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Towards A New Transaesthetics:
Rap Music in Germany and the United States

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Ph.D. Dissertation

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Introduction: Towards A New Transaesthetics

This dissertation is a comparative study of bi- and multilingual rap music in Germany and the United States, a form of popular music I understand as transcultural art. Where transcultural means "involving, encompassing, or extending across two or more cultures,"[1] any artwork that is composed in two, three, or more languages deserves to be understood in this manner. A relatively new word, transcultural stems from *transculturacion*, a term Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz devised to identify a series of dynamic, interrelated, and sometimes conflicting processes that lead to social and cultural change. If and when such transformations take place, it is reasonable to presume that some evidence should remain. Therefore, the bulk of this study consists of ferreting out instances of transculturation evident in music and lyrics. To facilitate this, I have gathered a selection of audio recordings and lyric transcripts, including English translations. Analyzing these, I will uncover transcultural 'effects,' which I refer to as 'traces' or 'residues.' In most cases, these traces or residues appear as blends: blended languages and blended musical forms. Where Homi K. Bhabha (1994) and other scholars refer to such forms as 'hybrids,' in my view this term, while useful, has its limit. Borrowed from animal husbandry and the genetic manipulation of plants, the term is problematic because hybrids are often sterile. In other words, they are often, though not always, incapable of reproducing.[2] To be sure, no humanmade cultural material can reproduce itself without human agents, but once hip-hop artists started producing music in two or more languages, evermore intricate forms began to appear. Furthermore, to assert that bi- and multilingual rap music constitutes mere 'hybrids' suggests that someone other than artists are responsible. Indeed, this is true: artists work with producers, engineers, and technicians, but artists are by and large responsible for the final versions of their work. The implications of this distinction are two-fold: on the one hand, hip-hop artists and the creative people they work with are transcultural agents; on the other, bi- and multilingual rap songs are transcultural expressions that result from collaboration. Most importantly, however, the music highlighted in this study relates to and involves more than one culture. In that sense, these songs speak from, to, and across many cultures at once.[3] In my view, this is the hallmark—indeed, it is the power—of transcultural art. While I explicitly formulate more nuanced questions near the end of this introduction, I am mainly interested in what these works can tell us about Germany and the United States.

Fernando Ortiz developed the concept of transculturation by focusing on the use, cultivation, and eventual global export of sugar and tobacco from Cuba. Detailing tobacco use across the Americas prior to, during, and after the colonial era, Ortiz traced it to Europe and Africa to suggest that its use and eventual local cultivation had transformed numerous societies. He also drew attention to Cuba's sugar industry, which relied on indigenous, African, European, and central Asian labor, to suggest that 'Big Sugar' was the

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[1] "Transcultural," *Merriam-Webster*, accessed June 3, 2018, merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transcultural.
[2] Liz Veloz, "Why Are Plant Hybrids Sterile?," *Sciencing*, Apr 24, 2017, accessed Aug 20, 2018, sciencing.com/plant-hybrids-sterile-5619428.html.
[3] "Transcultural," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.

major force that drove Cuba's transformation. Even though sugar and tobacco are agricultural commodities, there is good reason to apply Ortiz's model to rap music. Like sugar and tobacco, rap music is a globally traded product. Indeed, it has been one of the leading cultural exports of the United States since the 1980s, and Germany has been one of its primary receiving countries—first as entertainment, but soon after through the creation of original music. In both counties, hip-hop culture has been a part of, and even responsible for, profound social and cultural changes.

Rap is the most recent manifestation of Afro-diasporic music. Specifically, it is an extension of Jamaican soundsystem culture: spinners (DJs) who play music and DJs (emcees) who toast (or rap) on the mic. Thus, anchoring my study in Ortiz's theory, which emerged from the Caribbean, is sensible for three reasons. First, even though hip-hop originated in The Bronx, two of its founding figures, DJ Kool Herc and Grandmaster Flash, were born in Jamaica and Barbados, respectively, and other prominent early figures have connections to Puerto Rico.[4] Second, the Caribbean has been a crucial point of social and culture interchange and exchange, and it is through such interactions that transculturation takes place. Lastly, I root this study in the Caribbean out of respect for the untold numbers of black Africans who had to endure the middle passage to be enslaved for the realization of European and Euro-American dreams of enrichment. Where Ortiz maintained that tobacco and sugar had a profound effect on Europe,[5] and tobacco was eventually adopted and adapted by many cultures, hip-hop has been taken up and modified in many places, and similar economic circumstances, social relations, and interactions underpin its rise in the United States and Germany, as elsewhere.

Rap music is predicated on the breakbeat, i.e. recorded percussive passages that deejays and producers sample, recombine, and loop. Although he does not explicitly argue that rap constitutes transcultural music, musicologist Justin A. Williams writes that "the openness of the funk break allows producers to sample and borrow from myriad types of music and other sounds" which, in turn, "allows producers to utilize strikingly disparate material."[6] He maintains that the use of breakbeats "seems to yield limitless possibilities for the varieties of musical borrowing in hip-hop and other sample-based musics."[7] The resulting compositions, he argues, "not only draw attention to hip-hop's internalized discourse but often […] to various traditions outside of hip-hop."[8] As will become evident in each chapter, deejays and producers blend elements of music and sound from various traditions, heritages, and sources. As such, these compositions deserve to be understood as examples of transcultural music because they speak from, to, and resonate within and across multiple cultures simultaneously. The global appeal and spread of rap music underscores this point.

With regard to the use of two or more languages in song lyrics, code-switching, i.e. "the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of languages,"[9] figures prominently in this study,

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[4] Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: St. Marks Press, 2005), 67 and 112.
[5] Ortiz theorized that tobacco, sugar, chocolate, and tea—all of which contain alkaloids (stimulants)—may have prolonged the Renaissance in Europe. *See* Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, trans. Harriet de Onís (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 207.
[6] Justin A. Williams, *Rhymin' and Stealin': Musical Borrowing in Hip-Hop* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), 2.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., 12.
[9] "Code-switching," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.

and sociolinguist Jannis Androutsopoulos's work on the symbolic use of language in rap music in Germany has been insightful. He identifies two primary concepts: stanza-internal code-switching and stanza-external code-switching. Where the former refers to "*the use of two or more languages by the same speaker within the same turn/utterance*,"[10] the latter is organized around a "one speaker/one stanza/one language principle" where "songs [are] delivered by two or more rappers, with each rapper delivering a stanza in their preferred language."[11] In the first instance, rappers borrow, adapt, and sometimes fuse languages into heretofore nonexistent forms. In the second instance, languages are isolated and typically do not blend. Nevertheless, a linguistic landscape emerges that speaks from, to, and across two or more cultural spaces, and listeners are required to navigate some rather challenging linguistic terrain.

Taken together, the aesthetics of music and the aesthetics of language, especially if we understand them as a unified aural soundscape, present audiences with a unique, and challenging, opportunity—especially in contrast to monolingual songs. By aesthetics, I do not mean "beauty or the appreciation of beauty" (although that is certainly relevant, if in the eyes of the beholder), but "a set of principles underlying and guiding the work of a particular artist or artistic movement."[12] By closing scrutinizing music and lyrics, I maintain that bi- and multilingual rap provides evidence of transcultural aesthetics in popular music. Since artists in Germany spin rhymes in any combination and constellation of German, English, Turkish, French, Italian, Spanish (or any other language), I refrain from using the term *Deutschrap* due to how it reduces music to a quasi-nationalistic category, the result of which obscures its transcultural textures. While there is plenty of monolingual German-language rap worthy of study in its own right, I do not cover it because transcultural art emerges from the interplay of languages and music. In the United States, Spanish and Spanish-English rap are the core my analysis. However, there are instances, as I will show, of artists using other languages. Above all, I consider the political dimensions of these songs, paying close attention to the specific rhetorical and musical strategies rappers and producers deploy when crafting their music.

I conduct my explication of the songs gathered here via post-structuralist philosopher Jean Baudrillard's concept of transaesthetics, a term he coined to describe what he characterized as a loss of aesthetic particularity in art. In brief, he maintained that art from the Dadaists and Duchamp onward had lost its emancipatory power due to radical experimentation, which resulted in what he deemed a "confusion of categories."[13] Transaesthetics was the result of new artistic techniques, including pastiche methods, mixed media, and, eventually, multimedia technologies. With artists renouncing the "aesthetic rules of the game,"[14] i.e. flouting convention and tradition to produce radical new works, Baudrillard held that it was no longer possible to apprehend "any determining principle, whether of an aesthetic, a sexual or a political kind" in art.[15] With "metaphor […] disappearing in every sphere,"[16] and without the power of metaphorical

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[10] Jannis Androutsopoulos, "Multilingualism, Ethnicity and Genre in Germany's Migrant Hip Hop," in *The Languages of Global Hip Hop*, edited by Marina Terkourafi (London: Continuum, 2010), 26. Italics in the original.
[11] Ibid., 30.
[12] "Aesthetics," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.
[13] Jean Baudrillard, *The Flowers of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*, trans. James Benedict (London: Verso, 1993), 9.
[14] Ibid., 11.
[15] Ibid., 10.
[16] Ibid., 7.

difference, Baudrillard claimed that "aesthetic evaluation" was impossible.[17] L.H. Stallings, who has tried to redeploy his concept in her investigation of black sexual cultures, writes that for Baudrillard, "transaesthetics means a rejection of modernity and a negation of formal aesthetics where culture replaces what is formerly known as art."[18] Baudrillard, Stallings asserts, "dramatized transaesthetics as the end of Western civilization."[19]

Although he did not address music, Baudrillard's thinking seems applicable to rap, either when deejays and producers blur categories by sampling and blending music from numerous sources, or when emcees rap in two or more languages. Indeed, Baudrillard warned of a "proliferation of signs *ad infinitum*" and "the recycling of past and present forms."[20] But as Justin A. Williams has noted:

> the fundamental element of hip-hop culture and aesthetics is the overt use of preexisting material to new ends. Whether it is taking an old dance move for a breakdancing battle, using spray paint to create street art, quoting from a famous speech, or sampling a rapper or a 1970s funk song, hip-hop aesthetics involve borrowing from the past. When these elements are appropriated and reappropriated, they become transformed into something new, something different, something *hip-hop*.[21]

Where bi- and multilingual rap presents a (con-)fusion of musical and linguistic categories, one might understand it as indicative of transaesthetics. However, as I will show, the transformational process Williams emphasizes is akin to Ortiz's transculturation principle—a processual concept, much like Bhabha's, that is predicated on transition.[22] Throughout this study I will demonstrate that it is possible to apprehend and make sense of the blended *and* the particular at the same time. What is required, of course, is careful analysis to disentangle what is going on in any given work. Thus, I take issue with Baudrillard's claim that the reuse of past and present forms results in a loss of aesthetic difference. Instead, I maintain that such borrowing and blending sets up aesthetic circumstances that are challenging to understand.

By carrying out close readings of songs compared along common themes, I show the extent to which Baudrillard's understanding of transaesthetics remains applicable, but also why his original articulation of the concept is incomplete. It is here, then, that I intend to introduce additional qualifications to the term. On the one hand, the "trans" in transaesthetics refers to transatlantic, i.e. the borrowing, sharing, and exchange of music and languages back and forth across the Atlantic. On the other, "trans" also refers to the types of mutated and blended forms that occur in bi- and multilingual rap—in other words, its transcultural textures. But since hip-hop culture and rap music, especially in Germany, unfolded in a transatlantic space, and since rap is the most recent manifestation of Afro-diasporic music, the "trans" in transaesthetics also refers to transhemispheric (across the western and eastern hemispheres), which Paul Gilroy theorized at length in *The Black Atlantic* (1993). Further still, the "trans" in transaesthetics implies a transnational orientation between Germany, the U.S., and, as I will show, a number of other countries. Therefore, by

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[17] Ibid., 19.
[18] L.H. Stallings, *Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 11.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., 14. Italics in the original.
[21] Williams, 1.
[22] Nadja Gernalzick and Gabriele Pisarz-Ramirez, "Preface and Comparative Conceptual History," in *Transmediality and Transculturality* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2013), xiv-xv.

injecting transaesthetics with these additional qualifications, I aim to expand on Baudrillard's concept, hence this dissertation's title *Towards A New Transaesthetics*.

Linking up with Americanist Winfried Fluck's work in the area of aesthetic experience, which he synthesized from American pragmatist philosopher John Dewey and reception theorist Wolfgang Iser to explain how audiences become active when reading literary texts, I argue that bi- and multilingual rap constitutes a form of popular literature with enormous potential to trigger a powerful, and potentially empowering, aesthetic experience. In order for this to occur, Fluck maintains that blanks and gaps are required if audiences are to make literary works meaningful. He writes that every

> text consists of segments that are determinate, and of blanks between them that are indeterminate. In order to establish consistency between these segments, the reader has to become active in providing links for that which is missing. A blank is thus not a mere gap, or an ideologically instructive omission. It is an intentional, often carefully crafted, suspension of relations in order to make us provide links for what is disconnected. The difference is significant: A mere gap allows readers to indulge in their own projections, a blank compels them to set up relations between their own imaginary constructs and the text. Aesthetic experience is thus, in effect, defined as a state of "in-between."[23]

This 'in-betweenness' provides flexibility for audiences to explore transcultural works of art. On the one hand, 'determinate segments' such as musical citations from a range of traditions create a robust musical soundscape. On the other, 'indeterminate blanks' such as carefully crafted omissions in lyrics allow listeners to "set up their own relations between a textual segment and the mental projection of a meaningful context,"[24] e.g. the themes, premises, and narratives of any given song. Thus, by switching back and forth among a range of musical and linguistic elements, listeners stand to be pulled into a range of cultural frameworks. For example, a rap song with lyrics in Turkish, German, and English, as well as elements of Middle Eastern music laid overtop hip-hop beats, draws the listener into any, and possibly even all, of these cultural spaces. Where Fluck argues that audiences project their own experiences onto a work to imaginatively bring it to life, I maintain that listeners inscribe the transcultural contours of a song onto themselves. In other words, aesthetic experience is a two-way street: works affect us as we enact them. If that is the case, such music very likely induces a 'transculturating' effect that enables audiences to understand not only the robust contours of a given song, but the communities they physically and imaginatively inhabit.

This aesthetic experience is salient because as Barry Shank has argued, despite whatever politics or messaging appear in lyrics, music has incredible power to bring, and bind, people together irrespective of their ideological inclinations.[25] Shank maintains that "the act of musical listening enables us to confront complex and mobile structures of impermanent relationships […] that model the experience of belonging to a community not of unity but of difference."[26] On the one hand, bi- and multilingual rap is predicated

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[23] Winfried Fluck, "Why We Need Fiction: Reception Aesthetics, Literary Anthropology, *Funktionsgeschichte*," in *Romance with America?: Essays on Culture, Literature, and American Studies,* edited by Laura Bieger and Johannes Voelz (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2009), 370.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Barry Shank, *The Political Force of Musical Beauty* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 1.

[26] Ibid.

on difference: different forms of music with different, but often shared, origins. On the other hand, and by its very definition, bi- and multilingual rap is based on different languages, albeit with overlap—for example, through shared lexicons. Furthermore, listeners integrate music and words into a unified whole in two ways: first, through repeat listens (a hallmark of recorded music) and, second, by further reflecting on the themes they encounter in songs. Since bi- and multilingual rap constitutes transcultural music, I refer to this act of listening and reflection as a transcultural aesthetic experience. Throughout this study I show where and how this is likely to occur. In my conclusions, I will consider the importance of such material so that we can understand what it tells us not only about German and American culture of the past 40 years, but for the future, especially if such artistic work continues.

Interdisciplinary in scope, this study crisscrosses the disciplines of American Studies, musicology, sociolinguistics, and continental philosophy, and its methodology is four-fold. First, I apply Ortiz's transculturation model to the study of hip-hop, particularly in the United States (where, to date, it has not been discussed in such terms), but also in Germany, and with greater transparency, where hip-hop has been written about as a transcultural phenomenon since the late 1990s. Second, and similar to L.H. Stallings, I deploy Baudrillard's concept of transaesthetics to expand upon it.[27] Third, I ferret out the transcultural dimensions of these works—their 'traces' or 'residues'—to support my claim. Lastly, I apply Fluck's work on aesthetic experience to argue that rap lyrics constitute a form of popular literature. However, this study does not contain an ethnographic or sociological component, either qualitative or quantitative, to determine in how far, if at all, audiences receive songs in the manner suggested. Such an approach would require another set of theoretical constructs, investigative tools, and methodological procedures. While a follow-up study with a test group of participants could determine the extent to which my thesis, based on the analysis of these works, holds up, the study at hand simply theorizes their possible effect to inquire about their potential impact and significance.

The Shape of This Study and Its Implications

The first of its kind in English,[28] the questions driving this comparative study of rap music in the United States and Germany are as follows: what happens when emcees and/or emcee teams utilize two or more languages overtop musical compositions that reference, and recombine, sonic elements from a number of musical traditions? With ample analysis, I argue that such works are transcultural. On the one hand, these works demonstrate linguistic and musical blending and mixing. On the other, these works allow, if one reads them carefully, to understand the particular and the blended at the same time. Further still, I want to suggest that the material analyzed herein shows how bi- and multilingual works of art can speak from, to, and across a range of cultures simultaneously. In that sense, I aim to build upon, but also to further extend, Ortiz's

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[27] L.H. Stallings has recently attempted to resuscitate Baudrillard's term, but more work is needed to reconceptualize Baudrillard's concept properly. Stallings attempts to deploy the term transaesthetics to explain black sexualities, and I take up her work more explicitly later in this chapter as well as in my chapter on queer/trans feminism.
[28] The only explicitly comparative study of hip-hop in Germany and the United States I am aware of is Solveig Lüdtke's *Globalisierung und Lokalisierung von Rapmusik am Beispiel amerikanischer und deutscher Raptexte* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2007).

transculturation model beyond Cuba. Moreover, I ask what sort of experience audiences might undergo when exposed to such material. If bi- and multilingual rap music reveals transcultural aesthetics, to what extent are audiences primed to have a transcultural aesthetic experience, and, if so, what are the implications? Lastly, in how far can Baudrillard's concept of transaesthetics be redefined as an abbreviation for transcultural aesthetics, especially since the works studied here emerge from transatlantic, bi- and tri-national, and, in some instances, transnational orientations?

To address these questions, I have organized this dissertation into six chapters. In chapter one, "Transculturation and Hip-Hop in the Transcultural Zone," I begin by contextualizing, following Americanists Nadja Gernalzick and Gabriele Pisarz-Ramierz, the conceptual history of transculturation throughout the 20th century. How have scholars drawn upon Ortiz's concept while paradoxically neglecting his thinking? Since no one, especially in hip-hop studies, has actually applied his thinking with any depth or detail, I return to *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* to see in how far Ortiz's ideas can be sensibly applied to rap music. Afterward, I review the literature on hip-hop in both countries to show, on the one hand, how scholars have discussed hip-hop as a transcultural (or similar) phenomenon and, on the other, to build upon their thinking to emphasize how and why rap music deserves to be understood as transcultural music. At that point, I introduce Baudrillard's thinking in greater detail to show in how far his concept of transaesthetics is applicable, but also why there is sigificant potential to reinscribe it with the aforementioned qualifications. Finally, I review Fluck's work in aesthetic experience in greater depth to explain my analytical method in the subsequent chapters. As a brief example, I apply Fluck's thinking to Eminem's smash hit "The Real Slim Shady." Although the song is monolingual, considering the way in which Eminem's song stands to trigger an aesthetic experience in listeners will help us appreciate why Fluck's work applies to popular musc.

In chapter two, "Roots, Rhymes, and Realities: The Origins of Bilingual Rap in Germany and the United States," I review the earliest experiments of bilingual rhyming. What can we learn from these early examples? In the German-speaking world, I argue against the prevailing wisdom which states that early efforts such as G.L.S.-United's "Rapper's Deutsch" (1980) and Falco's "Der Kommissar" (1982) are not rap songs. While these two songs, much like the Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight," may not have 'birthed' hip-hop scenes in West or East Germany, Austria, or Switzerland, they nevertheless played a crucial role in showing, first, that one could rap in German and, second, that it was possible to rap in two languages, often mixing and blending them in surprising ways. In the American context, I closely analyze The Mean Machine's "Disco Dream" (1981), one of the first instances of English-Spanish rhyming. Most importantly, re-approaching these songs allows us to consider the central role mimesis played on *both* sides of the Atlantic. While Gabriele Klein and Malte Friedrich (2003) alluded to the importance of mimesis in transferring hip-hop culture beyond The Bronx, they mention it just once and do not explore that proposition in detail.[29] As a result, I answer their call by applying Robert Cantwell's notion of ethnomimesis to explain how the

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[29] Gabriele Klein and Malte Friedrich, *Is this real? Die Kultur des HipHop* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2003), 57-58. Although the authors suggest, citing Tricia Rose, that mimesis serves an important function in transferring hip-hop outside of its original context, they do not substantively explore how that occurs.

cultural translation of hip-hop occurred in (West) Germany and Austria well before 'official' hip-hop scenes began to flourish in the late 1980s. At the end of the chapter, I discuss UK deejay duo Coldcut's remix of Eric B. & Rakim's "Paid in Full (Seven Minutes of Madness—The Coldcut Remix)" (1987) to speculate on the influence that track had on producers in Germany, the United States, and elsewhere across Europe.

In chapter three, "Hip-Hip Spiritualties: The Reggae/Rap of Gentleman and MC Yogi's Hip-Hop Hinduism," I take up religion and spirituality by focusing on themes of liberation and transcendence in the work of Cologne-based reggae/rapper Gentleman and Point Neyes, California-based rapper MC Yogi. Before offering close analyses of two songs, however, I consider, following Sina Nitzsche, how Germany's Rhine-Ruhr region, from which Gentleman emerged, represents a synecdoche of Europe. Framed alongside Anton Allahar's understanding of the Caribbean as a transcultural space where languages and cultures meet, interact, and blend, how do these two spaces come into contact and interact in Gentleman's work? With Rev. Dr. James Cone's thoughts on Black Liberation in mind, I ask in how far Gentleman's "Man A Rise feat. Bounty Killer" exemplifies transgressive, and possibly transcendent, liberation. As a white German reggae/rapper, Gentleman stands, following bell hooks, to be understood as a cultural tourist and, thus, guilty of cultural appropriation. However, given Gentleman's commitments to Jamaica, his longstanding engagement with Jamaican soundsystem culture, and his collaborations with established artists from Kingston, Jamaica, is it fair to dismiss him as an interloper or wannabe, or does Gentleman's music actually demonstrate the transformative power that comes about through the processes of transculturation?

After weighing these considerations, I turn to MC Yogi. As an adherent and dedicated practitioner of yogic spiritual philosophy, MC Yogi fuses hip-hop and Hindu traditions and thereby stands in a long line of American Transcendentalists. As such, I expend some time, following Peter Goldberg, tracing the history of the influence of India's Vedic literary traditions on the United States nineteenth-century literature to the neo-kirtan music popular today. In that sense, I attempt to contextualize MC Yogi's work within a much longer trajectory that includes mainstays of the American literary canon such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman, but also the musical output of American kirtan singers of the early 21st century. I then offer a close reading of MC Yogi's "Om Namah Shivaya" to show, on the one hand, how the musical aesthetics of hip-hop and kirtan can be suffused into a seamless aesthetic blend, and, on the other, to examine how devotion and transcendence can be explored in rap music. Like Gentleman, MC Yogi stands to be accused of *double* cultural appropriation. As a result, I consider the measures he takes to ensure that he does not unduly appropriate from two cultures—in essence, how he adheres to hip-hop's core moral principle of *respect*. In closing, I consider the extent to which Gentleman and MC Yogi represent the more optimistic side of transculturation. With regard to my argument that bi- and multilingual rap music stands to initiate an aesthetic experience in listeners that draws them into any number of cultural spaces and traditions, what can we understand by studying these two artists who, through their enactment of musical cultures, combine and fuse them into transcultural forms?

In chapter four, "(You Gotta) Fight for Their Right (To Migrate): Hip-Hop, Immigration, and Activism," I take up the pressing issue of migration. Beginnging with a brief discussion of the outsized role migrants have played in hip-hop in Germany, I consider the under-emphasized importance immigrants

played in hip-hop's early development in the U.S. I then consider, following Shanna Lorenz, how hip-hop artists in the United States have worked, often collaboratively, over the last ten years to create music that advocates for the rights of undocumented migrants. A close reading of San Jose-based group Raul y Mexia's "Todos Somos Arizona" (We Are All Arizona) (2010) shows the types of bilingual rhetorical strategies rapper Mexia utilizes to build political consensus across Spanish and English-speaking communities. However, I also expend considerable time and effort to show how his code-switching demonstrates the subversive power to build consensus while simultaneously dissing and dismissing members of the audience who embrace the sorts of nativist sentiments that too often prevent the right of people to migrate. What does Mexia's rhetorical wordplay reveal about the power and potential of code-switching, and what kind of an aesthetic experience do listeners stand to undergo? In the second half of the chapter, I turn to the German crew TickTickBoom's "C'est quoi ton rôle" (Which Role Do You Play), a bilingual French-German song that argues for the rights of migrants. After detailing the circumstances in which migrants found themselves in Germany following the Fall of the Berlin Wall, I trace the socioeconomic circumstances behind the recent waves of migration to Europe. My reading of "C'est quoi ton rôle" will show the types of strategies emcees Refpolk and Ben Dana deploy to get the audience to reflect on the roles they play, either consciously or unconsciously, in the so-called migration crisis. As in Raul y Mexia's work, I examine rhetorical strategies Refpolk and Dana utilize to build consensus. Of particular interest, however, is the way in which the song's beatmakers, LeijiONE and Flox Schoch, deploy the aural aesthetics of tragedy to instigate terror in listeners, a tactic which I argue ultimately builds empathy. Combined with Dana and Refpolk's raps, how does this synergistic 'unity effect' stand to trigger an aesthetic experience so that listeners, like the emcees, might become activists to fight for the rights of migrants?

Chapter five, "Hip-Hop's Queer/Trans *Feminismus*: Sookee and Mykki Blanco," addresses homophobia and sexism. I begin by tracing, following Gwendolyn Pough, how women have had to fight to gain recognition in hip-hop culture in the United States, but also in Germany. Afterward, I examine the origins of anti-women and homophobic sentiments in hip-hop, but also the extent to which queer folk have also had to fight to gain recognition. I then devote considerable time, following Chris Weedon, to discuss how activists and musicians from second-wave feminism drew upon popular music to advance their political agenda. Following the work of transgender studies scholar Susan Stryker, I discuss how the transgender movement was crucial for transforming second-wave feminism into a more inclusive third-wave feminism. After a short overview of the rise of so-called HomoHop, as well as the origins of the term *no homo* (which has been used to denigrate and marginalize homosexuals), I turn to the work of Berlin-based queer/feminist activist rapper Sookee. In addition to the bilingual rhetorical strategies Sookee deploys to convince listeners to actively secure a space for homosexuals and transgender people in hip-hop, in how far do the musical components in her songs support, and thus advance, Sookee's overt political aims to edify people who do not ascribe to the heteronormative framework governing society? I then consider the work of Raleigh, North Carolina-native Mykki Blanco. Positioning Blanco's work against a reading of Gil Scott-Heron's "The Subject Was Faggots" (1970), I show how Blanco undercuts the homophobic sentiments from the Black Power and Black Liberation project of the 1960s and 70s in the United States that inform hip-hop's

homo/trans phobia. Offering close readings of three Blanco songs, I show on the one hand how Blanco's work seeks to normalize homo/trans people, and, on the other, how Blanco, perhaps more than any other US-based artist today, utilizes multilingual wordplay. In my reading, Blanco is in a realm of her own, and the selections offered here suggest that rappers in the U.S., like their counterparts in Germany, are just as apt (and capable) of mixing languages. Because Sookee and Blanco problematize what we think we know about gender and sexuality, they further demonstrate why Baudrillard's term transaesthetics deserves a reboot.

The sixth and final chapter, "'Digging Their Own Crates': Dan Wolf's *Stateless: A Hip-Hop Vaudeville* and the Hip-Hop Antifascism of Bejarano & Microphone Mafia," takes a rather unique and unprecedented historical look at the ability for hip-hop to cross spatial and temporal borders. In *Stateless*, Wolf and his partner Tommy Shepherd perform Wolf's familial history via a theater piece that explores the Hamburg cabaret team known as the Gebrüderwolf, who wrote, published, and performed vaudevillian songs in the early 20th century, including "An der Eck Steih't Ein Jung mit'n Tüdelband," which today stands as the unofficial anthem of Hamburg. Of interest are the many ways Wolf and Shepherd fuse German and (African) American culture through Wolf's German-Jewish cultural heritage. My interest here is two-fold: what do their aesthetic decisions reveal about the malleability of hip-hop's pastiche, collage-based music-making methodology, and how does the play span the 20th century and, in so doing, invite the audience to navigate a bicultural space? After showing how the play opens up numerous moments for the audience to undergo a historically constructed aesthetic experience, I turn to the work of Bejarano and Microphone Mafia. The link, here, is the Holocaust, which caused significant disruption to Wolf's family (including separation from his familial heritage), and, for Esther Bejarano (a Holocaust survivor), incarceration at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. Working with the Cologne-based group Microphone Mafia, Bejarano, her son Joram, and daughter Edna create music that, on the one hand, insists upon never forgetting one of Germany's darkest chapters; on the other, their bi- and multilingual texts invite listeners not only to explore the historical contexts the songs are predicated upon, but to engage with a number of cultural spaces at once. This final half of this chapter is useful because the challenging nature of the songs suggests the difficulty one might have in receiving them. Because their work draws heavily from Microphone Mafia's and Bejarano's previous recorded material, I title the chapter "Digging Their Own Crates." However, their output exists within the longer history of the antifascist music of the Jewish diaspora. What exactly do audiences stand to learn, and experience, by being exposed to such material?

In my conclusions, I draw upon Stuart Hall's notion of new ethnicities, Floya Anthias' concept of translocational positionality, and Irina Schmitt's understanding of the transcultural avant-garde to show how the music analyzed throughout this study demonstrates the power of music to transform people and instill transcultural consciousness. If the transcultural avant-garde occurs in popular music, how does it stand to affect listeners who might not see themselves as 'experimental' or 'different'? Do such works, which reflect how artists themselves have been influenced by a range of musical traditions (including hip-hop), demonstrate the potential for music to shape, transform, and ultimately bring into being the sort of transculturation Ortiz theorized at length not only for Cuba and the Caribbean, but for the United States

and Germany? In closing, I consider the implications of my new articulation of transaesthetics. How does it stand to problematize our understanding of German and American culture today, and why does that matter?

The implications of this study are significant. First, it applies Ortiz's transculturation model to hip-hop in the United States. Given the current debate among commentators about whether or not considering hip-hop from the point of view of multiculturalism is warranted (primarily for the way it challenges the assumption that hip-hop is a strictly 'black' cultural phenomenon), this aspect of the study is controversial unto itself. In my view, transculturation offers a workaround, and understanding hip-hop as a transcultural phenomenon is not incongruent with current approaches. Instead, I maintain that it can enrich them. For example, Ortiz's transculturation model can potentially deflect the types of criticism African American hip-hop artists receive when they borrow musical content from outside of the funk, soul, R&B, blues, and jazz traditions.[30] Second, this study transparently applies Ortiz's ideas in the German context. As Nadja Gernalzick and Gabriela Pisarz-Ramirez argue (which I take up in more detail in chapter one), scholars too often utilize Ortiz's transculturation concept without referring to his work, let alone working through and applying his ideas. Indeed, I know of no scholar writing about hip-hop in Germany as a transcultural phenomenon that cites Ortiz or works through his concepts. Thus, I hope to position him alongside theorists such as Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., all of whom have done excellent work that helps us better understand the cultural flows, exchanges, adoptions, and adaptations back and forth across the Atlantic that Ortiz argued have been happening, for better or for worse, since European colonial contact in the Americas. Washing back across Europe for years (and certainly before hip-hop appeared), those flows, circulations, and transformations are as present today as they were then, and there is little sign of their abating. Scrutinizing them in the study of a popular music form like bi- and multilingual rap helps to understand the transcultural nature of our world.

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[30] The best example here is Sharma's discussion of how American hip-hop artists such as R. Kelly and Jay-Z have appropriated Middle Eastern and Indian musical idioms. While I take up her arguments more explicitly in chapter five, for Sharma's comments on R. Kelly and Jay-Z, *see* Nitasha Tamar Sharma, *Hip Hop Desis: South Asian Americans, Blackness, and a Global Race Consciousness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 234-282.

Chapter 1

Transculturation and Hip-Hop in the Transcultural Zone

As American Studies scholars Nadja Gernalzick and Gabriele Pisarz-Ramirez point out in *Transmediality and Transculturality* (2013), Fernando Ortiz's transculturation model languished until 1982 when Uruguayan literary critic Ángel Rama "applied the term transculturation to literature" to explore "how different Latin American writers fuse elements of original popular cultures with European and North American aesthetic strategies."[1] Gernalzick and Pisarz-Ramirez explain how

> in the Anglo-American context the concept of transculturation is often traced back to [Mary Louise] Pratt's study *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* of 1992 in which she describes the imperial gaze in 18th century travel writing, focusing on "contact zones" as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination."[2]

These asymmetrical relations were the core of the European colonial project in the Americas, whereby France, England, Spain, and Portugal relied on African slave labor to implement an economic system that laid the groundwork for capitalism, an economic system predicated on a transnational paradigm of extraction, production, distribution, and commercial exchange.[3] The logic of colonialism persists in the present day, and if one needed an example, the Apple iPhone provides some insight. Even though the device is designed in California and assembled in China, 34% of its components originate in Japan, 17% in Germany, 13% in South Korea, 6% in the United States, and 3.6% in China. Another 27% of its components—rare earth minerals and metals—come from "other" countries,[4] where slaves, or extremely underpaid labor (oftentimes children), typically mine these materials.[5] One might debate in how far the multilateral, transnational orientation of advanced capitalist production is indicative of colonialism, but the cotton industry of 19th century, much like Cuba's sugar industry, was a transnational affair. Forced African labor cultivated cotton under brutal conditions in the American south, cotton was shipped and spun into fiber in mills in the North, those fibers were transformed into fabric, and the resulting garments made in English textile mills were exchanged around the world. Where the equipment needed to produce music is

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[1] Nadja Gernalzick and Gabriele Pisarz-Ramirez, "Preface and Comparative Conceptual History," in *Transmediality and Transculturality* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2013), xv.

[2] Ibid., xvi.

[3] Potter adroitly positioned discussions of hip-hop culture against the backdrop of colonialism and slavery, pointing out how "black postmodernism" predated its European counterpart. *See* Russell A. Potter, *Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip-Hop and the Politics of Postmodernism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 6.

[4] Discussing globalization and technology, former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, citing figures from the *Wall Street Journal*, details the production of the iPhone in the film *Inequality for All*. The segment begins at 28:18. *Inequality for All*, directed by Jacob Kornbluth (New York: Radius/TWC, 2014), DVD.

[5] Human Rights Watch has documented unjust mining practices in Tanzania and other African nations. *See* Zama Neff, "Africa's Child Mining Shame," Sept 11, 2013, accessed June 10, 2018, hrw.org/news/2013/09/11/africas-child-mining-shame.

manufactured around the world, similar circumstances underpin, and too often remain an unspoken dimension of, popular music today.

Gernalzick and Pisarz-Ramirez note that "the debate on transculturality" in the German-speaking world "was reinstigated by a short position paper by social philosopher Wolfgang Welsch of 1991, in which he discounted the appropriateness and the political soundness of the concepts of interculturality and multiculturality in contemporary societies."[6] Critiquing enlightenment philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder's understanding of culture, which "envisage[d] cultures as closed spheres or autonomous islands, each corresponding to a folk's territorial area and linguistic extent,"[7] Welsch argued that Herder's "sphere premise and purity precept not only render impossible a mutual understanding between cultures, but [that] the appeal of cultural identity of this kind […] threatens to produce separatism and to pave the way for political conflicts and war."[8] Welsch further argued that the

> conception of interculturality seeks ways in which such cultures could nevertheless get on with, understand or recognize one another. But the deficiency in this conception originates in that it drags along with it unchanged the premise of the traditional concept of culture. It still proceeds from a conception of cultures as islands or spheres. For just this reason, it is unable to arrive at any solution, since the intercultural problems *stem* from the island premise. The classical conception of culture *creates* by its primary trait – the separatist character of cultures – the secondary problem of a structural inability to communicate between these cultures.[9]

While an entire industry devoted to so-called intercultural communication has flourished, particularly in the business world,[10] Welsch asserted that the "recommendations of interculturality, albeit well meant, are fruitless." Even though people can, and often do, function in an intercultural orientation—for instance, a business person from one culture going on assignment into another, the concept," Welsch concluded, "does not get to the root of the problem."[11]

Likewise, Welsch pointed out how multiculturality "takes up the problems which different cultures have living together *within one society*," noting that it too "proceeds from the existence of clearly distinguished, in themselves homogenous cultures, the only difference being that these differences exist within one and the same state community."[12] While proponents sought "opportunities for tolerance and understanding, and for avoidance or handling of conflict," Welsch claimed multiculturalism and multiculturality were "equally inefficient […] since from the basis of the traditional comprehension of cultures a mutual understanding or a transgression of separating barriers cannot be achieved."[13] In the United States and

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[6] Gernalzick and Pisarz-Ramirez., xvii.
[7] Wolfgang Welsch, "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, edited by Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1999), 195.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., 196. Italics in the original.
[10] Seminars by alleged experts in intercultural communication have been hot in business and political relations in Germany since at least the early 2000s. I first encountered the notion of intercultural communication while working as an ESL instructor in various locations. While the skills these experts bestow upon clients may or may not be of use, Welsch's insights seem very sensible to me.
[11] Welsch, 196.
[12] Ibid. Italics in the original.
[13] Ibid., 196-197.

Germany, this remains the case: much debate about the 'success' or 'failure' of multiculturalism rages on, and segregation according to racial/ethnic differences continues. Nonetheless, cultures today, Welsch concluded, "no longer have the insinuated form of homogeneity and separateness," but "have instead assumed a new form, which is to be called *transcultural* in so far as it *passes through* classical cultural boundaries."[14] His insights into the differences between these three terms is instructive, especially his argument that societies by the late 20th century had become transcultural. However, that does not tacitly mean that terms such as 'multicultural' and 'intercultural' should be abandoned. In many instances, these terms still serve a purpose. Nevertheless, Welsch asserted that transculturality was the best explanation, in both a normative and a descriptive sense, for modern societies—even if palpable levels of separation and segregation persist.

The problem, however, as Gernalzick and Pisarz-Ramirez point out, was that neither Welsch nor Pratt "consider the history of the term [transcultural] as it relates to Ortiz's writings,"[15] choosing instead to relegate him to a brief mention in their footnotes. Further still, they maintain that "many of the scholars applying the concepts of transculturation, transculturality, and transculturism [in] various contexts […] reference Pratt's work while eliding that the term transculturation was coined by Ortiz in 1940."[16] Similarly, hip-hop scholars have not sufficiently dealt with Ortiz's model. Therefore, I would like to reexamine Ortiz's thinking for two reasons. First, no one writing about hip-hop as a transcultural phenomenon to date has done so. Second, applying Ortiz's insights to hip-hop in a general sense helps us to re-approach what we accept as given. In other words, his thinking opens up new avenues of thought and inquiry. After discussing the three core concepts of his model, I will review the secondary literature on deejaying and emceeing to determine their applicability. To articulate my thesis in greater detail, I then turn to the corpus on hip-hop studies in Germany and the United States to show how scholars on both sides of the Atlantic have discussed hip-hop as a transcultural (or similar) phenomenon. Finally, I introduce Baudrillard's thoughts on transaesthetics to argue, on the one hand, how his term can—and, in my view, should—be expanded upon and, on the other, to explain why fusing it with Fluck's work in aesthetic experience is sensible to understand bi- and multilingual rap music not only as a form of popular literature, but an artistic expression that can, and very likely does, induce a transcultural aesthetic experience in listeners.

Transculturation: Returning to and Rereading Fernando Ortiz's *Cuban Counterpoint*

Ortiz sought to extend "the discussion on cultural encounter and exchange by introduction of a new term which would offer an alternative perspective on cultural contact to that Melville J. Herskovits [offered] in *Acculturation: The Study of Cultural Contact* in 1938."[17] To that end, Ortiz carried out a study of the history of the cultivation of sugar and tobacco in Cuba. "[I]n the study of economic phenomena and their social

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[14] Ibid., 197. Italics in the original.
[15] Gernalzick and Pisarz-Ramirez, xvii.
[16] Ibid. Indeed, Welsch somewhat disingenuously argues that Friedrich Nietzsche had laid the groundwork for transculturality. Given that he did not work through Ortiz's concepts, this assertion is problematic, especially with regard to intellectual integrity.
[17] Ibid., xiii.

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effects," Ortiz wrote, "it would be hard to find more eloquent lessons than those afforded by Cuba in the startling counterpoise between sugar and tobacco."[18] The basis of the counterpoint, Ortiz claimed, were stark contrasts:

> Sugar and tobacco are all contrast. It would seem that they were moved by a rivalry that separates them from their very origins. One is a germineous plant, the other a saloanceous; one grows from cuttings of stalk rooted down, the other from tiny seeds that germinate. The value of one is in its stalk, not in its leaves, which are thrown away; that of the other is its foliage, not its stalk, which is discarded. Sugar cane lives for years, the tobacco plant only a few months. The former seeks the light, the latter shade; day and night, sun and moon. The former loves the rain that falls from the heavens; the latter the heat that comes from the earth. The sugar cane is ground for its juice; the tobacco leaves are dried to get rid of the sap. Sugar achieves its destiny through liquid, which melts it, turns it into a syrup; tobacco through fire, which volatizes it, converted into smoke. The one is white, the other dark. Sugar is sweet and odorless; tobacco bitter and aromatic. Always in contrast! Food and poison, waking and drowsing, energy and dream, delight of the flesh and delight of the spirit, sensuality and thought, the satisfaction of an appetite and the contemplation of a moment's illusion, calories of nourishment and puffs of fantasy, undifferentiated and commonplace anonymity from the cradle and aristocratic individuality wherever it goes, medicine and magic, reality and deception, virtue and vice. Sugar is *she* [sugar cane, *la caña de azúcar*]; tobacco is *he* [*el tabaco*]. Sugar cane the gift of the gods, tobacco of the devils; she is the daughter of Apollo, he is the offspring of Persephone.[19]

The way in which Ortiz draws out differences between these two crops along binary oppositions is instructive, especially since it was from these 'counterpoints' that he worked to theorize and articulate a theory of cultural blending. Similarly, hip-hop culture is often understood as a series of opposites: east coast/west coast, party music/conscious rap, commercial/underground, hard/soft (gangster/pop), black/white, real/fake, American/foreign, and so forth. Like sugar and tobacco (agricultural products that generate wealth for the companies that cultivate, process, and distribute them), rap music is a cultural product that enriches people up and down the production chain. From artists, record labels, and telecommunications companies to public relations firms, trade literature and journalists, concert venues, and the people who work in the service industries, hip-hop is big business and big money.

As a crop that flourished in Cuba and the Americas, tobacco, Ortiz noted, "was taken to the rest of the world from America."[20] Sugar, on the other hand, originated in South Asia and Southeast Asia, and European Christians "learned the taste of sugar from Arabs during the Crusades to Jerusalem, on the Moslem-held islands of Cyprus and Sicily, from the Moors in the gardens of Valencia or on the plains of Granada."[21] By the time the cultivation of sugar in Cuba and its global export began in earnest, sugar had already undergone a global journey. Hip-hop has similarly traveled much like sugar and tobacco, and the parallels are uncanny. "Tobacco was the delight of the people," Ortiz wrote, "before it became that of the upper classes."[22] The same is true of hip-hop, which emerged from working class African Americans and

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[18] Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, trans. Harriet de Onís (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 4.
[19] Ibid., 6.
[20] Ibid., 46.
[21] Ibid., 18.
[22] Ibid., 46.

Latinos outside official institutional structures—in the streets, so to speak—long before anyone outside New York embraced it. Early audiences in The Bronx first experienced hip-hop in open public spaces: parks, gymnasiums, and the recreation room at 1520 Sedgwick Avenue.

The appeal of tobacco, Ortiz claimed, "was natural and traditional rather than studied and commercial."[23] Rap music, like most forms of popular music, appeals to the human instincts of rhythm, dance, and freedom as well as predilections for partying, fun, aggression, and sex. Like many forms of popular music, the appeal of rap, like sugar and tobacco, is deeply sensuous. Both sugar and tobacco are acquired tastes and can be quite addictive; the same is true for rap music and, indeed, almost any music. Although hip-hop culture and rap music are inextricably tied to capitalism and commerce, the appeal to the aforementioned instincts does not require study. Without advanced musical knowledge or even purchasing a record, one can bob one's head to a song booming from the trunk of a car stopped at an intersection, or yet another playing on a stereo in the apartment next door. Further still, rap music attracts and repels people like sugar and tobacco. Ask any smoker/non-smoker, sugar addict/diabetic, or lover/hater of hip-hop and they are bound to express their devotion to or revulsion of all three based on personal preference. When it comes to rap music, there is typically no middle ground: one either loves it or hates it, often viscerally.

The comparison to tobacco, however, goes further. In the "spread of this habit of smoking," Ortiz wrote that "the island of Cuba has played a large part, not only because tobacco and its rites were native to it, but because of the incomparable excellence of its product, which is universally recognized by all discerning smokers."[24] One could easily substitute 'United States' for 'Cuba' and 'hip-hop' for 'smoking' or 'tobacco' and reach similar conclusions, especially since trends in hip-hop typically flow outward from the United States. Put another way, discerning hip-hop heads everywhere still consider music produced by American artists as the 'realest' or 'illest,' and hip-hoppers around the world continue to take cues from them. Where Havana "happened to be the port of the West Indies most frequented by sailors in bygone days,"[25] New York was, and remains, one of the major ports through which people move, exchange, arrive, and depart the United States. Just as companies in Cuba exported sugar and tobacco from Havana, hip-hop departed New York via record labels and telecommunications networks. Like Cuba and the global spread of sugar and tobacco, the United States has played a decisive role—indeed, the decisive role—in the projection of hip-hop culture around the world.

Concerning industrial and material requirements, Ortiz noted that there "can be no manufacture of sugar without machinery, without milling apparatus to grind the cane and get out its sweet juice, from which saccharose is obtained."[26] The same can be said of rap music. While an emcee can freestyle a cappella or be accompanied by someone on beatbox (i.e. producing percussive effects with the mouth), rap is unequivocally technological music. When "the steam engine was introduced into Cuba [in 1820] and marked the beginning of the industrial revolution," Ortiz argued that it "changed everything."[27] Similarly, modern

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[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., 47.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid., 48.
[27] Ibid., 49.

turntables enabled hip-hop's founding deejays—Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash, Grand Wizard Theodore, and Afrika Bambaataa—to cut up and reuse previously recorded material to fashion breakbeats, the rhythmic core of rap. Soon after, the advent of digital samplers, followed by computer-based hardware and software packages,[28] accelerated the widespread production of rap music. Today, one can produce a song on an iPhone using Apple's GarageBand application, which comes with specialized built-in hip-hop percussion packs. Where the steam engine revolutionized sugar production, technological developments in audio and digital technology, much of which is manufactured in southeast Asia, have revolutionized the making of popular music, thereby putting tools into more hands. Thus, rap music is indebted to technology and should in no way be considered 'post-industrial.' No matter where rap music is produced or by whom, hip-hop artists are beholden to industries dispersed across the globe. Workers in these manufacturing facilities are the 'silent partners' in the production of rap music.

Global infrastructure was crucial for the rise of Cuba's sugar economy. "For the widespread distribution of sugar," Ortiz argued, "great advances had to be made first in the secrets of chemistry, in machinery, in maritime shipping capacity, in tropical colonization, in the securing of slave labor, and, above all, in the accumulation of capital and in banking organization."[29] This activity precipitated advanced capitalism, and many of Ortiz's observations apply to hip-hop. Since rap's rise as a form of popular music, a global hip-hop empire has emerged, one that is marked by big name players—Dr. Dre, Sean "Puffy" Combs, Jay Z, and Beyoncé to name just four—who often work closely with multinational corporations, either for the production and distribution of their music, but increasingly to launch fashion labels and other ancillary product lines. Panasonic (the company that produced the Technics turntable), Adidas (the German sneaker firm), Kangol (the British haberdashery that produces headwear), and Beats Electronics LLC (the Apple-owned company that produces Dr. Dre's signature headphone line) are just some of the firms that pair with superstars. The Internet, arguably the most profound infrastructure development of the late twentieth century, coincided with the rise of the global hip-hop empire. Based on silicon, advanced computing and storage systems, global centers of finance in New York, London, and Hong Kong, and low-cost labor in southeast Asia, the hip-hop empire, much like the sugar empire, benefited from and precipitated a paradigm shift in business, commerce, and culture.

Stark differences in the human component needed to produce tobacco and sugar further marked their contrast: "The social consequences deriving from tobacco and sugar in Cuba and originating in the different conditions under which the two crops are produced can be easily grasped."[30] Where white labor (Spaniards) handled the cultivation, harvest, and distribution of tobacco, blacks and/or mulattos were pressed into the hard labor of sugar.[31] "Sugar," Ortiz noted, "always preferred slave labor; tobacco, free men. Sugar brought Negroes by force; tobacco encouraged the voluntary immigration of white men."[32] In the United States, especially early on, African Americans comprised the vast proportion of hip-hop artists,

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[28] Joseph G. Schloss, *Making Beats: The Art of Sample-based Hip-Hop* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 6.
[29] Ortiz, 55.
[30] Ibid., 55-56.
[31] Ibid., 57.
[32] Ibid., 81.

and white Americans came to the music voluntarily. Ortiz further noted that "[t]here is not the great human agglomeration in the tobacco region that is to be found around the sugar plants,"[33] due primarily to the intensive work of producing and refining sugar—which, in contrast to tobacco, elevated quantity over quality. Moreover, Ortiz argued that "the production of sugar was always a capitalist venture because of its great territorial and industrial scope and the size of the long term investments."[34] He elaborated that

> the entire history of sugar in Cuba, from the first day, has been the struggle
> originated by the introduction of foreign capital and its overwhelming influence
> on the island's economy. And it was not Spanish capital, but foreign: that of the
> Genovese, the Germans, the Flemings, the English, the Yankees, from the days
> of Emperor Charles V and his bankers, the Fuggers, to our own 'good-neighbor'
> days and the Wall Street financiers.[35]

Similarly, hip-hop has always been tied to the impulses of capitalism: founding father Kool Herc and his sister Cindy Campbell held their first party in the rec room of their 1520 Sedgwick Avenue Bronx apartment complex to raise money to purchase school clothes.[36] Even though rap initially emerged from small, independent record labels (Sugar Hill, Tommy Boy, and others), the multinational entertainment companies Sony BMG, Universal Music Group, and Warner Music Group—the so-called Big Three—are modern day manifestations of the capital interests that dominated Cuba during the era of Big Sugar. By now, these companies develop, support, and distribute rap music globally for huge profits.

With regard to sugar's focus on quantity, especially after slavery was outlawed in Cuba in 1886, an influx of labor dramatically altered Cuba's demographics.[37] "All the colonial governments," Ortiz noted, "favored the sugar-planters. […] And to work the mills and plantations, thousands and thousands of miserable wretches were killed or enslaved: Negroes from Africa, Indians from Yucatán, Mongolians from China."[38] Three distinct cultural groups from three continents were present in Cuba, and still others came by choice: "When [the sugar season] is finished, the workers who came to Cuba for the harvest in sallow-like migrations leave the country, taking their savings with them."[39] It was this 'agglomeration' of people from different places living and working alongside each other, either by choice or through force, from which the processes of transculturation began to emerge. These circumstances are not dissimilar to the situation in the United States and Germany. Indeed, both countries have witnessed significant demographic shifts: before and after the Second World War in the U.S. and Germany at the apex of its rebuilding process following WW2. The difference, of course, is that the people from the four corners of the globe that converged on Cuba do not necessarily converge and/or work closely in the U.S. and Germany. Indeed, advanced capitalism's expansive transnational orientation keeps people separated. Even if they do not meet and interact, people from multiple places contribute to the hip-hop empire.

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[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid., 56.
[35] Ibid., 62.
[36] Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: St. Marks Press, 2005), 67-68.
[37] Oritz, 58-59.
[38] Ibid., 68.
[39] Ibid., 61.

Gernalzick and Pisarz-Ramirez note that "Ortiz created the term transculturation to replace the concepts of deculturation and acculturation which focused on the transition of one culture into another more powerful one."[40] Although well aware that he was coining a neologism, Ortiz asserted

> I am of the opinion that the word *transculturation* better expresses the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another because this does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English word *acculturation* really implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as deculturation. In addition it carries the idea of the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena, which could be called neoculturation.[41]

As Dagmar Reichardt has recently shown, Ortiz introduced the term transculturation in 1965 when he added new chapters—indeed, the entire second half of the book—to an updated edition shortly before his death in 1969.[42] Nevertheless, by emphasizing processes of transition and transformation, Ortiz subsumed the existing concepts of acculturation (which suggests that people adapt themselves) and deculturation, which implies a loss (and possibly even destruction) of culture, under two new terms: transculturation and neoculturation—the latter of which denotes the creation of new, heretofore unseen cultural forms. To illustrate neoculturation, Ortiz detailed how numerous cultures across the Americas imbibed tobacco through the nose via bifurcation implements.[43] Where these implements were similar but different, their development in different cultures signaled neoculturation, i.e. the adoption of a pre-existing form and its adaptation. In that sense, the desire to consume tobacco drove innovation, thereby changing any culture that embraced it. Moreover, Ortiz acknowledged that many historians claimed tobacco "'ran through the world like wildfire'" to become "adopted by the Europeans on the other side of the Atlantic, thus giving rise to a profitable trade."[44] Like tobacco, hip-hop has driven musical and linguistic innovation wherever it has been adopted, and technology firms have actually implemented into their product designs many of the innovations early hip-hop deejays pioneered.[45]

The important point, however, is Ortiz's introduction of the term neoculturation to describe new cultural practices and forms. Despite being in print since 1965, the word is not recognized in the lexicon, thereby underscoring how Ortiz has been overlooked.[46] While making music, vocalizing, and dancing are universal to the human experience, rap music and hip-hop culture were very much new developments marked by new methods of music-making (deejaying and rapping), new lingo and slang, new styles of dance and fashion, new ways of carrying and presenting oneself, and new ways of interacting with one's immediate

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[40] Gernalzick and Pisarz-Ramirez, xiv.

[41] Ibid., xiv-xv. Italics in the original.

[42] Dagmar Reichardt, "Creating Notions of Transculturality: The Work of Fernando Ortiz and his Impact on Europe," in *Komparatistik: Jahrbuch der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft 2017*, edited by Joachim Harst, Christian Moser, and Linda Simonis (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2018), 68-69. Reichardt also indicates that Ortiz coined the term in the 1940s via correspondence with Yale University's Bronislaw Malinowski.

[43] Oritz, 111-133.

[44] Ibid., 183.

[45] Mark Katz details how companies modified turntable and mixer designs to better suit the needs of deejays. *See* Mark Katz, *Groove Music: The Art and Culture of the Hip-Hop DJ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 63.

[46] Neither the Merriam-Webster (online) nor the Oxford English Dictionary (online and print) acknowledge the existence of the term, let alone trace it to Ortiz. This speaks profoundly to how his ideas have been overlooked.

community and the wider world. Certainly much of this emanated from African American communities in The Bronx, but also from Latinos and, in a few instances, even white Americans. Because hip-hop culture emanated out into the wider world and became adopted and adapted, neoculturation, deculturation, and acculturation are particularly useful for understanding the rise and spread of hip-hop culture.

In the introduction to the 1995 edition of Ortiz's book, anthropologist Fernando Coronil noted how Ortiz "places emphasis on both the destruction of cultures and on the creativity of cultural unions. […] He says that cultural unions, like genetic unions between individuals, lead to offspring that partake of elements of both sources, and yet are different from them."[47] Moreover, Ortiz emphasized that transculturation was a process that resulted from the interactions of people from various backgrounds, writing that "[t]he whole gamut of culture run by Europe in a span of more than four millenniums took place in Cuba in less than four centuries. In Europe the change was step by step; [in Cuba] it was in leaps and bounds."[48] He suggested that if

> the Indies of America were a new world for the Europeans, Europe was a far newer world for the people of America. They were two worlds that discovered each other and collided head-on. The impact of the two on each other was terrible. One of them perished, as though struck by lightning. It was a transculturation that failed as far as the natives were concerned, and it was profound and cruel for the new arrivals.[49]

Examples of cultures that were very nearly destroyed include the Taíno, who were widespread throughout the Caribbean, particularly in Cuba and Puerto Rico. While hip-hop has not destroyed culture (although critics who do not hold a favorable view of rap music might contend otherwise), young people who take up the hip-hop arts may abandon the cultural practices of their ancestors, thereby renouncing 'heritage' and 'tradition' to engage in new cultural practices. In that sense, hip-hop culture contains a kernel of deculturation, and this applies to the children of immigrants in Germany who first took up the hip-hop arts. However, since hip-hoppers often return to their cultural heritages to reuse certain elements (music and language) to produce their own stylized forms of music, there is a contradiction in hip-hop's deculturative and acculturative tendencies. This suggests a paradox: rather than a problem of hip-hop culture, however, this is a core feature of transculturation. Clive Campbell (DJ Kool Herc), who brought Jamaican soundsystem practices to New York, but also Jospeh Saddler (Grandmaster Flash), are excellent examples of this: the creation of breakbeats was deculturative and neoculturative at the same time.

Developing the notion of deculturation, Ortiz highlighted its negative effects:

> To a greater or lesser degree whites and Negroes were in the same state of dissociation in Cuba. All, those above and those below, living together in the same atmosphere of terror and oppression, the oppressed in terror of punishment, the oppressor in terror of reprisals, all beside justice, beside adjustment, beside themselves. And all in the painful process of transculturation.[50]

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[47] Oritz, xxvi.
[48] Ibid., 99.
[49] Ibid., 100.
[50] Ibid., 102.

While people might benefit from the processes of transculturation, they could also be harmed by them. Analogies to the present-day United States reflect Ortiz's comments on life in Cuba during the colonial period, particularly where people of color are disproportionately targeted by the police and the police fear for their safety if someone is non-white. Likewise, ethnic Others in Germany continue to suffer from the catastrophic effects of bigotry and cultural chauvinism. Transculturation, at least in Ortiz's understanding, carries with it the potential for development but also degradation. This again suggests that transculturation is inherently contradictory: potentially destructive and productive at the same time.

A well-known "anti-racist"[51] who, especially by the end of his life, had rejected as "absurd and artificial" the "imaginary races invented by the race theorists" of the early to mid-20th century,[52] Ortiz noted, through racial and nationalist language, that "[a]fter the Negroes began the influx of Jews, French, Anglo-Saxons, Chinese, and peoples from the four corners of the globe. They were all coming to a new world, all on the way to a more or less rapid process of transculturation,"[53] one through which individuals became changed and, in the process, changed others. Ortiz's rejection of race is important because today, as then, this faux-scientific concept is used to divide, marginalize, order, and control people in hierarchical and unequal societies. Furthermore, rap music is replete with racial power plays. For example, even when they claim they are committed to overturning the social, cultural, and economic inequalities that race enables, people continue to circulate such terminology as unassailable fact. With regard to Ortiz's concept, however, transculturation was a process that occurs over the course of multiple generations, and it may be one that eliminates race over long trajectories of time. Within the context of the United States and Germany, we are only entering the third generation of hip-hop activity. Without fixating on the racial or ethnic identities of artists (except where it is appropriate within the context of a song), this study highlights some of the critical junctures where transculturation has occurred, but also where and how it continues to take place.

Even though his model sought to explain the cultural transformation of Cuba as a transitional process via a variety of foreign and domestic-born agents and actors, Ortiz maintained—again, in 1965—that the "concept of transculturation is fundamental and indispensable for an understanding of the history of Cuba, and, for analogous reasons, of that of America in general."[54] However, Ortiz did not explain in detail what he meant by this suggestion. Yet where he emphasized the influx of people from the four corners of the globe into Cuba, migration to the U.S. occurred for similar reasons, i.e. the prospect of a better life, an opportunity for increased material wealth, or, in the case of Africans (and some Europeans), slavery and indentured servitude. If the conditions new arrivals in Cuba found themselves in were less than favorable, the same is true for people who emigrated to the United States. American urban centers, past and present, are rife with conditions of squalor and substandard housing as well as racial and ethnic discrimination,

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[51] One presumes Ortiz used language such as "Negro" and "Anglo-Saxon" because they were the prevailing terms of his day. Indeed, Ortiz "was intellectually open-minded, a liberal-reformist, and a true polygraph. A non-sectarian thinker, he stood firmly against racism." *See* Mauricio A. Font, Alfonso W. Quiroz, and Pamela Maria Smorkaloff, "Introduction: The Intellectual Legacy of Fernando Ortiz," in *Cuban Counterpoints: The Legacy of Fernando Ortiz*, edited by Mauricio A. Font, Alfonso W. Quiroz, and Pamela Maria Smorkaloff (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005), xiii.
[52] Ortiz, 23.
[53] Ibid., 102.
[54] Ibid., 103.

violence, and recriminations. The question, of course, is to what extent people from different origins intermingle and influence one another, especially when segregation along racial and ethnic lines, either imposed or by choice, is common. Since transculturation explains transformation through exchange and interaction, it is important to trace those interrelationships. Rap music and hip-hop culture are well-suited for such an examination.

In addition to its applicability to the United States, transculturation, especially in the post-WW2 world (and particularly in the wake of the Cold War), applies to Germany. Migrant workers from Turkey, Italy, and elsewhere came to Germany after 1961 for the opportunity to work. In that sense, the incentives for socioeconomic uplift in the United States also apply. With regard to hip-hop culture, one might reflect on how dramatically it has impacted Germany—from music, style, and dress to the way people walk, talk, and do business. In both countries, however, acculturation (affiliations to conceptualizations of communities), deculturation (being uprooted from or losing one's culture), and neoculturation (the new forms that arise when people work across cultures) bear significantly on the rise and spread of hip-hop. As such, I will refer to these three terms throughout this study whenever appropriate to underscore the validity of applying Ortiz's transculturation principle. Although I do not do explicitly do so, one might closely study each of hip-hop's various phases—old school, golden age, new school, etc.—to show how each transitioned from one to the other, thereby tracing a map of hip-hop's transculturation.

With Ortiz's concepts of transculturation and neoculturation in place, I would like to take a cue from sociolinguist Alastair Pennycook, who suggested that the hip-hop arts were fundamentally transgressive.[55] On the one hand, I want to consider in how far a concept like transgression, which Pennycook borrowed from Chris Jenks, is useful for the new articulation of transaesthetics I hope to achieve, and, on the other, to show what can be learned by applying Ortiz's transculturation model to the hip-hop arts. Therefore, I want to reexamine two of hip-hop's much discussed Four Pillars—deejaying and emceeing—to see in how far they can be understood from the point of view of transgression and transculturation.

Transgression and Transculturation in the Pillars

Deejaying, Beatmaking, Producing

Transgression generally refers to "an act that goes against a law, rule, or code of conduct,"[56] and hip-hop's musical pillar, deejaying, has been discussed in transgressive terms. As musicologist Mark Katz notes:

> In the hands of hip-hop DJs, the turntable could also be appealingly transgressive, both in the way DJs handled the equipment and through the sounds they produced with it. Merely touching the surface of a record was taboo, and DJs touched records in most inappropriate ways. Scratching was the ultimate expression of the DJ's transgression. To scratch a record is to damage it—it is a technique that violates its own medium. (Though scratching does not damage the record nearly as much as a needle being pulled *across* the grooves.) In a sense, scratching is, like its hip-hop cousin graffiti, an art of vandalism. […] Just as graffiti artists tagged their city with spray paint, DJs, using phonograph needles, etched their own signatures into the city soundscape.[57]

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[55] Alastair Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows* (London: Routledge, 2007).
[56] "Transgression," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.
[57] Katz, 66.

Developed by Grand Wizard Theodore (Theodore Livingston) and perfected by Grandmaster Flash (Joseph Saddler),[58] when a deejay scratches, he or she goes *against* a turntable's design-function. In addition to working against the medium itself, a *scratched* record prior to the art of deejaying was, after being broken, the worst that could happen to a vinyl LP. Moreover, deejays force the stylus backwards *against* the grooves to create hip-hop's distinct rhythmic sound. At its heart, hip-hop deejaying is transgressive to its very medium. Scratching and the scratch, one of the truly original musical sounds hip-hop deejays have given the world, is forceful, abusive, abrasive, violent, irreverent, and goes against conventional musical notion.[59] As a result, deejays such as A-Track and others began devising notation methods in the late 1990s and early 2000s to legitimize deejaying.[60] Since then, musicologists have followed suit.[61] This need, or desire, for a notation system so deejaying can be recognized as a legitimate musical practice speaks to hip-hop as a new, or neocultural, practice.

The cuing method known as the needle drop, which Grand Wizard Theodore pioneered, runs counter to the common-sense logic that the turntable stylus should be placed gently to preserve a record's grooves. Before the hip-hop deejay, records were treated with care; since then, records have become respected for entirely different reasons—namely, for the sounds contained therein which can be re-purposed to forge new compositions. This change in attitude demonstrates an altered values system, and thus shows that deejay turntablism brought about a paradigm shift. Indeed, creative technologies scholar Sophy Smith, following Ulf Poschardt, describes deejaying as "one of the final avant-gardes of the twentieth century" due to its "development of creative sound manipulation techniques and flexible compositional strategies."[62] As a method of technological music-making, there was nothing quite like the hip-hop deejay before the early progenitors developed these methods. To be sure, musicians "borrow" riffs or new ideas from other musicians and incorporate them into their playing all the time. As any musician knows, this is common practice—even among deejays, who "borrow" samples and grooves from other deejays.[63] But hip-

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[58] Grand Wizard Theodore is credited with having developed the scratch. That he chose the title Grand Wizard, the highest ranking official of the original Reconstruction-era in Ku Klux Klan, speaks to deejaying's irreverent, iconoclastic, and transgressive disposition. *See* Steve Huey, "Grand Wizard Theodore (Theodore Livingstone)," in *All Music Guide to Hip-Hop: The Definitive Guide to Rap and Hip-Hop*, edited by Vladimir Bogdanov, Chris Woodstra, Stephen Thomas Erlewine, and John Bush. (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2003), 201-2.

[59] Katz, 67.

[60] Ibid., 208-210.

[61] In his desire to show how rap music is assembled and organized, Adam Krims was one of the first to develop a modified notation system to capture what hip-hop deejays do. *See* Adam Krims, *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). More recently, Kyle Adams has taken up the herculean task of combining lyrical flow and musical notation into a grand scheme notational system. *See* Kyle Adams, "The musical analysis of hip-hop," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop*, edited by Justin A. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 118-134. Kjetil Falkenberg Hansen reports that Alexander Sonnenfeld's S-notation system has been picked up and taught at the highly respected QBert Scratch University. *See* Kjetil Falkenberg Hansen, "DJs and turntablism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop*, edited by Justin A. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 53.

[62] Sophy Smith, *Hip-Hop Turntablism, Creativity and Collaboration* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 1. Like Krims, Smith has endeavored to establish a notation system. Chapters 7 ("An Analytical Methodology for Hip-Hop Turntable Music") and 8 ("Notation and Transcription Techniques") work toward that end.

[63] As Nelson George has documented, Grandmaster Flash started soaking the labels off his records so that other deejays could not appropriate his source material and copy his style. *See* Nelson George, "Hip-Hop's Founding Fathers

hop deejaying practices were new, and they harken towards Ortiz's neoculture principle, especially once these practices were adopted by young hip-hoppers in Germany and elsewhere.

As Williams has written, producers typically "utilize strikingly disparate material"[64] to forge, as Schloss has argued, "sonic collages."[65]   Because the backbone of rap music is a minimalistic percussive pulse, nearly any sound or instrumentation can be incorporated. Schloss asserts that hip-hop beats are "musical collages composed of brief snippets of recorded sound,"[66] arguing that "[w]hile hip-hop samples from a variety of sources," as its own musical form, "hip-hop is sui generis."[67] In other words, rap music is unique because of its pastiche production philosophy and the penchant for producers to combine elements from multiple sources. While hip-hop is not the only musical form to incorporate music from other traditions, musical borrowing is central to rap music, and this borrowing principle underpins its transcultural nature. Where the musical references and citations producers stitch together originate in any number of cultures and musical traditions, these arrangements should be understood as transcultural music because they speak from, to, and across multiple cultures at once.

Applying Gates' concept of Signifyin(g) to beat production, Williams argues that "[t]o Signify is to foreground the signifier, to give it importance for its own sake."[68] He further states that "Signifying as masterful revision and repetition of tropes […] also includes double-voiced or multivoiced utterances that complicate any simple semiotic interpretation."[69] In that sense, producers who pull from a range of musical heritages draw attention to them, even if the citations are not always obvious, which Williams calls "concealed borrowing."[70] While he suggests that hip-hop opens up "musical 'conversations' […] between the present and past,"[71] such 'conversations' also occur across sociocultural spaces through "an ever-shifting play of signifiers."[72] Working from jazz scholar Ingrid Monson, Williams argues that "[t]he important point is that a chain of associations may be set off that engage the listener and unite him or her with a community of other individuals who share a similar musical point of view."[73] That 'shared point of view' is the love of hip-hop, and Williams maintains that "knowledgeable listeners will no doubt understand certain references even when the borrowing is not textually signified."[74] This 'acculturative' effect, especially when it occurs in communities across national and cultural borders, is one of the powers of hip-hop culture.

Williams delineates hip-hop's borrowing practices along two primary axes, namely "intrageneric borrowing" (within hip-hop) and "intergeneric borrowing" (outside of hip-hop).[75] When the former occurs

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Speak the Truth," in *That's the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader*, edited by Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal (New York: Routledge, 2004), 48.

[64] Justin A. Williams, *Rhymin' and Stealin': Musical Borrowing in Hip-Hop* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 2.

[65] Schloss, 21.

[66] Ibid., 2.

[67] Ibid., 17-18.

[68] Williams, 4.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., 7-8.

[71] Ibid., 4

[72] Ibid., 12.

[73] Ibid., 16.

[74] Ibid., 12.

[75] Ibid., 17.

in hip-hop scenes in various countries and cultures, intrageneric borrowing may be understood as transcultural. For instance, when a rap group in Germany references, via either musical sampling or re-performing a line from a classic Run-DMC song, that group reaches across two cultures (Germany and the United States) through one shared culture (hip-hop) to demonstrate knowledge and signal affiliation. In this example, intrageneric borrowing becomes a transcultural gesture. Similarly, intergeneric borrowing is also a transcultural strategy. For instance, when the Rhymesayers artist Evidence sampled a snippet of sitar from The Beatles "Within You Without You" (1967) on "If Only They Knew" (2010), he references The Beatles *and* Indian music.[76] Depending on how each practice is deployed (and by whom), both intra- and intergeneric borrowing contain transcultural potential.

Schloss has argued that the aesthetic philosophy of hip-hop producers "is such that innovations from other musical forms can be brought into their own practice."[77] In that sense, intergeneric borrowing has always been a hallmark of rap music. With regard to the origins of breakbeats, Schloss maintains that "[m]any of the most popular breakbeats in hip-hop, from its earliest days, have been drawn from white rock artists such as Mountain, Grand Funk Railroad, and Jack Bruce."[78] Indeed, he argues that "deejays […] cast an increasingly wide net when looking for useful breaks. Since they were only playing a few, often unrecognizable, seconds from each song, they were no longer bound by the more general constraints of genre and style."[79] To illustrate his point, he cites one of the most well-known interviews David Toop conducted with founding hip-hop deejay Afrika Bambaataa in 1984. Describing his musical practice, Bambaataa stated:

> "I'd throw on 'Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band'—just that drum part. One, two, three, BAM—and they'd be screaming and partying. I'd throw on the Monkees, 'Mary, Mary'—just the beat part where they'd go 'Mary, Mary, where are you going?'—and they'd start going crazy. I'd say, 'You just danced to the Monkees.' They'd say, 'You liar. I didn't dance to no Monkees.' I'd like to catch people who categorize records."[80]

As one of "the multifaceted approaches of hip-hop producers,"[81] intergeneric borrowing has been a part hip-hop from the very beginning. When Williams writes that "DJs like Herc and Bam transcended fixed categories, decanonizing the range of artists they played,"[82] he is arguing that these deejays worked across, and through, various musical cultures. Because these practices reach across, and into, a number of musical traditions, this production strategy is transcultural by its very nature.

With the development of digital technologies, these practices accelerated. "With samplers," Schloss writes, "any music could be combined with a great drum pattern to make what essentially is a composite break. Moreover, different loops (and "stabs"—short bursts of sound) could be brought in and taken out at different times. This substantially broadened the spectrum of music that could be pressed into service for

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[76] "Evidence – If Only They Knew," *WhoSampled*, accessed Aug 17, 2018, whosampled.com/sample/126112/Evidence -If-They-Only-Knew-The-Beatles-Within-You-Without-You/.
[77] Schloss, 49.
[78] Ibid., 64.
[79] Ibid., 32.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Williams, 33.
[82] Ibid., 28.

hip-hop."[83] By 'composite,' Schloss refers to mixes and blends. "As the 1980s wore on," he explains, "the potential of digital sampling to go beyond the mere replication of deejaying techniques […] to take very short samples […] and to assemble these samples in any order, with or without repetition as desired" became the norm.[84] Indeed, expanding hip-hop beyond African American musical traditions was one of the main concerns of producers at the time. Keith Shocklee, a member of Public Enemy's production team the Bomb Squad, states that

> "Public Enemy was never an R&B-based […] group. It was a street group. It was basically a thrash group, a group that was very much rock 'n' roll-oriented. […] The parallel that we wanted to draw was Public Enemy and Led Zeppelin. Public Enemy and the Grateful Dead." […] "We decided that we wanted to communicate something that was gonna be three dimensional—something that you could look at from many different sides and get information from as well as entertainment."[85]

Where Schloss concludes that "the Bomb Squad were self-consciously breaking new ground in their production style, and that was an inspiration to other producers,"[86] the utilization of disparate musical elements became commonplace. The 'three-dimensionality' of hip-hop productions, especially when producers "find useful material in unexpected places,"[87] results in the music's transcultural contours, particularly when "specific musical interactions [reflect] deeper truths about social interactions."[88] These musical 'social interactions,' whether they occur in person or not, are the result of beatmaking and producing. Hip-hop producers have produced, or perhaps exposed and accelerated, the transcultural contours of our world so evident today.

Many of the producers Schloss interviewed in his study emphasize the importance of having knowledge of other musical forms. Phil Stroman states that "from listening to more and more records, your taste just becomes a lot broader. You're more receptive to a lot more sounds."[89] Producer Samson S. maintains that while "it's good to have a lot of music to listen to and get influenced" in a general sense, "it's very important […] in hip-hop, since we take from everything."[90] Echoing Keith Shocklee, producer Mr. Supreme claims that it is "the difference between using a Diana Ross record, that you could go out to any thrift store right now and buy, or using some Filipino soul band from Switzerland that no one's heard of and that's just funky as hell."[91] Producer Negus I states that "knowing a lot of records is important, because it's gonna give you a lot more to draw upon, but it's [also] gonna open up your mind to different ideas of what you can do. Even combining different eras of music."[92] Producer Beni B refers to the importance of the "spectrum of music,"[93] and still another named King Otto claims that he will "buy whatever kind of

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[83] Schloss, 36.
[84] Ibid., 39.
[85] Ibid., 39-40.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., 83.
[88] Ibid., 42.
[89] Ibid., 91.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid., 94.
[92] Ibid., 95.
[93] Ibid., 96.

record I can find that looks interesting: twenties piano records or violin training records."[94] Finally, DJ Kool Akiem maintains that "[p]art of the artistry is to combine elements that wouldn't be combined normally."[95] All of these producers communicate their openness to, and the importance of, combining music from various times, places, and traditions. Consciously or not, they are describing their predilection for transcultural music making, especially when they seek out and utilize source material from outside of African American music traditions.

Deejays isolate specific elements from various sources and fuse them into wholly new compositions, and the best deejays such as Afrika Bambaataa, who was respected for his eclectic musical taste, build their reputations on the diversity of their source material. Bambaataa, whose musical education included Motown and funk (but also Barbara Streisand, the Beatles, the Who and Led Zeppelin),[96] bragged about the eclectic records he would often spin at parties, including the Filipino group Please, who had prepared a remix of Sly and Family Stone's "Sing A Simple Song" (1975).[97] Flash would mix elements from the song "Fernando," a composition by white jazz arranger Bob James.[98] Herc played elements from the Richmond, VA soul/funk band The Whole Darn Family's "Seven Minutes of Funk."[99] While soul and funk fall firmly within the canon of African American music, this particular group was multiracial.[100] Herc also spun UK-based prog rock group Babe Ruth's "The Mexican" into his routines.[101] All of this reveals the intergeneric blending of music since hip-hop's inception.

Furthermore, the Incredible Bongo Band's "Apache" and "Bongolia" were utilized in the creation of breakbeats.[102] The Incredible Bongo Band was "a revolving-door group of studio musicians led by bongo player Michael Viner, who by day worked as an executive at the MGM label" and later took "unused studio time to record percussion-heavy instrumentals and pop covers with African and Latin influences."[103] While this is one of the ways Latin musical influences found their way into hip-hop, the Incredible Bongo Band, under the direction of Viner, a white American from Washington, D.C., covered the song "Apache" by the UK instrumental group The Shadows (1960). The so-called Apache-break, which is so central to hip-hop culture (and has been sampled 534 times to date),[104] speaks to the transatlantic pathways and interactions that undergird hip-hop's transcultural contours. Given that hip-hop deejays pioneered new techniques and were eager to fuse elements from a wide range of musical sources into something new, Ortiz's neoculturation principle, i.e. the emergence of new cultural forms or practices, best describes these

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[94] Ibid., 98.
[95] Ibid., 130.
[96] Ibid., 49.
[97] Ibid., 48.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Andrew Hamilton, "Has Arrived," *All Music*, accessed June 15, 2018, allmusic.com/album/has-arrived-mw0000944427.
[101] Nelson, 48.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Steve Huey, "Incredible Bongo Band," *All Music*, accessed June 15, 2018, allmusic.com/artist/incredible-bongo-band-mn0000570108.
[104] "Apache by Incredible Bongo Band," *WhoSampled*, accessed June 15, 2018, whosampled.com/Incredible-Bongo-Band/Apache/.

achievements. Indeed, Kool Herc says it best: "it is about experimenting and being open."[105] If we can consider this a version of the process of transculturation, then it becomes an extension of Ortiz's original idea, particularly because these musicians never actually interacted with each other directly.

Previous scholarship characterizes deejaying, producing, and beatmaking as a technological black cultural aesthetics. While Katz, citing Rayvon Fouché, describes hip-hop turntablism as "black vernacular technological creativity,"[106] artists in Europe had been using the turntable, albeit differently, as a creative musical device since 1920,[107] and the use of phonographs by artists in the French musique concrète movement was not incongruent with the potential that Thomas Edison, its inventor, imagined. Even though Edison anticipated "a *general* creative use of the phonograph,"[108] it would take nearly 80 years before hip-hop deejays began utilizing records in a radical new fashion. While the methods and techniques early deejays pioneered were new, the turntable of choice, the Technics SL1200, "was introduced by the Japanese electronics manufacturer Panasonic in 1972,"[109] which begs the question how accurate it is to fixate on the racial identities of deejays to foreground a technological black cultural aesthetics, especially when doing so overlooks the workers who produced hip-hop's iconic instrument. Kool Herc stated that as soon as he saw them for sale, he rushed out and bought two; furthermore, Grandmaster Flash, although he couldn't afford them at the time, nevertheless acknowledges that Technics turntables were superior.[110] This might seem minor, but if a Japanese firm produced the highest quality equipment to help deejays develop their craft, then that role needs to be recognized. From Jamaican soundsystem culture to The Bronx via Japan, Ortiz's transculturation model, which emphasizes the interactions of people across various cultures, even if they are unaware of each other's existence, seems a more relevant way to understand the complex processes that brought hip-hop deejaying about.

The development of the breakbeat through analogue sampling techniques eventually led to digital sampling,[111] which Katz traces to producer Marley Marl (Marlon Williams) who, in 1985, utilized an E-mu Emulator keyboard to sample drum sounds.[112] Referring to his innovation as "a creative *mis*use of technology," Katz argues that Marl's deejay sensibilities (and, by extension, the entire deejay community) not only informed digital sampling, but actually drove the sample-based hip-hop of the 1990s.[113] We would be remiss, however, to overlook that E-mu Systems, a company now headquartered in Scotts Valley, California (but which was founded in Santa Cruz by Dave Rossum, Steve Gabriel, and Jim Ketchum, among others), provided that technology.[114] Acknowledging the role a west coast company played in Marl's east

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[105] Nelson, 50.
[106] Katz, 66.
[107] Smith, 20.
[108] Ibid., 15. Italics in the original.
[109] Katz, 65.
[110] Nelson, 49.
[111] Katz discusses how Grandmaster Flash's "The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash on the Wheels of Steel" (1981) "looks forward to digital sampling and the emergence of the hip-hop producer […] later replicated in the digital realm." Katz, 83. Manufacturers implemented Flash's innovations into their designs.
[112] Ibid., 121-122.
[113] Ibid., 122. Italics in the original.
[114] Information concerning the founding of E-Mu Systems can be found at "Company History: 'E-MU: Birth of a Species'," *Creative.com*, accessed Apr 12, 2018, creative.com/emu/company/history/.

coast sample-based hip-hop breaks down the east/west divide in the American hip-hop discourse, and Dave Smith, who developed the E-mu Emulator, deserves more credit for his technical contributions. Rather than characterize beatmaking as black vernacular technological creativity (or, as Alexander Weheliye does, "sonic Afro modernity"),[115] Ortiz's transculturation model, which emphasizes the synergistic work of people from various backgrounds, tells the broader story more accurately.[116] Researchers interested in hip-hop's technological dimensions need to uncover the places of origin of hip-hop's tools and technology with greater transparency, especially when companies such as Casio and Akai, both Japanese firms, began producing affordable samplers in the 1990s, thereby making hip-hop production available to more people.[117]

Following Serge Lacasse, Williams refers to sampling, be it analogue or digital, as autosonic quotation,[118] a practice that is intertextual, but also transgressive because it takes someone else's work and reuses it. "Sampling," he continues, "is only one of the ways that hip-hop can borrow and reference pre-existing material: sampling as a technique […], in addition to reperforming past music (by way of a DJ or live band), referenc[es] other lyrics, matching the style of another rapper's flow, and quot[es], sounds and dialogue in the music, and other intertextual techniques."[119] While Williams places this, following Russell A. Potter, within Henry Louis Gates, Jr's notion of *signifyin(g)*, i.e. "repetition with *a difference*,"[120] sampling quickly led to accusations of stealing or theft. Intellectual and creative property law, in place before hip-hop came along,[121] tightened as deejays and producers borrowed sounds without permission. Indeed, lawsuits arose in the late 80s and early 90s precisely because of the unauthorized use of pre-recorded sound,[122] and producers have since begun moving away from direct sampling due to the high financial cost of clearing samples.[123] Nevertheless, sampling transgresses legal copyright and, thus, strikes at the heart of notions of property and ownership.

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[115] Weheliye writes, "In the force field of sonic Afro-modernity, sound technologies, as opposed to being exclusively determined or determining, form a relay point in the orbit between the apparatus and a plethora of cultural, economic, and political discourses." Despite mentioning these discourses, Weheliye does not acknowledge where technology comes from, let alone who makes it, or under what conditions they labor. *See* Alexander G. Weheliye, "'I Am I Be': The Subject of Sonic Afro-modernity," *boundary 2* 2, 2 (Summer 2003): 113.

[116] The danger here is the rationalization of technology for political purposes. Discussing American DJ and producer Moby's use of "sampled gospel and blues with electronica-dance instrumentation and beats" on his album *Play*, Shank warns that critics who "racially code technology as white and heartfelt emotion as black [are] complicit with the history of white supremacy." Barry Shank, *The Political Force of Musical Beauty* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 10-11.

[117] Citing the Akai MPC 2000, which cost $1,649 new in 2002, Schloss privileges a working-class narrative of young producers who worked menial jobs and/or received such devices as gifts from their parents or as hand-me-downs from siblings. While likely true, Schloss might have mentioned that Akai products were designed and produced in Japan, thus making them more affordable. *See* Schloss, 30. In addition, Schloss cites two producers (DJ Topspin and Jake One) who use Casio keyboard samplers, but does not mention the origins of the low-cost technology. *See* Schloss, 45 and 67, respectively. Throughout his excellent article on hip-hop deejaying, Hansen never once breeches the subject that many deejay tools are produced abroad.

[118] Justin A. Williams, "Intertextuality, sampling, and copyright," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop*, edited by Justin A. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 208. Citing Lacasse's ideas of autosonic (sampling) and allosonic (performative) quotation, Williams imports two very useful terms to the hip-hop discourse. I use them frequently throughout this study.

[119] Ibid., 208.

[120] Ibid., 207. Italics in the original.

[121] Williams identifies "the Statute of Anne in 1710 England as the first legislation that protected authors for a certain amount of time from unauthorized use or sale of their work." Ibid., 211.

[122] Williams discusses some of the most high-profile court cases that have been litigated. Ibid., 211-212.

[123] Schloss covers the legal controversy surrounding sampling and the clearing of samples. *See* Schloss, 169-193.

Because sampling disrupts a preexisting recording, the practice suggests the destructive side of transculturation. However, sampled recordings are neither destroyed nor erased, and noted hip-hop producers Hank Shocklee and Pete Rock testify to sampling's educational potential due to how it may expose young generations to "artistic antecedents."[124] Indeed, producers and listeners can be exposed to musical cultures beyond hip-hop. More importantly, sampled material, especially when it is brought into different contexts with other elements, creates entirely new compositions. These practices have allowed—and, in fact, even encourage—the recombination of musical passages from diverse sources, and the resulting compositions speak from and to specific ethnic, national, and cultural spaces at once. Moreover, when samples from any number of sources are brought together, beatmaking exemplifies the mixing and blending of elements from multiple cultures into a heretofore nonexistent aesthetic musical object. The final arrangement becomes more than the sum of its parts, and the individual musical components undergo a kind of aesthetic transcendence. To be sure, a hip-hop composition does not need to sample from a wide variety of sources; but when it does, the resulting arrangement draws musical cultures together. When those musical heritages had no prior interrelation, the resulting composition is transcultural.

Williams asserts, citing Burkholder, that the compositional inclinations and attitudes of hip-hop deejays are not dissimilar to the borrowing strategies of composers in the European musical canon prior to, and even after, 1300 AD.[125] This argument is important because if we understand rap music, as so many scholars do, as an African American musical form that is derived from—and even an extension of—west African musical and vocalizing traditions, then rap music is also part of the Western musical canon. More importantly, it also suggests that hip-hop deejays have brought together the pastiche music-making practices of Africa and Europe—a significant achievement that shows how transculturation occurs through shared practices. When we recognize that deejays draw from a wide range of places, origins, and traditions, we can acknowledge, much like Welsch suggests, that the contours of hip-hop are not monolithic, hegemonic, or neatly separated cultural spheres, but transcultural. In a rap song with musical elements from numerous cultures, all of these elements pass through each other. As a part of Western musical practices, rap music deserves to be recognized as one the most important cultural developments of the last half century.

Working from Benedict Anderson's notion of an imagined community, Williams refers to audiences as an "interpretive community" that actively "produce meanings" when they encounter works of art. He maintains that "hip-hop interpretive communities bring their experiences to the understanding of hip-hop texts, shaping and inflecting these texts through the interaction involved in the listening and interpreting experience."[126] If the recombination of music from multiple origins results in a multivocal discourse, this raises an interesting question. What happens when listeners encounter musical sounds and citations with which they have no previous experience—that is to say, music that originates outside of the sociocultural framework(s) with which they are familiar? When samples and instruments from a variety of cultures are

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[124] Erik Nielson, "Did the Decline of Sampling Cause the Decline of Political Hip Hop?" *The Atlantic*, Sept 18, 2013, accessed Apr 12, 2018, theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/09/did-the-decline-of-sampling-cause-the-decline-of-political-hip-hop/279791/.
[125] Williams 2015, 208.
[126] Williams 2013, 14.

used, listeners, no matter how knowledgeable they might be, must disentangle these sounds if they wish to understand them. To be sure, this is not a requirement: a person might simply listen and enjoy the music. But for those who are interested, they are invited to discover the origins of the sounds they encounter, and curious listeners will undertake the necessary work to determine what they are listening to, especially if certain sounds are 'foreign' or 'alien' to their experience. Indeed, identifying a sampled sound or instrument as 'strange' or 'foreign' opens within the listener the idea of the Other, which they may reflexively apply to themselves by thinking 'that music is not me' or 'mine.' By listening to rap music that contains unfamiliar musical elements, it is no longer simply hip-hop but 'hip-hop-and-something-more.' This is how rap music triggers a 'transculturating' effect in listeners: they inscribe the 'otherness' of these musical components onto themselves, especially when they like, or identify with, a song which, for them, contains unusual musical characteristics.

MCing, Rapping, and Hip-Hop Lyricism

While scholars such as Reiland Rabaka have noted the continuum of African American vocal practices from which rapping emerged,[127] Alice Price-Styles emphasizes the "jazz rhythms, […] freestyle approaches and […] various subversions to form" of Harlem Renaissance poetry, and especially the influence of Langston Hughes, to argue that the Last Poets, Sonia Sanchez, the Watts Poets, Amiri Baraka, and Gil Scott-Heron were all important antecedents to the modern emcee.[128] Concerning the "pastiche nature of African American speech," Price-Styles further notes, citing Fahamisha Patricia Brown, how

> [i]n the sacred and the secular traditions of African American vernacular cultural expression, we can identify modes of language and performance: sermon, testimony, and prayer as performed in the traditional Black Church; public oratory in the spheres of political and social life; children's games and jump-rope rhymes: "playin the dozens"; rappin' and signifyin'; tall tales, including toasts and boasts; and the lyrics of the spirituals, shouts, jubilees, gospel songs, field hollers, work songs, blues, jazz, and popular songs.[129]

Within this broad tradition of African American utterance, which ranged from North to South and East to West (and across many generations), a diversity of people, circumstances, conditions, and style and modes of speaking, utterance, and oration exist. Indeed, Potter, following Paul Gilroy, emphasizes "the full continuum of the multiple and interlinked African diasporic cultures in the Americas, the Caribbean, and Europe."[130] This seems to suggest Ortiz's process of transculturation.

With east coast progenitors such as DJ Hollywood, MC Coke La Rock, Kid Creole and Melle Mel (two of the emcees in Grandmaster Flash's Furious Five), and Grandmaster Caz (Cold Crush Brothers) establishing the early timbers of emceeing, Price-Styles emphasizes innovation, writing that "developments

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[127] Reiland Rabaka's *Hip Hop's Inheritance: From the Harlem Renaissance to the Hip Hop Feminist Movement* (New York: Lexington Books, 2011) impressively traces the connections between the Harlem Renaissance and emceeing. I take up some of Rabaka's arguments in chapter two.
[128] Alice Price-Styles, "MC origins: rap and spoken word poetry," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop*, edited by Justin A. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 12.
[129] Ibid., 12-13.
[130] Potter, 19.

in styles of rap began to surface and push them forward."[131] "Many factors," she continues, "can be attributed to rap flourishing, as increased participation and a need to carve out one's own distinct voice or niche, coupled with hip-hop's intrinsic competitiveness, pushed the attention paid to form and creative intent."[132] Highlighting emcees such as Rakim (Eric B. and Rakim) and Q-Tip (A Tribe Called Quest), Price-Styles stresses the evolution of the hip-hop emcee from the 1970s to the early 1990s. The entire period was one of development, growth, and competition, with many emcees learning from each other and expanding upon existing styles, methods, and techniques.[133] The same can be said of bi- and multilingual rhyming. Once someone proved that it could be done (1980 and 1981 in Germany and the U.S., respectively), a kind of competition arose with emcees trying to outdo one another. As I show in the following chapter, many of these early efforts were simple. However, it is important that we recognize them because these early experiments ultimately gave rise to ever more intricate and sophisticated wordplay across two, three, and sometimes four languages.

Russell A. Potter hinted at the transgressive power of hip-hop lyricism, arguing, following Henry Louis Gates, Jr., that rapping "is founded on the verbal play of signification."[134] Characterizing rap as a resistance vernacular located "between 'play' and 'seriousness'," rapping "does not exclude the 'ludic' from its modes of resistance," and "the African-American mode of Signifyin(g)," Potter argued, "is a history of a serious unseriousness, a power/play, a verbal game in which the stakes continually escalate."[135] Cautioning that Gates' theory of "a singular, unified, transhistorical African-American vernacular [does] violence to the complexity of the histories through which African-American culture—and 'American' culture in general—have taken form,"[136] Potter asserted that "to valorize a particular voice or tradition as *the* African-American vernacular becomes a romanticized quest for an unattainable grail [that] can only succeed by erasing historical difference."[137] In short, there is diversity within the Afro diasporic traditions that cannot be distilled into one megalithic ethno-racial cultural entity. Potter concluded that "the postmodernism of hip-hop pushes the boundaries of the political, in the process of redefining the very structures of resistance."[138] Arguably, it is through "overlapping and at times contradictory vernacular cultures"[139] that hip-hop lyricism and emceeing draws its strength and appeal. These 'overlapping' and 'contradictory' cultures harken towards Ortiz's transculturation model, which emphasized unequal distributions of power among people from various places.

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[131] Price-Styles, 14.

[132] Ibid.

[133] For an excellent collection of interviews that details the *mimetic practices* of emcees, both in the early years, but also as a general approach for learning the craft, see Paul Edwards, *How to Rap: The Art and Science of the Hip-Hop MC* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2009). In the forward to the book, Kool G Rap notes how he "started repeating what I would hear the older guys saying, and that as my first brush with just beginning to learn how to rap" (vii). Other emcees, such as will.i.am from the Black Eyed Peas, stress the importance of studying predecessors: "if you want to be an MC, you've got to know where shit comes from, you gotta know different styles, you gotta know different patterns, you gotta know different coasts" (xi).

[134] Potter, 15.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid., 17.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid., 15.

[139] Ibid., 17.

Perhaps the best way to understand emceeing from Ortiz's neoculturation principle resides in the creative urge to forge slang and neologisms, many of which have been adopted outside hip-hop communities in the U.S. and abroad.[140] Writing about what he calls Hip Hop Nation Language (HHNL), sociolinguist H. Samy Alim notes song and album titles such as "'New Rap Language' (Treacherous Three, 1980), 'Wordplay' (Bahamadia, 1996), 'Gangsta Vocabulary' (DJ Pooh, 1997), 'Project Talk' (Bobby Digital, 1998), 'Slang Editorial' (Cappadonna, 1998), *Real Talk 2000* (Three-X-Krazy, 2000), 'Ebonics' (Big L, 2000), *Country Grammar* (Nelly, 2000), and *Project English* (Juvenile, 2001)[141] to illustrate "that language is a favorite topic of discussion" among hip-hop artists.[142] Rappers are cognizant of, and even revel in, the creation of new words. Moving from an American context to include England and Germany, one could add "Latin Lingo" (Cypress Hill, 1991), "Krazy Wit Da Books" (Das EFX, 1993), "Word Play" (A Tribe Called Quest, 1996), "Alphabet Aerobics" (Blackalicious, 1999), "Freedom of Speech" (Immortal Technique, 2003), "Oh Word?" (Beastie Boys, 2004), "Word" and "Fall ins Wort" (Chaoze One, 2007),[143] "Alphabet Assassin" (Lowkey, 2008), "Wortgewaltverherrlichung" (Sookee, 2010), and "Wordnerd" (Sookee & Bad Kat, 2011), among many others. Where these examples bind rappers outside the United States to what Alim calls the Global Hip Hop Nation (GHHN),[144] they evidence acculturation. Where they denote destruction (i.e., the Lowkey or Sookee songs), they suggest deculturation, particularly if someone views rapping as a destructive force to language. Perhaps it is the offensive, transgressive, and potentially 'destructive' aspect of rap that turns some people off to the art of emceeing. Above all, however, the language play of rappers, like any creative writers, often results in new vocabulary.

Argot abounds in rap, and Fab 5 Freddy (Fred Brathwaite), one of hip-hop's earliest advocates, complied many examples in his slang dictionary *Fresh Fly Flavor* (1992).[145] Dope and def were variations on "cool," fresh generally meant "new" or "exciting," fly denoted the brightest or flashiest fashions,[146] and dead presidents (in use since the 1930s) and the benjamins (popularized in the 1990s by Sean "Puffy" Combs) refer to money.[147] With the recurring tagline "dollar dollar bill y'all," which itself was a reference to Jimmy Spicer's early rap single "Money (Dollar Bill, Y'all)" (1983), Statin Island collective Wu-Tang Clan added "C.R.E.A.M." to this list,[148] and performers from 50 Cent to rappers/activists Rebel Diaz have popularized "cheddar" (or "chedda") as yet another synonym for money.[149] Vallejo, California-based rapper

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[140] H. Samy Alim, *Roc the Mic Right: The Language of Hip Hop Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 71.

[141] Ibid., 69.

[142] Ibid.

[143] "Fall ins Wort" is a poem by the Austrian poet, translator, and essayist Eric Fried. By including a spoken word performance of the piece on his 2007 album *Fame*, Chaoze One signals his affiliation with Fried's politics.

[144] Alim builds his argument for the existence of a Global Hip Hop Nation in "Intro: Straight Outta Compton, Straight aus München: Flows, Identities, and the Politics of Language in a Global Hip Hop Nation," in *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language*, edited by H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook (London: Routledge, 2009), 1-22.

[145] William Safire, "On Language; The Rap on Hip-Hop," *New York Times*, Nov 8, 1992, accessed Apr 18, 2018, nytimes.com/1992/11/08/magazine/on-language-the-rap-on-hip-hop.html.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Alim 2006, 74.

[148] C.R.E.A.M. was an acronym for "Cash Rules Everything Around Me," also uttered throughout the song.

[149] A search at Genius.com reveals how numerous rappers use "cheddar" or "chedda" for money. For the verified note on Wu-Tang's intertextual reference to Spicer's single, see "C.R.E.A.M." (annotated), *Genius Media*, accessed Apr

E-40, one of the best known spinners of hip-hop neologisms, is credited with an impressive number of creations, including "gouda," yet another expression for money. It is an interesting word choice, especially since it references a Dutch cheese. The Netherlands, after all, was one of the financial centers of the colonial period, stretching from Europe to the Far East and into the Americas. Yet E-40's neologistic play goes far further. Alim writes:

> If [E-40] were to say something like, "What's crackulatin,…? I was choppin it up wit my playa-potna last night on my communicator – then we got to marinatin, you underdig – and I come to find out that the homie had so much fedi that he was tycoonin, I mean, pimpin on some real boss-status, you smell me?" not many people would understand him. ("crackulatin" = happening, an extended form of "crackin"; "pimpin" is sometimes used as a noun to refer to a person, like, "homie"; "choppin it up" = making conversation; "playa-potna" = partner, friend; "communicator" = cell phone; "marinatin" = a conversation where participants are reasoning on a subject; "underdig" = understand; "fedi" = money; "tycoonin" = being a successful entrepreneur; "pimpin" = being financially wealthy; "boss-status" = managing things like a CEO; "you smell me?" = you feel me? Or you understand me?).[150]

That Alim has to provide a translation speaks to the power of E-40's neologisms, and he concludes that creators of hip-hop slang "take a lot of pride in being the originators and innovators of terms that are consumed [and picked up and used] by large numbers of speakers."[151] Even though his slang expressions are primarily rooted in English, E-40 is a master neologician. Where he learns, like many other emcees and hip-hoppers, these terms from people from various locales (and actually invents new expressions),[152] it is apropos to refer to such creative, inventive language play as neocultural. One need only consider how hip-hop slang has 'gone global' to be picked up and circulated by people who, oftentimes, have never met each other, but are nevertheless brought together through the global distribution of music. At this point, then, it is important to recognize that transculturation occurs through telecommunications networks.

To locate this linguistic behavior within the continuum of African American Language (AAL) practices, Alim points to pre-hip-hop studies that

> recorded "black talkin in the streets of America" (Abrahams 1964, 1970, 1976), the analysis of "language behavior" of Blacks in Oakland (Mitchell-Kernan 1971), the narrative syntax and ritual insults of Harlem teenagers "in the inner city" (Labov 1972a), the critical examination of "the power of the rap" in the "Black Idiom" of the Black Arts Movement rappers and poets (Smitherman 1973, 1977),

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18, 2018, genius.com/50707. Rebel Diaz intone the importance of getting "the chedda" in the title track to their 2013 album *Radical Dilemma*.

[150] Alim 2006, 75.

[151] Ibid., 76.

[152] The only example here that isn't rooted in English is the term "Fetti," which Alim renders as "fedi." E-40 claims to have adapted his term "Fetti" from *Fettia*, "a Hispanic word" that he claims to have learned "from my Richmond folks." *See* Branden Peters, "The Definitive Guide to E-40's Slang," *Genius*, Aug 15, 2016, accessed Apr 18, 2018, genius.com/a/the-definitive-guide-to-e-40-s-slang. A user at *Urban Dictionary* asserts that *Fettia* "is a commonly used term amongst members of the mostly Mexican population residing in or around the western sector of the United [S]tates as a reference to the U.S. dollar, currency or money. This expression was made popular by the [M]exican hip hop group Latino Velvet; which consisted of the legendary Kid Frost and at that time, the fresh faced, up and coming star Baby Bash." These interconnections between Mexico, California, and Richmond are intriguing. *See* "Fettia (1)," *Urban Dictionary*, posted by Xcentric Esquire, Sept 9, 2007, accessed Apr 18, 2018, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=fettia.

and an elucidation of the "language and culture of black teenagers" who skillfully
"ran down some lines" in South Central Los Angeles (Folb 1980).[153]

Alim concludes that "these pioneering scholars, and others, demonstrated the creativity, ingenuity, and verbal virtuosity of Blacks in America by examining language use at the very loci of linguistic-cultural activity."[154] However, one might also emphasize the geographical (and predominantly urban) locations where these practices unfolded. To that end, one could reflect on the black, Latino, and white hip-hoppers interviewed in the documentary *Style Wars* (1983). Comparing their utterances to Mayor Ed Koch (white, educated, and privileged), it becomes clear that socioeconomic (dis-)advantage, or class (in addition to race), determines how one speaks.[155] When we consider the interactions among people in The Bronx and New York City in the 1970s and 80s when the first hip-hop slang was forged, it seems sensible to understand this as another instance of transculturation. People from various cultural, ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic milieus (but often connected through a shared working class heritage) traded language to creatively fashion new, heretofore unseen terms and vocabulary. Not all slang is transcultural, but as I will show throughout this study, some very interesting terms emerge from the interplay of two, three, or more languages.

"'Language' in HHNL," Alim argues, "refers not only to the syntactic constructions of the language but also to many discursive and communicative practices, the attitudes towards language, understanding the role of language in both biding/bonding community and seizing/smothering linguistic opponents."[156] Laying out ten tenets, Alim notes that "HHNL is just one of the many language varieties used by Black Americans," remarking that "HHNL is widely spoken across the country, and [is] used/borrowed and adapted/transformed by various ethnic groups."[157] This 'adoption' and 'adaptation' of new words suggests the process of transculturation. Insightfully, Alim asserts that "because California rapper Xzibit grew up in the hip-hop saturated streets of Detroit, New Mexico and California, his HHNL is a syncrentization of all these Hip Hop National Language varieties,"[158] thereby lending credence to the notion that geography and socioeconomic position play a large role in the blended nature of hip-hop language, which can certainly occur through actual physical relocation (as in Xzibit's case) or via exposure to dialectical regional variations and accents through the media. Indeed, the media has had a crucial role in bringing region-specific slang to people who do not reside in the place where such vernacular originates. It certainly brought it to Germany, thus underscoring Germany's transculturation through hip-hop culture.

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[153] Alim 2006, 5.
[154] Ibid., 6.
[155] An excellent example of class-based dialects/accents can be seen in Louis Alvarez and Andrew Kolker's documentary *Yeah You Rite!* (1985), which showcases four major accents that occur in New Orleans according to neighborhood and socioeconomic circumstances. In it, speech therapist Elizabeth Gochnour notes how dialects and accents, even when they are discernable along racial and ethnic lines of difference, "shade into one another, and there are many features that they have in common." For a brief snippet, see "A variety of New Orleans accents from YEAH YOU RITE!," YouTube video, 6:26, posted by People Like Us – The CNAM Channel, Feb 22, 2008, accessed Apr 18, 2018, youtube.com/watch?v=tpFDNTo4DNg.
[156] Alim 2006, 71.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid., 72.

In this study on bi- and multilingual rap in the United States and Germany, the use of multiple vernaculars features prominently, and Potter made significant insights into the use of vernacular in hip-hop. Tracing its history from 14th century Italy, he noted that

> the history of vernacular speech has been bound up since Dante's time in the history of nation-states, and indeed once there *was* an Italy as a political unity, the texts of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio were called upon to serve as the foundation for Italian culture. This process continued throughout Europe, with each emergent nation staking its own claim on its "native" tongue, often as not accompanied by campaigns of violence against those who, while within the "borders" of the state, did *not* speak the new official tongue. This violence continued, inevitably, with the project of colonialism, in which the colonizing languages were used as instruments of cultural erasure and appropriation: taught in schools and instituted in the courts, children beaten for not speaking it, its knowledge and use demanded as a condition for access to positions of power. Even within the new national languages, differences in syntax and pronunciation underwrote class difference; there was no one English, but many Englishes, each of which kept a certain region of class "in its place."[159]

Rather than writing in standard Latin, Dante penned *The Divine Comedy* in the regional dialects that existed across Italy, and Dante's tome laid the groundwork for a national Italian language and identity. During, and certainly after, colonialism, Potter argues that "a multitude of languages, a global heteroglossia within which the words of the colonizers and those of the colonized [have] intermingled and transformed into new kinds of vernaculars."[160] This "heteroglossic space," Potter continues, "is not merely or mainly 'diverse' (in the sense that 'diversity' is often invoked as a happy celebration of difference), but a matter of contending voices, contending forces; it is an arena for an ongoing struggle between colonizers and colonized."[161] These insights harken towards Ortiz's thoughts on transculturation, particularly when people intertwined in highly asymmetric relations practice their languages in a 'heteroglossic' space. Rap in Germany and the U.S., especially bi- and multilingual rap, evidences the existence of such spaces today.

The interplay of vernaculars, Potter asserted, constitutes standard, or "hegemonic," vernaculars and what he deemed "*resistance vernaculars*," i.e. non-standard manners of speaking/performing that "make inroads against the established power-lines of speech"[162] by "*deploying variance* in order to deform and reposition the rules of 'intelligibility' set up by the dominant language."[163] Although he commented on "the new urban heteroglossia of Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Vietnamese, and other languages" emerging from rappers outside the United States who "bend their vernaculars and intermix them with American ghetto slang,"[164] Potter only analyzed songs in English. As will become evident throughout this study, hip-hop artists who perform in two or more languages draw upon a variety of vernaculars. First, hip-hoppers in Germany draw inspiration from American rappers; second, they fuse these expressions with some from their own language(s). In doing so, they spawn what I refer to as *transcultural vernaculars*, i.e. highly stylized language that speaks from, to, and across a range of linguistic traditions and ethno-cultural spaces

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[159] Potter, 56. Italics in the original.
[160] Ibid., 57.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid., 57-58.
[163] Ibid., 68. Italics in the original.
[164] Ibid., 63.

at once. This may seem counterintuitive, especially since vernacular arises within a group of people in a specific location. Yet in the present globally interconnected era, someone rapping in a small town in Saxony, Germany might be inspired by, and even appropriate, African American of Latino vernacular to fuse it with their own. When rappers and hip-hoppers fuse vernacular expressions from two or more places (for instance, the U.S., Germany, and Australia), the result is a product of all three, and quite different from each. An example is the term *digga*, a seeming portmanteau of "deutsch" and "nigga" which translates as 'dude' or 'homie.' Used primarily in northern German hip-hop communities, some people claim that *digga* is borrowed from Australian English.[165] While this may be true, a more likely explanation is that it is a re-rendering of the German expression *dicker* (fatty) or *dicker Freund* ("good friend").[166] In each successive chapter, I show how transcultural vernacular occurs in bi- and trilingual utterances. Because languages do not exist solely within the jurisdiction of any one nation-state—indeed, one is often used in many—these sorts of utterances constitute transcultural expressions.

Pennycook's work has opened up new ways for approaching texts that are composed in any combination of languages. Critically taking up Kress and van Leeuwen's notion of multimodal communication, "which attempts to deal with the 'use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event'," Pennycook contends that "multimodality tends to celebrate the use of a plurality of modes rather than pursue the more transgressive enquiry into their initial construction as separate entities to start with."[167] To that end, he proposes distinguishing between "multilingualism and multimodality on the one hand, which focuses on languages and modes as pluralized entities within a new era of globalized communication, and translingualism and transmodality on the other hand, which question the very separability of languages and modes in the first place."[168] For Pennycook, transmodality implies that meaning "occurs across modes of meaning-making in ways that transgress established beliefs in discrete channels,"[169] which challenges proponents of so-called "segregationist linguistics" who delineate any one "language as a separate entity" from any other.[170] In short, some languages share commonalities and thus cannot be characterized as mutually exclusive. As I will show, it is through these commonalities that transcultural vernacular unfolds. While Pennycook's transmodality concept is useful, especially for how it suggests "a performative making of meaning across many sites" through the "mixing of languages" and the

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[165] "Digga," *Urban Dictionary*, posted by gunjah29, Aug 8, 2009, accessed July 29, 2018, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Digga.

[166] In his fascinating article on English language usage in online German hip-hop communities, Matt Garley does not cover this. That could be because the term *digga* did not appear enough in his data set. Whatever the case, some research to determine how *digga* came into usage is needed. *See* Matt Garley, "*Realkeepen*: Anglicisms in the German Hip-Hop Community," in *The Languages of Global Hip Hop*, edited by Marina Terkourafi (London: Continuum, 2010), 277-333.

[167] Pennycook, 48-49.

[168] Ibid., 49. Pennycook does not explain what he means with translingualism. Since there is presently no agreed upon definition in the lexicon, I take it to mean, as it suggests, "across the lingual," chiefly, that certain words or phrases appear in many languages; thus, a word or phrase in one language that is borrowed verbatim and used in other languages becomes translingual. Brand names such as Coca Cola are a good example. Problematically, the term "translanguaging" has been circulated as an alternative, or perhaps a synonym, for translingual. *See* Tong-King Lee, "Translanguaging and Visuality: Translingual Practices in Literary Art," *Applied Linguistics Review* 6, 4 (2015):441-465.

[169] Pennycook, 49.

[170] Ibid.

"sampling of sound texts," [171] a word of caution is in order. The collapse of discrete languages, which rely on distinct grammar, syntax, and vocabulary (but sometimes share some of these) in favor of a grand, unifying theory poses a danger. Where untangling transcultural texts allows us to appreciate the blended and the fused, careful analysis allows for understanding the distinct within the blended—otherwise, we run the risk, as Baudrillard warned, of the demise of aesthetic particularity.

Jannis Androutsopoulos's work on the symbolic use of language in rap music has been insightful. Primarily interested in "the use of minority and migrant or 'community' languages" by "rappers of migrant background […] as a resource [in] their lyrics,"[172] Androutsopoulos, following Bentahlia and Davies, questions the idea of "lyrics, or poetry, as evidence for code-switching patterns in a community,"[173] mostly because song lyrics, aside perhaps from semi-improvisational battle raps, are "an outcome of strategic styling decisions within specific social and historical contexts."[174] In other words, song lyrics are planned: they are written beforehand and, thus, not spontaneous. While this may be important for studying *how* artists create their rhymes (or how people behave in communities where code-switching is common), it has little impact on reception. Code-switching, for whatever reason it is done, enables audiences to experience the interplay of languages. While this, following Pennycook, calls into question the assumption that societies are monolithic, cultural units organized along the lines of mythical, and thus hermetically sealed, linguistic systems (and harkens back to Welsch's critique of Herder), listeners are required to navigate such linguistic terrain. This experience of negotiating between two or more languages creates the opportunity for listeners to undergo a transcultural aesthetic experience.

Hip-Hop in the Transcultural Zone

There are a number of studies that argue for understanding hip-hop as a transcultural phenomenon, but they have, by and large, been conducted by scholars writing outside the United States. Americanist Heinz Ickstadt first introduced the term transcultural in a short essay in 1999 on Berlin-based rapper Aziza A (Alev Yıldırım),[175] Germany's first female Turkish-German emcee. Seeking "to apply the debate on American multiculturalism to an understanding of the bi-cultural existence of a second-generation of Turkish migrants in Berlin, and the cultural negotiations among several cultural traditions that gave rise to Turkish-German rap,"[176] Ickstadt argued that Aziza A occupied a state of "cultural in-betweenness" by "mixing—musically and verbally—elements of three different cultures."[177] He titled his essay "Appropriating Difference" because

> those Turkish-German rappers (in Berlin and elsewhere) have indeed
> appropriated especially black cultural assertions of protest and of difference to
> articulate their own difference from a dominant and hostile German culture. In

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[171] Ibid., 50.

[172] Jannis Androutsopoulos, "Multilingualism, Ethnicity and Genre in Germany's Migrant Hip Hop," *The Languages of Global Hip Hop*, edited by Marina Terkourafi (London: Continuum, 2010), 19.

[173] Ibid., 20.

[174] Ibid.

[175] "Aziza A," *Discogs*, accessed Mar 13, 2018, discogs.com/artist/180438-Aziza-A.

[176] Heinz Ickstadt, "Appropriating Difference: Turkish-German Rap," *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 44, 4 (1999): 571.

[177] Ibid.

> assuming for themselves the role of Germany's "blacks," they provide a measure
> of their own cultural alienation. If pushed a little as to the relevance of such an
> analogy, they freely admit its limits but also point out its expressive possibilities,
> since it opens for them a wide margin of role play.[178]

Practitioners, Ickstadt reported, viewed this "state of cultural in-betweenness [as] opportunity and enrichment,"[179] and this "third generation," he noted, "uses American hip-hop to create its own cultural identity, which is neither German nor Turkish, but between 'the norms of both the 'host culture' [Germany] and the parental culture [Turkey]."[180] It is precisely within this "wide margin of roleplay" where the aesthetic experience of rap music occurs. While he concluded that Aziza A's music resulted in something decidedly Turkish-German, and thereby suggested the music's bicultural or binational orientation, her music encompassed at least three cultures: Turkish, German, (African) American, and possibly even more—which lends credence to understanding her work, and bi- and multilingual rap more generally, as transcultural music. Indeed, Ickstadt argued that appropriations of hip-hop culture outside the United States were "tricultural"[181] and, in lieu of Europe's increasingly integrated formation, "transcultural."[182]

Caroline Diessel, who also studied Turkish German rappers in Berlin, characterized the material young artists produced as "crossover forms of music" that originated in the "Turkish-German demography" not only Berlin, but many of Germany's larger cities.[183] One of the artists Diessel interviewed, Bektaş Turhan (a member of the successful mid-1990s multiethnic group Cartel), "came to Berlin with his parents and two older sisters when he was 18 months old. As a child, he learned to play the *saz* (*baglama*), a long-necked strummed lute characteristic of Turkish folk music."[184] Following musicologist Dietmar Elflein, Diessel imported the term *oriental hip-hop* into English from the German media sphere,[185] noting that the "musical modes and rhythms" borrowed from Turkey that young people like Turhan grafted onto hip-hop's musical aesthetics "were cultivated during the Ottoman Empire" and shared "a reciprocal influence with present-day Arab and Persian neighbors to the south and east of the Black Sea."[186] Diessel's insights underscore the multiple countries and cultures throughout the region such music references, resonates in, and emanates from. While she did not explicitly make the case for transculturality, Diessel nevertheless alluded to it. Discussing Aziza A (who, like Ickstadt, she interviewed), Diessel characterized Yıldırım's music as "her own

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[178] Ibid., 572.
[179] Ibid., 573.
[180] Ibid., 573.
[181] Ibid., 574.
[182] Ibid., 578. While I will not undertake a detailed proof of Europe's transnational identity, the establishment of the Schengen Area in 1995, which includes 26 member states, demonstrates that Europe apprehends itself more and more as a unified transnational entity.
[183] Caroline Diessel, "Bridging East and West on the 'Orient Express': Oriental Hip-Hop in the Turkish Diaspora of Berlin," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 13 (2001): 166.
[184] Ibid., 167. Italics in the original.
[185] Timothy S. Brown also uncritically imported the term *oriental hip-hop* into the English-language corpus. For example, he fails to highlight, as Diessel does, that the music from which Turkish German youth drew, the Arabesque, has origins well beyond Turkey. *See* Timothy S. Brown, "'Keeping it Real' in a Different 'Hood: (African-)Americanization and Hip Hop in Germany," in *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip Hop and the Globalization of Black Popular Culture*, edited by Dipannita Basu and Sidney J. Lemelle (London: Pluto Press, 2006), 137-150.
[186] Diessel., 171.

expansive, boundary-crossing performance,"[187] concluding that "[o]riental hip-hop draws on two rich dialectics of East/West and mainstream/hip-hop, and in doing so attempts to turn around the position of permanent outsider"[188] to which people of Turkish descent in Germany had been relegated.

Ickstadt did not offer any analysis of music or lyrics in his short essay to support his claim, and Diessel only offered a short snippet of Aziza A's German-language rhymes.[189] A cursory listen of her first record, however, offers evidence of its transcultural contours. For example, while the verses to the song "Gecenin Işıkları" (Lights of the Day) are rapped in Turkish and German (and the languages are not mixed), the musical arrangement is indebted to the production style of the dirty south (Atlanta, GA) and west coast G-Funk. Moreover, the sung chorus relies on a vocoder effect, which Afrika Bambaataa popularized in "Planet Rock" (1982) just as pioneering Düsseldorf-based electronic group Kraftwerk had on "Autobahn" (1974) and "Die Roboter" (The Robots) (1978).[190] The most discernable aspect of "Gecenin Işıkları," especially for non-Turkish or German speakers, occurs between the 1:10 and 1:13 mark when background vocalists issue the standard hip-hop shout-out "Hooo!!" three times. Likewise, at the 1:54 mark, Aziza A interrupts her Turkish rhymes to shout "hip-hop!" to an imagined audience. Since these strategies, as Ickstadt suggested, draw from three cultures, his argument holds true, as does Diessel's claim that Aziza A's music crossed boundaries. However, careful analysis is required to justify such assertions. Other songs on Aziza A's first full-length album—for example, "Maganda Baba" (Beautiful Father), which utilizes breakbeats, the saz, horns, flute, bongos, and violins—affirm these claims. As a mix of Turkish, German, and English, not to mention African American and Turkish music (the latter of which resonate across the Middle East), Aziza A's *Es Ist Zeit* (1997) exemplifies how transculturality occurs in music. By all measures, her music epitomizes Ortiz's notion of neoculturation specific to Germany's demographic realities. By the time Aziza A recorded and released her first album, hip-hop culture had been washing over Germany for more than ten years, and young Turkish Germans responded by infusing it with their own cultural sensibilities, including language and music.

Other commentators noted the blending of cultures. Tony Mitchell (2001) remarked that

> for a sense of innovation, surprise, and musical substance in hip-hop culture and rap music, it is becoming increasingly necessary to look outside the USA to countries like France, England, Germany, Italy, and Japan, where strong local currents of hip-hop indigenization have taken place. Models and idioms derived from the peak period of hip-hop in the USA in the mid-to-late 1980s have been combined in these countries with local musical idioms and vernaculars to produce

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[187] Ibid., 179.

[188] Ibid., 184.

[189] Diessel did cite a passage of Aziza A's German-language rhymes from the record's title track "Es ist Zeit" (It's Time), but only to highlight "the subordination of daughters to fathers." The refrain to the song, Diessel notes, is sung in Turkish, but she does not present the Turkish portion of the song for consideration. For instance, one might wonder the extent to which Aziza A, if at all, bends her native Turkish to fit the idioms of African American rapping. Had Diessel been interested in transculturality and how it is visible in language, perhaps she might have done so. But that does to seem to have been the author's primary concern. Ibid., 178-179.

[190] The vocoder was developed at Bell Labs during the Second World War for military purposes, namely to encode voice messages to mask their content. Kraftwerk was the first group to popularize its use in music. *See* "The Secret History of the Vocoder," YouTube video, 11:30, posted by The New Yorker, Aug 20, 2014, accessed June 11, 2018, youtube.com/watch?v=OvR4qK0B--w.

excitingly distinctive syncretic manifestations of African American influences and local indigenous elements.[191]

With indigenization, Mitchell referred to how artists made hip-hop their own by suffusing it with their own musical and linguistic material, lamenting that "these foreign developments have rarely, if ever, been acknowledged in the growing body of academic commentary on hip-hop in the USA, nor are recordings that feature them released in the parochial U.S. market."[192] Sadly, this remains true today, due in large part, as Mitchell pointed out, to language barriers. With lyrics and language(s) so prominent in rap music, and when only certain groups of people can access them, non-English lyrics, especially in the United States, exclude those who cannot—the exception of course being Spanish, which is meaningful for a significant, and growing, portion of the population.

Mitchell contested the notion that hip-hop was "quintessentially African American," arguing that its "roots are as culturally, eclectically, and syncretically wide ranging as they are deep."[193] By syncretic, Mitchell means "the amalgamation or attempted amalgamation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought" into something new,[194] which suggests the applicability of Ortiz's transculturation principle. To that end, Mitchell noted that a "common feature of the hip-hop scenes in most of these countries is their multiethnic, multicultural nature as vernacular expressions of migrant diasporic cultures, which would appear to reflect the multicultural origins of rap in the South Bronx more significantly than current Afrocentric manifestations."[195] Furthermore, he added that the music "in these localities […] tends to draw on a considerably wider range of musical genres, idioms, and influences," which implied an "argument for the locality, temporality, and 'universality' of hip-hop."[196] Above all, Mitchell emphasized, following Elflein, the pluralistic dimensions of rap music beyond American shores,[197] concluding that "the globalization of rap music has involved modalities of indigenization and syncretism that go far beyond any simple appropriation of a U.S. musical and cultural idiom."[198] By pluralistic, Mitchell alluded to "a system in which two or more states, groups, principles, [or] sources of authority coexist,"[199] which would seem to affirm the concept of multiculturalism. However, as Welsch has shown, multiculturalism is premised on separation. Thus, pluralism, like multiculturalism, is insufficient for understanding the mixing and blending that occurs in rap music. Transculturation is better suited to explain what occurs in bi- and multilingual rap.

In his landmark ethnographic book-length study on Turkish youth and how they engaged with hip-hop culture in Berlin-Kreuzberg, political scientist Ayhan Kaya (2001) emphasized the "creative character and potential of newly emerging syncretic cultures."[200] Citing studies of *Gastarbeiter* (guest worker) families

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[191] Tony Mitchell, "Introduction: Another Root—Hip-Hop outside the USA," in *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA*, edited by Tony Mitchell (Hannover: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 3.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid., 4.
[194] "Syncretism," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.
[195] Mitchell, 10.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid., 19.
[198] Ibid., 33.
[199] "Pluralistic," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.
[200] Ayhan Kaya, *"Sicher in Kreuzberg" Constructing Diasporas: Turkish Hip-Hop Youth in Berlin* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2001), 13.

from the 1980s, Kaya noted how researchers described second-generation young people of Turkish origin in Germany as having experienced "'cultural conflict,' 'culture shock,' 'acculturation,' 'inbetweenness' and 'identity crisis.'"[201] As a result, Kaya centered his study "around the notion of cultural syncretism, or bricolage, which," by that time, had "become the dominant paradigm in the study of transnational cultures and modern diasporas."[202] Bricolage, especially in literature and art, refers to artistic aesthetic "construction or creation from a diverse range of available things."[203] Where transculturality in art appears as mixes and blends, bricolage remains an important concept. With an emphasis on identity, Kaya sought to explain "how youngsters see themselves" as "caught 'betwixt and between,' as with no culture to call their own, or as agents and *avant-garde* of new cultural forms."[204] His emphasis on the avant-garde, i.e. "new and unusual or experimental ideas, especially in the arts,"[205] hints at Ortiz's notion of neoculture.

To explain these phenomena, Kaya developed the terms "diasporic consciousness" and "diasporic identity,"[206] arguing that the hip-hop arts enabled "youngsters […] to symbolically transcend the discipline and power of the nation-state" through practices that were both local and global.[207] The term diaspora, which originally described the forced exodus of Jews from their homeland between the 8th and 6th centuries BC, now more generally refers to "the dispersion of any people from their original homeland."[208] For the Turkish communities in post-WW2 Germany, diaspora concepts were particularly salient: not only did Turkish guest workers continue Germany's rebuilding efforts after they began arriving in 1961,[209] they and their children (and now grandchildren) comprise the largest ethnic minority in the country today. Similar logic applies to the American context, especially where African Americans experienced the internal displacement of the second Great Migration during (and after) World War Two, which brought them from the rural south into the industrial cities of the north. During the same period, people from across Latin America and the Caribbean also migrated to the United States. Thus, Kaya's diaspora concepts stand to be of great use for scholars and critics writing about hip-hop in the United States.

Throughout his book, Kaya demonstrates how "Turkish hip-hop artists are concerned with the construction of new cultural alternatives, in which identity is created and re-created as part of an ongoing and dynamic process."[210] Explaining the term German-Turks (which young people did not self-apply), Kaya noted that these young people had a "transcultural character."[211] Given that Kaya observed Turkish, Lebanese, Yugoslavian, and German youth living side by side in the Kotbusser Tor area of Berlin where he conducted his research,[212] Ortiz's transculturation model (which he does not mention) could have bolstered

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[201] Ibid., 14.
[202] Ibid.
[203] "Bricolage," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.
[204] Kaya, 14-15. Italics in the original.
[205] "Avant-garde," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.
[206] Kaya, 15.
[207] Ibid.
[208] "Diaspora," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.
[209] Britta Sweers, "Music Against Fascism: Applied Ethnomusicology in Rostock, Germany," in *Music and Conflict*, edited by John Morgan O'Connell and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 203.
[210] Kaya, 16.
[211] Ibid., 19. Despite using the term transcultural, Kaya cites neither Ortiz, Welsch, or Pratt.
[212] Ibid., 20.

his ethnographic sociological study, especially since Ortiz argued that transculturation resulted from contact and exchange among people of diverse origins. Nonetheless, Kaya's book has been crucial for understanding the cultural flows, exchanges, and blends that arise in the practice of hip-hop outside the United States, which he located between "*diasporic consciousness* and *global hip-hop youth culture.*"[213] Utilizing Homi K. Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity, a processual concept which Bhabha, much like Ortiz, argued "emerge[s] in moments of historical transition,"[214] Kaya concluded that Turkish youth practicing the hip-hop arts forged "a 'third culture' [that] transcends binary understandings of cultural interaction."[215]

In the United States, Juan Flores[216] (2000) and Raquel Z. Rivera[217] (2003) intervened to argue that hip-hop culture owed a significant debt of gratitude to Puerto Rican youth. Up to that point, their contributions had been overlooked due to the prevailing narrative that hip-hop was the domain of Black culture, attributable in part to eminent African American Studies scholar Cornel West. Tracing the musical output of African Americans across the 20th century, West used the term "black," or variations thereof, 111 times in his ten-page essay "On Afro-American Music: From Bebop to Rap" (1982) to describe people (musicians, entertainers, entrepreneurs), cultural material (music, genre), places (America and "the nation"), organizations (churches), spaces (inner city ghettos), and even economic activity and sectors.[218] West's characterization entrenched a Black cultural narrative, which David Toop in *The Rap Attack* (1984), among countless others, picked up and applied to discussions of hip-hop culture, both in the U.S. and abroad. While Flores and Rivera centered, for example, Richard Colón (aka Crazy Legs, one of the b-boys in the world-renowned breakdancing troupe the Rock Steady Crew) and Carlos Mandes (aka Charlie Chase, who deejayed for the early group the Cold Crush Brothers), and thus cemented their place in hip-hop history, Flores and Rivera expanded the discourse to argue that hip-hop was more than just Black culture. However, their focus was framed by and large in a multicultural narrative—one that, following Welsch, suggests that people from various ethnic and racial backgrounds live side by side but do not necessarily interact with each other.[219] However, Colón and Mandes did collaborate with African American progenitors of hip-hop culture. Citing Latino Studies scholar Frances Aparicio, Rivera mentions the term transcultural once,[220] but makes no reference to Ortiz. Yet Ortiz's transculturation model, which emphasizes interactions among people from various backgrounds, helps explain how Latinos working in tandem with African Americans enriched hip-hop culture from the very beginning.

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[213] Ibid., 27. Italics in the original.
[214] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 2.
[215] Kaya, 29.
[216] For Flores's insights on the Puerto Rican influence on hip-hop culture, see Juan Flores, "Puerto Rocks: Rap, Roots, and Amnesia," in *From Bomba to Hip-Hop: Puerto Rican Culture and Latino Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 115-139.
[217] Raquel Z. Rivera, *New York Ricans from the Hip-Hop Zone* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
[218] Cornel West, "On Afro-American Music: From Bebop to Rap," in *The Cornel West Reader* (New York: BasicCivitas, 1999), 474-484. West's essay first appeared in the journal *Semiotexte* in 1982.
[219] Flores utilizes the term multicultural throughout his book, particularly to write that "[t]here is no question that we are entering an era when the multicultural essence of Latino culture will allow for a kind of shaking-out process that will help define the Next Big Thing." *See* Flores, 126-127.
[220] Rivera, 140.

In Germany, sociologists Gabriele Klein and Malte Friedrich (2003) discussed hip-hop's hybridity and heterogeneity at length. Writing that "hip-hop has been a hybrid culture since its inception," which "developed as a culture of ethnic minorities *and* as a post-industrial, technological practice," the authors assert, following Bhabha, that "[a]s a globalizing culture, [hip-hop] continues to establish its hybrid character in different cultural contexts."[221] While true, it is unclear why Friedrich and Klein characterize hip-hop, following Africana Studies scholar and hip-hop commentator Tricia Rose, as post-industrial, particularly since the creative technologies needed to create rap music, especially today, are technologically intricate and, in many cases, are manufactured in Japan, Taiwan, or China. To be sure, hip-hop culture emerged at a point when the northeastern United States was undergoing a process of deindustrialization, i.e. the dismantling and relocating of facilities overseas for the advantages of low-cost labor and fewer tariffs. However, it does not axiomatically follow that hip-hop culture and rap music are 'post-industrial,' whatever the term might mean. While not a core question of this study, one wonders how rap music, which relies heavily on technology (first analogue, now digital), can be considered post-industrial at all.[222] Like many other forms of popular music today, rap is primarily made with advanced digital technologies produced neither in Germany nor the United States. Thus, even though such workers are 'silent partners' and hip-hop artists seldom, if ever, directly interact with them, they nevertheless play a crucial role. Where Ortiz argued that transculturation occurred through the personal interactions of people in Cuba, it now appears to happen on a much broader scale, with actors and agents often never interacting directly.

Noting how theorists from Birmingham's Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies, of which Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy are the best-known, "formulated the topos of youth as a force for cultural production [as] craftsmen who formed their own styles," Klein and Friedrich emphasized the individual agency that arises from performing the hip-hop arts.[223] They insightfully argued that "[t]he close interlocking of authenticity between style and politics is no longer derived from the category of class, but ethnicity," asserting that "hip-hop is the first youth culture whose origins are not seen in the experience of class antagonism, but rather in the experience of ethnic difference."[224] Where ethnic authenticity is essentialized into recurring themes and motifs such as the desire to escape inner city ghettos, including unemployment,

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[221] "HipHop ist von seinen Anfang an eine hybride Kultur, die enstanden ist als eine Kultur von ethnischen Minderheiten *und* als eine postindustrielle, technologisierte Praxis. Als eine sich globalisierende Kultur etabliert sie ihren hybriden Charakter in den verschiedenen kulturellen Kontexten immer wider neu." *See* Gabriele Klein and Malte Friedrich, *Is this real? Die Kultur des HipHop* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2003), 80.

[222] The argument, now widespread, is that hip-hop emerged from the deindustrialization of the northeastern United States, particularly because inner city communities were abandoned by industrial capitalists. While true, this does not necessarily constitute the "post-industrial," whatever the term might mean. Instead, it demonstrates the impulse of global transnational capitalism to outsource and offshore production, a development which despite the nationalist rhetoric of nativist politicians shows little sign of abating.

[223] "Sie formulierten den Topos von der Jugend als einer kulturproduzierenden Kraft, indem sie in Anlehnung an Claude Lévi-Strauss Begriff der Bricolage die Jugendlichen als Bastler verstanden, die ihre Stile selbst bildeten." Ibid., 81.

[224] "Diesem Grundmuster einer subversiven Subkultur folgt auch der HipHop-Diskurs, mit dem Unterschied, daß die enge Verklammerung von Authentizität, Stil und Politik nicht mehr über die Kategorie der Klasse hergeleitet wird, sondern über Ethnizität. HipHop ist die erste Jugendkultur, deren Ursprung nicht in der Erfahrung von Klassenantagonismen gesehen wird, sondern die Erfahrung ethnischer Differenz." Ibid., 82.

crime, violence, and drugs,[225] Klein and Friedrich asked in how far authenticity, especially in a globally widespread culture like hip-hop, is created again and again in individual scenes.[226] This question, they concluded, "refers on the one hand to the relationship between globality and location in hip-hop and, on the other, to the relationship between discourse and practice, narrative and performance, and between staging and credibility."[227] Where these themes and motifs are adopted and adapted by artists outside the U.S., transculturality opens up through shared and overlapping subject matter—hence, this study's comparative approach along common themes. Yet if hip-hop is rooted in ethnic difference—and, in so doing, masks its underlying class dimensions—then what can we learn about class and hip-hop culture when we acknowledge that rap music is enabled by workers laboring in factories across southeast Asia? Recognizing that these workers provide the material base—the tools artists use—necessitates viewing hip-hop culture, no matter where it is practiced, from transnational perspectives. Consider the following analogy: a young white British youth raised on a depressed council estate in England who raps in his spare time either cuts a record in a studio on devices produced in southeast Asia or on a friend's low-cost laptop computer. Is that young person producing UK grime, the British variant of rap? To be sure, yes, but to overlook the underlying historical and contemporary factors leading up to his musical output, including the origins of the technology, not to mention the history of the slave trade or the flow of rap music across the Atlantic to Europe in the 1980s and 90s, would be shortsighted.

Horst Tonn (2004), also writing in a German context, asserted that rap music since its beginnings in the South Bronx "has developed from a culturally specific musical style [of Black and Latino youth] to a transcultural phenomenon,"[228] and, second, to describe the "transcultural adaptations" Tonn claimed the Hamburg-based Fettes Brot achieved in their song "Gangsta Rap."[229] Like Kaya, Tonn relied on concepts such as transnational and, following American pragmatist philosopher Richard Shusterman, "diasporic cultures" to explain cultural mixing and blending.[230] Insightfully, Tonn stressed rap's novelty in the German-speaking world, writing that the early years of hip-hop

> are in retrospect associated with pioneering improvisation and a vaguely felt sense of the emergence of something radically new. At the same time, the attraction to Hiphop was intuitive and very personal. Some of the early Hiphoppers describe their first encounters with the culture in terms of epiphanic moments, of a sudden revelation or an intuitively perceived affinity. "Energy" is the most frequently used term when they describe their immediate first responses to Hiphop culture.[231]

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[225] "Die Ursprungserzählung des HipHop [ist] als einer Ghetto-Kultur schwarzer Jugendlicher, die sich einen Ausweg aus dem Kreislauf von Arbeitslosigkeit, Kriminalität, Gewalt und Drogen suchten, eine mythische Erzählung." Ibid.

[226] "Wenn aber die HipHop-Kultur eine global verbreitete Kultur ist, deren Vorbild nach wie vor die Schwarze Ghetto-Kultur des ursprünglichen HipHop darstellt, wie Authentizität in den einzelnen HipHop-Szenen immer wieder hergestellt wird." Ibid., 83.

[227] "Diese Frage verweist zum einen auf das Verhältnis von Globalität und Lokalität im Feld des HipHop, zum anderen auf das Verhältnis von Diskurs und Praxis, von Erzählung und Performanz, von Inszenierung und Glaubwürdigkeit." Ibid.

[228] Horst Tonn, "Rap Music in Germany: How Ethnic Culture Travels," in *Sites of Ethnicity: Europe and the Americas*, edited by William Boelhower, Rocío G. Davis, and Carmen Birkle (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2004), 271.

[229] Ibid., 280.

[230] Ibid., 276.

[231] Ibid., 278. I retain Tonn's typographical rendering ("Hiphop" and "Hiphoppers") in my citation.

Tonn's characterization that young people felt as though they were part of something "radically new" underscores Ortiz's neoculturation concept, especially with regard to new forms of culture. Furthermore, Tonn's reporting that young people responded *intuitively* to rap music echoes Ortiz's observations that people around the world responded 'naturally' to Cuban tobacco, i.e. to its sensuous appeal. Moreover, Tonn's observation that young people felt "an intuitively perceived affinity" to hip-hop parallels Ortiz's understanding of acculturation, especially when young people felt bound to burgeoning hip-hop scenes in Germany *and* the United States.

In the final essay in *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop* (2006), Danny Hoch writes that like any influential art, "good hip-hop is highly articulate, coded, transcendent, [and] revolutionary,"[232] adding that hip-hop was "born of the fusion—and profusion—of […] complex conditions and circumstances"[233] as well as numerous "traditions, conditions, and phenomena,"[234] including

- an African and Caribbean continuum of storytelling and art
- a polycultural community of both immigrants and migrants
- appropriation of European cultural traditions and Japanese technology
- a legacy of political and gang organizing
- the bumpy transition from post-civil rights and militarized nationalist organizing to the supply-side economics of the 1980s
- the devastating effects of Reaganomics on urban America
- the age of accelerated technology.[235]

Controversial for how it de-centers hip-hop as a strictly Black cultural expression, Hoch's list of intersecting phenomena demonstrates the confluence of social, economic, cultural, and technological interactions across space and time that are hallmarks of hip-hop *and* advanced capitalism. Where they mirror the material and human circumstances driving the transculturation of Cuba, polycultural seems inaccurate. Deploying, but never explaining, the term (which is not recognized as official lexicon by Oxford or Merriam-Webster), it is difficult to know precisely what Hoch means.[236] Instead, transculturation elevates groups of people from various backgrounds to explain how they interact and collaborate. In the American context, this occurred in The Bronx and, later, other American cities after hip-hop began to spread across the country. In Germany, this occurred in many urban localities, including Dortmund, Heidelberg, Stuttgart, Dresden as well as Frankfurt, Berlin, and Munich, where young people gathered to practice the hip-hop arts.

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[232] Danny Hoch, "Toward a Hip-Hop Aesthetic: A Manifesto for the Hip-Hop Arts Movement," in *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop*, edited by Jeff Chang (New York: BasicCivitas, 2006), 350.

[233] Ibid., 351.

[234] Ibid., 350.

[235] Ibid.

[236] The Oxford Living Dictionary online defines "polycultural" as "involving or consisting of a number of (especially well-integrated) cultural or ethnic groups; reflecting or embodying several cultural or ethnic influences," but it neither appears in the Oxford English Dictionary nor does Hoch explicitly define it. While one may presume with some certainty that he means "more-cultural" or even multicultural, without explanation one is left to wonder. Furthermore, McFarland (2013) uses the term polycultural, but also offers no real qualification for what the term means. *See* "Polycultural," *English: Oxford Living Dictionaries*, accessed July 17, 2018, en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/polycultural.

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Other commentators in *Total Chaos*, including Jeff Chang (editor),[237] but also Greg Tate, Vijay Prashad, Mark Anthony Neal, and Brian Cross,[238] stressed the importance of multiculturalism and even suggested a "postmulticulturalist" narrative.[239] In short, they seemed eager to view hip-hop 'beyond the black' but were limited by the rhetoric of multiculturalism—which, again, Welsch argued was insufficient to explain complex cultural interactions. Ortiz's transculturation model, had it been more widely known, could have provided valuable insight, especially since Hoch emphasized the roles immigrants and migrants, European cultural traditions, the age of accelerated technology and the appropriation of Japanese technology played in the rise of hip-hop. Hoch's insights, especially the roles of different people from various locations, echo those Ortiz made when identifying the social, economic, and cultural transformation that had taken place in Cuba. As a result, Hoch's insights are crucial, and viewing them alongside Ortiz's theory bolsters his argument.

Sociologist Pancho McFarland (2006) further intervened in an essay on so-called Chicano rap, i.e. music produced by artists on the U.S. west coast and along the U.S.-Mexico border. Following the work of anthropologist Guillmero Bonfil Batalla, McFarland fused the concept *mestizaje*, which refers to "a process of cultural and biological/racial hybridization [that] has characterized Mexican cultures for centuries,"[240] with *mulataje*, a term which, like mulatto, denotes racial mixing.[241] McFarland claimed that "African Diasporic cultures and peoples have been central components of syncretism and hybridization in Mexican societies, especially in postindustrial Mexico America."[242] Examining works by Kid Frost, Cypress Hill, and South Park Mexican, McFarland argued that "Chicano rap texts […] illustrate a new millennial *mestizaje/mulataje* consisting of Mexican/ Chicana/o, African (American) and European (American) elements" that are "similar in circumstance and significance to that mixing of cultures that created Mexico and Mexicanness in the sixteenth century."[243] McFarland's *mestizaje/mulataje* concept strongly resembles Ortiz's transculturation model. Given his eagerness to return agency to Latino/Chicano hip-hoppers who, following Kaya, found themselves betwixt and between two or more cultures, McFarland missed an opportunity to apply Ortiz's concepts. As a citizen of Cuba in the 19th and 20th centuries, Ortiz not only bore witness to many of the processes McFarland sought to explain, he had already theorized them at length. On the one hand, McFarland's work has provided valuable insights into Spanish and English-Spanish-

[237] Jeff Chang, "Introduction: Hip-Hop Arts: Expanding Our Universe," in *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop*, edited by Jeff Chang (New York: BasicCivitas, 2006), x.

[238] Greg Tate et al., "Got Next: A Roundtable on Identity and Aesthetics after Multiculturalism," in *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop*, edited by Jeff Chang (New York: BasicCivitas, 2006), 33-51.

[239] Jeff Chang, "Roots: Perspectives on Hip-Hop History," in *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop*, edited by Jeff Chang (New York: BasicCivitas, 2006), 4.

[240] Pancho McFarland, "Chicano Rap Roots: Black-Brown Cultural Exchange and the Making of a Genre," *Callaloo* 29, 3 (Summer 2006): 940.

[241] Thomas Gale, "Representations Of Blackness In Latin America And The Caribbean," *Encyclopedia*, 2006, accessed Mar 29, 2018, encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/representations-blackness-latin-america-and-caribbean.

[242] McFarland, 940-941.

[243] Ibid., 939.

language rap in the United States;[244] on the other, his argument harkens toward Ortiz's transculturation model. In that sense, McFarland's work illustrates the validity of applying Ortiz's thinking to hip-hop culture, particularly outside the framework of race, which Ortiz emphatically rejected due to how race and racial thinking provided the ideological justification for the oppression, exploitation, and marginalization of people during, and after, the colonial period.

In his study of applied sociolinguistics in hip-hop around the globe (but not the German-speaking world), Alastair Pennycook (2007) drew upon transculturation to develop his concept of "transgressive knowledges," which he extended from the work of sociologist Chris Jenks, critical theorist bell hooks, post-structuralist philosopher Michel Foucault, and psychologist and postcolonial theorist Frantz Fanon. Arguing that hip-hop practices are transgressive, i.e. that they "oppose, [...] push against and [...] traverse oppressive [social and cultural] boundaries,"[245] Pennycook asserted the "need to move beyond arguments about homogeneity or heterogeneity, or imperialism and nation states, and instead focus on translocal and transcultural flows."[246] Concerning the latter, he defines such flows to mean "the ways in which cultural forms move, change and are reused to fashion new identities in diverse contexts,"[247] which echo Ortiz's thinking on how tobacco crossed borders and became adapted and adopted. Pennycook sought to disrupt received hip-hop wisdom to create the "political and epistemological tools to transgress the boundaries of conventional thought and politics."[248] This, in turn, would allow "new frames of thought and conduct"[249] and, I argue, new ways of approaching, interpreting, understanding, writing, and teaching about hip-hop culture, its origins, and its practice in the United States, as elsewhere.

Pennycook's focus was "not so much on how music works culturally in a specific location but on the effects of the many encounters and hybrid co-productions of languages and cultures."[250] He argued that "transcultural flows therefore refer not merely to the spread of particular forms of culture across boundaries, or the existence of supercultural commonalities," i.e. similarities that occur within, but also beyond, the constraints of the nation-state, "but rather to the processes of borrowing, blending, remaking and returning, to processes of alternative cultural production."[251] Working from Mary Louise Pratt, who understood transculturation as "a 'phenomenon of the contact zone' describing how 'subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture,'"[252] Pennycook deployed Bhabha's hybridity concept to investigate "language and culture in terms of 'fluidity,' which refers to the movement and flows of music across time and space, and 'fixity,' which refers to ways in which music

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[244] McFarland's other books include *Chicano Rap: Gender and Violence in the Postindustrial Barrio* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008) and *The Chican@ Hip Hop Nation: Politics of a New Millennial Mestizaje* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013).
[245] Pennycook, 40.
[246] Ibid, 5-6.
[247] Ibid., 6.
[248] Ibid., 40.
[249] Ibid., 41.
[250] Ibid., 6.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Ibid., 7.

is about location, tradition, [and] cultural expression."[253] Similarly, I tease out instances of musical and linguistic 'fluidity' and 'fixity' in this study.

Pennycook's study is crucial for understanding hip-hop culture outside of, but also potentially within, the United States. While he works to "draw our attention […] to the constant processes of borrowing, bending and blending of cultures" that occur through the "borrowing, bending and blending [of] languages into new modes of expression,"[254] in how far does Pennycook's claim hold true that these blends and fusions constitute "alternative spaces of cultural production,"[255] especially when they appear in commercial *and* independent rap music? Arguing that trans concepts allow "us to get beyond the question of uniformization or particularization,"[256] such frameworks enable us to appreciate the mixed, the blended, and the fused. Instead of 'alternatives' or exceptions, I argue that the mixtures and fusions that result from the interplay of music and languages in bi- and multilingual rap, regardless if produced by independent 'underground' or commercial 'mainstream' artists, are actually quite commonplace. Indeed, these mixes and blends, especially when they result in an utterance (either musical or linguistic) that had not previously existed (and therefore does not belong to any of the cultural frameworks from which it is forged), exemplify Ortiz's notion of neoculturation. Moreover, such material allows us to experience, and thereby appreciate (or even reject), the blended *and* the particular at the same time if we are prepared to do the necessary analytical work.

American Studies scholar Simon Strick (2008) made a strong case for transculturation in an article that enumerated hip-hop's many pathways to Germany, emphasizing that "rap music is and always has been a global music, both in the sense that its formation incorporated diverse cultural and transatlantic influences and journeys."[257] Like Hoch, Strick argued that "[e]arly American rap […] developed in the cultural patchwork of inner-city New York and blended very diverse African-American, Latin-American, Caribbean and also European cultural influences."[258] Following Wolfgang Iser, Strick posited that young people who took up the hip-hop arts engaged in cultural translation. Rather than "the process of transferring one text into another text of another language," Strick emphasized "the interpretive effort and necessary explication of cultural constructs and texts (such as a rap record) that an audience has to achieve in order to make that construct work in a different context."[259] Where song lyrics occur in two or more languages, that process of translation as an interpretative-receptive act becomes even more heightened, and it is a cornerstone of the notion of transcultural aesthetic experience I argue for throughout this study.

Critiquing Bhabha's concept of hybridity, Strick argued that "the simplistic notion of a *cultural hybridity* that is somehow fabricated through the networks of globalization proves insufficient."[260] Rather than "a

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[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid., 47.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Simon Strick, "Competent Krauts – Following the Cultural Translations of Hip-hop to Germany," in *Traveling Sounds: Music, Migration, and Identity in the U.S. and Beyond*, edited by Wilfried Raussert and John Miller Jones (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2008), 265.
[258] Ibid., 266.
[259] Ibid., 267 (footnote 7).
[260] Ibid., 285. Italics in the original.

result of the blending, hybridization or translation of one cultural system into another,"[261] Strick claimed that hip-hop in Germany showed how "cultural communities *actively produce and problematize translatability and hybridity* […] in critical reaction to the worldwide dissemination of cultural texts."[262] In other words, how a listener receives a particular song determines the extent to which he or she understands it. To illustrate this point, one can imagine a young German hearing a song with German, Turkish, and Arabic lyrics and musical elements. If that person understands hip-hop culture as a black cultural phenomenon, then he or she would likely be unable to apprehend as transcultural. This is not conjecture: like jazz, blues, R&B, Motown, and other forms of music from the Afro-diaspora, hip-hop is still marketed as black music in Germany. This is precisely where new ways of thinking about hip-hop culture come into play. If we are prepared to understand rap music as more than black culture, especially by disentangling and understanding its many cultural inputs (one of which is African American), then we can begin to apprehend it as transcultural music. Stressing the "cultural and political competence of youth cultures in the age of globalization,"[263] Strick centered individuals, much like Klein and Friedrich, as active agents in the reception, and creation, of rap music and hip-hop culture. This suggests that instead of being passive receivers, audiences become active, and activated, through music. Hardly a shocking revelation, it is nevertheless an important one. Music animates people physically, psychologically, and possibly even spiritually, and Strick claimed that active translation is the hallmark of "transcultural translation and identity."[264] In that sense, this study builds upon Strick's arguments while anchoring them in Ortiz's thinking.

While some of the contributors to *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language* (2009) deployed the term transcultural in their discussion of hip-hop around the world, not one of them mentions Ortiz, Pratt, Welsch, or Ángel Rama, who reintroduced Ortiz's thinking in 1982.[265] Thus, Gernalzick and Pisarz-Ramirez's critique that scholars utilize Ortiz's ideas without substantively dealing with them holds true. Indeed, it seems as if scholars presume that terms such as transcultural, transculturation, transculturality, and transculturalism are settled concepts. Yet as Germanic Languages and Literature scholar Christoph Schaub (2008) noted in an essay on leftist politics in rap music in Germany, there is no firm "politically emphatic understanding of th[e] term" transcultural, which has been used to describe "certain cultural products or practices which are conceptualized or communicated as

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[261] Ibid.
[262] Ibid. Italics in the original.
[263] Ibid.
[264] Ibid.
[265] In addition to the book's three editors, Christina Higgins, Tope Omoniyi, and Mela Sarkar all use the term transcultural; however, not one of them cites Ortiz, Pratt, Welsch, or Rama. *See* Christina Higgins, "From Da Bomb to *Bomba*: Global Hip Hop Nation Language in Tanzania," in *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language*, edited by H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook (London: Routledge, 2009), 95-112; Tope Omoniyi, "'So I choose to Do Am Naija Syle': Hip Hop, Language, and Postcolonial Identities," in *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language*, edited by H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook (London: Routledge, 2009), 113-135; and Mela Sarkar, "'Still Reppin Por Mi Gente': The Transformative Power of Language Mixing in Quebec Hip Hop," in *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language*, edited by H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook (London: Routledge, 2009), 139-157.

a constant permeation of elements from different 'origins'."[266] Insofar as scholars do not deal with the origins of the concept, Schaub's critique is accurate. However, more than simply highlight the multiple origins of music and language in a given work, I argue at length in this study that bi- and multilingual rap songs not only contain elements from various places, but that such songs speak from, to, and across many cultural frameworks at once. Indeed, I maintain that this is a hallmark of transcultural music.

Interrogating use of the term transcultural, Schaub cites Welsch briefly to criticize his assertion that transculturality is inherently emancipatory. This is an important insight, and I wish to extend it to suggest that transculturality in music can be liberating but even imprisoning. Regarding the former, hip-hop fans who are open to bi- and multilingualism are more likely to embrace transculturality in music; in the latter, those who reject the interplay of two or more languages likely do so because they find it off-putting. In other words, one person may enjoy monolingual English rap music but not English-Spanish rhymes. Likewise, someone may enjoy German-language rap, but reject German-Turkish rhymes—or, more challenging still, German-Turkish-Italian raps. Transcultural musical and linguistic landscapes can be challenging and difficult to navigate, and bi- and multilingual rap, just like rap music itself, is not for everyone. This suggests that there is a limit in how far such musical material stands to reach audiences. To put it another way, if one is open to and can receive songs in two, three, or more languages, then there is a greater chance that one will not only connect with such music, but that he or she will be able to undergo the type of transcultural aesthetic experience I argue such music triggers. As Strick argued, the process of translation is an important component to the act of listening and reception. Therefore, a person must have the ability to hear and understand, or at least a desire to work through, any of the languages and musical citations that appear in a given song.

As with the contributors to *Global Linguistic Flows*, the same is true for those who submitted articles to *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows* (2013). While Sina A. Nitzsche, the book's main editor, mentions Pratt's concept of the contact zone at the end of the book's introduction (and Pennycook in passing),[267] only Daniela Doboș (hip-hop in Romania),[268] Eszter Szabó Gilinger (hip-hop in Hungary),[269] and Phillip Siepmann (Jewish hip-hop)[270] refer to Pennycook's understanding of transculturation. To be clear, these articles shed much needed light on the development of hip-hop across Europe, but none of them work with Ortiz's transculturation model with any depth. Indeed, my own

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[266] Christoph Schaub, "If Black Dante were to meet the Tupac Amaru of Stuttgart's barrio: Political Poetics and Global Society: Contemporary Rap Lyrics in the U.S.A. and Germany," in *Traveling Sounds: Music, Migration, and Identity in the U.S. and Beyond*, edited by Wilfried Raussert and John Miller Jones (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2008), 247 (footnote 1).

[267] Nitzsche mentions Pennycook (and Alim and Ibrahim) on page 17 and Pratt in the final paragraph on page 30. *See* Sina A. Nitzsche, "Hip-Hop in Europe as a Transnational Phenomenon: An Introduction," in *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, edited by Sina A. Nitzsche and Walter Grünzweig (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2013), 3-34.

[268] Daniela Doboș, "In the Global 'Hood': Slang and Hip-Hop in Present-Day Romania," in *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, edited by Sina A. Nitzsche and Walter Grünzweig (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2013), 145-169.

[269] Eszter Szabó Gilinger, "The Language(s) of Self-Presentation in Hungarian Rap Lyrics," in *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, edited by Sina A. Nitzsche and Walter Grünzweig (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2013), 171-188.

[270] Philipp Siepmann, "'A Hip Hop Haggadah': The Transnational and Transcultural Space of Jewish Hip-Hop and Transnational Cultural Studies in the EFL Classroom," in *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, edited by Sina A. Nitzsche and Walter Grünzweig (Berlin: LIT Verlag), 385-403.

contribution on hip-hop in Germany only cites Strick's thinking,[271] and given how he did not reference any transcultural theorists (including Ortiz), my work displays a conceptual weakness this study seeks to remedy.

Summarizing Pennycook's "transgressive knowledges concept," Siepmann, like Schaub, cites Welsch to question his celebration of the emancipatory power of transculturality, writing that

> Welsch generalizes assumptions about the transcultural condition that may be true for well-educated, middle or upper class, heterosexual, male Westerners, who are likely to experience transculturality as a privilege. However, transculturality may be experienced also as a burden or a lack of belonging. Welsch's concept should therefore be complemented by more critical approaches to transculturality, such as Delanoy's *context-sensitive approach* or Kraidy's *critical transculturalism*, which draw a much more differentiated picture of the transcultural condition.[272]

Siepmann's call for critical reflection is sound. However, one of the arguments I put forth and return to in this study is the idea that transcultural texts produce an aesthetic field in music and language where, in the best cases, no one cultural reference point reigns over any other. In that sense, I take issue with the assertion that transculturality privileges well-heeled, heterosexual white men. Conversely, scholars who insist upon hip-hop as a black cultural phenomenon privilege heterosexual black men and women—indeed, that has been one of the major aims of the project of Black cultural politics. Instead, I argue that bi- and multilingual rap creates a blended musical and linguistic landscape that may disorient listeners, and states of transcultural awareness (or consciousness) might be confusing or perplexing. Therefore, the transcultural aesthetic experience I argue such material stands to initiate in listeners is not necessarily emancipatory, but quite possibly frustrating. Unfortunately, there is no easy answer. This contradiction, I hope to show, is part and parcel of transcultural texts. Since I will be arguing that bi- and multilingual rap music evidences transcultural aesthetics, and that audiences stand to undergo a transcultural aesthetic experience when they are exposed to such material, it is necessary to review Jean Baudrillard's concept to determine in how far it can be linked up with Winfried Fluck's work on aesthetic experience.

Towards A New Transaesthetics

Jean Baudrillard coined the term transaesthetics in *La Transparence du Mal: Essai sur les phénomènes extrêmes* (1990), where he discussed the visual arts, sexuality, economics, politics, technology, and even the biomedical sciences, to argue that each contributed to what he identified as aesthetic dissolution. Alarmist in his approach, he decried the 'false liberation' art offered modern societies, writing

> all we do […] is simulate liberation. We may pretend to carry on in the same direction, accelerating, but in reality we are accelerating in a void, because all the goals of liberation are already behind us, and because what haunts and obsesses us is being thus ahead of all the results—the very ability of all the signs, all the forms, all the desires that we had been pursuing. But what can be done? This is a state of simulation, a state in which we are obliged to replay all scenarios precisely because they have all taken place already, whether actually or potentially. The state of utopia realized, of all utopias realized, wherein paradoxically we must continue

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[271] Terence Kumpf, "Beyond Multiculturalism: The Transculturating Potential of Hip-Hop in Germany," in *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, edited by Sina A. Nitzsche and Walter Grünzweig (Berlin: LIT Verlag), 207-225.

[272] Siepmann, 386. Italics in the original.

> to live as though they had not been. But since they have, and since we can no longer, therefore, nourish the hope of realizing them, we can only 'hyper-realize' them through interminable simulation. We live amid the interminable reproduction of ideals, phantasies, images and dreams which are now behind us, yet which we must continue to reproduce in a sort of inescapable indifference.[273]

Baudrillard relied on his concepts of *simulacra*, i.e. the representation of that which does not exist (or a copy with no original), and *simulation*, the blending of reality with representation such that a person can no longer distinguish between the two, the result of which constitutes the *hyperreal*: a perpetual and accelerating state of aesthetic simulation divorced from any reference to reality.[274] Baudrillard's fascination with the 'original' and the 'copy' is indebted to eminent Frankfurt School theorist Walter Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1935), where he reflected on artistic production in the industrial age. Yet as W.J.T. Mitchell has argued with his concept of biocybernetic reproduction, which suggests the interrelationship of human creative output *through* advanced technology,

> [i]f mechanical reproducibility (photography, cinema, and associated industrial processes like the assembly line) dominated the era of modernism, biocybernetic reproduction (high-speed computing, video, digital imaging, virtual reality, the Internet, and the industrialization of genetic engineering) dominates the age that we have called postmodern. This term, which played its role as a placeholder in the 1970s and '80s, now seems to have outlived its usefulness.[275]

Indeed, Baudrillard's thinking does not substantively address the ways in which art is created. To be fair, he was writing, at least with regard to hip-hop culture (and popular music more generally), at precisely the moment when technological innovations were occurring in leaps and bounds. In that sense, his concept of transaesthetics was a conservative, and possibly even reactionary, response to advanced media strategies in artistic production.

To bolster his simulacra concept, which he posited as an explanation for value in societies structured around advanced capitalism, Baudrillard introduced the so-called fractal stage. "At the fourth, the fractal (or viral, or radiant) stage of value," he wrote, "there is no reference point at all, and value radiates in all directions, occupying all interstices, without reference to anything whatsoever, by virtue of pure contiguity."[276] Claiming that it was now "impossible to make estimations between beautiful and ugly, true and false, or good and evil,"[277] Baudrillard argued that "each value or fragment of value shines for a moment in the heavens of simulation, then disappears into the void."[278] He concluded that "[t]his is the pattern of the fractal—and hence the current pattern of our culture."[279] He further warned that "[t]he possibility of metaphor is disappearing in every sphere," asserting that

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[273] Jean Baudrillard, *The Flowers of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*, translated by James Benedict (London: Verso, 1993), 3-4.

[274] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, trans. by Paul Foss, Paul Patton, and Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), 5.

[275] W.J.T. Mitchell, "The Work of Art in the Age of Biocybernetic Reproduction," in *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), 318.

[276] Baudrillard 1993, 5.

[277] Ibid., 5-6.

[278] Ibid., 6.

[279] Ibid.

> this is an aspect of a general tendency towards transsexuality which extends well beyond sex, affecting all disciplines as they *lose their specificity* and partake of a *process of confusion and contagion*—a *loss of determinacy* which is the prime event among all the new events that assail us. Economics becomes transeconomics, aesthetics becomes transaesthetics, sex becomes transsexuality—all converge in a transversal and universal process wherein no discourse may have a metaphorical relationship to another, because for there to be metaphor, differential fields and distinct objects must exist. But they cannot exist where *contamination is possible* between any discipline and any other.[280]

Baudrillard's fascination with aesthetic blurring, breakdown, or collapse is rooted in a kind of paranoia where the alleged loss of purity is tantamount to disease. Indeed, words such as "confusion," "contagion," and "contamination" suggest that Baudrillard considered aesthetic mixing a sickness. His view bemoans any artistic human activity that would dare blend traditions which formerly existed alongside, but did not mix, with one another.

He reveals his preference for some kind of idealistic aesthetic purity when he writes that "our melancholy stems from […] haphazard and senseless proliferation."[281] He continues:

> Perhaps our melancholy stems from this, for metaphor still has its beauty; it was aesthetic, playing as it did upon difference, and upon the illusion of difference. Today, metonymy—replacing the whole as well as the components, and occasioning a general commutability of terms—has built its house upon the dis-illusion of metaphor.[282]

Writing "our" instead of "my," Baudrillard ensconces his complaint as though it were a widely held view, yet he does not cite anyone else who shares his concern. He concludes that "the perfect realization of the whole tendency of modernity, and the negation of that idea and that tendency, their annihilation by virtue of their very success, by virtue of their extension beyond their own bounds—this state of affairs is epitomized by a single feature: the transpolitical, the transsexual, the transaesthetic."[283] In essence, any move that challenges the neatly defined boundaries of aesthetic distinctiveness—be it in the visual arts, sexuality, politics, and, as I contend, music and song lyrics—was undesirable. Although Stallings has tried to resuscitate his term to theorize black sexualities to show how "sexual expressivity or explicitness in black literature and culture [reject] the Western will to truth, or the quest to produce a truth about sexuality,"[284] Stallings' attempt to redefine Baudrillard's concept is incomplete, primarily because she only deals with Baudrillard's focus on "the medium of the visual arts,"[285] entirely overlooking how he claimed aesthetic dissolution occurred across a range of disciplines and activities.

Baudrillard further asserted that "the crucial moment for art was undoubtedly that of Dada and Duchamp, that moment when art, by renouncing its own aesthetic rules of the game, debouched into the transaesthetic era of the banality of the image,"[286] which he concluded resulted from the "general

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[280] Ibid., 7. Emphases in italics are my own.
[281] Ibid., 8.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Ibid., 9-10.
[284] L.H. Stallings, *Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), xii.
[285] Ibid., 11.
[286] Baudrillard 1993, 11.

aestheticization of everyday life."[287] Rather than argue that a hallmark of human artistic endeavor is to transgress, and thus go beyond (and eventually rewrite), the existing rules that govern art, Baudrillard couched his critique in a conservativism that diminishes human creative agency. His critique amounts to an ageist argument indicative of the generational dismissal of cultural movements that dare to forge new ground. Hip-hop, as many of the scholars I cited have argued, has been doing precisely that.

Baudrillard's greatest fear, it seems, was the democratizing power of technology to empower people formerly shut out from artistic creation: "thanks to the media, computer science and video technology," he wrote, "everyone is now potentially a creator."[288] Indeed, hip-hoppers exemplify this 'democratic' development. By claiming that "the soul of Art—Art as adventure, Art with its power of illusion, its capacity for negating reality, for setting up an 'other scene' in opposition to reality," Baudrillard asserted that "Art is gone."[289] Instead of decrying the death of art, what is needed is an ability to apprehend, disentangle, and thereby understand its aesthetic conditions: a way of listening, seeing, and reading that empowers audiences to delineate aesthetic difference in complex works. Rather than bemoan the opportunity that exists for more people to engage in creative activity (or describe it as false liberation), or describe a perceived loss in aesthetic particularity as transaesthetic, the term needs to be redefined.[290]

Even though he did not apply his critique to rap music, Baudrillard's thoughts are apropos, especially since rap music compositions reuse source material. Following Baudrillard's line of thought, one might deem sample-based music as aesthetic simulation. However, it is quite easy to see how his this falls short. To be sure, sample-based music references preexisting works; but to insinuate, as Baudrillard might have, that musical arrangements composed of decontextualized elements constitutes 'simulation' is incorrect. Instead, rap music refers to musical predecessors with more or less transparency. In this way, these musical arrangements harbor a constellation of sources and referents from the continuum of music in, but also beyond, Afro diasporic musical traditions. By untangling those citations, we can understand bi- and multilingual rap music as transaesthetic—not in Baudrillard's sense, but in terms of transcultural aesthetics, i.e. the blending of components from multiple sources, places, and times, which speak from, to, and across a range people, places, and traditions. Where Baudrillard claims that transaesthetics signaled "a fundamental break in the secret code of aesthetics,"[291] I argue, following Sophy Smith, that the aesthetics of rap music signal a paradigm shift. If bi- and multilingual rap music, with its aural snippets, pastiche compositional strategies, and tapestry of languages, achieves transcultural aesthetics, then exposure to such material stands

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[287] Ibid. One wonders what Baudrillard might have thought of the poetry of William Carlos Williams or, later, Robert Creeley and English-born American poet Denise Levertov, all writers who celebrated the daily, the average, and the mundane in their work.

[288] Ibid., 16.

[289] Ibid., 14.

[290] Writing about the so-called split between "high" and "low" culture in the United States in the mid-19th century, Fluck has noted how the "democratic dimension [of culture] provoked members of the upper classes to replace cultural democracy by cultural hierarchy because they felt threatened in their claims for social superiority." In my reading, Baudrillard, who occupied as comfortable position in the Ivory Tower as anyone, operates from similar assumptions. *See* Winfried Fluck, "High and Low: The Race for an Extension of Sensations," in *Romance with America?: Essays on Culture, Literature, and American Studies*, edited by Laura Bieger and Johannes Voelz (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2009), 342.

[291] Ibid., 15.

to initiate an aesthetic experience in listeners. To speculate on how that might occur, I turn to Winfried Fluck's work in aesthetic experience, which he synthesized from American pragmatist philosopher John Dewey and German reception theorist Wolfgang Iser.

Aesthetic Experience in Music: Listening as Enactment

Although Fluck developed his ideas on aesthetic experience to explain how the act of reading requires active participation from readers, there is potential to apply it to popular music. Fluck writes:

> Can the term aesthetics and aesthetic experience be meaningfully applied to popular culture at all? Almost all of the terms that have traditionally been used to describe popular culture imply severe aesthetic shortcomings. Characterizations like kitsch, sentimentality, sensationalist or trashy literature (for which the equally disparaging term *Kolportageliteratur* has often been used in German-speaking countries), or the term *Trivialliteratur*, which dominated discussions of popular culture in German-speaking countries for decades, all have their common denominator in the assumption that, whatever their merits and cultural significance may be, popular cultural texts are marked (and marred) by fundamental aesthetic flaws. This also applies to two of the most frequently used characterizations which have long been a staple of cultural criticism, those of mass culture and the culture industry. In emphasizing standardized mass production as the defining characteristic of popular culture, these terms postulate not only a deplorable lack of artistic originality and creativity but assert their impossibility. No matter where the emphasis lies: all of these characterizations emphasize a loss of control over the creative process, and thereby a watering down of aesthetic standards – either because of ineptitude or, worse, for commercial reasons.[292]

Fluck's observations are insightful, particularly for how he challenges Frankfurt School-style dismissal of popular culture, but also people who felt and continue to feel that rap does not constitute a legitimate form of music—either because it is sample-based, bass-heavy, loud, or because it does not follow western musical conventions of harmony and melody, or because some artists celebrate criminality, wealth, and violence.[293] Rap music is all of these and more, but if we resist making moralistic judgements based on so-called 'high' or 'low' cultural standards (or by measuring art against the perceived success/failure of what came before), then we may approach the aesthetics of rap music anew.

Discussing nineteenth-century literature and dime novels, Fluck asserts, following Alexis de Tocqueville, that popular 'democratic' forms of culture create "a need for ever new and ever more spectacular effects in order to keep the [audience's] interest."[294] He argues that

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[292] Ibid., 339.

[293] While Potter (26) discusses the well-known resistance to seeing rap music as *music*, Martha Bayles is one such critic. Regarding rap's musical side, she writes "[w]ith sampling, [the] element of musicianship gets lost. The computer permits any sound to be inserted, with the utmost precision, at any point, to create a thickly textured aural montage. And if it doesn't fit exactly, it can be altered. The process requires skill, needless to say. But not always musical skill. And the result is not always judged by musical standards" (345). Regarding lyrics, she writes that "[s]ince written poetry is, as a rule, more sophisticated than improvised, one might expect improvement now that most raps are written down and recited. But no such luck. Rap 'poetry' is a cut above punk," which she derides as 'perverse modernism,' "but most of it confirms the fact that an inability to improvise does not confer an ability to write" (346). Most tellingly, Bayles suggest that rappers display "verbal incompetence" (346). Indeed, Bayles spends much of her time decrying the vulgarity and obscenity of some forms of rap while wholly overlooking others. *See* Martha Bayles, *Hole in Our Soul: The Loss of Beauty and Meaning in American Popular Music* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994).

[294] Fluck, 346. Fluck footnotes de Tocqueville's thinking in the essay, and it is striking the extent to which it echoes Baudrillard's and Bayles' alarmist—and, I would argue, elitist—sentiments concerning art and music today.

> all barriers break down in the sensationalist novel and a new form of interiority is revealed—aggression, lust, greed, cravings for omnipotence, narcissistic self-empowerment (= the "master of the universe"-fantasy), incestuous wishes, rage, sadism and masochism, and, not to forget, pornographic fantasies. […] In its articulation of hitherto repressed emotions and fantasies, the sensationalist novel [was] already moving toward a *body-centered, corporeal form of aesthetic experience*, [a] seemingly unmediated experience of bodily 'sensations'.[295]

This 'breakdown of barriers' mirrors not only Baudrillard's assessment of art from the modernist period onward, but also the aesthetic 'breakdown' of distinct musical categories and languages in bi- and multilingual rap. Further still, it is striking the extent to which Fluck's observations foreshadow the appeal of rap and many other forms of popular music. Nearly all of the forms of interiority Fluck mentions appear in varying degrees (and often in combination) in hip-hop. Furthermore, writing about some of Edgar Allan Poe's most famous works, Fluck notes that "[t]hey draw their artistic effects solely from the successful coordination of linguistic, phonetic and associative elements of the text to create a unity effect."[296] The same can be said of rap music, especially where, as I argue throughout this study, music and lyrics combine to create an immersive aesthetic experience for the body, intellect, and, particularly for full-blown hip-hop heads, the spirit.[297] Where listeners engage with first-person narratives and tropes such as the pimp/ho, gangsta/trap lord, diva/bitch, playa, or the conscious hip-hopper/activist., rap music, like the sensationalist literature of the 19th century, signals "a development in which aesthetic experience is reconceptualized as the extension of sensations."[298] Put another way, we are lured by a combination of musical and verbal elements so that we might be drawn out of our routine, mundane senses of self. This is certainly true of rap music (for instance, exaggerated fantasies of fantastic wealth and power), but also potentially any other form of popular music, e.g. the extreme violence, brutality, and gore of death metal, contemporary country-western (metaphors of freedom and independence, nativism, god-and-country, and/or patriotism), and even generic pop ballads, which draw heavily upon clichéd tropes of romantic love. As Fluck suggests, it is not important if popular music does or does not attain some perceived level of aesthetic sophistication. It is simply important in the eyes and ears of the listener that any song in question be credible and believable—or, in hip-hop parlance, *real*.

In an essay discussing the appeal of representations of Native Americans in literature and various visual media, Fluck asks a probing question: "[w]hy do we expose ourselves (again and again) to popular culture and mass media entertainment (in the widest sense of the word), although, as a rule, we are well aware of the fact that this material is fictional?"[299] He proceeds to argue that popular culture, and especially mediated popular culture, "provide[s] strong or pleasant experiences"[300] which bring us back again and

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[295] Ibid., 348. Emphasis mine.

[296] Ibid., 352. Fluck refers to "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Tell-Tale Heart," and "The Black Cat."

[297] Stating that "[r]ap is a complex fusion of orality and postmodern technology," Tricia Rose argues similarly. *See* Klein and Friedrich, 59.

[298] Ibid., 358. Fluck refers here to renowned theorist Marshall McLuhan's understanding of media, i.e. that it is an extension of human faculties.

[299] Winfried Fluck, "Playing Indian: Aesthetic Experience, Recognition, Identity," in *Romance with America?: Essays on Culture, Literature, and American Studies*, edited by Laura Bieger and Johannes Voelz (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2009), 433.

[300] Ibid.

again, oftentimes to the same book, film, TV series, gallery painting, or photo(s). Likewise, people return to popular music for repeat listens, either recorded (and played back) or live, which unfolds in a communal space at massive volumes to deliver profound physical sensations. Indeed, the entire era of recorded music is one that is receiver-driven in the sense that playback technology enables listeners to expose themselves again and again to recorded texts which, for all intents and purposes, should become, after numerous listens, all-too-familiar. Nevertheless, repeat exposure creates an opportunity for audiences to position themselves in profoundly immersive experiences, and quite likely as a form of self-extension. Any music lover when asked will happily admit which artists, albums, songs, or music videos he or she listens to and watches, oftentimes repeatedly. Although Fluck does not explicitly address it in his work, popular music presents a "unique form of sensuous experience"[301] that stimulates the ears, eyes, and the body, particularly because of modern audio systems. Next to watching a film in a darkened theater, music might be the most immersive form of popular culture to date, which warrants considering it from the point of view of aesthetic experience.

Shifting "the definition of the aesthetic from a philosophy of art to that of aesthetic experience," which helps us move beyond Baudrillard's fixation on the supposed demise of aesthetics, Fluck posits that "a key formative aspect of aesthetic experience [is] that it is constituted by a transfer."[302] "The basic fact about aesthetic objects," he explains, be they novels, static or moving images, or music, is that "in order to acquire significance and to provide an aesthetic experience, they have to be brought to life by means of an imaginary transfer."[303] As audience members, Fluck argues that we "bring [characters] to life by drawing on our own associations, feelings and even bodily sensations."[304] Discussing literature and reading, Fluck explains that in the act of reception

> the fictional text or aesthetic object comes to represent two things at the same time: the world of the text and the imaginary elements added to it by the reader in the act of actualizing the words on the page. It is this "doubleness" that can be seen as an important source of aesthetic experience, because it allows us to do two things at the same time: to articulate imaginary elements and to look at them from the outside.[305]

Thus, the act of reading, and I would argue the act of listening (along with the reading and/or singing/rapping of lyrics while listening), opens what Fluck refers to as a state of in-betweenness. "[B]ecause of the doubling structure of fictionality," Fluck writes, "we are, in the words of Wolfgang Iser, 'both ourselves and someone else at the same time.'"[306] Citing the examples of Hamlet and Isabel Archer (the protagonist from Henry James' "A Portrait of a Lady"), Fluck claims that since "we do in fact know that [these characters] never existed, we have to bring them to life by drawing on our associations, feelings and

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[301] Ibid.
[302] Ibid., 434.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Ibid.
[305] Ibid.
[306] Ibid.

even bodily sensations."[307] The same is true for fictional characters in a story, novel, TV show, film, and, as I argue, audio recordings.

Rap music is replete with imaginary characters. From the invented artist personae of Flavor Flav, Dr. Dre, Biggie Smalls, or Queen Latifah, Warrior Queen, and Sookee, the list could go on and on. However, an entire record is sometimes orchestrated around imaginary characters. For example, Eminem's *The Marshall Mathers LP* (2000) includes the massively successful single "The Real Slim Shady." Here, we find a rather interesting *double* doubling effect. In the first instance, Eminem is the performance personae of Marshall Mathers; in the second, Slim Shady is an alter ego Eminem invented—first, for the *Slim Shady EP* (1997) and, again, for the full-length record *The Slim Shady LP* (1999). In each of these manifestations, Slim Shady is a character that engages in all sorts of questionable ethical behavior, including sexism and cartoonish suggestions of violence. For example, in "The Real Slim Shady," Eminem jokes that his producer (Dr. Dre) is dead and locked in his basement, and Eminem issues faux-maniacal laughter as a rejoinder. The emcee also makes numerous explicit sexual references, including bestiality, kinky parental intercourse, a diss that suggests the listener is performing cunnilingus on Mathers' mother, and even the quite bold suggestion that two men ought to be able to love and marry each other—rather progressive for a rap song in the U.S. at the time, or anywhere else for that matter.[308]

Yet for all intents and purposes, Slim Shady does not exist, and audiences have to bring the character to life via cues in the lyrics and associations with Eminem. (In the music video, Eminem portrays Slim Shady as a mock super hero, dancing around and engaging in comical antics). In the song's intro, a voice asks "Will the real Slim Shady please stand up?," replying "We're gonna have a problem here." (In the video, a female nurse, modeled after nurse Ratched in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, issues the call over the PA system of a mock insane asylum.) Indeed, that line (minus "We're gonna have a problem here") is refashioned as "Won't the real Slim Shady please stand up/Please stand up, please stand up" for the song's recurring hook. The problem, of course, is that Slim Shady is not real; therefore, no 'real' Slim Shady actually *can* stand up— except perhaps in the minds of the listener. How can this be? Hip-hop aficionados know that the call *Stand up* is common in rap—indeed, in live musical performance more generally. Thus, Eminem plays with a well-worn phrase to implore the audience to become Slim Shady. All of this unfolds through Mathers as Eminem, and audiences can play out *any* of the bizarre suggestions, no matter how ludicrous or transgressive, Eminem *as* Slim Shady models in the song. However, it is still entirely fictional. It is worth remembering that with more than 172 million records sold worldwide, Eminem is the most successful commercial rapper to date,

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[307] Ibid.

[308] Since recording "The Real Slim Shady," as well as a host of other songs where he openly bashes homosexuals, Mathers has come out as bisexual. *See* Noah Michcelson, "Eminem Comes Out As Gay In 'The Interview' (VIDEO)," *Huffpost*, Dec 15, 2014, accessed May 4, 2018, huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/25/eminem-gay-interview_n_6380696.html.

and his Slim Shady song and character are beloved around the world.[309] He twice sold out Wembley Stadium in England in 2014. The venue holds approximately 80,000 seats.[310]

As Fluck suggests, aesthetic experience requires that we actualize fictional characters in whatever actions they might engage by way of transfer: we invest our own thoughts, feelings, memories, fantasies, and bodily sensations to bring them to life. While that occurs in the fictional characters and narrative structures found in literature or film, the same is true for popular music. As Barry Shank argues, the "experience of musical beauty engages the listener in the search for the extramusical."[311] In the act of listening, a "gap between the listener and the world remains, despite our efforts to fill it."[312] Furthermore, "[w]hen we listen," he claims, "we find ourselves drawn to close those gaps between sensation and music, wanting to fill them in with meaning."[313] From outright imaginative fantasy to injecting our own lived experiences (and likely a combination of both), the 'meaning' Shank refers to comes in many forms, and that is quite likely the allure: we are allowed to explore all sorts of personae (gangsters, pimps, divas, bitches, hos, political activists, and so forth) and the actions they engage in (drug taking/dealing, violence, illicit sex, revenge, tenderness, political activism, "saving the world," etc.) without fear of reprisal. Moreover, by grafting what we think we know of ourselves onto the imaginary figures we encounter—and, through such encounters, enact—we imaginatively extend ourselves. With regard to race, Potter noted that this was one of hip-hop's greatest potentials, arguing that the radical postmodernism of hip-hop

> gives us a third option, neither the essentialized racial identities cherished by separatists on all sides nor the erasure of difference which is so dear to so-called "liberal" theorists who still dream of a "melting pot" society, but a concrete "double" and perhaps even *multiple* consciousness—the awareness that "white" is no less a construction than "black," and that cultural differences emanate not from hermetically-sealed universes, but from an insistent and ongoing *mix*.[314]

This can certainly happen within the fictional realm of the above Eminem song, but also in the semi-fictional/semi-autobiographical narratives found in rap music. It is precisely these sorts of situations and circumstances that this study explores. On the one hand, I understand rap music to be a form of popular literature; on the other, bi- and multilingual rap is an *avant-garde* form of popular literature because of the way in which rappers experiment with languages. If these experimental musical and linguistic texts, which are quite commonplace, result in transcultural art, then listeners stand to undergo a transcultural aesthetic experience through the act of listening. The proceding chapters investigates how and when this is likely to occur.

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[309] Eminem's most recent worldwide sales data was compiled at Statistic Brain in July 2017. *See* "Eminem Total Albums Sold," July 11, 2017, accessed Apr 29, 2018, statisticbrain.com/eminem-album-sales-statistics/.

[310] Simon Boyle, "Eminem celebrates sell-out Wembley shows in stately Berkshire home and snubs London's nightlife," *The Mirror*, July 12, 2014, accessed Apr 30, 2018, mirror.co.uk/3am/celebrity-news/eminem-celebrates-sell-out-wembley-shows-3848882.

[311] Shank, 19.

[312] Ibid.

[313] Ibid., 20.

[314] Potter, 19. Italics in the original.

Chapter 2

**Roots, Rhymes, and Realities: The Origins of Bilingual Rap
in Germany and the United States**

In a short piece entitled "Rapping DJs Set A Trend" from the Nov 3, 1979 issue of *Billboard* magazine, music journalists Radcliffe Joe and Nelson George wrote about the "changing directions in disco music" to describe how "recordings by rapping deejays," which they also refer to as "spinners" (a term that, in lieu of emcee, never caught on), had begun to "make an impact on the soul and disco charts."[1] Joe and George were responding to the Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight," the first commercially significant rap song that had already peaked at #4 on the Hot Soul Singles chart, and which stood poised to break into the Billboard Hot 100.[2] Most interesting, however, is the way in which the authors describe the new oral art of rapping: "[t]he music of rapping deejays," they wrote, "features a style reminiscent of New York's street corner 'doo wop' groups in the early days of rock."[3] On the one hand, this comparison helped readers understand rap's nascent sound who had not yet heard other early rap singles—for instance, The Fatback Band's "King Tim III (Personality Jock)," the predecessor to "Rapper's Delight," or Spoonie Gee's "Spoonin' Rap," the latter of which the authors refer to as "bootleg product."[4] On the other, their characterization positioned rap music within the history of African American musical practices, and thus reflects an effort to take control of, and even launch, the narrative that would eventually emerge—namely, that rap music and hip-hop constitute Black culture. Aside from their analogy that "rapping deejays" resembled doo-wop groups, Joe and George offer no explanation.

That characterization caught on. The first ethnographic study of New York's hip-hop scene, David Toop's *Rap Attack* (1984), contains the heading "Doo-wop hip-hop."[5] Where Murray Forman mentions doo-wop alongside "Rapper's Delight" to decry the type of "corporate manipulation of talent" the Sugarhill Gang's "unethical, if timely, plagiarism" is thought to represent,[6] Reiland Rabaka argues that even though doo-wop "was not the first form of black popular music to 'cross over' to white audiences," it was the first "to spawn widespread white youth imitation."[7] Taking a cue from Toop, who suggested that the roots of rap lie in the West African griot tradition, Rabaka emphasizes the multigenerational connections between rap and "scat singing, vocalese, 'bop-talk,' and 'jive talk'" that comprise the "long musical and colloquial

[1] Radcliffe Joe and Nelson George, "Rapping DJs Set A Trend," *Billboard* 91, 3, Nov 3, 1979: 4

[2] Joe Lynch, "35 Years Ago, Sugarhill Gang's 'Rapper's Delight' Made Its First Chart Appearance," *Billboard*, Oct 13, 2014, accessed Apr 12, 2017, billboard.com/articles/news/6281561/sugarhill-gang-rappers-delight-first-chart-appearance-anniversary.

[3] Joe and George, 64.

[4] Ibid., 4.

[5] David Toop, *Rap Attack 3* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2000), 22,

[6] Murray Forman, *The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2002), 109.

[7] Reiland Rabaka, *The Hip Hop Movement: From R&B and the Civil Rights Movement to Rap and the Hip Hop Generation* (New York: Lexington Books, 2013), 63.

continuum that reaches all the way back to ancient African *jeliyas* (now *djalis*)."[8] While these types of observations serve a useful, and necessary, historiographic project, they are, as Shea Serrano describes, "obtuse," "unnecessarily complicated," and "planted in the most unlikeable kind of semantics."[9] Moreover, they are often made without sufficient analysis to provide hard evidence to support them. For instance, though Toop, Rabaka, and others assert that rappers are modern day incarnations of West African griots, who has actually taken the time to conduct a study to determine the extent to which early rappers consciously responded to that rich tradition?

Links between early rap and African American musical practices do exist, but if they are to be properly understood, then those connections must be explicitly teased out through hard analysis, especially if, as Danny Hoch has argued, hip-hop deserves to be discussed in terms of its aesthetics.[10] "Hip-hop's origins," he writes, "are multifaceted, politically conflicting, consistently debated, and highly complicated."[11] Furthermore, Hoch astutely observes that "hip-hop's aesthetics lie foremost in the social context" from which they emerged—the demographics of New York City that included "southern Blacks living alongside Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Jamaicans and a handful of working-poor whites, all of whom drew upon both inherited and appropriated cultures in the face of urban decay and accelerated technology."[12] If rap's early musical and vocal aesthetics were developed and practiced by people from a variety of backgrounds, both in the U.S. and in Germany, then closely scrutinizing how those practices became taken up across a number of social and cultural divides is vitally important.

In this chapter, I explore the origins of bilingual rap in Germany and the United States by closely examining musical and oral aesthetics from the point of view of mimesis—that is to say, mimicry and imitation. To do so, I return to the Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" to tell in greater detail the story behind its borrowing of the core musical components from disco/funk band Chic's "Good Times," but also to show how specific instances in its lyrics connect "Rapper's Delight" to the scat, bop-talk, and jive-talking traditions scholars and commentators often mention, but fail to highlight. In the popular imagination—that is to say, across the Internet—the Sugarhill Gang sampled "Good Times" so the group's emcees could rap overtop portions of Chic's disco/funk hit. But aside from the analogue turntable techniques founding hip-hop deejays Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash, Afrika Bambaataa, and Grand Wizard Theodore had developed, no direct sampling technology existed. Thus, the core musical elements of "Good Times" had to be recreated in the studio by the house band at Sylvia and Joe Robinson's Sugar Hill Records. If we approach the musical reuse of "Good Times" outside the trappings of commercial capitalism, i.e. intellectual property rights and the urge to 'get paid,' what can we learn by analyzing that process as an act of creative imitation?

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[8] Reiland Rabaka, *Hip Hop's Amnesia: From Blues and the Black Women's Club Movement to Rap and the Hip Hop Movement* (New York: Lexington Books, 2012), 158.

[9] Shea Serrano, *The Rap Yearbook: The Most Important Rap Song from Every Year Since 1979, Discussed, Debated, and Deconstructed* (New York: Abrams, 2015), 11.

[10] Danny Hoch, "Toward a Hip-Hop Aesthetic: A Manifesto for the Hip-Hop Arts Movement," in *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop*, edited by Jeff Chang (New York: BasicCivitas, 2006), 350.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

Understanding that process in some detail is vital if we are to better apprehend how rap's early aesthetics migrated across the Atlantic. After comparing "Good Times" and "Rapper's Delight" in terms of musical mimesis, I conduct a close analysis of the first example of recorded rap in Germany, G.L.S.-United's "Rapper's Deutsch" (1980). To do so, I rely on what Robert Cantwell calls ethnomimesis: imitation as "a primary form of learning […] that arises between, among, of, and by people in the realm of social relations, which includes most of what we call 'culture.'"[13] However, where Cantwell stresses "unconscious mimicry" as the means by which "we take the deposits of a particular influence, tradition, or culture to ourselves and by which others recognize them in us,"[14] I argue that the mimesis G.L.S.-United and its creative production team engaged in was deliberate—in other words, conscious. After describing the re-fashioned musical arrangement of "Rapper's Deutsch" to show what it shares, and how it diverges, from the Sugarhill song, I consider its lyrics in terms of content, but also from the point of view of aurality, the aim of which is to tease out specific instances of vocal mimesis. Because "Rapper's Delight" and "Rapper's Deutsch" are unique works that function in entirely different ways, it will become evident how G.L.S.-United did not engage in mere imitation. Again, if we step back from the logic of capital and resist the temptation to use loaded words such as 'theft,' 'stealing,' and 'appropriation,' comparatively studying these two songs will shed light on transatlantic cultural translation.

Because this study seeks to resuscitate and constructively redeploy French cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard's term transaesthetics, this first chapter focuses on three important aspects of its redefinition—namely, the role of mimesis in launching new cultural practices, the cultural flows between the United States and Germany, and the role of translation in relocating cultural practices outside their original sociocultural context. In the original sense of Baudrillard's term, one could argue that the re-use of the musical breakdown from "Good Times" is an example of what he deemed aesthetic simulation, i.e. the imitation of an original.[15] Instead, I argue that by suffusing musical elements from "Good Times" with the Latin salsa tradition, the Sugar Hill production team engaged in creative musical mimesis. Likewise, "Rapper's Deutsch," which musically cites "Good Times" via "Rapper's Delight," could be dismissed as what Baudrillard referred to as endless simulation, i.e. a copy of a copy. However, because the lyrics to "Rapper's Deutsch" are completely different from the Sugarhill Gang's original, I argue that it is a creative translation which showed that rap music could be made in German, even if in a rudimentary form. As the first instance of recorded German rap with plenty of English-language wordplay, "Rapper's Deutsch" is best understood as an original work that resulted from creative mimesis across the cultural contact zone of the Atlantic. In that sense, G.L.S.-United's creative response to the Sugarhill Gang in a transatlantic orientation lays the ground stone for the redefinition of transaesthetics this study argues for.

For the remainder of the chapter I turn to other early examples of bilingual rhyming in both countries: The Mean Machine's "Disco Dream" (1981), Austrian recording artist Falco's "Der Kommissar" (1982),

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[13] Robert Cantwell, *Ethnomimesis: Folklife and the Representation of Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 5.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Jean Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*, trans. James Benedict (London, Verso: 1993), 11.

and the Coldcut remix of Eric B. & Rakim's "Paid in Full" (1987). Even though "Disco Dream" was one of the first American rap songs to contain Spanish lyrics, serious discussion of it has languished for too long. Highlighting the song's playfulness, its calls for participation, and its didactic nature will add an important layer to the theory of aesthetics this study strives to articulate. Furthermore, closely studying "Disco Dream" allows us to understand how studio techniques, in conjunction with adroit bilingual rapping, create a powerful aesthetic experience of participation. Similarly, Falco's "Der Kommissar," which is typically dismissed as inconsequential in the development of German-language rap,[16] deserves reconsideration simply for the way Falco suffused Neue Deutsche Welle synthpop with rap. On the one hand, I argue that Falco further modeled how vocalists could rhyme in German and English; on the other, he introduced, and even Germanized, early hip-hop slang. Further still, Falco's code-switching between German and English unfolds a diffuse, linguistic field that, at times, is neither German nor English, but both and more. Closely reading the lyrics to his song will, one the one hand, offer the first concrete example for why the term transaesthetics deserves to be resuscitated and redeployed in a more constructive manner, and, on the other, provide the first evidence of the sort of transcultural vernacular that results from the merging and blending two or more linguistic systems. At the end of the chapter, I consider Eric B. & Rakim's "Paid in Full (Seven Minutes of Madness—The Coldcut Remix)" primarily for the way the UK duo interpolated a sample of Ofra Haza's performance of "Im Nin'alu," a seventeenth-century poem by the Yemeni poet Shalom Shabazi. Because Coldcut's remix was successful in the United States, Germany, and elsewhere, it demonstrated how other languages could be incorporated into monolingual songs, thereby further signaling how artists might utilize two or more languages in their work.

The examples examined in this opening chapter hearken back to a time when hip-hop meant getting dressed up in the flyest fashion, being out, meeting up, socializing, flirting, dancing, and having fun. To be sure there are many other aspects of hip-hop culture worth thinking and writing about, but mimicry, playfulness, experimentation, and translation were responsible for developing and spreading the culture both within and outside the United States. The examples in this chapter funnel those sentiments in surprising, and possibly even unintentional, ways. While some of these works might not be 'official' rap songs, they nevertheless helped audiences cut loose and, in hip-hop parlance, 'get stupid'—two expressions that underscore the liberating power of popular music.

Revisiting "Rapper's Delight" as Musical and Oral Mimesis

The Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" did not come out of nowhere. By the summer of 1979, the infectious groove of "Good Times" was massively popular with hip-hoppers in New York. As hip-hop scholar Jeff Chang has noted, "Good Times" had replaced "MFSB's 'Love Is the Message' as the beat that sent […] dancers running to the floor and […] MCs running to the microphone."[17] Chic guitarist and composer Nile Rodgers, who co-wrote "Good Times," explains that upon visiting the Bronx with members of new wave group Blondie, he witnessed young people taking over playgrounds, school gymnasiums, and

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[16] Sascha Verlan and Hannes Loh, *35 Jahre HipHop in Deutschland* (Höfen, Austria: Koch/Hannibal, 2015), 287.
[17] Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: St. Martin's, 2005), 130-131.

bowling alleys to hold what was then called "a hip-hop."[18] According to Rodgers, young people with boom boxes and actual mobile deejays played the musical breakdown from "Good Times" over and over so young people could dance and "rap for hours and hours and hours."[19] Up-and-coming emcees in New York's burgeoning hip-hop scene, including Fab Five Freddie and Futura 2000, rushed the stage in the middle of a Chic concert at Bonds, a New York nightclub, so that they could freestyle rap during the breakdown.[20] While these accounts prove the popularity of "Good Times," they also show that the Sugarhill Gang's creative reuse of the song was an extension of behavior already prevalent in New York's burgeoning hip-hop scene.

By the Fall of 1979, deejays had begun spinning "Rapper's Delight" at hip-hops. A 19-year old Carl Ridenhour (Chuck D from the iconic group Public Enemy) recounted how he was performing on the mic at an event in October when

> "[a]ll of a sudden the DJ [cut] in this shit behind me. Right? And I'm rhyming over words," he laughs. "The crowd don't know. They're just thinking that I'm rhyming and I'm changing my voice or whatever. I held the mic in my hand, I heard words and I lip-synched that motherfucker. Folks thought that shit was me. I was a bad motherfucker after that, believe! The next day, Frankie Crocker broke ["Rapper's Delight"] on [W]BLS. By the next party, folks were looking at me like, 'Pshhhh. You a bad motherfucker, but you ain't that nice!'"[21]

Ridenhour's account is illustrative for two reasons. First, the deejay who mixed "Rapper's Delight" into his set signaled acceptance of the Sugarhill Gang's surprise breakout single. Second, when put on the spot, Ridenhour lip-synched to the track. He did not pause to ponder the ethical dimensions of his act, which was spontaneous and taken out of necessity. Even if he did so to protect his reputation, Chuck D's decision to pretend and play along constituted a form of conscious mimesis.

How many aspiring emcees rap along to their favorite artists to learn the art of rhyming? Impossible to know, it is a useful question, especially if we consider how the Sugarhill Gang got its start. As Chang notes, Henry "Big Bank Hank" Jackson was

> a Bronx nightclub bouncer [and follower of DJ Kool Herc] who somehow became a manager for Grandmaster Caz [Curtis Fisher] and the rappers who became the Cold Crush Brothers. He was making pizzas in New Jersey to pay for Caz's sound system, and rapping along to a Caz tape one afternoon at the parlor, when Joey Robinson heard him and asked him to come to Jersey for an audition. On the way back, two other rhymers jumped into Joey's car, Guy "Master Gee" O'Brien and Michael "Wonder Mike" Wright, and the three auditioned that evening. Sylvia Robinson immediately signed them to be the first group on her new imprint, Sugar Hill Records.[22]

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[18] "The Story of Rapper's Delight by Nile Rodgers." YouTube video, 4:33, posted by shot7.com, Mar 2, 2008, accessed Mar 25, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=t-SCGNOieBI.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Chang, 131.
[22] Ibid.

While fans, commentators, and scholars of hip-hop tend to fixate on the transgressive aspect of this story, i.e. that Fisher never received financial compensation for Jackson's use of his rhymes, Jackson learned to rhyme by rapping along to Caz's demo tape. Though the Robinsons hoped to cash in on the nascent hip-hop sound,[23] no one knew that "Rapper's Delight" would become commercially successful. Before anyone financially profited from sales of the record, Jackson engaged in mimetic behavior. Rather than calling him a thief, it might be more accurate to characterize Big Bank Hank as Caz's petulant protégée.

In "Rapper's Delight," Wonder Mike and Master Gee utilize a number of scat-like expressions—thus, mimicry is not limited to Big Bank Hank's 'borrowing' of Curtis's rhymes. In the first verse, Wonder Mike scats "I gotta bang bang the boogie to the boogie/Say up jump the boogie to the bang bang boogie/Let's rock." In verse three, Master Gee raps "Like a hot ready to pop the pop the pop dibbie dibbie/Pop the pop, pop, you don't dare stop." In the fourth verse, Wonder Mike scat sings "Skiddlee beebop a we rock a scoobie doo" and, later, "Rock it up, uh, baby bubba/Baby bubba to the boogie the bang bang the boogie/To the beat beat." Wonder Mike concludes verse five with "To the rhythm of the boogie the bang bang the bong," and in verse seven, Master Gee raps "To the rhythm of the beat to the beat the beat/To the double beat beat that it makes ya freak." In the eighth verse, Wonder Mike raps "To the bang bang boogie/Say up jump the boogie to the rhythm of the boogie the beat," and in verse ten, Master Gee scats "to the beat the beat/To the double beat beat that makes you freak."[24] In essence, these emcees deployed language to create syncopated rhythms, often to fill out lines before the next emcee stepped up to the mic.

As Reiland Rabaka notes, these types of scat-like phrases, though mostly devoid of semantic content, are not inconsequential, but it is unclear why he and other commentators tie them to the doo-wop tradition of the 1940s and 50s. In doo-wop, back-up singers typically intone "ooohs" and "aaaahs" or expressions such as "bow-bow-bow" or "bah-bah-bah" to produce a steady, rhythmic constancy over which a vocalist sings. Rabaka argues that these vocal sounds "imitate musical instruments"[25] much like the jazz tradition of vocalese, where multiple vocalists work together to create, through mimicry, the instrumentation of a full ensemble. But this is not the case in "Rapper's Delight," where the aforementioned phrases are foregrounded as part of the lead vocal. Since they are uttered overtop actual instruments, these vocalizations do not function as a stand-in for musical accompaniment as in vocalese. Although this highly rhythmic, mostly non-semantic use of language had predecessors, in "Rapper's Delight" it was by all accounts a new development. The emcees could complete their verses without significant semantic content, the result of which gives the listener a break so that he or she is 'fresh' to listen to the next emcee's rhymes with an open mind. More importantly, the lack of 'meaning' allows the listener to imagine whatever he or she wishes. Rather than speculate on what Master Gee's phrase "pop the pop the pop dibbie dibbie" might mean, it simply opens a productive space for the listener to imagine.

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[23] Ibid., 132.

[24] "Rapper's Delight – The Sugarhill Gang," *Genius Media*, accessed Mar 24, 2017, genius.com/Sugarhill-gang-rappers-delight-lyrics.

[25] Rabaka 2013, 61.

While Rabaka argues that these sorts of near-nonsense phrases "seem to mirror, if not mimic, the high-sounding but hallow words of 1950s U.S. government and society as a whole,"[26] he never explicitly describes what he means or give examples of those 'hollow words.' Rather than making broad, unsubstantiated claims, it is more sensible, at least in this specific instance, to argue (as Rabaka does) that Wonder Mike and Master Gee position the early oral aesthetics of rap "within the wider context of postwar African American history, culture, and struggle"[27] because they mostly use language—actual words, not gibberish—as a vocal rhythmic solo device. Further still, by displaying their knowledge of scat singing, Wonder Mike and Master Gee not only insist upon their place within the deeper tradition of African American musical practices, they establish credibility for any other early emcees who would rely on the technique. As will become evident in my analysis of G.L.S.-United's "Rapper's Deutsch," this type of vocal mimesis was vitally important for bringing rap's rhyming aesthetics to Germany.

Chang emphasizes that the "amateur rappers" of the Sugarhill Gang "never had a DJ."[28] As a result, the "Good Times" breakdown was recreated for "Rapper's Delight" using actual instruments. On early rap records, this method was the rule, not the exception. As Stuart Baker notes, producers utilized sessions players "to replay and emulate what hip-hop DJs were creating in the streets and clubs."[29] In this case, Chip Sherin, a seventeen-year-old Raleigh, North Carolina-native, was visiting a friend in New Jersey when Sugar Hill records co-founder Sylvia Robinson asked him to replay the "Good Times" bassline for the session.[30] Another studio player, Brian Horton, was commissioned to re-create the drums.[31] According to Sherin, he "never thought that the song would have any real momentum" because its "musical value was absolutely zero. [The] last thing I wanted to be known for," he has stated, "was playing that song."[32] Although "Rapper's Delight" was "a studio creation […] assembled in a New Jersey afternoon,"[33] Sherin was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for his ad-hoc performance. In essence, however, Sherin, Horton, and any of the other musicians who played on "Rapper's Delight" were mimicking the deejays who had been spinning Chic's song to delight audiences. This is a form of conscious memesis.

Under Robinson's direction, the entire production team engaged in what Serge Lacasse calls allosonic quotation, i.e. the verbatim recreation of a specific musical passage through performance,[34] but the rhythm track they laid down is not an exact reproduction. In the verse sections of "Good Times," a snare drum is used on beats two and four, but in the chorus, the snare is replaced by handclaps. Between 3:13 and 3:47 of the 12-inch single (the passage deejays worked with in live settings), only hi-hat, bass drum, bass guitar, and

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[26] Ibid., 62.

[27] Ibid., 61.

[28] Chang, 132.

[29] Stuart Baker, "Liner Notes," *Boombox: Early Independent Hip-Hop, Electro, and Disco Rap 1979-82* (London: Soul Jazz Records, 2016), 15.

[30] David Menconi, "The Riff That Lifted Rap," *The News & Observer*, Mar 14, 2010, accessed Mar 26, 2017, web.archive.org/web/20110714175053/http://www.newsobserver.com/2010/03/14/385149/the-riff-that-lifted-rap.html?storylink=misearch.

[31] "The Sugarhill Gang—Credits," *AllMusic*, accessed Mar 26, 2017, allmusic.com/album/the-sugarhill-gang-mw0000067810/credits.

[32] Menconi.

[33] Chang, 132.

[34] Justin A. Williams, "Intertextuality, sampling, and copyright," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop*, edited by Justin A. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 208.

handclaps are heard. That passage was the one audiences craved: burgeoning breakdancers and hopeful emcees honed their crafts to it, and it inspired audiences to dance. In short, the reason the production team at Sugar Hill Records zeroed in on that one particular musical passage was because the culture expected, demanded, and loved it. Thus, Sylvia and Joey Robinson and the individuals they gathered in the studio answered a call made by the nascent hip-hop community. Where David Samuels argues that the beginning of "Rapper's Delight" was "indistinguishable from the disco records of the day,"[35] the first sixteen seconds sound as if they could have been scored for a seventies-era Blaxploitation film or TV detective show. Indeed, the theme Isaac Hayes composed for *Shaft* (1971) or Bobby Womack's theme for *Across 110th Street* (1972) come to mind. In addition, the opening eight bars of "Rapper's Delight" evoke the introduction to War's "Low Rider" (1975), or perhaps even "Summer," albeit faster, the group's downtempo hit from the summer of 1976. These references are achieved with just four percussive instruments: a hi-hat, cow bell, bongos, and the cabasa—a shaker common in Latin jazz. Thus, although the opening sequence of "Rapper's Delight" falls firmly in the African American soul-funk tradition, it has a decidedly Latin flair. In this way, it reflects New York's Afro-Latin Caribbean community of 1970s, which problematizes the notion that hip-hop culture and rap music are strictly Black culture. Combined with the punchy, ascending/descending *a due* piano and bass guitar riff, which was borrowed from the UK group Love De-Luxe's hit "Here Comes That Sound Again" (1979),[36] the opening sixteen seconds of "Rapper's Delight," even with the aforementioned resemblances, might be the most original aspect of the song.

The use of handclaps in "Good Times" is an important component for understanding the song's appeal, and the foregrounding of handclaps in "Rapper's Delight" may explain why it became so popular, both in the U.S. and abroad.[37] While music is undoubtedly a feature common to the human experience, "music and linguistic systems," psychologist David Ludden notes, "vary widely from culture to culture."[38] Given how differing tonal, harmonic, and melodic sensibilities make musical collaboration across cultures tricky,[39] music does not constitute a universal language. For the able-bodied, foot-tapping and head-bobbing are fundamental ways to engage with music: both are rhythmic, and neither require advanced education or training. The same is true for clapping. Indeed, it is one of the first motor skills toddlers learn in one-on-one situations with caregivers. Done in groups, clapping fosters communality. Furthermore, the sound of handclaps fosters psychological engagement. In other words, songs that contain handclaps invite people to clap along, both physically and psychologically. (Tellingly, the last verse of "Good Times" contains the lyric

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[35] David Samuels, "The Rap on Rap: The 'Black Music' That Isn't Either," in *That's the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader*, edited by Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal (New York: Routledge: 2004), 148.

[36] "Sugarhill Gang—Rapper's Delight," *Discogs*, accessed Aug 18, 2018, discogs.com/Sugarhill-Gang-Rappers-Delight/master/131354.

[37] Handclaps are a power aesthetic device. Consider Queen's massively successful "We Will Rock You" (1977), an a cappella song comprised solely by thunderous stomping and handclaps. The only "music" in the song comes near the end when guitarist Brian May enters with a guitar solo.

[38] David Ludden, "Is Music a Universal Language? Expressing the Shared Human Experience," *Psychology Today*, July 31, 2015, accessed Mar 26, 2017, psychologytoday.com/blog/talking-apes/201507/is-music-universal-language.

[39] Kendra Salois describes the limits of cross-cultural musical collaboration in hip-hop, but also the opportunity for non-US cultural actors to "take control of […] a failed collaboration." *See* Kendra Salois, "The US Department of State's 'Hip Hop Diplomacy' in Morocco," in *Music and Diplomacy from Early Modern Era to the Present*, edited by Rebekah Ahrendt, Mark Ferraguto, and Damien Mahiet (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2014), 231-249.

"don't be a drag, participate.") Someone on the production team at Sugar Hill Records, possibly Sylvia Robinson herself, decided to foreground handclaps on "Rapper's Delight." Like so many pop songs before and since, the role of handclaps is likely one reason why, in Chang's words, the song "crossed over from New York's insular hip-hop scene to Black radio, then charged up the American Top 40, and swept around the globe."[40] While Chang claims that "[i]mitations popped up from Brazil to Jamaica,"[41] one such emulation appeared in (West) Germany, and it is in the spirit of flow back across the Atlantic that I turn to G.L.S.-United's "Rapper's Deutsch," a minor musical curiosity from April 1980.

Ethnomimesis: The Curious Case of G.L.S.-United's "Rapper's Deutsch" (1980)

In the Spring of 1980, Harold Faltermeyer, the renowned soundtrack composer, went into a studio with Hans Scherer to prepare the music for a spin-off single titled "Rapper's Deutsch." As musicologist Dietmar Elflein has shown, the re-creation of R&B and funk hits, often before they were officially released to the West German market, was commonplace in West Germany from the 1950s to the mid-1970s.[42] In this case, Faltermeyer and Scherer relied on the same instruments, and upon a cursory listen they achieve nearly the same feel, albeit with slight differences. For instance, the cow bell in the Sugarhill original has a slightly lower pitch than "Rapper's Deutsch," a variation attributable to the speed at which the recording was made, the acoustics of the studio, the size of the cowbell, the precise point at which the bell was struck, microphone positioning, or any combination thereof. Furthermore, where the musical accompaniment for "Rapper's Delight" does not utilize handclaps until after the first sixteen bars, handclaps are featured in the opening of "Rapper's Deutsch." By zeroing in on and amplifying the use of handclaps, Faltermeyer and Scherer recognized, and further exploited, the aural device to cleverly forge a cross-cultural, transatlantic bond through a very simple, effective, and nearly universal musical sound. Tempting though it may be to dismiss the music of "Rapper's Deutsch" as mere imitation, it would be a mistake to characterize it as a copy of a copy. Instead, Faltermeyer and Sherer, like Sherin and Horton, committed a gesture of musical mimesis. While these methods and techniques represent one more instance of Lacasse's notion of allosonic quotation, Faltermeyer and Scherer took it a step further. Because they consciously mimicked the creative team at Sugar Hill Records, the musicians who performed on Chic's "Good Times," and Love De-Luxe's "Here Comes That Sound Again," Faltermeyer and Scherer demonstrate Cantwell's notion of ethnomimesis. Instead of dismissing "Rapper's Deutsch" as an imitation, cover, or parody, it is more accurate to characterize it as an example of transatlantic ethnomusical mimesis circulating between Germany, the UK, and the United States.

As Verlan and Loh point out, G.L.S.-United had nothing to do with hip-hop culture in Germany, and for good reason: at the time, there was no scene to speak of whatsoever. Following Dietmar Elflein, consensus in the scholarship suggests that Germans, both in the former East and West, first learned of hip-

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[40] Chang, 131.

[41] Chang, 131.

[42] For detailed overview of his argument, *see* Dietmar Elflein, "Das war nicht nett von Dir! Anmerkungen zum Diskurs über afroamerikanische Musik in (West-) Deutschland," in *Aneigungsformen Populärer Musik: Klänge, Netzwerken, Geschichte(n) und wildes Lernen*, edited by Dietmar Elflein and Bernhard Weber (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2017), 57-92.

hop's core practices of spraying, deejaying, breakdancing, and rapping through the films *Wild Style* (1983), *Style Wars* (1983), *Beat Street* (1984), and *Breakin'* (1984).[43] Sina Nitzsche, following Pratt, refers to this early exposure as a "medial contact zone" that created a "personal encounter between different groups of people in different positions of power."[44] Similarly, Horst Tonn focuses on how young people began meeting up in 1985 to practice the skills they learned from these films.[45] However, as Simon Strick has shown, first contact with early rap music and hip-hop culture was not limited to those films, pointing instead to a more holistic, full-spectrum media exposure via "radio, records, television and cinema" to argue that "the first hip-hoppers in Germany were not participants but first and foremost audiences."[46]

Part of that more complete picture includes the Jan 17, 1980 appearance of the video clip for "Rapper's Delight" on episode fifty-one of the West German television show *Musikladen* (The Music Shop), a pop music program produced by Radio Bremen that presented audiences with an eclectic mix of sights, sounds, and styles. Viewers in the previous decade would have seen The World's Greatest Jazzband, an ensemble from the U.S. that performed jazz standards, and Afric Simone, a multilingual singer from Mozambique who found success on the European charts with "Ramaya." Even as watered down disco dominated the airwaves—for instance, Italian/French disco outfit Citizen Gang's "Womanly Way" or Dutch bubblegum pop girl-band Babe's "Wonderboy"—the show featured funk combo the Ohio Players ("Fire"), the Village People ("Ready for the '80s"), and, following the release of their wildly successful "Le Freak," disco standby Chic. Thus, when "Rapper's Delight" finally arrived, it was the culmination of the projection of Anglophone music into Germany, illustrating at once the role of pop music in binding the divided country to the West at the height of the Cold War, but also a measure of diversity. *Musikladen* audiences bore witness to a confluence of music cultures in Germany,[47] and this process was very much a part of West Germany's acculturation to the Anglophone world. It also signaled the transculturation of Germany through popular music.

The proto-emcees of G.L.S.-United—Thomas Gottschalk, Frank Laufenberg, and Manfred Sexauer—were radio moderators from the (West) German corporate media sphere: Gottschalk for the Bayern 3 show *Star*, Laufenberg for the SWF3-produced *Musiklexikon*, and Sexauer for SR1's *Europawelle*.[48] In a sense, none of these figures were that different from the individuals Sylvia Robinson pulled together to produce "Rapper's Delight." Henry "Big Bank Hank" Jackson was a peripheral figure in New York's

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[43] Dietmar Elflein, "From Krauts with attitudes to Turks with attitudes: some aspects of hip-hop history in Germany," *Popular Music* 17, 3 (1998): 255.

[44] Sina A. Nitzsche, "Hip-Hop Culture as a Medial Contact Space: Local Encounters and Global Appropriations of 'Wild Style'," in *Contact Spaces of American Culture: Globalizing Local Phenomena*, edited by Petra Eckhard, Klaus Rieser, and Silvia Schultermandl (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2012), 174.

[45] Horst Tonn, "Rap Music in Germany: How Ethnic Culture Travels," in *Sites of Ethnicity: Europe and the Americas*, edited by William Boelhower, Rocío G. Davis, and Carmen Birkle (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2004), 274.

[46] Simon Strick, "Competent Krauts—Following the Cultural Translations of Hip-Hop to Germany" in *Traveling Sounds: Music, Migration, and Identity in the U.S. and Beyond*, edited by Wilfried Raussert and John Miller Jones (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2008), 266-67.

47 *Musikladen* playlists have been archived online. *See* "Musikladen (Spielliste), accessed Mar 23, 2017, hitparade.atwebpages.com/spielliste.html.

48 "GLS-United 'Rapper's Deutsch' (1980)," *Bayerische Rundfunk*, July 20, 2010, accessed Mar 23, 2017, web.archive.org/web/20140724051703/http://www.br.de/radio/bayern3/inhalt/musik-center/one-hit-wonder/one-hit-wonder-11-gls-united-rappers-deutsch100.html.

hip-hop scene, and Wonder Mike and Master Gee were simply in the right place at the right time. Indeed, where Strick astutely observes that the Sugarhill Gang demonstrated the "punctuated phrasing, scatting, breaks, crowd-hyping" and braggadocio of early rap,[49] G.L.S.-United's novelty track similarly presented German audiences with many of these techniques. Nobody would deny the Sugarhill Gang's place in hip-hop history, so why should "Rapper's Deutsch" and the proto-emcees of G.L.S.-United not be accorded a similar distinction, no matter how embarrassing, to paraphrase Strick, their first attempt at German-language rap might be?[50]

Like their counterparts in the Sugarhill Gang, Gottschalk, Laufenberg, and Sexauer each take turns on the mic. In terms of subject matter, the lyrics to "Rapper's Deutsch" bear almost no resemblance to "Rapper's Delight," a circumstance that further justifies questioning Verlan and Loh's dismissal of the song as a cover version.[51] Rather than translating the lyrics, Horst Mittmann and Michael Bollinger, two writers for the SWF3 comedy show *Comedy-König* who wrote the words,[52] actually crafted original rhymes. In the song, G.L.S.-United run down a laundry list of English-language pop cultural icons from the 1950s, 60s, and 70s that had shaped German culture following the Second World War. Opening their creative reinterpretation, Laufenberg mimes Wonder Mike's intro:

Laufenberg
Sag' mal Hip-Hop, the hibbe, the hibbe-dibbe hip Hip-Hop of the Beat
Und nun Hip Hop, the hibbe, the hibbe-dibbe hip Hip-Hop of the Beat

Wonder Mike
I said, hip-hop, the hibby, the hibby dibby,
Hip-hip-hop you don't stop. The rock it to the bang bang boogie
Say up jump the boogie to the rhythm of the boogie, the beat.

Where Wonder Mike raps "I said," Laufenberg says "Sag' mal," a truncated form of "Sage mal," the informal second person imperative that literally translates as "say it." While this may seem minor, from the point of view of mimesis it is crucial because both utterances constitute just two syllables. Had Laufenberg rapped a proper German translation, he would have said *ich sagte* (three syllables) or *ich habe gesagt* (five syllables), but neither are a suitable rhythmic match. "Sag' mal," on the other hand, effectively captures Wonder Mike's rhythm and flow. Like Wonder Mike, Laufenberg riffs on the term hip-hop with "hibbe," a total nonsense word.[53] By phonologically mimicking Wonder Mike's oral word play, Laufenberg engages in a form of mimicry we might call vocal (or oral) ethnomimesis.

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[49] Strick, 269.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Verlan and Loh, 287.
[52] "GLS-United 'Rapper's Deutsch' (1980)."
[53] For both songs, I rely on the transcripts at the popular online lyric database Genius.com. Astonishingly, there is no consensus on the opening line of "Rapper's Delight." The transcript at Genius shows Wonder Mike rapping "I said a hip hop the *hippie* the *hippie*" but after many listens, I am convinced Wonder Mike says "hibbe." Furthermore, David Samuels renders the line "I said, hip-hop, de-hibby, de-hibby-dibby/Hip-hip-hop you don't stop." If the word really is "hippie," then Wonder Mike's pronunciation of the double P is very soft. *See* "Rapper's Delight – Sugarhill Gang," *Genius Media*, accessed Mar 24, 2017, genius.com/Sugarhill-gang-rappers-delight-lyrics, Samuels 148, and "Rapper's Deutsch," *Genius Media*, accessed Mar 24, 2017, genius.com/Gls-united-rappers-deutsch-lyrics.

Rather than reusing Master Gee or Wonder Mike's scat-like utterances verbatim, the G.L.S.-United emcees, with Mittmann and Bollinger as ghost writers, create their own. In Sexauer's verse, he raps (or scat sings) "a Hu-Hu-Hula Hoop," "a Yik, a yak, a Yakety Yak," and "Da Doo Ron, Da Doo Ron Ron." For Sexauer, who was born in 1935, these utterances take on cultural significance. The first references hula hoops, the popular toy of the 50s and 60s; the second, the hit song "Yakety Yak" by The Coasters (1958); and the third, the song "Da Doo Ron Ron" by The Crystals (1963).[54] Like a hip-hop deejay who decontextualizes musical elements from recordings to create new compositions, Sexauer creatively reuses the American pop cultural material of his youth. His scat-like rhymes invoke the era he grew up in and thereby demonstrate his love for that culture. Like Laufenberg, Sexauer's performance is a form of mimesis, albeit with a creative twist. While it is difficult to know how much of this word play should be attributed to Sexauer or Mittmann and Bollinger, it is nevertheless an example of playful, inventive vocal mimicry.

More than mimesis, however, G.L.S.-United engage in bilingual play, a phenomenon known as code-switching. After Laufenberg mimics Wonder Mike to open the song, he raps, "Hej, es ist schon lange her, ich weiß' gar nicht mehr, wie es so richtig begann" (Hey, it's been so long I don't remember how it really began). Like Sexauer, Laufenberg identifies musicians who shaped the cultural contours of his generation by referencing groups associated with the so-called big beat Mersey Sound of the 1960s: The Beatles, Petula Clark, The Searchers, The Rolling Stones, and a host of others. In one sequence, Laufenberg raps:

> Es gab a hip, a hip, a Hippy Hippy Shake
> Das waren die Swinging Blue Jeans
> Und ha-ha, Don't Ha Ha, Casey Jones sang für die Teens
> Hey Manfred, Sexy, sag' doch mal, wie alles bei dir anfing!

The language play is striking. "Es gab" (There was) is the only instance of German in the first line. Laufenberg stutters on "hip," then slides into "Hippy Hippy Shake," a song made popular by the British group The Swinging Blue Jeans, namedropped in the very next line. With "hip," a synonym for "cool" (both of which are affirmations for good style), Laufenberg constructs a bridge between his generation and the new rap argot flowing across the Atlantic. In a sense, Laufenberg assures older listeners that rap, the next big trend, is not that different from what came before it. Conversely, Laufenberg riffs on faux-laughter ("ha-ha, Don't Ha Ha") to discourage younger listeners from dismissing the stars of his generation. Even though Laufenberg's code-switching is not particularly sophisticated, he nevertheless modeled that it was possible to rap-rhyme between two languages. As a result, his rhymes unfold a diffuse linguistic field between German and English that could, following Baudrillard, be described as transaesthetic. However, because it unfolded across the Atlantic (and because it is a form of vocal ethnomimesis), the simplistic fixation on 'aesthetic breakdown' is insufficient if we are to understand the importance of this utterance.

Of all the verses, Gottschalk's is perhaps the most intriguing, especially in terms of aurality and the inventive use of language. Opening his verse, he raps:

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[54] Curiously, East coast rapper The Notorious B.I.G. referenced the very same song by The Crystals when he rhymed "Your crew run run, your crew run run" seventeen years later on his smash hit "Hypnotize" (1997). Although popularized in 1963 by the female African American R&B group The Crystals, "Do Doo Ron Ron" was actually written by Jeff Barry, Ellie Greenwich, and famed producer Phil Spector. *See* "The Crystals—Da Doo Ron Ron," *Discogs*, accessed Jan 17, 2017, discogs.com/The-Crystals-Da-Doo-Ron-Ron/release/584761.

> Ich steh' auf Boomtown Rats, XTC, Devo, Patti Smith
> Feel Good, AC/DC, Kiss, Blondie und auch Slits
> Ich bin der New Wave-Man, Nic Nac-Man, kein Guru, kein Punker, kein Freak
> Leg' mich nicht auf irgendwas fest, ich hab' die Scheuklappen dick.

With "ich steh'" (I'm into), a truncated form of *ich stehe* patterned after Wonder Mike and Laufenberg's two-syllable utterance, Gottschalk identifies the contemporary acts he venerates, some of which are associated with the post-punk movement, e.g. Devo, Patti Smith, Blondie, and The Slits. However, in the next line, he declares that instead of being a punk, a guru, or a freak, he is a "New Wave-Man." Although Gottschalk identifies with post-punk artists, he asserts that they do not define him. Taking those sentiments further, he raps "Leg' mich nicht auf irgendwas fest" (Don't put that on me) to instruct his fellow emcees not to pigeon hole him with their sentimental rhymes. Thus, he declares that it is acceptable—and, in fact, desirable—to be attracted to multiple styles of music. The second half of the line, "ich hab' die Scheuklappen dick," is a creative mash-up of two distinct expressions: *Scheuklappen tragen* (to wear blinders) and *etwas dick haben* (to be fed up with or have enough of something). On the one hand, Gottschalk tells Laufenberg and Sexauer that he has had it with their reminiscing; on the other, he signals that he is tired of being narrowly defined—for instance, by a music industry bent on marketing product along strict genre categories. Tellingly, Gottschalk's lines mirror Afrika Bambaataa's desire to transcend genre categories in his deejaying practices. However, both of these readings are possible only because of the lyrical inventiveness of the line. Whoever wrote it—Gottschalk, Mittmann, or Bollinger (and possibly a collaboration of all three)—rose to the occasion to speak to the eclectic nature of popular music. In other words, the line speaks to the confluence of music *Musikladen* audiences were privileged to see and hear, and it underscores the importance of transatlantic flows in the transculturation of West Germany via popular music.

Gottschalk works to build cross-generational consensus, and the remainder of his verse is instructive:

> Der gute Disco-Mann, so dann und wann, da bin ich immer dabei
> Schau die Girls mir an auf der Rollerbahn, das gibt mir 'nen bombigen Drive
> Bin kein Spinner, Mann, hast' den Flimmerkram, wann tust du dir das endlich rein
> Mensch Manni, Mensch Frank, in der Rock 'n' Roll-Zeit da war ich noch viel zu klein
> Ich sag' bam, schubidua, sock it to me babe, I need you by my side
> Und dann schubidubi duwap, abapbap schuwap ist Musik der neuen Zeit
> Kein Honky Tonk, kein Geigensound, ein Knaller muss es sein!
> Und bei gutem Rock, bei Rock 'n' Roll, da passt auch Maffay rein
> Shake!

> A good disco man, from time to time, I'm always down with that
> When the girls check me out on the roller rink that really winds me up
> Not joking, man, you got that fusion-stuff, when are you going to get it
> Hey Manni, hey Frank, I was way too young in your rock 'n' roll days
> I say bam, shoobie do wah, sock it to me, babe, I need you by my side
> And then shoobie doobie doo-wop, a bop bop shoo wop is the music of our time
> Forget honkey tonk and violins it's gotta be a hit!
> When it comes to killer rock and rock 'n' roll Peter Maffay also fits
> Shake!

Although he identifies with the guitar and synth-driven music of his day, Gottschalk acknowledges that he, like Sexauer and Laufenberg before him, enjoys discos and roller rinks. However, "Rollerbahn" (roller rink) is not a German word. (*Rollbahn* is, but it means "runway" or "tarmac.") Thus, by rhyming back and forth

between German and English, Gottschalk spins an interlingual neologism. Done so through the aesthetics of early African American rap, this is the first instance of transcultural vernacular. Furthermore, the English word "drive" is Germanized as "Drive" and is preceded by the adjective "bombig" (terrific; fantastic) to describe the feeling Gottschalk gets when ogled by women. (Curiously, this use of "bombig" predates the widely accepted hip-hop slang "that's the bomb.") Although most of Gottschalk's verse is in German, he borrows the English expression "sock it to me" popular in the 1960s and 70s to signal his solidarity with previous generations. Furthermore, by performing scat-like vocals (that, for him, constitute baby talk because of his age), Gottschalk, like Sexauer, Laufenberg, and Wonder Mike and Master Gee, demonstrates an ability to understand, and even venerate, the culture of previous generations. Gottschalk's final gesture— a tip of the hat to the Romanian-born German rock artist Peter Maffay—places German-language music on par with its Anglophone counterparts. In this way, Gottschalk stands up for and insists upon the relevance of German-language music for present and future generations.

This whirlwind of cultural references, allegiances, and affiliations is accomplished through the playful imitation of the nascent vocal technique of rapping. No one knew that the Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" would signal a sea-change, but G.L.S.-United's "Rapper's Deutsch" was nevertheless a fun, creative response to it. More importantly, this half serious, tongue-in-cheek experiment confirms the importance of playfulness in cultural translation. Rather than argue for or completely dismiss "Rapper's Deutsch" as the first German rap single, it is more accurate to regard it as neither. As a novelty song, it iterates how people mimic and mime as a means to understand and familiarize themselves with new cultural practices. By mimicking the vocal style, but hardly any of the actual words, of "Rapper's Delight," G.L.S.-United attempted to come to grips with yet another new American sound flowing across the Atlantic into Germany. Although Cantwell's principle of ethnomimesis was developed to explain how people engage with culture at traditional folk festivals, if we consider the popular music market a kind of festival space, then G.L.S-United's creative reinterpretation of "Rapper's Delight" is an important example of mimicry and imitation that signaled the acceptance of the new rap sound and language. In that sense, the song is neocultural, and thus underscores the applicability of Fernando Ortiz's transculturation model to explain how the art of rapping was translated to Germany. More importantly, Gottschalk demonstrated that it was possible to rap-rhyme back and forth between German and English, even in a rudimentary manner. Given that early rap culture was an extension, or development, of the microphone toasting practices of Jamaican soundsystem deejays, and that G.L.S.-United were creatively responding to the Sugarhill Gang in a mix of German and English, we can understand this effort as transaesthetic—not in Baudrillard's sense, but in the sense of transcultural practices unfolding across the Atlantic among three countries and cultures and two languages.

Understanding this significance only occurs if we resist the temptation to reach for simple conclusions. One the one hand, the Neue Deutsche Welle movement in pop music was an attempt for Germans to discover, define, and assert their own cultural identity near the height of the Cold War. By rhyming in German about the music and culture that came from the Anglophone world, Gottschalk, Laufenberg, and Sexauer signal a desire to break away, or decouple, from the countries that shaped Germany after World War Two. Yet by rhyming in a combination of German and English with wordplay modeled

after African American vocal practices, G.L.S.-United simultaneously recouples with the musical forms of the United States. In that sense, "Rapper's Deutsch" reflects a kind of curious cultural de- and recoupling that would allow Germans to experiment with the art of rapping. Thus, it underscores the acculturation and deculturation principles in Ortiz's transculturation model.

There are a number of reasons why G.L.S.-United might have wanted to playfully interpret "Rapper's Delight." Perhaps by piggy-backing on its success they too, like the owners of Sugar Hill Records, hoped to make a little money from the new disco-rap phenomenon.[55] Perhaps Faltermeyer and Scherer felt inspired to experiment with a hot, new musical aesthetic; or perhaps Gottschalk, Laufenberg, and Sexauer (with Mittmann and Bollinger as ghost writers) were just playing around and having fun. Whichever the reason, and likely a combination of all three, these collaborative efforts provide insight into the cultural borrowing, translation, and creative refashioning of early rap between Germany and the United States. As the first instance of bilingual rap on either side of the Atlantic, "Rapper's Deutsch" deserves far greater recognition than it has thus far received. One the one hand, it underscores the importance of creative cultural translation; on the other, it provides the first concrete evidence for why the term transaesthetics deserves to be expanded upon with additional qualifications. More than mere 'aesthetic breakdown,' transaesthetics should refer to cross-cultural, transatlantic, transhemispheric, and transcultural practices via ethnomimesis.

Rap in the U.S. Goes Bilingual: The Mean Machine's "Disco Dream" (1981)

Like "Rapper's Deutsch," a flash-in-the-pan experiment that disappeared almost as quickly it had emerged, one of the first rap singles in the U.S. with Spanish lyrics, The Mean Machine's "Disco Dream," has a similar story. As the only song the group produced for Sugar Hill Records, it is tempting to call The Mean Machine a one-hit-wonder, but since "Disco Dream" never charted, the group cannot even claim that backhanded compliment. Because of the low visibility of the group and song, discussion about both has languished. For example, although its online platform has since remedied the lack, the *All Music Guide to Hip-Hop* (2003) did not even list The Mean Machine in their extensive compendium of artists. Raquel Z. Rivera, author of *New York Ricans from the Hip Hop Zone* (2003), mentions in passing that "some hip hop historians say ["Disco Dream"] was the first rap record with bilingual rhymes,"[56] which is odd given that three of the group's emcees, Mr. Schick (Daniel Rivera Jr.), DJ Julio (Steven Santiago), and Mr. Nice (Jose Semprit), not only claim Puerto Rican heritage but even rap in Spanish slang common to New York's Puerto Rican diaspora.

This neglect follows the more general oversight of Puerto Ricans and their role in early hip-hop. That omission, as Juan Flores argues, "has as much to do with the selective vagaries of the music industry as with the social placement of the Puerto Rican community in the prevailing racial-cultural hierarchy."[57] He states that to

> speak of Puerto Ricans in rap means to defy the sense of instant amnesia
> that engulfs popular cultural expression once it is caught up in the logic of
> commercial representation. It involves sketching in historical contexts and

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[55] Chang, 132.

[56] Raquel Z. Rivera, *New York Ricans from the Hip Hop Zone* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 87.

[57] Juan Flores, "Puerto Rocks: Rap, Roots, and Amnesia," in *That's the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader*, edited by Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal (New York: Routledge: 2004), 69.

> sequences, tracing traditions and antecedents, and recognizing hip-hop to
> be more and different than the simulated images, poses, and formulas the
> public discourse of media entertainment tends to reduce it to.[58]

In essence, Flores argues that Puerto Ricans have been overlooked due to the fixation on hip-hop as Black culture. By approaching hip-hop through transculturation models, we can return to understanding these contributions for the ways in which they have informed and enriched the culture, especially before rap music and hip-hop became corporate-driven forms of entertainment.

Flores also points out that in the mid-to-late 1970s and early 1980s, "using Spanish in rap was still a rarity, especially in rhymes that were distributed on tapes and records."[59] Charlie Chase (Carlos Mandes), a hip-hop deejay of Puerto Rican descent who spun records for the legendary Cold Crush Brothers, affirms that "a lot of people were doing [Spanish rhymes] underground, but they couldn't come off doing it, they couldn't make money doing it. The people that did it, did it in parties, home stuff, the block, they were the stars in their ghetto."[60] Chase recalls his own ambivalent feelings when "Disco Dream" appeared:

> "It was strange, and it was new. At first I didn't jive with it because I was
> [...] so caught up in that whole R&B thing that when I heard that, it didn't
> click with me. And I was like, 'Naw, this is bullshit!'" [...] "And then [...]
> something made me realize one day that, wait a minute, man, look at you,
> what are you? You don't rap like they do, but you're Hispanic just like
> them, trying to get a break in the business. And I said, if anything, this is
> something cool and new."[61]

Chase's recognition that "Disco Dream" resembled something "cool and new" underscores its neocultural potential. Like Mellow Man Ace or Latin Empire, masters of so-called Latin Rap (hip-hop in the U.S. that foregrounds a Latina/o view), Charlie Chase eventually came around to The Mean Machine's artistry.[62]

If it took time for Spanish rhymes to emerge in early rap, the "rhythmic texture of songs" already demonstrated a certain kind of Latin flair. Chase recalls how he would

> [sneak] the beat from the number 'Tú Coqueta,' right "in the middle of a
> jam. I'm jamming. I throw that sucker in, just the beat alone, and they'd
> go off. They never knew it was a Spanish record. And if I told them that
> they'd get off the floor." Even the other rappers couldn't tell because the
> salsa cuts seemed to fit in so perfectly. "It was great! I would sneak in
> Spanish records. Beats only, and if the bass line was funky enough, I would
> do that too. Bobby Valentín stuff."[63]

The sounds of Latin music are prevalent on "Disco Dream." Although production details are scarce, its rhythm track is replete with percussion instruments common to salsa (Latin jazz/rock), including timbales, clave, bongos, cow bells, congas, and whistles.[64] Furthermore, the Sugar Hill production team led by Sylvia Robinson, arranger Jiggs Chase, and in-house bassist Doug Wimbish allosonically quoted the bass line from

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[58] Ibid., 70.
[59] Ibid., 73.
[60] Ibid., 74.
[61] Ibid., 75.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Mark Katz, *Groove Music: The Art and Culture of the Hop-Hop DJ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 30.

the Grace Jones single "Pull Up to the Bumper" (1981).[65] Rounding out the percussion track, the use of handclaps, as in "Delight" and "Deutsch," imparts a distinct participatory feel to create the atmosphere of a live performance.

The Mean Machine emcees explore and embellish this participatory dimension at length. Jimmy Mac (James McClean), Mr. Nice, and DJ Julio, and Mr. Schick address listeners directly and encourage them to get up and dance. To maximize performer/audience interaction, and thus enhance the sense of participation, the emcees issue phrases commonly used to pump up crowds at live events, including "10-4," "La-di-da-di," "So let's party," and "Let's do it." Before these shout-outs are issued, a recurring signal line ("Somebody everybody scream a lot insane") is given, and a simulated audience calls these phrases back. At the 2:50 mark, Julio improvises on the hip-hop standard "Just throw your hands in the air" and completes the line with "and wave them in the atmosphere/Get crazy, get crazy, and wave'em like you just don't care." Julio's fellow emcees punctuate his line with "Somebody" and "Everybody" overtop the sounds of a mingling audience. Hardly exclusive to "Disco Dream," this simulated audience effect was common to Sugar Hill recordings of the period.[66] Listening at home, one becomes not only part of the aurally manufactured audience, but psychologically conditioned to participate. These participatory aural elements, both in music and language, underpin the aesthetic experience the song creates.

That potential, however, is not limited to these studio tricks. As the song builds towards its Spanish rhymes, listeners are again primed to actively take part. The emcee team rhymes in unison "We got something new, we got something new/We got something new what want y'all to hear," and Mr. Schick delivers the first verse in Spanish:

> ¡Wepa! "¡Wepa!"
> Alli, ¡na' mas!
> Les abrí las puertas a está ritmos
> Si que tanto les fascina
> Se lo traje en español, mí gente, para América Latina
> Si ustedes quieren gosar y de la vida disfrutar,
> Pues,
> Olviden en los problemas y empiecen a bailar[67]

> Aw yeah! "Aw yeah!"
> There, that's it!
> I opened the doors to these rhythms
> Yes, so fascinating
> I brought it in Spanish, my people, for Latin America
> If you want to enjoy yourselves and enjoy life
> Well,
> Forget about your problems and start dancing.

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[65] "Disco Dream (Overview)," *All Music*, accessed Apr 7, 2017, allmusic.com/song/disco-dream-mt0010436488. YouTube user waxwarrior03 and the website WhoSampled both point out the use of the bassline from the Grace Jones song. *See* "The Mean Machine – Disco Dream (1981)," YouTube video, 6:36, posted by waxwarrior03, Mar 28, 2008, accessed Apr 7, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=i2J38YRkIis&list=RDi2J38YRkIis and "Disco Dream by The Mean Machine," *WhoSampled*, accessed Apr 7, 2017, whosampled.com/The-Mean-Machine/Disco-Dream/.

[66] Songs by Sugar Hill artists that use a simulated audience effect include the Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight," "8th Wonder," and "Apache," but also The Funky 4 + 1 single "That's The Joint," Kevie Kev's "All Night Long (Water Bed)," Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five's "Beat Street," and the Treacherous Three's "Whip It."

[67] Because the lyrics were not included with the release of the single, nor existed anywhere on the Internet at the time of writing, I am indebted to Larissa Medina, a friend of Puerto Rican descent in New York City, for transcribing Mr. Schick's rhymes, but also for explaining some of the slang indicative of the Puerto Rican diaspora.

To maintain the interactive dynamic, the other emcees shout back "¡Wepa!," an exclamation commonly used to express celebration, approval, or encouragement.[68] Furthermore, they shout "Alli, ¡na' mas!" (There, that's it!) in unison to embellish the participatory aesthetic.

As Mr. Schick explicitly states, the entire first verse is geared exclusively toward Spanish speakers: "Se lo traje en español, mí gente, para América Latina." But for those who do not speak or understand Spanish, his follow-up lines, which comprise a mix of Spanish and English, take on a didactic tone:

> Tirén su mano al aire, yes, means
> Throw your hands in the air
> Y siguen con el baile, means
> Dance your body like you just don't care
> Cómo la sal y pimienta que sazónan tú comida,
> ¡Aquí está Mean Machine para sazónan tú vida!

By rapping the standard hip-hop expression "Throw your hands in the air" in Spanish, Mr. Schick's performance becomes an act of translation, but there is considerably more at stake. On a superficial level, Mr. Schick teaches non-Spanish speakers how to say "Tirén su mano al aire." Yet on a deeper level, he demonstrates the art of code-switching and, in the process, reveals its potential as an aesthetic device. In the first instance, his bilingual rap educates, enlightens, and entertains; in the second, he pokes fun at non-Spanish speakers. The latter becomes evident when he raps "y siguen con el baile," which translates to "and continue with the dance" (or "keep dancing")—not, as he and his fellow emcees exclaim, "dance your body like you just don't care." For bilingual Spanish-English speakers, the line likely strikes a humorous tone. While bilingual listeners stand to have a good laugh, Mr. Schick's artistry demonstrates that code-switching can serve two purposes at once. Thus, he and his colleagues perform as tricksters—a cornerstone, as Henry Louis Gates, Jr. has argued, of the vernacular literary traditions in the African diaspora of the Americas.[69]

The power and potential of code-switching is not communicated only through the act itself. In the last two lines, Mr. Schick relies on two complementary and nearly universal symbols (salt and pepper) to metaphorically suggest that two opposites in tandem are more powerful than either, alone. "Cómo la sal y pimienta que sazónan tú comida,/¡Aquí está Mean Machine para sazónan tú vida!" translates to "Like the salt and pepper that flavors your food/Here's Mean Machine to spice up your life." With "sazónan," a verb that means either to season, to flavor, or to spice, Schick draws an analogy to link Mean Machine to that symbolic power. If one reads these symbols as stand-ins for Spanish and English (and Schick's performance as advocacy for using both), then the final two lines become a metaphor that advocates for the power and potential of bilingual rapping.

In the closing moments, the imagined audience becomes part of the core semantic essence of the lyrics. At 5:57 Mr. Schick raps "Get down," and his fellow emcees rejoin with "and give me what you got."

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68 There is no standard spelling for "¡wepa¡," a circumstance that speaks to the power of vernacular language. Flores renders it "uepa," but the *Urban Dictionary* shows "¡wepa!" as the preferred spelling. A discussion thread at a website associated with diaspora communities of the Dominican Republic prefers "uepa." *See* Flores 75; "Wepa," *Urban Dictionary,* June 12, 2008, accessed Apr 7, 2017, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Wepa; and "Waipa!! (sp?) – proper spelling and meaning?," DR1, May 23, 2008, accessed Apr 7, 2017, dr1.com/forums/showthread.php/75561-Waipa!!-(sp-)-proper-spelling-and-meaning.

69 Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 4-5.

Schick then raps "But if what you got," to which they reply "ain't really owned," and all four chime in with "Just clap your hands and rap along." Mr. Schick then rattles off a barrage of Spanish lines, all of which, untranslated, speak to and about the Spanish-speaking Latino/as aurally figured through the use of studio effects:

> ¡Wepa! "¡Wepa!"
> Allí, ¡na' mas!
> La gente en el frente 'tan caliente
> ¡Wepa! "¡Wepa!"
> Allí, ¡na' mas!
> Y la gente en lado 'tan salao
> ¡Wepa! "¡Wepa!"
> Alli, ¡na' mas!
> La gente del medio tiene promedio
> ¡Wepa! "¡Wepa!"
> Allí, ¡na' mas!
> La gente atrás no están en na'

In essence, Schick identifies degrees of engagement according to the spatial dispersion of an imagined audience: those "el frente" (up front) are hot (*'tan caliente*); those "en lado" (on the side) are in the hall (*'tan salao*); those "del medio" (in the middle) are average (*tiene promedio*); and those "atrás" (in back) are not it (*no están en na'*). Thus, in the song's closing moments, Mr. Schick judges varying levels of communal, participatory engagement.

In the very last lines, Mr. Schick reminds the audience through braggadocio that he is largely responsible for bringing the Latin/Spanish vibe to rap:

> ¡Wepa! "¡Wepa!"
> Allí, ¡na' mas!
> Y eso fue lo que trajo el barco, ¡mi gente!
> Eso fue lo que trajo yo
> ¡Fuego a la lata! "¡Fuego a la lata!"
> Agua, ¡que va' cayer!
>
>
> Aw yeah! "Aw yeah!"
> There, that's it!
> And that's what the boat brought, my people!
> That's what I brought
> Fire to the can! "Fire to the can!"
> Water, it's gonna fall!

In addition to his boasting, however, Mr. Schick figures into Spanish one of the most well-known and beloved performer/audience interactions in hip-hop: "the roof is on fire/We don't need no water let the motherfucker burn." The first half becomes "Fuego a la lata!" (Fire in the can!), and the answer-line becomes "Agua, ¡que va' cayer!" (Water, it's gonna fall!). Mr. Schick's final gesture is an act of creative translation, and it is an excellent example of transcultural vernacular. On the one hand, his utterance is ethnomimetic; on the other, it is neocultural: the creation of new slang brought from one language into another. In that sense, "Disco Dream" is an excellent example of transculturation in New York's burgeoning hip-hop scene through ethnomimesis and creative translation.

To date, the song remains underappreciated. While Flores dismisses the group's bilingual rhyming as "perfunctory and fleeting," he nevertheless recognizes that it "planted a seed."[70] The only other known bilingual single from that era, "Spanglish" by Spanish Fly and the Terrible Two (1981, Enjoy Records), does not achieve nearly the same level of sophistication. The Mean Machine briefly returned with "At The Party" (1986, Honey Hush Records), but otherwise, the first commercial record to feature rhymes in Spanish and English was Kid Frost's *Hispanic Causing Panic* (1990), which included "La Raza," one of the west coast rapper's biggest hits. Since then, a plethora of artists have popped up, many of whom Pancho McFarland carefully documents in *The Chican@ Hip Hop Nation: Politics of a New Millennial Mestizaje* (2013) and *Chicano Rap: Gender and Violence in the Postindustrial Barrio* (2008). However, McFarland does not mention "Disco Dream," let alone locate The Mean Machine in Latino rap history, which is odd given that the group and the producers at Sugar Hill Records combined musical elements of salsa with early rap aesthetics to orchestrate a clean, tight, crystal clear production. "Disco Dream," like "Rapper's Deutsch," deserves greater recognition for what it achieved. Where the Library of Congress added "Rapper's Delight" to the National Recording Registry in 2011, and thereby designated it as culturally, historically, and aesthetically significant,[71] perhaps "Disco Dream" will one day receive similar accolades. At the very least, it is worthy of consideration, especially for its participatory, bilingual rhyming aesthetics. Furthermore, Mr. Schick's creative translation of standard hip-hop phrases into another language demonstrates, much like "Rapper's Deutsch," that ethnomimesis contains a productive dimension. In the case of "Disco Dream," the song bound Latino/as to New York's nascent hip-hop community. These 'residues' or 'traces' are evidence of the processes of transculturation that were central to hip-hop culture from the very beginning. These strategies underscore the importance of redefining the term transaesthetics. Rather than 'aesthetic breakdown' between English and Spanish, it is quite possible to apprehend the blended and the particular at the same time. In that sense, "Disco Dream" is an excellent example of transculturation unfolding between the Latino and African American communities of New York in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The Case for Reconsidering Falco: "Der Kommissar" (1982)

To argue that Austrian recording artist Falco (Johann Hölzel) had a significant role in founding German-language rap flies in the face of artistic, and even scholarly, consensus. Part of this stems from an interview Falco gave in 1996 to Werner Geier, host of *Tribe Vibez* (an FM4 Austria-produced radio show), just two years before the singer, in true gangsta-style, died in a car crash in the Dominican Republic while driving under the influence of cocaine and alcohol.[72] When Geier declared that the point of the interview was to contextualize Austria's then burgeoning hip-hop scene with its origins, Falco responded that his name and hip-hop should not be spoken in the same sentence. When asked why, Falco explained in Viennese German:

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[70] Flores, 76.

[71] "Recordings by Donna Summer, Prince and Dolly Parton Named to the National Recording Registry," *Library of Congress*, May 23, 2012, accessed Apr 10, 2017, loc.gov/item/prn-12-107/new-entries-to-the-national-recording-registry-2/2012-05-23/.

[72] "Falcos Obduktionsbericht notariell beglaubigt Ult.: Vorausmeldung zu NEWS 12/19.3.98," *APA-OTS*, Mar 18, 1998, accessed May 2, 2017, ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_19980318_OTS0177/falcos-obduktionsbericht-notariell-beglaubigt-ult-vorausmeldung-zu-news-1219398.

"Na weil i immer Popmusik gmocht hob und net Hip-Hop. Also Hip-Hop hat von seiner gesellschaftspolitischen und sozialkritischen Geschichte her nie was mit mir zu tun gehabt. Ich hab das nie wirklich so empfunden, wie es dann mit dem Hip-Hop eigentlich gekommen ist, verstehst […]. I hob den Kommissar net aufgenommen, weil i Hip-Hop hab machen wollen, sondern weil i ma dacht hab, ah es ist irgendwie geil, deutsche Sprache zu rappen. Des hat no kana gmocht und als Rhythmiker, Bassist, Schlagzeuger und analog gelernter Musiker kann ich das irgendwie und des is so reingegangen, dass i mir docht hob: Jo Moment! Aber mit der politischen Aussage des Hip-Hop in dem Sinn hab i genauso wenig zu tun […] Wenn du so willst, hat Hip-Hop für mich seinen Ursprung schon darin, dass ich bei Anarcho-Bands gespielt hab und aus dem ganz linken Eck komme und den Fensterkitt gfressen hab, in der 25-Quadratmeter-Wohnung. Das war für mich mein Hip-Hop."[73]

Well, because I've always made pop music, not hip-hop. Hip-hop has its sociopolitical and socially critical history that had nothing to do with me. I didn't really sense how all of that went together, you know? […] I didn't record "Der Kommissar" because I wanted to do hip-hop, but because I just thought it would be cool to rap in German. Nobody had tried, and since I deal with rhythm as a trained bassist, drummer, and analogue synth player, I thought, hey, just a second! That was my in. I had little to do with hip-hop's political statement. […] But if you want, hip-hop for me began by playing in leftist anarchist-punk bands and eating from the windowsill of a 25-sq. meter apartment. For me that was my hip-hop.

Although Falco states it was not his intent to produce rap music, he nevertheless confirms that he was drawn to it as a rhythm musician. This reaffirms, as Tonn has argued, that the early attraction to rap music "was decidedly visceral rather than rational or intellectual,"[74] thanks in part to "energies based on sound and rhythm" that appeal to the body.[75] However, by declaring that no one had tried to rap in German before him, Falco fails to mention G.L.S.-United—an oversight that enables him to be an originator while not being an originator. He continues that type of argumentation when he says he had no connection to hip-hop's sociopolitical and cultural origins, yet retrospectively felt affiliated with New York's urban poor due to his experience as an anarchist-punk musician in Vienna. Falco's felt sense of "affiliation" starkly resembles what Fernando Ortiz described as acculturation—the binding together of disparate groups through cultural practices—in a transatlantic (and transcultural) orientation.

Artists and scholars have parroted Falco's reasoning. Much of this can be attributed, on the one hand, to what Tonn identifies as an "obsessional concern" with authenticity among hip-hoppers in Germany (one that is ritualistically performed to demonstrate legitimacy or credibility),[76] and, on the other, the desire to deflect allegations of cultural appropriation. Regarding Verlan and Loh's dismissal that attempts at rap-like rhyming in the early 1980s amounted to experiments that had no lasting impact,[77] Tonn's insight is illuminating, especially since Hannes Loh is an active emcee in the Iserlohn-based group Anarchist

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[73] Christoph Wagner, "Falco: Sein legendäres FM4 Interview zum Anhören," *Redbull*, Dec 19, 2016, accessed Apr 27, 2017, redbull.com/at-de/falco-fm4-tribe-vibes-interview.

[74] Tonn, 278.

[75] Ibid., 279.

[76] Ibid., 276-7.

[77] "Auch wenn viele HipHops immer wieder behaupten, Falco sei der erste deutschsprachige Rapper gewesen: Die Experimente Anfang der Achtzigerjahre blieben ohne Wirkung." Verlan and Loh, 287.

Academy. Furthermore, Tonn's observation applies to Smudo (Michael Schmidt), one of the emcees from Die Fantastischen Vier (Germany's first commercially successful rap group), who contends that the Austrian musician admitted he liked the rhythm of rap and that he simply wanted to play with the technique.[78] Moreover, Milo, an emcee from Schönheitsfehler (a commercially successful Austrian hip-hop group, also present in the *Tribe Vibez* interview), repeats the same story.[79] Likewise, Torch, an emcee from Advanced Chemistry (one of Germany's first political hip-hop groups), declares that he should not be lumped together with Gottschalk or Falco.[80] It seems that German rap artists remain reluctant to acknowledge Falco's role out of fears of appearing inauthentic, but also because doing so would sabotage their owns claims at being part of the natural, 'organic' rise of hip-hop in the German-speaking world.

This view has become something of a quandary. Asserting that Neue Deutsche Welle artists like Falco "began using rapping techniques in their efforts to internationalize German music," and that this resulted from "the cultural density of the NYC area as well as from transatlantic connections," Strick argues that "to view an artist like Falco, who rapped his way into the German top ten […] as connected to the hip-hop-phenomenon is misleading, since [he] reacted to a development within American pop music."[81] Yet even the leading lights of what eventually became Germany and Austria's hip-hop scenes responded and reacted to what they saw in the media. How can such logic apply to other artists but not to Falco? To date, the only scholars or commentators to give Falco any recognition whatsoever are Johannes Schmidt and Michael T. Putnam, who, writing from the point of view language acquisition, argue that his music might be useful for teachers of German.[82] How is it that Falco *rapped*, but his decision to do so has nothing to do with popularizing the vocal technique across the German-speaking world?

Part of that assertion resides in the musical arrangement for "Der Kommissar," which bears little resemblance to the R&B disco funk aesthetics of early rap singles. Produced by Robert Ponger, the arrangement relies on a straight-forward 4/4-rock drum pattern and closely paired bass and guitar riffs and atmospheric keyboard parts.[83] Yet as with the previous songs in this chapter, handclaps are used, albeit on the offbeat of beat four in the second and fourth bars. In delivering his lines in a kind of Sprechgesang (the operatic vocal technique where rhythm trumps melody), Falco marries a distinctly European tradition with rap-rhyme aesthetics—which, at that time, had been further popularized by Kurtis Blow's "The Breaks" (1980), a song that spent nine weeks on the German chats (and peaked at #56),[84] and Blondie's "Rapture"

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[78] "Falco habe ich übrigens getroffen und befragt, ob er eigentlich Rap machen wollte. Er entgegnete nur, nein, er sei Bassist und ihm habe lediglich der Rhythmus des Rap gefallen und er wolle es beim 'Komissar' [*sic*] einmal ausprobieren." *See* Sebastian Krekow and Sebastian Steiner, *Bei Uns Geht Einiges: Die Deutsche Hip-Hop Szene* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2000), 35.

[79] "Falco hat sich von Beginn an rausgenommen und gesagt, er hat dieses Rappen als rhythmisches Element gesehen, weil er ja eigentlich auch ursprünglich Bassist ist. Er selbst sehe sich aber überhaupt nicht als Rapper." Verlan and Loh, 541.

[80] "Was soll dies Scheißdiskussion? Ich will nur nicht, dass man mich mit Gottschalk oder Falco in einen Topf wirft." Ibid., 376.

[81] Strick, 270.

[82] Johannes Schmidt, "German Rap Music in the Classroom," *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German* 36, 1 (2003): 2 and Michael T. Putnam, "Teaching Controversial Topics in Contemporary German Culture through Hip-Hop," *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German* 39, 1/2 (2006): 74.

[83] "Der Aufstieg zum Popstar," *Falco.at*, accessed Apr 27, 2017, falco.at/?page_id=245.

[84] "Kurtis Blow – The Breaks," *Offizielle Deutsche Charts*, accessed Apr 21, 2017, offiziellecharts.de/titel-details-20545.

(1981), a new wave hit with an extended rap section in the solo break that spent thirteen weeks in the German charts, peaking at #40.[85] Further still, Falco raps the verses and sings the chorus, a structural device that did not emerge in rap until Run-D.M.C.'s "It's Like That" (1984) and Whodini's "Escape (I Need A Break)" or "Friends" (1984). With references to cocaine subculture and petty criminality, the themes in "Der Kommissar" predate those later explored in Melle Mel's "White Lines (Don't Do It)" (1983), which centers on the dangers of cocaine use. In arguing that Falco's performance reflects the early rhyming aesthetic of rap in Neue Deutsche Welle synthpop, I support Tonn's notion that hip-hop did not merely flow west to east,[86] a circumstance documented in the use of musical passages from German electro-pioneers Kraftwerk's "Trans Europe Express" (1977) and "Numbers" (1981) in Afrika Bambaataa and Soul Sonic Force's "Planet Rock" (1982).[87] This assertion is not made to suggest that Falco is a source for the aesthetics of rap, but instead to show that rapping, albeit in slightly differing forms, exists in other cultures, and thereby explains the technique's appeal and transcultural potential. If songs like "Planet Rock" and Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five's "The Message" (1982), both of which rely on synth as one of their defining sounds, are considered seminal hip-hop songs, then why should "Der Kommissar" not be considered an important electro-synth/rap crossover?

If there were a case for redefining the term transaesthetics, especially where the term signals a loss in aesthetic specificity,[88] as well as ruminating over the emergence of transcultural vernacular, "Der Kommissar" is an intriguing example. While Falco's website confirms his use of standard German (*Hochdeutsch*), Viennese German (*Wienerisch*), and English,[89] the lyrics contain a German variant of African American Vernacular English—specifically, *rappen*, a Germanized form of the verb "to rap." Through the creative mix of languages, the use of language variants (vernacular), the truncation of words, nonstandard grammar, loan words, and neologisms, Falco's vocal performance achieves a startling aesthetic beauty. While one might argue, following Baudrillard, that all of this results in a kind of non-specific linguistic blather, the lyrics reveal the diffuse aesthetics of bilingual rap. One need look no further than the opening verse:

> Two, three, four – eins, zwei drei – na, es is nix dabei
> Ja, wenn ich euch erzähl' die G'schicht'
> Nichtsdestotrotz, ich bin das schon gewohnt
> Im TV-Funk da läuft es nicht – Tja![90]
>
>
> 2, 3, 4 – 1, 2 3 – ain't nothin' to it

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[85] "Blondie – Rapture," *Offizielle Deutsche Charts*, accessed Apr 21, 2017, offiziellecharts.de/titel-details-7998.

[86] Tonn, 273.

[87] Brewster and Broughton detail at length the production process behind "Planet Rock," noting that John Robie's re-performance of the keyboard line from "Trans Europe Express" represents "the kind of organic sampling which has always existed in music – the slow transmission of melodies and rhythms – to a more unmediated form of musical thievery." *See* Bill Brewster and Frank Broughton, *Last Night a DJ Saved My Life: The History of the Disc Jockey* (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 265.

[88] Striking an alarmist tone, Baudrillard bemoans the loss of aesthetic particularity as a "confusion or contagion" where distinct aesthetic categories become "absorbed" into one another, but also a "generic lack of specificity," especially among people who identify as transsexuals. *See* Baudrillard 9, 7, and 21, respectively.

[89] "Es sind nicht nur seine genialen Texte, eine Mischung aus Hochdeutsch, Wienerisch und Englisch, es ist nicht nur seine von ihm entwickelte Kunstsprache, sondern es ist vor allem auch seine eigene Art zu singen, womit er der erste weiße Rapper wird." *See* "Der Aufstieg zum Popstar."

[90] With slight modification, I rely on the transcript available at Falco's website. *See* "Der Kommissar," *Falco.at*, accessed May 5, 2017, falco.at/?page_id=286.

> yes, when I tell you the history
> Nonetheless, I'm used to not
> Being played on TV – tough luck!

Although Falco counts in, he does not as a bandleader might, i.e. to bring an ensemble together to start playing, nor didactically to teach non-German speakers how to count. Counting upwards in English and downwards in German is solely an oral, bilingual aesthetic device. Slang expressions common across the German-speaking world include "nix" (*nichts*/nothing), *nichtsdestotrotz* (nonetheless),[91] and "Tja!," an interjection that means "tough luck," which Falco uses as a rhythmic device—much like handclaps—near the end of the song. To achieve tight rhythm and flow, Falco reduces the total number of syllables by truncating *erzählen* (ich erzähl'/I tell) and *Geschichte* (G'schicht'/history). Favoring English, he pronounces TV in "TV-Funk" *ti: 'vi:*, not *te: 'fau* as one would in German. Furthermore, he subverts German grammar in two instances. Given the conjunction "wenn" (if/when) in line two, the verb should be subordinated to the end: *wenn ich euch die G'schicht' erzähl'*. Instead, Falco's word order follows English grammar. Conversely, he interjects "da" (there) in line four to prevent the verb from being forced to the end. On the one hand, these examples evince a linguistic anarchism, a lawlessness where rules are bent, mutated, and subverted. On the other, they reveal, and thus speak from, Falco's roots in Vienna's leftist anarcho-punk scene. While one might bemoan the loss of aesthetic particularity, bilingual speakers of German and English will recognize that these rhymes paradoxically exist inside and outside English and German at the same time. Transgressive in nature, these rhymes involve, encompass, and extend across two or more linguistic systems, and thereby become transcultural.

Similar effects are on display when Falco raps in verse four about an imagined female figure who regularly uses cocaine.

> Ich überleg' bei mir, ihr' Nas'n' spricht dafür
> Währenddessen ich noch rauch'
> Die Specialplaces sind ihr wohl bekannt,
> Ich mein', sie fährt ja U-Bahn auch

> Thinking it over, her nostrils reveal
> While I smoke,
> The secret places she knows all too well
> I mean, yes, she takes the train.

The narrator knows the female character still uses cocaine because, like any user, her nose is running. The first person conjugation of *überlegen* is truncated to *ich überleg'* so that both sides of the line contain the same number of syllables: six each for a full utterance of twelve. To achieve that rhythmic balance, however, Falco must dramatically—and even brutally—truncate *ihre Nasenlöcher* (her nostrils) to *ihr' Nas'n'*. To insinuate she knows where to score drugs, Falco jams two English words together (*Specialplaces*) following the morphology conventions that govern the formation of compound nouns in German. To complete the allusion, Falco

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[91] Although *nichtsdestotrotz* is recognized as an adverb, the arbiter of the German language, *Duden*, claims that the word is a playful, hybrid slang formed from *nichtsdestoweniger* and *trotzdem*. The online German dictionary *Leo* corroborates that claim. *See* "nichtsdestotrotz," *Duden – Wissensnetz deutsche Sprache* (German), 2013, and "nichtsdestotrotz," *Leo*, accessed May 7, 2017, dict.leo.org/englisch-deutsch/nichtsdestotrotz.

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deploys the loaded phrase "sie fährt ja U-Bahn auch" to contextually signal that the woman goes wherever necessary to acquire cocaine. Tellingly, his reference to the U-Bahn links Vienna with the NYC subway system—an iconic symbol in hip-hop culture. Given the line's ambiguity, one might make the case that it can also be read as "she goes down" to suggest the woman performs sexual acts in public places (the subway) in return for drugs. Because rappers often coin new phrases by making coded insinuations, Falco seems to spin a sexual innuendo by rapping within a translinguistic space of German, English, Viennese, and African American Vernacular English. If this reading is accurate, then Falco's innuendo can be considered an example of transcultural vernacular, i.e. an utterance fused from two linguistic systems that does not exist in either. Indeed, this type of fusion with a difference unfolds within a transatlantic and transcultural space. To be sure, there is significant 'aesthetic breakdown' in Falco's German, but this blurring is required so that he can successfully bring German and English together to craft a series of transcultural utterances.

In the song's recurring hook, Falco sings in his native Viennese accent:

> Drah di' net um – oh, oh, oh
> Schau, schau, der Kommissar geht um – oh, oh, oh
> Er wird di' anschau'n und du weißt warum,
> Die Lebenslust bringt di' um
> Alles klar, Herr Kommissar?
>
> Don't turn around – oh, oh, oh
> The chief's making the rounds – oh, oh, oh
> He's got his eye on you and you know why
> This lust for life is killing you
> We cool, officer?

The melody of the chorus is borrowed verbatim from the children's game known throughout the German-speaking world as *Der Plumsack*, a game that resembles Duck Duck Goose in the English-speaking world. Indeed, when Falco raps/shouts "Jetzt das Kinderlied!" (Now the nursery rhyme!) before the final two renditions of the chorus, he reveals this reference.[92] The difference, here, is Falco's accent. "Drah," the second person imperative of *umdrehen* (to turn around), is intentionally misspelled to convey Viennese. Likewise, "di'" is a truncated form of *dich*, and "net" is *nicht*. Where early rap singles introduced the world to rap slang, "Der Kommissar," which was moderately successful in the Anglophone world, introduced English-speakers to the German expression *Alles klar*. Indeed, when UK group After the Fire recorded an English version of "Der Kommissar" in 1982, they retained the expression in its original German. Since hip-hop typically only flows west to east (that is, from the U.S. to Europe), Falco's song scored a rare

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[92] Hip-hop heads are likely to recall that Run-D.M.C. mixed English nursery rhymes into their song "Peter Piper," the opening track to their album *Raising Hell* (1986), but Kurtis Blow also did it on "Christmas Rappin'" (1979). Having not grown up in Germany or Austria, a note of acknowledgement is due to my students at the Institüt für Musik at the University of Oldenburg for providing this small, but nevertheless crucial, insight. Like the emcees in the Sugarhill Gang and G.L.S.-United, Falco creatively re-uses cultural material from his youth to fashion something new. The website *Labbé* provides detailed info about *Der Plumsack*, including the lyrics and melody of the song. *See* "Liederbaum: Dreh dich nicht um," *Labbé*, accessed Nov 22, 2017, labbe.de/liederbaum/index.asp?themaid=22&titelid=244.

achievement. One wonders if this might be one reason why its significance is downplayed, especially since Afrika Bambaataa elevated "Der Kommissar" by spinning the record on the New York club scene.[93]

Falco is the first artist to import the verb *to rap* into German, and he makes allusions to early hip-hop culture through his creative use of the term, or variations thereof, throughout the song. In the first example, he raps "Sie sagt: Sugar sweet, you got me rappin' to the heat/Ich verstehe, sie ist heiss" (I got it, she's hot). Furthermore, in the line "sie rappen hin, sie rappen her/Dazwischen kratzen's ab die Wänd'" (They rap here, they rap there/In between they scrape it off the walls), Falco Germanizes the word and uses it figuratively to describe the frenetic behavior of cocaine users. Moreover, between 1:34 and 1:38 Falco says, in English, "Hey, did you ever rap that thing, Jack? 'Cuz you're rap it to the beat," a transfiguration, with shoddy grammar, of Wonder Mike's opening line in "Rapper's Delight." In this instance, Falco's performance, like G.L.S.-United, is rooted in vocal ethnomimesis. On the one hand, by mixing African American Vernacular English with German, Falco cracked open a door through which future rappers could more boldly walk. On the other, he illustrates the vernacular blends that emerge from bilingual wordplay.

Criticism of "Rapper's Deutsch," "Der Kommissar," and other early attempts at rap in German typically center on what these songs lack: a DJ, scratching, breaking, and/or graffiti art—in short, the other elements that mark hip-hop as a holistic practice. But if that is the case, why do we consider "Rapper's Delight," itself a transgression against New York's hip-hop community, an acceptable breakout hit but not "Rapper's Deutsch" or "Der Kommissar"? The answer partly lies in the desire by artists, scholars, and commentators in the German-language hip-hop community to establish their own founding cultural narrative. These types of assertions, which rely on varying degrees of cultural essentialism, are entirely unnecessary. Hip-hop is one part of Germany's post-WW2 cultural history, and obfuscating aspects of that story to benefit artists eschews the dissemination of cultural knowledge. While G.L.S.-United and Falco might be uncomfortable instances of rap's early translation across the Atlantic, both deserve to be recognized if we are to properly understand hip-hop's migration out into the wider world through the transatlantic space of creative ethnomimesis. Moreover, Falco's creative use of language, language variants, and the types of blends that emerge underscores the importance of expanding upon Baudrillard's concept of transaesthetics. It is no longer sufficient to characterize these sorts of utterances as a loss in aesthetic particularity. Instead, it is more accurate to understand such strategies as transcultural, especially since rap music has its origins in Jamaican soundsystem culture. In that sense, and much like "Rapper's Deutsch," "Der Kommissar" emerged from the transcultural space of the Caribbean, New York, and Austria. It is somewhat ironic that Falco found his untimely death in the Dominican Republic: "Der Kommissar" demonstrates that his vocalization practices were very much informed by Afro Caribbean and African American practices, thus providing further evidence of his own transculturation through creative artistic practice.

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[93] "Durch den New Yorker Star-DJ Afrika Bambaataa, der wesentliche Starthilfe für Falco in den USA leistete, wird 'Der Kommissar' in amerikanischen Clubs zum Szene-Hit." *See* "Der Aufstieg zum Popstar."

Eric B. & Rakim "Paid in Full (Seven Minutes of Madness—The Coldcut Remix)"

New York duo Eric B. & Rakim's first full-length album *Paid in Full* was released in 1987. Although the album is strictly monolingual, it was nevertheless a game-changer. Music critic Steve Huey notes that even though the group "never had a mainstream hit of their own, […] during rap's so-called golden age in the late '80s, Eric B. & Rakim were almost universally recognized as *the* premier DJ/MC team in all of hip-hop."[94] The duo are heralded for shepherding hip-hop into the modern age, with Huey noting that Eric B. "was a hugely influential DJ and beatmaker whose taste for hard-hitting James Brown samples touched off a stampede through the Godfather of Soul's back catalogue that continues to the present day."[95] Regarding Rakim's skills, Huey states that he "still tops fan polls as the greatest MC of all time," mostly because "he crafted rhymes like poetry, filling his lines with elaborate metaphors and complex internal rhymes."[96] Furthermore, Rakim "played with the beat like a jazzman, earning a reputation as the smoothest-flowing MC ever to pick up the mic."[97] In short, Rakim's "articulation was clear, his delivery seemingly effortless, and his influence on subsequent MCs incalculable."[98] Indeed, Rakim's deft skills, which included internal rhymes, enjambment, and extended phraseology, disrupted the staid rhyming patterns of all the rappers who came before him. Christopher Wiengarten notes how Rakim "juggled his syllables with a goldsmith's attention to detail, spilling out a rhythmic complexity that left competitors gasping for air."[99] As a result, the fine art of emceeing would never be the same. However, as a team, Huey concludes that Eric B. & Rakim's "peerless technique on the microphone and turntables upped the ante for all who followed them, and their advancement of hip-hop as an art form has been acknowledged by everyone from Gang Starr to the Wu-Tang Clan to Eminem."[100]

Paid in Full paved the way for a remix of the album's title track. Prepared by UK duo Coldcut, who were paid 700 British pounds for their work,[101] the track was released as a 12-inch dance single, and the remix (subtitled "Seven Minutes of Madness") blew the doors off sampling due to the numerous elements Coldcut added, including, as Potter notes (though not explicitly with regard to this remix), the use of "newscasts, talk-shows, movie dialogue, sound effects, television themes, and answering machines messages,"[102] and, in this remix, commercial dialogue and other vocal fragments. In essence, the Coldcut remix thrust advanced sampling into the public eye one year before Public Enemy and its production team, the Bomb Squad, dropped *It Takes A Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* (1988), which still stands as one of

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[94] Steve Huey, "Eric B. & Rakim," in *All Music Guide to Hip-Hop: The Definitive Guide to Rap and Hip-Hop*, edited by Vladimir Bogdanov, Chris Woodstra, Stephen Thomas Erlewine, and John Bush (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2003), 158. Italics in the original.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Christopher R. Weingarten, *It Takes A Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 8.
[100] Huey, 158.
[101] Greg Kot, "The Tasteful Turntable: British Deejays Coldcut To Mix It Up At Metro," *Chicago Tribune*, Oct 17, 1997, accessed May 3, 2018, articles.chicagotribune.com/1997-10-17/entertainment/9710170416_1_mixes-culture-club-duo.
[102] Russell A. Potter, *Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip-Hop and the Politics of Postmodernism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 42.

the finest examples of anarchistic musical collage-making in hip-hop.[103] Along with the Beastie Boys sample-laden *Paul's Boutique* (1989), which was by and large produced by Los Angeles duo The Dust Brothers, these records pressed sampling further into mainstream music. In particular, Rakim's famed phrase "pump up the volume" from the song "I Know You Got Soul" (also on *Paid in Full*) became "the basis for [the] M|A|R|R|S hit of the same name," the lone song from a flash-in-the-pan UK dance group that went to #1 and spent two weeks on the UK Singles charts,[104] peaked at #1 in the U.S. on Billboard's Hot Dance Club Play chart, and spent a total of sixteen weeks in the charts in Germany, where it climbed to #2.[105] Meanwhile, "Paid in Full (Seven Minutes of Madness—The Coldcut Remix)" spent twelve weeks in the German charts, albeit as a shortened 7-inch radio-friendly single, peaking at #27.[106] If sampling, either analogue or digital, is one of the hallmarks of hip-hop, it was clearly beginning to make its mark beyond that community, thus changing the shape of popular music.

Eric B. was unimpressed with Coldcut's remix (possibly for being upstaged), which he reportedly derided as "girly disco music;" Rakim, however, claimed it was "the best remix he'd ever heard."[107] Whatever the case, Coldcut's work boldly signaled how non-rapped languages could be inserted into a rap song via the art of remixing. By "shrinking," i.e. slowing down,[108] a vocal sample from Ofra Haza's recording of the Hebraic poem "Im Nin'Alu" ("If The Doors Are Locked") (1985), which Yemeni poet Rabbi Shalom Shabazi had written in the 17th century, Coldcut managed to interpolate, and therefore significantly enhance, Eric B.'s composition with Haza's ethereal singing.[109] Coldcut deejay Jonathan More states that Haza's vocal snippet "was a piece of a record that I used to play in clubs; in the studio I found when I dialed down the pitch, it was perfectly in tune with the break beat for the Rakim record."[110] While the sample fit tonally (and More's musical sensibilities challenge critics such as Martha Bayles who claim that sampling does not require musical skill), the contrast is striking. Given the commercial success of the single, audiences and artists took note, including Public Enemy, who sampled a still smaller fragment of Haza's voice from the very same passage on "Can't Truss It," a single from *Apocalypse 91…The Enemy Strikes Black* (1991).[111] For all intents and purposes, however, Coldcut introduced Hebraic singing to Eric B. & Rakim's single, making it one of the earliest examples of non-English/Spanish overlay in rap music.

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[103] Weingarten has written an entire book describing in detail the chaotic pastiche production methodology deployed by the Bomb Squad for what is arguably Public Enemy's most influential album. *See* Christopher R. Weingarten, *It Takes A Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* (New York: Continuum, 2010).

[104] "M|A|R|R|S," *Official Charts*, accessed May 3, 2018, officialcharts.com/artist/24465/m-a-r-r-s/.

[105] "M|A|R|R|S – "Pump Up The Volume" (Single), *Offizielle Deutsche Charts*, accessed May 4, 2018, offiziellecharts.de/titel-details-1694.

[106] "Eric B. & Rakim – "Paid in Full (Single)," *Offizielle Deutsche Charts*, accessed May 4, 2018, offiziellecharts.de/titel-details-44548.

[107] Kot, "The Tasteful Turntable."

[108] Potter describes how the technique known as shrinking, which digital sampling enabled, is crucial to interpolate source material so that its tempo, tone, and timbre fit the target composition. *See* Potter, 41.

[109] Throughout my discussion of the sampled material in Coldcut's remix, I rely on data at *WhoSampled*, one of the premier websites for tracking down musical intertextuality in rap songs. *See* "Paid in Full (Seven Minutes of Madness—The Coldcut Remix," *WhoSampled*, accessed May 1, 2018, whosampled.com/Eric-B.-%26-Rakim/Paid-in-Full-(Seven-Minutes-of-Madness-the-Coldcut-Remix)/samples/.

[110] Kot, "The Tasteful Turntable."

[111] "Can't Truss It by Public Enemy," *WhoSampled*, accessed May 2, 2018, whosampled.com/Public-Enemy/Can%27t-Truss-It/.

In the Coldcut remix, Rakim's rapping does not appear until after one minute and seven seconds have elapsed, a marked departure from the back and forth banter between him and Eric B. in the original version. Up to that point, the vocal elements Coldcut interpolate dominate the mix. In the remix, a sample of NBC announcer Don Pardo can be heard saying "This is a journey into sound," which is immediately followed by a sample of 50s-era female backup singers along with a simple commercial jingle. After Pardo's intro line is repeated a second time, it is followed by another: "A journey which along the way will bring you new color, new dimension, new value." Bongos culled from Boogie Woogie's "Sound Experience" (1975) are added, which harken to the use of The Incredible Bongo Band's "Apache," a well-known break that Grandmaster Flash, among others, popularized in the late 1970s. Thus, the Boogie Woogie interpolation, which does not appear in Eric B.'s original arrangement, reinforces an allegiance with the methodology of early hip-hop deejaying, thereby suggesting that Coldcut made a conscious decision to signal affiliation and, in accordance with Ortiz's transculturation model (specifically, the notion of acculturation), to bind communities on both sides of the Atlantic. In this way, Coldcut engaged in a deliberate form of ethnomimesis.

Coldcut then sample another male voice: "When all is ready, I pull this switch," quickly followed by a sample of Rakim intoning, "Pump up the volume, pump up the volume" and a slowed down vocal snippet ("Pump that bass") from the Original Concept song of the same name from 1986. At that point, the bassline from Eric B.'s arrangement, which he culled (and significantly slowed down) from soul and R&B singer Dennis Edward's "Don't Look Any Further" (1984), enters with Ofra Haza's singing. After Haza's vocal line runs its course, another vocal snippet of a woman, possibly from a television commercial, intones, "You make me feel so qualitative." Another Don Pardo sample ("We interrupt this broadcast to bring you a special news bulletin from our on-the-spot task force") is cut into the mix, followed again by the same female voice, who says, "Oh my gosh, the music just turns me on!" Rakim's original opening rhyme ("Thinking of a master plan…") enters, but is cut and repeated a few times before the Coldcut deejays allow Rakim's lines to play out.

While all of these interpolated samples unfold quite seamlessly, the effect could be perceived as somewhat disorienting. One wonders if Jean Baudrillard might have had "Paid in Full (Seven Minutes of Madness—The Coldcut Remix)" in mind when developing his concept of transaesthetics. The song spent one week at #49 on the French charts, reached #5 and spent eleven weeks in the Dutch charts, and climbed to #12 and spent a total of seven weeks in the Belgian charts.[112] Laden with jingles, commercial and movie dialogue, and the Pardo samples, it is relatively easy to speculate how Baudrillard might have critically received the song, had he heard it, to dismiss these verbal samples as simulation. Indeed, these vocal fragments from television and radio comprise the sort of free-floating signifiers that relate to essentially nothing other than the Anglophone PR sphere from which they were culled. Given the reluctance of the French (particularly older, conservative people) to embrace non-French language in music and art, it is safe to assume—though tough to prove—that a song like Eric B. & Rakim's "Paid in Full (Seven Minutes of

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[112] "Eric B. & Rakim – Paid in Full (Chanson)," *Les Charts*, accessed May 4, 2018, lescharts.com/showitem.asp?interpret=Eric+B.+%26+Rakim&titel=Paid+in+Full&cat=s.

Madness—The Coldcut Remix)" might have rankled Baudrillard. It is not difficult to imagine how he might have found the collaged reworking of media-talk aesthetically distasteful. In a certain sense, the Coldcut remix exemplifies Baudrillard's concept of transaesthetics; on the other hand, however, the transnational collaborations that created it, including its more-cultural contours via the Haza sample, suggest that his original articulation of the concept is insufficient to explain the significance of the song, especially if it prompted producers to alter their production techniques. This offers yet another example for why Baudrillard's term deserves to be revisited, redefined, and redeployed as a stand-in for transcultural aesthetics.

The video for "Paid in Full (Seven Minutes of Madness—The Coldcut Remix)" is noteworthy and, at least in once instance, quite transgressive, and possibly even offensive. When the Haza sample appears at the 0:46 mark, a scantily clad woman can be seen belly dancing with passages from the Quran scrolling up-screen as a visual overlay. Moreover, scrolling Arabic text overtop a sexualized belly dancer actually problematizes what one hears. In other words, although Haza sings in Hebrew, a viewer might get the impression that she is singing in Arabic. Thus, the juxtaposition of Hebrew and Arabic create a somewhat disorienting visual-aural experience, and it is only through careful research and analysis that one can delineate between the two. While the music video may have not been controversial to Western audiences in Europe and the United States, these aesthetic decisions would prove devastating years hence. In 2004, the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh was murdered in broad daylight on the streets of Amsterdam,[113] in part, because his controversial film *Submission*, which contested the oppression of women in fundamentalist Islamic countries, displayed Quranic verses visually projected onto the partially nude body of a woman.[114] While van Gogh's film appeared in the post-9/11 era, the music video for "Paid in Full" was released in 1988. By contrast, it is quite tepid. However, that should not diminish the way in which the video might be construed as offensive.[115]

With regard to transculturation and transaesthetics, it is worthwhile to reflect on the deeper ramifications of this particular example. To review: a UK remix team on contract through the record label of a New York hip-hop duo introduced the Hebraic singing of Ofra Haza (an Israeli citizen), who had set a seventeenth-century Yemeni poem to music and recorded it. While the Eric B & Rakim/Coldcut collaboration was clearly transatlantic, it also unfolded a transnational space. Given how Coldcut mixed and blended disparate elements, this song is best understood as transcultural, especially in lieu of Ortiz's insight that transculturation arises through the interactions of people from various origins. Given how the song cites Shabazi's poem, one might even characterize the remix as transgenerational for how it spans three centuries. While all of this underscores the power of hip-hop's creative methodology to decontextualize, morph, and combine elements from different cultures, this example might have single-handedly inspired

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[113] Marlise Simons, "Dutch Filmmaker, an Islam Critic, Is Killed," *NYT*, Nov 3, 2004, accessed May 3, 2018, nytimes.com/2004/11/03/world/europe/dutch-filmmaker-an-islam-critic-is-killed.html.

[114] Jörg Victor, "Theo van Gogh murdered on the streets of Amsterdam," *World Socialist Web Site*, Nov 10, 2004, accessed May 4, 2018, wsws.org/en/articles/2004/11/gogh-n10.html.

[115] When I showed the video to Bilal Souda, a Syrian-born colleague of mine in Dortmund, he expressed dismay that Quranic verses would be so prominently overlaid the belly dancing woman.

artists in Germany and across Europe to become more creative in their approach to rapping, particularly with regard to utilizing their own languages. Certainly one sensible way to determine if this were true would be to ask producers from that era in how far Coldcut's remix moved them and/or influenced their work. The remix charted fairly well in Germany, which suggests it had some impact. To offer a more concrete example, however, the title of the first release by the Berlin-Kreuzberg group Islamic Force was titled "My Melody/Istanbul" (1992),[116] which clearly took a cue from "My Melody," the third track on *Paid in Full*.

Above all the Coldcut preparation of "Paid in Full" evidences the type of transnational and transcultural flows between the U.S., Europe, and Africa that underpin hip-hop's pastiche production methodology. Furthermore, acknowledging Coldcut's contributions to sampling, much like The Dust Brothers (who produced for Delicious Vinyl recording artists Ton-Lōc and Young MC),[117] challenges the assumption that east coast producer Marley Marl was the eminent "king" of sample-based hip-hop.[118] Coldcut, among many others, drew inspiration from the underground duo known as Double Dee & Steinski, two white deejay/producers active in New York since the early 1980s who issued a series of kaleidoscopic sample-based promotional singles on Tommy Boy Records beginning in 1985.[119] Moreover, The Dust Brothers, whose most innovative work at the time was the Beastie Boys' *Paul's Boutique* (1989), are two white producers from Los Angeles.[120] The influence of all of these innovative producers is important and should not be overlooked to privilege a narrative of Afro sonic modernity or black technological creativity, especially as digital sampling began to become the preferred production method.[121] Instead, and in this instance, interactions between talented people from the east and west coast of the United States, the UK, and, even if unintentionally, Israel and, historically, Yemen, all indicate that by 1987, hip-hop was quickly growing beyond what its predominantly Black and Latino progenitors in the Bronx had been developing since the early 1970s. If, by 1987, hip-hop culture was going global, the Coldcut remix of Eric B. & Rakim's

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[116] Verlan and Loh, 553. Islamic Force released their single in April 1992.
[117] Jason Ankey, "The Dust Brothers," *All Music Guide to Hip-Hop: The Definitive Guide to Rap and Hip-Hop*, edited by Vladimir Bogdanov, Chris Woodstra, Stephen Thomas Erlewine, and John Bush (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2003), 145.
[118] While acknowledging that Steinski's "eclectic mixes from the 1980s influenced countless DJs," Katz does not mention Coldcut or The Dust Brothers at all in his book on the art of hip-hop deejaying. *See* Katz, 88. Schloss, on the other hand, who interviewed Steinski extensively in 2002, devotes considerable time and space to document Steinski's collage experiments. *See* Joseph G. Schloss, *Making Beats: The Art of Sample-based Hip-Hop* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 10, 11, and 19.
[119] Kot, "The Tasteful Turntable." Kot notes that "More and Coldcut partner Matt Black, a computer programmer, had been inspired by the cut-and-paste mixes of such American hip-hop deejays as Steinski, in which everything from Little Richard's screams and Humphrey Bogart's "Casablanca" monologues to the beats of the Supremes and Culture Club were intermingled." Moreover, Brewster and Broughton relay in considerable detail how Douglas DiFranco (Double Dee) and Steve Stein (Steinski) made their foray into hip-hop culture, much to the dismay of New York's African American deejays, who were "surprised to see they weren't as young or black as they'd expected." *See* Brewster and Broughton, 488-490. They also emphasize how Coldcut was inspired by Double Dee & Steinski's early by-and-large tape-based sampling techniques.
[120] For the role The Dust Brothers played with regard to Ton Lōc, the Beastie Boys, and Young MC, see "John King and the history of the dust brothers," YouTube video, 6:38, posted by Brad Wright, Dec 30, 2007, accessed May 5, 2018, youtube.com/watch?v=VbMBJ8iIr2E.
[121] It is interesting how scholars overlook the importance of Double Dee and Steinski's tape-based collage method. In his otherwise excellent article describing how sampling leads to genre hybridity, Elflein fails to mention the duo, let alone tape-based sampling as a method that bridged analogue and digital sampling. *See* Dietmar Elflein, "Diggin' the Global Crates—Genrehybridität im HipHop," *Samples: Online-Publikationen des Arbeitskreis Studium Populärer Musik 9* (2010): 3-4.

"Pain in Full" indicates that it was equally primed to become even more transcultural, a development that contests the somewhat simplistic characterization that hip-hop culture and rap music are exclusively Black cultural phenomena. This example further justifies redefining Baudrillard's concept of transaesthetics as much more than 'aesthetic breakdown.' Instead, the term can, and in my view should, be understood as an abbreviation for transcultural aesthetics.

Conclusions

Mimesis played a crucial role in spreading the musical and verbal aesthetics of hip-hop in the United States and Germany. Developed by working class African, Afro-Caribbean, Latino/a, and in some instances Anglo American youth in the Bronx between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s, the arts of deejaying and emceeing were learned and passed around through mimicry and imitation. In the U.S. context, the house band at Sugar Hill Records exploited the rhythmic breakdown of Chic's "Good Times" in "Rapper's Delight" to satisfy a need in the nascent hip-hop community. By mimicking, but also extending, the vocal aesthetics of scat, jive, and bop-talk, the Sugarhill Gang emcees anchored the new oral aesthetics of rap in the historical musical practices of African Americans. While most scholars and critics decry the way Hank "Big Bank Hank" Jackson ripped off Grandmaster Caz's rhymes, it is more accurate to characterize Jackson's use of Caz's material as mimetic, especially since no one at the time knew that "Rapper's Delight" would become a smash hit. Had the song not been commercially successful in the U.S., Germany, and elsewhere, it is likely that no one would decry Hank's 'borrowing' of Caz's rhymes, which suggests that these sorts of criticisms are uncritically rooted in the logic of capitalism, i.e. that Caz 'owned' his words at that he should be reimbursed for them.

Before Germans in both the East and West learned, let alone adopted and adapted, hip-hop's via exposure to early hip-hop films such as *Wild Style*, *Style Wars*, *Breakin'*, and *Beat Street*, the Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" inspired an early experiment by G.L.S.-United, a trio of personalities, backed by two ghost writers, from the German media sphere. Like the mimetic behavior of early hip-hoppers in New York, the proto-emcees in G.L.S.-United engaged in all sorts of mimicry, and Cantwell's notion of ethnomimesis, albeit with an emphasis on *conscious* imitation, best explains this early effort. Rapping overtop a re-constructed backing musical track that is very similar to, though not an exact copy of, the Sugarhill Gang song, G.L.S.-United explored the early rhyming aesthetics of rap for their own purposes—namely, to simultaneously decouple and recouple from the Anglo American world. Almost none of the rhymes in "Rapper's Deutsch" are the same as "Rapper's Delight," thus it is not accurate to characterize, let alone dismiss, it as a cover. While Verlan and Loh may be correct in their assertion that "Rapper's Deutsch" had little to no impact on birthing hip-hop scenes in West or East Germany, G.L.S.-United's effort did nevertheless show that it was possible to rap in German, albeit in a rudimentary and somewhat embarrassing fashion. However, they more importantly showed that it was possible to rap in German *and* English. Thus, "Rapper's Deutsch" deserves to be recognized as culturally and historically significant, especially if, as I argue throughout this study, the practice of hip-hop in Germany constitutes the transculturation of German culture prior to, and after, the Fall of the Berlin Wall. The same is true of Falco's "Der Kommissar." Like

G.L.S.-United, Falco showed that one could adroitly rhyme in German *and* English. Indeed, Falco importantly Germanized some early rap slang. Given the success of his song in the German and English-speaking worlds, "Der Kommissar" is a rare instance, backed by Afrika Bambaataa's spinning of the song in New York clubs in the early 1980s, of a German-language proto-rap song entering the Anglophone world. If, as I argue, Falco's microphone antics reveal the emergence of a transcultural vernacular, then his song deserves to be recognized as historically, culturally, and aesthetically significant.

These early efforts in Germany deserve to be recognized as rudimentary but nevertheless important creative cultural translations that presented the German-speaking world with a new oral aesthetic in popular music that would eventually be not only accepted, but embraced. To disregard Gottschalk, Laufenberg, and Sexauer for rapping an oral pop cultural history of post-WW2 Germany while championing German youth who later explored and experimented with hip-hop for their own reasons is disingenuous. Artists, commentators, and academics should not overlook the role cultural mimesis plays in introducing and instituting new cultural practices. To assume that a person or group must be 100% culturally 'pure' when enacting new cultural procedures—especially practices that are transcultural in nature—smacks of cultural policing. Hip-hop in Germany, itself a transatlantic affair, reflects both the African Americanization of Germany,[122] but also its transculturation.[123] Lest anyone suggest that such an argument diminishes the role African Americans played in developing hip-hop's early aesthetics, it is important to note that neither process mutually excludes the other, and thus actually speaks to the potential for understanding hip-hop from transcultural perspectives.

Likewise, The Mean Machine's "Disco Dream," one of the first recorded rap songs in the United States to incorporate Spanish-language rhymes, also deserves to receive more credit than presently accorded. Like their counterparts in Germany and the United States, The Mean Machine engaged in mimicry and, by translating early rap slang into Spanish (and didactically teaching listeners those expressions in the song), they engaged in the type of creative translation that is part and parcel of transcultural practices. While "Disco Dream" was the only The Mean Machine record issued by Sugar Hill Records, it is important to recognize that it predated west coast rapper Kid Frost's *Hispanic Causing Panic* (1990) by nine years. Within the trajectory of Latina/o or Chicana/o rap history, The Mean Machine importantly showed that one could rap in Spanish. Serious discussion of what the group achieved, both verbally and musically, has been ignored for too long. Like "Rapper's Deutsch" and "Der Kommissar," "Disco Dream" deserves to be recognized as culturally and historically significant.

The Coldcut remix of Eric B. & Rakim's "Paid in Full" was a watershed moment in the development of remix culture. Inspired by the early tape experiments of Double Dee & Steinski, two white New Yorkers

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[122] While Timothy S. Brown offered this argument, Elflein recently published an article examining how African American musical forms were appropriated in West Germany between the 1950s and 1975. *See* Timothy S. Brown, "'Keeping it Real' in a Different 'Hood: (African-)Americanization and Hip Hop in Germany," in *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip Hop and the Globalization of Black Popular Culture*, edited by Dipannita Basu and Sidney J. Lemelle (London: Pluto Press, 2006), 137-150 and Elflein 2017, 57-92.

[123] I have written about this elsewhere. *See* Terence Kumpf, "Beyond Multiculturalism: The Transculturating Potential of Hip-Hop in Germany," in *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, edited by Sina A. Nitzsche and Walter Grünzweig (Berlin: LIT Verlag), 207-225.

who won a contest sponsored by New York City-based label Tommy Boy Records in 1985,[124] Coldcut interpolated all sorts of additional elements into Eric B. & Rakim's song. The end result was a composition that was significantly different from the original, including a short vocal passage from Ofra Haza's "Im Nin'Alu" ("If The Doors Are Locked"), a Yemeni-Hebraic poem dating from the seventeenth century. This interpolation constitutes one of the earliest, if not the earliest, uses of non-English or Spanish language vocal overlay in rap music. Coldcut's decision to do so not only reveals the sorts of cultural flows that had been taking place between the United States, Europe, and Africa for centuries, it demonstrates that rap music was becoming even more transcultural. The Coldcut remix found considerable success in the U.S., the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Belgium, and the extent to which producers took note, and whether or not it influenced their future productions, is worth investigating. For as much as Eric B. & Rakim unquestionably changed the nature of rap music, the Coldcut remix signaled another sea-change. At the very least, it demonstrated that the early aesthetics of deejaying and emceeing could be extended in numerous directions.

All of the aforementioned artists presaged and contributed to the sorts of transcultural aesthetics that began to emerge as rap developed in the United States and Germany throughout the 1990s. Indeed, where bi- and multilingual rap comprises a range of aesthetic methods, premises, and practices from various cultural traditions, such work constitutes what I refer to as transcultural aesthetics. In that sense, the term transaesthetics, which sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard coined to describe a perceived loss in aesthetic particularity in art, deserves to be resuscitated and redefined. Examples by many more artists in the coming chapters will support that argument.

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[124] Brewster and Broughton, 488-490.

Chapter 3

Hip-Hop Spiritualties: Liberation in the Reggae/Rap of Gentleman and Transcendence in MC Yogi's Hip-Hop Hinduism

In the Spring and Summer of 1993, the artist known as Snow, along with guest rapper MC Shan (of the renowned Juice Crew from Queens, New York), rocketed up the North American and European charts with the smash hit "Informer." The song was notable for the way in which it blended Jamaican reggae/dancehall-style toasting with rap. With crystal clear production by John Ficarrotta and Ez Steve Salem, composition and arrangement by Edmond Leary, Shawn Moltke, and Darrin O'Brien,[1] not to mention strong vocal performances by the two emcees, audiences found the song convincing. In the U.S., "Informer" went to #1 on the Billboard Hot 100, #10 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles chart, and as far as #12 on the Top 40 charts. In Germany, the song entered the Top 100 at #85 on April 5, 1993, jumped to #20 just one week later, then spent seven weeks at #1 from May 3 until June 14. It remained in the Top 40 from June 1 until August 16 and even the Top 100 until the second week of September when it finally dropped out of the charts.[2] Likewise, the song went to #1 in Spain, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Sweden, rose to #2 in Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the UK, and even #3 in France. By all accounts, Snow and MC Shan's curious reggae/dancehall/rap crossover, with Snow's mind-bogglingly quick-tongued Jamaican patois, "shattered the myth," as music critic Ron Wynn has noted, "that pop audiences wouldn't embrace any tune whose lyrics weren't in pristine English."[3] To Wynn's point, one might add Austrian singer Falco's "Rock Me Amadeus" (1986), which did very well in the Anglophone world, despite curious mixes of German and English in the lyrics.

Wynn further reports that when the video for "Informer" was "released, it included a rolling translation at the bottom" so viewers could get a sense of what Snow was rhyming about. Overtop the song's infectious, danceable beat, the recurring hook, which is sung six times throughout the 4min and 28sec track, reads as follows:

> Informer, you know, say daddy me Snow, me I'll go blam
> A licky boom-boom down
> 'Tective man a say, say daddy me Snow me stab someone down the lane
> A licky boom-boom down.[4]

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[1] For production details, see "Snow—*12 Inches of Snow* (Credits)," *All Music*, accessed May 22, 2018, allmusic.com/album/12-inches-of-snow-mw0000094642/credits.

[2] "Snow—Informer (Single)," *Offizielle Deutsche Charts*, accessed May 22, 2018, offiziellecharts.de/titel-details-2603.

[3] Ron Wynn, "Snow (Darrin O'Brien)," in *All Music Guide to Hip-Hop: The Definitive Guide to Rap and Hip-Hop*, edited by Vladimir Bogdanov, Chris Woodstra, Stephen Thomas Erlewine, and John Bush (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2003), 445.

[4] "Informer—Snow," *Genius Media*, transcribed by Maboo, 2010, accessed May 22, 2018, genius.com/Snow-informer-lyrics. Following Luke Fox's article at *Genius*, I modified some of the lyrics, particularly "me I'll go blam," which the community of contributors at *Genius* rendered as "me I go blame." In Jamaican reggae, dancehall, and dub music, the expression "blam! blam!" is onomatopoeia for gunshots.

Snow toasted and sang about an apparent murder ("stab someone") and that, potentially, the police (""Tective"/detective) were looking for him, thus suggesting that Snow was a suspect in a homicide that took place somewhere "down the lane." These allusions to homicide, an inquisitive cop, and the possibility that Snow was culpable, especially because of the album's lyric sheet or the 'translation' provided in the video, increased the chances for the song to trigger an aesthetic experience in audiences. In short, "Informer" had a great storyline that, if listeners/viewers bothered to decipher the lyrics, audiences could get into. While the scenario outlined in the lyrics was based on Snow's actual run-ins with the law,[5] the scenario in the song remains primarily fictional: a blurring of fact and fiction that the audience is unlikely to untangle when merely hearing the song. In a sense, this would seem to affirm Baudrillard's notion of transaesthetics, particularly the blurring of reality with fiction such that audiences cannot distinguish between the two. However, such a tactic or strategy is common in creative work: artists draw upon their own experiences and suffuse them with fantasy. Indeed, listeners, via aesthetic experience, do exactly the same when they bring a fictional work to life.

The aforementioned themes are hardly alien to dancehall and rap; in fact, they are the norm, which is probably one reason why "Informer" found bona fide chart success, particularly at a time when gangsta rap was provoking audiences, beguiling listeners, and infuriating parents, educators, and politicians. Maybe "Informer" just had a great beat, or perhaps audiences were more comfortable listening and dancing along to a smoother, radio-friendly blend of reggae/dancehall and rap, as opposed to Shabba Ranks, a master of dancehall, who released a dizzying number of albums between 1988 and 1992.[6] Whatever the case, and likely a combination of all three, "Informer" packaged sentiments common to gangsta rap, minus the profanity, including allusions to beautiful women and, in verse three, clues to Snow's origins:

> So, listen for me, you better listen for me now
> Listen for me, you better listen for me now
> When-a me rock-a the microphone, me rock on steady-a
> Yes a daddy me Snow me are de article don
> But the in an' a-out a dance an' they say where you come from-a?
> People dem say ya come from Jamaica
> But me born an' raised in the ghetto that I want ya to know-a
> Pure black people man that's all I man know
> Yeah me shoes are a-tear up an'a me toes just a show-a
> Where me-a born in are de one Toronto, so…

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[5] Contributors at *Genius* note that "Snow wrote this song while he was in jail charged with two attempted murders" and, further, that "he ended up spending a year in Toronto's East Detention Center maximum security prison. After coming out he met MC Shan and recorded the song. He went back to do a [*sic*] 8 month bid for aggravated assault, and it was during this jail-stay that the song caught on and started getting airplay." A longer article at *Genius* details Snow's biographical background, including being charged with attempted murder. *See* Luke Fox, "Snow's 'Informer': How A Stop Snitching Anthem Became A No. 1 Pop Hit," *Genius Media*, Oct 12, 2016, accessed May 22, 2018, genius.com/a/snows-informer-how-a-stop-snitching-anthem-became-a-no-1-pop-hit.

[6] Shabba Ranks released numerous albums between 1988 and 1992, including *Rappin' with the Ladies* (1988, Greensleeves Records), *Just Reality* (1990, VP Records), *Golden Touch* (1991, VP Records), *Best Baby Father* (1991, VP Records), *As Raw As Ever* (1991, Epic), *Rough & Ready Vol. 1* (1992, Epic), and *X-tra Naked* (1992, Epic). He is arguably one of the most well-known artists associated with Jamaican dancehall. *See* "Shabba Ranks (Discography)," *Discogs*, accessed May 22, 2018, discogs.com/artist/37234-Shabba-Ranks?sort=year%2Casc&limit=25&filter_anv=0&subtype=Albums&type=Releases.

Like most emcees, Snow goes to some length to show that he was "born an' raised in the ghetto" and, furthermore, that "[p]ure black people man that's all I man know." To make sure listeners did not miss the point, Snow utters "listen for me" four times in the first two lines. If the audience poured over the lyric sheet or paid attention to the translation in the video, they likely figured out that Snow was Canadian. But a transcript of some kind is absolutely *essential* for this to occur: Snow's delivery is so confounding that anyone unfamiliar with the rhythm and flow of Jamaican patois simply *would not* understand his place of origin. The most comprehensible location, to my ears anyway, is not Toronto, but Jamaica.[7]

Snow, aka Darrin O'Brien, was not only a Canadian born and raised in Toronto's North York district (where Jamaicans and other members of the Caribbean diaspora resided), he was white—hence, his stage name, and quite likely why audiences were impressed that a fly-looking white dude from Toronto could toast on the mic as good as anyone from Jamaica. In retrospect, Snow put those biographical details in the song for two reasons: on the one hand, emcees frequently talk about their origins, so Snow did what was expected; on the other, and because credibility is king in hip-hop culture, Snow needed to protect his reputation by deflecting criticism that he was appropriating dancehall *and* hip-hop culture. Moreover, deflecting allegations of 'posing' or cultural theft is likely why MC Shan rapped on "Informer," and O'Brien had reason to be concerned. One need only to recall the case of Robert van Winkle aka Vanilla Ice: once people found out that Winkle had fabricated details in his bio that alleged he had grown up in tough neighborhoods, his career as a singer/performer took a hit. In hip-hop culture, as elsewhere, misrepresenting oneself has real consequences, and Snow, with Vanilla Ice in mind, foregrounded his connection to Toronto's Jamaican community and his run-ins with the law to generate an aura of credibility. Whether or not that is enough to disarm allegations of cultural appropriation remains an open question.

However, if rap music and hip-hop culture spread in the U.S. and Germany because artists—black, Latino, and white alike—engaged in ethnomimesis, then Snow seems to be an excellent example to indicate just how far that can go, and this is hardly speculation. Court documents from a lawsuit Marvin Prince, Snow's creative collaborator (and possible mentor), brought against O'Brien for not properly remunerating him detail how Prince, "a Jamaican native," claimed to have "helped [O'Brien] refine his reggae singing ability and knowledge of Jamaican dialect."[8] While Prince lost the case (mostly because he could not prove that he had helped mold Snow's skills and image), if even half of Prince's claim is true, then Snow most definitely fell under the spell of Jamaican dancehall music and culture. It influenced and shaped him and, ultimately, helped turn him into something of a one-hit wonder. While critics might continue to pan Snow for his use of Jamaican patois, his performance is undeniable: it may (or may not) be 'authentic' (whatever that term may mean), but it was nonetheless *convincing*. Had it been otherwise, audiences would not have

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[7] This section of the song unfolds between the 1:45 and 2:09 mark. Snow deliberately plays with his pronunciation and enunciation to make it exceedingly difficult, if not next to impossible, to understand where he comes from, particularly at the 2:02 mark where he clearly enunciates "born and raised" but then rattles off a barrage of syllables that are nearly incomprehensible. If Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s notion of signifyin(g) lies at the heart of rap, then this is a fine example of how one can not only operate as a trickster, but that O'Brien, performing as Snow, is *white*. Thus, the signifyin(g) tradition is equally taken up by anyone, and that says a lot about transculturation in North America.

[8] "Prince v. O'Brien: 256 A.D.2d 208 (1998) 683 N.Y.S.2d 504," *Google Scholar*, accessed May 22,2018, scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=13886394386652351580&q=Prince+v.+O%27BRIEN,+256+AD2d+208&hl=en&as_sdt=100000000000002&as_vis=1

flocked to buy the song or dance to it. What cannot be contested, however, is that Snow and a team of talented individuals collaboratively crafted one of the biggest hits of 1993 on both sides of the Atlantic.

This analogy with Snow/Darrin O'Brien is useful for a number of reasons, and I bring it up because in this chapter I focus on Gentleman, a Cologne-based reggae/rapper who produces a style of music sometimes referred to as Germaican, and MC Yogi, a Point Reyes, California-based rapper who produces a highly stylized hip-hop Hinduism hybrid. While this chapter primarily explores hip-hop and spirituality by focusing on notions of liberation in the work of Gentleman and, in the case of MC Yogi, transcendence, notions of credibility linger in the background. Where early studies on hip-hop and religion concentrated on either human suffering and redemption, or binary principles such as the sacred and the profane,[9] I focus not only on liberation and transcendence, but also transformation—specifically, the transformations that Tilmann Otto (Gentleman) and Nicholas Giacomini (MC Yogi) underwent on their journeys to becoming recording and performance artists, but also the extent to which their work might transform listeners. Initially, I abstain from close readings of their work to focus on the circumstances, both contemporaneous and historical, that contributed to the emergence of each. What roads did Otto and Giacomini travel to become their performative selves, and what can this tell us about the power of culture and music in shaping people, be they fans or artists and often both?

In the first half of the chapter, I focus exclusively on Gentleman. A native of Osnabrück, Germany, Tilmann Otto emerged as a performer in Cologne's reggae-dancehall scene in the mid-1990s just two years after the runaway success of Snow's "Informer." While I cannot prove that Snow inspired Gentleman, the fact that Otto had just turned 18 when "Informer" was topping the German charts suggests that the song moved Otto just as it had many other people. More importantly, though, Gentleman's music resulted from a series of transatlantic collaborations between Germany and Jamaica, and I begin by tracing the links between the Caribbean and western Germany. As Sina Nitzsche has argued, Germany's western Ruhr region is "a synecdoche of Europe" that "consists of a multi-layered system of intersecting spaces, borders, and boundaries, many of which are constantly transcended by its people and through various forms of personal, spatial, and media interactions."[10] Alongside the European synecdoche in the Ruhr (and, I would argue, the wider Rhine-Ruhr region, which includes Cologne), Henke and Magister and others have convincingly argued for the existence of a trans-Caribbean vernacular culture in Europe that exists independent of, and sometimes even in opposition to, the vernacular cultures of the Caribbean. Because Gentleman emerged from Cologne's reggae-dancehall scene, his music is ideal for investigating how the cultures of Germany and Jamaica overlap and blend through the creation of a form of popular music that originated in Jamaica, but which is now practiced and experienced by people not only in Germany, but across Europe.

To explore the so-called trans-Caribbean vernacular in western Germany, I showcase some of the major Caribbean music and cultural festivals that have taken place in the Rhine-Ruhr. While these festivals are supported by corporate funding, the spread of Jamaican music and Caribbean culture in Germany

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[9] Monica R. Miller and Anthony B. Pinn, *The Hip Hop and Religion Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 4.

[10] Sina A. Nitzsche, "Hip-Hop in Europe as a Transnational Phenomenon: An Introduction," in *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, edited by Sina Nitzsche and Walter Grünzweig (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2013), 8.

occurred through fans. To examine that in some depth, I focus on language use at Reggae Node, a web-based platform that brought together aficionados of Jamaican music culture across Germany beginning in the mid-1990s. Taking a cue from Jannis Androutsopoulos who has shown, following cultural theorist John Fisk and sociolinguist Bent Preisler, how interaction between the secondary sphere of media discourse and the tertiary sphere of online fan cultures leads to the integrative spread of vernacular literacies,[11] I highlight examples at Reggae Node to suggest how these language practices, which reside at the interstices of Jamaican Patois, German, and English, reveal the communities both on- and offline that gave rise to, supported, and shaped the practice of Jamaican music and vernacular culture in Germany. Where Androutsopoulos attests that this sort of language use demonstrates "the persistent dialogue between the global and the local manifested in both discourse and in language style,"[12] Reggae Node not only parallels the emergence of the trans-Caribbean that Henke and Magister and others have argued for, it also shows how the website functioned as an interactive, medial bridge connecting Germany and Jamaica. Reggae Node is important for three reasons: first, language use on the website demonstrates the existence of a translingual vernacular; second, the site disseminated information that enabled and sustained Caribbean music scenes across Germany; and third, the website provided visibility for Gentleman early in his career. Because these hybrid linguistic practices between German, Jamaican Patois, and English are not limited solely to artists, I focus on a short review, written exclusively for Reggae Node, of Gentleman's second full-length CD *Journey to Jah* (2002) to highlight examples of inter-/translingual vernacular. In that sense, I want to argue that Gentleman emerged from a wider community of practice, and the evidence at Reggae Node strongly supports this claim. It also underscores how transculturation has been occurring in Germany for many years.

I then offer a close reading of "Man A Rise," a track from *Journey to Jah* that features a guest appearance by Jamaican dancehall star Bounty Killer. On the one hand, the song, which is anchored in liberation theology, calls upon listeners to overcome "social, political, and economic oppression as an anticipation of ultimate salvation;"[13] on the other, a transgression metaphor unfolds that offers listeners the promise of transcendence if they rise up against their oppressors. Regarding the emergence of transcultural aesthetics, in how far do the language interactions in Gentleman and Bounty Killer's performances evidence a transcultural German-Jamaican vernacular? Supported by emissaries from the well-established music scene in Kingston, Jamaica and musicians from various studios around Germany, *Journey to Jah* is very much a binational, transatlantic collaborative effort. In how far, if at all, does the song's musical arrangement exemplify Baudrillard's concept of simulation, the key idea underpinning his articulation of transaesthetics? Are Gentleman and the creative team he works with merely 'simulating' the musical aesthetics of reggae and rap for profit, or are they practicing a craft, extending it across Germany and Europe, and thereby creating what might be called Euroreggae? Considering the linguistic and musical aesthetics in tandem, I argue for

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[11] Jannis Androutsopoulos, "Language and the Three Spheres of Hip Hop," in *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language*, edited by H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook (New York: Routledge, 2009), 43-62.
[12] Ibid., 44.
[13] "Liberation theology," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.

why "Man A Rise" provides further justification for understanding transaesthetics as transcultural aesthetics that unfolds in a transatlantic and transhemispheric space.

Lastly, I consider Gentleman's live-to-air television appearance in 1994 with Pow Pow Soundsystem, a Cologne-based reggae/dancehall group, on the VIVA-produced music television show *Freestyle*, which occurred eight years prior to the release of *Journey to Jah*. In how far does Gentleman further evidence Cantwell's notion of ethnomimesis? Is Otto, as Gentleman, the penultimate example of what bell hooks calls "cultural tourists," i.e. outsiders who eavesdrop on, appropriate, and profit from a culture they were neither born into nor raised in?[14] If so, is Otto just "jahfakin,"[15] a term that denigrates non-Jamaicans who speak and sing in patois, or does he, through ethnomimetic behavior, evidence what Irina Schmitt has identified as the "transculturation within German society that integrates and re-creates diverse cultural populations?"[16] This brief look at Gentleman's segment on *Freestyle* will allow us to better understand how he developed his reggae/dancehall vocal delivery style, and thus allow us to consider the extent to which he may or may not be 'posing' as Jamaican.

In the second half of the chapter, I turn to the work of MC Yogi to consider, on the one hand, how he advocates for Hindu spiritual practices through hip-hop and, on the other, in how far his work results in transcultural aesthetics. As Nitasha Tamar Sharma has argued, the creative reuse of the iconography and music of India by hip-hop artists in the United States since the early 2000s "reveal[s] the polycultural processes of appropriation that comprise," and thereby calls into question, the presumed "authenticity and 'purity' of hip-hop culture."[17] Drawing upon "henna tattoos, belly dancing, Indian fabrics, and rap songs infused with Indian music and videos featuring South Asian women," artists such as Jay-Z, Timbaland, Missy Eliot, and R. Kelly have utilized the cultural capital of India, oftentimes under questionable circumstances.[18] Like these artists, MC Yogi stands to be accused not only of appropriating Indian culture, but also hip-hop. Thus, I begin by enumerating the pathways he walked to become MC Yogi. After providing an overview of how he first became exposed to both cultures, I take a deeper look, following the work of Peter Goldberg, into the role Hinduism and Indian Vedic literature have played in shaping American culture. How do the four distinct phases of interest in the literary, musical, and spiritual practices of India over the last 200 years inform what MC Yogi does in the 21st century? This historic contextualization will buttress my argument that Giacomini, performing as MC Yogi, represents yet one more example in a long line of cultural intermediaries since the early 1800s who have brought the spiritual practices of Hinduism and Indian culture to the United States.

Before proceeding to a close reading of MC Yogi's work, I highlight the musical aesthetics that Indian religious music (kirtan) and hip-hop share. What are their similarities, and how do these allow the two

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[14] bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 17.

[15] "Jahfakin," *Urban Dictionary*, posted by Ob1, Aug 22, 2003, accessed Mar 15, 2017, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=jahfakin.

[16] Irina Schmitt, "Germany Speaking? Rap and Kanak Attack, and Dominant Discourses on Language," in *Negotiating Transcultural Lives: Belongings and Social Capital among Youth in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Dirk Hoerder, Yvonne Hébert, and Irina Schmitt (Göttingen, Germany: V&R unipress, 2005), 229.

[17] Nitasha Tamar Sharma, *Hip-Hop Desis: South Asian Americans, Blackness, and a Global Race Consciousness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 244.

[18] Ibid., 244-247.

musical forms to be merged into a relatively seamless and aesthetically pleasing blend? What strategies does MC Yogi's production team deploy, and are these techniques sufficient to deflect criticism that their use of kirtan music does not constitute either undue cultural appropriation or Baudrillard's notion of aesthetic simulation? With these questions in mind, I turn to "Om Namah Shivaya," a devotional to the Hindu god Shiva from MC Yogi's debut full-length *Elephant Power* (2008). What specific strategies does MC Yogi rely on in his lyrics to stich Vedic literature and hip-hop together? Finally, with Fluck's notion of aesthetic experience in mind, I ask in how far the song stands to coax listeners with little or no prior knowledge of yoga or its fundamental principles to undergo a transcultural—and possibly even transcendent—aesthetic experience. If the song contains significant power to stimulate audiences into taking an interest in yoga, meditation, and Hinduism (or, conversely, to draw practitioners of Hinduism with little to no prior knowledge of rap music into hip-hop culture), in how far can the song be understood as an example of neutral, non-biased transcultural music?

In my conclusions I ask if Tilmann Otto and Nicholas Giacomini are cultural tourists or if, as I argue, they are cultural mediators and translators who advocate, albeit tacitly, for transculturation through their actions and behavior. On the one hand, I consider TJ Brown's comments on cultural adoption and adaptation as the highest form of flattery, love, and respect; on the other, I apply Bakari Kitwana's use of Wimsatt's concentric attitudinal circles theory to argue that Otto and Giacomini's wider and deeper commitment to and engagement with the cultures they borrow from deflects allegations of appropriation. I also take up the vexing notion of authenticity, a central and often sensitive subject, in discourses on popular music. Writing about authenticity in international hip-hop, Matthäus Ochmann has argued, following Knaller and Müller, that the notion of the authentic "often combines empirical, interpretative, evaluative and normative elements in ways that are not always decipherable."[19] Recognizing that "authenticity is constructed discursively in dynamic processes," Ochmann argues for the importance of "[a]pproaching authenticity [with] a careful consideration of ethical, aesthetic, anthropological, sociological, and cultural aspects."[20] With these insights in mind, I weigh Otto and Giacomini's cultural journeys, engagement, and output. Does their creative work and the connections with the cultures they draw from (and sustain) make them credible? If so, do these circumstances reflect, at least in part, what Wolfgang Welsch characterized as the transcultural contours of our modern world, or are Otto and Giacomini, as Philipp Siepmann describes in his critique of Welsch, simply "well-educated, middle or upper class, heterosexual, male Westerners, who are likely to experience transculturality as a privilege?"[21] In how far can we consider both performers the result of transculturation, and what does it mean when artists such as these channel the cultural energies that have transformed them to their audiences? If Otto and Giacomini exemplify Schmitt's notion of a transcultural avant-garde, might their work with musicians and technicians from different countries and

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[19] Matthäus Ochmann, "The Notion of Authenticity in International Hip-Hop Culture," in *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, edited by Sina Nitzsche and Walter Grünzweig (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2013), 426.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Philipp Siepmann, "'A Hip Hop Haggadah': The Transnational and Transcultural Space of Jewish Hip-Hop and Transnational Cultural Studies in the EFL Classroom," in *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, edited by Sina Nitzsche and Walter Grünzweig (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2013), 388.

cultures comprise the kind of transnational engagement and collaboration that helps audiences move beyond static, mono-cultural conceptualizations of identification and belonging? As another example of transcultural aesthetics (and the new transaesthetics argued for throughout his study), what is that potential moving forward?

Trans-Caribbean Vernacular Culture in Germany's Rhine-Ruhr

The Caribbean, as Anton Allahar argues, is hardly homogenous. Constituting "a geographic space, a language space (e.g., Dutch-, English-, Spanish-, French-speaking Caribbean), a diasporic space (e.g., Africa and India), or a creole space," the Caribbean "transcends geography, language, or original ancestry to produce a common Caribbean *Zeitgeist* that is more than the sum of its parts."[22] When the "music, religion, and language" associated with the Caribbean are practiced outside the region, the Caribbean, as Henke and Magister assert, becomes "deterritorialized," a development that has "the potential to influence and transform the global imaginary and to articulate enduring affiliations" between people in any number of countries with Caribbean cultures.[23] In that sense, cultural events associated with the Caribbean such as concerts that are held around the world produce and maintain what is known as trans-Caribbean vernacular, i.e. specific "habits of the mind, secular and spiritual rituals, the production and reproduction of markers of class and ethnicity within a given cultural context, and the sphere from which mass culture often draws its inspiration or refers to in and through its representations."[24]

Events that maintain and nurture the vernacular practices of the Caribbean occur in numerous cities and countries around the world. Like New York, Toronto, London, and Berlin, Germany's Ruhr region, which includes the cities of Dortmund, Essen, and Duisburg (and, via the Rhine, Cologne and Düsseldorf), has hosted a number Caribbean festivals. The Afro-Ruhr Festival, first held in 2010, and the Ruhr Reggae Summer festival, held continuously since 2007, allow people to engage with culture from the Afro Caribbean diaspora. Hosted by the Dietrich-Keunig-Haus, the largest youth center in Dortmund, the Afro-Ruhr Festival receives funding from institutions such as the Auslandsgesellschaft Nordrhein-Westfalen, a non-profit organization founded in 1949 that seeks to "build bridges between people of different origins, societies, and cultures" through its "commitment to international understanding and tolerance."[25] Beyond the Ruhr, Summerjam, one of Europe's largest reggae festivals, has been held in Cologne since 1996 (and in St. Goarshausen, Rhineland-Pfalz since 1986). As a result, Summerjam has played a major role in establishing the practice of Caribbean and Jamaican culture in western Germany.[26] All of these events span the weekend, possess multiple stages, and provide camping facilities so that people from Germany—and, given the proximity, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and the United Kingdom—may immerse themselves in a weekend of Afro Caribbean music, art, and culture.

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[22] Holger Henke and Karl-Heinz Magister, *Constructing Vernacular Culture in the Trans-Caribbean* (New York: Lexington Books, 2010), ix-x.

[23] Ibid., xx.

[24] Ibid., v-vi.

[25] "Über Uns" (About Us), n.d., *Auslandsgesellschaft Nordrhein-Westfalen*, accessed Feb 10, 2017, agnrw.de/index.php?id=47.

[26] Information regarding Summerjam can be found in both German and English at summerjam.de.

Such events, Allahar asserts, produce "culture that is authentic, original and native to the new generations," even if what is on offer might be "infused with sensibilities that were once entirely out of place anywhere in the Caribbean."[27] Where attendees, nearly all of whom have no Caribbean roots,[28] cultivate a sense of identity and affiliation with the people, music, culture, and languages of the Caribbean, these events are indicative of Cantwell's principle of ethnomimesis, i.e. the "learning that arises between, among, of, and by people in the realm of social relations, which includes most of what we call 'culture,' but especially that unconscious mimicry through which we take the deposits of a particular influence, tradition, or culture to ourselves and by which others recognize them in us."[29] Through playing and performing, musicians (and, in the case of vendors, the selling of handicrafts, food, and drink) recreate and celebrate Caribbean culture. By listening, dancing, eating, drinking, and, in some instances, smoking marijuana, attendees physically and psychologically engage with the cultural habits, rituals, and activities associated with Jamaica and Caribbean. In short, this is how trans-Caribbean vernacular culture thrives in Germany.

Sponsored by media outlets such as 1Live (a radio network that belongs to Westdeutscher Rundfunk), Funkhaus Europa (a multicultural radio show produced by Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln), and major beer brands, cynics might dismiss the festivals as corporate-sponsored spectacles organized in the summer months to make money (which they most certainly are and do), but interest in the music of Jamaica in Germany, and Europe, runs much deeper. Renewed enthusiasm for reggae, ska, rocksteady, and dub sparked when Trojan Records, the British record label originally responsible for bringing this music to audiences outside the Caribbean, began re-releasing their back catalogue in 1998. The Trojan Box Set Series introduced a new generation to the many musical forms that flourished in and flowed out of Jamaica and the Caribbean.[30] Although Summerjam preceded the rerelease of the Trojan catalogue, the Afro-Ruhr Festival and Ruhr-Reggae Summer festival resulted from the renewed interested and popularity of Jamaican music. These festivals helped establish trans-Caribbean vernacular in Germany and Europe, and they have played a large role in Europe's ongoing transculturation process through the many musical forms associated with the Afro-diaspora.

Language Contact in Online Spaces: Reggae Node

Reggae Node (www.reggaenode.de) listed Caribbean music events across Germany to bring aficionados together to celebrate Jamaican culture. Touted as a "free and private initiative for the promotion of Reggae-music [sic] and similar styles in Germany,"[31] the website was formally founded in 1994 as an outgrowth of the newsgroup rec.music.reggae and the reggae FTP server hosted by the Institute of Biology at the

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[27] Henke and Magister, x-xi.

[28] The Federal Office of Statistics reports that of the 82.52 million people in all of Germany in 2004, just 27,301 (one-third of one-tenth of one percent) originated in the Caribbean. *See* "Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit: Ausländische Bevölkerung Ergebnisse des Ausländerzentralregisters (2011)," *Destatis*, Apr 4, 2012, accessed Mar 19, 2017, destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung201020011 7004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile.

[29] Robert Cantwell, *Ethnomimesis: Folklife and the Representation of Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 5.

[30] "The Trojan Records Box Set Statistics Page," *Trojan*, accessed Feb 13, 2017, savagejaw.co.uk/trojan/index.htm.

[31] "Imprint," *Reggae Node*, n.d., accessed Feb 10, 2017, reggaenode.de/imprint/.

University of Freiburg in the southwestern state of Baden-Württemberg.[32] Reggae Node operated for seventeen years (1994-2011) before it was decommissioned,[33] during which time the site provided lovers of Caribbean music and culture with "quick infos [*sic*] about the German Reggaescene [*sic*]" so that they could meet up, associate, and participate in Caribbean culture.[34]

The preceding quote lends some insight into the processes of vernacularization that occur in online spaces. Working from Bent Preisler's concept of English from below, i.e. "the informal—active or passive—use of English as an expression of subcultural identity and style," Jannis Androutsopoulos has argued the extent to which fans of hip-hop in Germany symbolically wield their vernacular knowledge to show "identity or affiliation" and "peer group solidarity" on discussion boards in online forums.[35] *Duden*, the arbiter of the German language, recognizes *Infos* as the nonstandard colloquial plural form of *Information*, but also the abbreviation for *Informationsblatt*—a newsletter, handout, or fact sheet, which Reggae Node certainly was in an online capacity.[36] However, in writing "infos" in the English translation of the original German, the site administrators made an innocent, yet common, orthographical error. This simple error nevertheless shows how non-standard language—indeed, an orthographically incorrect form—entered the English lingua franca on Reggae Node. Native speakers of German often mistake "Infos" (much like "Shrimps," "Fishes," or "Sheeps") as an acceptable plural form when speaking or writing in English. However, the importing of *infos* is an example of how language develops, even erroneously, through translation to become adopted in an online vernacular space. Like the term reggae, which originates from Jamaican group Toots & the Maytals "Do the Reggay" (1968),[37] and which also underwent orthographic transformation as it got picked up across the globe, *infos* shows the kind of linguistic diffusion that may occur when vernacular is practiced between two languages.

The term *Reggaescene,* which appears in both the German and English versions of the aforementioned quote, constitutes an interlingual neologism. Neither German nor English, it is a mashup of Jamaican patois (reggae) and English (scene). *Reggaescene* appears in both quotes because the Reggae Node administrators observe the conventions which govern the formation of compound nouns in German. The term is similar to *dancefloor*, a word now accepted in standard Oxford English, and which has even migrated into German.[38] However, even though *Reggaescene* appears online at Reggae Node, a delimited Boolean search for "Reggaescene + deutsch" at Google returns no results.[39] Without quotes, the search returns just over 64,000 hits, very few of which link to websites written in German or hosted on servers in Germany. (The vast

[32] "Team," *Reggae Node*, n.d., accessed Feb 10, 2017, reggaenode.de/team/.

[33] "Imprint," *Reggae Node*, n.d., accessed Feb 10, 2017, reggaenode.de/imprint/.

[34] "Startseite," *Reggae Node*, n.d., accessed Feb 10, 2017, reggaenode.de/node/.

[35] Androutsopoulos, 57.

[36] "Infos," *Duden—Wissensnetz deutsche Sprache*, Bibliographisches Institut GmbH, 2013.

[37] Douglas Harper, "Reggae," n.d., *Etymonline*, accessed Feb 11, 2017, etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=reggae.

[38] The term *dancefloor* appears extensively in Brewster and Broughton's work on the history of deejaying. *See* Bill Brewster and Frank Broughton, *Last Night A DJ Saved My Life: The History of the Disc Jockey* (New York: Grove Press, 2000).

[39] The delimited search "google.de/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=%E2%80%9CReggaescene+%2B+deutsch%E2%80%9D&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&gfe_rd=cr&ei=kultWZ2lG4uAaIv3sJAC" was conducted on July 18, 2017.

majority of results direct to sites in the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, and Norway.) A delimited Boolean search for "Reggaeszene + deutsch" returns just seven results, all of which appear in websites in Switzerland,[40] and a delimited Boolean search for "HipHopScene + deutsch" reveals no hits, with the term *HipHopSzene* in widespread use.[41] While words are often borrowed, adapted, and adopted, *Reggaescene* appear to be a neologism that has become the default term not only in the German discourse, but across multiple European languages. On the one hand, it shows how such vernacular formulations emerge through language contact and interaction, but also that fans as much as artists create and perpetuate non-standard vernacular forms. On the other, the term evidences not only the rise of an interlingual vernacular in many European countries, but one which has become picked up and used as a pan-European reggae lingua franca. Now in wide use, *Reggaescene* seems to be a word without definite origins, yet also one that has multiple homes.

Lastly, *Reggaescene* is emblematic, albeit in reverse, of French philosopher Louis Althusser's concept of interpellation and hailing. Instead of a dominant class interpolating individuals, the administrators and fans at Reggae Node signal the German scene's affinity to "Mother Jamaica" and other reggae scenes located across Europe through use of this term. Understood from this perspective, *Reggaescene* provides one piece of evidence, albeit small, for the existence of a trans-Caribbean vernacular across Europe. It reveals the type of transfers that occur through (mis-)translation, but also the transformative potential that arises from the global practice of Jamaican and Caribbean culture outside its place of origin. Where Androutsopoulos argues that lexical borrowing from English in the German hip-hop community shows fans "stepping out of one's own national boundaries," as opposed to "stepping into an alien ethnic category ("Blackness"),"[42] this use of a constructed word in multiple European countries shows fans occupying and perpetuating an in-between lingual space that bridges and binds communities to one another. The use of such a term shows how vernacular subcultures—be it reggae or hip-hop (and quite possibly even other musical subcultures)—behave in ways that contest national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. Where noted hip-hop scholar H. Samy Alim argues for the existence of a "Global Hip Hop Nation (GHHN)" as a "multilingual, multiethnic 'nation' with an international reach, a fluid capacity to cross borders, and a reluctance to adhere to the geopolitical givens of the present,"[43] one might also argue for a Global Reggae Nation (GRN) and Global Reggae Language (GRL), one that is modeled after Jamaican patois and becomes shaped by local languages. Although further research would be required to show the extent to which this type of vernacular language appears and persists, *Reggaescene* and the misuse of *infos* at Reggae Node suggests that a transcultural vernacular arose within the reggae subcultures of Germany and other European countries. In that sense, these terms are the 'residues' or 'traces' of the processes of transculturation in Germany and Europe.

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[40] The delimited search "google.de/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=%22Reggaeszene+%2B+deutsch%22&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&gfe_rd=cr&ei=bQduWe6BKsjFaKWwgJAE" was conducted on July 18, 2017.

[41] The search "google.de/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=%22Reggaeszene+%2B+deutsch%22&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&gfe_rd=cr&ei=bQduWe6BKsjFaKWwgJAE#q=%E2%80%9CHipHopScene+%2B+deutsch%E2%80%9D+" was carried out on July 18, 2017.

[42] Androutsopoulos, 59.

[43] H. Samy Alim, "Intro: Straight Outta Compton, Straight aus München: Global Linguistic Flows, Identities, and the Politics of Language in a Global Hip Hop Nation," in *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language*, edited by H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3.

Inventive Linguistic Interplay: *Journey to Jah* Album Review

This type of creative language play between German, English, and Jamaican patois is not limited to Reggae Node administrators. A plethora of neologisms, compounds nouns, and non-standard grammatical constructions occur in the review on the website for Gentleman's second full-length release *Journey to Jah*. Dated March 2002, and written exclusively for Reggae Node by Helmut "h.p. setter" Phillips, the review appeared either shortly before, or possibly after, the album's official release on March 25, 2002.[44] Although speculative, Four Square/Sony Music, the label that released the record, may have relied on Reggae Node's grassroots/street credibility to market *Journey to Jah*. Nevertheless, close examination of the language choices Phillips makes in his review underscores the existence of a vernacular forged from three languages.

Phillips precedes his review with the exclamation "CLEAN HEART A DWEET!," an expression common in online reggae circles, but which is in no way part of any official lexicon. Aside from its use on websites hosted in a number of countries, a search for the phrase turns up little: a delimited Google search returns only 205 hits, none of which explain what the phrase means, but at least show it in use.[45] Where *dweet* is Jamaican patois for "do it,"[46] the phrase can be understood as "those with clear conscious do it," "those pure of heart prevail," or "those of pure heart succeed." Thus, the phrase functions as a salutation that could be interpreted as "Be well!" or "Be righteous!" Indeed, Phillips deploys the expression both as an informal greeting to his readers, but also to signal his credibility within the scene. The phrase is another example of what we might call, following Alim, Global Reggae Language (GRL).

Although written in German, the review is littered with non-standard language. Detailing Gentleman's rise to prominence through appearances at Summerjam and Splash! (a hip-hop festival in Chemnitz, Germany), Phillips references Gentleman's first record, *Trodin On*, to describe how *Journey to Jah* emerged.

> Eigentlich waren alle sehr gespannt was als nächstes kommen würde. Das erste Album "Trodin On" war das typische Debütsammelsurium und hatte noch nicht durchgängig überzeugt. Seine Auftritte beim Splash und beim Summer Jam haben jedoch ganz klar gezeigt, dass trotz aller (Verkaufs-) Erfolge von Jan Delay oder Seeed der Held in Reggae-Deutschland "GENTLEMAN" heisst. Dabei haben viele gar nicht mitgekriegt, wie souverän er inzwischen die Riddims kontrolliert. Es ist seine Aura die ihn so stark macht. Gentleman ist nicht nur der ehrlichste sondern auch der internationalste unter den deutschen Reggae Artists.

The first instance of creative language construction is *Debütsammelsurium*, which Phillips uses to refer to Gentleman's first solo release. The term *Sammelsurium*, which means "smorgasbord," "collection" or "conglomeration," does exist in German, but Phillips exploits the language's affinity for compound nouns to forge a word that does not appear in standard German. Phillips also writes *Riddim*s (from riddim, Jamaican

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[44] Helmut "H.P. Setter" Phillips, "Gentleman—Journey to Jah," Mar 2002, *Reggae Node*, accessed July 26, 2017, reggaenode.de/cdreview/.

[45] The following search returned only 205 results: google.de/search?q=%22Clean+Heart+A+Dweet%22&client=safari&rls=en&ei=rZ19We2cCYT7auS8pbgH&start=0&sa=N&biw=1220&bih=689.

[46] Two websites, *Jamaican Patwah* and *Urban Dictionary*, report that *dweet* means "do it." *See* "Dweet," *Jamaican Patwah*, Apr 25, 2013, accessed July 30, 2017, jamaicanpatwah.com/term/Dweet/972#.WX2Z6hhh2Rs and "Dweet," *Urban Dictionary*, posted by Pietro, July 6, 2006, accessed July 30, 2017, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=dweet.

patois for "rhythm"), which refers to the rhythmic elements of reggae and dancehall much like *beatz* does in hip-hop,[47] to describe Gentleman's role, albeit without qualification, in preparing the musical arrangements on *Journey to Jah*. Also of interest is the assertion that Gentleman is the most honest ("das ehrlischte") and most international ("das internationaliste") of German reggae artists. Aside from striving to establish Gentleman's credibility, this formulation shows the influence of English ("international") and French ("Artists") on the German language.[48] While slight, these instances of inventive creation—or, to borrow a phrase from Fernando Ortiz, neoculturation—in the opening paragraph of the review are but a sample of what follows.

In the second paragraph, Phillips details the backstory to the record's production, including how Gentleman, who was exhausted ("Ausgepowert"), retreated to Jamaica after touring for his first record.

> Ausgepowert, wie er selbst sagt, zog er sich nach Jamaica zurück. Hier sollte entspannt und nachgedacht werden über das nächste Album. Ausgestattet mit einem äußerst effektiven Management und der finanziellen Rückendeckung eines Majordeals ließ man zunächst die über die Jahre gewachsenen Kontakte wirken. Gentleman ist in der Karibik schon lange kein Unbekannter mehr und dass Deutschland für Reggae ein immer bedeutenderer Markt wird, ist hier auch bekannt.

By describing how Gentleman was able to relax and think about his next album ("entspannt und nachgedacht werden"), Phillips states that the support of a major label with financial backing ("finanziellen Rückendeckung") and management ("effektiven Management") allowed Gentleman to plan his next project. However, rather than using the standard term *Schallplattenvertrag* or *Plattenvertrag* for "record deal," Phillips writes *Majordeals*, a word which does not exist in the standard lexicon. While slight, Phillips nevertheless signals his knowledge of the music business by either choosing to deploy a known vernacular term, or inventing one entirely, for the community he speaks from and to.[49] While this decision bolsters both his and Gentleman's credibility, it also illustrates the extent to which the German language and German speakers remain 'open' to importing Anglicisms.

Phillips devotes the next paragraph to describe the music on *Journey to Jah*.

> Respect und Neugier begannen zu wirken und die Dinge entwickelten sich. Durch eine Reihe von Zufällen oder Gottesfügungen wurden vier Riddims zusammen mit der Firehouse Crew arrangiert und exklusiv für Gentleman eingespielt. Zwei weitere wurden von Bobby Digital produziert und damit war der Kurs der Reise bestimmt. Keine Computer sondern Musiker spielen die Riddims. Auch die beiden aus Deutschland mitgebrachten digitalen Tunes werden mit Musikern nachbearbeitet. So erhält die Produktion Wärme und Intensität, die Maschinen nicht herstellen können. Ein Trend, den wir schon länger beobachten können: in Jamaica wird die Musik vermehrt wieder mit der Hand gemacht.

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[47] "Riddim," *Jamaican Patwah*, Oct 2, 2013, accessed July 30, 2017, jamaicanpatwah.com/term/riddim/1420#.WX3Flxhh2Rt.

[48] *Duden* reports that "international" and "Artist" were imported into German from English and French, respectively. *See* "international" and "Artist," *Duden—Wissensnetz deutsche Sprache*, Bibliographisches Institut GmbH, 2013.

[49] A delimited Boolean search for "Majordeals" + "deutsch" at Google between 1994 and 2002 reveals just one hit, which suggests that the term was not used online in German at the time Phillips wrote his review. Whether or not *Majordeals* was used in spoken German beforehand would require research beyond the scope of this study. *See* google.de/search?client=safari&rls=en&tbs=cdr%3A1%2Ccd_min%3A1994%2Ccd_max%3A2002&q=%22Majord eals%22&oq=%22Majordeals%22&gs_l=psy-ab.3..0i10i30k1j0i5i30k1.2588.2882.0.3157.3.3.0.0.0.0.114.114.0j1.1.0....0...1.1.64.psy-ab..2.1.114.JvkzdmBcd2E.

Use of English orthography for *Respect*, but capitalizing it as though it were German, signals allegiance to Jamaican reggae culture through English, a global lingua franca. While *Fügung* in *Gottesfügungen* translates as destiny, fate, or fortune, Phillips attaches *Gott* (god) to the term to suggest that Gentleman and his production team (the Firehouse Crew) were guided by the divine. The team's credibility is further bolstered when Phillips identifies Bobby "Digital" Dixon, a leading figure in Jamaican reggae, as one of the main producers. Moreover, the warmth ("Wärme") and intensity ("Intensität") of the compositions is attributed to studio musicians and the use of acoustic instruments over digital technology. Embellishing this assertion, Phillips asserts that this production aesthetic mirrors those in Jamaica, where music is still created "by hand" ("in Jamaica…mit der Hand gemacht"). Rather than using the word *Lieder*, *musikalische Stücke*, or even *Songs* to talk about individual tracks, Phillips imports *Tunes* from English. While his rhetorical strategies bestow credibility to Gentleman and the record, Phillips' word choice also demonstrates a commitment to linguistic borrowing and importation.

In the next two paragraphs, Phillips discusses Gentleman's collaborations with stars of the Jamaican reggae scene, including vocalists Morgan Heritage, Black Scorpio, Capleton, and Luciano, but also the acclaimed arranger Dean Fraser, who handled choral arrangements and string orchestration on the album.

> Morgan Heritage laden ihn ein für den nächsten Sampler der Familie eine Version zu singen, dieser Tune ist im Austausch auf beiden Alben. Black Scorpio, mittlerweile auch involviert, vermittelt eine Combination mit Capleton. Dean Frazer [*sic*] arrangiert für alle Stücke Horns und Chöre, eingesungen wird von Luciano's Sängerinnen. Steven Stanley pon de mix, danach Kevin Metcalfe, der Reggae-Mastergott in London, hinzu kommt eine eindrucksvolle Liste an Gästen - bei dieser Produktion wurde alles richtig gemacht!
> Böse Zungen werden von Kalkül sprechen. Verstummen werden sie, wenn sie das Album gehört haben. Die Combis mit Bounty Killer und Capleton sind echte Killertunes, Junior Kelly liefert eine wahrhaft weirde Performance, die besten Stücke sind jedoch Gentleman's Solotunes. Hörenswerte Lyrics, kraftvoller Vortrag und catchy Hooks, "Journey To Jah" hat nicht einen Schwachpunkt.

Rather than use terms such as *Zusammenarbeit*, *Kollektivarbeit*, *Mitarbeit*, *Schulterschluss*, or *Kollaboration* (all of which denote cooperation or collaboration), Phillips follows English orthography to write "Combination," a variant of *Kombination*, that does not exist in standard German.[50] Further still, Phillips creates a neologism when he abbreviates the term as *Combis*. *Kombis*, from *Kombiwagen*, does exist, but it refers to station wagons, not creative collaboration. In the most stunning example yet, Phillips drops "pon de mix" in the middle of the first paragraph to characterize engineer Steven Stanley's role in making the record. On the one hand, this use of Jamaican patois, which evokes an image of Stanley laying his hands upon the mixing deck, imparts excellence; on the other, it underscores, when read in conjunction with the previous examples, Phillips' penchant for operating across three languages at once. This is another example of transcultural language usage.

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[50] Speakers of German and Germanophiles would know that the term *Zentrum* is written semi-officially as *Centrum*, especially on road signage, in parts of mid-western and northwestern Germany. Nevertheless, neither *Centrum* nor *Combination* appear in *Duden*, the official dictionary of the German language.

Phillips also deploys Germanized English adjectives to modify nouns borrowed from English. Examples include "weirde Performance" (to describe Junior Kelly's vocals) and "catchy Hooks" to describe the memorable choruses and melodies. Similarly, *Killertunes* (modified with *echte*, German for "really") and *Solotunes* are entirely constructed words that, to date, *Duden* does not identify as standard German or recognized slang. In short, Phillips uses English and Jamaican patois in his German review for the same reason the Reggae Node administrators did on the website: to demonstrate cultural knowledge and signal affiliations between Germany, Jamaica, and the European (and possibly even worldwide) reggae scenes. While Phillips' language use contributes to the creation of the trans-Caribbean vernacular in Germany, some of his constructions evidence a vernacular that arises from the blending of three distinct languages. If this type of language play across three cultures and linguistic systems is transcultural, then its constitutes transcultural vernacular. Rather than showing the loss of aesthetic particularity Baudrillard warned about in his definition of the term transaesthetics, a new aesthetic emerges from the use of three languages, underscoring yet again why Baudrillard's term deserves to be expanded upon. Whether or not Phillips' formulations have entered wider usage would be the subject of another study. Nevertheless, these aesthetic constructions did occur on Reggae Node, an online platform that facilitated the growth and development of Germany's reggae scenes, and this language play constitutes a trans-Caribbean vernacular that does not exist in the Caribbean. Furthermore, it is not one strictly perpetuated by artists, but by fans, aficionados, and critics. To examine how artists develop this type of language play, I turn to Gentleman's work.

A Gentleman Rises: Tilmann Otto

Mirroring similar arguments in the German hip-hop discourse discussed in chapter two, Olaf Karnik argues that reggae, like hip-hop, began as a "reception-phenomenon in Germany." However, by asserting that "reggae dancehall only emerged in Germany within the context of hip hop, ragga, and jungle in the early to mid-1990s,"[51] Karnik overlooks the roles that the Summerjam festival and Reggae Node played in not only establishing Caribbean and Jamaican culture to Germany, but in creating German practitioners of Jamaican music. Karnik observes that Gentleman, who was born Tilmann Otto in Osnabrück, Germany (and who was first known as Mr. Gentleman in Cologne's Jamaican soundsystem scene),[52] has become "the biggest star in the German-speaking reggae scene." There are two problems with this characterization. First, Gentleman has performed in Spain, Portugal, Poland, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Sweden, Norway, and Belgium, and even as far afield as Africa and the United States, thereby casting sufficient doubt on the assertion that Gentleman's appeal exists solely in Germany.[53] Second, the vast majority of Gentleman's output is not in German but Jamaican patois, the performance language he

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[51] Olaf Karnik, "Reggae," in *Contemporary Youth Culture: An International Encyclopedia, Vol. 2*, edited by Shirley Steinberg, Priya Parmar, and Birgit Richard (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 331.

[52] Under the moniker Mr. Gentleman, Otto was associated with the Cologne-based Pow Pow Soundsystem well before he ever went solo. *See* "Pow Pow Soundsystem Köln (Cologne)," *Reggae Node*, April 2001, accessed Feb 12, 2016, reggaenode.de/soundsys/.

[53] Maria Eckardt, "Sommerliches Jamaika-Feeling am Rhein-Herne-Kanal," *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Aug 8, 2016, accessed Feb 23, 2017, waz.de/staedte/gelsenkirchen/sommerliches-jamaika-feeling-am-rhein-herne-kanal-id12142025.html.

adopted early in his career. Indeed, Reggae Node emphasizes this fact as a point of pride, describing Gentleman's decision to reject his native language as "the right one."[54] Choosing to sing and rhyme in Jamaican patois and English increased Gentleman's chances of becoming an international star.

As a teen, Otto claims to have first gained access to Jamaican music through his brother's record collection, which included Bob Marley, Peter Tosh (a member of Marley's Wailers), and Dennis Brown, an important proponent of reggae globally.[55] Trips back and forth to Jamaica beginning at the age of seventeen in 1992 suffused Otto's musical interests with firsthand experience of the people, culture, and language of the country.[56] As a recording artist, Gentleman got his start in 1998 "when the Stuttgart-based hip-hop group Freundeskreis asked him to lend his singjay skills to their single 'Tabula Rasa'."[57] (Curiously, there is no mention of Snow's massive 1993 hit "Informer.") Nevertheless, as Germany's leading reggae artist today, Gentleman's music is sometimes referred as "Germaican,"[58] a portmanteau of German and Jamaican, which represents another instance of lingual fusion. Rather than a mash-up of German and Jamaican patois, this invented word arises from creative interplay between English, Spanish, and Taíno, the indigenous language of Jamaica, which Columbus first referred to in his ship's logs.[59] As a so-called sing-jay, i.e. "a DJ [emcee] who raps and sings as part of their performance,"[60] Gentleman's music is a blend of reggae, dancehall, ragga (a subgenre of dancehall and reggae), and hip-hop—a degree of musical overlap that makes delineations according to the strict genre criteria somewhat difficult. Operating within all of these, Gentleman is an intermediary who brings the music of Jamaica to audiences in Germany and across Europe. While he is the result of the complex, interrelated overlapping practices of Jamaican music culture between Germany and Jamaica, Gentleman projects these musical and cultural energies to audiences across Europe.

As Phillips noted in his review, *Journey to Jah* resulted from binational, creative musical collaboration. Recorded at studios in Kingston, Cologne, and Leipzig, the album features prominent figures from Jamaica's music scene, including legendary audio engineer Bobby "Digital" Dixon, vocalist and producer Richie Stephens, and saxophonist Dean Fraser. Furthermore, while these technicians and musicians impart credibility to Gentleman's record, the reliance on well-known figures from Kingston's famed music scene

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[54] The quote reads "H.P. SETTER über einen deutschen Artist, der sich als Künstler seiner Heimatsprache verschließt und der mit dieser richtigen Entscheidung unterwegs ist an die weltweite Spitze des Jah Movements." *See* Helmut "H.P. Setter" Phillips, "Gentleman—Journey to Jah," Mar 2002, *Reggae Node*, accessed July 29, 2017, reggaenode.de/cdreview/.

[55] Jo-Ann Greene, "Dennis Brown (Biography)," *All Music*, n.d. accessed Feb 15, 2017, allmusic.com/artist/dennis-brown-mn0000242861/biography.

[56] Teacher and Mr. T, "Album Review—*Journey to Jah*," *Reggae Vibes*, n.d. accessed Feb 16, 2017, reggae-vibes.com/rev_sin/journeyt.htm.

[57] David Jeffries, "Gentleman (Biography)," *All Music*, n.d., accessed Feb 15, 2017, allmusic.com/artist/gentleman-mn0000803479/biography. While Jeffries claims Gentleman's career began in 1997, the *Deutsche National Bibliothek* indicates that the Freundeskreis single "Tabula Rasa" was released in 1998. *See* d-nb.info/356175561.

[58] Jeffries, "Gentleman (Biography)."

[59] "Jamayca," *Diccionario de Voces* (Taíno Dictionary), 2002, accessed Feb 16, 2017, web.archive.org/web/20071016055722/http://www.uctp.org/VocesIndigena.html.

[60] "Sing-jay," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013. The terms DJ and MC denote different roles in hip-hop and dancehall. In hip-hop, the DJ plays the records and the MC works the microphone. In dancehall, the person spinning the records is called the *selector* and the person on the microphone is called the DJ. Thus, a sing-jay is a vocalist from the dancehall tradition who sings and raps. My thanks to Tamás Novák for clarifying this crucial difference.

deflects criticism that Gentleman's music constitutes, in Baudrillard's sense, the simulation of reggae and its musical aesthetics. Because *Journey to Jah* emerged from collaborations that took place in studios in two countries on either side of the Atlantic, this creative culture-work exemplifies transatlantic and transhemispheric interaction and engagement.

The album title denotes a quest to find, and ultimately know, the Rastafarian figuration of god (Jah), and many of the songs deal with aspects of Rastafari faith. For instance, the opening track "Dem Gone" boldly declares "Jah Jah is real!" while a line from another song, "Run Away," addresses divine creation, eternal life, ("Jah give we life after all"), and, due to its grammatical ambiguity, the notion that we actually create god by virtue of belief. "Jah Ina Yuh Life" affirms that knowing god improves one's day-to-day existence, and "Empress" claims that god (Jah) is responsible, and thus deserves thanks, for granting man a woman to love. Core values of Rastafarianism, the religious faith reggae artists celebrate, include an emphasis on Old Testament laws, the prophecies outlined in the Book of Revelation, and the recognition of Jesus as the earthly embodiment of god (Jah).[61] Despite some notable differences from European manifestations of Christianity—for instance, that Jesus was black, the disavowal of a heavenly afterlife that places Africa (or "Zion") as the promised land, and the resistance of Babylon, i.e. the white power structure of Europe and the Americas[62]—listeners and fans of Gentleman's music who identify as Christian are able to connect with the themes on *Journey to Jah* via shared spiritual values. Where monotheism, notions of eternal life and creation, and heterosexual love resonate across many countries and cultures, the subject matter of these songs explain in part Gentleman's widespread appeal, but the overlap of these principles underpin the transcultural dimensions and universal appeal of his music.

Transcendence Through Transgression: Liberation Theology in "Man A Rise"

One song in particular, "Man A Rise ft. Bounty Killer," asks in how far the measures needed to attain equality beyond the status quo—that is, to transcend the conditions of the present—may require deviation from the moral codes religions enshrine—in other words, to transgress divine law. At the discursive level, the song addresses racism, oppression, war, poverty, and, above all, love—which, by the song's conclusion, becomes a panacea for these social ills. Much of this aligns with the principles of black liberation theology. Its chief proponent, American theologian Rev. Dr. James H. Cone, claimed that black theology derives its legitimacy from Christian doctrine. "The Christian understanding of God," Cone writes, "arises from the biblical view of revelation, a revelation of God that takes place in the liberation of oppressed Israel and is completed in the incarnation, in Jesus Christ."[63] "The doctrine of God in black theology," Cone argues

> must be of the God who is participating in the liberation of the oppressed
> of the land. Because God has been revealed in the history of oppressed
> Israel and decisively in the Oppressed One, Jesus Christ, it is impossible
> to say anything about God without seeing God as being in the
> contemporary liberation of all oppressed peoples. The God in black

[61] "Rastafarianism: Rastafarianism fast facts and introduction," *Religion Facts*, Aug 11, 2006, accessed Feb 14, 2017, religionfacts.com/rastafarianism.

[62] "Rastafarian Beliefs," *Religion Facts*, Aug 11, 2006, accessed Feb 14, 2017, religionfacts.com/rastafarianism/beliefs.

[63] James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation—Deluxe Edition* (Ossining, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 64.

theology is the God of and for the oppressed, the God who comes into view in their liberation.[64]

Cone further argues that liberation theology resides in the black experience (i.e. "a life of humiliation and suffering […] in a system of white racism"),[65] black history (specifically, the role of black churches from the 18th century to the present in the black struggle for independence),[66] black culture (literature, music, and other art forms), and, above all, becoming aware of blackness and having "the power to love oneself precisely because one is black," including being prepared "to die if whites try to make one behave otherwise."[67] "Black theology," Cone concludes, "cannot speak of God […] without identifying God's presence with the events of liberation in the black community."[68] Cone's articulation of black theology reserves a place for violence and transgression in liberating the downtrodden from oppression even though such acts might run counter to the teachings of Christ. In Gentleman's "Man A Rise," however, the supremacy of love neuters readings of the song as an overt call to armed resistance, revolt, or violence.

Featured artist Bounty Killer brings the proto-rap vocalization technique of toasting to the song, and his shout-outs underpin much of its political message. For instance, within the first four seconds, Bounty Killer declares "It's poor people governor learn with Gentleman," to which someone, perhaps Gentleman (or an uncredited studio vocalist), rejoins "That's right!" Bounty Killer's toast, which lacks specificity because of its unconjugated verb, invites multiple interpretations. Where "learn" means to acquire knowledge and, in broken English, to teach (i.e. to learn someone), Bounty Killer, who also goes by the alias the People's Governor, states that he, but also the audience, will learn with Gentleman. Further still, one might understand his toast as an imperative: after declaring who is on the mic ("It's poor people governor"), he commands the audience to "learn with Gentleman." Not only does Bounty Killer suggest that Gentleman is someone the audience can learn from, Bounty Killer advocates for collaborative learning. As opposed to authoritarian, top-down, or hierarchical systems of domination and control, the grammatical ambiguity of the line demonstrates the power of vernacular language to impart knowledge, wisdom, and power to, of, by, and for the people. Happening within just the first four seconds, the message coincides with the song's theme of liberation through collective knowledge and action.

While the song ultimately resolves on the idea of love as panacea, its refrain encourages listeners to act collectively to achieve heretofore unknown levels of justice and equality. After Bounty Killer's introductory toast, Gentleman delivers the chorus:

> Full time now the people overstand
> That together we can rise and then be strong
> We've been abiding righteousness for oh so long
> It's up to us to fulfil the father's plan.[69]

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[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid., 24-25.
[66] Ibid., 28.
[67] Ibid., 26.
[68] Ibid., 26-27.
[69] "Man A Rise," *Genius Media Group*, n.d., accessed Feb 11, 2017, genius.com/Gentleman-man-a-rise-lyrics. Although the lyrics I cite throughout my analysis originate from a transcription provided at Genius.com, the lyric sheet required significant revision, which I provided under the username MC Duden.

With an enclosed rhyme scheme cast as a traditional ABBA quatrain, the chorus, which is sung eight times in the three-and-a-half-minute song, takes on chant-like dimensions to implore listeners to break from convention. "Full time," which Gentleman distinctly pronounces as German *voll*, can mean "all the time," "continually," "forever"*,* or "eternity." The term, which commonly refers to fulltime employment, is a call for permanent commitment to "overstand." Where the *Urban Dictionary* defines *overstand* as "comprehend[ing] a thing itself and to have knowledge of why it is the way it is and of its place or role in the grand scheme of things,"[70] within the context of the song it means to rise above the petty bickering, hatreds, and resentments of the status quo. Furthermore, the act of rising up is cast as a communal act of empowerment ("together we can rise and be strong"). When Gentleman sings "we've been abiding righteousness for oh so long," he suggests that people have been dutifully playing by the rules, which has gotten them nowhere.[71] These lines suggest that by working together ("it's up to us"), god's plan ("the father's plan"), which is never defined in the song, can be realized. Like James H. Cone, Gentleman advocates for transcendence through transgression via the breaking of rules—either god's or man's, and quite possibly both. The justification for liberation resides in Christian theology.

Gentleman's use of the term *overstand*, which communicates the desire to separate "from […] Western ideology as well as a continual […] remembrance of the struggle for emancipation,"[72] underscores this reading. Widely used in reggae and dancehall, and increasingly more so in hip-hop, the term in its present meaning originated in the mid-1960s with Rastafarianism. Despite being in circulation for a half century, *overstand* does not appear in the Oxford Dictionary. Merriam-Webster claims that *overstand* means "to keep on a navigational course beyond (a mark),"[73] which is contextually meaningful. However, the 1912 edition of *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language* defines *overstand* as "to endure to the end."[74] Given that Oxford does not include the word in its present dictionary, Rastafarians and reggae musicians have curated, but also maintained, the word by establishing it as one of their founding principles.

As one of the best known instances of Jamaican vernacular, the origins of *overstand* are unclear. Etymology websites claim that the word has roots in Old English (*oferstandan*),[75] Middle English (*overstonden*), Dutch (*overstaan*), and German (*überstehen*),[76] yet provide few details, if any, to explain how these

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[70] "Overstand," *Urban Dictionary*, Dec 11, 2006, accessed July 30, 2017, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=overstand.

[71] The poverty rate in Jamaica hovers around 15% of the total population. Although the World Bank reports a reduction in poverty worldwide over the last several decades, 2103 estimates place nearly 11% of the global population as living on under two dollars per day. *See* "The Poverty-Environment Nexus: Establishing an Approach for Determining Special Development Areas in Jamaica," *The Planning Institute of Jamaica*, Feb 2007, accessed July 30, 2017, pioj.gov.jm/Portals/0/Sustainable_Development/Poverty-Environmental%20Vulnerability%20Relationship.pdf and "Poverty (Overview), *The World Bank*, Oct 2, 2016, accessed July 30, 2017, worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview, respectively.

[72] "Why do Rastas say Overstand?," *Rasta Reason*, Sept 12, 2007, accessed Feb 16, 2017, rastareason.wordpress.com/2007/09/12/why-do-rastas-say-overstand/.

[73] "Overstand," *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, n.d., accessed Feb 17, 2017, merriam-webster.com/dictionary/overstand.

[74] "Overstand," *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language* (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1912), 1538. My thanks to the Alden Historical Society of Alden, New York for allowing me to page through their display-only copy of the dictionary.

[75] Douglas Harper, "Overstand," *Etymonline*, n.d., accessed Feb 17, 2017. etymonline.com/index.php?term=overstand&allowed_in_frame=0

[76] "Overstand," *Wiktionary (The Free Dictionary)*, n.d., accessed Feb 17, 2017. en.wiktionary.org/wiki/overstand.

interconnections, should they be true, came to pass. Of these, the Dutch link is perhaps the most spurious. While Google Translate claims that *overstaan* means "to overcome,"[77] the word does not appear as a verb in any Dutch dictionary.[78] According to Bab.la, a free online platform that aims to become the world's largest online dictionary (and which has been owned by Oxford since April 2015),[79] the term *ten overstaan* has a range of connotations, most of which are prepositional, e.g. "in respect of," "in the face of," "against," "over," "for the sake of," "in opposing," "before (a person)," "in front of," or "in relation to."[80] While these gradations in usage lend some credence to the latent, counterhegemonic potential of *overstand* as a term of resistance, one wonders the extent to which these connections have been reverse-engineered, especially in online communities, to legitimize one of Rastafarianism's best known concepts. Of these alleged etymological connections, the German *überstehen*, which means "to endure," "to survive," or "to overcome," is most profound,[81] but given Germany's limited role in the colonial history of Jamaica and the Caribbean, the assertion that *überstehen* informs *overstand* is perplexing. Nevertheless, *overstand*, like the term reggae, has penetrated a number of countries, languages, and cultures to gain traction outside its original sociolinguistic context due to the global spread of reggae, dancehall, ragga, and hip-hop. Artists have preserved the term through popular culture, which is precisely how vernacular persists, and Gentleman's use of the term continues that trend.

Other examples, particularly due to pronunciation, enunciation, and intonation, showcase the creative lingual play between German and Jamaican Patois, but these examples must be heard to be appreciated. One of Bounty Killer's verses, where he appeals to Jah directly, bears this out:

> And then the most tie abide us
> Please stand beside us
> Blessing thee provide us
> Don't try divide us
> Jah changing time
> No man hurry you a hide up
> People waan rise and just dis I see my nuoz.

Ending each of the first four lines in "us," Bounty Killer emphasizes the importance of the collective over the individual. The first line, "the most tie abide us," is a backwards rendering of what could be formulated as "we abide by the ties that bind us" to god, but also to each other. Beseeching Jah not to abandon them, Bounty Killer distinctly enunciates "thee" (archaic English for "you") as *Sie* (or *zee*), the second person formal for "you" in German, when he invokes Jah's blessing. Bestowing reverence upon the all-mighty by creatively pronouncing "thee" as *Sie*, Bounty Killer's performative use of German pronunciation demonstrates his commitment to learn with Gentleman. In the last line, Bounty Killer claims that people, despite wanting to rise ("People waan rise"), often get caught up denigrating others ("and just dis," i.e. disrespect). Ending the line with "I see my nuoz" (I see my nose), Bounty Killer does not simply admonish the audience for behavior he views as counterproductive, but also implicates himself. Thus, by calling out

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[77] "Overstaan," *Google Translate*, n.d., accessed July 31, 2017, translate.google.de/#nl/en/overstaan.
[78] My thanks to G.H. Joost Baarssen in Amsterdam for corroborating this fact.
[79] "Bab.la (About Us)," *Bab.la*, n.d., accessed Feb 19, 2017. en.bab.la/company/.
[80] "Overstaan," *Bab.la*, n.d., accessed Feb 18, 2017. en.bab.la/dictionary/dutch-english/overstaan.
[81] "Überstehen," *Leo*, n.d., accessed July 31, 2017, dict.leo.org/german-english/überstehen.

his own occasional failings, he reemphasizes the metaphor of collective, non-hierarchical learning. Because this occurs through Bounty Killer's creative use of German and Jamaican patois, it is a translingual utterance.

In the subsequent verse, Gentleman emphasizes the need for action and the importance of embracing love over hate.

> I ready make your talk
> Now it's time to make your walk
> Words without action well it's better you go part
> I see no love ina your heart
> You should have shown that from the start
> The hatred that you're teaching us is tearing us apart.

In the first two lines, Gentleman implores the listener to take action. To do this, he twice utilizes the English auxiliary verb *to make* in the imperative, much like one would in German.[82] In the first instance, "make your talk" commands the listener to convert their words into action; in the second, "make your walk" propels the listener to act.[83] Gentleman's knowledge of German and English enables him to exploit the power of both through Jamaican patois, his performance language. The third line affirms that there is no place in the collective for those who only talk and do not act. Indeed, Gentleman asserts that those who only talk should leave ("it's better you go part"). He then postulates that the absence of love ("I see no love ina your heart") is the reason for the lack of conviction; he follows up that observation by admonishing those who preach hatred to suggest that doing so spurs disunity. In identifying the counterproductive role of hatred, Gentleman mirrors Bounty Killer's line in the previous verse to begin building towards the song's underlying theme that love is the supreme value.

After two renditions of the chorus, Gentleman returns to emphasize the importance of love for people to successfully rise as a collective.

> It's only love what we possess
> We stand for happiness
> We take it good ah make it better
> And better become the best
> No matter how dem try the rest
> And put me to the test
> The work it haffi done
> So we haffi do the rest.

Instead of *that* or *which*, Gentleman uses *what* as a relative pronoun, a common mistake Germans commit when speaking English. Thus, he exploits a kind of Germanized English as an interlingual vernacular to poetic effect. Furthermore, rather than use *make* Gentleman deploys *take* as an auxiliary verb to compound happiness as an inflected superlative. Working through patois and German, he deploys a common patois word ("dem") as a stand in for *they* ("No matter how dem try the rest"). However, his word choice, especially for German speakers, must be intriguing. *Dem* is the dative form of the masculine definite article *der*. Given that he is singing about Jah, or god (in German *der Gott*), *dem* allows for double entendre that suggests "they"

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[82] Examples might be "Mache deine Arbeit" (Do your work) or "Mache mal" (Just do it).
[83] Gentleman's word choice is comparable to the English expression "Don't just talk the talk, walk the walk." *See* "Talk the talk…walk the walk," *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Thesaurus*, n.d., accessed Aug 4, 2017, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/talk-the-talk-walk-the-walk.

(the people) but also god (him). The potential for this double reading rests on the following line where Gentleman evokes the Old Testament story of Job ("And put me to the test") where god and satan test Job to determine his loyalty to the all-mighty. Thus, the preceding line, precisely because of its linguistic ambiguity, can be read as "No matter how much people try things other than happiness" and "No matter how much god tests them." Regardless if people opt for values or principles other than happiness (or love), or if they are tested by god, the collective effort to rise continues.

Perhaps the best illustration of the fluidity of English-patois and the interpretive openness it invites comes when Gentleman rhymes "The work it haffi done/So we haffi do the rest." In the first instance, *haffi*, Jamaican patois for "have to,"[84] functions as *has to* due to the third person "it." In the second, *haffi* functions as *have to* (due to the first person plural "we"), but it can also be understood as *half*. The two lines can thus be interpreted as "the work has to be done/so we have to do the rest" and "the work is half done/so we have to do the rest." In both instances, Gentleman beseeches listeners to commit to finishing what has been started. Likewise, "rest" can mean the remainder or the cessation of work to relax. In that sense, the line evokes Genesis 2:2, which states that God rested on the seventh day after creating the world. These multiple readings, predicated upon linguistic diffuseness, reaffirm Gentleman's call for listeners to commit to a continual process so that they may collectively rise and overturn the conditions that keep them oppressed. The aesthetic 'breakdown' or 'collapse' in the utterance alludes to the loss of aesthetic particularity Baudrillard warned of, but given the extent to which multiple meanings open up because of this diffuseness, his original articulation of transaesthetics is untenable. In other words, there is much more at stake here than aesthetic 'loss.' Indeed, there is significant gain, and this further warrants expanding on the original articulation of transaesthetics.

Advocacy to adhere to love as the highest principle is communicated in the song's bridge.

> Love will never let you down no way
> Just hang up on your portion today
> Keep it alive, for you and for me
> And sad man nuh go morrow get slay.

The singing of these lines constitutes a departure in the song's performative aesthetic. Whereas both vocalists up to this point rely exclusively on toasting and rhyming techniques, Gentleman's decision to sing, in conjunction with a sparse musical accompaniment, creates emphasis on the opening line to stress the enduring power of love. Because the first line is delivered in standard English (one of the very few instances in the entire song), one may conclude that the first line bears greater significance. Instead of rhyming *to hang on*, which would have created an ill-suited "on on" utterance (i.e. "just hang on on your portion today"), Gentleman deploys the phrasal verb *to hang up* to fill out the rhythm of line two. The result is a somewhat ambiguous suggestion that can be understood as "hold on to the love you have today." Keeping with the imaginary collective reiterated again and again throughout the song, Gentleman beseeches the listener to keep love alive not only for him or herself, but "for you and for me." In the final line, Gentleman reverts

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[84] "Haffi," *Jamaican Patwah*, Nov 12, 2014, accessed Mar 15, 2017, jamaicanpatwah.com/term/haffi/1001#.WMm-MBiZPMI.

to patois. *Nuh*, meaning "no" or "not,"[85] works with the unconjugated verbs "go" and "get slay" (be killed). *Morrow*, patois for "tomorrow," implies an indeterminate future.[86] Thus, the line, which might be translated as "whoever is sad will not die tomorrow," allows for a dual reading. On the one hand, love that is maintained by, and strictly for, individuals negatively impacts the collective; on the other, and read alongside Gentleman's earlier declaration that "We stand for happiness," individual love not maintained out of selfishness is strong enough to sustain people in times of despair. In this way, and in line with Christian doctrine, the song privileges love as the ultimate value.

As a commercial reggae/dancehall/rap hybrid, "Man A Rise," a title that also metaphorically suggests resurrection, is an example not only of the aesthetic looseness that occurs when lyrics are delivered across three languages, but also how those aesthetic circumstances enhance interpretative potential. If the interplay between Jamaican Patois and English with some minor Germanized usage and pronunciation/intonation yields a loss in aesthetic particularity that Baudrillard warned of in his definition of transaesthetics, then this aesthetic blending or diffuseness enhances, rather than detracts from, the resulting work. Because "Man A Rise" and *Journey to Jah* emerged from binational, transatlantic collaborations between musicians, producers, and technicians in Germany and Jamaica, the 'trans' in transaesthetics evokes more than musical or linguistic aesthetics. Here, trans refers to creative collaboration across national, social, and cultural boundaries, especially if we consider how Germaican, or Euroreggae, has emerged as a musical genre from years of exchange and interchange between Africa, the Caribbean, and Europe.

Cultural Tourist, Cultural Appropriator, or Cultural Intermediary?

What are we to make of an ethnic German from Osnabrück who raps and sings in Jamaican patois, especially one who has achieved significant commercial success? Since the global spread of hip-hop, cultural tourism and appropriation have been serious concerns. Indeed, Bakari Kitwana devotes an entire book, *Why White Kids Love Hip-Hop* (2005), to the subject. The majority of the book tells the story of how hip-hop culture transformed the lives of two non-Black Americans, Jeremy Miller (from Warr Acres, Oklahoma) and Lynne Ballard (from the San Francisco Bay area). Kitwana cites Billy Wimsatt's concentric attitudinal circles theory to define the type of engagement required to justify one's place in a cultural scene that fits neither one's skin color or, more importantly still, the socioeconomic and racial oppression people of color have endured and continue to strive to overcome. The ideas surrounding concentric attitudinal circles theory, paraphrased by Marc Spiegler, include (from most to least engaged):

1. People "who actually know Blacks and study the intricacies of hip-hop's culture;"
2. Those who have "peripheral contact with the culture through friends of relatives, but doesn't actively seek 'true hip-hopper' status. They go to shows, but don't rap, spray-paint, or breakdance;"
3. So-called "free-floating fans," i.e. people "who play hip-hop between other types of music;" and lastly,

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[85] "Nuh," *Jamaican Patwah*, June 15, 2015, accessed Aug 5, 2017, jamaicanpatwah.com/term/nuh/1055#.WYWfwRhh2Rs.
[86] "Morrow," *Jamaican Patwah*, Dec 27, 2014, accessed Aug 5, 2017, jamaicanpatwah.com/term/morrow/2144#.WZr4FRhh2Rs.

4. "Pure consumers […] rural 'wiggers' who avoid cities, and thought Blacks complained too much about their societal lot."[87]

While Kitwana problematizes these ideas throughout his book, he holds that Wimsatt's model "provides an effective framework for discussing white kids and hip-hop."[88] As with the portmanteau wigger, a condescending term for a white person who dresses, speaks, and acts black (and which Kitwana includes in the subtitle of his book), critics refer to non-Jamaicans who speak or perform in patois as "fake Jamaican,"[89] or jahfakin, i.e. someone who "pretends to be a Rastafarian" and "involves themselves [sic] in reggae culture for non-spiritual purposes."[90] Because of his use of Jamaican patois, but especially for financially profiting as a commercial artist, critics such as bell hooks might dismiss Gentleman as a cultural tourist or cultural appropriator. But is Tilmann Otto, as Gentleman, guilty of such an allegation?

In September 1994, four years before he first recorded with the Stuttgart-based rap group Freundeskreis (and one year after Snow's "Informer" stormed the German charts), Otto performed as Gentleman with Pow Pow, a Cologne-based Jamaican dancehall soundsystem, on episode 37 of *Freestyle*, a music program produced by VIVA, the German music television network that showcased hip-hop, dancehall, and reggae from around the world.[91] In that appearance Otto displays a penchant, even at the age of eighteen or nineteen, for emulating Jamaican patois. In addition to freestyle rhyming and singing with Pow Pow, who provide dancehall riddims and microphone shout-outs (and thereby participate in the creation, or extension, of Jamaican culture in Germany), Otto's spoken German during his interview segment is speckled with English and flavored with a Jamaican accent. The moderator asks how Otto became interested dancehall and why he speaks patois so well.[92] After relaying that dancehall, which he describes as "simple music," reached him on a deep level, Otto attests that he picked up Patois when visiting Jamaica because "man muss irgendwie mit den Leuten verständigen" (one has to somehow agree with/be in agreement with the people). His answer suggests that he adopted these speech patterns through mimicry and reciprocity—strategies common to human communication. These techniques, especially if Otto engaged in them unconsciously, fit well with Cantwell's notion of ethnomimesis, i.e. the "unconscious mimicry through which we take the deposits of a particular influence, tradition, or culture to ourselves."[93] This particular instance unfolds in a binational, transatlantic orientation, and Otto's behavior is not that different from what young musicians do when mimicking mentors. Indeed, one could argue that Otto

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[87] Bakari Kitwana, *Why White Kids Love Hip-Hop: Wankstas, Wiggers, Wannabes, and the New Reality of Race in America* (New York: BasicCivitas Books, 2005), 54.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Jason Simpson, "The Bug (Kevin Martin) Producer Interview: Exploring Duality on Angels and Devils," *Redefine Magazine*, Sept 11, 2014, accessed Mar 15, 2017, redefinemag.com/2014/bug-kevin-martin-producer-interview-angels-devils/.

[90] "Jahfakin," *Urban Dictionary*, Aug 22, 2003, accessed Mar 15, 2017, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=jahfakin.

[91] A debt of gratitude is owed to Tamás Novák for pointing this out. *See* "Freestyle—Pow Pow/Gentleman/Silly Walks—Folge 37—90's Flashback (Official Version AggroTV)," YouTube video, 57:39, posted by AGGRO.TV, Oct 13, 2013, accessed Mar 17, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=NAnnQ_eIhJM.

[92] The interview segment takes place between 27:36 and 29:29 of the video.

[93] Cantwell, 5.

mimics Snow, who also speaks with Jamaican-flavored English in interviews.[94] Adopting these speech patterns at an impressionable age, Otto demonstrates not only an adroit ability to emulate the sound and rhythm of language, but also skill to redeploy it creatively.

Furthermore, Otto code-switches between German and English during the interview. When asked if he has been to Jamaica, he states that he has been there on three occasions but issues a quick rejoinder, saying "(Ich) will auch *soon* wieder hin fahren" (I want to go back again soon). When the interviewer asks which artists from Jamaica's dancehall/reggae scene Gentleman aligns with, he cites no one in particular but claims dancehall in general. He then postulates that because audiences in Germany have a hard time understanding dancehall lyrics, they are attracted primarily by its sound and rhythm. Picking up on his earlier comment that the music of dancehall is simple, Otto states "Die Leute sollen auf den Sound abfahren" (People should dig the sound) because "der Sound ist so simpel, die sollen sich ein *simplicity* erfreuen, weil *simplicity is beautiful*" (The sound is so simple, people should enjoy simplicity because simplicity is beautiful). In addition to dropping English into what is an otherwise German utterance, the exaggerated way in which Otto pronounces "beautiful," modeled after patois, emphasizes *sound*. By privileging the aesthetics of sound over semantic content (yet not wholly divorcing the two from each other), Otto not only argues for why dancehall could, and eventually did, become popular in Germany, but also for how and why he was drawn to it. In making the case for how music crosses boundaries and borders due to its aesthetic experience, Otto mirrors Barry Shank's argument that music holds enormous potential for generating new political ideas, expressions, and affiliations among people who do not necessarily share the same political views, regardless of what messages might be conveyed in lyrics.

Gentleman's appearance on *Freestyle* took place a full eight years before the release of *Journey to Jah*. Even then, Otto, as Gentleman, was marked with Jamaican speech habits and patterns—a hallmark, as Allahar notes, of the practice of trans-Caribbean vernacular outside the region. By the time *Journey to Jah* was released, Otto had been honing his vernacular skills for nearly a decade. While skeptics might contend that he performs in the interview, his behavior reveals a commitment to the linguistic habits of Jamaica. As someone steeped in reggae and dancehall from his early teens onward, Gentleman falls into the third and fourth points (the most superficial) in Wimsatt's attitudinal concentric circle theory. Otto's collaboration with numerous figures from Jamaica's established music scene, not to mention the time he spent on the island, satisfy points one and two. Lastly, Otto, who is married to and has a family with a native-born Jamaican, sustains a deeper relationship with the people and culture of Jamaica. If Wimsatt's theory is valid, then Otto seems to fulfill its criteria. Thus, the depth and duration of Gentleman's engagement with Jamaican culture disqualify him from being denigrated as a cultural tourist.

What about charges of the undue appropriation of Jamaican culture? In an article for the *Foundation for Economic Education*, Taleed J. Brown characterizes cultural appropriation as "a gesture of love in

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[94] An excellent example of this is an interview Snow gave circa 1995 to coincide with the release of his second album *Murder Love*. Not only does he speak in a Jamaican-inflected English, but he, much like Gentleman, contends that it is the physical sonic impact of reggae and dancehall that moves him. *See* "SNOW IN JAMAICA! REGGAE ARTIST," YouTube video, 8:44, posted by Dancehallarchives, Dec 26, 2015, accessed May 23, 2018, youtube.com/watch?v=DLCwwFpdBp4.

humanity," one that leads to "learning, emulation, aspiration, celebration, and progress."[95] His comments strongly resemble Cantwell's notion of ethnomimesis. Does Otto's work as Gentleman lead to progress? His translation of Jamaican music and culture to audiences in Germany and across Europe arguably extends reggae and dancehall outside of Jamaica. If Otto is guilty of cultural appropriation, it is not just for his financial bottom line, but for the benefit of audiences and Jamaica. Moreover, his culture-work preserves Caribbean culture and even sustains trans-Caribbean vernacular in Europe. In the final analysis, the practice of Jamaican and Caribbean culture in western Germany from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s explain Otto's transformation into the recording artist known as Gentleman. The channeling and redirecting of these musical and linguistic aesthetics through Germany and across Europe, not to mention fusing Rastafarianism with the principles and values found in Christianity, have led to a transcultural musical form known as Germaican, and which might be called Euroreggae. Analysis of language contact in online spaces, the circumstances surrounding the transatlantic creative musical collaborations on *Journey to Jah*, and the lyrics in "Man A Rise" not only make a strong case for transculturality, they also justify the argument to redefine the term transaesthetics as an abbreviation for transcultural aesthetics.

Merging Yoga and Hip-Hop: MC Yogi

Born and raised in California, Nicholas Giacomini (MC Yogi) fuses hip-hop and yoga into a stylized East-West hybrid that he claims brings "the wisdom of yoga to a whole new generation."[96] There are reasons why the two link up rather seamlessly, which lends insight into how transcultural forms emerge. Breakdancing is hip-hop's corporeal component; likewise, *asanas* constitute the disciplined, bodily practice of yoga. Whereas breaking is one of hip-hop's four pillars, the physical practice of yoga is one of the so-called eight limbs.[97] Furthermore, both require high levels of concentration, well-developed muscles, dexterity, a keen sense of balance, and considerable flexibility. Breakdancing demands a high degree of cardiovascular fitness and adroit practitioners of yoga excel at breathing, or *pranayama*.[98] Tellingly, MC Yogi exploits these links in "Yoga Breakdance" (2014), a minimalistic song that consists of a simple up-and-down beat, the ektara (a one-stringed Indian instrument played like a loose rubber band), the dotara (a lute of central Asia), and deejay scratches. In that song, and much like a dancehall caller, MC Yogi urges listeners to "clap your hands, enter the center and take a chance."[99]

The paths Giacomini walked to become MC Yogi began at a young age. While he did not practice a faith with regularity as a child, he received catechisms, i.e. summaries of the basic principles of Christianity issued in the form of questions and answers, from his grandmother.[100] Regarding hip-hop, Giacomini claims to have become aware of the power of rap music when he first heard "Supersonic," a hit from 1988 by west

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[95] Taleed J. Brown, "Cultural Appropriation Is Love," *Foundation for Economic Advancement*, Oct 31, 2016, accessed Mar 15, 2017, fee.org/articles/cultural-appropriation-is-love/.

[96] MC Yogi, *Elephant Power*, "Liner Notes," (Boulder, CO: White Swan Records, 2008), compact disc.

[97] Cyndi Lee, "Yoga 101: A Beginner's Guide to Practice, Meditation, and the Sutras," *Yoga Journal*, Oct 7, 2014, accessed Feb 13, 2017, yogajournal.com/article/beginners/yoga-questions-answered/.

[98] Ibid.

[99] MC Yogi, "Yoga Breakdance," *Mantras, Beats & Meditations* (Boulder, CO: Sounds True, 2014), compact disc.

[100] Steven J. Rosen, "Hip-Hop and Hinduism: The Spiritual Journey of MC Yogi," in *The Hip Hop and Religion Reader*, edited by Monica R. Miller and Anthony B. Pinn (New York: Routledge, 2015), 333.

coast Latina rap group J.J. Fad; shortly thereafter, he purchased Run-D.M.C.'s *Raising Hell* and the Beastie Boys' *Licensed to Ill*.[101]   A neighborhood boy who possessed a modest ability to rap inspired Giacomini to try his hand at rapping.[102] Like many of his generation, Giacomini "grew up painting graffiti [and] listening to hip hop. Inspired by artists like the Beastie Boys and Run-D.M.C, he began writing raps and freestyling for friends at house parties in the mid-1990s.[103] Furthermore, during his troubled teen years, Giacomini

> spent most of high school in a group home for at-risk youth, and hip hop culture provided both a soundtrack and a creative outlet. On a whim, he joined his father [at the age 18] for a yoga and meditation intensive with a famous spiritual teacher from India. Deeply moved by this powerful experience […] he began studying the physical forms of yoga, as well as meditation, philosophy and devotional chanting.[104]

In addition to describing how Giacomini personally came into contact with both cultures, the thank-you list on *Elephant Power* (2008), MC Yogi's debut release, includes teachers, immediate and extended family, associates, and friends who inspired, motivated, and mentored him. Where respect is key in hip-hop and yoga, this simple gesture mirrors the importance of diminishing ego in yogic practice. As a self-described "un-rapper,"[105] Giacomini shines the spotlight away from himself, a pronounced difference from hip-hop culture's oftentimes unhealthy fixation on celebrity. Indeed, Giacomini stresses that he shares details from his own personal journey "not to glorify or glamorize" himself, but to assist others on their own paths of spiritual awakening and growth.[106]

The musical influences Giacomini cites demonstrate a lineage of global music culture, including The Beatles, Ravi Shankar, and Bob Marley.[107] These examples of his musical education are neither uncommon nor coincidental. People continue to be turned on to the sitar, a mainstay of Indian music, through The Beatles *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967); Bob Marley, who died in 1981, still serves as a global ambassador for unity, peace, and love. Moreover, Giacomini claims to have first heard the term *Namaste*, the Indian greeting of respect, from the final track on the Beastie Boys album *Check Your Head* (1992).[108] In fashioning himself as a spiritual teacher, Giacomini takes a cue from Run-D.M.C. founder Joseph Simmons, who became a practicing Pentecostal minister in the wake of the unsolved shooting death of Jason Mizell, the group's co-founder and deejay, in 2002.[109] Simmons, who refashioned himself under the moniker Rev Run, released *Distortion* (2005), a mini rap/rock solo album that combines themes such as the importance of hard work and financial reward ("Mind of My Own") with spiritual concerns such as the dangers of

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[101] Giacomini recounted these details during a one-hour talk in 2013. *See* "'Pilgrimage' MC Yogi at Wanderlust's Speakeasy," YouTube video, 50:28, posted by Wanderlust, Sept 17, 2014, accessed Aug 7, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=WX0E304HdvY.
[102] Ibid.
[103] MC Yogi, "Liner Notes," *Elephant Power* (Boulder, CO: White Swan Records, 2008), compact disc.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Rosen, 332.
[106] Giacomini makes this explicit in his talk at the 2013 Wanderlust. *See* "'Pilgrimage' MC Yogi at Wanderlust's Speakeasy."
[107] Rosen, 332-334.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Steve Hochman, "Minister on MTV? Yep, He's a Rev Run," *Los Angeles Times*, July 16, 2005, accessed Jan 22, 2017, articles.latimes.com/2005/jul/16/entertainment/et-run16.

temptation, but also the opportunity for redemption and salvation ("The Way").[110] Thus, Simmons's own turn to spirituality seems to have provided Giacomini with a model. While one might argue that Giacomini constitutes bell hooks' quintessential cultural tourist due to his appropriation of Indian and African American music culture, he has practiced both from his teens onward, and he combines them in novel ways.

While the term yoga in the west often evokes the "system of physical exercises and breathing control" one practices to maintain good health,[111] the term refers to the "ancient Hindu system of religious and ascetic observance and meditation" adherents practice in order to attain "*Samadhi*" or "union with the divine" through "spiritual purification and self-understanding."[112] Given this misconception, one might expect a synthesis of yoga and hip-hop to be a superficial sampling of Indian music combined with hip-hop beats. Yet Giacomini and co-producer Robin Livingston, who call themselves the Bhakti Brothers in reference to bhakti yoga (the tradition from which kirtan music emerged),[113] collaborate with well-known kirtan artists such as Bhagavan Das, Jai Uttal, and Rita Sahai to achieve a mesmerizing musical blend that remains true to both while transcending the specificities of each. Where Rosen calls MC Yogi a "musical navigator,"[114] Giacomini's story illustrates how individuals become transformed, and in turn become transformative figures, after being exposed to an array of musical and cultural practices. While Giacomini functions as a cultural intermediary to translate Hinduism to twenty-first century audiences, this is hardly a new development.

A Brief History of Hinduism in America

MC Yogi represents yet another rekindled interest in the spiritual teachings of India, a process that has ebbed and flowed in the United States since the early 19th century. Hardly a bilateral exchange, the appearance of Indian spiritual philosophy in America, as Peter Goldberg has shown, was a transatlantic affair. Classics of Indian Vedic literature such as the Bhagavad Gita were first translated into European languages in the early 1800s, and German intellectuals such as Indologist Max Müller (1823-1900) and philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) became the chief exponents of Veda philosophy in the West.[115] Characterizing the ability to access the Upanishads "a great privilege," Schopenhauer predicted that Vedic literature would become as important to the West as Greek literature was for the Renaissance.[116] Writers associated with the English Romantic tradition such as Coleridge, Carlyle, Wordsworth, and Blake soon followed suit. "To many educated Europeans," Goldberg writes, "knowledge of India and its dominant religion came as a revelation" that signaled "a possible antidote to materialism and the cult of reason."[117] Thus, the transnational cultural flows Giacomini taps into to become a yogi emcee in the 21st century have been underway for generations.

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[110] Ibid.
[111] "Yoga," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Kaivalya, 238.
[114] Rosen, 332.
[115] Peter Goldberg, *American Veda: From Emerson and the Beatles to Yoga and Meditation—How Indian Spirituality Changed the West* (New York: Harmony Books, 2010), 29-30.
[116] Ibid., 30.
[117] Ibid.

Broadly speaking, there have been four distinct periods when Vedic literature and Hindu spirituality influenced the United States. The first occurred when Ralph Waldo Emerson incorporated Vedanta-Yoga concepts into the tenets of American transcendentalism. "Because of Emerson and his direct heirs, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman, millions of educated Americans," Goldberg writes, "have been touched by India since the mid-nineteenth century."[118] He refers to Emerson as the "rishi," the inspired poet of American transcendental philosophy;[119] Henry David Thoreau, who praised the Vedas at length in his notebooks, "the Karma Yogi;"[120] and Walt Whitman, whose poetry bridged transcendentalism and realism, the "Bhakti Bard."[121] Thus, while Giacomini, performing and recording as MC Yogi, is a hip-hop artist, one might also characterize him as a twenty-first century American transcendentalist, and Goldberg, who renames the giants of nineteenth-century American literature, draws some inspiration from MC Yogi.

The second phase in Hindu spirituality began following a series of lectures Swami Vivekananda, a Calcutta-born Hindu monk, delivered at the Parliament of World Religions at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Vivekananda spoke at length about the equality of spiritual faiths, the importance of tolerance, and the shared commonalities that make faith and spiritualism part of the universal human experience. A gifted and well-educated orator, Vivekananda's lectures cultivated admiration and respect for Vedanta-Yoga principles in America.[122] "The trailblazing work of Vivekananda and his handpicked successors," Goldberg writes, "established a template for transplanting the core message of Vedantic philosophy into American soil." Bridging the 19th and 20th centuries, Vivekananda's work set the stage for someone like MC Yogi, whose songs deal with spiritual themes Vivekananda touched upon in his Chicago lectures. Much like Gentleman (who blends Rastafarianism with Christianity), these themes resonate across many cultures, creeds, and faiths to help explain, in part, why MC Yogi's material leans towards the transcultural.

The third phase, "fueled by the primary practice of kirtan chanting," began in 1926 and popularized what would become known as the bhakti yoga movement.[123] Kaivalya writes that "kirtan arrived in the West largely through Paramahansa Yogananda" when "thousands of people packed into Carnegie Hall in New York City to chant kirtan with him."[124] By the 1930s, India's liberation movement was already well underway, and the appearance of Mahatma Gandhi on the cover of *Time* in May 1930 and January 1931 fueled even more interest in India and Hindu traditions.[125] A twelve-page article on Sri Ramana Maharshi, one of India's most revered living saints, in *Life* magazine in 1947 spurred more curiosity.[126] Americans again took a keen interest in India, and kirtana, the form of devotional religious music that began in ninth-

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[118] Ibid., 26.
[119] Ibid., 32-34.
[120] Ibid., 38-41.
[121] Ibid., 38-42.
[122] Ibid, 67-75.
[123] Alanna Kaivalya, *Sacred Sound: Discovering the Myth & Meaning of Mantra & Kirtan* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2014), 238.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Goldberg, 131.
[126] Ibid.

century India (and which is currently enjoying a surge in popularity in the U.S. today), played a key role in expanding interest in Hinduism beyond literature.[127]

   After the second world war, curiosity in Indian spiritualism continued as a response, Goldberg argues, to American "conformity, materialism, [and] suburbanization" that mirrored, in some respects, the "same drive for expansion and freedom" that "stirred the souls who blew bebop into jazz, shattered the structure of poetry and painting, and questioned received wisdom in philosophy, psychology, and religion."[128] Goldberg further points out that through the 1950s and 60s, writers such as Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg channeled yogic philosophy in their work. The desire for growth, expansion, liberation, and self-knowledge—all hallmarks of American society and Hindu spirituality—constitute the shared principles and values that allow for, and possibly even encourage, MC Yogi's yoga-flavored hip-hop. By the time The Beatles undertook their well covered spiritual retreat to study transcendental meditation with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in 1967, Goldberg and others show that nearly 150 years of interest in Indian culture, Vedic literature, and Hindu spiritualism had been underway in Europe and the United States. Following Goldberg's line of argumentation, Giacomini represents one more in a long line of figures who have translated Vedanta-Yoga philosophy to audiences in the United States. He is the first, however, to do so by combining it with rap music.

Building Bridges: The Aesthetic Ties That Bind Two Cultures

Giacomini sees hip-hop and yoga as a natural fit and asserts that they complement each other because as "oral traditions […] initially created to uplift the community," they "spread a culture of creativity and celebration" that speaks "to the same truth that we are all connected."[129] More than orality, however, there are musical aesthetics that bind the two together. When musicologist Arnold Bake first studied kirtan in the 1930s, he identified similarities with the European oratorio, the "large-scale musical work for orchestra and voices" that conveys "a narrative on a religious theme."[130] Bake explained that

> in a group of *Kirtan* singers one finds soloists, instrumentalists, and a chorus. The soloist unfolds the story, connected in one way or another with the worship of Vishnu; the chorus repeats his words, or comments upon them in lyrical stanzas. There are instrumental interludes, especially on the drum, giving an exhibition of unparalleled skill and fascinating beauty.[131]

Many of these elements are prevalent in hip-hop. Oratorio soloists who convey a story resemble hip-hop emcees, especially in rap songs that incorporate narrative structures such as plot, characters, conflict, and resolution. Call-and-response strategies, which are central to all three, are especially important. In live performances, but also on recordings, emcees issue shout-outs that audience members, either real (live

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[127] Kaivalya, 238.
[128] Goldberg, 131.
[129] "Interview with MC Yogi – Seattle Yoga News," YouTube video, 9:30, posted by Seattle Yoga News, July 28, 2014, accessed Jan 30, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=Ua03Eb8A3F4.
[130] "Oratorio," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.
[131] Arnold Bake, "Indian Folk-Music," *Proceedings of the Musical Association, 63rd Session (1936-7)*: 69, accessed Jan 23, 2017, jstor.org/stable/765693.

concert settings) or simulated (studio recordings), repeat. In kirtan, audience-participants chant in choral unison after a chant leader initiates a mantra. In both cases, these vocalization practices unify audiences and performers. While it can be argued that nearly all forms of music strive for some degree of unification between audiences and performers, hip-hop and kirtan deploy similar techniques that ultimately become the aesthetic devices that allow the two to be merged into a transcultural blend.

Moreover, characterizing kirtan as *deçi* (folk) music, Bake stresses that "insofar as it has remained *for* the people by singers *from* the people," kirtan, like hip-hop, was created outside official institutions of high culture.[132] Kirtan, which means "'the mentioning' or 'enumeration'," became "a form of worship […] in other parts of India" and eventually "developed into an art" in the Bengal region.[133] Not unlike hip-hop deejaying and emceeing, kirtan's musical techniques became "so technical that only trained singers and players" could execute them.[134] Indeed, the consolidation of kirtan's musical aesthetics, like hip-hop, represent the codification of sounds, methods, and techniques. Even though kirtan and hip-hop arose under different circumstances at vastly different places and times, both were developed by common people to serve specific community needs, and both constitute artistic practices that were eventually embraced as legitimate forms of musical expression. While hip-hop is not inherently devotional or religious, it has, as Miller and Pinn point out, "fostered an alternative form of religiosity" among fans,[135] not unlike many other forms of popular music today.

Interaction between voice and rhythm, and especially the foregrounding of percussion, is another aesthetic aspect rap music and kirtan share. In kirtan, "the drum," Bake writes, "is indispensable in giving the rhythmical background to the melody."[136] Voice and drum, he continues, "move to the same basic time, but each is allowed an extraordinary amount of freedom within the limits of certain fixed periods which may contain as many as thirty-six units" (or measures).[137] Likewise, rappers work within a strict period of time (typically 16 bars, or 64 beats), yet remain free to explore and develop their own distinct rhythmic vocal style. Thus, although there are differences, the basic premises of kirtan and rap—a central percussive pulse, solo vocalists, and audience participation—allow the two to merge. These overlaps between Indian, European, and African American musical practices ultimately allow MC Yogi and his team of musicians to forge transcultural music.

"Om Namah Shivaya": A Devotional That Sings Cross-Culturally

While many of MC Yogi's songs warrant close readings, one especially intriguing example is "Om Namah Shivaya," the title for which comes from the mantra meant to invoke the Hindu god Shiva (or Śiva) in his "highest, most all-encompassing form."[138] The purpose of mantras in Vedic spiritual practices, as Howard Beckman explains, "is to free the mind and thinking from the material sphere of consciousness and to be

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[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Miller and Pinn, 5.
[136] Bake, 69.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Kaivala, 333.

able to transcend the wheel of 'samsara' or 'birth and death within this physical world'."[139] Practiced by Shaivas, i.e. those who hold that Shiva represents "the ultimate form of the supreme source, […] the essence of all things and responsible for all of creation,"[140] the mantra translates to "I invoke the supreme essence of Śiva!"[141] Beckman explains that the purpose of the mantra is "to fulfil[l] all desires and to lead to moksha (spiritual liberation)."[142] The mantra's meaning or purpose, however, is never explained in "Om Namah Shivaya." Transformed into an aural device, the mantra becomes another voice in the song's aural tapestry, especially for casual listeners who neither understand Hindi, practice yoga, nor are familiar with kirtan culture. The deliberate avoidance of explaining the mantra results in a lack, or gap, that allows the song, along with its musical elements, to become an encompassing aesthetic experience.

While Giacomini and co-producer/engineer Robin Livingston arranged the music for "Om Namah Shivaya," they were aided by guest musicians Jai Uttal, Bhagavan Das, and vocalist Rita Sahai, all of whom have longstanding connections to the people, language, music, and spiritual practices of India. An acclaimed yogi, singer, and teacher who undertook a long spiritual pilgrimage through India beginning in 1963, Das claims to have been "the first American to live in the jungle of the Himalyas [*sic*] as a hermit-sadhu."[143] As a "sacred music composer, recording artist, multi-instrumentalist, and ecstatic vocalist," Uttal, who is renowned for fusing eastern and western music in his recordings, "has been leading, teaching and performing kirtan around the world" for nearly 50 years.[144] Uttal released a 23min rendition of the Shiva mantra on his own full-length album *Nectar* (2001), a collection of kirtan music recorded live at various yoga schools in the United States.[145] As a composer, performer, and music teacher, Rita Sahai studied with "the world-famous sarod maestro Ustad Ali Akbar Kahn" and trained "in the Seni Allaudin Gharana style known for its creativity and purity of ragas."[146] Born in Allahabad, India, and residing in San Francisco, Sahai "has served as an ambassador of India's rich musical heritage [for] over three decades in the United States."[147] As with Gentleman's *Journey to Jah*, MC Yogi's *Elephant Power* is deeply informed and enriched by collaborative efforts with highly regarded musicians.

The music for "Om Namah Shivaya" is greater than the sum of its parts, and it speaks from and to the traditions and cultures from which it draws. Rather than relying solely on synthesizers or samples of preexisting music, Uttal, Das, and Giacomini play actual acoustic instruments such as the ektara and dotara from the *deçi* folk tradition. When these elements, along with the harmonium (a small European designed

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[139] Howard Beckman, *Mantras, Yantras & Fabulous Gems: The Healing Secrets of the Ancient Vedas* (Great Britain: Balaji Publishing, 1997), 31.
[140] Kaivala, 333-334.
[141] Ibid., 182.
[142] Beckman, 38.
[143] "Home (Biography)," BhagavanDas.com, n.d., accessed Aug 9, 2017, bhagavandas.com.
[144] "About," JaiUttal.com, n.d., accessed Aug 9, 2017, jaiuttal.com/about/.
[145] "Nectar: Live Kirtan and Pagan Remixes (Product Description)," *Amazon*, n.d., accessed Aug 9, 2017, amazon.com/Nectar-Live-Kirtan-Pagan-Remixes/dp/B0000523KP/ref=sr_1_1?s=music&ie=UTF8&qid=1502364546&sr=1-1&keywords=Jai+Uttal+nectar.
[146] "About the Artists," *UC Davis Arts*, n.d., accessed Aug 9, 2017, arts.ucdavis.edu/sites/main/files/file-attachments/02_25_10_hindustani_nc_pgped.pdf.
[147] "Rita Sahai: The Jewel of Music (Biography)," RitaSahai.com, n.d., accessed Aug 9, 2017, ritasahai.com/biography/.

reed pump organ), conch (a sea shell played as a wind instrument), and small hand bells[148] are combined with Livingston's synthesized hip-hop percussion, over-driven bass lines from the Jamaican dub tradition, and a droning synthesized sitar, the resulting arrangement should not only be understood as a hybrid composition, but as transcultural music where none of the musical heritages that inform the work become privileged over any of the others.

Bhagavan Das delivers the Shiva mantra eight times in the opening bars. As the instrumentation slowly builds, breakbeats appear and MC Yogi delivers the first verse:

> Now I bow to Shiva with love and respect
> I invoke him with this slogan so I'm open to connect
> with devotion cuz I'm knowin that he's always in effect
> in deep meditation with a snake around his neck
> he's the husband of Parvati Maha Shakti
> & he rides a white bull the vehicle Nandi
> he's Ganapati's father mister Mahadev
> and the Ganges flow down from the crown of his head
> a crescent moon rests right next to his dreads
> he's the god of the dead covered in ash
> with a smile on his face his compassion is vast
> He lives in a place called Mount Kailash
> in the Himalayan kingdom known as his home
> & in the shape of a lingam he's a rolling stone
> to the king of all yogis Shankara Shambo
> (singin') Om Namah Shivaya, Shivaya Namah Om.[149]

Rapping in the first person, the opening line encourages listeners to imaginatively bow, defer, and bestow respect upon Shiva. Tape echo, a common studio effect, on "I'm open to connect" lends a shimmering quality to MC Yogi's voice. While he raps about meditation, transcendence, and the importance of connecting with higher (or deeper) realms of consciousness, this effect sonically figures the experience of transcendence. Rapping "with devotion cuz I'm knowin' that he's always in effect," MC Yogi emphasizes Shiva's omniscience through use of the hip-hop slang term "in effect," which means here and ready.[150] Stating "I'm knowin'," MC Yogi articulates faith not as intellectual knowledge but as a a deeper, more profound and all-encompassing sensorial feeling. The nonchalant use of *knowin'* also suggests, in contrast to hierarchical faiths, that one might know Shiva casually. Furthermore, while MC Yogi delivers the stative verb *to know* in the Present Continuous (a verb tense that typically conveys motion) to fill out the rhythm of the line, his decision to do so paradoxically postulates meditative awareness as an action.[151] In yogic practice, being centered, calm, and quiet is crucial for attaining and sustaining prolonged states of mindfulness. If one comes to know Shiva by meditating, then articulating that awareness by bending English grammar suggests that transgression, i.e. going beyond the bounds of established behavior, is required to transcend not only oneself, but one's culture.

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[148] Information explaining which artist plays which instrument is provided in the liner notes to *Elephant Power*.

[149] With minor alterations to match what is rapped on the recording, I rely on the official transcript available at the artist's website. *See* "Lyrics," MCYogi.com, n.d., accessed Aug 9, 2017, mcyogi.com/lyrics/.

[150] "In effect," *Urban Dictionary*, posted by EHA, July 18, 2006, accessed Aug 10, 2017, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=in+effect.

[151] Martin Hewings, "Unit 1: Present continuous and present simple (1)," *Advanced Grammar in Use*, 2nd Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2.

Although MC Yogi raps in English, references to figures and sacred locations from the Bhagavad Gita generate a bilingual aesthetic. These references also function as a vitally important bridge between two cultures. MC Yogi raps about Parvati Maha Shakti (Shiva's wife), Ganapata (Shiva's son), Nandi (Shiva's mount, depicted as a bull), the Ganges river, Mount Kailash (Shiva's home), and, "mister Mahadev" and "Shankara Shambo," two of Shiva's anthropomorphized human figurations. The name dropping of these characters is very similar to how rappers celebrate fallen figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, or tragic hip-hop stars such as Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smalls. Likewise, the mentioning of Nandi, Shiva's mode of transport, mirrors the celebration of car culture, particularly in west coast hip-hop. Similarly, the mentioning of Mount Kailash, Shiva's home, is nearly identical to how rappers celebrate 'the crib' as a place of safety and sanctuary. It is through these common elements that MC Yogi blends Hinduism and hip-hop into a hybrid, transcultural form.

In addition to basic explanations for who and what these figures and places represent, hyperlinks in the lyric transcript on MC Yogi's website direct visitors to Wikipedia, the popular online encyclopedia, where they can learn more. (Hence, the underlined words, which contain embedded hyperlinks, in the above transcript.) Even though Wikipedia is not an authoritative source, Giacomini nevertheless exploits technology as a twenty-first century yogi to offer a path to further knowledge. Since Wikipedia pages are translated into numerous languages, one can read about these figures, places, and concepts in English, one's own language, or any other language by merely changing the settings on the website. Although this level of access is not part of the actual listening experience, the lyrics are not provided in the CD inlay for *Elephant Power*. Where curious listeners search the Internet for the lyrics to "Om Namah Shivaya," they are directed to MC Yogi's website. Thus, Giacomini utilizes technology to turn on as many people to the basic premises of Hinduism as possible. Perhaps more significantly, he places that power—the power of auto-didacticism—in their hands.

After Das delivers another eight iterations of the Shiva mantra, the second verse covers the basic tenets of Hinduism, including holistic non-duality, the rejection of binary-thinking, the (false) mind-body-divide, and advocacy for the ascetic lifestyle as an answer to western materialism.

> To Shiva Shankar, the yoga master
> known as Nataraja the cosmic dancer
> lord of destruction, god of disaster
> and if you don't invite him he's the party crasher
> to the old school mystic, who's non dualistic
> Shiva guides my mind so that I can shift it
> away from a place that's materialistic
> into a space that's more holistic
> magnetic ascetic you make my soul shine
> you awaken the snake at the base of the spine
> third eye wide open in a yoga pose
> you show us how to focus so the lotus unfolds
> in deep concentration with breath control
> returning to the source now you feel the force flow
> when the Jiva meets Shiva opposites become whole
> (singin') Om Namah Shivaya, Shivaya Namah Om.

Reiterating the importance of devotion, MC Yogi dedicates the verse to Shiva; however, he does that somewhat mysteriously by using two of Shiva's other names, Shankar and Nataraja. Much of what MC Yogi

raps about runs counter to ideas promulgated in (commercial) rap music. For instance, describing Shiva as "non-dualistic" privileges unity ("more holistic") over division, a view that runs contrary to hip-hop dualities, e.g. east/west coast, commercial/underground, black/white, and so forth. In contrast to gross material accumulation as the ultimate sign of success (a value celebrated in both hip-hop and American culture more generally), MC Yogi raps "magnetic ascetic you make the soul shine" to suggest that enlightenment and happiness are attained not by acquiring possessions, but by rejecting self-indulgence through self-discipline. Finally, a reference to "the snake at the base of spine" underscores how MC Yogi exploits a symbol common to both cultures, but which has opposing meanings. Where the snake is a symbol of evil in western culture (especially in Christianity), in yoga it is a sign of coiled, untapped power that one learns to unfurl through meditative practice. As in the previous verse, hyperlinks to these concepts are provided in the transcript on the artist's website so that curious listeners may learn more.

Despite pitting the two cultures against each other as a teaching strategy, subtler overlap between Hinduism and hip-hop culture occur. After informing the listener that Shiva is the god of destruction and disaster (which connects to hip-hop's celebration of masculine power rooted in a commitment to violence), MC Yogi nonchalantly refers to Shiva as "the party crasher." Calling Shiva "the old school mystic" evokes a slang term (old school) ubiquitous in hip-hop. Likewise, an allusion to breath control refers, on the one hand, to disciplined, meditative practice and, on the other, to excellence in rapping and beatboxing.[152] Mentioning "the source," MC Yogi draws a dual allusion to Purusha, the Vedic principle of the life force inherent in all living beings (for which a hyperlink is provided in the transcript), and *The Source*, the longest, continually running periodical on hip-hop culture, first published as a newsletter in 1988 before becoming a magazine.[153] While these overlaps are minor, they nevertheless diminish MC Yogi's critique of some of hip-hop's coarser principles and allow for connection with ideas fundamental to the Hindu tradition.

After another eight iterations of the Shiva mantra by Das, MC Yogi consolidates Hindu teachings in the final verse, many of which overlap with key Christian principles such as peace, compassion, and sacrifice.

> Om Namah Shivaya the flame gets higher
> as the corpse gets burned on the funeral pyre
> the soul never dies so it won't expire
> when it's time to die just take off this attire
> exhale to let go of the ego's desire
> let your soul be inspired to shine even brighter
> like Shiva Nataraja the one that I admire
> dancing on a demon in a burning ring of fire
> Mahadev it's been said that you're pure auspiciousness
> and you're known as Truth Consciousness & Bliss,
> creating, devastating and always transforming
> you saved the whole world when you swallowed up the poison
> destroying bad habits, ignorance, and greed
> practicing detachment, compassion, and peace
> to the king of all yogis I offer these prayers
> to the lord of meditation living in the Himalayas.

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[152] The reference to beatboxing is carried out through a subtle allusion to "Breath Control" by Boogie Down Productions from *Ghetto Music: The Blueprint of Hip-Hop* (1989).

[153] Lola Ogunnaike, "War of the Words at Hip-Hop Magazines," *New York Times*, Jan 29, 2003, access Aug 12, 2017, nytimes.com/2003/01/29/arts/war-of-the-words-at-hip-hop-magazines.html.

The verse begins with a reference to funeral pyres, a symbol with significant cross-cultural potential. When MC Yogi raps "the soul never dies," he draws a connection between the Christian notion of eternal life and the Hindu notion of rebirth. The image of Shiva "dancing on a demon" champions the triumph of good over evil, and the suggestion that Shiva is both creator and devastator mirrors the notion of a benevolent, yet punishing Christian god. Similar to Jesus's martyred self-sacrifice to redeem his followers, MC Yogi raps that Shiva "swallowed poison" in an attempt to eliminate the "bad habits, ignorance, and greed" that tempt people. Where Jesus is referred to as the "king of kings" in Revelation 19:16, MC Yogi raps that Shiva is "the king of all yogis." For hip-hop heads who identify as Christian, or Hindus with little to no interest in hip-hop, these sentiments resonate between both faiths. Even though "Om Namah Shivaya" is a devotional intended for the Hindu god Shiva, it speaks from and to each culture at once.

After MC Yogi delivers the third verse, Das is joined at the 3:30 mark by a group of kirtan singers. By sonically recreating the atmosphere of a group meditation session, the song aurally figures the communal environment one would find in a kirtan singing circle. After nearly one full minute of choral chanting, Das's voice completely fades out. Overtop the kirtan singers, his somewhat individualist improvisation of "om namah/om namah" (I invoke/I invoke) marks the only variation in phrasing. Das's final utterance of "shivaya" warbles and becomes swallowed up when the music, much like a record being brought to a standstill, slows down and stops. The listener's attention, like Das's improvised chant, is brought to a singularity—a sonic rendering of unified consciousness. In all, fifty-seven iterations of Shiva's mantra interpolate listeners into an imagined meditative space. As music and mantra work together, the listener is coaxed, via the power of repetition, into having a transcendent experience. It is not hyperbole to assert that "Om Namah Shivaya" possesses real gravitas. With no prior knowledge of the Shiva mantra, my 71-year-old father began chanting along to the song after a handful of listens. The song thus contains considerable power to coax listeners, even those who possess no knowledge of or interest in Hinduism or Shaivism, into deeper engagement with Hinduism and hip-hop, and quite possibly both.

While "Om Namah Shivaya" is most certainly not an example of literary fiction, it nevertheless possesses many characteristics of fiction: characters (figures from the Gita), allegories (the story of Shiva deliberately taking poison), and action sequences (Shiva's vanquishing of a demon by dancing on him in a ring fire). These aspects warrant examining the song as a work of fiction to explain how it functions so that we might speculate how audiences engage with it. MC Yogi makes explicit use of the type of blanks and gaps Fluck claims are necessary components of literary texts. For instance, by providing the listener with the names of Shiva's anthropomorphized figurations, but not over-determining them with excessive description, MC Yogi's rhymes contain gaps, especially for listeners who are unfamiliar with Hinduism, but also for those who are. As Kaivalya notes, Shiva "is not only embodied in ways that make him more personal, but that Śiva is […] an impersonal form."[154] Citing Iser's example of Hamlet (either the play or film adaptations), Fluck argues that although "we have never met Hamlet and do in fact know that he never existed, we have to come up with our own images of him. Inevitably, this mental construct will draw on our

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[154] Kaivalya, 334.

own associations and feelings which are in this way interlinked with the representational level of the text."[155] Because neither Shiva nor his various figurations constitute actual lived, historic persons, the listener must imaginatively fill them in order to bring them to life. Working with the clues MC Yogi provides, this can be done in four ways: first, by pure fantasy (for example, by imagining Shiva as human); second, by seeking out artistic renderings of Shiva (for instance, by searching image databases at Google); third, by inserting details of actuals persons (i.e. robed Hindu monks one has encountered in person or through various media sources); and lastly, by grafting one's prior knowledge of spirituality (for example, Christianity) onto the spiritual principles in the song. The blanks, or limited information, invite the listener to fill in these gaps and connect them with his or her own preexisting knowledge.

Imaginatively synthesizing any, or all, of this information, listeners may begin constructing Shiva and, through him, a conceptualization of Hindu spiritualism. It is here, then, that the aural aesthetics of the song's rich musical score, the performance of Das and the kirtan vocalists, MC Yogi's rhymes, and the hyperlinks he provides in the transcript on his website link up with the aesthetic experience of reading fiction. What transpires might be called the transcultural aesthetic experience of listening. Whether or not audiences are coaxed into further exploring Vedic literature, Hindu spiritual beliefs and practices, or hip-hop culture, its history, or any of its practices is entirely at the discretion of the listener. To be sure, a plethora of clues, cues, and signals exist for this to occur. Performing as MC Yogi, Giacomini operates as a cultural intermediary, translator, and teacher across two distinct cultural traditions, and the music he creates, of which "Om Namah Shivaya" is but one example, offers listeners the opportunity to engage not only with either of these cultural traditions, but with both at the same time. Even though there are no instances of language blending or transcultural vernacular—forged, for instance, through the fusing of two or more languages into new, heretofore unseen forms—"Om Namah Shivaya" exemplifies transcultural music-making. As an adroit blend of African American hip-hop and Indian kirtan, MC Yogi's "Om Namah Shivaya" seems capable of triggering a transcultural aesthetic experience so that listeners may transcend their own cultural frameworks and experiment with others.

Conclusions

The Rhine-Ruhr region of western Germany is one place where the musical and linguistic practices known as trans-Caribbean vernacular have been adopted and extended. A robust and active reggae/dancehall scene developed there, and it was through festivals such as Summerjam, Ruhr Reggae Summer, and the Afro Ruhr Festival that people from Germany and neighboring countries came together to participate in Jamaican and Caribbean culture. Websites such as Reggae Node facilitated these practices, and language use on the website indicates that people not only adopted Jamaican or Caribbean vernacular, but that they infused it with German and English in creative and intriguing ways. The practice of Caribbean and Jamaican music and culture in Germany is an example of ethnomimesis, and Tilmann Otto, who eventually became the recording artist known as Gentleman, is one example of the profound effect this can have. As Gentleman, Otto works

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[155] Fluck, 374.

with emissaries from Jamaica's music scene to produce a crossover, commercial reggae/rap hybrid that is referred to by the portmanteau Germaican. These creative collaborations are binational and transatlantic, and this cross-cultural cooperation lends an important dimension to the "trans" in transaesthetics and, ultimately, the rise of what I deem transcultural aesthetics. On the one hand, Gentleman's music is an example of how the musical and linguistic practices of the Caribbean have washed across the Atlantic much like a productive tsunami. On the other, Gentleman is an example of how the forces and processes of transculturation create what Schmitt has described as a transcultural avant-garde. Channeling and redirecting those energies in his music and performances, Gentleman stands to affect audiences much the way he was as a young man. *Journey to Jah* (2002) becomes transcultural, in part, because Gentleman successfully blends Rastafarianism, the spiritual system from Jamaica, with Black liberation theology and conventional Christian values that resonate with continental Europeans. In that sense, his music continues the processes of transculturation than have been underway in Germany for decades.

In Nicholas Giacomini we see a similar, albeit slightly different, development. Performing as MC Yogi, Giacomini is the most recent example of a long line of individuals stretching from Calcutta to Germany who have translated the spiritual principles of India in the United States since the early 19th century. From Emerson and Thoreau to Whitman, Kerouac and Ginsberg, Vedic literature and Hinduism have profoundly influenced American culture. Where Giacomini and his creative production team successfully blend kirtan, the devotional music of India, with hip-hop, they achieve a striking transcultural musical blend. Donning the mantel of a spiritual teacher and exploiting telecommunications technology, Giacomini offers audiences the opportunity to learn about the precepts of yogic philosophy including the importance of self-discipline, acceptance, love, and transcendence. Fusing the spiritual principles of yoga with hip-hop, Giacomini and his production team synthesize a convincing hip-hop Hinduism hybrid. Like Tilmann Otto, Giacomini is another example of the so-called transcultural avant-garde, and people who are exposed to his music stand to either transcend or enrich their existing cultural identities.

Because Otto and Giacomini work closely with musicians who are well-connected to the cultures they draw from, it would be incorrect to describe either as cultural tourists. Indeed, both go to great lengths to maintain and sustain deep connections with the cultures they are involved with. As cultural intermediaries, their work helps to shape and enrich the cultural contours of Germany and the United States. Both artists were transformed by the processes of transculturation, and their work provides strong evidence of transculturality. Closely analyzing just two songs from their corpus, there are numerous instances where it becomes apparent how transculturation plays out in language mixing and musical blending. These aesthetic strategies deserve to be described as transcultural because they speak from, for, and to two or more cultures simultaneously. As such, these works demonstrate what I refer to as transcultural aesthetics. Where neither artist engages in aesthetic simulation, their work makes a strong case for refining, redefining, and redeploying Jean Baudrillard's term transaesthetics. Rather than demonstrating a loss in aesthetic particularity that Baudrillard warned of, this new understanding suggests that blended linguistic and musical aesthetics oftentimes delivers astonishing semantic and interpretive potential. Rich and robust, the texts analyzed in this chapter demand careful scrutiny and examination if we are to understand what occurs there. It is after

careful examination and close analysis that these works can be properly appreciated as transcultural works of art that contain significant potential to trigger a transcultural aesthetic experience in listeners.

Chapter 4

(You Gotta) Fight for Their Right (to Migrate): Hip-Hop, Immigration, and Activism

Immigration and migration play important, if starkly different, roles in the development of hip-hop in Germany and the United States. "Since its beginnings in the early 1980s," musicologist Oliver Kautny summarizes how "hip-hop culture in Germany has been especially popular among young people from immigrant families."[1] Devoting an entire essay to illustrate how "immigrant hip-hop artists construct and represent their cultural identities,"[2] Kautny shows "how differently immigrant MCs, DJs or B-Boys deal with issues of migration, geography and ethnicity," with some "consciously avoid[ing] linking to ethnic discourses" while "others strongly emphasize ethnic roots."[3] Following Güngör and Loh, Kautny argues that

> from the point of view of migrants, hip-hop was particularly attractive because the US precursors, mostly African Americans and Caribbeans, were social outsiders whose communal dancing, painting, and music facilitated self-determined activities. Many ethnic immigrant rappers in Germany report how important it was for them to follow this example and to view themselves no longer as marginalized objects but as creative subjects. It was an empowering experience to associate themselves with like-minded individuals, to be seen and heard in public and to – literally – assume new identities, new names, and imaginative alter egos.[4]

For artists and fans, being a German citizen with *Migrationshintergrund* (migration background) provided "precious capital" to "be used in different ways."[5] Moreover, "[t]heir experience of social exclusion," Kautny asserts, "at times became a requirement for participation."[6] Citing Ayşe Çağlar, he concludes that "[y]oung Turkish hip hoppers proudly exclaimed that they are 'Germany's Blacks',"[7] an overt analogy to African Americans launching hip-hop, but also a veiled insight into the roles non-white racial/ethnic groups played in building the two nations. Migrants—or, more accurately, the first-generation children of migrants—were so central in translating hip-hop's core practices to Germany that the scholarship overemphasizes their role.[8] While hip-hop enabled migrant youth to empower themselves, framing the narrative in this manner not only excludes the role of 'white' Germans in receiving and developing hip-hop prior to, and especially after, the Fall of the Berlin Wall, it also re-inscribes racial and ethnic difference. Such

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[1] Oliver Kautny, "Immigrant Hip-Hop in Germany: The Cultural Identities of Migrants," in *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, edited by Sina A. Nitzsche and Walter Grünzweig (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2013), 405.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., 406.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Authors who follow this argument include musicologist Dietmar Elflein (1998), Americanist Heinz Ickstadt (1999), Caroline Diessel (2001), Ayhan Kaya (2001), Tony Mitchell (2001), Mark Pennay (2001), Horst Tonn (2004), and Simon Strick (2008). It is *the* dominant narrative of hip-hop in Germany.

a characterization codes, and thereby maintains, the notion that hip-hop is a series of ethnic and/or racialized cultural practices. Transculturation, on the other hand, offers a way around the sorts of racial/ethnic divisions colonialism—and, later, advanced transnational capitalism—insists upon to maintain hegemonic dominance and control.

Discussing Advanced Chemistry's "Fremd im eigenen Land" (1992), a watershed moment in the emergence of conscious rap in Germany (and which was performed in English as "Stranger in My Own Land" until the late 1980s),[9] Kautny asserts that "rap music attempts to process, articulate, narrate, and change the reality of the immigrants' experience."[10] Indeed, the song's recurring tagline demonstrates as much. Rapped in standard German, the lines "Ich habe einen grünen Pass mit dem goldenen Adler darauf" (I have a green passport with a golden eagle on it) insisted that the emcees in the group, all of whom were the children of at least one immigrant parent, were nevertheless German. Thus, hip-hop culture and rap music helped bind young people with immigrant backgrounds to Germany in the volatile years after unification. According to Advanced Chemistry, one could be German and non-white, and that was in no way a contradiction, and this helped the country come to terms with its multiethnic/multiracial reality. Such claims for recognition shed light on the reconfiguration of Germany's demographic make-up prior to, but especially after, the *Wende*. Thus, where Kautny argues that Advanced Chemistry and other groups rapped to change their reality, they actually succeeded in influencing the narrative of German national identity early in the unification process. That is as impressive as it is significant.

Fernando Ortiz's transculturation model, with its three-pronged approach of deculturation, acculturation, and neoculturation, offers intriguing insights. While Advanced Chemistry and other hip-hop groups sought to carve out space for themselves in a solidifying post-Cold War Germany, they also signaled their affiliation with, on the one hand, the United States and, on the other, with what H. Samy Alim has called the Global Hip Hop Nation (GHHN): a "multilingual, multiethnic 'nation' with an international reach, a fluid capacity to cross borders, and a reluctance to adhere to the geopolitical givens of the present."[11] Thus, the practice of hip-hop in Germany by whoever chose to do so led to acculturation (to the United States, Germany, and, imaginatively, the GHHN), neoculturation (German-language and, later, bi- and multilingual rap), and a degree of deculturation (a loss of culture) among practitioners. The latter was especially true wherever young people, Germans and the children of immigrants alike, turned away from the traditional ethno-cultural heritages of their parents to breakdance, rap, deejay, and spray graffiti. While Timothy S. Brown and J. Griffith Rollefson identify this process as African Americanization,[12] it is more

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[9] Kautny, 407.

[10] Ibid.

[11] H. Samy Alim, "Intro: Straight Outta Compton, Straight aus München: Global Linguistic Flows, Identities, and the Politics of Global Language in a Global Hip Hop Nation," in *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language*, edited by H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3.

[12] J. Griffith Rollefson, *Flip the Script: European Hip Hop and the Politics of Postcoloniality* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), 55-78. Rollefson discusses what he refers to as the African Americanization of Germany with regard to Berlin-based hardcore/gangster rap label Aggro Berlin. Brown's comments are more generally levied to the rise of hip-hop in Germany. *See* Timothy S. Brown, "'Keeping it Real' in a Different 'Hood: (African-)Americanization and Hip Hop in Germany," in *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip Hop and the Globalization of Black Popular Culture*, edited by Dipannita and Sidney J. Lemelle (London: Pluto Press, 2006), 137-150.

accurate to refer to it as the transculturation of German culture, especially since hip-hop and rap music, even in their nascent stages, were not essentialized Black cultural forms, but in fact bicultural and, as Danny Hoch has argued, polycultural.[13]

In the U.S., the acknowledgement of the significance of migration and immigrants to hip-hop has been markedly different—in fact, almost the exact opposite. Since early discussion privileged a Black cultural narrative (with African Americans as the main progenitors), the role of immigrants was downplayed.[14] Given that two of hip-hop's so-called Founding Fathers, DJ Kool Herc (Clive Campbell) and Grandmaster Flash (Joseph Saddler), were born outside the United States, diminishing the importance of migration is perplexing. Born in Kingston, Jamaica, Campbell moved, aged 12, with his family to The Bronx in November 1967; Saddler, whose date of relocation is unknown, was the fourth of five children of Barbadian parents who emigrated to The Bronx, where he grew up and took a keen interest in the inner workings of technology and electronics.[15] Eventually, technology companies that produced deejaying equipment actually incorporated Flash's modifications into their designs.[16] While this relationship underscores Ortiz's neoculturation principle, it also suggests that Flash and the other progenitors of hip-hop deejaying acquired a degree of power that enabled them to *speak back* to corporate entities. Technically, however, two of the early hip-hop innovators were Afro-Caribbean immigrants who became black after relocating to the United States, and this is not without precedent. Awad Ibrahim has shown how "a group of French-speaking immigrant and refugee continental Africans" came to understand themselves as black after they emigrated to Canada and entered a "social imaginary—a discursive space in which they [were] already imagined, constructed, and thus treated as Blacks by hegemonic discourses and groups."[17] For as much as Herc and Flash, along with Grand Wizard Theodore and Afrika Bambaataa, invented hip-hop deejaying and became black in the process, they also invented themselves, through alter identities, much the way Kautny emphasizes in his discussion of so-called migrant rappers in Germany. One consequence of hip-hop's Black cultural narrative in the United States is that migration is viewed, by and large, as the domain of Latino/a Americans.

As Melissa Castillo-Garsow points out in the introduction to *La Verdad: An International Dialogue on Hip Hop Latinidades* (2016), the "[d]escendents of Latin American immigrants in the United States were instrumental in the foundations of Hip Hop's four elements on both the East and West coasts, adapting

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[13] Some commentators, particularly in the U.S., describe hip-hop as polycultural. *See* Danny Hoch, "Toward a Hip-Hop Aesthetic: A Manifesto for the Hip-Hop Arts Movement," in *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop*, edited by Jeff Chang (New York: BasicCivitas, 2006), 354, and Pancho McFarland, *The Chican@ Hip Hop Nation: Politics of a New Millennial Mestizaje* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013).

[14] Toop was the first to characterize hip-hop as Black. *See* David Toop, *Rap Attack: African Jive to New York Hip Hop* (Boston: South End Press, 1984).

[15] For details about their respective backgrounds, *see* Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: St. Marks Press, 2005), 67 and 112.

[16] Katz details how companies responded to early hip-hop deejays by modifying turntable and mixer designs to better suit their needs. *See* Mark Katz, *Groove Music: The Art and Culture of the Hip-Hop DJ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 63.

[17] Awad El Karim M. Ibrahim, "Becoming Black: Rap and Hip-Hop, Race, Gender, Identity, and the Politics of ESL Learning," *TESOL Quarterly* 33, 3, Special issue *Critical Approaches to TESOL* (Autumn 1999): 349.

some of the cultural traditions of their ancestors' homelands to a different environment and time."[18] Examples include the eminent graffiti sprayer Lee Quiñones, who starred as Zoro in the early hip-hop film *Wild Style* (1983), and Crazy Legs (Richard Colón), who, as a member of the breakdancing troupe the Rock Steady Crew, appeared in *Wild Style* as well as the highly regarded hip-hop documentary *Style Wars* (1983).[19] Furthermore, two of the central figures in the development of west coast rap, Kid Frost (Arturo Molina, Jr.) and Ice-T (Tracy Lauren Marrow), have connections to the US-Latino/a community. However, if one applies Castillo-Garsow's reasoning to Clive Campbell, whose deejaying sensibilities were informed by the Jamaican sound system culture he witnessed in Kingston as a boy,[20] then even Kool Herc, a non-Latino/a migrant, drew upon the cultural resources of his country of origin. Thus, immigrants—and not just Latino/as—played a central role, even if their contributions have been downplayed to privilege a particular cultural narrative.

Juan Flores has argued that the omission of the contributions of Latino/as to early hip-hop culture "has as much to do with the selective vagaries of the music industry as with the social placement of the Puerto Rican community in the prevailing racial-cultural hierarchy" of the United States, where discussions are often framed within a narrow black-white racial/cultural divide.[21] Castillo-Garsow has noted that "for every Latino 'theme' (immigration, discrimination, lack of opportunities) or 'style' (Spanish, English, sampling from salsa or Tejano music) there [are] numerous artists who [are] both Latino and Latin American [who are] doing something entirely different."[22] One takeaway from these two insights is that because migration and immigration are understood as the purview of Latino/as, black Americans are excluded from that discussion. However, if the Great Migrations—the first, during Reconstruction; the second following WW2—are defining historical events for African Americans, then this exclusion represents a paradox. While domestic relocation within a country can entail many of the same challenges as emigrating to a completely new country, few—if any—African American rappers in the United States have drawn upon the Great Migrations as a source of creative inspiration.[23]

In this chapter I take up migration and immigration to show how artists in Germany and the United States draw upon rap music and the power of hip-hop rhetoric to advocate for the rights of migrants. In the first half of the chapter, I focus on San Jose, California-based duo Raul y Mexia's "Todos Somos Arizona" (We Are All Arizona) (2010), a song written and recorded in response to Arizona's controversial anti-immigration bill known as S.B. 1070. Before turning to a close analysis of the song, however, I review

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[18] Melissa Castillo-Garsow and Jason Nichols, *La Verdad: An International Dialogue on Hip Hop Latinidades* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2016), 7.

[19] Michael Holman, "Breaking: The History," in *That's the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader*, edited by Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal (New York: Routledge, 2004), 38-39.

[20] Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: St. Marks Press, 2005), 68.

[21] Juan Flores, "Puerto Rocks: Rap, Roots and Amnesia," in *That's the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader*, edited by Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal (New York: Routledge, 2004), 69.

[22] Castillo-Garsow and Nichols, 10.

[23] The only reference to the Great Migrations in rap music in the U.S. I have located is a lyric transcript at *Genius* for a song titled "Great Migration" by an artist named Sandy Placido. In the "About" section, the artist notes that the song "compares the early 20th century Great Migration of African Americans in the U.S. to the contemporary migration of Latin Americans to the U.S." The lyrics, which are written in both English and Spanish, are enticing. However, aside from this one entry, the song does not appear to have been officially released. *See* "Great Migration," *Genius Media*, posted by Sandy Placido, accessed Dec 12, 2017, genius.com/3087994.

the scholarship to show how Latino/as have been discussed, particularly with regard to an overemphasis on identity formation, but also to show, as McFarland does, how certain artists have dealt with immigration in their work. Afterward, I consider, following Shanna Lorenz, the potential that exists to build social justice movements through music. Where Lorenz has written about the collaborative efforts between established African American and Latino/a hip-hoppers (and how their work argues for the rights of migrants), Raul y Mexia's song holds incredible potential to forge a broad Black-Brown-White alliance to do the same. Because Raul y Mexia's song did not emerge from a vacuum, I discuss the activist and artist-driven boycott movement that arose after S.B. 1070 was passed, some of which took on transnational dimensions. A close reading of "Todos Somos Arizona" will then highlight, following Robert Tinajero, the power of borderland hip-hip rhetoric to secure the rights of migrants.[24] Alongside musical aesthetics that underpin the song's message, how does lead rapper Mexia, through his bilingual English-Spanish mode of address, convince a variegated audience of bilingual and monolingual Spanish and English speakers to work together to fight for the rights of the undocumented? Furthermore, how does the song stand to initiate an aesthetic experience in listeners to achieve those aims, and what evidence is there to suggest that Raul y Mexia's song further evidences the sorts of transcultural aesthetics this study argues for?

The second half of the chapter is devoted to the advocacy work of the Berlin/Hamburg-based hip-hop collective TickTickBoom—specifically, their song "C'est quoi ton rôle" (What Role Do You Play) (2014). Before carrying out a close reading, however, I turn to the scholarship to illustrate how migration—again, with an overemphasis on identity—has dominated the hip-hop discourse in Germany. Afterward, I detail how rap music has been one of the primary popular music genres for artists to stand up and protect perceived racial and ethnic Others from extreme rightwing violence. Following Britta Sweers, I discuss how rap music since the early 1990s, particularly after "neo-Nazis attacked a multistory building housing Roma asylum seekers and Vietnamese contract workers in Lichtenhagen, a suburb of Rostock,"[25] has been utilized for creative intervention. "After a siege that lasted several days," Sweers reports, "the first two floors were set on fire,"[26] and these scenes of violence, which were widely televised, held viewers in rapt awe. Where applied ethnomusicology played a major role in defusing intercultural conflict, specifically between members of Germany's extreme right and the far left in Rostock,[27] hip-hoppers in Germany have continued using music as an interventionist strategy. Understood within that context, I ask in how far TickTickBoom's "C'est quoi ton rôle," which was written in response to the capsizing of migrant boats in the Mediterranean Sea in transit to Europe,[28] invites listeners to critically engage with complex sociocultural issues, but also to reconcile uncomfortable historical truths so that Germans might be activated to come to the aid of migrants in the present.

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[24] Robert Tinajero, "Borderland Hip Hop Rhetoric: Identity and Counterhegemony," in *La Verdad: An International Dialogues on Hip Hop Latinidades*, edited by Melissa Castillo-Garsow and Jason Nichols (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2016), 17-40.

[25] Britta Sweers, "Music Against Fascism: Applied Ethnomusicology in Rostock, Germany," in *Music and Conflict*, edited by John Morgan O'Connell and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 193.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 193-194.

[28] Matthew Chance, "Lampedusa boat sinking: Survivors recall awful ordeal." *CNN (International)*, Oct 9, 2013, accessed Nov 27, 2017, edition.cnn.com/2013/10/08/world/europe/italy-lampedusa-boat-sinking/index.html.

With Tinajero's borderland hip-hop rhetoric and Jannis Androutsopoulos's work on bi- and multilingual rap in Germany in mind, especially his concept of participant-related code-switching,[29] I will attempt to untangle the song. Rapped in German and French (with shout-outs in English that shape the song's multilingual contours), "C'est quoi ton rôle" was released prior to the beginning of Europe's so-called migration crisis.[30] If the song's trilingual address reveals, as J. Griffith Rollefson has suggested, "eloquent moralizing," and thereby constitutes the types of "humanizing portraits that push back against the dehumanizing language of 'aliens' and 'immigrants,'"[31] how does the song position listeners in Germany, France, and across Europe to reflect on their complicity in such tragedies so that they might intervene? If nationalist identities, with their insistence on narrow, monocultural understandings, prevent people from demanding action to prevent such tragedies, in how far can a bilingual German-French rap song with third-language accents break the impasse of "discursive and legalistic structures that reify ideal nations at the expense of de facto realities"[32] inherent in twenty-first century Europe that have been growing since the mid-20th century? Furthermore, to what extent does "C'est quoi ton rôle" offer yet more evidence of transcultural aesthetics, and how does it demonstrate the importance of expanding Baudrillard's term?

While reading both songs, I rely upon Fluck's ideas on aesthetic experience, particularly with regard to how audiences must imaginatively enact, via transfer, a number of positions simultaneously when receiving cultural texts. Because both songs respond to real-world events, the ways in which Raul y Mexia and TickTickBoom aestheticize tragedy to build narratives around notions of difference and commonality stand to create double and possibly even multiple consciousness in listeners. It is through double and multiple consciousness, I argue, that audiences stand to be coaxed into working to secure the rights of migrants, especially when artists present not only an ethical case for doing so, but even demonstrate, via their performances, how this is can be achieved—namely, by speaking out and taking action. Above all, I aim to show how bi- and trilingual hip-hop rhetoric dismantles hegemonic notions of nation and self and thereby signals the ongoing transculturation of German and American society and culture.

Latino/as in Hip-Hop: From Early Contributions to Establishing a Genre

As Castillo-Garsow points out, the first studies on Latino/a hip-hop "were written purely from a U.S. context and within a bounded East Coast/West Coast divide," with the current trend being "to examine, historicize, and contextualize localized Hip Hop scenes in the United States."[33] In the first book-length study that included a discussion of the contributions Latino/as made to hip-hop culture, Juan Flores argues, citing DJ Charlie Chase (Carlos Mandes), that "the commercial media and dominant story of hip-hop tend[ed] to leave out […] that Puerto Ricans were involved" in crafting hip-hop "from the beginning;"

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[29] Jannis Androutsopoulos, "Multilingualism, Ethnicity and Genre in Germany's Migrant Hip Hop," in *The Languages of Global Hip Hop*, edited by Marina Terkourafi (New York: Continuum, 2010), 30.

[30] "Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts," *BBC News*, Mar 4, 2016, accessed Nov 27, 2017, bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911.

[31] J. Griffith Rollefson, "'Gheddos du Monde': Sounding the Ghetto, Occupying the Nation from Berlin to Paris," in *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, edited by Sina A. Nitzsche and Walter Grünzweig (Berlin: LIT Verlag), 228.

[32] Ibid., 229.

[33] Castillo-Garsow and Nichols, 8.

however, Puerto Rican and other Caribbean practices and traditions are woven into the very fabric of this supposedly 'American' or strictly 'African American' genre in all its subsequent manifestations."[34] Three years later, Raquel Z. Rivera affirmed that assertion, writing that hip-hop is "ahistorically taken to be an exclusively African American expressive culture. Puerto Ricans thus are excluded from the hip hop cultural core on the basis of their being Latino."[35] However, "[w]hen the subject is popular culture," Flores noted, "and participation and performance" serve as the primary "vehicles of exchange, suddenly it seems possible to begin reconstructing Latino history and repair that 'broken memory' so that it can serve as an active force in the challenging social struggles ahead."[36] One of the struggles to which Flores refers is migration, but also, if even without explicitly stating so, the right of people to relocate and actively become part of new cultural and social formations. For Latino/as already in the United States, and for people across Latin America who consider making the trip, migration, and the right to relocate, is their primary concern.

The influx of Latino/a migrants to the United States is by no means a new phenomenon, and Flores took considerable effort to summarize the historical trends. Underway since the early decades of the 20th century, Flores noted that

> the single most important factor to usher in the "new immigration" was the change in the U.S. immigration law in 1965, which put an end to the national origins quota system, in effect since the 1920s, favoring northern and western Europeans. This policy shift, which placed a 120,000 ceiling for each Asia and the Western Hemisphere, literally opened the floodgates to a massive immigration from many parts of Asia and most countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.[37]

While this legislative change impacted people across Latin America, it also brought Clive Campbell (DJ Kool Herc) and Joseph Saddler (Grandmaster Flash) to the United States. Even DJ Charlie Chase, who was born to Puerto Rican immigrants in East Harlem in the 1950s, relocated throughout New York City numerous times during his youth, living in various neighborhoods in Manhattan, The Bronx, and Brooklyn.[38] Thus, immigrants and migration, both internal and external, have been at hip-hop's core from the beginning.

Flores further stresses that "[r]epresentation from nearly all countries of Latin America and the Spanish Caribbean has increased geometrically over the decades since 1960."[39] While New York City has been a well-known destination for Puerto Ricans, "[a]dd to these the huge numbers of Colombians, Salvadorans, Ecuadorians, Panamanians, Hondurans, Haitians, Brazilians, and the 'new' New Yorkers from nearly every country of Latin America,"[40] and it becomes apparent, he contends, that the "momentous pan-Latinization"[41] of the United States has resulted in a pan- or trans-Latino identity.[42] Flores also notes that

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[34] Juan Flores, *From Bomba to Hip-Hop: Puerto Rican Culture and Latino Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 3.

[35] Raquel Z. Rivera, *New York Ricans from the Hip Hop Zone* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 4.

[36] Flores 2000, 4.

[37] Ibid., 143.

[38] Flores 2004, 71.

[39] Flores 2000, 143.

[40] Ibid., 142.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., 141.

"over the same generation in which New York came to join Chicago, Miami, Houston, and Los Angeles as 'pan-Latino' cities on a contemporary scale, the terms *Latino* and *Hispanic* have established themselves in everyday U.S. parlance."[43] Though now contested as colonial identities "tuned to function as extensions of Western/European Empire,"[44] both terms carry as much weight as such terms as African American and even American. Latino/a migration patterns can only be properly understood through transnational frameworks, and Latino/a migration to the U.S. affirms, for better or worse, the power of one of the core narratives of the United States: the promise of a better life. As elsewhere, people from Latin America come for a chance at socioeconomic uplift—not only for themselves, but for their children.

While Flores and Rivera traced the influence Puerto Ricans had in shaping hip-hop in New York in the 1970s and 1980s, Pancho McFarland was the first to focus on rap music made by those who identified as Chicano/a, i.e. members of the "hybrid (*mestizo*) society and culture […] throughout the Mexican diaspora of the United States [who had] carved out a new musical culture by borrowing from and transforming a new African culture, hip hop."[45] McFarland's emphasis on the 'new' reiterates the importance of applying Ortiz's neoculturation principle to hip-hop. "By 1992," McFarland writes, "Chicanas and Chicanos had been rapping, breakdancing, deejaying, and writing graffiti for a decade, and in 1992, Kid Frost (later Frost), the godfather of Chicano rap, released his second compact disc, *Eastside Story.* The year prior, another important innovator, the group Cypress Hill, released its debut album, *Cypress Hill.*"[46] Yet by excluding the east coast from his study, McFarland did not consider the contributions of Latino/as much earlier in hip-hop, specifically DJ Charlie Chase and Sugarhill Records group The Mean Machine.[47] His focus, like so many scholars, centers on identity formation, which he sees as "essential to the determination of behavior and place within any given society."[48]

Stressing hybridity and social and cultural mixing, McFarland places the development of Chicano rap within the long trajectory of the colonization of the western hemisphere, arguing that

> [m]uch like in the sixteenth century, mixed-race Amerindians (Chicanas/os) and new world Africans (U.S. blacks) live side by side as a result of a new economic and political order. Under Spanish colonial rule Africans and indigenous Americans remade cultures in diaspora and through *mestizaje* and *mulataje* (cultural or biological mixing involving Africans in the Americas). In the postindustrial, neocolonial new world order, Chicanas/os and African Americans borrow and transform aspects of their cultures to create hip hop on the West Coast.[49]

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[43] Ibid., 147. Italics in the original.
[44] Pancho McFarland and Jared A. Ball, "¡Ya basta con Latino!: The Re-Indigenization and Re-Africanization of Hip Hop," in *La Verdad: An International Dialogue on Hip Hop Latinidades*, edited by Melissa Castillo-Garsow and Jason Nichols (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2016), 41.
[45] Pancho McFarland, "Chicano Rap Roots: Black-Brown Cultural Exchange and the Making of a Genre," in *Callaloo* 29, 3, Special issue *Hip-Hop Music and Culture* (Summer 2006): 939. Italics in the original.
[46] Ibid. Italics in the original.
[47] See chapter two of this study for my in-depth analysis of The Mean Machine's "Disco Dream," one of the first bilingual rap songs in the United States.
[48] McFarland and Ball, 41.
[49] McFarland 2006, 939. Italics in the original.

McFarland's comments on how people from different origins and backgrounds lived alongside each other strongly echo Ortiz's observations about Cuba. Working from the diasporic concepts of literary scholar Robert E. Fox, McFarland contends that Mexicans and Africans in the Americas historically "developed cultures that relied on syncretism and hybridization (*mestizaje/mulataje*),"[50] stating that

> these new African and Mexican cultures […] are laden with Africanisms and Mexicanisms, yet they are uniquely American (United States-ian). They are rooted in the myriad cultures and traditions of Africa and the Americas, yet transform and transfigure them within the context of a multiracial and multiply racist United States of America.[51]

The extent to which McFarland's characterization of cultural blending resembles Ortiz's notion of transculturation is striking, especially where *mestizaje* constitutes "a process of cultural and biological/racial hybridization."[52] Developed 70 years prior, Ortiz's model describes the interactions of "Negroes, […] Jews, French, Anglo-Saxons, Chinese, and peoples from the four corners of the globe"[53] in Cuba during European colonization. Thus, Ortiz's theory satisfies McFarland's mestizaje/mulataje model to describe how "African Diasporic cultures and peoples have been central components of syncretism and hybridization in Mexican societies, especially in postindustrial Mexico America."[54] Unshackling *mestizaje* from the "popular and scholarly discourse," where the term "is understood simply to refer to Spanish-indigenous mixing,"[55] McFarland expands it to "describe the processes of black-Chicana/o interaction that created rap and a new Chicana/o identity associated with post-industrial urban living and youth culture,"[56] arguing that "*[m]estizaje* is not simply reducible to miscegenation between Europeans and indigenous Americans," but "should be better understood as acts of resistance and survival by a people besieged by European cultures."[57]

While this resistance component is useful, neglecting one of the cultural theorists of the Caribbean—indeed, the fourth member, along with Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., of the so-called Black Atlantic—is a detriment to McFarland's argument. For example, while he acknowledges that "Mexican musics were greatly influenced by Africans," and, following the work of Marco Polo Hernández Cuevas, notes that "'the jarocho son, the mariachi, [and] the fandango […] all have black African roots at the point of origin along with Amerindian, Spanish, and other roots,"[58] Ortiz's book on Afro-Cuban musical instruments published in 1952 from the point of view of transculturation emphasizes similar interactions.[59]

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[50] Ibid., 940. Italics in the original.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar.* Trans. Harriet de Onís (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 102.

[54] McFarland 2006, 940-1.

[55] Ibid. Italics in the original.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid. Italics in the original.

[58] Ibid., 942.

[59] In his review of Ortiz's book *Los Instrumentos de la Música Afrocubana* (Havana: Publicaciones de la Dirección de Cultura del Ministerio de Educación, 1952), Richard Walterman notes that "[h]istorically, the instruments stem partly from African, partly from European sources; at the present time, however, some of the most important ones have been so modified that they are distinctly Cuban." Those modifications and adaptations reflect the processes of transculturation present in Cuba and the wider Caribbean. *See* Richard A. Walterman, "Reviewed Work: *Los Instrumentos de la Música Afrocubana* by Fernando Ortiz," *Notes* 10, 4 (1953): 630. doi:10.2307/893765.

In essence, Ortiz's transculturation model describes the same processes rooted in the same complex social and cultural interactions that have been taking place in the Caribbean, middle and South America, and the United States for hundreds of years. Transculturation is as much a part of American history as it is for Cuba.

Nevertheless, McFarland's work on Chicana/o hip-hop is invaluable. *Chicano Rap: Gender and Violence in the Postindustrial Barrio* (2008) invites, and actually enables, the study of English and Spanish-language hip-hop thanks to the taxonomic listing of artists from the west, Midwest, and southern portions of the United States. Yet by the time McFarland addresses the subject of immigration (which he frames within the global north-south paradigm),[60] it is almost an afterthought. In chapter six, he discusses how the northern California group Funky Aztecs, one of the progenitors of Chicano rap, "point out how popular movies and other media have created stereotypes of Chicanos and Mexican immigrants that have swayed public opinion *against* immigrants and gangs or Chicano barrio youth generally."[61] Importantly, McFarland notes that "[a]s immigration from Mexico and anti-immigrant sentiments have increased, so too has the aggressive and violent policing of immigrants," including "more Border Patrol agents," "sophisticated military technology," but also the "rise of vigilante groups on the border" such as "the Minuteman project during the spring and summer of 2005 in which more than one thousand civilians patrolled the U.S.-Mexico border."[62] As evidence of the rising contentious relationship, McFarland notes how The Funky Aztecs song "Prop 187" "repeat[s] the phrase 'Secure the border'" to suggest that "the average citizen's anti-immigrant attitudes and desires to secure the border from further illegal immigration stem directly from the misinformation provided by corporate media."[63] But without providing any textual evidence, we are hard-pressed to follow his argument. To date, the lyrics to that song do not appear online, and the song is not listed on any of the group's official releases.[64] While the track, which is comprised of English-language media samples over top a beat,[65] may have opened a dialogue to contest anti-immigrant media narratives, how far it penetrated the market and reached people is unknown. The track's sampling aesthetic, however, seems to have informed Raul y Mexia's "Todos Somos Arizona," as the forthcoming analysis shows.

McFarland addresses immigration more thoroughly in chapter four of *The Chican@ Hip Hop Nation* (2013). Discussing "Mexican national identity and immigrant identity," the author asks in how far both comprise "resistance identities that could contribute to a liberatory politics."[66] Focusing on a selection of work from San Pedro-California-based Mexiclad, McFarland shows, on the one hand, how the group's monolingual Spanish raps fiercely advocate for the rights of migrants, and, on the other, how their bilingual English-Spanish rhymes "remain in a patriarchal paradigm that sees women as sexual Others […] useful for

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[60] Pancho McFarland, *Chicano Rap: Gender and Violence in the Postindustrial Barrio* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2008), 21-22.

[61] Ibid., 117. Emphasis my own.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Amazon.com lists "Prop 187" as appearing on the album *Day of the Dead: Dia de los Muertos* (Raging Bull Records, 1995), but the song is not listed on any of the group's three full length albums nor as one of their stand-alone singles. *See* "Funky Aztecs," *Discogs*, accessed Dec 9, 2017, discogs.com/artist/353380-Funky-Aztecs.

[65] The track can be found on YouTube. *See* "Prop 187," YouTube video, 2:00, posted by Funky Aztecs – Topic, Nov 6, 2014, accessed Dec 9, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=cz4Y0_DIkX0.

[66] Pancho McFarland, *The Chican@ Hip Hop Nation: Politics of a New Millennial Mestizaje* (East Lansing: The Michigan State University Press, 2013), 81.

their sexuality and little else,"[67] thereby diminishing the potential of the group's material to deliver political change. Discussing a selection of songs from Los Angeles-based Akwid, McFarland shows how the group's work "describe[s] and analyze[s] young Mexican immigrant lives, especially as they relate to experiences in state institutions such as education and criminal justice."[68] In his analysis of "El Principio" (The Beginning), McFarland shows how Akwid marshals Spanish raps to foster empathy for the so-called 1.5 generation, i.e. young people born in Mexico who were brought to the U.S. by their parents. Although the chorus is delivered in English, the monolingual lyrics make it difficult to gauge how far empathy strategies are successful beyond the communities that most need them.

McFarland's close reading of Akwid's "Indocumentados" (Undocumented) shows how the group "expresses solidarity with their Mexican compatriots […] who suffer indignities, financial hardship, familial disarray, and other threats as they attempt to work in the United States."[69] While the song "summarize[s] the obstacles faced by the undocumented workers, and their orientation toward the troubles they encounter in the United States,"[70] its exclusively Spanish lyrics limit the song's reach. Similarly, in "Esta Copa" (This Cup) Akwid "displays solidarity with the large class of undocumented Mexican workers who toil without much thanks and for little pay."[71] In turn, the group honors "Mexican workers" who "supply us with food, health care, cleaning, car maintenance, gardening, and many other things,"[72] and many of these sentiments reappear in Raul y Mexia's "Todos Somos Arizona." While Akwid's "celebration of Mexicanness often includes a critique of the ruling class in the United States, and those in institutions such as education and government agencies who fail to properly serve Mexicans or, worse, actively oppress them,"[73] one wonders what power these songs—valid responses in their own right—have to foster the broad-based coalitions needed to improve the lives of migrants. The "nationalist stance" of some "Mexican nationalist emcees," McFarland concludes, "limits the possibility of broader class-consciousness that includes workers of other nationalities, races, and ethnicities."[74] Efforts to bridge these divides, however, have been taken by hip-hop artists and activists, but even by musicians outside the hip-hop community, and all of this work stands to "assist in developing cross-racial, cross-cultural solidarity and affiliation."[75]

Forging a Black-Brown Alliance to Advocate for Human Rights

Writing about the "emerging spaces of black and brown alliance in contemporary pro-immigrant work,"[76] Shanna Lorenz has noted that since 2009 "an unprecedented number of black hip hop artists, well known,

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[67] Ibid., 103.
[68] Ibid., 104.
[69] Ibid., 108.
[70] Ibid., 110.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid., 111.
[74] Ibid., 117.
[75] Ibid., 253.
[76] Shanna Lorenz, "Black and Latino Hip Hop Alliances in the Age of State-sponsored Immigration Reform," *American Music* 31, 3 (Fall 2013): 243.

and obscure, have released tracks that call attention to the deteriorating conditions of undocumented migrants in the United States."[77] "Of particular concern to these rappers," Lorenz argues, are the

> newly introduced state-sponsored immigration bills that require police to check the immigration status of people they encounter when they have probable cause to believe they are in the country without authorization, a practice that many activists believe will lead to increased racial profiling in all communities of color. Talents including Talib Kweli (Black Star), Chuck D (Public Enemy), and stic.man (Dead Prez) have called for immigration reform and an end to the persecution of undocumented migrants, particularly those of Latino descent.[78]

What these artists share, Lorenz maintains, is "a common reference point in the rediscovery of empowering discourses from the civil rights and black power movements […] and a will to see beyond toxic mainstream representations of undocumented immigrants in order to imagine a more just democracy."[79] One of the leaders of this collaborative artistic movement, Lorenz notes, was the east coast rap group Public Enemy who "inspired by the memories of black agency and collective struggle […] promoted interracial alliances by exploring the connections between blacks and Latinos who share similar histories of racial and economic oppression."[80]

Public Enemy's song "By The Time I Get To Arizona" (1991) called out the state of Arizona's reluctance to recognize Martin Luther King Day as an official holiday. The music video, which Lorenz focuses on extensively, "offered an alternative mode of remembering social struggle, one that self-consciously refuted the hegemonic meanings that threatened to resign black agency to the past."[81] While Lorenz convincingly argues that the song and its video result in an "intergenerational transmission [that] tacitly invokes an audience of listeners who are themselves vulnerable to affective contagion,"[82] the song and video remain a template for how to marshal music, lyrics, and visual imagery to forge socially-conscious, interventionist hip-hop. It is that sense of affectation, i.e. priming the audience to demand, initiate, and work for social change, that Raul y Mexia's "Todos Somos Arizona" strives. While Black and Brown artists have begun to cooperate to secure the rights of the undocumented—and, in so doing, request that their audiences do the same—Raul y Mexia, as will become apparent, presume a wider audience to forge a more potent Black-Brown-White alliance to accomplish those aims.

Lorenz highlights a number of artists that have united to contest Arizona's recent discriminatory state-wide legislation, a move seen as "a renewed florescence of [the] white supremacy" that inspired Arizona's initial reluctance to recognize Martin Luther King Day.[83] Lorenz explains that "Arizona was the first state to pass a controversial new immigration law, Arizona Senate Bill 1070 (S.B. 1070), a bill that inspired copycat laws in several states, including Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina, and Utah."[84]

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[77] Ibid., 241.
[78] Ibid., 242.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid., 242-243.
[81] Ibid., 249.
[82] Ibid., 255.
[83] Ibid., 255.
[84] Ibid., 256.

"Particularly controversial," Lorenz continues, "has been the provision that empowers police to verify the immigration status of individuals they encounter when there is reasonable suspicion they are in the country without proper authorization," a move the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) warned "'clearly invites racial profiling'."[85] While the bill makes it illegal for business owners "to solicit work and to block traffic while picking up day laborers on city streets," and also for migrant workers "to be in Arizona without the required documents," the law goes a step further by criminalizing

> those who harbor, transport, and shield undocumented migrants. The first anti-immigrant state bill to be considered in federal courts, S.B. 1070 has been an important test case for state legislatures that hope to circumvent the antiquated federal immigrations system. The law has also become a testing ground for immigration rights activists who, since the law passed [in April 2010], have staged boycotts and demonstrations as well as filed multiple lawsuits.[86]

Although of S.B. 1070 posed consequences for migrants in Arizona, the bill's rhetoric, which mirrors the "with us/against us" mentality of the Global War on Terror, clearly held implications for anyone who might empathize with and harbor migrants.

Lorenz notes that musicians were "quick to respond to the post-S.B. 1070 crisis in Arizona's immigrant community. Initially, musical responders were mostly Latino/a, reflecting the strong Latino presence in the immigrant rights movement."[87] Former Rage Against the Machine vocalist Zach de la Roche organized Sound Strike, a musical event that, in essence, amounted to "a boycott by national and international musicians who have sworn off performing in Arizona," much like the BDS (boycott, divestment, sanctions) movement in South Africa and Israel,[88] "for profit until the law is appealed."[89] Puente, an immigrant rights group in Arizona that "has been particularly active in organizing against the repressive policies of Sheriff Joe Arpaio in Maricopa County," "organized benefit shows featuring hip-hop artists such as Immortal Technique, Chino XL, and Ana Tijoux."[90] No stranger to immigrant rights issues, Cuban American rapper and pop star Pitbull, who titled his third album *The Boatlift* (2007) to honor the flight of Cuban refugees in Florida in 1980, also cancelled a concert scheduled for May 31, 2010 in Phoenix in response to Arizona's unjust immigration bill.[91]

Boycott participants, however, were not limited to hip-hop artists. By canceling a concert scheduled to take place after an Arizona Diamondbacks baseball game on July 2, 2010, pop duo Hall & Oats also took part, stating that they stood "in solidarity with the music community in our boycott of performing in

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[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., 257.
[88] Kornhaber points out the connection between musicians uniting against S.B. 1070 and the anti-apartheid movements in Israeli (BDS) and South Africa. *See* Spencer Kornhaber, "Boycotting Arizona: Should They or Shouldn't They?," *Spin*, July 14, 2010, accessed Nov 20, 2017, spin.com/2010/07/boycotting-arizona-should-they-or-shouldnt-they.
[89] Lorenz, 257.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Stephen Lemons, "Rapper Pitbull Cancels Phoenix Show In Protest Over SB 1070," *Phoenix New Times*, May 14, 2010, accessed Nov 20, 2017, phoenixnewtimes.com/news/rapper-pitbull-cancels-phoenix-show-in-protest-over-sb-1070-w-update-6503216.

Arizona."[92] Although she did not cancel performances, pop icon Lady Gaga openly challenged the bill's ethics at her shows.[93] In addition, the organization Alto Arizona "convinced the world-renowned Manu Chao to perform outside the Maricopa County 'tent city' jail,"[94] a detention center that tough-on-immigration Sheriff Joe Arpaio once publicly likened to a concentration camp.[95] Chao, a French-born activist-musician, delivered a "version of his Spanish-language song 'Clandestino,'" a song that "originally described the hardships of undocumented laborers who cross borders to find work," but which "was updated to include references to 'clandestine' Mexicans and Central Americans who are the 'illegals' of Maricopa County."[96] While Lorenz convincingly argues for an emerging black-brown alliance between artists such as Chuck D (of Public Enemy), Saint Paul-based rapper Toki Wright, Oakland-based Brown Bflo and stic.man (of Dead Prez), and Talib Kweli (whose "Papers Please" contains a brief smattering of Spanish),[97] musicians across the spectrum of popular music joined activists to contest Arizona's law in an impressive display of unified dissent.

Moreover, protests against the bill, and pro-immigration sentiments more generally, were not limited to Arizona. Writing for *Socialist Worker*, Elizabeth Schulte reports that "tens of thousands of immigrants and their supporters took to the streets on May 1 [2010]—150,000 in Los Angeles, 65,000 in Milwaukee, 20,000 in Chicago and many more in other cities across the country" to stage "defiant demonstrations […] as people of all ages, races and immigration statuses came together to oppose a law that would encourage racial profiling and the harassment of anyone 'suspected' of being undocumented."[98] Slogans such as "¡Todos Somos Arizona!" (We Are All Arizona), "Nos somos illegal" (We Are All Illegal), and "Si Se Puede!" (Yes We Can) as well as calls to "Deport ICE!" (ICE, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement) were common at rallies.[99] The movement also had the support of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community,

[92] Justin Burning, "Hall & Oats Cancel D-backs Post-Game Concert To Oppose SB1070, Old Folks Across State Are Sad," *SBNation*, June 7, 2010, accessed Nov 20, 2017, arizona.sbnation.com/2010/6/7/2316154/hall-oates-cancel-d-backs-post-game-concert-to-oppose-sb1070-old. *See also* Mark Carlson, "Hall and Oates say no to Arizona immigration law and concert," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 8, 2010, accessed Nov 20, 2017, csmonitor.com/From-the-news-wires/2010/0608/Hall-and-Oates-say-no-to-Arizona-immigration-law-and-concert.

[93] Ethan Sacks, "Lady Gaga slams Arizona immigration law SB 1070 during Phoenix concert," *New York Daily News*, Aug 2, 2010, accessed Nov 20, 2017, nydailynews.com/news/national/lady-gaga-slams-arizona-immigration-law-sb-1070-phoenix-concert-article-1.200361.

[94] Lorenz, 257.

[95] The independent news organization *Democracy Now!* covered the tent city in Maricopa County. For more information, see "Ariz. Sheriff Joe Arpaio: Mounting Storm of Anti-Latino Bias, Prisoner Abuse, Sex-Crimes Negligence," *Democracy Now!*, Dec 22, 2011, accessed Nov 26, 2017, democracynow.org/2011/12/22/ariz_sheriff_joe_arpaio_mounting_storm and "Phoenix to Close Scorching Outdoor Jail Known as "Tent City," *Democracy Now!*, Apr 5, 2017, accessed Nov 26, 2017, democracynow.org/2017/4/5/headlines/phoenix_to_close_scorching_outdoor_jail_known_as_tent_city. For a firsthand account of the inhuman conditions at the detention center, see Francisco Chairez, "The year I spent in Joe Arpaio's tent jail was hell. He should never walk free.," *Washington Post*, Aug 26, 2017, accessed Nov 26, 2017, washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2017/08/26/the-year-i-spent-in-joe-arpaios-tent-jail-was-hell-he-should-never-walk-free/?utm_term=.c3b236ad6384 and Maya Salam, "Last Inmates Leave Tent City, a Remnant of Joe Arpaio," *New York Times*, Oct 11, 2017, accessed Nov 26, 2017, nytimes.com/2017/10/11/us/arpaio-tent-city-jail.html?_r=0.

[96] Lorenz, 257.

[97] Ibid., 260-1.

[98] Elizabeth Schulte, "¡Todos Somos Arizona!," *Socialist Worker*, May 3, 2010, accessed Nov 20, 2017, socialistworker.org/2010/05/03/todos-somos-arizona.

[99] Ibid.

with LGBT members "demand[ing] that the federal government grant same-sex families the same immigration rights as heterosexual couples when one member of the couple is a U.S. citizen."[100] One protestor justified the call by asserting that "they were fighting for immigrant rights because the LGBT community 'knows what it is like to be discriminated against.'"[101] Finally, the movement took on a transnational dimension in late July 2010 when organized protests were held in Mexico City, to which high-profile pop artists such as Shakira, Kanye West, and Taboo (a member of the successful group the Black Eyed Peas) lent their star-power, but also in Guadalajara, Mexico and even as far south as El Salvador.[102] Uniting in an international protest action, artists and activists made clear that S.B. 1070 was about more than itinerant day laborers in Arizona. Because the bill targeted Latino/as in Arizona, inspired states across the country to pass similar measures, and could potentially impact anyone across the Latin American-world, its reach and ramifications were at once regional, national, and transnational in scope.

Urging Political Action: Raul y Mexia's "Todos Somos Arizona" (2010)

As sons of Hernán Hernández, one of the founding members of Mexico's Grammy Award-winning norteño group Los Tigres Del Norte,[103] Raul Hernández and Hernán "Mexia" Hernández (Raul y Mexia) were motivated out of frustration to combine their musical talents to write and release "Todos Somos Arizona" (We Are All Arizona). The brothers describe the song "as a cross generational anthem with an addictive beat and compelling narrative" that not only gives "voice to the fears of young Americans of Latino descent who are anxious about the future of their families," but "to take action."[104] They further explain that they

> "wanted to make a song that reflected the frustration and struggle of our people. […] America is a country founded and built by immigrants, but immigration laws focused on Latinos have often changed depending on the labor needs of the country. […] This law is affecting so many families including our own."[105]

The track was more than a creative response to social injustice. All proceeds from the sale of the song were donated to MALDEF, the nation's leading Latino legal civil rights organization (founded in 1968),[106] to support the "ongoing legal battle against the radical Arizona law and to continue [providing] assistance to Latino communities in need."[107] As a political crossover pop/rap song, "Todos Somos Arizona" is a call

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Nacha Cattan, "Black Eyed Peas join Mexico in protesting Arizona immigration law SB1070," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 29, 2010, accessed Nov 20, 2017, csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2010/0729/Black-Eyed-Peas-join-Mexico-in-protesting-Arizona-immigration-law-SB1070-video.

[103] iraygoza, "Q&A: Raul y Mexia, Using Biculturalism to Create Their Own Musical Identity," *Remezcla*, Jan 25, 2013, accessed Nov 22, 2017, remezcla.com/music/raul-y-mexia-arriba-y-lejos-interview/. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, norteño music "is a style of folk music, associated particularly with northern Mexico and Texas, typically featuring an accordion and using polkas and other rhythms found in the music of central European immigrants." Norteño was also influenced by the Mexican corrido, which the OED describes as "a ballad in a traditional Mexican style, typically having lyrics that narrate a historical event."

[104] "MALDEF Honors Three Pioneers at 2010 Los Angeles Awards Gala; Special Guests Included Musicians Raul y Mexia, 'Todos Somos Arizona' to Benefit MALDEF's SB1070 Lawsuit," MALDEF.org, Nov 12, 2010, accessed Nov 22, 2017, maldef.org/news/newsletter/la_awards_gala_11122010/index.html.

[105] Ibid.

[106] "About," MALDEF.org, accessed Nov 22, 2017, maldef.org/about/mission/index.html.

[107] "MALDEF Honors Three Pioneers."

for empathy, solidarity, and action, and its aim is simple: get immigrants, their children, and supporters out in the streets to formally confront state-sanctioned discrimination.

The song opens with three cleverly orchestrated spoken word samples. First, the voice of a young woman expresses fear of being separated from her family. With tears in her voice, she intones, "Yo…me puse muy triste…porque sabía que mis papas…no iban a estar conmigo" (I…I was very sad…because I knew my parents would not be with me). The sample, which positions listeners in the woman's situation, creates empathy. A subsequent sample of a newscaster delivering a punchy anchor line ("Outside the Arizona state capital in Phoenix protestors are demonstrating at this hour *against* a new law") further establishes the theme. Regardless of one's location, the sample imaginatively transports the listener to Phoenix, Arizona. In addition, the newscaster's emphasis on *against* primes listeners to stand in opposition. Lastly, a sample of former MSNBC news anchor Keith Olbermann ups the ante: "Good evening from New York. Just hours ago the Governor of Arizona signed into law an immigration bill that may in practical terms mandate racial profiling." On the one hand, the listener learns that the legislation in question deals with immigration and racial profiling; on the other, the sample extends an issue specific to Arizona to audiences on the other side of the country. The suggestion, then, is that the law holds potentially ominous ramifications for the whole nation. Echoing coast to coast, these introductory samples, which are borrowed from the aesthetic Funky Aztecs deployed in "Prop 187," foreshadow the song's bilingual Spanish-English wordplay.

The song's musical arrangement slowly builds over the first eight bars. Handclaps on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4 begin when the female speaker utters *porque* ("because"), revealing that the song is a response to her fear and emotional pain. These handclaps, which do not deviate from their quarter note beat pattern (and are heard throughout the song), create a persistent percussive foundation that not only propels the song forward, but psychologically positions listeners to participate. Indeed, these techniques aurally figure what will ultimately become a call to action—which, because of the timing of the delivery, is rooted not only in the anxiety of the female voice's but, by extension, the anxieties of anyone who stands to be affected by S.B. 1070. A piano riff enters on the *and* of beat three in the first bar. Reserved and muted, the riff modulates between two octaves. Played in a lower register in the first bar, it establishes a somber mood; by the third bar, however, the riff, now an octave higher, sounds a more optimistic tone. While an eighth note hi-hat pattern, with stress placed on the down beats, enters in bar five to reinforce the urgency of the handclaps, the release of the hi-hat on the *and* of beat four in bars six and eight creates tension. Bongo taps on the off beats in bars five and six instill a contemplative atmosphere while also drawing attention to the bongo break in the Incredible Bongo Band's "Apache." At the end of the eighth bar, Mexia laconically intones "Todos somos" (We are all) on the *and* of beat three. As the beat drops on beat one of the ninth measure, bass drum kicks establish a cadence typical for hip-hop, and a walking bass guitar line, also beginning on beat one, aurally suggests a crowd walking in a march. While beats and musical orchestration in hip-hop are oftentimes arbitrary, the aesthetic decisions deployed here embellish the political message and help to create an aesthetic 'unity effect.' As will become evident, "Todos Somos Arizona" invites listeners to actively resist Arizona's discriminatory law.

The song makes extensive use of English and Spanish, with sole rapper Mexia code-switching back and forth between the two. Where Robert Tinajero has noted that "Latino/a Hip Hop functions at the crossroads of […] English, Spanish, Spanglish, [and] African American Vernacular English (AAVE)"[108] to serve "as a form of dissent and protest that pushes up against dominant culture and 'standard' English,"[109] he asserts that the "ability of many Latino/a Hip Hoppers to code-switch is a discursively rich and powerful tool embraced by many in the Latino/a community and highlights their identities as multi-conscious *mestizos*."[110] Identifying the explicit use of two languages as borderland hip-hop rhetoric, Tinajero posits that artists who do so oppose "a simplified monolinguistic English public discourse" that is "cloaked […] in nationalistic and culturally and politically conservative ideals" that commonly find expression in "'English-only' and 'official English' movements."[111] Thus, in light of "openly racist thinking and policies," "attacks on bilingual education," "stereotypical images in popular media," and "actions against Latino/as" by nativist groups,[112] the decision to rap and sing in English and Spanish constitutes a political act unto itself. Bilingual performance becomes a form of resistance that, on the one hand, "challenges dominant cultural hegemony,"[113] and, on the other, "shape[s] multilingual/multidialectical individuals who pose a threat to English monolinguistic hegemony."[114] This strategy is also indicative of transaesthetics.

In "Todos Somos Arizona," lyrics in Spanish and English figure three audiences: Spanish speakers (migrants), English speakers (non-Spanish-speaking Americans), and bilingual English-Spanish speakers (migrants and/or American citizens). Mexia's opening line, "Todos Somos Arizona, que te pasa la raza" serves two purposes: first, he riffs on *que pasa* (what's up) to issue a colloquial greeting to Spanish-speakers in Arizona, across Latin America, and, because of the Olbermann sample, the entire country. In that sense, Mexia presumes—and even creates—a transcontinental and transnational audience. However, because he raps "que te pasa la raza" (what's happening to the people), he also calls upon listeners to reflect upon what is being done to *people*.[115] Where Tinajero notes that "Latino/a Hip Hoppers, and Latino/as in general, feel that their identity—their very being—is commonly disrespected by dominant culture,"[116] Mexia's opening line is an attempt to humanize the dehumanized.

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[108] Tinajero, 23.

[109] Ibid., 24.

[110] Ibid., 27. Italics in the original.

[111] Ibid., 32.

[112] Ibid., 34.

[113] Ibid., 38.

[114] Ibid., 33.

[115] While *La raza* literally translates to "race," the term references the civil rights group by the same name that advocates for the legal rights of Mexican Americans. Moreover, a user by the name francisco villa at Urban Dictionary points out that José Vasconcelos coined the term in *La Raza Cósmica* (*The Cosmic Race*, 1925) to describe "the product of racial mixing over time that was already in progress (black, white, Asian, Native American, all becoming racially and culturally mixed due to the events of time, for example the conquest of Mexico resulted in mixing of the blood and culture of the natives and the Spaniards). [Vasconcelos] believed that eventually all of the races would be completely mixed into a new race that had the best attributes of all the cultures." *See* "La Raza (1)," *Urban Dictionary*, posted by Mr.Juan-derful, Jan 9, 2010, accessed Oct 22, 2017, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=La+Razaand "La Raza (2)," *Urban Dictionary*, posted by francisco villa, Sept 3, 2006, accessed Oct 22, 2017, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=La+Raza. Tinajero confirms the origins of the term. *See* Tinajero, 26.

[116] Ibid., 24.

As the first verse unfolds, however, it quickly becomes apparent how Mexia toys with the audience through deftly executed bilingual code-switching:

> Todos somos Arizona, que te pasa la raza es la razón
> that all you can chill at home without a care in your zone
> we clean your home cook your food while sit on your throne
> without a clue (damn) there's something wrong with that picture there
> no lo puedo creer, no lo puedo entender, no lo puedo ver
> tu forma de ser es lo de ayer
> and we Latinos on the rise like blood pressure (yeah)
> trying to control us with fear, de que se trata
> treat us like some animals (*hey!*) que desgracia
> ya basta, dictatin' Nazis to get rid of all of us, no va ser nada fácil (*come on!*).

After offering his Spanish salutation, Mexia switches to English. But before doing so, he raps "la raza es la razón" (the people are the reason) to suggest that migrant workers (cleaners and cooks) provide middle and upper class Americans with the comforts that allow them to "chill at home" free from worry ("without a care in your zone"). Mexia's deliberate use of "your throne" (as opposed to "their throne") reveals that he is indeed addressing two distinct audiences: privileged white Americans and underprivileged migrant workers. This dual-address is underscored by Mexia's interlingual rhyming of *razón* with "throne" and "zone," and his ability to rhyme across two languages is the first evidence for transaesthetics. However, instead of an 'aesthetic breakdown' or 'blurring,' it is quite possible to apprehend the blended and the particular at once.

After declaring the privileged-underprivileged relationship unacceptable ("there's something wrong with that picture there"), Mexia switches to Spanish: "no lo puedo creer" (I can't believe it), "no lo puedo entender" (I can't understand it), "no lo puedo ver" (I can't see it), and "tu forma de ser es lo de ayer" (the way you were yesterday). Because these lines are oriented towards Spanish speakers, Mexia suggests that Latino/as who passively accept their lot—for instance, by remaining silent and dutiful—are now a thing of the past. The next line, "we Latinos on the rise," amounts to a declaration of pride, either in the sense of socioeconomic mobility or, within the context of the song, those who are already out protesting in the streets. Yet because Mexia raps in English, the phrase is a warning (or threat) to status quo Americans who benefit from migrant labor, yet remain unconcerned about their welfare. Furthermore, he denounces attempts to control Latinos "with fear" (e.g. through legislation, racial profiling, and the constant threat of deportation), but then immediately switches back to Spanish ("de que se trata"/what's that about) so that listeners who understand Spanish may critically reflect on these measures. Similarly, though in English (and thus for monolingual English-speakers), Mexia calls out the inhuman treatment of immigrants ("treat us like some animals"), which is buttressed by the shout-out "hey!" Switching back to Spanish ("que desgracia"/what a disgrace) ensures that Spanish speakers understand his denouncement. A powerful rhetorical tool, bilingual code-switching enables Mexia to address three audiences for different, albeit interconnected, reasons.

The last line in the first verse opens with an imperative ("ya basta"/stop), which can be understood as either a demand to end the inhuman treatment mentioned in the previous line and/or for Latinos to stop accepting their underprivileged status. Switching to English, Mexia outs nativist lawmakers as "dictatin'

Nazis." In that sense, "basta" takes on yet another meaning: in essence, "let's stop these Neo Nazi lawmakers." Switching back to Spanish, Mexia acknowledges that doing so will be difficult ("no va ser nada fácil"/it will not be easy), and a cleverly placed shout-out in English at the end of the line ("*come on!*") urges everyone, Spanish and English listeners alike, to unite and work together. In short, Mexia's use of two languages enables him to make a call for grassroots action among, on the one hand, those who suffer under unfair laws and, on the other, those who empathize with their plight and who might be willing to intervene to alleviate their suffering. While all of this could theoretically be accomplished in monolingual lyrics, Mexia's use of two languages attains a remarkable level of efficiency that demonstrates the power of borderland hip-hop rhetoric.

The song's chorus, sung entirely in Spanish, summarizes the aspirations (but also the frustrations) of immigrant workers whose labor, despite being illegal, is nevertheless a major component of the socioeconomic model of the United States. Mexia sings:

> Solo quiero triunfar y ahora me quieren deportar
> Yo no más quiero trabajar
> Yo voy a luchar, yo voy a triunfar
> Solo quiero triunfar y ahora me quieren deportar
> Yo no más quiero trabajar
> Yo voy a luchar, (*yeah!*) yo voy a triunfar.
>
> I just want to succeed and now they want to deport me
> I don't want to work anymore
> I'm going to fight, I'm going to succeed
> I just want to succeed and now they want to deport me
> I don't want to work anymore
> I'm going to fight, (*yeah!*) I'm going to succeed.

Because it is sung and not rapped, the soaring melody masks Mexia's subversive call for migrant laborers to organize to attain equal rights. Invoking the ethic of hard work, the desire for success, and standing up for what one believes, Mexia draws upon tenets central to the American Dream. Singing in the first person, "Yo no más quiero trabajar" (I don't want to work anymore), he subtly goads migrant workers to strike. With "Yo voy a luchar" (I'm going to fight) and "Yo voy a triunfar" (I'm going to succeed), also delivered in the first person, Mexia not only urges migrants to join the protest, but assures them that their work ethic will guarantee success. Indeed, he utters *triunfar* (to succeed) four times. The power of the chorus is two-fold: on the one hand, only Spanish speakers (migrants, or empathetic bilingual Americans) can heed the call; on the other, monolingual English speakers are kept in the dark about the growing movement. Where Mexia previously utilized two languages to motivate three audiences, he now relies exclusively on Spanish to speak directly to the undocumented migrants who must demand, and work for, equal rights.

Where the first verse displayed a fairly even split of English and Spanish,[117] the first half of the second verse relies more heavily on Spanish to further exclude English monolinguals.[118] Mexia raps:

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[117] The first verse contains 113 words, of which 69 are English and 44 are Spanish. Thus, 61% of the first verse is English and 39% is Spanish.

[118] The second verse contains 104 words, of which 31 are English and 73 are Spanish. Thus, 30% of the verse is English and 70% is Spanish.

Mil castigos a todos los enemigos
Mejicano por fortuna hasta la tumba (*yeah*)
Soy la esencia de la gente, no vale en frente
Es muy indecente de repente
Quieren cambiar las leyes.

A thousand punishments to the enemies of Mexico
fortunately destined for the grave (*yeah*)
I am the essence of the people, not worth being in front
It is very indecent all of a sudden
They want to change the laws.

After calling for the enemies of Mexico to be vanquished, Mexia declares himself the spirit of the people ("la esencia de la gente"/the essence of the people). However, by rapping "no vale en frente" (not worth being in front) and "Es muy indecente" (It's very indecent), he seems to refute the idolization of leaders. This suggests that *anyone* who turns out to protest, not just those leading the charge, is a potential leader. However, the utterance "Es muy indecente" has a dual function: not only does it castigate anyone who would declare himself a leader (such as Mexia himself), it also calls out elected officials for enacting unjust legislation. Mexia reminds listeners of recent efforts ("de repente"/all of a sudden) to crack down on migrants with tougher laws ("Quieren cambiar las leyes"/They want to change the laws). Like the English language news reports sampled in the opening bars, Mexia takes on the role of newscaster, a strategy to call Latino/as to protest that dates back nearly 100 years,[119] to inform monolingual migrant workers who stand to be adversely affected by harsh new laws.

As the verse continues, Mexia returns to using two languages, rapping:

(*come on!*) El Estado del estado
Controlado por güeyes se creen reyes
I really don't understand what they're saying
Te rodean por ser latino
Obstáculo en tu camino
Solo quieren que tú caigas en el remolino, si
Siguen tu camino por tu destino
Sigue metido en la lucha en for what you believe
White, brown, or black, poor or wealthy
We weigh/way much more than a pot that's melting (*yes!*).

(*come on!*) The State of the state
Controlled by dumb dudes kings are created
I really don't understand what they're saying
They surround you for being Latino
An obstacle in your way
They just want you to fall into the whirlpool, yes
Follow the path of your destiny
He is still in the fight for what you believe
White, brown, or black, poor or wealthy
We weigh/way much more than a pot that's melting (*yes!*).

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[119] Radio has long played a central role in facilitating migrant workers movements in Latino/a communities in the United States. *See* McFarland 2013, 100-101.

After castigating elected officials as "güeyes" (dumb dudes)[120] who anoint "reyes" (kings), i.e. the police, with authoritative powers, Mexia switches to English and raps, "I really don't understand what they're saying." On the one hand, he mocks English monolinguals incapable of receiving Spanish rhymes; on the other, he also expresses his inability to understand the rationale and behavior of nativist politicians. Continuing in Spanish, he expresses sentiments that would likely resonate with all Latinos, migrants and citizens alike: the sense of being surrounded ("Te rodean"), that government officials are obstacles ("Obstáculo"), and the fear of being cast into a state of danger and uncertainty ("el remolino"/the whirlpool). Despite these frustrations, Mexia turns positive when he mentions destiny ("destino") and "Sigue metido en la lucha" (He is still in the fight). To finish off the verse, he switches back to English and raps "for what you believe." He closes by rapping entirely in English ("White, brown, or black, poor or wealthy") to evoke diversity and equality, regardless of one's socioeconomic status or place in America's racial hierarchy. Drawing upon the metaphor of the melting pot ("We weigh/way much more than a pot that's melting"), Mexia further justifies his call for equality by anchoring it in values that are, in theory, highly regarded in the United States.[121] Directed at those in power, Mexia wields American ideals against establishment officials who oppress Latino/as and forbid migrants from pursing their aspirations to become American.

> After another rendition of the chorus, Mexia relies equally on English and Spanish in the final verse:

> Quieren ponernos en cadenas like we're ignorant (*sí*)
> Dicen que somos libres soundin' like some hypocrites (*haha*)
> Quiero reforma, no quiero racismo
> Comprehensive immigration reform for all my people (*come on!*)
> Solo le pido a Estados Unidos (*sí*)
> Remember that we're all created equal
> Balance the good and evil
> La lucha la solución
> Una adecuada y valuada pa' la nación
> Pogan atención, es una obligación (*yeah*)
> Hay que unirnos y tener más comunicación
> This is our home, country built on immigrant blood
> We're all descendants and connected through love (*come on!*).[122]

Due to code-switching, the first two lines can be read in a number of ways. To begin, Mexia provocatively raps "Quieren ponernos en caenas" (They want to put us in chains), but then switches back to English ("like we're ignorant"). On the one hand, the Spanish half of the line invokes the historical shame of slavery, but also the practice of chaining undocumented migrants together during ICE raids. For bilinguals, the line is

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[120] The Mexican slang website *Güey Spanish* reports that *güey* is modeled after "buey," which means "ox" (and functions as a put down meaning "dumb"), much like "dumb as an ox" in English. The website also maintains that *güey* is a euphemism for "dude." Complicating matters further, McFarland notes that *güey* is deployed as an epithet against homosexuals. I translate *güeyes* as "dumb dudes" because Mexia is sharply critical of the authorities throughout the song. It might also be translated as "dumb asses" or, following McFarland, "dumb faggots." *See* "Güey," *Güey Spanish*, accessed Oct 26, 2017, gueyspanish.com/word/87/güey and McFarland, 2013, 106.

[121] Because Raul y Mexia have never released an official lyric transcript, it is not possible to know if Mexia raps "weigh" or "way." Nevertheless, both words reinforce the message: people (and the nation) are more than a blend of mixing cultures.

[122] Of the 90 words that comprise the final verse (including shout-outs in the background), 46 words are English and 44 words are Spanish.

clear: immigration agents are coming to round up undocumented workers. However, the use of Spanish cleverly turns the English portion of the line into a dis: unable to understand the line, Mexia disses English monolinguals. A similar strategy is deployed in line two. Mexia raps "Dicen que somos libres" (They say we're free), then switches to English ("soundin' like some hypocrites") to expose the hypocrisy of a nation allegedly founded on freedom that nevertheless institutionalized slavery. While both lines stand to resonate with bilinguals, monolingual English listeners can only hear "ignorant" and "hypocrites." Where "Latino/as who use this mixture of Spanish and English are often criticized by non-Latino/as (and even Latino/as) who look down on this practice of linguistic mixing,"[123] Mexia incisively works around, and through, two languages at once. By resisting "the call of 'just speak one language'," he becomes a threat to "those who serve to gain the most from speaking only English" and who "are bothered and/or threatened by the intermixing of languages."[124] Mexia again demonstrates the power and potential of bilingual borderland hip-hop rhetoric which, because of its mixing of two languages, demonstrates transaesthetics. However, it is possible to appreciate the blended and the particular at the same time, thereby underscoring the importance of expanding upon Baudrillard's original articulation of the term.

Yet in the next four lines, which also oscillate back and forth between two languages, Mexia makes an unequivocal appeal to English monolinguals.

> Quiero reforma, no quiero racismo
> Comprehensive immigration reform for all my people (*come on!*)
> Solo le pido a Estados Unidos (*sí*)
> Remember that we're all created equal.

After declaring "Quiero reforma" (I want reform) and "no quiero racism" (I don't want racism), Mexia plainly calls for comprehensive reform. Where he previously rooted the call for resistance in American principles (e.g. hard work, success, and diversity), he now anchors his call for equality in the Declaration of Independence, rapping "Solo le pido a Estados Unidos" (I only ask the United States)/Remember that we're all created equal."[125] Above all, however, where Mexia previously exploited two languages to address three audiences for different reasons (and even pitted them against each other), the interlingual rhyming of "racismo," "people," "Unidos," and "equal" at the end of each line draws everyone together. This effect cannot be achieved through monolingual rhyming, either in Spanish (*racismo*, *gente*, *Unidos*, *igual*) or English (racism, people, United, equal). Part and parcel of borderland hip-hop rhetoric, this interlingual rhyming constitutes a transcultural aesthetic utterance: neither Spanish nor English, it is both and more. Where Mexia exploited code-switching in the previous lines to disrespect one group and uplift another, here he suggests—and even demonstrates—that unity that can be achieved through perceived difference.

As the verse proceeds, however, Mexia's gesture seems fleeting, particularly because he continues in Spanish, rapping:

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[123] Tinajero, 24.
[124] Ibid.
[125] The second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence states: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." *See* "Declaration of Independence: A Transcription," *America's Founding Documents*, accessed Oct 29, 2017, archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript.

> La lucha la solución
> Una adecuada y valuada pa' la nación
> Pogan atención, es una obligación (*yeah*)
> Hay que unirnos y tener más comunicación.

Where he previously rhymed between two languages, Mexia now rhymes solely in Spanish. While the lines translate to "The struggle the solution/An adequate and valid nation/Pay attention, it's an obligation/We must unite and have more communication," none of that stands to resonate with English monolinguals. But because he ends each line with *solución* (solution), *nación* (nation), *obligación* (obligation), and *communicación* (communication), Mexia's use of cognates evidences a clever attempt to speak across linguistic barriers. Even though English monolinguals are essentially blocked from receiving these lines, they nevertheless are positioned to hear these words because of their resemblance to English. If these are the only Spanish lyrics monolingual English listeners understand in the entire song, then difference is bridged through similarity. Indeed, Mexia seems to drive that point home in the final two lines, rapping, "This is our home, country built on immigrant blood/We're all descendants and connected through love (come on)." Most importantly, however, Mexia's duo-lingual address signals a remarkable achievement. While it speaks to the political power of bilingual rhyming, it also suggests that Baudrillard's fear of the loss of aesthetic particularity (the hallmark of his conceptualization of transaesthetics) deserves redefinition. Mexia speaks from and across two languages at once, and bilingual English-Spanish listeners would quite likely have no problem with Mexia's aesthetic decisions. In fact, the song stands to resonate quite profoundly precisely in these individuals which, for them, would result in a power transcultural aesthetic experience.

The song concludes on a double rendition of the chorus, and the final 87 seconds amount to a bilingual urging to stand up, get involved, be active and participate. Numerous shout-outs, including "come on!," "si," "yeah," "ah-ha," "alright," "vale" (okay)," "come on raza," "tell him," "let'em know," and, lastly, "¡vamo! ¡vamo!" (let's go! let's go!), underpin the call to action. While McFarland criticizes the song (albeit without detailed analysis) for its "neoliberal reformism" that "do[es] not explicitly condemn the capitalist economic system and the state as the foundation" of exploitation and ill treatment,[126] "Todos Somos Arizona" strongly advocates for the rights of undocumented workers. Even though it stands as something of a one-off in Raul y Mexia's body of work, it is an unmistakable example for how a crossover hip-hop/Latino pop song can, and does, make a call for political action. In the end, the song is part of a growing movement to humanize undocumented migrants and their families, people who too often are forced to hide in the shadows while lawmakers use them as pawns to further nativist agendas. In the final analysis, "Todos Somos Arizona" effectively marshals languages and music to foster the sort of Black-Brown-White alliance needed to contest unjust, discriminatory legislative actions that target a minority, yet nevertheless significant and growing, community. If YouTube comments are any indication, that message is not lost on listeners.[127]

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[126] McFarland 2013, 248-249.

[127] A brief scan of the comments section on YouTube reveals that the message resonates with listeners/viewers. Like the song, some of the comments are written bilingually. A user named omar a writes: "bout time someone made a song like this..now ppl going to listen especially them racist freaks...ohhh somos mexicanos hasta la muerte...BROWN PRIDE." *See* "Todos Somos Arizona," YouTube video, 3:26, posted by SuenaTron Oficial, Nov 3, 2010, accessed Oct 30, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=94cGB6ZkrAI.

While similar tactics are deployed in TickTickBoom's "C'est quoi ton rôle" (2014), it is important to trace some hip-hop history and the social movements in Germany that inform the song.

Hip-Hop in Germany: Purview of *Migranten* and Birth of the New

Hip-hop in Germany has long been cast as the domain of immigrant youth. Sociolinguist Jannis Androutsopoulos writes that the phrase "migrant hip hop"

> is a cover term for narratives of migration and ethnicity, including the migration experience; testimonies of discrimination, exclusion and racist aggression in Germany; the pride and burden of ethnic heritage; the tension between dominant society and the ethnic group; and the search for new spaces or identity.[128]

He further asserts that "young people with a migrant background have been instrumental in the appropriation of hip hop in Germany and the development of 'local' hip-hop discourses, in which ethnicity and migration constitute important topics from the very beginning."[129] These sentiments are a defining characteristic of hip-hop discourse in Germany.

Much of this originates from a seminal article written in 1998 by ethnomusicologist Dietmar Elflein, where he asserts that "never before in the history of German popular music have so many immigrant youngsters produced a culture which is not rooted in the heritage of their parents."[130] To back up his argument, Elflein noted the following:

> By 1994, the number of immigrants living in Germany had reached 6.9 million. 97 per cent of all immigrants were residents in the western part of the country, which meant that in the former Federal Republic of Germany and in West Berlin every tenth citizen was a foreigner. 1.53 million came from EU countries, among them 500,000 from Italy and 350,000 from Greece. Further, some 930,000 immigrants originated from the former Yugoslavia and 260,000 from Poland. The biggest foreigner community, however, was formed by the Turks with a population of 1,918,000, of whom 300,000 to 400,000 were of Kurd origin. Half of the Turkish immigrants were between 25 and 45 years old.[131]

These numbers reflect Germany's post-WW2 demographic shift. Describing these migration flows in greater detail, Britta Sweers notes that the

> first wave of immigrants occurred when 13 million (German) refugees fled to Germany from former German territories. During the 1950s and 1960s, the economic miracle in Germany led to the recruitment of so-called guest workers. Between 1955 and 1973, approximately 5.1 million workers, predominantly from Italy (after 1955), Spain and Greece (after 1960) Turkey (after 1961), and the former Yugoslavia (after 1968) migrated to West Germany. The families of these migrants followed after 1973. Since the mid-1970s, the majority of migrants have been classified as asylum seekers. East Germany also recruited "guest workers" made necessary by the outflow of 2.7 million refugees to West Germany (between 1949 and 1961), a migration that caused a serious labor shortage. Here

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[128] Androutsopoulos, 22.
[129] Ibid., 21-22.
[130] Dietmar Elflein, "From Krauts with attitudes to Turks with attitudes: some aspects of hip-hop history in Germany," *Popular Music* 17, 3 (1998): 255.
[131] Ibid.

approximately 0.5 million workers were recruited from Vietnam, Poland, and Mozambique.[132]

Thus, long before hip-hop became the purview of young people with migrant backgrounds, immigrants played a vital role in rebuilding Germany. Even though guest workers were non-German citizens, they had as much to do with continuing the building up of Germany's infrastructure as any ethnic German. It is hard to imagine what Germany would be today without them.

After providing insight into Germany's underground hip-hop scenes (mostly in the West), including the emergence of the wildly successful pop rap group Die Fantastischen Vier, Elflein dismissed labels such as *Deutscher Hip-Hop*, *Neuer Deutscher Sprechgesang*, and *Neue Deutsche Reimkultur* to describe German-language rap, claiming that watered down commercially friendly rap texts in German "locked out many of [the scene's] participants,"[133] presumably the migrant youth who helped establish the culture in the 1980s. The suggestion, then, is that migrant youth did not speak, or spoke very little, German; however, to date there is no indication this was the case. Nevertheless, when "hip-hop became solely reduced to a style of music" by Germans who, "in imitating exotic cultures, no matter how perfectly, reduce them to carnival," Elflein argued that "some musicians used rap to critique the construction of immigrants as foreigners."[134] Furthermore, he argued that as "the first West German youth culture of Afro-American origin which, right from the beginning, involved numerous male immigrant youngsters," hip-hop was a gravitar for "a large number of second generation migrants."[135] This observation created a useful distinction: authentic, or "real" hip-hop produced by migrant kids versus pop-lite German-language rap produced by white ethnic Germans.[136]

Yet even while rejecting the aforementioned terms, which were themselves interesting neologisms to describe German-language rap (and therefore indicated that something new was afoot, further affirming the applicability of Ortiz's neoculturation principle), Elflein imported the labels *oriental hip hop* and *migrant hip hop* from the German media sphere into the Anglophone world. With the discussion framed within a domestic/foreign dichotomy, one wonders if the internal relocation of Germans from East to West following unification also falls under the term *migrant hip hop*. To date there seems to be little discussion about East Germans who relocated to the West, experienced culture shock, and began rapping about their internal migration experience. Arguably, one could say that everyone in the former East and West, Germans and non-Germans alike, became migrants when they physically, but especially psychologically, relocated to a unified geopolitical entity after the unification process began in 1990. Here, the slogan of the immigrant

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[132] Sweers, 203.

[133] Elflein 1998, 258.

[134] Ibid., 259.

[135] Ibid., 261.

[136] Describing how the media presents the two, Klein and Friedrich summarize this quite well: "'Deutsch Rap' wird mit Spaß und Kommerz in Verbindung gebracht, deutsch-türkischer HipHop hingehen mit Politik, Gewalt und Ghetto" (*Deutsch Rap* is connected to fun and commerce, German-Turkish hip-hop with politics, violence, and the ghetto). Describing German-language rap music with a Germanized term while transposing hip-hop as a loan word for Turkish-German rap already connotes one being more connected to New York and The Bronx. *See* Gabriela Klein and Malte Friedrich, *Is this real? Die Kultur des HipHop* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2003), 71-72.

rights movement in United States, to wit, "We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us,"[137] which was modeled on Malcolm X's provocative quote invoking Plymouth Rock,[138] could apply to everyone, Germans and non-Germans alike, who found themselves in transit to a unified Germany. The period after the Fall of the Wall was one of dynamic flux and uncertainty, and the decision to deploy rhetoric such as national/migrant with regard to hip-hop culture not only evinces that instability, but underscores the desire for certainty modeled on difference. Curiously, this sort of distinction served immigrant youth drawn to hip-hop culture, but also nativists who needed ideological justification to insist upon a homogenized "German" culture.

Elflein nevertheless insisted that there was "no need to propose different ethnically defined subgenres [of rap] on the basis of the origin of particular musical samples," concluding that one had "to acknowledge the existence of different musical, social and political dispositions […] in a scene which is, by its nature, various and pluralistic."[139] While his conclusion of pluralism hinted at, but did not touch upon, transculturation, Americanist Heinz Ickstadt, writing just one year later, did. He described the music of Berlin-based Aziz-A, the first female Turkish-German emcee, not only as "tricultural,"[140] i.e. a blend of German, Turkish, and African American cultures, but as emblematic of a "united transnational/transcultural Europe."[141] Even while reaching toward a more useful framework to understand the types of transnational and cross-cultural flow and exchange Aziza-A's music represented, the notion of migrant rap or immigrant hip-hop, especially as a curious new subject of study, persists. Despite renouncing the term *oriental hip hop* twelve years earlier, Elflein continues to use it—most recently in an article from 2010 where he examines genre hybridity in rap music.[142]

Discussing Mark Pennay's contribution to *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA* (2001), the book's editor, Tony Mitchell, emphasized, citing Elflein, "the multicultural, migrant ambit of German hip-hop in the context of the increase in right-wing racist violence in the 1990s," and thus extended that discourse further into the Anglophone world.[143] Pennay, however, expanded the scope. Highlighting an interview Henkel and Wolff (1996) had conducted with Main Concept (an important early rap group in West Germany), the group's emcees reported that "youth from all social groups belong[ed] to the hip-hop movement in Berlin."[144] Furthermore, Kiel-based Cora E, Germany's first female emcee, claimed that "mid-1980s dance-offs in Berlin […] took place between crews divided along the lines of citizenship, that is, into

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[137] Paul D'Amato, "The Meaning of Marxism: 'The border crossed us'," *Socialist Worker*, Apr 28, 2006, accessed Dec 7, 2017, socialistworker.org/2006-1/586/586_13_Border.shtml.

[138] The full Malcolm X quote is "We didn't land on Plymouth Rock. Plymouth Rock landed on us!" *See* Robert Koulish, *Immigration and American Democracy: Subverting the Rule of Law* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 122.

[139] Elflein 1998, 264.

[140] Heinz Ickstadt, "Appropriating Difference: Turkish-German Rap," *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 44, 4 (1999): 574.

[141] Ibid., 578.

[142] Dietmar Elflein, "'Diggin' the Global Crates': Genrehybridität im HipHop," *Samples: Online-Publikationen des Arbeitskries Studium Populärer Musik* 9 (2010): 8.

[143] Tony Mitchell, "Introduction: Another Root—Hip-Hop outside the USA," in *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA*, edited by Tony Mitchell (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 18.

[144] Mark Pennay, "Rap in Germany: The Birth of a Genre," in *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA*, edited by Tony Mitchell (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 113.

Germans and foreigners."[145] With hip-hoppers aligning, or self-segregating (which, on some level, suggests a predilection, conscious or not, for racial/ethnic stratification), Pennay stressed that "contact with hip-hop had set off a spark among a tightly-knit club of disaffected Eastern youth" in the former East Germany "and some small clusters of immigrants around major industrial centers in the West."[146] Despite increasing numbers of adherents from across Germany's social strata, young people with migration backgrounds, at least for commentators, remained front and center. If hip-hop culture in Germany (a heretofore unknown cultural form) is an example of what Ortiz called transculturation (specifically, neoculturation), then the desire to explain it as the domain of *the foreign*, either through young people with migrant backgrounds or the *foreign influences* that fueled and fed it, suggests that hip-hop in any form was *undeutsch*, even when artists rapped in German. That sort of response to the new, the unknown, and the *strange* is, in many respects, a common response to the unfamiliar. It is no wonder that early commentators gravitated toward binary notions to try and understand the appeal and rise of rap music in Germany.

Since the early days, so-called migrant rappers have attained bona fide stardom, including Kool Savas, a Turkish German, and Bushido, a Tunisian German who, in perhaps one of the more intriguing instances of cultural blending, takes his performance name from the code of honor and ethics of the Japanese samurai. Other artists such as Bass Sultan Hengzt (Italian Turkish German), Eko Fresh (Turkish German), and Farid Bang (Moroccan), among many others, have found considerable success.[147] These artists, Kautny stresses, "are not so much perceived as [immigrant] rappers than as rappers working in Germany."[148] On the one hand, participating in hip-hop culture (and rapping in German) normalizes their ethnic roots; on the other, these artists are able to cash in on their ethnicity for profit in a system of capitalist entertainment that privileges difference as a selling point. Even though many of them rap in German, the perception that these artists as not German, or German-and-something-else, fuels the fascination that non-ethnic Germans produce provocative music—often gangster rap—for "children and young people who live in socially deprived milieus and who consider their chances to move into the social mainstream slim."[149] Despite nearly all of the aforementioned artists being German citizens who were actually born in the country,[150] the role of the immigrant in hip-hop in Germany, present from the beginning, persists today, especially when scholars and commentators overemphasize identity. As with the rise of hip-hop culture and rap music in the United States, vast portions of 'white' ethnic Germans embraced the culture as receivers. While immigrant youth did play an outsized role in translating hip-hop to Germany, overlooking audiences to privilege a cultural narrative seems a bit shortsighted.

Music as Intervention: Hip-Hop as Protest Form

One of the first songs to put so-called immigrant hip-hop on the map—indeed, to have spawned the subgenre—was "Fremd im eigenen Land" (A Stranger At Home), a song by the multiethnic Heidelberg-

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[145] Ibid., 114.
[146] Ibid., 117.
[147] Kautny, 415-416.
[148] Ibid., 416.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Of the artists Kautny lists, only Farid Bang, who was born in Spain, is a non-German citizen.

based crew Advanced Chemistry.[151] Released in August 1992 in the wake of anti-migrant sentiments in Rostock, Germany, but also "after a house for asylum seekers was attacked" in the eastern city of "Hoyerswerda (in September 1991),"[152] the song launched the phase of so-called "migrant hip hop" that arose "in the aftermath of German unification."[153] This phase, Androutsopoulos notes, "coincided with an increase in xenophobic discourse and a wave of assaults against migrants and asylum seekers," with artists reacting "against racist aggression" by appropriating "the tradition of protest or message rap to articulate their voices and viewpoints."[154] Where protest is a form of catharsis, it is intriguing that message rap, or conscious hip-hop, served as the membrane through which rap music passed into Germany, and even took a more profound hold. It seems to suggest that complaining, bemoaning, and/or decrying injustices is a highly valued response across all human societies. Conversely, Die Fantastischen Vier's often derided party rhymes about girls, dating, and having fun speak to the universal desire for joy and pleasure, which could also be understood from a universalist perspective with significant cross- and even transcultural potential. Perhaps this explains the appeal of rap music across cultures more generally. Nearly everyone likes to party, dance, and make romantic inroads with desired sexual partners.

In the contentious, brutal, and bloody years following unification, Pennay notes that "asylum seekers and Turkish families died in attacks, homeless people and leftwing sympathizers were beaten to death, and neo-Nazi groups managed to stage unrestricted demonstrations."[155] Advanced Chemistry's song, Pennay correctly argues, "described in clear German what it was like to possess German citizenship but be treated like a foreigner based on appearance."[156] Indeed, Advanced Chemistry's song "brought into sharp focus a level of widespread and implicit racism that was in clear danger of being ignored if not actively denied in the face of overt racist attacks."[157] Because "Fremd im eigenen Land" was rapped in German, migrant hip-hop emerged through German-language rhymes, which presents something of a conundrum: was it *Deutschrap*, migrant hip-hop, or something else entirely? Advanced Chemistry essentially *founded* conscious rap in Germany, and its founding, regardless of which language it occurred in, was a transatlantic and transcultural development.

Tapping into the power of rap as a protest form, many other groups and songs followed suit, including Fresh Familee's "Ahmet Gündüz" and "Fuck the Skins" (1993), Anarchist Academy's "Stopt Faschisten" (Stop Fascists) and "How To Kill A Racist (1993), and T.C.A Microphone Mafia's "Insanlar" (Turkish for "People") (1993), among others. More than just offering their voices, however, these songs were interventions that spoke directly to social injustices, mistreatment, and the underlying assumption of second-class status for perceived ethnic Others in Germany. The interventionist work of that period culminated in the song "Adriano (Letzte Warnung)" (2001) by Brothers Keepers, which was a response to

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[151] Caroline Diessel, "Bridging East and West on the 'Orient Express': Oriental Hip-Hop in the Turkish Diaspora of Berlin," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 13 (2001): 168.

[152] Sweers, 194.

[153] Androutsopoulos, 22.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Pennay, 118.

[156] Ibid., 120.

[157] Ibid., 120.

the June 2000 murder of Alberto Adriano in Dessau, Germany, a small city in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt. As "a joint project consisting of Afro-German hip-hop, soul and reggae artists" that "was initiated by Adé Odukoya, an artist who was both a performer with and a producer of the band Bantu (2000-2001),"[158] well-known figures from the hip-hop community, including Samy Deluxe and Xavier Naidoo, but also Torch and Toni-L (both from Advanced Chemistry) and the emcee Afrob were just some of the artists involved.

While these musicians "decided to make a clear statement about racist violence in Germany"[159] to confront the bigoted attitudes and criminal actions of the far-right, the project, as Sweers notes, evolved into activist-outreach efforts. Brothers Keepers "not only supported the relevant victims and related projects with the income from their musical performances, but they also tried to make contact with young people by organizing school tours, which included a visit to Rostock-Lichtenhagen in 2002,"[160] the site of racist violence a decade earlier. Brothers Keepers thus transformed what began as a musical response to tragedy into palpable civic action. Concurrently, institutional efforts emerged to stem anti-immigrant sentiments and prevent further violence. The founding of migrant organizations followed, "including: Verein der Freunde der russischen Sprache (Organization of Friends of the Russian Language) in 1996 and the Afrikanische Bürgerinitiative (African Citizens Initiative) in 1997."[161] Furthermore, Bunt statt Braun (Colorful not Brown), an organization devoted to promoting tolerance and diversity, as well as LOBBI, a group that supports the victims of rightwing violence, were founded in 2000 and 2001, respectively.[162] Artists relied on these organizations to organize themselves and likeminded citizens to stage events that addressed pressing social issues. The power of music, and especially hip-hop, continues as an interventionist strategy today.

From Rostock and Cologne to Lampedusa: Violence, Migration, Tragedy

More migration brought more violence and tragedy. "After reunification," Sweers writes, "Germany experienced another wave of migration, a group of around 4 million so-called *Spätaussiedler* (late emigrants)" comprised of "Russian Germans […] from the former Soviet Union" who, after Turkish Germans, "constitute the largest migrant group in Germany."[163] Sweers writes that in 1992

> the number of asylum seekers from Romania grew so fast that the German government decided to impose a limit on the places offered to these applicants. The refugees were predominantly Roma, a group that has experienced violence, arson, and murder resulting from the revolutions that had occurred in Romania (and throughout Europe) after 1989. Arriving in Germany during the spring and summer 1992, they were not aware that they would be denied asylum as political refugees. The bureaucratic procedure in place to decide the legality of their status lasted many months. Unable to return to Romania immediately, they were stuck, and local authorities were unable to offer them accommodations or even to set up a provisional camp for asylum seekers who continued to arrive

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[158] Sweers, 200.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid., 197.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid., 203.

in Rostock-Lichtenhagen. As a result, the growing number of asylum seekers had to camp without facilities outside the central reception site close the Sonnenblumen-Haus (Sunflower House), a residential complex with distinctive artwork where the original asylees were resident.[164]

Part of the problem was the rate at which immigration occurred, but also how the media magnified it. Citing former minister of the interior Rudolf Seiters, Sweers notes that the so-called Rostock-Lichtenhagen Pogrom "was a striking example of the media manipulating reality."[165] However, rather than place responsibility for the attacks at the feet of perpetrators, Seiters claimed that "'the riots demonstrated that the [then] current legislation [was] insufficient. The main problem—the uncontrolled influx of economic refugees, especially from Eastern Europe—can be confronted only with a tighter asylum law.'"[166] In the wake of the aggression, the government "resolved to restrict the number of asylum seekers from Eastern Europe and decided to tighten the laws concerning asylum applicants in general."[167] Instead of admitting that violence was carried out by members of the far-right, Seiters chose to blame a lack of legislation, and even the victims themselves. Despite this uptick in immigration, Germany only began "to perceive itself as a country of immigration" in 1998, which "initiated an ongoing debate concerning migrant integration"[168] that continues today.

By 2005, Sweers reports, "there were 7.3 million 'foreigners,' representing 8.8 percent of the total population of 82.5 million in Germany."[169] More rightwing violence accompanied the increase, and one of the more high-profile incidents took place in Cologne on June 9, 2004, when a nail bomb planted on a bicycle in Keupstraße in Köln-Mülheim, a Turkish district of the city, exploded and injured 22 people, many seriously.[170] Shocked and outraged, the community pulled together, and victims have since spoken out about their experiences.[171] An interfaith Muslim-Jewish-Christian monument, nicknamed *Der Engel der Kulturen* (Angel of Cultures), was laid into the sidewalk in the district to honor the injured, and a larger monument is being discussed.[172] Furthermore, a play titled *Die Lücke* (The Gap, The Breach, The Distance), written by Nuran David Calis and produced by the Schauspielhaus Köln in 2015, addressed ethnic stereotypes to instigate critical reflection on the Keupstraße bombing.[173] In line with hip-hop interventionism, Kutlu Yurtseven (a founding member of the Cologne-based Microphone Mafia) and Refpolk (a rapper, political activist, and member of the hip-hop collective TickTickBoom) released a song titled "Niemand wird

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[164] Ibid, 195-196.
[165] Ibid., 196.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid, 204.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Axel Spilcker, "Zünder aus dem Modellbaukasten," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, June 15, 2004, accessed Dec 7, 2017, ksta.de/zuender-aus-dem-modellbaukasten-13810966.
[171] Per Hinrichs, "'Ich dachte, ich bin in der Hölle angekommen,'" *Die Welt*, Jan 21, 2015, accessed Dec 7, 2017, welt.de/politik/deutschland/article136630723/Ich-dachte-ich-bin-in-der-Hoelle-angekommen.html.
[172] Moritz Küpper, "Gedenkstätte für NSU-Opfer," *Deutschlandfunk*, Nov 8, 2016, accessed Dec 7, 2017, deutschlandfunk.de/denkmalplanung-in-koeln-gedenkstaette-fuer-nsu opfer.1769.de.html?dram:article_id=370768.
[173] For more info, see "Die Lücke: Ein Stuck Keupstraße," *Schauspielhaus Köln*, accessed Dec 7, 2017, schauspiel.koeln/spielplan/monatsuebersicht/die-luecke/.

vergessen–Hiç unutmadik" (No One Will Be Forgotten) (2015) in yet another attempt to memorialize the victims of rightwing attacks since the early 1990s.[174]

Since then migration to Germany has again risen dramatically. With over one million people seeking entry to Europe in 2015 alone (more than 350,000 of whom were Syrians fleeing civil war),[175] the recent wave of immigration, based on previous trends, presaged more violence. With more than ten attacks on refugees logged every day, more than 3,500 attacks were reported in Germany in 2016 alone,[176] criminal actions that "left 560 people injured, among them 43 children" nationwide.[177] Furthermore, nearly three quarters of the attacks "targeted refugees outside of their accommodations," and "another 988 attacks were carried out on refugee housing."[178] Many of these attacks were carried out by people who identify with Pegida, a rightwing populist organization founded in Dresden, Germany in October 2014[179] that exploits fears of an immigrant takeover believed to threaten a fictional monolithic German national cultural identity. Where Pegida created a space for ethnic Germans to voice their concerns that "migrant communities […] strain an already overburdened welfare system by taking up precious social services," its members, who espouse nativist sentiments, "are loath to have their taxes spent on educating 'foreigners' [or] providing welfare benefits to support their families."[180] The effect is two-fold: on the one hand, Pegida's rhetoric enables transgressions against perceived ethnic Others; on the other, it provides the ideological basis that allows people to divert their attention away from human rights abuses in their own communities. Violence, however, was not only delivered upon refugees and asylum seekers: 217 refugee organizations and their volunteers were also attacked,[181] indicating that perpetrators did not distinguish between foreigners and domestic Germans who sought to provide migrants with aid and shelter.

Even though a rise in immigration has fueled these types of hate crimes, one incident in particular— a refugee boat tragedy on the Mediterranean in 2013—gave many people across Europe pause. An entirely man-made catastrophe, migration law and human rights scholar Paolo Cuttitta has pointed out how the event galvanized public opinion:

> On 3 October 2013, a fishing boat carrying over 500 migrants heading for Europe sank only half a mile before reaching the Italian island of Lampedusa. 366 people lost their lives in the deadliest tragedy in the Mediterranean since World War II. While Pope Francis condemned the incident as 'shameful', and called on the people to pray for the dead, the

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[174] Verlan and Loh discuss the way in which the song addresses the history of rightwing attacks in Germany, including a transcript of the lyrics. *See* Sascha Verlan and Hannes Loh, *35 Jahre HipHop in Deutschland* (Höfen, Austria: Koch/Hannibal, 2015), 76-81. The song was officially released on Refpolk's album *Klippe* (Springstoff, 2015), and the official video is available online. *See* "Refpolk & Kutlu: Niemand Wird Vergessen / Hiç unutmadik," YouTube video, 3:25, posted by Springstoff, Jan 19, 2015, accessed Dec 7, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=FopN3nFv4B0.

[175] "Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts," *BBC News*, Mar 4, 2016, accessed Dec 7, 2017, bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911.

[176] "More than 3,500 attacks on refugees in Germany in 2016: report," *Detusche Welle*, Feb 26, 2017, accessed Dec 7, 2017, dw.com/en/more-than-3500-attacks-on-refugees-in-germany-in-2016-report/a-37719365.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid.

[179] Maximillian Popp and Andreas Wassermann, "Where Did Germany's Islamaphobes Come From?," *Der Spiegel*, Jan 12, 2015, accessed Nov 3, 2017, spiegel.de/international/germany/origins-of-german-anti-muslim-group-pegida-a-1012522.html.

[180] Jeremy Rifkin, "The Immigrant Dilemma," in *The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 249.

[181] "More than 3,5000 attacks."

> Italian government proclaimed a national day of mourning, and Prime Minister Enrico Letta said the women, men and children who had died in the Lampedusa tragedy would be – from now on – Italian citizens. Letta and his Interior Minister, Angelino Alfano, together with the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, and the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström, all flew to Lampedusa to pay respects to the victims, whose coffins were lined up in a hangar of the island's airport. A compassionate hand laid a teddy bear on each of the children's white coffins. Everybody was moved by the pictures, taken by scuba divers, of two dead bodies locked in an embrace at the bottom of the sea. The Lampedusa tragedy caused an unprecedented sensation throughout Europe.[182]

Cuttitta further notes how the event "produced, at least, a terminological shift: in the parlance of both political actors and the media, boat migrants are no longer 'intercepted' or 'apprehended' but rather 'rescued'."[183] This prompted Cuttitta to ask

> why is the human life of a migrant person only recognized as valuable *after* it has been devalued by restrictive border policies? Why do migrants deserve sympathy only when they die or risk their lives? Why are the dead – if only in words – granted Italian citizenship, while their surviving travel mates are investigated for illegal immigration?[184]

Questions such as these, likely simmering in the public imagination, ignited yet another creative response from Germany's hip-hop community to a senseless and avoidable catastrophe.

Aestheticizing Tragedy, Urging Action: TickTickBoom's "C'est quoi ton rôle"

TickTickBoom was a supercrew comprised of more than twenty singers, DJ*anes, producers, organizers, graphic designers, and rappers.[185] From studio releases and music videos ("BOOM,"[186] "SBKLTR,"[187] and "Zusammenhänge"/Contexts)[188] to concerts (Zeckenrap Gala),[189] pre-show panel discussions,[190] workshops that teach beatmaking, deejaying, emceeing, spraying, and event organization,[191] as well as research and publications that expose underground extreme rightwing rap groups across Germany

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[182] Paolo Cuttitta, "Humanitarianism and Migration in the Mediterranean Borderscape: The Italian—North African Border between Sea Patrols and Integration Measures," in *Borderscaping: Imaginations and Practices of Border Making*, edited by Chiara Brambilla, Jussi Laine, James W. Scott, and Gianluca Bocchi (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 131.

[183] Ibid.

[184] Ibid. Italics in the original.

[185] For general information about the group, see "Info," TickTickBoomCrew.de, accessed Nov 3, 2017, ticktickboomcrew.de/info/. The group formally dissolved on May 24, 2017. *See* "#TickTickBye," TickTickBoomCrew.de, accessed Nov 3, 2017, ticktickboomcrew.de.

[186] "BOOM," YouTube video, 4:04, posted by ticktick boom, Jan 1, 2014, accessed Nov 3, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=BRAPsK_llTQ.

[187] "SBKLTR," YouTube video, 4:58, posted by ticktick boom, Dec 8, 2013, accessed Nov 3, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=pGn8gkFrdG8.

[188] "SPUCK AUF RECHTS #12_Sookee feat. Spezial – K 'Zusammenhänge'," YouTube video, 6:04, posted by Gitta Spitta, May 17, 2013, accessed Nov 3, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=3fS7bw0DwHo.

[189] "Ticktickboom – Zeckenrapgala 2015," YouTube video, 2:53, posted by ticktick boom, May 11, 2015, accessed Nov 3, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=AfIrC5F-XYg.

[190] "TickTickBoom Podiumsdiskussion: 'Rappen für die Revolution?!'," YouTube video, 1:55:07, posted by ticktick boom, Feb 10, 2015, accessed Nov 3, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=g708daE8thE.

[191] "Zeckenrapgala 2015 Berlin – Workshops, Podium, Konzert," YouTube video, 5:00, posted by ticktick boom, Jun 17, 2015, accessed Nov 3, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=2QK6zi47N0w.

(*Deutschrap den Deutschen?*),[192] TickTickBoom epitomized interventionist work through cultural production. Working alongside Refugees Welcome[193] and Kein Mensch Ist Illegal,[194] two organizations that seek to prevent hate crime against foreigners and migrants, TickTickBoom's agenda solidifies around Germany's radical Left (*Linksradikal*), and their engagement with the aforementioned organizations becomes particularly cogent in lieu of the rise of grassroots nativist organizations like Pegida.

While a number of song's from TickTickBoom's full-length album *Herz|Schlag* (2014) are worthy of consideration from the point of view of bi- and multilingual rhyming, "C'est quoi ton rôle" is particularly interesting for how it addresses Germany's—and Europe's—so-called migration crisis. Two of the group's emcees, Refpolk and Ben Dana, drew inspiration from the tragedy off the coast of Lampedusa to pen a song that strives to garner sympathy for migrants and refugees while politically activating listeners. By exposing the failure of European leaders, EU bureaucrats, the public's complicity in silence, and the lack of political will to address the needs of asylum seekers, the song is a clarion call for political action and civic engagement. What strategies do the Refpolk and Dana, as well as the song's producers, rely on to generate empathy and outrage in listeners so that they, like the audiences in the Raul y Mexia song, might come to the aid of and begin working for the rights of migrants? Furthermore, how do these aesthetic decisions inform the new articulation of transaesthetics this study argues for?

Arranged by the Berlin-based producer LeijiONE and beat-maker, photographer, and artist Flox Schoch,[195] the sonic palette of "C'est quoi ton rôle" is shrill, chaotic, and dissonant. The first bar consists entirely of synthesized horn stabs (beats one and four) that evoke the blast of a ship's emergency alarm system. As the percussion track fades in, an eighth-note hi-hat pattern at the end of the first measure slowly crescendos to full volume by the end of the fourth bar; furthermore, the addition of a 16th-note hi-hat triplet at the end of beat two creates a shuffling, ambulatory feel that suggests people on deck frenetically walking to and fro. Similar to the handclaps in "Todos Somos Arizona," highly filtered snare hits on the backbeat (two and four) figure not only corporeal, but psychological—and, eventually, political—participation. Low frequency synthesized dubstep-style bass tones on beats one and four in the fifth and seventh bars mirror the horn stabs; however, additional horns that rise in incremental steps on beats two, three, and four in the fifth and seventh bars create a sense of panic, emphasizing urgency and tension. Moreover, the syncopation of the bass tones on beats 1 +3 +4+ in bars six and eight propels the rhythmic pulse forward in a lurching manner. While hip-hop beats (percussion and orchestration) are often arbitrary and interchangeable (with producers selling generic beats for any rapper to rhyme over), the atonal musical orchestration and off-kilter rhythmic arrangement in "C'est quoi ton rôle" establish a leitmotif that figures disaster at sea. In this way, tragedy becomes aestheticized, and the listener is pulled into an imaginary space of panic, fear, and death.

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[192] "Broschüre: 'Deutschrap den Deutschen?'," TickTickBoomCrew.de, accessed Nov 3, 2017, ticktickboomcrew.de/deutschrap-den-deutschen-deutscher-nationalismus-im-rap/.

[193] "Startseite," BerlinGegenRechts.de, accessed Nov 3, 2017, berlingegenrechts.de.

[194] "Home," Kein Mensch ist illegal – Köln, accessed Nov 3, 2017, kmii-koeln.de/.

[195] Production credits are listed under the song's official video. *See* "TickTickBoom–C'est Quoi Ton Rôle (with subtitles)," YouTube video, 3:09, posted by ticktick boom, Apr 3, 2014, accessed Oct 31, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=e-jIILbcoYo.

Listeners are thus aurally positioned to empathize with migrants and/or refugees by imagining themselves caught in the perils of transit across the Mediterranean.

The introductory eight bars establish the song's bilingual modus operandi. Between bars five and eight, Refpolk and Ben Dana trade a series of cleverly interlaced shout-outs in English and French:

> Refpolk: yeah!
> Ben Dana: solidarité
> R: oui, oui
> R: mes ami (I am!)
> BD: avec les sans-papiers
> R: solidarité
> BD: levez vous, levez vous (yeah, yo!!).[196]

Listeners must aurally navigate this bilingual soundscape. Oscillating between English and French, "yeah!," "solidarité" (solidarity), and "oui, oui" (yes, yes) work to foster unity. Because Refpolk begins in English, and because *solidarité* and solidarity are almost phonetically identical, "oui, oui" can be misheard as "we, we." The linguistic diffuseness of *oui, oui*/we, we results from the interaction of two languages and actually enhances the call for unity. Rather than a loss in aesthetic particularity that renders an utterance meaningless (one of the hallmarks of Baudrillard's original articulation of transaesthetics), this exchange, neither English nor French (but both), fuses the two into one. Much like the interplay of Spanish and English in "Todos Somos Arizona," which is indicative of borderland hip-hop rhetoric, Refpolk and Ben Dana forge a similar kind of political rhetoric from French and English. This linguistic diffuseness is the first evidence of transaesthetics in the song. However, because it is premised on both the particular and blended, their strategy emphasizes the need to move beyond the notion of a perceived loss in aesthetic difference.

When Refpolk delivers his French-English utterance "mes ami" (my friends) and "I am!" in tandem with Ben Dana's "avec les sans papiers" (those without papers), Refpolk suggests that he himself is a refugee. At the same time, however, their tandem address (and especially Refpolk's use of the first person singular) interpolates the listener as a refugee through two languages. Furthermore, this bilingual tandem performance, especially when it is heard as one complete utterance, merges two voices into one to symbolically suggest unification. After Refpolk makes another plea for solidarity in French, Dana commands each listener individually, through his use of the second person singular ("levez vous, levez vous"), to stand up. His French shout-out can be simultaneously read as a call to physically stand or, in a figurative sense, to stand up for the rights of migrants. Playing out over three measures and comprising just 14 seconds of recorded audio, these bilingual shout-outs attain an astonishing degree of brevity. Artistically, this is quite an achievement: before any of the song's overt political messaging begins, listeners have not only been goaded into identifying as asylum seekers, but to stand up and fight for their rights. Thus, the intro functions as a kind of overture for the entire song.

Once positioned, the song confronts listeners with a number of postulations delivered in German and French, the song's two primary performance languages. Where the beat aestheticizes tragedy, Refpolk's first four lines in verse one draw attention to catastrophe on the Mediterranean:

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[196] These introductory shout-outs do not appear in the transcript for the song. My thanks to Julie Dumonteil (a French native speaker) and Kasia Cichoń (a second language speaker of French) for helping compile this short transcript.

> Mittelmeer – Massengrab, aber Reaktion absehbar
> Gelder für die Grenzen abgemacht
> Unser Europa? Sorry, aber was ist das?
> Ohne Pass eine Burg ohne Platz[197]

> Mediterranean – mass grave, but reactions foreseeable
> Arranging money for borders
> Our Europe? Sorry, but what's that?
> No passport a fortress without space.

Refpolk begins by referring to the Mediterranean Sea as a mass grave (*Massengrab*) to call attention to victims who have died in transit. Alluding to politicians who quickly move to allocate funds to strengthen borders, Refpolk neither explicitly provides names of actual people, nor uses the word *Politiker* (politicians). This results in two intriguing effects. In the first instance, this deliberate lack opens a gap that the listener must imaginatively fill. Since national elected officials and EU bureaucrats in Brussels are the only people who can allocate money for tighter border controls, the astute listener would presume that these are the subjects to which Refpolk alludes. On the other hand, because these figures go unnamed, Refpolk projects the anonymity of dying in the Mediterranean onto them. Thus, if one of the goals of the song is to imaginatively cast listeners as refugees to garner empathy, Refpolk also implicates politicians as enablers of such tragedies through collective, anonymous guilt.

By calling out a rhetorical platitude used by Germany's Social Democratic Party (SPD) to invoke the notion of a unified European identity ("Unser Europa"/Our Europe),[198] Refpolk directly interrogates an empty political phrase ("Sorry, aber was ist das?"/Sorry, but what's that?) to ask in how far the European Union represents people when refugees are allowed to die. While *Sorry* is technically not a German word, it is sometimes used to communicate apology. Here, however, it is deployed ironically to express contempt. Drawing upon the concept of Festung Europa (Fortress Europe)—again, without explicitly stating it—Refpolk suggests that Europe is a fortress without space ("eine Burg ohne Platz"), and that anyone without a passport ("Ohne Pass"), i.e. non-EU citizens, is unwelcome. If some kind of unified, transcontinental European identity does exist, Refpolk critiques it so that a new solidarity—one that includes refugees—can be forged from a broader, more inclusive concept of dignity and human rights.

Ben Dana takes up the next four lines, rapping:

> pendant que le vent efface les traces, dans le sable du sahara
> reste gravée l'angoisse dans les faces des survivants à Gibraltar
> les images de chasse s'entassent, terrorisme d'Etat
> mediterranee – fosse commune, amuse-gueules pour nos richards

> while wind is covering the tracks in the sand of the Sahara
> fear remains engraved in the faces of the survivors of Gibraltar
> hunting scenes increase – state-run terrorism
> Mediterranean – mass grave, appetizers for our super rich.

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[197] The lyrics cited here are taken from the transcript embedded in the official video clip on TickTickBoom's YouTube channel. I consulted Julie Dumonteil, a native speaker of French (and faculty member at Université de la Reunion) to check for errors and eliminate any discrepancies. *See* "C'est Quoi Ton Rôle (with subtitles)."

[198] At the time of writing, the phrase "Unser Europa – solidarisch und stark" (Our Europe – unified and strong) serves as one of the headlines on the official website of Germany's Social Democratic Party. *See* "Programm," *SPD*, accessed Nov 2, 2017, spd.de/standpunkte/unser-europa-solidarisch-und-stark/.

Dana's opening line condemns the erasure of people—notably, Africans—who cross deserts while affirming that their motivation to migrate—*l'angoisse* (fear/anxiety)—remains permanently etched (*reste gravée*) in their faces (*les faces*). For survivors, this takes the form of some kind of post-traumatic stress disorder; for victims, an emotion engraved in their faces in the moment of death. When Dana raps "terrorisme d'Etat" (state-run terrorism), he does not mince words: the actions of the state—for instance, through NATO operations— are one cause of migration. Where Refpolk referred to the Mediterranean as a mass grave, Dana does the same, rapping "mediterranee – fosse commune" (Mediterranean – mass grave). The difference, however, is his claim that these images ("les images"/scenes) are like appetizers ("amuse-gueules") for the *über*-wealthy ("pour nos richards"/our super rich). The suggestion, then, is that war profiteers and ruling elites sit back and perversely enjoy these scenes as they unfold in the media. Given that France and Germany are two of the world's largest weapons manufacturers—number two and four, respectively (after the United States, Russia, and China)—Dana's lines amount to a ruthless critique of how the munitions industries in both countries profit from the global conflicts that fuel migration.[199] Thus, the decision to rap in German and French serves an agenda: expose the culpability of the two largest European exporters of weapons to reveal how official government policy not only fuels migration, but is responsible for refugee deaths.

In the next four lines, each emcee takes turns rapping in his respective language, constituting what Androutsopoulos identifies as participant-related code-switching.[200]

> Refugee-Proteste für Rechte, Hungerstreiks
> Politik? Groß reden, undenkbar unerreicht
> Et votre réaction? Politique de répression
> la dignité humaine insultée par constitution

> Refugee protests for rights, hunger strikes
> Politics? Talking big, unimaginably untouched
> And your reaction? Politics of repression
> Human dignity insulted by (the) constitution.

However, unlike Androutsopoulos's understanding of the term, where each rapper takes up the same theme in a different language, Refpolk and Dana address different issues. After recognizing mass public movements (protests and hunger strikes), Refpolk somewhat ambiguously addresses politics (*Politik*), not politicians (*Politiker*), and dismisses the kind of "big talk" ("Groß reden") that comes in the wake of boat tragedies. In that sense, he calls out elected officials *and* citizens who resort to platitudes and endless discussion, but ultimately do nothing. Dana, on the other hand, reorients the listener's attention (admittedly, listeners who understand French) to condemn official state responses ("Politique de répression"/politics of repression) such as policing measures to crack down on pro-refugee movements and/or laws to seal national borders.[201] Dana's admonishment reaches its apex when he juxtaposes "la dignité humaine" (human dignity)

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[199] Aude Fleurant, Pieter D. Wezeman, Siemon T. Wezeman, and Nan Tian, "Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2016," SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), Feb 20, 2017, accessed Nov 5, 2017, sipri.org/sites/default/files/Trends-in-international-arms-transfers-2016.pdf.
[200] Androutsopoulos, 30.
[201] As with the tighter immigration policies pushed by German officials in the wake of the Rostock Pogrom of 1992, Cuttitta notes that Italian officials aggressively amended their immigration laws in 2002 to include "stricter penalties for smugglers if the life or the physical safety of migrants is put at risk during the smuggling process, and if migrants

alongside "constitution" to critique the latent hypocrisy of national documents founded on notions of human rights that nevertheless insult ("insultée") people.[202] Rather than addressing the same issue in two different languages, these emcees work in tandem to issue a scathing critique of the system that can only be fully understood if their performance is read as one complete utterance. Reading it as one complete utterance constitutes more evidence of transaesthetics.

As the verse culminates and builds toward the chorus, Refpolk and Dana swap lines:

> Sag, bist du die Bilder schon gewohnt, nur, weil sich die Bilder wiederholen?
> Ou crois-tu vraiment que personne n'a vu couler les bateaux?
>
> Tell me, are you already accustomed to the pictures just because they're repeating?
> Or do you really believe no one saw the ships sinking?

In the first line, Refpolk addresses listeners who have grown desensitized to the ad nauseam flow of post-tragedy images circulating through the media. In the second, Dana confronts those who deny that such tragedies occur simply because news crews and video cameras do not capture them on film. As the verse concludes, the emcees trade a series of quick call-and-response phrases in French:

> *[Refpolk]* de Hambourg à Calais – *[Ben Dana]* solidarité
> From Hamburg to Calais – solidarity
> *[Refpolk]* amour et respect *[Ben Dana]* pour les sans-papiers
> Love and respect for the paperless.

Where the first line references—and, by doing so, enjoins—refugee encampments in Hamburg, Germany and Calais, France (and, in the process, opens a supranational space by dissolving national boundaries), the second line demands respect for refugees. While one might argue that the decision to rap exclusively in French excludes non-French-speaking listeners, Refpolk and Dana select the type of school-level French that any tourist is likely to know. Indeed, the word choice here is so basic that nearly any European listener, and certainly any French speaker (native or otherwise), will get the message. There is, however, something more significant at stake. While Dana adheres to his own mother tongue, Refpolk steps out of his own native language and raps in French to symbolically demonstrate solidarity. Intended or not, the decision is an aesthetic one with considerable political force. While the effect might be so subtle as to go unnoticed, it undoubtedly is a clever and somewhat subversive ploy to foster solidarity in the listener.

In the chorus, the emcees continue swapping lines to play with the concept of "role":

> Wenn du siehst, was passiert – c'est quoi ton rôle?
> C'est quoi ton rôle?
> Quand l'Union laisse périr – c'est quoi ton rôle?
> C'est quoi, c'est quoi, c'est quoi ton rôle?
> Du weißt, Krieg beginnt hier – c'est quoi ton rôle?
> C'est quoi ton rôle?
> L'Europe tue pour s'enrichir – c'est quoi ton rôle?
> C'est quoi, c'est quoi, c'est quoi ton rôle?

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are subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment." While these laws may give comfort to bureaucrats, such measures, especially in light of the boat tragedies in the 2010s, have had little impact on actual people. *See* Cuttitta, 133.

[202] Cuttitta discusses at length how official EU policy, for instance the Tempere Programme (1999) and the Hague Programme (2004), "implies respect for the basics of the European Union and fundamental human rights" that "requires basic skills for participation in society." Ibid., 134.

> When you see what's happening – what is your role?
> Which role is yours?
> If the Union lets people die – what is your role?
> Which role, which role, which role is yours?
> You know war starts here – what is your role?
> Which role is yours?
> Europe kills to enrich itself – what is your role?
> Which role, which role, which role is yours?

Although "C'est quoi ton rôle" literally translates as "What is your role," the forcefulness with which it is repeated—twelve times (if one counts the stutter "c'est quoi" in lines 4 and 8)—turns the phrase into an accusation.[203] Although neither emcee explicitly says so, the possible 'roles' one might play are either silence (ignorance, willful avoidance, or apathy) or complicity (conscious or otherwise). When Refpolk raps "Wenn du siehst, was passiert" (When you see what's happening), he implores audience members to consider their own roles, in effect asking if they are among the dying, those who let others perish, or just passive observers. Similarly, Dana exhorts listeners to consider their role if the EU lets people die ("Quand l'Union laisse périr"). Because of the previous allusions to the war industries, Refpolk's assertion "Du weißt, Krieg beginnt hier" (You know war starts here) suggests, on the one hand, that EU support of military adventures (via NATO, albeit unmentioned) leads to these tragedies; on the other, the suggestion is that citizens in receiving countries must initiate the fight against policies—both military and civic—that result in increased immigration and the resulting boat tragedies.

In the second verse, Ben Dana juxtaposes capitalism to colonialism to link big business practices today to the rapacious blunder of the past:

> On a partagé le monde et nos frontiéres font bonne affaire
> oui, le prix est sanglant et l'abondance sans frontières
> le continent des émigrants oublie l'histoire coloniale
> l'occident en uniforme jusqu'où personne n'est legal
>
>
> We divided the world and our borders grant big business
> yes, the price is bloody and abundance unlimited
> the continent of emigrants forgets its colonial history
> the west in uniform until in the end no one is legal anymore.

Known in the Franco and Anglo-speaking worlds from the non-governmental organizations Médicins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) and Reporters Sans Frontières (Reporters Without Borders), Dana riffs on the concept of borders ("frontiéres") to surprising effect. On the one hand, he exposes how governments establish borders to benefit business; on the other, he acerbically exploits "sans frontiéres" (literally: without borders) to suggest that the right to business revenues ("l'abondance"/abundance) shall not be infringed. Furthermore, Dana flips the script by identifying Europe as a continent of emigrants ("le continent des émigrants") that forgets its colonial past ("oublie l'histoire coloniale") whenever convenient.

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[203] While *c'est quoi ton rôle* literally translates to "What is your role," the transcript at TickTickBoom's official YouTube channel translates the phrase as "Which role do you play?" After deliberating with Julie Dumonteil (Université de la Reunion) and Céline Murillo (a native speaker and faculty member at Université Sorbonne 13 Paris Cité), I've decided to translate the phrase as both "What is your role" and "Which role is yours."

The next four lines, rapped by Refpolk, expose the racial ideology of the Enlightenment used to justify colonial dispossession and domination.

> oui, oui ich komme aus dem Land, wo Kant schrieb wie
> Weiße überlegen sind, vergebe das nie
> kein Erbarmen in der Schlacht, wenn wir kommen
> auf der Jagd nach dem "Platz an der Sonne"

> yes, yes I come from the land where Kant wrote how
> whites were superior, I'll never forgive that
> no mercy in the battle when we come
> hunting for that "place in the sun."

Jointly proclaiming "oui, oui," Refpolk and Dana again riff in French, as in the opening bars, to collectively signal strength through solidarity, but also to psychologically assert the legitimacy of the lines that follow. Rhyming between French and German ("oui, oui"/yes, yes; "wie"/how; and "nie"/never), Refpolk reminds listeners that German philosopher Immanuel Kant argued not only for the concept of race, but for the existence of a separate white race inherently superior to all others ("Weiße überlegen sind").[204] Like Dana before him, Refpolk links Germany's colonial past to the present when he sarcastically raps "Platz an der Sonne" (place in the sun), a reference to the phrase German Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow coined in an address before the German Reichstag in 1897, which ideologically justified the global expansion of German power in the late 19th and early 20th century.[205] Where Dana accuses modern-day Europeans of forgetting their colonial history, Refpolk revives Germany's distant and recent past to denounce both ("vergebe das nie"/I'll never forgive that). Given how echoes of the phrase *Platz an der Sonne* reappear in German culture today,[206] Refpolk's denunciation is no small gesture. In essence, he performs the "role" he expects of the audience. Where Cuttitta has pointed out that EU integration policies, even those based on so-called humanitarian principles, perceive of "immigrants as subjects in need of being lifted from a condition of backwardness and oppression,"[207] Refpolk's remarks take on much more than mere historical significance. By adding "oui, oui" to the opening line, he and Dana draw together France and Germany's colonial and neocolonial histories of exploitation and domination.

As the verse proceeds, more denunciations of war industries and craven, capitalist behavior follow, with Dana and Refpolk swapping lines, rapping

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[204] Kant's essay "Von den verschiedenen Rassen der Menschen" (1775), where he delineates people according to racial categories, is available in English. *See* Immanuel Kant, "On the Different Races of Man," in *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, edited by Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 38-48.

[205] The full phrase is "Mit einem Wort: wir wollen niemand in den Schatten stellen, aber wir verlangen auch unseren Platz an der Sonne" (In a word, we do not want to overshadow anyone, but we also demand our place in the sun). Yixu Lü argues that von Bülow's address from 1897 justified expansion beyond Germany's relatively small colonial footprint in Jiaozhou Bay, China (Kiautschou) to more global aspirations, including Africa and the Caribbean. *See* Yixu Lü, "Tsingtau," in *Kein Platz an der Sonne: Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte*, edited by Jürgen Zimmerer and Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst (Frankfurt: Campus, 2013), 217.

[206] Sebastian Conrad, a Professor of Modern History at FU Berlin's Friedrich Meinecke Institute, discusses the extent to which variations of the *Platz an der Sonne* metaphor persist in German culture today, including an exhibition of African villages at the Augsburger Zoo in 2005 to "convey the atmosphere of the exotic" (*die Atmosphäre von Exotik zu vermitteln*). *See* Sebastian Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2016), 120.

[207] Cuttitta, 132.

oui, oui quelle ironie de s'enrichrir
en refusant à ceux qui restent le peu qui reste pour survivre
von der Flut der Kolonialherren und Siedlungsgebiete
bis zum Fluch der Wirtschaftshilfe und Kriegsindustrie
Expulsions! Réaction? C'est quoi mon rôle à présent?
deutscher Passport – so sieht es aus der présent
[Ben Dana] no border, no nation – *[Refpolk]* die Grenzen bekämpfen
[Refpolk] fängt an mit der Unterstützung von – *[Ben Dana]* von Menschen

yes, yes what irony to enrich oneself
by depriving those who are left behind what little is left to survive
from the flood of colonial masters and settlements
to the curse of economic aid and the war industry
Deportations! Reaction? What's my role today?
German passport – so it seems at the moment
no border, no nation – fighting borders
begins with the support of – of people.

As in the previous lines, Refpolk and Dana jointly declare "oui, oui" (yes, yes) to assert the legitimacy of what follows. Rapping "Expulsions! Réaction? C'est quoi mon rôle à présent?" (Deportations! Reaction? What's my role today?), Dana again performs the type of reflection expected of the audience. Refpolk responds with "deutscher Passport – so sieht es aus der *présent*" (German passport – so it seems today). His code-switch into French in the second half of the line ("aus der *présent*") serves two purposes: first, Refpolk rhymes with Dana's previous utterance by simply repeating the same word. However, he again crosses over to Dana's native tongue to symbolically perform solidarity. Brief and fleeting, that solidarity is seemingly broken when Dana interjects "no border, no nation," the rallying cry of the European pro-immigration Left. Given how the slogan unifies the Left across Europe, Dana's shout-out is an overt attempt to sustain the transnational movements united in the fight for the rights of migrants. With references throughout the song to Hamburg, Calais, Lampedusa, Africa, the Sahara, and Europe, the song decisively figures a transnational and pan-regional space within Europe that is equal, and perhaps even morally superior, to the European Union itself. By completing Refpolk's line with "von Menschen" (of people), Dana, like Refpolk before him, steps out of his native French tongue to symbolically demonstrate his unity by issuing an utterance in German. In effect, Dana's use of three languages—French, English, and German—demonstrates the transnational solidarity the song argues for. The entire passage suggests that a transcultural vernacular comprising all three languages emerges from the transnational fight for the rights of migrants. This is yet more evidence of the song's transaesthetic dimensions—not because of aesthetic blurring or breakdown, but because it weaves three languages into a powerful, and potentially empowering, cross-lingual utterance.

In the final iteration of the chorus, a subtle twist on *ton* (your) and *mon* (my)—"c'est quoi ton rôle/c'est quoi mon rôle?" (which role do you play/which role do I play?)—initiates a double-consciousness in the listener to force deeper reflection. As performers, Refpolk and Dana address not only the audience, but themselves, and listeners are invited to do the same. Sonic elements in the final thirty seconds affirm this reading. A recurring, synthesized sound effect evokes the bell of a buoy (or possibly a blip on a sonar screen), and DJ Spion Y's heavy scratch track dominates the mix to suggest that the lives lost in the Mediterranean cannot be erased or 'scratched' out. Indeed, by cutting back and forth on hip-hop's global affirmation of truth (the exclamation "word!"), Spion Y punctuates that message. Thus, listeners are left to

ask each other, and themselves, about their roles in a debilitating transnational/pan-European tragedy that claims non-Europeans as victims. From orchestration and beat arrangement to the use of German and French as primary performance languages (but also well-placed English shout-outs), the aesthetic decisions of language and sound in "C'est quoi ton rôle" potently create awareness across a number of national and cultural spaces. Not only is it a fine example of the power of bi- and multilingual rap to potentially initiate change, it evidences, at key critical moments, how linguistic diffuseness actually enhances calls for solidarity and political engagement. The song demonstrates the power of transaesthetics to open up a diffuse linguistic space across three languages that potentially surpasses the power of one. While these multilingual aesthetic choices seem to have the potential to draw people together to actively fight for the rights of migrants and asylum seekers to flee conflict zones and relocate, they are also indicative of the new transaesthetics this study argues for.

Conclusions

The role of migrants and immigrant narratives play divergent roles in hip-hop culture in the United States and Germany. Where the contributions of immigrants in the U.S. were long downplayed, partly in service to the narrative of Black cultural politics, in Germany the opposite is the case. Immigrants—or, more accurately, Germans with migration backgrounds—were by and large responsible for translating hip-hop to the German context, up to and including the appropriation of narratives of ethnic and racial difference. However, the circumstances in both countries reveal the extent to which the cultural politics of difference, to borrow a phrase from Cornel West, has real utility. The use of such politics, Pennycook cautions, runs the risk of reinforcing the systems of control and domination that have been part and parcel of the European colonial project in the Americas and, one might argue, through the rise of advanced transnational capitalism. Yet with these two rich and by now well entrenched narratives in place in both countries, one wonders if they can be questioned. Yet as I argued in the previous chapter, there is evidence to suggest that the practice of hip-hop came to Germany before the early 1990s, but also that some of these early experiments did flow back westward.

Migration and the concerns of migrants are contemporaneous hot-button issues in Germany and the United States. As Lorenz has shown in the American context, collaborations between high profile African American and Latina/o musicians have yielded material that demands people stand up for the rights of the undocumented. Furthermore, recording artists from across the spectrum of popular music have similarly taken a stand, for example, by participating in mass organized boycotts to resist the racial profiling practices instituted by Arizona's controversial S.B. 1070 bill. One of the groups to emerge from this effort, the San Jose, California-based brother duo Raul y Mexia, recorded "Todos Somos Arizona" to contest the legality of Arizona's legislation. Similar to the collaborations Lorenz highlights, Raul y Mexia's song is orchestrated to initiate empathy in listeners so that they might begin actively working to secure the rights of the undocumented. To that end, Mexia's deft code-switching between English and Spanish, which Tinajero describes as borderland hip-hop rhetoric, allows Mexia to speak to three audiences at once. Rhyming back and forth between the two, Mexia beseeches (especially white) listeners to help migrants and their families;

however, in the same breath, he dismisses and even castigates them. Operating between two languages and drawing on the power of African American Vernacular English, Mexia's microphone skills evidence the power of hip-hop rhetoric. Because his utterances occur in both English and Spanish, one might characterize this interplay between two languages as transaesthetic: neither one or the other, and quite possibly both and more. While monolinguals are bound to have a hard time untangling Mexia's raps, bilingual English-Spanish speakers are well positioned to appreciate not only his performance, but his bilingual address. Indeed, those are the people who would most likely undergo the type of transcultural aesthetic experience I argue such a song stands to initiate. In short, Mexia's bilingual performance suggests, especially at particular moments, the existence of transcultural aesthetics.

Immigrants have long played an outsized role in Germany's various hip-hop scenes. Following attacks on migrant housing in the early 1990s, the hip-hop community began using music as an intervention strategy. By drawing on their native languages and, in some cases, the musical aesthetics of their ethnocultural heritages, hip-hoppers, for a time, helped Germany come to grips with the reality of its multiethnic and multiracial make-up, especially in the aftermath of the Fall of the Berlin Wall. This aspect of Germany's hip-hop heritage continues to serve as a model, with artists today utilizing music to intervene on a range of sociopolitical issues. In particular, the Berlin/Hamburg-based supercrew known as TickTickBoom offered "C'est quoi ton rôle" as a response to the sinking of migrant boats in the Mediterranean enroute from Africa and the Middle East to Europe. Utilizing French and German raps, and enhanced by cleverly placed English language shout-outs (all of which are issued overtop the sonic aestheticization of tragedy), rappers Refpolk and Ben Dana levy a scathing critique of the status quo which questions EU bureaucrats, politicians, and average citizens. By imploring these groups to reflect on the roles they play, be it passive or active, in the events that lead to such tragedies, Refpolk and Dana attempt to initiate contemplation in audiences which, in turn, stands to activate listeners to fight for the rights of migrants. Whether or not their effort is successful is another question that would require further research; however, the lyrics to the song, and the ways in which the two emcees trade lines back and forth in two and sometimes three languages, demonstrates the power of hip-hop rhetoric to engage listeners by triggering a transcultural aesthetic experience that could potentially pull them into the cause for social justice. Like Raul y Mexia, Refpolk and Ben Dana's performance suggests that transaesthetics unfolds, and even emerges, from the use of two or more languages. While more artists and close analysis of their work in the coming chapters will further support this argument, one wonders what type of transatlantic and transnational political movement for refugees and migrants could be developed by linking such artist/activists together. For culture workers, musicians, hip-hoppers, and social justice activists, it is one very much worth considering.

Chapter 5

Hip-Hop's Queer/Trans *Feminismus*: Sookee and Mykki Blanco

Women have had to fight to gain recognition in hip-hop. As Women's Studies scholar Gwendolyn Pough notes, "[w]omen's contribution to [the] culture has been lost, or rather erased," adding "[t]o hear some self-proclaimed Hip-Hop historians tell it, there were no significant women in Hip-Hop's history."[1] Citing Nelson George, Pough shows how he claims that "there are no women who have contributed profoundly to rap's artistic growth."[2] While George lists a number of "women rappers who have released albums, from the early group Sequence to Foxy Brown, Missy Elliot, and Lil' Kim," he concludes that "if none of these female artists had ever made a record, hip hop's development would have been no different."[3] Similarly, Reiland Rabaka calls out George for stating that hip-hop "has produced no Bessie Smith, no Billie Holiday, no Aretha Franklin."[4] But as Christopher Farley pointed out in *Time Magazine* in 1998:

> Ask almost any rapper or alternative rocker if Elvis is the King of Rock, and all you'll get is a sneer. Michael Jackson likes to call himself the King of Pop, but we all know the true king of pop is whoever has the No. 1 album in a given week. All told, there's only one monarch in music whose title has never rung false and still holds up--and that's Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul.[5]

While Farley later notes Franklin's undeniable influence on female pop vocalists, if one listens to her vocal performance in the smash hit "Respect" (1967), it becomes clear how her attitude, intonation, and brash, assertive confidence influenced some of the most well-respected male emcees in hip-hop from Kurtis Blow and Run-DMC to Chuck D and beyond. Considering the outsized role the notion of *respect* plays in hip-hop culture, perhaps Aretha Franklin will one day claim the title Godmother of Rap or some other designation. After all, Aretha Franklin did offer to post bail for Angela Davis.[6]

Calling hip-hop "a uniquely testosterone-filled space," Pough nevertheless insists that "women have always been a part of Hip-Hop culture and a significant part of rap music."[7] She is correct: Cindy Campbell, the sister of DJ Kool Herc, was the impetus behind the first hip-hop jams in The Bronx. In addition to seminal albums by MC Lyte (*Lyte As A Rock*, 1988), Queen Latifah (*All Hail the Queen*, 1989), and Ms. Melodie (*Diva*, 1989), women such as Lady Pink (an early graffiti writer who starred in *Wild Style*), Debbie

[1] Gwendolyn Pough, *Check It While I Wreck It: Black Womanhood, Hip-Hop Culture, and the Public Sphere* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004), 8.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid. 8-9.
[4] Reiland Rabaka, *Hip Hop's Inheritance: From the Harlem Renaissance to the Hip Hop Feminist Movement* (New York: Lexington Books, 2011), 175.
[5] Christopher John Farley, "The Soul Musician Aretha Franklin: The Queen of Soul reigns supreme with a heavenly voice and terrestrial passion," *Time*, June 8, 1998, accessed Aug 20, 2018, content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,988505,00.html.
[6] "Angela Davis: Aretha Franklin Offered to Post Bail for Me, Saying 'Black People Will Be Free'," *Democracy Now!*, Aug 17, 2018, accessed Aug 20, 2018, democracynow.org/2018/8/17/angela_davis_remembers_aretha_franklin_who.
[7] Pough, 9.

Harry (the lead singer of Blondie), Roxanne Shante (the female emcee who launched the Roxanne Wars), and Sheila E. (the drummer for The Revolution who lent her star power to the film *Krush Groove*) were all prominent early on. Nevertheless, significant scholarly effort and the non-academic work of hip-hop feminists such as Lisa Jones, Veronica Chambers, and Joan Morgan[8] have been required to give women their due.

The situation is similar in Germany. Although Sascha Verlan and Hannes Loh devote considerable space in *35 Jahre HipHop in Deutschland* (2015) to Cora E., Germany's first female emcee, scant attention is paid to women rappers from the 1990s, including Tic Tac Toe, a pop rap girlband from Germany's Ruhr region;[9] Sebrina Setlur (Schwester S), who came up with Frankfurt's Rödelheim Hartreim Projekt, but later released numerous solo albums, EPs, and singles;[10] Aziza A,[11] the first Turkish-German female emcee who has released three albums (and a fourth in 2018);[12] and Nazz, an indie rapper from the city of Siegen.[13] Despite four albums and numerous EPs and singles, the Rostock-born emcee Pyranja is mentioned only once,[14] and Fiva (from Munich), like Aziza A, is quoted on her experience as an improvisational emcee, but there is no mention of her releases.[15] Finally, and most tellingly, the successful female producer Melbeatz, the so-called "queen of beats" who has produced for Kool Savas, one of Germany's most successful gangster rappers, is not mentioned at all.[16] Verlan and Loh's book, which has been updated and re-issued three times, is one of the best references on rap in the German-speaking world, but these oversights affirm the notion that hip-hop in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland is by and large a boy's club. This is somewhat perplexing since a double vinyl LP titled *Ladies First - A Collection Of Female Hip Hop* (Decka8, 2002) showcased these and other artists at the turn of the millennium.[17] Unofficial efforts, notably by Lisa Katharina Gabriel, a Berlin-based social worker who goes by the moniker L, have stepped up to fill the gap. While Gabriel's blog *noboysbutrap* has been archiving links and stories about women hip-hoppers since 2004

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[8] Patricia Hill Collins, *From Black Power to Hip Hop: Racism, Nationalism, and Feminism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 161-162.

[9] Tic Tac Toe receives two mentions, neither of which is favorable. *See* Sascha Verlan and Hannes Loh, *35 Jahre HipHop in Deutschland* (Höfen, Austria: Koch/Hannibal: 2015), 379 and 475. For a more detailed look at their work, *see* Mark Pennay, "Rap in Germany: The Birth of a Genre," in *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA*, edited by Tony Mitchell (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 123-125.

[10] Ibid., 560 and 588. Between 1995 and 2007, Setlur released five studio albums. *See* "Sabrina Setlur," *Discogs*, accessed Feb 6, 2018, discogs.com/artist/62804-Sabrina-Setlur.

[11] Ibid, 34. Aziza A is quoted in the book, but her full-length releases *Es ist Zeit* (1999), *Kendi Dünyam* (2001), and *Kulak Misafiri* (2009) are mentioned nowhere. For in-depth discussion of her work, *see* Caroline Diessel, "Bridging East and West on the 'Orient Express': Oriental Hip-Hop in the Turkish Diaspora of Berlin," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 13 (2001): 177-182.

[12] "Aziza A," *Discogs*, accessed Feb 6, 2018, discogs.com/artist/180438-Aziza-A.

[13] To be fair, Nazz has only released two albums, but she has appeared on a numerous singles. *See* "Nazz," *Indiepedia*, accessed Feb 6, 2018, indiepedia.de/index.php/Nazz#Diskographie.

[14] "Pyranja," *Discogs*, Feb 6, 2018, discogs.com/artist/380154-Pyranja.

[15] Verlan and Loh, 110. Since 2009, Fiva has released four albums. *See* "Fiva MC," *Discogs*, accessed Feb 6, 2018, discogs.com/artist/364491-Fiva-MC.

[16] On the other hand, Kool Savas is covered extensively. Melbeatz has produced for other rappers in Germany, and her debut album *Rapper's Delight* (Optik, 2004) featured guest appearances by many high-profile American rappers. There is a three-part interview with Melbeatz (aka Melanie Wilhelm) about her career on YouTube. *See* "Queen of Beats: Melbeatz im Interview Part 1 (Hiphop.de Interview)," YouTube video, 10:37, posted by HipHop.de, June 15, 2011, accessed Feb 2, 2018, youtube.com/watch?v=JCe8NmSfqqc.

[17] "Various – Ladies First – A Collection of Female Hip Hop," *Discogs*, accessed Feb 6, 2018, discogs.com/Various-Ladies-First-A-Collection-Of-Female-Hip-Hop/release/1317689.

both in and outside of the German-speaking world,[18] some YouTube users have complied video playlists to shine light on female emcees.[19] Nonetheless, if a young woman picked up Verlan and Loh's book, she might get the impression that women played little to no role in hip-hop's development in Germany, which simply has not been the case.

Like women, members of the LGBT community have had a hard time finding their place in hip-hop, a highly masculine art form where homophobic epithets are the ultimate dis.[20] "While some rappers claim to be the new voice for the marginalized Black youth they claim to represent," as Pough explains, "they oppress and marginalize women and homosexuals."[21] More specifically, Pough observes how

> rap lyrics that make constant references to "bitches" and "hos," "punks" and "faggots," work to create hostile environments for some women and homosexual participants in Hip-Hop culture. This hostility is evident not only in the lyrics, but also in the attitudes that some rappers exhibit towards women and homosexuals, marginalizing and oppressing anyone who is not Black, straight, male, and dripping with testosterone.[22]

Indeed, search results for "faggot" and "ho" at *Genius*, one of the largest lyric repositories on the Internet, are disconcerting. To these one might add "queer," "gay," "homo," "queen," "butch," "dyke," "femme," or "tranny," all insults that gain their derogatory power by characterizing as the lowest of the low anyone who dares exist outside the heteronormative framework that orders society. In conjunction with femininity, particularly when both are projected onto men to characterize them as weak, hip-hop has had a problem with women, lesbians, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people.

Homo/transphobic sentiments are very much a part of the American, German, and African American experience. Regarding the latter, Patricia Hill Collins has noted that "Black cultural nationalism's idealized gender ideology of men as warriors and women as nurturers" was one of the defining features of the Black power movement of the 1960s and 70s.[23] With hip-hop's derogatory homo/transphobic and anti-women language extending from these values, soul and jazz poet Gil Scott-Heron, often cited as one of the most important precursors to the modern emcee, had a track titled "The Subject Was Faggots" on his influential album *Small Talk at 125th and Lenox* (1970).[24] Where Collins discusses calls by leading Afrocentric thinkers such as Molefi Kete Asante to include the contributions of women to the history of Black culture and Black liberation, she admonishes such calls as empty, especially when the people making them do not undertake such intellectual work themselves.[25] The lack of focus on gender and sexuality in African

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[18] Subtitled "tracking herstory of rap since 2004," *nobouysbutrap* has a page explicitly devoted to female artists. *See* "Artists," *noboysbutap*, accessed Feb 2, 2018, noboysbutrap.org/blog/artists/.

[19] Dimitris Pardalas created a YouTube channel devoted to female emcees in Germany. *See* "German Female Rap," YouTube, Aug 17, 2012, accessed Feb 7, 2018, youtube.com/playlist?list=PL81067854CA051FD6.

[20] Tim Stüttgen, "Homo(phob) HipHop: Zur Homophobiefrage im HipHop und den Beats & Rhymes queerer Frauen," in *Female HipHop: Realness, Roots and Rap Models*, edited by Anjela Schischmanjan and Michaela Wünsch (Mainz, Germany: Ventil Verlag, 2007), 134.

[21] Pough, 19.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Collins, 115.

[24] As the lyric sheet makes clear, the song drips with homophobic sentiments. *See* Gil Scott-Heron, "The Subject Was Faggots," *Genius Media*, 2014, transcribed by KanYeezyYouDidItAAgain, accessed Jan 12, 2018, genius.com/Gil-scott-heron-the-subject-was-faggots-annotated.

[25] Collins, 116-117.

American Studies, Collins concludes, results in "Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people not [being] authentically Black."[26] In short, if one is a person of color, male, female, gay, lesbian, and/or transgendered, then the opportunity to gain visibility, garner respect, and achieve success for being true to oneself in hip-hop, let alone to practice the hip-hop arts without fear of gendered or sexualized violence (either physical or psychological), is severely diminished.

Writing about the difficulty homosexual and transgendered Black men have in expressing their non-normative sexualities, Matt Richardson has argued how homo/transphobia results from the need to keep same-sex relationships secret.[27] To underscore his point, Richardson references an article titled "Homo Thugz Blow Up The Spot" from the *Village Voice*, where author Guy Trebay writes:

> Doesn't everybody know that hip-hop hates faggots? The lyrics, at least, have never been ambiguous on queer status in the hip-hop nation. "Rrrrr arf arf what the deal," rhymed DMX in "Get at Me Dog." "Well in the back wit ya faggot ass face down. Lucky that you breathin' but you dead from the waist down." DMX has hardly been a lone voice speaking rhymes that, when they don't offhandedly insult homosexuals, often "openly advocate violence against gay people," as the compilers of Web site Da.Dis.List. make plain. Hip-hop has long had a field day with the specter of the faggot, from Mase's reflexive posturing on *Harlem World* ("I'll be lacin' em, hollow tips, I be wastin' em. That's what you faggots get, tryin' to fuck with Mase and 'em") to Snoop Doggy Dogg's Iron John whimper on *Love's Gonna Getcha* ("I can't believe that dog would dis me. That faggot, that punk, piss on that sissy") to the Notorious B.I.G.'s limp but bilious rhymes from the grave. In the hip-hop hierarchy, the faggot is the un-man: passive, disempowered, he's down in the gutter with the bitches and 'hos. By faggot is meant, of course, the girlie man—who vogues in his spare time, worships the anthemic divas, and takes it up the keister when he isn't giving head in a local park.[28]

In the same article, club-goer Craig Henderson asserts that "'Straight-up homies, niggaz, and thugz can do what they want. You can walk through projects and be gay. But you can't walk through the project and be a faggot, because that's when they'll mock and harass.'"[29] The assertion then, is that it is acceptable to be homosexual or transgendered as long as one is in accord with hard masculinity. Charles Jackson, an open homosexual and organizer of hip-hop events in New York at the time, affirms those sentiments: "If you dress thug style, nobody's gonna bother you, because thugness and realness is an ultimate man."[30] Softness and sensitivity, especially among male rappers, remain the purview of superstars only after they have demonstrated their toughness.[31] Nevertheless, a paradigm shift is afoot, with some artists publically denouncing hip-hop's penchant for homo/transphobia, some of whom have gone so far as to disown and

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[26] Ibid., 117.
[27] Matt Richardson, "Good and Messy: Lesbian and Transgender Identities," *Feminist Studies* 39, 2, Special issue "Categorizing Sexualities" (2013): 374.
[28] Guy Trebay, "Homo Thugz Blow Up the Spot," *Village Voice*, Feb 1, 2000, accessed Jan 12, 2018, villagevoice.com/2000/02/01/homo-thugz-blow-up-the-spot/.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] The best early example here is LL Cool J's ballad "I Need Love" from his second album *Bigger and Deffer* (1987). Not only did the song climb the charts and win awards, it allowed Cool J to recast his image as a street-hardened rapper into a softer, more introspective maturing young man. The point is not to denigrate Cool J's decision to do so, but simply to note that ruthless, hard masculinity must precede softer, more empathetic masculinity—and never the reverse. More recently, American rap icon Kendrick Lamar released the song "Love" (*DAMN.*, 2017), which allows the emcee to explore his more tender side.

distance themselves from their own homo/transphobic statements.[32] For instance, the world renowned and best-selling rapper Eminem came out as bisexual in 2014, despite having issued numerous songs that take pot shots at homosexuals and transgendered people. It is long past time for hip-hop to come to terms with its latent, but hardly hidden, homo/transphobias.

In this chapter, I take up queer/trans feminism. Working chronologically, I begin by summarizing the work of Chris Weedon, who has shown how a musicology that foregrounds feminist politics has emerged since the 1960s. Congruent with the embrace of music as an intervention strategy, I detail, following transgender studies scholar Susan Stryker, the rise of the transgender movement in North America, which problematized feminism, and thereby created a productive tension. With sociologist Andreana Clay's work in mind, which calls for more LGBT representation in the media for young people of color, I discuss the rise of LGBT rap, or homo hop, in the United States, beginning with the work of Matt Miller, who has shown how so-called "sissy rap" emerged from the bounce music scene in New Orleans at the turn of the millennium. Afterward, I briefly consider the documentaries *Hip Hop Homos* (2004), *Pick Up the Mic* (2006), and the TV series *Built From Skratch* to show how LGBT rap developed concurrently in the Midwest and on the West coast. Much like the classic hip-hop films *Wild Style*, *Style Wars*, and *Breakin'*, these films provided crucial visibility for early LGBT artists—exposure that not only helped grow LGBT rap scenes in the United States, but in Europe.[33]

I then turn to the work of the Berlin-based feminist rapper/activist Sookee, much of whose output is devoted to confronting patriarchal systems of privilege as well as elevating women and creating space for queer/trans folk in hip-hop. Active since 2003, Sookee is one of the most outspoken political rappers of her generation, and quite possibly in all of Germany. To begin, I consider Sookee's assessment of the German rap scene in an essay titled "Sookee ist Quing: Rap aktuell und mehrheitlich" (2007).[34] I then focus on her 2010 album *Quing*, the title for which is a portmanteau fashioned from "queen" and "king" modeled after the gender neutral pronouns s/he, ze, and hir promoted by transgender activist Leslie Feinberg.[35] As the self-proclaimed Quing of Berlin, Sookee deploys the term to convey an all-inclusive non-binary gender construction for the transnational feminist movement, but also to carve out space in hip-hop for genderqueer people. Echoing Collins' call to interrogate traditional gender and sex roles, how does *quing* encapsulate, on the one hand, the type of gender work so desperately needed in rap, and, on the other, a political concept with enormous liberatory potential?

I then offer close readings of Sookee's work to demonstrate its potential to free listeners from sexist and gendered assumptions that not only underpin hip-hop, but society in general. After showing how

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[32] Megan Boyanton, "From A$AP to Jay Z: 15 hip-hop stars who think homophobes are mothaf*ckas," *Pink News*, Aug 11, 2015, accessed Jan 15, 2018, pinknews.co.uk/2015/08/11/from-aap-to-jay-z-these-hip-hop-stars-think-homophobes-are-mothafckas/.

[33] Stüttgen, 137-139. Without giving examples, Stüttgen theorizes the impact *Pick Up the Mic* had in England and Europe. In an email to me dated Feb 9, 2018, Sookee, the Berlin-based artist I study in this chapter, claims never to have seen *Pick Up the Mic*. Instead, she found more inspiration in drag culture, Ru Paul and other performance artists, and the film *Paris Is Burning* (1991), which showcased New York City ball culture.

[34] The title of the essay translates as "Sookee is Quing: Rap today and by the majority."

[35] Leslie Feinberg, "Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Times Has Come," in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, edited by Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (New York: Routledge, 2006), 205.

"Quing" posits Sookee's political project, I examine the rhetorical strategies she uses in "Pro Homo" (2010) to upend homophobia. Where Joshua Brown has shown how the term "no homo" arose in hip-hop in the 1990s as a way to deflect allegations of being either homosexual or supporting the homosexual lifestyle, how does Sookee subvert the stilted logic of hypersexualized gender roles to open up space for genderqueer people in hip-hop? I then consider "Purpleize Hip Hop" from *Bitches Butches Dykes & Divas* (2011), where Sookee makes her mission more explicit. What strategies does the artist rely on to convince audiences, on the one hand, to accept genderqueer people and, on the other, to work actively to achieve gender equality? Finally, I briefly consider "Frauen mit Sternchen" (Women with Asterisks/Women*) from *Lila Samt* (*Purple Velvet*) (2014), a song that contains a dazzling array of appellatives from the spectrum of feminine gender identification. Following Stryker, Currah, and Moore's concept of *transing*, i.e. "a practice that takes place within, as well as across or between, gendered spaces,"[36] how does Sookee, by celebrating the diversity of female sexuality, invite listeners to *trans*imagine*?

For the remainder of the chapter I focus on the work of Mykki Blanco. A native of Durham, North Carolina, Blanco, who was born Michael David Quattlebaum, Jr.,[37] is arguably one of the most provocative transgendered artists in hip-hop today. After characterizing Blanco's rise as a performance artist, I show how Blanco, in "Wavvy," a song from the independent release *Cosmic Angel: The Illuminati Prince/ss* (Uno, 2012), confronts and disarms the homophobic sentiments expressed in Gil Scott-Heron's "The Subject Was Faggots." After first showing how Scott-Heron denigrated homosexuals, I examine the strategies Blanco deploys to disempower rap's latent homophobia. Without being overtly activist, how do these strategies, both in the lyrics, but also in the song's music video, insist upon queer/trans spaces in hip-hop? Moreover, what *mise en scène* strategies do the filmmakers deploy to convince audiences that the cross-dressing practices of transvestitism and drag culture are not altogether alien to hip-hop?

I then turn to material from Blanco's first full-length album *Mykki* (!K7 Records, 2016). Even though the majority of Blanco's work is monolingual, the use of a variety of languages imparts a multilingual vibe that otherwise queers English-language raps.[38] To demonstrate how this occurs, but also to show its significance from the point of view of transculturality, I offer close readings of three songs: "I'm in a Mood," "Fendi Band," and "My Nene," the latter of which is the most linguistically robust song on the album. Where Blanco un-genders "nene,"[39] a Spanish term of endearment meaning honey or baby,[40] in how far might the song, following Blanco's own stated aim, appeal to queer and straight listeners alike? If, as I argue, the use of multiple languages in "My Nene" invites listeners to do further research to make sense of the

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[36] Susan Stryker, Paisley Currah, and Lisa Jean Moore, "Introduction: Trans-, Trans, or Transgender?," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 6, 3/4 (Fall-Winter 2008): 113.

[37] "Mykki Blanco," *Discogs*, accessed Feb 11, 2018, discogs.com/artist/2959276-Mykki-Blanco.

[38] By "queer" I mean the traditional and outdated definition "to make strange," but also the more contemporary sense, which sex educator Charlie Glickman describes as "to take a look at foundations and question them." *See* "Queer Is A Verb," CharlieGlickman.com, Apr 6, 2012, accessed Feb 4, 2018, charlieglickman.com/queer-is-a-verb/.

[39] Ann-Derrick Gaillot, "Mykki Blanco Explains The Meaning Of Every Song On *Mykki*," *The Fader*, Sept 13, 2016, access Jan 14, 2018, thefader.com/2016/09/13/mykki-blanco-album-track-by-track-interview.

[40] "NeNe (1)" *Urban Dictionary*, June 28, 2004, posted by gaby, accessed Feb 4, 2018, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=nene and "NeNe (2), *Urban Dictionary*, Jan 6, 2013, posted by Frans4Lyf, accessed Feb 4, 2018, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=nene.

numerous cultural references Blanco makes, in how far might the song trigger a transcultural aesthetic experience in listeners?

In my conclusions, I consider the extent to which the work of both artists informs the new articulation of transaesthetics this study argues for. Where L.H. Stallings has attempted to dislodge Jean Baudrillard's term from "the medium of visual art" to apply it "to all artistic forms, including sex as representative of art as experience,"[41] Stallings' reduction of transaesthetics to the realm of the visual overlooks how Baudrillard applied the term to politics, economics, and, most importantly, sexuality.[42] Instead of "writers and performers us[ing] sexually explicit expressions" to create a literary tradition Stallings deems "*funky erotixxx* (formerly Black erotica)" that "cannot and do[es] not align with Western traditions of humanism,"[43] I argue that Sookee and Mykki Blanco's work reveals a transaesthetics built on gender and sexual politics that have, following Feinberg, existed in many cultures around the world throughout history.[44] Does Sookee's and Blanco's "playing with the commutability of the signs of sex"[45] render us "politically indifferent and undifferentiated beings, androgynous and hermaphroditic" due to a "confusion of categories,"[46] as Baudrillard warned, or can their work liberate us from the ideological prison of the heteronormative assumptions that undergird American and German society today? In other words, if audiences are invited to consider non-traditional sexual and gender identifications as viable alternatives that they can either accept, reject, or simply allow others to explore without fear of reprisal, then how might the aesthetic experience of their music contribute to achieving equality for people who identify and live outside the narrow, binary heteronormative framework that governs society?

Second and Third Wave Feminism: Music as Intervention

In *Dichotonies: Gender and Music* (2009), feminist scholar Chris Weedon "traces the history of feminism and of feminist, gender, and queer studies in the field of music since the 1960s" to show how "the interrelation of gender and music 'gave rise to […] the development of new feminist musicology'."[47] Arguing that popular music is "both a site of affirmation and subversion of culturally constructed gender norms,"[48] Weedon explains how

> [f]rom its early beginnings in the late 1960s, second-wave feminism mobilised aspects of performance and music in campaigns and in consciousness raising, signaling what would become an on-going feminist concern with the cultural politics of representation. In the 1970s and 1980s Western feminist cultural theory and practice set a radical agenda for social change much of which is still relevant today. This agenda traced aspects of the public and private spheres, challenging the binary modes of thinking that constructed a private sphere that was ostensibly

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[41] L.H. Stallings, *Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 11.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 10-11.
[44] Feinberg provides an overview of the known instances of people who have identified outside strict binary gender and sexual roles. *See* Feinberg, 209-216.
[45] Jean Baudrillard, "Transsexuality," in *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*, trans. James Benedict (London: Verso, 1993), 20.
[46] Ibid., 24-25
[47] Beate Neumeier, "Dicho*ton*ies – Gender and Music: An Introduction," in *Dichotonies: Music and Gender*, edited by Beate Neumeier (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2009), 11.
[48] Ibid.

beyond politics. All aspects of life were revisioned as political, giving rise to the
watchwords of the 1970s: "The personal is political."[49]

Furthermore, "second-wave feminism gave rise to a wide range of performance, activism and research" to
birth what Weedon describes as "a new musicology," one that pays attention to "among other things how
the codes and conventions that are identified in music theory describe and prescribe musical meaning."[50]
Collaboration among cultural theorists, activists, and musicians from second-wave feminism and "the Gay
Liberation and Queer movement […] facilitated new music and modes of performance by creating the
cultural political contexts and audiences for straight women and gay, bi-sexual and transgender women and
men to become increasingly involved in the music industry."[51] From the 1970s onward, "[f]eminists
identified popular music as a key site for the reproduction of patriarchal modes of thinking, feeling and
behaving that addressed broad constituencies of both men and women."[52] Even while perpetuating
traditional conceptualizations of sex and gender, "music could also function as a mode of resistance to and
subversion of oppressive gender norms."[53]

From punk rock and "the new wave music that emerged from it," women singers and performers
began "to challenge hegemonic ideas of femininity and visibly break the code of acceptable feminine
behavior, as for example, in the music of the Slits, the Au Pairs and the Raincoats."[54] Moreover, "Glam
rock, a musical style that placed emphasis on performance and theatricality," but also heavy metal (where
men dress in leather, jeans, and lycra, sport hair and make-up in styles coded as feminine, and sing in falsetto
voices), "crossed hegemonic gender borders displaying gender bending that involved movement between
masculinity and femininity in the performance of gender." [55] Weedon convincingly argues how "1970s
female punk would in due course give rise to the Riot Grrrl and queercore music of the 1990s, which was
directly linked to third wave feminism,"[56] arguably becoming some of the brashest articulations of feminist
thought and practice in the popular public sphere.

Weedon notes that "as feminist theory and politics became more complex, the 1980s and 1990s also
produced debates about queering feminism that have become increasingly important to feminist critical
practice."[57] To that end, "queer feminism refuses fixed ideas of what is normal or natural and it challenges
the very ideas of normality that underpin social institutions and practices, arguing that nothing is natural."[58]
Echoing Judith Butler's view that gender is performed, Weedon argues that

> [n]ormality is a social convention and an effect of power – indeed, gender is a
> social and cultural construct and gender identities are acquired, at least in part,
> through performance. Much queer cultural politics and analysis is aimed at
> exposing the social and cultural nature of gender, stressing the arbitrariness and

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[49] Chris Weedon, "Feminist and Queer Approaches to Music," in *Dichotonies: Music and Gender*, edited by Beate
Neumeier (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2009), 33.
[50] Ibid., 34.
[51] Ibid., 35.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 39.
[55] Ibid., 38.
[56] Ibid., 39.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.

> unnaturalness of traditional signifiers of gender difference. In theoretical terms, queer theory is in many ways postmodern, since it renounces any fixed notions of difference, in particular, fixed distinctions between masculine and feminine maleness and femaleness and heterosexual, gay and lesbian. Binary oppositions are replaced by a proliferation of differences that include, for example, bi-sexuality and transgender, which queer theory and politics refuse to hierarchise, and, in the process, gender ceases to express anything fundamental about women or men.[59]

How sex and gender play out in popular music has ramifications for society at large, even for those who do not see themselves as invested in feminist and/or queer politics.[60] By "factoring in patriarchal forms of power," third-wave feminist activists and musicians have enabled "a widespread move away from any fixing of subjectivities within specific forms of identity politics to positions that relativise and complexify categories of identity."[61] In terms of the public sphere, where "political objectives involve coalitions, which can include a range of positions and identities," Weedon concludes that this development "signals specific forms of political engagement outside of mainstream institutions that are informed by queered ideas of identities, boundaries, positions and genders."[62] Thus, "[t]he new musicologies that have emerged as a result of feminist, gay and queer studies have not only challenged and enriched existing musicology but have begun to add a necessary and productive dimension to gender aware cultural studies in its engagements with written musical texts and performances."[63] When this awareness is achieved through music, the work of feminist and queer theorists connects with the general public at large, potentially initiating social and cultural change.

The Rise of the Transgender Movement

While Weedon accepts as given the cooperation between second-wave feminism and queer politics, transgender historian, theorist, and activist Susan Stryker has catalogued the rise of the transgender movement, which ultimately led to the institutionalization of transgender studies, a field that "claims as its purview transsexuality and cross-dressing, some aspects of intersexuality and homosexuality, cross-cultural and historical investigations of human gender diversity, [and] myriad specific subcultural expressions of 'gender atypicality'."[64] Stryker emphasizes the movement's interdisciplinary contours and political aims, writing that it is

> concerned with anything that disrupts, denaturalizes, rearticulates, and makes visible the normative linkages we generally assume to exist between the biological specificity of the sexually differentiated human body, the social roles and statuses that a particular form of body is expected to occupy, the subjectively experienced relationship between a gendered sense of self and social expectations of gender-role performance, and the cultural mechanisms that work to sustain or thwart specific configurations of gendered personhood.[65]

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[59] Ibid., 39-40.
[60] Regina Bradley has discussed the wider implications of gender and sexual representation in hip-hop and the ramifications it has for society. *See* Regina N. Bradley, "Barbz and kings: explorations of gender and sexuality in hip-hop," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop*, edited by Justin A. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 182.
[61] Weedon., 41.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., 46.
[64] Susan Stryker, "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies," in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, edited by Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (New York: Routledge, 2006), 3.
[65] Ibid.

Thus, while advocating for the rights of genderqueer and transgendered people, the transgender movement addresses sexual oppressions that affect society at large.

Stryker further notes how American activist Leslie Feinberg coined the term transgender "as an adjective rather than a noun" in a pamphlet titled "Trans Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come" (1992).[66] Virginia Prince, a "Southern California advocate for freedom of gender expression,"[67] first used the term "to refer to individuals like herself whose personal identities she considered to fall somewhere on a spectrum between 'transvestite' (a term coined by Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld) and 'transsexual' (a term popularize in the 1950s by Dr. Harry Benjamin)."[68] Noting crucial differences in terminology, Stryker observes that if

> a *transvestite* was somebody who episodically changed into the clothes of the so-called "other sex," and a *transsexual* was somebody who permanently changed genitals in order to claim membership in a gender other than the one assigned at birth, then a *transgender* was somebody who permanently changed social gender through the public presentation of self, without recourse to genital transformation.[69]

Activism was foregrounded from the beginning, with Feinberg calling for a "political alliance between all individuals who were marginalized or oppressed due to their difference from social norms of gendered embodiment, and who should therefore band together in a struggle for social, political, and economic justice."[70] In Feinberg's sense, "[t]ransgender was a 'pangender' umbrella term for an imagined community encompassing transsexuals, drag queens, butches, hermaphrodites, cross-dressers, masculine women, effeminate men, sissies, tomboys, and anybody willing to be interpolated by the term, who felt compelled to answer the call to mobilization."[71] Indeed, Feinberg's genius was calling for unity and solidarity with the lesbian and gay movement, which in turn encouraged allies to work toward achieving non-normative gender equality.[72]

Feinberg's pamphlet emerged alongside artist and recording engineer Sandy Stone's "posttranssexual manifesto" (1991), in which Stone "wrote against a line of thought in second-wave feminism, common since the early 1970s and articulated most vehemently by feminist ethicist Janice Raymond, which considered transsexuality to be a form of false consciousness."[73] Stone contested feminists who claimed that transsexuals "failed to properly analyze the social sources of gender oppression" by, on the one hand, "internaliz[ing] outmoded masculine or feminine stereotypes" and, on the other, doing "harm to their bodies in order to appear as the men and women they considered themselves to be, but that others did not."[74]

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[66] Ibid., 4.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] To rally people to the transgender cause, Feinberg argued that "[w]hile oppressions within these two powerful communities are not the same, we face a common enemy. Gender-phobia—like racism, sexism and bigotry against lesbians and gay men—is meant to keep us divided. Unity can only increase our strength" and "solidarity is built on understanding how and why oppression exists and who profits from it." *See* Feinberg, 206.
[73] Stryker 2006, 4.
[74] Ibid.

Indeed, the link with Baudrillard's notion of 'false liberation,' a hallmark of his articulation of transaesthetics (not to mention his denigration of transsexuality), is striking. Stone's intervention "combat[ed] the anti-transsexual moralism embedded in certain strands of feminist thought by soliciting a new corpus of intellectual and creative work capable of analyzing and communicating to others the concrete realities of 'changing sex.'"[75] Feinberg and Stone's work began merging second-wave feminism and the transgender movement.

This was important, especially since transsexuals and transgendered people were not always welcome at musical events staged by the Women's movement. For example, "the Michigan Women's Music Festival, a women-only event with deep roots in the lesbian feminist community, expelled a postoperative transsexual woman, Nancy Jean Burkholder" in 1991 by "claiming [that] she was 'actually' a man."[76] While the "incident became a flashpoint in the United States and Canada for transgender people and their allies,"[77] and showed that LGB and T have not always been allied in their fight for equality, artists and activists stepped up to bridge the divide. For instance, Stryker notes that performance artist "Kate Bornstein […] tweak[ed] the consciousness of audiences on both sides of North America with confessional works that explored her tortured personal history with the word 'transsexual'."[78] Furthermore,

> the activist group Transgender Nation—whose formation in 1992 as a focus group of the San Francisco chapter of Queer Nation marks the emergence of a specifically transgender politics within the broader queer movement of the early 1990s—generated scholarly work as part of its protest against the inclusion of "gender identity disorder" in the American Psychiatric Associations *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual.*[79]

Grassroots efforts produced "'zines like *Gender Trash, TransSisters, Rites of Passage*, and *TNT: The Transsexual News Telegraph* [and] combined community-based cultural production with academically-informed critical gender theory."[80] Without the transgender movement, second-wave feminism may never have evolved into its present stage.

Indeed, feminism's evolution "paralleled the rise of queer studies, with which it has enjoyed a close and sometimes vexed relationship."[81] Stryker describes how this

> new "queer" politics, based on an array of oppositions to "heteronormative" social oppression rather than a set of protections for specific kinds of minorities that were vulnerable to discrimination, radically transformed the homosexual rights movement in Europe and America. The queer movement allowed transgender people to make compelling claims that they, too, had political grievances against an oppressive heteronormative regime.[82]

Tension with transgender issues necessitates that "feminists re-examine, or perhaps examine for the first time, some of the exclusionary assumptions they embed within the fundamental conceptual underpinnings

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[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., 5
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid., 7.
[82] Ibid.

of feminism."[83] Moreover, "[t]ransgender phenomena challenge the unifying potential of the category 'woman,' and call for new analyses, new strategies and practices, for combating discrimination and injustice based on gender inequality."[84] Hip-hoppers have begun developing practices and strategies to create spaces for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans people in a genre of music that formerly marginalized them.

Media Representation and the Rise of LGBT Rap: Birth of a Genre

As sociologist Andreana Clay points out in her study of post-civil rights activism among youth in the San Francisco Bay Area, there has been some, albeit limited, improvement in the representation of openly gay, lesbian, and genderqueer people in American media. The problem, in Clay's view, is that "the visibility of [television] shows like *Will and Grace*, the *L Word*, and public figures like Ellen DeGeneres," or "the establishment of gay neighborhoods like the Castro in San Francisco, Chelsea and Greenwich Village in New York City, and West Hollywood in Los Angeles," privileges whiteness. In other words, LGBT spaces in the media are by and large dominated by representations of white queernees.[85] "In all of these settings," Clay argues, "the experiences of queer people of color are largely overlooked, invisible, or are lumped into the umbrella of 'queer'."[86] The result for young people of color, Clay laments, is "that there is such a thing as gay culture, but not gay people of color. […] If one were to peruse these images or stroll these neighborhoods, it would appear that people of color do not exist, perhaps singularly in a sea of white friends, but not as a community."[87] Echoing Matt Richardson, Clay observes that because of the "popular discourse of Black men and other men of color being on the 'down low,' made famous in books, songs, and television talk shows, the existence of queer people of color is sometimes linked to confusion, deviancy, and even death."[88] Queer youth of color, Clay concludes, "must continue to search for images and movements that reflect their experience."[89] However, these young people may not need to look as far afield as Clay suggests.

LGBT rap, sometimes called homo hop, got its start in New Orleans. Chronicling the story of bounce music, a sub-genre of rap and dance music that rose in the 1990s, Matt Miller describes how independent record label Take Fo' "played a pioneering role in one of the most remarkable trends of the early 2000s in New Orleans when it signed the first openly gay rapper," Kenyon "Katey Red" Carter, "the first of several such artists to emerge from the local scene after the millennium."[90] Miller explains how

> these artists, most of whom grew up in the city's housing projects, identify themselves as "sissies" or "punks" through their lyrics and self-presentation. The distinctive and historically rooted cultural values of New Orleans encouraged receptiveness to the work of this cohort of gay rappers, who rose to widespread local popularity at the center of a new wave of grassroots activity in the bounce scene. Their ultra-local perspective and style was intertwined with the limitations

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[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Andreana Clay, *The Hip-Hop Generation Fights Back: Youth, Activism, and Post-Civil Rights Politics* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 127.

[86] Ibid., 127-128.

[87] Ibid., 128.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid., 129.

[90] Matt Miller, *Bounce: Rap Music and Local Identity in New Orleans* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 154.

> imposed by biases against their sexuality—sissy rappers had difficulty being accepted by audiences in other places.[91]

Katey Red's debut release, an EP titled *Melpomene Block Party* (1999), "did not feature any pictures of the rapper, but her sexuality was clearly manifest in the lyrics of the title track, which revolved around the subject of male prostitution."[92] A full-length release titled *Y2Katey: The Millennium Sissy* (2000) soon followed, and the CD inlay "featured pictures of Katey Red in feminine garb […] as the Statue of Liberty […], at times surrounded by her female backup group, Dem Hoes."[93] In short, Miller concludes, *Y2Katey* "was the first full-length rap release by an openly gay or transgender performer in New Orleans, and one of the first in the larger national and international rap music field."[94]

With "their adherence to local performances and perspectives [that] helped them attain a substantial level of general popularity in the city," sissy rappers thrived in New Orleans until the mid-2000s. With "lyrics structured by call-and-response rather than by extended narrative," adherence to the bounce aesthetic produced vocalists who functioned as dance callers. By urging people to dance, LGBT bounce vocalists occupied a space of power and authority. The dance craze known as twerking, which was popularized by Miley Cyrus and Robin Thicke at the 2013 MTV Video Music Awards,[95] was born in the New Orleans bounce scene, where artists such as Big Freedia, an openly genderqueer performer, and her fans had been developing the dance since the early 1990s.[96] Nonetheless, "rather than remaining constrained to 'an openly gay hip hop world,' sissy rappers in New Orleans [were], to a large extent, able to participate in creative and musical relationships […] not limited to people who self-identify as gay."[97] In that sense, New Orleans sissy rappers played a vital role in gaining visibility and acceptance for queer people of color, particularly through their use of "humor and irony to counter anti-gay attitudes."[98]

Even though her appeal was mostly "limited to the New Orleans area, Katey Red's releases generated national publicity."[99] Miller notes how "the sheer novelty of an openly gay performer in a notoriously anti-gay genre of popular music helped drive coverage in the *New York Times*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and the *Village Voice*."[100] National exposure conflicted with prejudice against LGBT figures. Miller explains how Neil Strauss, a NYT music critic

> attended a concert by Katey Red in New Orleans and penned an article in May 2000 that is notable for its treatment of the rapper as a freakish anomaly. Strauss's insistence on using the male pronoun in reference to Katey Red would be less offensive if the article itself did not explicitly mention "his wish to be referred to

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[91] Ibid., 154-155.
[92] Ibid., 155.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Phillip Mlynar, "Miley Cyrus Twerks, Gives Robin Thicke Some Tongue At VMAS," *MTV News*, Aug 25, 2013, accessed Feb 1, 2018, mtv.com/news/1713017/miley-cyrus-robin-thicke-vma-twerk/.
[96] John Hutt, "Big Freedia on Miley Cyrus and 'Transforming One Twerker at a Time'," *Out*, Sept 10, 2013, accessed Jan 16, 2018, out.com/entertainment/interviews/2013/09/10/big-freedia-queen-bounce-miley-cyrus-twerking-gender. Extremely popular in the New Orleans bounce scene, Big Freedia has been releasing music since 2003.
[97] Miller, 155.
[98] Ibid., 157.
[99] Ibid., 158.
[100] Ibid.

as 'she'," which was respected by the various rappers and New Orleans music scene participants whose comments were quoted.[101]

While New Orleans audiences supported one of the first openly gay emcees, cosmopolitan New York was not prepared to embrace an out LGBT rapper. Strauss's ham-fisted coverage of Katey Red was rightly criticized in *PlanetOut*, a now defunct media venture that covered stories for LGBT communities nationwide.[102]

Other LGBT hip-hop scenes emerged at approximately the same time on the West coast and in the Midwest, and three documentary films trace these developments: *Hip Hop Homos* (2004, dir. Doe Mayer), a short student film produced at the University of Southern California;[103] *Pick Up the Mic: The Evolution of Homohop* (2006, dir. Alex Hinton);[104] and a series of episodes showcasing queer/trans rappers on *Built From Skratch*, a hip-hop themed television show produced by MYX TV.[105] In addition to in-depth interviews and performances by up-and-coming artists, these films catalogue important milestones in LGBT hip-hop. For example, *Built From Skratch* features an interview with Juba Kalamka, whose involvement in the San Francisco-based crew Deep Dickollective (D/DC) helped found the PeaceOUT World Homo Hop Festival, an offshoot of San Francisco's LGBT pride community.[106] As one of the organizers, Kalamka adroitly notes how hip-hop "fights against oppression, but at the same time […] takes on the role of the oppressor by mirroring society at large: male-centered, patriarchal and classist."[107] *Built from Skratch* also provided interviews with L.A.-based rapper Deadlee, whose debut album *7 Deadlee Sins* (2002) was an important release; an extended talk with multi-artist manager Camilo Arenivar (and founder of the now defunct website OutHipHop.com); and segments that showcased San Francisco Bay Area rappers Katastrophe and Eyeris as well as DJ Val G and DJ Motive, two female deejays and entrepreneurs who worked to create spaces so queer women could practice the hip-hop arts in the Bay Area.[108] Rapper God-Des from the Midwestern duo God-Des & She was also showcased. While these documentaries promoted LGBT hip-hoppers outside the regional scenes that birthed them, these films may one day claim similar status afforded to *Wild Style*, *Style Wars*, *Breakin'*, and *Beat Street*, both in the U.S. and abroad. It is somewhat perplexing why Andreana Clay, whose work with youth of color in Oakland and the San Francisco Bay

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[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid.

[103] At the time of writing, the short film can be streamed at "Hip Hop Homos," *Snag Films*, accessed Jan 17, 2018, snagfilms.com/films/title/hip_hop_homos.

[104] "Pick Up the Mic: The Evolution of Homohop," *Internet Movie Database*, accessed Jan 17, 2018, imdb.com/title/tt0422952/.

[105] "Built From Skratch (TV Series 2007-2009)," *Internet Movie Database*, accessed Jan 17, 2018, imdb.com/title/tt1996578/. The segments showcasing queer rappers on *Built from Skratch* are available in seven parts on YouTube. For part one, *see* "Deadlee LGBT 1 of 7 on Built from Skratch (Gay Rappers)," YouTube video, 7:14, posted by Anthony Garcia, Mar 26, 2009, accessed Jan 17, 2018, youtube.com/watch?v=WgJrmvaXZ_M.

[106] "Juba Kalamka LGBT 7 of 7 on Built From Skratch (Gay Rappers)," YouTube video, 7:25, posted by Anthony Garcia, Mar 26, 2009, accessed Jan 17, 2018, youtube.com/watch?v=YThm3TVfHL8.

[107] Neva Chonin, "They're here, they're queer and they homohop. Gay and lesbian artists, long rejected by mainstream rappers, are stretching the genre's boundaries," *SF Gate*, Sept 10, 2003, accessed Jan 17, 2018, sfgate.com/default/article/They-re-here-they-re-queer-and-they-homohop-Gay-2590201.php.

[108] For the interview with these two entrepreneurial deejays, *see* "DJ Val G LGBT 4 of 7 on Built From Skratch (Lesbian DJ)," YouTube video, 4:22, posted by Anthony Garcia, Mar 26, 2009, accessed Jan 17, 2018, youtube.com/watch?v=HCKoRm2iEA0.

Area, fails to mention these films or activists, especially since Deadlee, DJ Vale G and DJ Motive, and some of the members of Deep Dickollective are all queer people of color.

Many of these artists worked as LGBT activists and advocates, which again begs why Clay does not mention them. For example, although he was primarily based in Los Angeles, Deadlee explicitly became a rapper while working with young people so that queer youth could have a hip-hop role model.[109] Similarly, God-Des & She, which formed in Madison, Wisconsin in 1999 out of a desire to create positive role models for LGBT youth, released their debut album *Reality* in 2004 after relocating to New York.[110] Since then the duo has worked fiercely to make LGBT issues visible in hip-hop.[111] After receiving notoriety for "Lick It" (2007), an instructional song that provides listeners with tips on how to perform cunnilingus (and thereby legitimizes female sexual pleasure, straight and gay),[112] God-Des & She appeared in the season three finale of the television series *The L Word*.[113] While "Lick It" got the group banned from MTV,[114] God-Des & She nevertheless capitalized on its notoriety to further their activist agenda. For example, their song "Never Give Up" (2012) provides LGBT youth with much needed encouragement and validation, especially where schools have been barred by law from providing institutional support to prevent suicide among LGBT youth.[115] Selling over 40,000 albums and touring the U.S. and performing in Europe, including Sweden's Europride festival,[116] God-Des & She have arguably found the most commercial success of all of the groups associated with LGBT hip-hop in the United States. If their interview for the upscale lifestyle magazine *FourTwoNine* is any indication,[117] then the duo has moved beyond the niche market that fostered and supported them. More importantly, a subgenre of hip-hop was born through the hard work of these artists and activists. While God-Des & She reside at the forefront of mainstream acceptance, the work of all of these artists has enabled performers to be open about their sexualities and gender orientations.[118] However,

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[109] Deadlee made plain his reasons for becoming an openly gay rapper in an interview with Ted Rowlands for CNN. *See* "Deadlee's famous CNN interview," YouTube video, 3:45, posted by Camilo Arenivar, Nov 7, 2007, accessed Jan 17, 2018, youtube.com/watch?v=zznSeTu7Yw4.

[110] Jon O'Brien, "God-Des & She (Bio)," *All Music*, accessed Jan 18, 2018, allmusic.com/artist/god-des-she-mn0000568650.

[111] "Women on a mission: An Interview with God-Des & She," *LGBT Weekly*, Mar 29, 2012, accessed Jan 18, 2018, lgbtweekly.com/2012/03/29/women-on-a-mission-an-interview-with-god-des-she/.

[112] Heidi Lewis takes up the issue of cunnilingus, both for and against, in the music of Lil Wayne to show how the rapper has normalized female sexual pleasure in mainstream rap. *See* Heidi R. Lewis, "Let Me Just Taste You: Lil Wayne and Rap's Politics of Cunnilingus," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 49, 2 (2016): 289-305.

[113] "Women on a mission."

[114] Erika Star, "'God-des and She: Never Give Up' gives an intimate look at the hip-hop duo," *After Ellen*, June 16, 2014, accessed Jan 18, 2018, afterellen.com/tv/219366-god-des-and-she-never-give-up-gives-an-intimate-look-at-the-hip-hop-duo.

[115] "Women on a mission."

[116] Ainsley Drew, "The Rumpus Interview with God-des & She," *The Rumpus*, Feb 18, 2009, accessed Jan 18, 2018, therumpus.net/2009/02/the-rumpus-interview-with-god-des-she/.

[117] Jen, "EXCLUSIVE: Interview with lesbian hip hop duo God Des and She," *FourTwoNine*, Mar 8, 2013, accessed Jan 18, 2018, fourtwonine.com/2013/03/08/1631-exclusive-interview-with-lesbian-hip-hop-duo-god-des-and-she/.

[118] While the online portal for *All Music* now includes entries for Katey Red and Deep Dickollective, neither was included in the 2003-print edition of the *All Music Guide to Hip-Hop*, thus reflecting the reluctance of the gatekeepers of the scene to embrace these artists.

due to this study's focus on bi- and multilingualism, analysis of these artists' material remains for researchers interested in this growing field of hip-hop studies.[119]

Quing of Berlin: Sookee's Queer Feminist Activism

There is no shortage of sexism or homophobia in hip-hop in Germany today.[120] Cissexual exaggerations proliferate in the music and videos by such high-profile artists as Bushido, Haftbefehl, Kollegah, Farid Bang, King Orgasmus One, and Schwester Ewa, a former prostitute of Polish descent who draws inspiration from her experiences in the commercial sex milieu.[121] Catering to audience expectations and industry-defined tastes, *Rap.de*, one of the country's predominant online and print publications, depicts a steady stream of hypermasculine fantasies of *über*-cisgendered men and women engaging in ever more lurid performances of heteronormativity. Even Lady Bitch Ray, a controversial artist who casts herself as the hypersexualized ghetto bitch to critique rap's hyper-heterosexuality,[122] deploys faux pornographic imagery to empower women.[123] While the commercial rap scene in Germany is asphyxiating itself on the *ad nauseam* recirculation of tired tropes, underpinning these representations are deep-seated homo/transphobias. Yet even when homophobic epithets are the ultimate dis,[124] homoerotic imagery has been used to sell records.[125] If a case study were needed to illustrate how the entertainment industry reifies unspoken normative assumptions (which, in turn, manipulate people into recreating sex and gender norms), mainstream consumer rap in Germany would be a good start.

Enter Sookee, one of the most outspoken critical voices in hip-hop in Germany today. Born Nora Hantzsch to political dissidents who fled East Germany after her father refused compulsory military duty,[126]

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[119] In the conclusion to her honors thesis (2013), Silvia Galis-Menendez called for transnational research in rap music and queer studies. *See* "Why Hip-Hop Is Queer: Using Queer Theory to Examine Identity Formation in Rap Music," Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive, accessed Oct 13, 2016, repository.wellesley.edu/thesiscollection.

[120] The lead to a July 2015 story on the absence of women in Germany hip-hop asks: "Is German hip-hop macho music? There's certainly no shortage of sexism or homophobia. This makes it tough for women to enter the scene. Time for change" ("Ist deutscher HipHop Macho-Musik? Zumindest mangelt es nicht an Sexismus oder Homophobie. Das macht es Frauen nicht gerade einfach in die Szene rein zu kommen. Zeit etwas zu ändern"). Sophie Elmenthaler, "Du willst rappen!?," *DRadio Wissen*, July 20, 2015, accessed Jan 20, 2018, dradiowissen.de/beitrag/hiphop-berlin-label-springstoff-workshop-rapperinnen.

[121] Fatma Aydemir, "Ich kriege das allein hin, Alter," *Die Tageszeitung*, Jan 3/4, 2015, 25.

[122] Maria Stehle, *Ghetto Voices in Contemporary Germany: Textscapes, Filmscapes, Soundscapes* (Rochester: Camden House, 2012), 158.

[123] Maria Stehle, "Gender, Performance, and the Politics of Space," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32, 1 (2012): 94.

[124] Stüttgen, 134.

[125] Rapper Bass Sultan Henzgt (BSH) released an album in 2015 with cover art showing a close-up of two men about to kiss. BSH's Twitter feed and the comments section of the following article at *Rap.de* blew up with all sorts of generalized homophobic aspersions. *See* Oliver Marquart, "Bass Sultan Hengzt löst Schwlenfeindlichen Shitstorm aus" ("BSH triggers homophobic shit storm"), *Rap.de*, Feb 23, 2015, accessed Feb 18, 2018, rap.de/allgemein/54283-bass-sultan-hengzt-loest-schwulenfeindlichen-shitstorm-aus/.

[126] "Mein Vater war in der DDR im Knast, weil er den Dienst an der Waffe verweigert hatte. Wir waren Dissidenten. Aber wir hatten nicht die Kalaschnikow im Rücken oder so. Meine Familie hatte einen Ausreiseantrag gestellt" (My father was jailed in the GDR because he refused to serve in the military. We were dissidents. But we didn't have Kalashnikovs slung over our shoulders or anything like that. My family filed an exit application.) *See* Anna Meinecke, "Sookee: The Quing is back: 'Deutschland geht mir am Arsch vorbei'," *N-TV.de*, Mar 15, 2017, accessed Jan 26, 2018, n-tv.de/leute/musik/Deutschland-geht-mir-am-Arsch-vorbei-article19745371.html.

Sookee, the self-fashioned Quing of Berlin and *Zeckenrapper,*[127] is a queer-feminist emcee and activist. Recording since 2006, songs with titles such as "Quing," "Purpleize Hip Hop," "Pro Homo," "D.R.A.G.," "One Billion Rising," and "Working On Wonderland" clarify Sookee's mission: to insist upon, establish, maintain, promote, and celebrate spaces for women and queer/trans people in hip-hop. Recording for Berlin's Springstoff Records, Sookee's work resonates on the indie scene, but engagement with a variety of media outlets through interviews and television guest appearances, as well as appearances on the lecture circuit, have brought her considerable mainstream exposure.

In a short essay entitled "Sookee ist Quing: Rap aktuell und mehrheitlich" (2007), Hantzsch made known her frustration with rappers in Germany who "no longer support[ed] social criticism with any seriousness."[128] Noting how conscious rap, the defining thread in hip-hop in Germany since the early 1990s, had become devalued as *Öko-Rap* (environmental rap) or *Müsli-Rap* (granola rap) due to gangsta rappers who rooted social critique in their alleged experiences growing up in ethnic ghettos,[129] Hantzsch took up the activist mantle in hopes of delivering "a broad spectrum of performative and communicative possibilities."[130] Decrying a dearth of role models for women,[131] and labeling as too narrow the accepted tropes of "bitch," "sister," and "gangsta girls" which primarily empower men,[132] Hantzsch sought to develop a new form of rap that might be artfully "packaged in music to reach young people who are used to a different kind of coolness."[133] From the start, Hantzsch's mission as Sookee had clear political dimensions, all of which are informed by and anchored in second and third-wave feminist activism that embraces music as an interventionist strategy. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Hantzsch holds a degree in Women's and Gender Studies, thus illustrating how work in the academy can be transferred to popular culture.

Sookee's material thematically, linguistically, visually, and aurally creates and promotes queer/trans pride and awareness in a variety of ways. To begin, Sookee defines her performance persona as *quing.*

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[127] Literally translated as "tick rapper" (and based on the epithet *Zecke* used to denigrate political opponents of the Third Reich), *Zeckenrapper* refers to a new wave of conscious hip-hoppers affiliated with the radical Left in Germany, including Pyro One, Refpolk, Ben Dana (formerly of the Bremen group Radical Hype), Kobito, Johnny Mauser (from Antilopen Gang), Captain Gips and Marie Curry (from Neonschwarz), Jennifer Gegenläufer, Spezial-K, among many others.

[128] "Diese Subkultur fußt in ihren Anfängen aud der Thematisierung und Skandalisierung von sozialen, kulturellen und politischen Ungleichheiten, dennoch will heutzutage, da auch in Deutschland Rap klingeltonkompatibel geworden ist, keiner mehr ernsthaft hinter Sozialkritik stehen. Was einst Conscious-Rap hieß, wird heute als Öko-Rap oder Müsli-Rap abgewertet." *See* Sookee [Nora Hantzsch], "Sookee ist Quing," in *Female HipHop: Realness, Roots und Rap Models*, edited by Anjela Schischmanjan and Michaela Wünsch (Mainz, Germany: Ventil Verlag, 2007), 33.

[129] Ibid. "Wenn sich jemand sozialkritisch äußert, dann fast nur noch in der Form, dass seine/ihre Kindheit im Ghetto hart gewesen sei, was ihn/sie dazu autorisiert, anderen vor die Fresse zu kloppen."

[130] Ibid. "Trotz all dieser oberflächlichen Peinlichkeiten, die zugegebenermaßen ihre Existenzbrechtigung haben, bin ich gerne Aktivisten dieser Szene, da sie ein großes Spektrum an performativen und kommunikativen Möglichkeiten liefert."

[131] Ibid., 34. "Wo es im anglophonen Raum wenigstens noch so etwas wie unantastbare und erhabene Identifikationsmuster zu geben scheint, die durch Frauen wie Erykah Badu oder Mary J. Blige vertreten werden, sind die Images für Frauen in Deutschland recht dünn gestreut. Nicht zuletzt deswegen, weil die Präsenz von Frauen im deutschen Rap zwar gegeben, aber nie stark und vielfältig war."

[132] Ibid., 34. "Im Prinzip erstreckt 'Sister,' 'Bitch' und 'pseudomännliches Gangta-Girl' was letztlich dadurch begründet ist, dass Männer nun mal die lautesten Stimmen im Rap und damit die Definitionsgewalt und sich diese auch nicht nehmen lassen."

[133] Ibid., 37. "Diese Werte und Programmpunkte in gute Musik zu verpacken, ist jedoch die eigentliche Kunst, schließlich ist es das Ziel, junge Menschen zu erreichen, die überwiegend eine andere Art von Coolness gewohnt sind."

According to the *Urban Dictionary*, *quing*—a portmanteau of queen and king—suggests a "transgendered, non-gendered, or ambiguously gendered monarch."[134] In that sense, Sookee follows Leslie Feinberg, who advocated for the gender-neutral pronouns s/he, ze, and hir. However, *quing* also suggests a queer/trans sovereign (queer + king), process (queering), critical thinking (questioning), and even the journey towards critical consciousness (quest + ing). In an interview with *AVIVA-Berlin: Online Magazin für Frauen*, Sookee affirmed that the term should remain open and flexible enough to allow young people who feel excluded from traditional political organizations to politicize themselves.[135] In line with feminism's baseline belief that the personal is political, Sookee's deployment of *quing* urges self-activation, social and political engagement, and activism.

Sookee elaborates on the concept in the title track of her second full-length album, *Quing* (2010).[136] Throughout three verses and the song's recurring hook, *quing* is mentioned thirty-four times. In the chorus, she invites listeners to find—and define—their place in it, rapping

> ist dein gedanklicher ausblick nicht ein verdammt tiefer ausschnitt an dir wahnsinnig sexy
> dann bist du quing - dis is quing
> hast du politische ziele bist motiviert unzufrieden dann herzlich willkommen
> du bist quing - dis is quing
> liebst du die kleinen momente die dir freiheiten schenken dann sei dir gewiss
> du bist quing - dis is quing
> schreibst du klar und doch kryptisch bist du stark manchmal glücklich dann reich mir die hand
> du bist quing - dis is quing[137]
>
> if your mental outlook and not some low-cut neckline is crazy sexy on you
> then you're quing – dis is quing
> have you got political goals are you motivated dissatisfied then welcome
> you're quing – dis is quing
> if you love the little moments that give you freedom then rest assured
> you're quing – dis is quing
> if you write clearly yet cryptically are strong and sometimes happy then lend me a hand
> you're quing – dis is quing.

On the one hand, Sookee encourages women to privilege their mental outlooks ("gedanklicher ausblick") over plunging necklines ("tiefer ausschnitt"); on the other, she calls to any listeners with political ambitions to lend a hand ("reich mir die hand"). Thus, while Sookee works to liberate women from the calcified social conventions that govern femininity—for instance, being valued for one's fashion sense—she reaches out to anyone to create allies.

From a linguistic perspective, the recurring line "du bist quing – dis is quing" is particularly intriguing. As one of hip-hop's most well-known neologisms, *dis* is an abbreviation for *dis*respect, typically used as a

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[134] "Quing," *Urban Dictionary*, Oct 30, 2003, posted by cazort, accessed Jan 20, 2018, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=quing.

[135] "Damit wird nur parlamentarische Parteipolitik oder Gewerkschaftsarbeit gedacht, aber darüber hinaus gibt es relativ wenige Gelegenheiten für Menschen, sich als politisch zu fassen, wenn sie nicht in der Jugendorganisation einer Partei sind. Ich glaube, wenn sich da das Verständnis ein bisschen öffnen würde, dann gäbe es auch nicht diesen Eindruck von Politikverdrossenheit bei jungen Menschen. *Quing* ist auch die Gelegenheit, sich zu politisieren." *See* Sharon Adler and Britta Meyer, "Interview mit Sookee," *AVIVA-Berlin: Online Magazin für Frauen*, Dec 31, 2011, accessed Feb 20, 2018, aviva-berlin.de/aviva/content_Interviews.php?id=12103.

[136] Sookee, "Quing," *Quing*, Springstoff Records, 2010, CD.

[137] The lyrics can be found at the artist's website. *See* "o2 // QUING," *Sookee.de*, accessed Jan 20, 2018, sookee.de/material/lesen/rap-lyrics.

noun or verb.[138] However, *dis* is sometimes used in English as a substitute for *this*.[139] Deploying *dis* as a stand-in for *das* (the neuter definite article in German), Sookee takes a cue from rappers in the Anglophone world. However, *dis* is almost never utilized in German in this way. While regional dialects such as *Plattdeutch* (Low German) use "dat" for *das*,[140] and the Berlin accent renders *das* as "dit" or "det,"[141] there is little precedent for the way Sookee uses *dis*.[142] Moreover, she does not deploy *dis* as an abbreviation for disrespect, either as a verb or a noun.[143] Her refusal to do so reveals a conscious decision to avoid recirculating one of rap's most notorious neologisms. Sookee, at least in her own usage, blocks the use of a normative term for denigration,[144] and its 'newness' is indicative of Ortiz's neoculturation principle, especially since Sookee is responding to homo/transphobias that have existed in rap for decades, both in the U.S. and Germany.

Furthermore, the *t* is intentionally dropped from *ist* ("dis is quing"), the third person singular conjugation of the verb *sein* (to be), the absence of which is apparent in Sookee's enunciation. While the majority of the hook is standard German (albeit enjambed and without punctuation or capitalization, which speaks provocatively to the loss of aesthetic particularity Baudrillard warned of), and Sookee raps "dis is quing" in English, the phrase exists somewhere between German, English, and African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Its interlingual dimensions become apparent when one tries to translate the phrase into German. If one translates it into either of the aforementioned dialects, the result is *dat ist quing* (Low German) and *dit ist quing* or *det ist quing* (Berlin dialect).[145] All three are aesthetic choices Sookee might have made, but in all of them *quing* remains an English fusion word. Since there is no German equivalent, any German translation must contain this neologism, and Sookee actually Germanizes *quing* by bringing it into popular usage. Thus, every conceivable iteration in German would remain bilingual, and like Sookee's initial utterance, all of these would exist between German, English, and dialectical variants. Where linguist

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[138] While not exclusively connecting "dis" to hip-hop culture, the Oxford English Dictionary nevertheless recognizes that "dis" appeared as an abbreviation for "to disrespect" in the 1980s. *See* "Dis," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.

[139] A search as Genius turns up many instances where rappers use *dis* as a substitute for "this." Examples include, but are not limited to, A Tribe Called Quest's "Dis Generation" (2016), Die Antwoord's "Dis Iz Why I'm Hot (zef remix) (2016), Lil Durk's "Dis Ain't What U Want" (2013), Method Man & Redman's "Dis Iz 4 All My Smokers" (2009), Redman's "Dis Iz Brick City" (2007), Project Pat's "Dis Bitch, Dat Hoe" (2003), Three Six Mafia's "Fuckin' Wit Dis Click" (1995), and Miami-based female duo Dis-n-Dat's "Dis 'n' Dat" (1994).

[140] "Dat," *Plattdeutsches Wörterbuch*, accessed Jan 23, 2018, plattdeutsches-woerterbuch.de/pages/plattdeutsches_woerterbuch.html.

[141] "Det, dit," *Spree Taufe: Wörterbuch Berlinisch*, accessed Jan 23, 2018, spreetaufe.de/berlinerisch-berliner-jargon/woerterbuch-berlinisch-a-h/#D1.

[142] German author Claus Ulrich Wiesner published a book titled *Das war's: Lachdienliche Hinweise* (Berlin: Reiher Verlag, 1991) in which the author playfully imagines Weimar Republic writer/satirist Kurt Tucholsky visiting a hairstylist. In the dialogue for tale "Friseur Kleinekorte seift wieder ein," the hairstylist repeatedly substitutes *dis* for *das*. Aside from this one instance, there are few other examples.

[143] The term *dis* as a definite article appears over 100 times in the lyric transcripts at Sookee's website. *Dis* is only ever used in this fashion. *See* "Rap Lyrics," *Sookee.de*, accessed Jan 23, 2018, sookee.de/material/lesen/rap-lyrics.

[144] Frankfurt-based Konkret Finn's "Ich Diss Dich" (I Dis You) (No Mercy Records, 1994) was the first to Germanize *dis* in a recording. *See* "Konkret Finn a.k.a. Iz (4) & Tone (4) and DJ Feedback – Ich Diss Dich," *Discogs*, accessed Jan 28, 2018, discogs.com/Konkret-Finn-aka-Iz-4-Tone-4-and-DJ-Feedback-Ich-Diss-Dich/release/221080. More recently, the title track from Hamburg-based Samy Deluxe's *Dis wo ich herkomm* (Dis where I come from) (EMI/Deluxe Records, 2009), which caused controversy for its pro-German, semi-nationalistic lyrics, substitutes *dies*, the German pronoun for *this*, with *dis*. *See* "Dis wo ich herkomm," *Discogs*, accessed Jan 28, 2018, discogs.com/Samy-Deluxe-Dis-Wo-Ich-Herkomm/master/190717.

[145] Since *dit* and *dat* are Dutch for "this" and "that," respectively, and Dutch is a West Germanic language, the line, had Sookee uttered it this way, would speak to yet another European country and language.

Tong-King Lee has argued that such aesthetic decisions "construct a transcultural imaginary [that] resist[s] hegemonic discourses,"[146] *dis is quing*, while perhaps a minor example, constitutes what for all intents and purposes is a translingual utterance. While this breakdown in aesthetic particularity marks this particular utterance's transaesthetic dimensions, the ways in which the term is used for an overt political aim strongly suggests that linguistic ambiguity is more than the failure of art that Baudrillard postulated. Indeed, *dis is quing* signal a development across two languages that, because of its diffuseness, actually argues for the recognition of transsexuals and transgendered folks, which Baudrillard belligerently dismissed in a chapter titled "Transsexuality" in *The Flowers of Evil* (1993), where he introduced the term transaesthetics.

Sookee asserts that purple is *quing*'s ideal optical analogy,[147] and the concept has far-reaching implications. A fusion of red and blue, colors commonly associated with traditional conceptualizations of femininity and masculinity,[148] but which, as Feinberg pointed out, have symbolized the opposite at different points in time,[149] Sookee almost exclusively costumes herself in shades of purple. Where color is used to denote political affiliation, mixing blue and red can be understood as an attempt to unify oppositional orientations on the political spectrum. For example, where Germany's Christian Democrats (CDU) and Christian Union (CSU) associate with blue, and red connotes the Social Democrats (SPD) and The Left (*Die Linke*), purple is a synthesis of conservative and liberal. In an American context, where Republicans identify with red and Democrats with blue (a relatively new turn of events),[150] purple suggests a right-left synthesis. Furthermore, in hip-hop culture, where blue and red historically signified gang allegiances (the Crips and the Bloods, respectively), blending the two into purple implies conflict mitigation. In essence, these metaphorical fusions suggest third-way politics based on *mutual inclusivity*, and this blending of colors coincides with Tope Omoniyi's re-theorization of code switching, which moves away from traditional understandings of language-based code-mixing to include colors and symbols.[151]

Regarding the latter, third-way thinking is visually conveyed in the album's title. In particular, the *q* and the *g* (but also the *u* and the *n*) are ambiguously rendered such that each resembles the other—a subversive reversal of *GQ*, the abbreviation of the popular international men's magazine *Gentleman's Quarterly*. The suggestion, then, is that *quing* can overturn the systemic social structures and institutions that privilege the concerns and desires of men. There is, however, another implication for Sookee's aim to normalize queerness. Due to the ambiguous typographical rendering of *quing*, one can rotate the album

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[146] In his study of visual aesthetics in literary texts in China that draw from English loanwords, Lee extends the concept of *translanguaging* to describe "the various formations of dynamic communicative practice whereby multilingual language users deploy and interpret linguistic and non-linguistic resources across semiotic boundaries." *See* Tong-King Lee, "Translanguaging and Visuality: Translingual Practices in Literary Art," *Applied Linguistics Review* 6, 4 (2015): 441-442.

[147] Sookee [Nora Hantzsch], "Sookee ist Quing," 39.

[148] "Diese Farbe ist die optische Entsprechung zu Quing. Das heißt, sie ist zunächst eine Mischung aus dem männlich konnotierten Blau und einem weiblich konnotierten Rot, wobei die genauen Mischungsverhältnisse mit jeder Nuance von Lila, Violett, Purpur, und Magenta verändert werden." Ibid.

[149] "Pink is for girls and blue is for boys. It's just 'natural,' we've been told. But at the turn of the century [the 1900s] in this country [the United States], blue was considered a girl's color and pink was a boy's." Feinberg, 205.

[150] Historically, blue connoted Republicans and red signified Democrats. The association of colors as we know it today changed in 2000. *See* Clark Bensen, "Red State Blues: Did I Miss That Memo?," *Polidata: Political Data Analysis*, May 27, 2004, accessed Feb 11, 2018, polidata.org/elections/red_states_blues_de27a.pdf.

[151] Tope Omoniyi, "Toward a Re-Theorization of Code Switching," *TESOL Quarterly* 39, 4 (Dec 2015): 729-34.

artwork in any spatial orientation, yet the title remains legible, thereby suggesting that *all ways* of sexual and gender affiliation are acceptable. In that sense, the logo symbolizes one of the basic ideas of Magnus Hirschfeld, the German sex researcher who coined the term transvestite in 1910.[152] Hirschfeld, who openly advocated for the rights of queer/trans people until his death in France in 1935,[153] developed the concept of sexual intermediaries, i.e. the notion that "every human being represented a unique combination of sex characteristics, secondary sex-linked traits, erotic preferences, psychological inclinations, and culturally acquired habits and practices."[154] While Sookee raps about *quing*, its stylized logo adds embellishments that deepen, but also communicate, *quing*'s underlying sexual-political premise. In other words, even if one does not listen to the song or understand German, one can nevertheless glean the gist of the term from its logo.

Purple has long stood for privilege, power, and prestige both in and outside Europe,[155] and aristocratic undertones play out in *quing*'s aural iteration. Indeed, the beat for "Quing," which was produced and arranged by the production team Beat2.0 (beatmaker Flox Schoch and producer LeijiONE),[156] aurally figures a royal procession. At the outset, swelling strings sans breakbeat climb in a slow majestic pulse. As the strings crescendo and rise and fall in incremental steps, sonorous brass instruments drone in low registers. Piano accents, which mimic (but also follow) the strings, accentuate a dramatic feel. Prominent at the beginning, the instrumentation slowly recedes into the background while Sookee raps, and the musical accompaniment almost fades out completely (thereby foregrounding Sookee's rhymes), only to return at full volume at the onset of the hook. Couched in a syncopated march motif, these musical elements generate a sense of rising power, and Sookee's shout-out in the opening bars ("dis is quing of Berlin") confirms the arrival of a gender-neutral monarch. Where hip-hop beats are sometimes arbitrary (with producers churning out generic beats that are sold to any artist who wishes to rap over them), Beat2.0's arrangement is noteworthy. If one understands the music of European courts as high culture, then these musical aesthetics, which once served the monarchy, are now in service to those who have neither access to power nor are elevated in society: queer/trans people. In conjunction with Sookee's rhymes, Beat2.0's arrangement imparts Sookee's political project with a measure of royal dignity that is communicated aurally. In that sense, the music and the words achieve an aesthetic 'unity effect' that stands to profoundly impact listeners.

The title of Sookee's fourth album *Lila Samt* (*Purple Velvet*) (2014) affirms these readings to suggest the edification of queer/trans symbols, aims, and concerns. In light of European democratic movements in the former Czechoslovakia (Velvet Revolution, 1989), Georgia (Rose Revolution, 2003), and the Ukraine (Orange Revolution, 2003-4), the color purple lends a revolutionary dimension Sookee's project. Additionally, the use of purple and black on the highly stylized artwork of *Bitches Butches Dykes & Divas*

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[152] Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2008), 38.

[153] Ibid., 40. Hirschfeld was deemed an enemy of the state by Hitler and the Third Reich. As Stryker notes, Hirschfeld died in exile because like so many, he was forced to flee Germany after Hitler's rise to power.

[154] Ibid., 38-39.

[155] The color purple and its connection to royalty, privilege, and power stems from the Phoenician trading city of Tyre. Historically, purple dye was obtained from mollusks only found in the Tyre-region of the Mediterranean. Very expensive, it remained the purview of aristocrats. *See* Remy Melina, "Why Is the Color Purple Associated With Royalty?," *Live Science*, June 3, 2011, accessed Feb 25, 2018, livescience.com/33324-purple-royal-color.html.

[156] Notes on the production team are available at Discogs. *See* "Beat2.0 (Bio)," *Discogs*, accessed Jan 25, 2018, discogs.com/artist/2005335-Beat20.

(2011), Sookee's third album, anchors her project in the global anarcha-feminist movement, thus extending queer/trans feminist thought ever deeper into hip-hop. As a kind of *trans*imagining*,[157] these aesthetic choices, replete with overt political content, merge sexual, gender, political, and social dichotomies to enable hip-hop heads to think beyond the restrictive binary paradigm governing human sexual and gender identification and orientation. At the very least, Sookee's *quing* concept, and the ways she deploys it, is revolutionary and potentially liberatory.

From *No Homo* to "Pro Homo": Overturning Hip-Hop Homophobia

As Joshua R. Brown has shown, "the phrase *no homo* arose in hip-hop lyrics of the 1990s as a discourse interjection to negate supposed sexual and gender transgressions."[158] Typically deployed at the end of a line, *no homo* is meant "to negate a supposed misconception or misconstrued reading of a previous utterance"[159] to indicate that the person speaking does not live, or even tacitly support, the homosexual lifestyle. Artists such as The Diplomats, Juelz Santana, Cam'ron, Jay-Z, and Lil Wayne (among others) have used the phrase,[160] and it has even found currency outside of hip-hop. Brown notes that "for those in hip-hop who use 'no homo,' and for many outside of hip-hop who have adopted it, the phrase functions successfully as a self-regulating method for the continued construction of their masculinity."[161] To that end, the phrase allows its users to achieve agency in a highly competitive culture.[162] However, Brown argues against the assertion that artists who say "no homo" are axiomatically homophobic.[163] While "the phrase comments on social norms,"[164] he asserts that "placing blame on hip-hop musicians […] ignores the prevalence of similar marginalization techniques within other minority communities of practice."[165] Yet if *no homo* shores up masculine power on the assumption that homosexuality is undesirable, and it sheds light on how homophobic epithets are used within, and beyond, hip-hop, then use of the phrase, for whatever reason, still relegates people in the LGBT community to a lower status in the gender/sexual hierarchy. Even if the phrase opens a wider discussion as Brown suggests, its use protects the *de facto* denigration of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people.

In "Pro Homo," Sookee addresses homophobia by creatively punning on, and thereby overturning, *no homo*. After improvising "schwierig, oh, oh, oh" (difficult, oh, oh, oh) in the opening bars, Sookee explicitly states her case in the first verse, rapping

> hiphop hat probleme weil ein großteil dieser szene
> nicht drauf klarkommen will dass männer nun mal männer auch begehren
> sie wollen ihnen verwehren ihre liebe auch zu leben

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[157] Since Sookee herself uses asterisks to promote gender and sexual equality, I follow her lead, as well as Stryker, Curah, and Moore's concept of *transing*, in my use of the term trans*imagining.

[158] Joshua R. Brown, "No Homo," *Journal of Homosexuality* 58, 3 (2011): 299.

[159] Ibid., 300-301.

[160] Ibid., 300.

[161] Ibid., 306.

[162] Ibid., 310.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid., 311.

[165] Ibid., 310.

> dieser track will was bewegen bin dafür und nicht dagegen[166]
>
> hip-hop's got issues because a large part of the scene
> doesn't want to come to terms with the fact that men desire men
> they want to deprive them of their love as well to live
> this track wants to make a difference I'm all for and not against.

Instead of stating that homophobia is a problem for people who experience it, Sookee calls out the entire hip-hop scene and firmly places responsibility on practitioners. Line three ("sie wollen ihnen verwehren ihre liebe auch zu leben"/they want to deprive them of their love as well to live) suggests that those who reject homosexual love commit an act of violence. Sookee ends line four with "bin dafür und nicht dagegen" (I'm all for and not against), which is decidedly subversive. Speaking in the first person, listeners, especially those who are not yet *pro homo*, are psychologically coaxed to be supportive.

Sookee's subtle psychological ploy continues when she raps

> dis is pro homo hiphop kann nix dafür
> die gesellschaft verschloss schon lange diese tür
> denn ein mann gilt als mann wenn das verlangen was er spürt
> sich dominant verhält niemals ein ander'n man berührt

> this is pro homo hip-hop can't help itself
> the community locked this door long ago
> because a man is a man when he demands what he feels
> dominantly no one's ever touched another man.

Like "dis is quing," Sookee proclaims "dis is pro homo." She then puns on "hiphop kann nix dafür," which has three potential meanings. On the one hand, Sookee suggests that hip-hop is powerless (hip-hop can't help itself) against her attempts to edify queer folk; on the other, she calls out rappers who unconsciously circulate homophobic attitudes. As a form of reverse psychology, listeners might think the opposite, i.e. hip-hop *can* help itself. Third, the line also means "it's not hip-hop's fault," thereby suggesting, like Brown asserts, that society, not just hip-hoppers, is to blame for homophobia. Indeed, in the next line Sookee names the *Gesellschaft* (community, society), thereby laying responsibility at the feet of society as well as hip-hop more generally. Her rhetorical wordplay continues when she raps "denn ein mann gilt als mann wenn das verlangen was er spürt." A loaded verb, *verlangen* means to demand, to claim, to request, to insist, to desire, or to call for.[167] Sookee thus calls upon men, both in and outside hip-hop, to demand queer/homo acceptance, especially if they "feel it" ("was er spürt") but are nevertheless reluctant to do so because of the rigid heteronormative framework governing society.

She then proceeds to expose how social norms perpetuate heteronormativity, rapping

> und die norm geht weiter betrifft sogar kleider
> die moves und die sprache man darf niemals scheitern
> sonst heißt es ganz einfach 'bist du schwul oder was'?
> der bittereste zweifel an kool und an krass

> and the norm goes further even with clothes
> you may never collapse the moves and the language

> otherwise it's 'are you gay or what'?
> the bitterest doubt about cool and phat.

After pointing out how the conventions of dress reinforce masculinity and femininity, Sookee deploys the English word *moves* (dance moves or physical postures) to observe that not following hip-hop conventions often leads to questions about one's sexuality ("'bist du schwul oder was'?"/are you gay or what?). Coupled with the suggestion that these norms may never be questioned (which, as another example of reverse psychology, might cause deeper reflection in listeners), Sookee questions what constitutes cool ("kool") and phat ("krass"), thus inviting listeners to do the same.

Yet Sookee does not reserve her call for reflection solely for the hip-hop scene, rapping

> dis gibt's nicht nur in baggies dis gibt's auch mit krawatte
> in alle schichten im einzel vor allem der masse
> der manager der keeper an der tür und am tor
> guck die kameraden brüllen als brüder im chor

> this isn't just for baggies but also for ties
> for individuals in every strata above all the masses
> the manager the keeper at the door and the gate
> look buddies roar as brothers in the choir.

Borrowing, and transforming, the English word "baggy" into *baggies*, Sookee references the penchant for hip-hoppers to wear loose jeans, and addresses them directly. Mentioning ties ("krawatte"), she calls upon upper middle class men to reflect. Furthermore, the line "in alle schichten im einzel vor allem der masse" indicates that everyone across the social milieu is invited to think about social norms. Borrowing the English word *keeper* from soccer culture ("der manager der keeper"),[168] Sookee targets leaders and cultural gatekeepers. With "kameraden brüllen als brüder im chor," she points out, on the one hand, that men openly assemble to sing and be men in church choir groups and the *Volkslieder* street choirs associated with soccer culture.[169] On the other, and especially where these institutions suppress homosexual behavior—or, in the case of the church, protect homosexuality while publicly condemning it—Sookee unmasks hypocrisy. Above all, she asks the audience—and not just a niche audience, but everyone—to interrogate these underlying social norms.

She further extends the call for critique across all echelons of society, rapping

> doch auch in der mitte links oder im gotteshaus
> gibt's starre männerbilder und diese hoffen drauf
> dass niemand erkennt wie fragil sie sind
> und deswegen leicht dekonstruierbar sind

> but also in the middle the left or in the church
> there are rigid symbols of masculinity and they hope
> that no one will recognize how fragile they are

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[168] While *keeper* is also used in soccer culture in Germany, the fact that there are a slew of other German terms for the word, e.g. *Torwart, Torhüter, Torwächter, Torsteher, Tormann, Torspieler,* or *Schlussmann,* indicates that Sookee's decision to use *keeper* is an aesthetic one. *See* "Keeper," *Leo,* accessed Jan 27, 2018, dict.leo.org/german-english/keeper.

[169] The *Volkslieder* culture of German football is a working class phenomenon stretching back 100 years. For 34 of the most popular soccer songs, organized by club, see "Fussball-Lieder," *Volksliederarchiv,* accessed Feb 26, 2018, volksliederarchiv.de/sportlieder/fussball-lieder/. *See also* Guido Brink and Reinhard Kopiez, *Fussball-Fangesänge: Eine Fanomenologie* (Würzburg, Germany: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999).

and thus how easily deconstructable they are.

Of interest are *männerbilder* and *dekonstruierbar*, words that Sookee invents. Given German's penchant for creating compound nouns by stringing words together, *männerbilder* essentially means "symbols of masculinity," or, where *Vorbilder* means role models, "masculine role models." Yet where *Bilder* also means "pictures" or "images," Sookee refers to the images that circulate through society and how they perpetuate conceptualizations of masculinity. Additionally, *dekonstruierbar*, which comes from *leicht rekonstruierbar* (easy to reconstruct),[170] also invented, is modeled after Jacques Derrida's concept of deconstruction, a core principle in LGBT studies and feminist thought. By replacing *re* with *de*, Sookee flips the script to suggest that fragile masculinity can be easily unraveled.

> In the final section of the first verse, Sookee addresses men directly, rapping

> alle diese pfeifen scheinen zu meinen
> der phallus sei 'ne hete und ihnen zu eigen
> jungs macht den kopp an wenn ihr echte männer seid
> seid ihr kool mit queer alles and're ist brei

> all this hot air seems to suggest
> the phallus is hetero and belongs to them
> guys use your heads if you're real men
> be cool with queer everything else is porridge.

Pfeifen (to blow or to whistle) suggests that masculine posturing is just "hot air." Substituting *Kopp* (Yiddish: "smart person")[171] for *Kopf* ("head"), Sookee invites male listeners to "use their heads" and "be smart" ("jungs mach den kopp an"). She proposes that if they are real men ("wenn ihr echte männer seid"), then they should accept queerness ("seid ihr kool mit queer"). Curiously, she closes the verse with "alle and're ist brei," a nonstandard German expression. Similar to the phrase *das ist mir Wurscht* (it doesn't matter), a common German idiom constructed from *Wurst* (sausage), Sookee's phrase essentially means "the rest is porridge" (it doesn't matter), and thus constitutes the conscious avoidance of a masculine-based expression. However, according to the *Urban Dictionary*, "he's done his porridge" (British slang) means someone has served time in prison;[172] yet if something "is porridge," it is "just right" or pleasing and acceptable.[173] Sookee thus spins a rhyme modeled on British slang to suggest that those who do not accept queerness remain locked in the prison of social convention, while those who do are "just right." Her knowledge of British English and Yiddish, combined with her skills as a cunning wordsmith, yield creative wordplay in German. Articulating her third-way politics through what is largely understood as an African American art form, this wordplay is perhaps the best example of transcultural vernacular in the song.

> Political messaging becomes most apparent in the hook. Repeated twice, Sookee raps

> pro homo – und die zeit ist reif
> pro homo – dis ist keine leichtigkeit

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[170] "Rekonstruierbar," *Oxford German Dictionary (German-English)*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2015.
[171] "Yiddisher Kop," *Yiddish Slang Dictionary*, accessed Jan 31, 2018, yiddishslangdictionary.com/word/307/yiddisher%20kop.
[172] "Porridge (1)," *Urban Dictionary*, Oct 2 2003, posted by Wise Man, accessed Jan 31, 2018, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=porridge.
[173] "Porridge (4)," *Urban Dictionary*, Sept 9 2012, posted by thatkidfromlondon, accessed Jan 31, 2018, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=porridge.

> wie kann man nur hassen dass menschen sich lieben
> die normalität wüscht sich endlich frieden
>
> pro homo – and the time is ripe
> pro homo – dis is not easy
> how can you just hate that people love each other
> normality finally wants peace.

Avoiding the simple binary inversion *yes homo*, Sookee supplants *no homo* with *pro homo*. Where Brown has argued that "the absorption of 'no homo' into colloquial American English [was] relatively easy," particularly because it consists of soft assonance and lacks "staccato-like syllabic patterning,"[174] *pro homo* stands to become a slogan in German, English, and in any country where English functions as a lingua franca. Sookee's edification of queer people stands to resonate in many countries and cultures. In that sense, "no homo" contains within it significant cross-cultural potential.

Other parts of the chorus work to similar effect. While "die zeit ist reif" can be translated as "the time is ripe," it also implies "the time is neigh," "the time is now," "the time has come," or "it's high time." Indeed, the phrase suggests that queer/trans acceptance is long overdue, another echo of Feinberg's pamphlet on transgender liberation. Sookee nevertheless recognizes a challenge: as she opened with "schwierig, oh, oh, oh," here she states "dis ist keine leichtigkeit" (dis is not easy)—a double entendre that suggests dissing is not cool. Since *Leichtigkeit* also means "effortlessness," she recognizes an uphill battle, especially in a popular music scene where "fag," "faggot," "queer," and "sissy" (or *Schwul*, *Schwuchtel*, and *Homo* in German) function as epithets. Colloquially, *Leichtigkeit* also means "no-brainer;" thus, the line can be read as "this is not a no-brainer," a double negative suggesting the opposite—to wit, "a brainer," i.e. the smart thing to do.[175] Drawing upon hip-hop's longstanding commitment to conflict mitigation, Sookee appeals to reason ("wie kann man nur hassen dass menschen sich lieben"/how can you just hate that people love each other) and calls for peace: an end to the dissing of—and violence against—lesbians, gays, and bisexuals. If we understand Sookee's work as a 'new' transaesthetic, especially when Baudrillard so openly condemned people who did not fit neatly into rigid male/female sex and gender norms, then this provides one more reason why Baudrillard's term deserves redefinition.

In the second verse, Sookee continues marshaling arguments anchored in a critique of religious institutions. To make her point, she draws together the world's major faiths:

> und ganz nebenbei es gibt auch noch alltag
> und ramadan und chanukka oder die weihnacht
> stellt euch vor schwule sind genauso nett und doof
> wie alle ander'n auch das ist einfach so
>
> alle wollen respekt und toleranz für sich
> aber dis gilt irgendwie für and're nicht
> wenn es gott wirklich gibt dann liebt er alle menschen
> wenn es gott wirklich dann sieht sie keine grenzen
>
> and by the way there's still everyday life
> and ramadan and hanukkah or christmas
> imagine gays are just as nice and stupid

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[174] Brown, 301.
[175] "Leichtigkeit," *Leo*, accessed Feb 1, 2018, dict.leo.org/german-english/leichtigkeit.

as everyone else that's just the way it is

everyone wants respect and tolerance for themselves
but dis somehow doesn't apply to everyone else
if there really is a god then he loves all people
if god is real then she doesn't see borders.

To normalize the LGBT community, Sookee points out that its members are as amiable ("nett") or silly ("doof") as anyone. Bringing the listener's attention to holidays (a difficult time of year, especially for the LGBT children of parents who have not accepted their sexuality), Sookee references the world's main faiths by citing their largest festivals, and thereby makes a cross-cultural gesture to unite LGBT communities through the common experience of navigating conflicts with their faiths and families. She further posits that god can be male or female, and that, regardless, god loves all people ("er liebt alle menschen"/he loves all people) and does not see boundaries ("sie sieht keine grenzen"/she doesn't see any borders). Sookee's final gesture strikes at the root of religious patriarchy—the very institutions that, through their oppression and suppression of homosexuality, have provided the ideological justification to marginalize lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people. Because these lines speak from, to, and across shared cultural and religious traditions, Sookee's strategy is decidedly transcultural. Again, such strategies underscore the importance of redefining transaesthetics to refer more accurately to transcultural aesthetics, particularly because the scope, reach, and power of these institutions are transnational and speak to any number of cultures.

Disempowering Masculinity and Celebrating Trans-femininity

Sookee expends considerable energy upending masculinity. The first verse from "Purpleize Hip Hop" (2011)[176] attacks the patriarchy. Sookee raps

nicht irgendwo irgendwann sondern hier jetzt
lila basis rosa winkel regenbogen queer rap
ich feuer die symbole in richtung dieses phallus
dieser sound macht dass du denkst du hättest hallus
keule siehst du dis auch was da verschwindet
es ist deine macht sieh nur sie ist jetzt ganz winzig
fast süß wie aus plüsch und sehr bald weg
dis is ein gottloses requiem kein track[177]

not somewhere sometime but here and now
purple base pink triangle rainbows queer rap
I fire these symbols at the phallus
this sound will make you think you're having hallucinations
mace do you also see what's disappearing there
it's your power just look now it's totally tiny
all but sweet like from plush and very soon gone
dis is a godless requiem not a song.

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[176] Sookee, "Purpleize Hip Hop," *Bitches Butches Dykes & Divas*, 2011, CD.

[177] "..06..purplize hiphop," *Sookee.de*, accessed Feb 5, 2018, sookee.de/material/lesen/rap-lyrics. The term "hallus" (line 4) is street slang for hallucinations, and young people use it on Internet discussion platforms. *See* "Komplett verschoben! HALLUS auf MDMA," *Drugscouts.de,* June 18, 2014, accessed Feb 5, 2018, drugscouts.de/de/experiencereport/komplett-verschoben-hallus-auf-mdma.

In the first line, Sookee strikes an urgent tone similar to "Pro Homo." In the second, she figures queer/trans symbols—purple bases ("lila basis"), pink triangle ("rosa winkel"), rainbows ("regenbogen"), and "queer rap"—and launches them ("ich feuer die symbole") at the patriarchy, symbolized as a phallus. As the symbol of the international gay rights movement, the pink triangle is particularly salient in a German context, especially given how it was used to mark homosexuals in concentration camps during the Third Reich.[178] Wielding it as a badge of pride, Sookee ensures that the pink triangle shall never again be used as a symbol of denigration and marginalization. Punning on mace ("keule"), a defensive tool for women threatened with sexual assault, Sookee turns it into a weapon to diminish masculine power. To circumvent criticism that "Purpleize Hip Hop" is just another rap song, Sookee declares it is an atheist requiem ("gottloses Requiem") eulogizing the death of the patriarchy.

The song's hook, rapped entirely in English ("how can one purpleize hip hop/we don't imitate we intimidate"), invites listeners to reject hip-hop's normative gender and sex clichés ("we don't imitate"), but also to imagine other strategies ("how do we") to move forward forcefully without hesitation ("we intimidate"). Because Sookee raps in English, and because English is a *de facto* global lingua franca, her call for listeners to actively create queer-friendly spaces in hip-hop not only stands to resonate in Germany, but across Europe and potentially the world. Moreover, by substituting the indefinite third person singular ("one") with nominative personal pronouns (I, you, he, she, we), Sookee frequently improvises the hook in live performances[179] to make the call for involvement and action more personal, intimate, and immediate.[180]

The second verse addresses critics who assert that the promotion of gender/sexual diversity and equality axiomatically leads to the hatred of heterosexuals.

> man munkelt ich sei hetenfeindlich so ein scheiß
> ich bin cool mit jeder hete die pro homo teilt
> check pyro kobito refpolk und gips
> alles satte features homes und ihr rap's der shit
> endlich feiern alle queers hiphop wieder
> und der grund ist offensichtlich meine hits sind lila
> queer leben ist kein partymotto dis teil geht tiefer
> quing is bitch butch dyke and diva
>
> some say I be hatin' on heteros what bullshit
> I'm cool with every het that shares pro homo[181]
> check pyro kobito refpolk and gips
> all deep features homes and their rap's the shit
> queers are finally celebrating hip-hop again
> and the reason is obvious my hits are purple
> queer life isn't a party motto dis goes deeper
> quing is bitch butch dyke and diva.

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[178] Robert Plant has extensively documented Nazi policy against homosexuals during the Second World War. *See* Robert Plant, *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals* (New York: Henry Holt, 1988).

[179] "Sookee: Purpleize Hip Hop – Purple Velvet Tour," YouTube video, 5:41, posted by Springstoff, June 6, 2014, accessed Feb 5, 2018, youtube.com/watch?v=CfLzr-qV8Pg.

[180] During a conversation with Shirlette Ammons, Sookee explains her reasoning for modifying the song in live performances. "Sookee & Shirlette Ammons: Pretty Precious Cargo Tour—Fall 2013," YouTube video, 16:32, posted by Springstoff, May 10, 2014, accessed Feb 5, 2018, youtube.com/watch?v=6WVVJItktxA.

[181] In this line Sookee self-reflexively references "Pro Homo" to address some of her critics.

With "hetenfeindlich" (a non-existent word), Sookee spins a neologism that loosely translates as "hetero-hating." Furthermore, the abbreviation "hete" (heteros), modeled after "homos," is new slang. These creative strategies affirm the neoculturation principle in Ortiz's transculturation model. By specifically naming rappers from Germany's radical left hip-hop scene (Pyro One, Kobito, Refpolk, and Captain Gips), many with whom she collaborates, Sookee not only recognizes their artistry and promotes their careers ("ihr rap's der shit"/their rap's the shit), she demonstrates that rappers committed to queer/trans equality already exist. Bilingual wordplay—for instance, where Sookee deploys the English loan words "features" (guest artists), "homes" (friends),[182] and "shit" (awesome/good)—is also prominent. Referencing *quing* to close out the stanza, Sookee suggests that the concept is not only for queer/trans women ("bitch butch dyke"), but even female pop singers ("diva"). Thus, where Sookee calls upon heterosexual men, she also gestures to women. In essence, Sookee's rhymes proselytize, engendering allies. One wonders what effect lyrics such as these might have on listeners who do not see themselves as benefiting from LGBT equality, especially if this song is able to trigger a transcultural aesthetic experience in listeners.

In "Frauen mit Sternchen" (Women with Asterisks/Women*) from *Lila Samt* (2014),[183] Sookee celebrates all manifestations of womanhood and femininity. The song establishes an unshakeable allegiance to feminist principles at the outset: "Ich fänds unanständig keine feminist zu sein"[184] (I can't imagine not being a feminist).[185] Signaling at once her desire to enfold every conceivable type of femininity, Sookee raps "Ich shließ mich nicht ein ich shließ euch mit ein," a loaded, ambiguously worded line that can be read as "I don't hem myself in/I don't shut myself out/I don't enclose myself" ("Ich shließ mich nicht ein") and "I don't count you out/I include you/I enwomb you" ("ich shließ euch mit ein").[186] Thus, the line poetically affirms a welcoming, inclusive attitude. Sookee then cites a dazzling array of feminist figurations in English and German: "ladies divas dykes," "tribaden ultras amazonen" (scissorers ultras amazons), "bitches inter weiber [hags] homos," and "macherinnen babes pans" (doers/makers babes pansexuals), all of which are modeled after similar concepts found in Feinberg's pamphlet on transgender liberation.[187] Throughout the song, Sookee gives shout-outs to essential feminist thinkers, including philosopher Olympe de Gouges, musician Clara Schumann, critical theorist Simone de Beauvoir, and communist revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg. The opening verse concludes with "Alle anders alle gleich/Alle sternchen mitgemeint" (Everyone else everyone equal/All the asterisks all the people). As the song shifts into an extended instrumental, the allegiance to strong female figures resonates in an edited sample of Sarah Jones' spoken-

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[182] "Homes (1)," *Urban Dictionary*, May 5, 2003, posted by Manzy, accessed Feb 5, 2018, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=homes.

[183] Sookee, "Frauen mit Sternchen," *Lila Samt*, Springstoff Records, 2014, CD.

[184] Sookee, "Frauen mit Sternchen," *Genius Media*, Mar 1, 2015, transcribed by Ileana Exara, accessed Feb 7, 2018, genius.com/Sookee-frauen-mit-sternchen-lyrics.

[185] The expression literally translates "I'd find it rude not to be a feminist," but Sookee uses a more informal translation on merchandise.

[186] The misspelling of *schließen* as "shließen" is deliberate. Sookee sometimes leaves out the c in German words that have an -sch suffix or prefix, e.g. "shreiben" for *schreiben* (to write) or "Shwester" for *Schwester* (sister).

[187] "There are other words used to express the wide range of 'gender outlaws': transvestites, transsexuals, drag queens and drag kings, cross-dressers, bull-daggers, stone butches, androgynes, diesel dykes or berdache—a European colonialist term." *See* Feinberg, 206.

word piece "Your Revolution," thereby reaffirming Sookee's commitment to revolutionary feminism via the Black feminist tradition. Use of the sample constitutes another cross-cultural and transatlantic gesture.[188]

Yet Sookee's activities are not solely confined to writing, performing, and recording. Acting as tutor, mentor, and educator, the artist leads creative writing workshops—urging, for example, young men to write original material based on their own experiences to avoid reproducing the cissexual assumptions, exaggerations, and homophobic impulses common in mainstream rap in Germany.[189] In addition, panel discussions are held at venues before concerts. For example, on the 2014 Purple Velvet Tour in Bielefeld, Germany, Sookee, Shirlette Ammons (United States), and Lex Lafoy and DJ Doowap (South Africa) discussed their individual ambitions, collaborative aims, and the creative challenges and opportunities they face as women in a masculine-dominated field. Taking questions in two languages from the audience, the ensuing discussion encouraged dialogue and the sharing of knowledge across three continents. Events such as these allow fans to interact with artists, which in turn fosters a sense of community that stands in stark contrast to conventional musician-fan relationships, especially if we understand the idolization of popular music stars as yet another reductive binary sociocultural relationship. Where artists and labels work to destabilize and break down such artificial sociocultural constructions, one might call this the *trans*imagining* of cultural spaces, particularly when such interactions occur at a bilingual international hip-hop event.

These efforts lend themselves to the growth of communities rooted in the celebration of trans-feminism, sexual and gender diversity, inclusivity, and participatory democratic practices. A stenciling workshop held on June 7, 2014 at AJZ Bielefeld (a youth center in Bielefeld, Germany) for young people who identify as lesbian, trans*, and/or intersex sought to create a space in which participants could develop, hone, and share their artistic skills in a supportive environment. This dedication to spreading knowledge through teaching, mentorship, discussion, and the nurturing of artistic practices among fans exemplifies hip-hop's longstanding commitment to the creation and sharing of knowledge, a philosophy Sookee herself echoes in the song "Links Außen" ("Extreme Left").[190] For example, the bilingual line "Each one teach one highfly tiefgang/Alle sind anders wir feiern vielfalt"[191] (Each one teach one fly high be deep/Everyone's something else we celebrate diversity) doubles down on Sookee's advocacy for queer/trans acceptance and, most importantly, urges people to embrace, celebrate, and promote trans equality. Although people in queer communities in Germany have criticized some of Sookee's work, particularly the somewhat clichéd representations of queerness in the video for "Pro Homo,"[192] the aforementioned activities, taken together,

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[188] Sarah Jones, "Your Revolution," *Russell Simmons Presents: Def Poetry*, 2004, Home Box Office Home Video, DVD.

[189] "Ich komme an einem Workshop-Tag morgens in die Schule, und sofort erzählt mir der Lehrer: Hier, das ist der Kevin, das ist unser Rapper. Der hat dann gleich Druck, weil er weiß, ich bin schlecht in Mathe, jetzt muss ich glänzen. Also setzt der sich hin und schreibt ganz schnell viel Text runter. Ich seh dann: Die Zeile ist von Massiv, die ist von Haftbefehl, die nächste von Farid Bang. Die bauen sich Mosaike aus Texten von bekannten Rappern zusammen, bekommen aber gar nicht den Raum, sich selbst zu entfalten" and "Ich sage ihm: So, jetzt versuch mal einen Text zu schreiben, in dem du nicht zitierst. Das einzige Thema, das ich vorgebe, ist: Ich." Thomas Gross and Thomas Winkler, "Hau rein, denn die Welt kaputt ist," *Die Zeit*, July 25, 2013, 36.

[190] Sookee. "Links Außen (feat. Mal Élevé & Ben Dana)," *Lila Samt*, 2014, CD.

[191] Sookee, "Links Außen (Featuring Mal Elévé & Ben Dana)," *Genius Media*, Mar 1, 2015, transcribed by Ileana Exaras, accessed Feb 26, 2018, genius.com/Sookee-links-auen-lyrics.

[192] The blog *Brennessel* has archived some of the heated debate that emerged after the video for "Pro Homo" was released. Some commenters came to its defense, while others expressed consternation. *See* "Pro Homo," *Brennessel*, May 20, 2011, accessed Feb 4, 2018, brennessel.blogsport.de/2011/05/20/pro-homo/.

constitute a level of commitment to queer/trans liberation, but also Sookee's bona fides as a feminist hip-hop activist. Given how she embraces English—for example, "Wordnerd Featuring Bad Kat" (2011) is a 50/50-split of English and German—Sookee's work deserves far greater exposure beyond the German-speaking world.[193] Her work also informs the redefinition of Jean Baudrillard's outdated and chauvinistic term transaesthetics this study argues for, certainly in the aid of queer and transgendered people, but also in terms of its potential to function as a stand-in for transcultural aesthetics. The work of Mykki Blanco, which I turn to now, suggests the same.

Mykki Blanco: Hip-Hop's Next Level Transgendered Artist

Hailing from Durham, North Carolina, Mykki Blanco, also known as Mykki Tricky B,[194] is the performance name of Michael David Quattlebaum Jr., a persona the artist initially began exploring in a video art project.[195] Music journalist Reagan Nicole notes that "Blanco's music career began in 2011. In 2012, she released *Cosmic Angel: The Illuminati Prince/ss*, an EP that generated a great deal of buzz on the internet and among publications alike."[196] Daisy Jones, also a music journalist, further notes that

> [w]hen Mykki Blanco emerged on to the scene in 2011, many were quick to box her in as a "gay rapper" or a "drag queen", bypassing more original modes of expression to describe someone who could be many things at once: an NYC riot grrrl, a freaky noise punk, a hip hop queen, a ferocious poet and a performance artist with a blade-sharp wit. Four years later, and it's clear that Mykki has always been more than media words or music industry labels. She's a multi-gendered, multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary artist who can […] push sonic and aesthetic boundaries.[197]

Blanco herself asserts that "'I can be an entertainer and not care about being validated by the music industry—the days of 'Mykki Blanco, Gay Rapper' are over. I am, and always have been, a multidisciplinary artist and I am beginning to live that manifestation.'"[198]

Westword's culture editor Kyle Harris notes that "Blanco raps and sings about everything from the ups and downs of drugs and addiction to his shifting gender identity. He has been an icon for hip-hop-loving queer youth, as he has lived as a trans woman and a genderqueer person while producing some of the most lyrically devastating, smart and inspiring underground hip-hop songs of the past decade."[199] Based in New York, California, and various locations around Europe, Blanco has unique insights about the nature of queer/transphobia on both sides of the Atlantic. Asked how audiences have changed in the United States, and how her work is received in North America and Europe, Blanco remarks:

> The biggest change that I see is a lot of the things that make my music or make my image or make me as a person seem really taboo to a lot of people in these

[193] "Wordnerd" appears on Sookee's 2010 album *Quing*.
[194] Reagan Nicole, "The Future of Hip-Hop Is Black & Femme: 4 Artists to Watch," *Afropunk*, Aug 29, 2017, accessed Feb 13, 2018, afropunk.com/2017/08/future-hip-hop-black-femme-4-artists-watch/.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Daisy Jones, "Enter the dark and fearless world of Mykki Blanco," *Dazed Magazine*, Nov 17, 2015, accessed Feb 13, 2018, dazeddigital.com/music/article/28438/1/enter-the-dark-and-fearless-world-of-mykki-blanco.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Kyle Harris, "Rapper Mykki Blanco on Why He Won't Just Say 'Fuck the Administration'," *Westword*, Feb 23, 2017, accessed Feb 14, 2018, westword.com/music/rapper-mykki-blanco-on-why-he-wont-just-say-fuck-the-administration-8823393.

> American audiences, which is why I haven't toured much here. I've been living and touring so much more in Europe, because people weren't as open-minded [in the United States]. A lot of my identity politics seem super-taboo to American audiences. And now we've so much of a larger genderqueer and transgender presence, and gay marriage passed in America, which was a really big touchstone for a lot of people.[200]

Building on the increasing acceptance of queer and transgendered people, Blanco observes that "people are more comfortable"[201] because they may

> engage with a queer entertainer and for some reason not have to have their own identity entwined with enjoying my music—or, at the same time, people who feel celebrated and proud to come to the shows and feel like they're inhabiting a safe space and feel like they have a place where they can enjoy my kind of music or live music in general and not have to share space with people who would put them down or judge them.[202]

Audiences, it seems, have begun opening up to trans artists, even if they are not personally invested in queer/trans politics. This suggests that Blanco's music very likely can, and does, trigger a profound aesthetic experience in listeners regardless of their own predilections.

Despite increased acceptance, however, Blanco reports her own experiences with discrimination, both in the U.S. and abroad:

> There are definitely certain places in Europe where I've experienced more transphobia. Portugal, the South of Europe. I love the Unsound festival and my fans in Poland, but I think the country is miserable and I hate performing there. Overall, I think it depends on the culture. Some people are still very, very closed-minded. America has changed in the last five years, but there are ignorant people everywhere. They passed a really bigoted piece of legislation where I grew up, discriminatory against transgender people. People don't even know the extent of what the law does – it's actually so much more than just a "bathroom bill". It also has to do with workers' rights and civil rights. But overall, I think things are moving forward.[203]

In spite of this optimism, Blanco experienced a bizarre form of anti-trans discrimination after falling asleep aboard a Delta Airlines flight in the United States in July 2017. Marquita Harris reports that "when Blanco awakened he was subjected to an investigation by the police and the threat of an FBI report being filed [because a] passenger seated next to him allegedly called the police and complained about his seatmate."[204] While the passenger claimed "that he was 'not comfortable' sitting next to the openly queer artist and activist," Blanco asserted on Twitter that the police officer who arrived on the scene "threatened to send him to jail if he continued to ask questions,"[205] thus underscoring the persistent institutional prejudices that exist against queer/trans people. Blanco, however, does not embrace political activism:

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[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Dennis Agyemang, "'I was really scared' – an interview with Mykki Blanco," *Siegessäule: Das Queere Onlinemagazin aus Berlin*, July 5, 2017, accessed Feb 13, 2018, siegessaeule.de/no_cache/newscomments/article/2812-i-was-really-scared-an-interview-with-mykki-blanco.html?PHPSESSID=e6f6dcc140d2260ef4847b1eb8b5c3e4.
[204] Marquita Harris, "Mykki Blanco Fell Asleep On A Flight & Woke Up The Subject Of A Homophobic Investigation," *Refinery 29*, Feb 18, 2017, accessed Feb 13, 2018, refinery29.com/2017/02/141668/delta-mykki-blanco-homophobic-passenger.
[205] Ibid.

> People often tell me that [doing] my show is unabashedly, in itself, a political statement. I would never necessarily call myself an activist. A lot of people have called me an activist. I just feel like there are certain things that are important to talk about, and I use my platform to speak about [them]. When it's important to use my platform to act on it, I do. But I don't have any kind of political strategy.[206]

Yet even without donning the activist mantel, Blanco's output invites listeners to engage with queer and transgender people, politics, and issues. How might this occur, especially when someone is not personally invested or sympathetic?

If we recall Fluck's thoughts on aesthetic experience, any of the figures Blanco explores in her work—from tough, aggressive so-called "homo thugs" and adulating fanboys to posh drag kings and queens and even, at times, tender manifestations of Blanco's feminine side—we can see how these fictive postulations for the straight, heteronormative members of the audience who are 'opening up' to Blanco's work offer an opportunity for extension. Blanco's material, I argue, creates the chance for audiences to safely explore some of the contours of queer/trans life and love, many of which, but certainly not all, are quite common to the human experience. For instance, queer/transphobia and the violence visited upon queer folks simply because they do not ascribe to the binary gender and sexual norms of society are one obvious exception. Since aesthetic experience requires the viewer/listener to engage in transfer (by investing their own memories, thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations to actualize what they encounter), then we can begin to understand how people, both in and outside the queer/trans community, are able to connect with Blanco's work. For insiders, the content of Blanco's songs, while perhaps more 'real' because it reflects their own lived experiences, is still semi-fictional; for outsiders, the subject matter is decidedly fictional—perhaps even strange. In both cases, however, audiences must bring whatever figures, actions, and situations they encounter to life to make them 'real.' As I will show in the following analyses, it is precisely the power of aesthetic experience that allows audiences of whatever sexual persuasion or gender orientation to consider, and thereby empathize with (but also potentially reject), queer/trans concerns.

Confronting Gil Scott-Heron's Proto-rap Homophobia: "Wavvy" (2012)

American spoken word artist and poet Gil Scott-Heron is partially responsible for the anti-homosexual sentiments that have been a part of hip-hop from the beginning. While artists have recently begun to "fully consign lingering homophobic attitudes to the dustbin," and Scott-Heron most definitely was "a product of his time […] who contributed towards the retrograde, derogatory view of homosexuals,"[207] the spoken word performer unleashed a bevy of poetic put-downs in "The Subject Was Faggots" (1970), including:

> 34th street and 8th avenue
> Giggling and grinning and prancing and shit
> Trying their best to see the
> Misses and miseries and miscellaneous misfits
> Who were just about to attend the faggot ball
> Faggots who had come to ball
> Faggots who had come to *ball*

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[206] Harris, "Rapper Mykki Blanco."

[207] Gil Scott-Heron, "The Subject Was Faggots," *Genius Media*, 2015, annotated by Jimmytwoeyes, accessed Feb 14, 2018, genius.com/Gil-scott-heron-the-subject-was-faggots-annotated.

> Faggots who were balling
> Because they could not get their balls inside the faggot hall
> Balling, balling, ball-less, faggots
> Cutie, cootie and snootie faggots
> […]
> Had there been no sign on the door saying:
> "Faggot ball"
> I might have entered
> And God only knows just what would have happened
>
> The subject was faggots.[208]

Revealing his homophobia in the second last line (where Scott-Heron subtly alludes to his fear of being sexually molested and/or possibly 'turning gay'), the majority of the verse mocks homosexuals. While one might marvel at Scott-Heron's poetic riffing on *ball*, e.g. a gala, to fuck, to cry, and testicles (in particular, being "ball-less," i.e. without them—that is to say, not manly), the stanza makes clear the artist's disdain for homosexuality, a sentiment common in both black America and the United States at the time.

It is precisely these sorts of sentiments that Blanco contests in "Wavvy" to try and recoup space for queer/trans people. In the first verse, Blanco raps

> Welcome to Hell bitches, this is Mykki Blanco
> New World Order motherfucker, follow *pronto*
> Get in line nigga
> Your soul is mine nigga
> You scaredy cat pussy motherfuckers can't deliver
> Maybe she born with it, maybe it was Maybelline
> All white Blanco give your heathen ass a christening
> Niggas so greasy in the daylight, he glistening
> "Oh this fag can rap" yeah they saying that they listening.[209]

Addressing detractors, Blanco commands them to "follow pronto/get in line," later rapping, "'Oh this fag can rap' yeah they saying that they listening." In addition to using *pronto* (a loan word from Spanish) for *now*, Blanco takes control of the epithet "fag" to neuter its ugly rhetorical power. Referencing George Bush's phrase "New World Order," Blanco suggests that change is afoot: on the one hand, the acceptance of genderqueer rappers and, on the other, a world where queer and transgendered artists are leaders no longer relegated to the periphery. She further asserts that beauty is innate ("Maybe she was born with it") or sculpted ("maybe it was Maybelline"), thereby referencing self-fashioning not only for people in queer (or drag) culture, but anyone—for instance, so-called metrosexuals, "young, urban, heterosexual male[s] with liberal political views, an interest in fashion, and a refined sense of taste."[210] Thus, by situating queerness within a more general metaphor of beauty, Blanco crafts a clever stanza that invites listeners, straight or otherwise, to fill the song in with their own memories, thoughts, or feelings of efforts to make themselves attractive.

Blanco continues disarming her critics, rapping

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[208] Gil Scott-Heron, "The Subject Was Faggots," *Genius Media*, 2014, transcribed by KanYeezyYouDidItAgain, accessed Feb 14, 2018, genius.com/8692015.

[209] Mykki Blanco, "Wavvy," *Genius Media*, 2014, transcribed by asctx, accessed Feb 14, 2018, genius.com/Mykki-blanco-wavvy-lyrics.

[210] "Metrosexual," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.

> Mother fuckers y'all can go home
> I'm the new Rufio
> Y'all ain't know
> I pimp slap you bitch niggas with my limp wrist, bro
> What the fuck I gotta prove to a room full of dudes
> Who ain't listening to my words cuz they staring at my shoes.

Declaring himself "the new Rufio," Blanco intertextually references *Hook* (1991), a fantasy film and sequel to the movie *Peter Pan*.[211] In the film, a spikey-haired punk named Rufio leads the group known as The Lost Boys after Peter Pan becomes the adult Peter Banning.[212] Because Rufio is a cocky, charismatic, serious, and aggressive character who eventually declared loyalty to Peter Pan after he returned to battle Captain Hook (the commander of the pirate ship Jolly Roger),[213] Blanco casts herself as a subversive, yet loyal, character and leader. Thus, it is relatively easy to understand why applying Fluck's thoughts on aesthetic experience is sensible. Listeners have the opportunity to enact, and therefore identify with, Rufio. Challenging the notion that homosexuals are weak, Blanco raps "I pimp slap you," a subtle reference to, and twist upon, the expression "to bitch slap." Blanco, however, does not do so with an open hand, but with a "limp wrist," thereby imbuing a clichéd symbol of male effeminacy with power. More interesting still, Blanco issues "bro" as a rejoinder, which seems to suggest no harm is intended. In a final rhetorical flourish, Blanco questions why she should seek the acceptance of male audiences when they are more interested in her footwear than the content of her rhymes. Given the appeal of sports shoes in hip-hop culture ever since Run-D.M.C. built their image around Adidas sneakers, Blanco's strategy is a flash of genius. She turns an iconic hip-hop symbol around on itself. Reinforcing the notion of hip-hoppers as metrosexuals (through the suggestion that "dudes" are interested in "shoes"), Blanco's strategy elevates queer/trans rappers to positions of power, and thus challenges Scott-Heron's absurd characterizations in "The Subject Was Faggots" that revel in, and reveal, proto-rap's belligerent heteronormative attitudes, stances, and posturing.

In the hook to "Wavvy," Blanco takes back the metaphorical space of the club for queer/trans people, rapping

> We...we we make love to the night
> In the back of the club yeah we feeling alright
> L-lights lights low
> This shit feel crazy
> Low key loose niggas know
> We getting wavvy.

Cleverly, Blanco utters "we" three times and actually avoids mentioning queer or trans people. Thus, the listener, whatever their proclivities, are welcome. The music video, which was directed by the award-winning Italian-born director Francesco Carrozzini,[214] further undercuts Scott-Heron's dismissal of "faggot balls," namely through lush visual depictions of queerness in a darkened club. In addition to standard imagery of dancing and the imbibing of drugs (for which "wavvy" is a substitute for 'high'), the club characters are

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[211] "Hook (film)," *Neverpedia*, accessed Feb 18, 2018, neverpedia.com/pan/Hook_%28film%29.

[212] "Rufio," *Neverpedia*, accessed Feb 18, 2018, neverpedia.com/pan/Rufio.

[213] Ibid.

[214] The video is available online. *See* "Mykki Blanco – Wavvy – Directed by Francesco Carrozzini." YouTube video, 4:51, posted by Mykki Blanco, Aug 21, 2012, accessed Feb 21, 2018, youtube.com/watch?v=sokeAMDm7mk.

costumed in lavish outfits, thereby normalizing drag culture, cross-dressing, and, in one scene, an obese female figured as a sex symbol—a clever twist on the notion of curvaceous rap divas that exist primarily for hetero male pleasure. The club scene, while modeled on actual clubs, is fictional, and the audience must invest their own memories and experiences (or, for those who have never been to one, their fantasies) to make it 'real' through visual cues. In this way, viewers, at least in this instance, come to understand that queer/trans people are, in Blanco's words, "alright." They inhabit such spaces and always have, and this is an important step towards normalization and acceptance. Although one might criticize the suggestive violence in Blanco's lyrics—with the artist rapping at one point, "I scalp these haters with a sickle I'm a sling blade/I'm cut-throat bitch, I cut throats bitches keep away"—Blanco's use of threats of physical aggression is common, especially among rappers, both straight and queer, who draw upon metaphorical violence to signal power. Indeed, Blanco's use of violence and aggression, so popular in gangsta rap, might constitute yet one more strategy to bring about acceptance of so-called queer rap in people who might otherwise reject it. Whatever the case, by aggressively countering anti-homosexual sentiments, Blanco embodies the homo thug *de jure* while opening up space for queer/trans people in hip-hop.

Queering English-language Raps with Foreign Language Wordplay

Blanco's linguistic dexterity becomes apparent on *Mykki* (!K7 Records, 2016), the artist's first full-length release. In the opening verse of "I'm in a Mood," Blanco raps

> Sweatpants they Gosha
> La costra nostra
> Zip lock to potions
> I left my lip gloss and lotion
> I fuck with some bumpkins
> They cook me gumbo and okra
> Look inside my soul
> Please call Deepak and Oprah.[215]

Rhyming the Russian designer fashion label "Gosha" with "La costra nostra" (the Sicilian term for mafia), Blanco continues the rhyme scheme by adding "okra," a vegetable with origins in western Africa,[216] and "Oprah," the first name of successful talk show host and media mogul Oprah Winfrey. By adroitly exploiting words that end in an *ah*-sound, Blanco crafts cross-lingual and cross-cultural rhymes that resonate from Russia, Italy, and Africa to the United States. In that sense, Blanco overtly deploys a transcultural strategy.

However, Blanco also temporarily abandons notions of queerness. For example, she raps "I left my lip gloss and lotion," which could be taken to mean that he did not bring them along (or apply them), instead choosing to self-represent as a straight male. In the next line, he raps "I fuck with some bumpkins," which suggests that Blanco is hanging out with some rural friends. We know that he does not deploy "fuck with" as a synonym for "to mess with," "to play around with," or "to annoy" because in the very next line Blanco claims that they have made him dinner. Nevertheless, he takes a stab at normative culture when he raps "Look inside my soul/Please call Deepak and Oprah," a reference to Winfrey and pop alternative medicine

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[215] Mykki Blanco, "I'm in a Mood," *Genius Media*, 2017, transcribed by ekans, accessed Feb 18, 2018, genius.com/Mykki-blanco-im-in-a-mood-lyrics.
[216] "Okra," *Etymonline: Online Etymology Dictionary*, accessed Feb 18, 2018, etymonline.com/word/okra.

guru Deepak Chopra, who often appears on Winfrey's show peddling New Age healing techniques. Blanco teases people who ascribe to alternative philosophies to suggest that while they might easily accept practices outside the bounds of accepted medical practice, at the same time they do not accept people who exist outside society's heteronormative framework. If so, it is a rather clever ploy that advances, whether conscious or not, queer/trans acceptance.

In "Fendi Band" (where Fendi refers to an Italian fashion label), Blanco uses multiple linguistic references to weave a tapestry of associations. In the opening verse, Blanco raps

> I'm like
> Fuck being low key
> I'm never low with it, slow with it
> Finish it wide open I aim to put my nose in it
> No limit soldier I'm like whoa there, whoa there
> Make me feel so good holy ghost on my *Po* oh yea
> Black madam, baby, I'm Morticia Addams
> Don Blanco coming through, In a silk Yohji suit
> Cocaine trail Snow White body's blue
> I got your fey face spooked on my foo foo juice.

Rapping "Po" in line six (German for "ass," "tushie," "bum," "fanny," or "buttocks")[217] and connecting it with "slow with it," "no limit soldier," and "Make me feel so good," Blanco depicts a male homosexual encounter. After fashioning herself as a "Black madam" and linking to the strong matriarchal figure Morticia from the campy, faux-horror TV show *The Addams Family*, Blanco refers to herself as a "Don," the Spanish and Portuguese title for a gentleman, also used in Italian Mafioso culture.[218] Yet this "Don Blanco" is draped in a "silk Yohji suit," a reference to Yohji Yamamoto, a Japanese designer known for avant-garde fashion.[219] After a quick reference to Snow White, which allows the emcee to re-feminize herself (and which also suggests, because of the song's sexual theme, a cocaine-infused sexual romp), Blanco raps "I got your fey face spooked on my foo foo juice." Fey, a Scottish term for otherworldly,[220] describes the face of an imagined lover; "foo foo juice" is slang for high quality men's aftershave or cologne.[221] With these references sliding back and forth between American pop culture, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Japan, Scotland, and even France/New Orleans ("madam"), Blanco attains a rich depiction of masculine and feminine self-representations, particularly in the last four lines. While undoubtedly an English-language rap, Blanco's use of other languages imbues it with a remarkable degree of transculturality. Furthermore, by sliding in and out of these various figurations, Blanco not only transforms him/herself, but the audience through aesthetic experience. Whether or not the listener accepts or rejects these transformations is entirely up to the individual. Nevertheless, he or she must navigate and enact them beforehand. In other words, even if a listener ultimately rejects Blanco's gender play, that person has already imagined him or herself as sliding

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[217] "Po," *Leo*, accessed Feb 18, 2018, dict.leo.org/englisch-deutsch/Po.
[218] The user PDA provided this insight. *See* Mykki Blanco, "Fendi Band," *Genius Media*, 2017, annotated by PDA, accessed Feb 18, 2018, genius.com/12260445.
[219] Ibid.
[220] "Fey," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.
[221] "Foo foo juice," *Urban Dictionary*, Jan 13, 2005, posted by GuinessFan, accessed Feb 18, 2018, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=foo+foo+juice.

between these figurations of masculinity and femininity. Perhaps that more than anything else is the power of Blanco's rhymes and performance.

In "My Nene," Blanco experiments with German, Hindi, Japanese, Italian, and Portuguese. The title is taken from a Spanish slang term for males that roughly means "honey," "hun," "sweetie," "babe," or "baby"—in other words, a term of endearment for a romantic partner, but also "for family, friends, and even sometimes strangers in a joking or 'light-hearted' manner, depending on the context."[222] In an interview with *The Fader*, Blanco explains:

> "My Nene" is one of those songs where I get to play with gender roles. As a queer artist, sometimes on a certain song I on purpose want to play with universal things. I on purpose want to make sure that I use wording that doesn't gender what I do so that it can have a universal appeal. "My Nene" is one of those songs where I'm using words that could be applied affectionately to a man or a woman, and I'm doing it *on purpose*. For me I'm definitely talking about a guy, *that's my baby, that's my nene*, but through the wording and through not gendering it, also a straight guy or straight woman could listen to that song and completely identify with it.[223]

Blanco explicitly identifies the power of rhetorical choices and the deliberate, selective use of language to initiate identification in listeners not already sympathetic to queer/trans concerns. To achieve the interplay of gender in the song, Blanco experiments with vocal inflection. In the first half of verse one, she raps from the point of view of a groupie,[224] which is aurally marked by an overly exaggerated, high-pitched lilt:

> My baby my groupie my number one sway
> You're so hard it feels like the summer sun
> Here we come
> Boy am I in luck
> Shorty's bad as fuck
> One look at the booty make my noodle wanna bust.[225]

In the second half, Blanco raps in a distinctly lower register to achieve a gruff masculinity:

> You the kinda *Mahler*
> Make a nigga holler
> Jumpin' out of my Aermacchi
> Screaming like a Maharaji
> Bitch, you like a Tamagotchi
> Introduce you to my mommy
> Damn you're like my favorite hobby
> Make a nigga hurt somebody.

These vocal techniques figure two distinct speakers: the first, an imagined lover; the second Blanco herself, and the emcee embodies both through performance. Communicating infatuation, Blanco utilizes multiple languages to dazzling effect. First, we know that the relationship between the characters is one of sexual lust, with Blanco rapping "Boy am I in luck" and "One look at the booty make my noodle wanna bust"

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[222] "Nene (3), *Urban Dictionary*, Jan 23, 2011, posted by Mamisonga25, accessed Feb 19, 2018, urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=nene.

[223] Ann-Derrick Gaillot, "Mykki Blanco Explains The Meaning Of Every Song On *Mykki*," Sept 13, 2016, accessed Feb 19, 2018, thefader.com/2016/09/13/mykki-blanco-album-track-by-track-interview. Italics in the original.

[224] While Regina Bradley has proposed the new trope *groupies* for sexually rapacious women and men in hip-hop, I use the term here in a more traditional sense, i.e. the type of fan that will do anything to get as close to a musician as possible. *See* Bradley, 187-189.

[225] Mykki Blanco, "My Nene," *Genius Media*, 2017, transcribed by duffy120, accessed Feb 19, 2018, genius.com/Mykki-blanco-my-nene-lyrics.

("noodle" a synonym for penis and "bust" a synonym for orgasm). Here, Blanco raps from the point of view of the groupie, which allows Blanco to self-adulate by admiring his own body ("booty"/ass). Next, Blanco refers to her lover as a *Mahler*, German for painter, but also a reference to the Austrian composer Gustav Mahler who, as a musician herself, Blanco may adore. Blanco then rhymes *Mahler* with "holler," which suggests that the object of her desire makes Blanco want to scream. Furthermore, the infatuation is so intense that Blanco declares she wants to jump out of her "Aermacchi," an Italian firm that produced aircraft, or possibly a line of classic European motorcycles. In either case, the feelings are so strong that Blanco wants to leap from a vehicle, and listeners, even if they have not thought about doing so themselves, must connect this suggested action with their own previous experiences of irrational behavior. Rhyming *Aermacchi* with "Maharaji," a twist on *Maharaja* (Hindi for Indian prince, from Sanskrit meaning "great king" or "high king"),[226] Blanco spins another screaming metaphor. Similarly, Blanco rhymes "Maharaji" with "Tamagotchi," the Japanese digital pet toy popular in the late-twentieth century. Thus, Blanco characterizes the love interest as a beloved pet—a common way people in love apprehend and refer to one another. While the intensity of the infatuation makes Blanco want to engage in dangerously erratic behavior (including even violently protecting her beloved from other suiters), it also inspires the emcee to rap across a number of languages. Like the previous cross-cultural references and allusions, these too pull the listener into multiple cultural spaces at once. A deft and rather impressive strategy, Blanco's word choices and rhyming patterns strongly suggest transcultural vernacular.

In the song's outro, Blanco repeatedly intones "Tua e magica/So più lo es per me." While *Genius Media* user ncasale claims that these lines are Italian (and roughly translate to "You're magic/And you're all mine"),[227] the utterance is not strictly Italian. "Tua e magica" seems to be, but "So più lo es per me" could also be Portuguese, meaning "Just ask me." In that sense, Blanco raps "You're magical/Just ask me," i.e. ask me (what I think about you). While all of the aforementioned word choices express varying degrees of affection, it is the wordplay and rhyming across languages that make Blanco's rap so remarkable. "My Nene" is one of the finest examples of Blanco's skills as a wordsmith, and the use of languages in this way shows Blanco operating as a trickster across multiple languages. While these words queer, i.e. make strange and invite the listener to question what is being uttered, what for all intents and purposes are English rhymes, the use of additional languages imparts the song with a marked degree of transculturality.

Although these layers of nuance may be lost on the casual listener, die-hard fans might be inspired to undertake further research. Whatever the case, "My Nene" holds tremendous power to trigger a transcultural aesthetic experience in the listener, and this is true of any listener, regardless if he or she identifies and/or sympathizes with such figurations of queer/trans love and culture. For those who already do, they are likely to welcome such representations in a rap song. For those who do not, there is reason to believe that Blanco's rhymes could make them more sympathetic. However, even if they ultimately reject these notions of queerness, such listeners nevertheless have to navigate and enact these postulations. In other words, unsympathetic listeners still *get queered*, whether they like it or not. Perhaps this is why people

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[226] "Maharaja," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, version 2.2.1 (178), 2013.
[227] Mykki Blanco, "My Nene," *Genius Media*, 2017, annotated by ncasale, accessed Feb 19, 2018, genius.com/11050271.

respond so harshly to suggestions of homosexual and trans love in rap music. Bumping up against and challenging their own heteronormative assumptions, such suggestions likely cause cognitive dissonance.

Yet while listeners might not accept Blanco or queer/trans culture on first listen, the subversive potential of Blanco's rhymes, courtesy of the transfer required of aesthetic experience, just might prime them to become more accepting in the future. In that sense, the gender and sexual interplay that unfolds through the selective use of vocabulary from two, three, four and, in the case of "My Nene," five and even six languages, further suggests why Baudrillard's concept of transaesthetics needs redefinition. With regard to the edification of queer/trans people, this is particularly salient since Baudrillard, much like Gil Scott-Heron, belligerently dismissed and disparaged such people in his original articulation of the term. At this point, then, transaesthetics not only functions as an abbreviation for transcultural aesthetics, but for any artistic effort (visual, aural, or oral) that strives to elevate queer/trans people and legitimize them so that they can have their place, with all due rights and protections under the law, in our societies. Given the levels of hate, discrimination, and violence still delivered upon them, that is significant. Since this occurs in hip-hop, which has long denigrated and marginalized such individuals, that is quite a development.

Conclusions

Even though women and people from LGBT communities have been active in hip-hop in Germany and the United States from the beginning, the culture has had a problem with them, particularly because of the way in which rappers have relied on homophobic and anti-women epithets to dismiss competitors and shore up their masculinity. While second-wave feminism seized upon popular music as an interventionist strategy to challenge the heteronormative assumptions that order society, the rise of the transgender movement in the late 1980s and early 1990s problematized feminist philosophy. The ensuing culture work of artists, scholars, commentators, and activists created a productive tension that ushered in third-wave feminism, which by now includes the LGBT community. Since then, more and more hip-hoppers have foregrounded their sexualities in their music, which has given rise to so-called homohop or LGBT rap. Of course, the music these artists produce might simply be called rap because there is no real reason, minus the concerns of the culture industry (which requires ever more specific genre categories to satisfy marketing needs), to designate yet another subgenre of rap. Put another way, while queer/trans politics and concerns are front and center, such music is simply another variation of rap. As a result, audiences in Germany, the United States, and across Europe more openly embrace LGBT artists today than ever before, and that is an important development that should be recognized on its own merits.

Sookee and Mykki Blanco are two of the leading queer/trans figures in hip-hop today. Sookee, who holds a degree in Women's and Gender Studies, is a hip-hop feminist activist whose work edifies queer/trans people, creates space for them in hip-hop, and elevates women in a male-dominated industry. Marshaling her critiques in German and English with African American Vernacular English accents, Sookee's political project stands to resonate across the German and English-speaking worlds. In that sense, her deeply political project has clear transatlantic and possibly even transnational implications. Given how hip-hop flowed, and continues to flow, across the Atlantic from the United States to Germany, Sookee's

feminist hip-hop activism injects the new understanding of transaesthetics this study argues for with transatlantic, transgendered, and even transcultural dimensions.

Where Baudrillard warned about a loss in aesthetic particularity (and deemed such dissolution transaesthetics), we see linguistic mixing in Sookee's work that is neither German nor English, but both and more. On the one hand, this suggests that Baudrillard's term applies. However, if one moves beyond his simplistic characterization of aesthetic 'loss' to consider what is gained, then it becomes clear why his term, at least as he defined it, is inadequate. Some of Sookee's rhymes, "dis is quing" being one prominent example, evidence language blending to such an extent that trying to render them as strictly German utterances is impossible. More than that, however, such blending, with close careful analysis (and not broad dismissal) allows us to apprehend and understand the particular at the same time. Furthermore, Sookee's aim to elevate genderqueer people in a rigidly binary, heteronormative genre of popular music by evoking *trans*, e.g. transgendered, transsexual, and transvestite, further undercuts Baudrillard's concept of transaesthetics, especially since he marginalized and dismissed transsexuals and transgendered people. In addition, Sookee deploys transcultural strategies—for instance, the subtle linking of the world's three main religions in "Pro Homo"—to draw LGBT communities together through the shared experience of dealing with conflicts between their faiths, families, and sexualities. Thus, if we understand Sookee's project as transnational (given how German and English lyrics are not the domain of individual nation-states and actually speak across a number of countries), transatlantic (hip-hop's flow out of The Bronx and into Europe), transcultural (fusing countries and cultures through common bonds), and, at times, even translingual (lyrics that exist between two or more linguistic systems), then Sookee's work evidences a transaesthetics not in Baudrillard's alarmist sense, but one that is inclusive, robust and, ultimately, more reflective of the present era. What is required, of course, is a sensitivity for aesthetic circumstances that do not accord to rigid, unitary conceptualizations of nation, language, culture, and/or gender and sex—and certainly not to Baudrillard's tacit dismissal of trans people as illegitimate. They are people like anyone else, and they deserve to be recognized as such.

Much the same can be said for the work of Mykki Blanco. As an openly transgendered artist who identifies, presents, and performs as male and female, Blanco's work, while not overtly activist-oriented, is anchored in feminism's concept "the personal is political." By confronting Gil Scott-Heron's "The Subject Was Faggots," Blanco strikes at the heart of homophobia implicit (and often explicit) in his proto-rap spoken word performance, which itself was an extension of the heteronormative and binary gender roles favored by the Black Power and Black liberation movements of the 1960s and 70s. Like Sookee, Blanco intervenes to unravel and disempower the homo/transphobic sentiments that have plagued hip-hop for years. Furthermore, Blanco's use of vocabulary from multiple languages, even though it essentially amounts to loan words, weaves a tapestry of intertextual cultural references. In that sense, Blanco's aesthetic language choices queer, i.e. make strange and invite questioning, what for all intents and purposes are English-language raps. While Blanco "plays with the commutability of the signs of sex"[228] in "My Nene," it would

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[228] Baudrillard, 20.

be mistaken to conclude that this renders audiences "politically indifferent" due to a "confusion of categories," as Baudrillard predicted.[229] Instead, and as the readings I have offered show, Blanco's material, much like Sookee's, centers genderqueer people to insist upon their place not only in hip-hop culture, but society in general. According to Blanco's own insights, audiences on both sides of the Atlantic are 'opening up' to, exploring, and even embracing her work, regardless of their own orientations.

By applying the premises of aesthetic experience and carrying out close readings, I have argued how this might occur, especially for listeners who are not personally invested in queer/trans culture and politics. If Blanco's rich intertextual cultural references initiates a transcultural aesthetic experience in listeners, then there is a good chance that they are able to explore, whether they wish to or not, what it might be like to be transgendered or a genderqueer person, and such an exploration might constitute a form of extension. Blanco's material seems to offer listeners the opportunity to explore aspects of themselves they might not be ready to come to terms with, or even knew existed. In that sense, this speaks profoundly to the power and potential of Blanco's art. Whether or not audiences do, of course, is a question that would require sociological ethnographic research to answer with any seriousness. Indeed, that might be one sensible and important step forward: the study of the reception of queer culture by non-queer audiences and how such reception reorients their views on queerness. If one of the political aims of queer culture is to ensure that transgendered, transsexual, and genderqueer people are accepted as *people* (so that they do not have to endure discrimination and violence), then such a research project might help achieve those ends. In my view, that is worth pursuing and it might be one sensible way forward for researchers who are interested in the potential and power for popular culture to transform audiences to accept what they are not.

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[229] Ibid., 24-25.

Chapter 6

"Digging Their Own Crates": Dan Wolf's *Stateless: A Hip-Hop Vaudeville* and the Hip-Hop Antifascism of Bejarano & Microphone Mafia

One of the enduring metaphors in hip-hop culture is the concept known as "digging in the crates," a phrase that refers to deejays who sometimes go to extreme measures to acquire old and rare records to craft original musical arrangements through sample-based beat-making. Noting that digging "serves a number of other purposes for the production community," including "manifesting ties to [the] hip-hop deejaying tradition, 'paying dues,' [and] educating producers about various forms of music," Joseph Schloss argues that the practice functions "as a form of socialization between producers."[1] Schloss's insight is revealing, especially if by socialization he means that the practice actually *binds* deejays to each other and, thus, begets a community that is local, national, and transnational in scope. In that sense, his observation accords with the acculturation aspect of Ortiz's transculturation model, particularly when digging results in an awareness of the interconnected nature of musical cultures. However, digging is sometimes lauded to the point of becoming romanticized. Schloss continues:

> Evoking images of a developed collector spending hours sorting through milk crates full of records in used record stores, garages, and thrift shops, the term carries with it a sense of valor and symbolizes an unending quest for the next record. Individuals who give themselves to this quest are held in high esteem, and one of the highest compliments that can be given to a hip-hop producer is the phrase "You can tell he digs."[2]

Musicologist Mark Katz picked up the habit while researching his study on the art of deejaying, describing how he "spent time searching for records to scratch and mix in record stores, thrift shops, and the homes of friends and relatives." "As I discovered," he writes, "it's called digging for a reason—it's tiring, hard on the back, and often leaves the digger with dirty hands. But it can also be hugely rewarding, and plays an important role in the education of DJs."[3] For practitioners, digging and deejaying yield an undeniable, and no less important, form of music education, and when the resources they dig come from any number of countries and cultures, then the act of digging is an important step in the transculturation process.

Hip-hop fans, commentators, and practitioners impart a kind of mystical power to digging, sampling, and deejaying. For example, in the documentary *Scratch* (2002), renowned sample-based producer DJ Shadow is shown "sitting alone in the dark, claustrophobic basement" of his favorite Sacramento record store, "musing on the spirituality of digging and the ephemerality of music."[4] Equating the search for rare

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[1] Joseph G. Schloss, *Making Beats: The Art of Sample-Based Hip-Hop* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 79.
[2] Ibid., 79-80.
[3] Mark Katz, *Groove Music: The Art and Culture of the Hip-Hop DJ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 11.
[4] Ibid., 197.

records as "urban archeology" that places one in a state of nirvana,[5] DJ Shadow recounts how the activity "has almost a karmic element."[6] Similarly, well known turntablist Grandmixer D.ST (also known as Grandmixer DXT[7]), who performed on Herbie Hancock's "Rock It" (1983) and thereby brought the technique of scratching to the wider listening public, invokes similar language when he bemoans breakbeat compilations as violating "the sacred crates." Painstakingly digging records he claims not only "enable[s] the hip-hop DJ to become a hip-hop DJ," but also helps him to build his own "uniqueness."[8] Likewise, Grand Wizard Theodore, the pioneer of scratching, bestows god-like power on artists when he asserts that the "people who created hip-hop created *something from nothing*."[9] That view has gained traction: west coast deejay Shortkut uses the language of alchemy and magic when he claims that the "creativity of trying to make something out of nothing" is "what the whole DJ essence is about."[10] How is it that the elements of sound deejays decontextualize, often from a "constellation of musical traditions,"[11] constitute *nothing*? While deejaying and digging require time, practice, and devotion to develop one's talent and skill, diminishing the material one draws from to heap praise on deejays seems misguided, especially in hip-hop, where respect is a highly valued principle. Noted emcee KRS-One (Chris Parker) mentions "respect" 100 times in *The Gospel of Hip Hop* (2009), a spiritual treatise based on hip-hop practices, when he admonishes artists who do not pay respects to their predecessors. "Others can perform the artistic elements of Hip Hop; this is good and highly respected," he writes, "[b]ut if those same performers have no clear idea as to why they perform, then longevity, even as a performer, is out of their reach."[12] KRS-One's comments would seem to call into question deejays who claim that the material they cull from constitutes 'nothing.'

While digging denotes finding and reusing material produced by other musicians, do artists ever draw from their own material to fashion new work? This chapter takes up that question by comparing and contrasting two sets of artists who explore the Holocaust, its repercussions, and the lingering echoes of racial bigotry and cultural chauvinism that persist today. Dan Wolf and Tommy Shepherd's *Stateless: A Hip-Hop Vaudeville* and Bejarano and Microphone Mafia's *La vita*-series are instances where artists cull from their own archives to fashion new works. While both utilize the concept of digging as a creative strategy, they do so in slightly different ways. Relying on a letter penned by Wolf's grandfather as a source text, Wolf and Shepherd craft a theater piece that works through multigenerational, transatlantic spaces to uncover the trauma Wolf's German Jewish ancestors experienced during the Second World War, the result of which reveals the cultural contributions they made to the city of Hamburg. Moreover, the play allows Wolf to reclaim his lost family history. In their collaborative work, Bejarano and Microphone Mafia sample their own recordings from the 1990s to fashion antifascist peace songs that contest ultra-nationalist and extreme

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[5] Bill Brewster and Frank Broughton, *Last Night A DJ Saved My Life: The History of the Disc Jockey* (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 286.

[6] Katz, 197.

[7] Ibid., 5.

[8] Ibid., 159.

[9] Ibid., 147. Emphasis in the original.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., 23.

[12] KRS-One (Lawrence Parker), *The Gospel of Hip Hop: First Instrument* (Brooklyn: powerHouse, 2013), loc 581.

rightwing ideologies. In both cases, these artists seek to educate present generations about past transgressions to prevent future calamity. As a result, they advocate for tolerance, mutual respect, peace, and solidarity. By comparing the work of both groups, I hope to show how, on the one hand, these principles endure through artistic practice and, on the other, how they further demonstrate transcultural aesthetics.

The first half of the chapter focuses on Wolf and Shephard's *Stateless: A Hip-Hop Vaudeville*. To provide context, I briefly characterize what Hilene Flanzbaum and others have called the Americanization of the Holocaust, i.e. creative works that address and articulate the Holocaust it in such a way as to make it understandable for those who did not experience it directly.[13] To position *Stateless* in the canon of those creative responses, I briefly look at the role theater has played. A cursory overview, following Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson, of the so-called transcultural turn in memory studies will help understand *Stateless* as an example of transcultural Holocaust remembrance. With Walter Benn Michaels' view that performing, or enacting, the Holocaust is a crucial step in converting memory into history,[14] I argue, following Winfried Fluck's understanding of aesthetic experience, that the play not only stands to trigger a transcultural aesthetic experience in viewers, but that aesthetic experience is an important mechanism for conveying Wolf's family history to people who never experienced it. After showing how Wolf and Shepherd meld the aesthetics of theater with hip-hop, close readings of the play's exposition and "The Tüdelband Song," one of the play's main musical numbers, will help elucidate the play's transcultural dimensions. If *Stateless* creates an opportunity for viewers to undergo a transcultural aesthetic experience, what evidence does the play provide for understanding transaesthetics not as Baudrillard described it, but how artists and musicians such as Wolf and Shepherd redefine the term through their creative artistic practices?

The second half of the chapter takes up the work of Bejarano and Microphone Mafia, a collaborative project that has yielded material in two, three, and sometimes even four languages. After reviewing the early narratives surrounding hip-hop in Germany and providing background on both groups, I consider "Schir La Schalom," a cover of Yaakov Rotblit and Yair Rosenblum's "Shir LaShalom" (A Song of Peace), that Esther, Edna, and Joram Bejarano, performing as Coincidence, recorded for their album *Lider fars lebn* (Songs for Life) (1995). After considering the historical context from which Rotblit and Rosenblum's song emerged, but also the basic musical elements of the Coincidence cover, I turn to "Schalom" (Peace), the opening track from Bejarano and Microphone Mafia's first album *Per la vita* (2012). Like respect, peace has been one of hip-hop's core principles since James Brown and Afrika Bambaataa collaborated on *Unity* (1984), an EP release that calls for peace and solidarity.[15] Because Microphone Mafia and Bejarano build on not only a core value in hip-hop culture but a universal principle, the song's thematic premise underpins its

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[13] Hilene Flanzbaum, *The Americanization of the Holocaust* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

[14] Walter Benn Michaels, "'You Who Never Was There': Slavery and the New Historicism—Deconstruction and the Holocaust," in *The Americanization of the Holocaust*, edited by Hilene Flanzbaum (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

[15] Dick Hebdige, "Rap and Hip-Hop: The New York Connection," in *That's the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader*, edited by Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal (New York: Routledge, 2004), 227.

transcultural potential. Which musical elements from "Schir La Schalom," if any, are reused in "Schalom," and how does the group draw upon a universal value like peace to craft a transcultural song?

Whereas the Coincidence rendition is sung exclusively in Hebrew, "Schalom" contains verses in German, Neapolitan Italian, and Turkish. With so many languages in a song just three minutes and seventeen seconds in length, one might expect ample examples of language contact and interaction. Yet where these languages, following Janis Androutsopoulos's notion of "stanza-external switching (i.e. one stanza: one language),"[16] are constrained to specific verses, is there a limit in how far "Schalom" can be read as a transcultural text? Do rappers Rossi Pennino and Kutlu Yurtseven utilize these languages symbolically "to make ethnicity claims while targeting a mainstream, monolingual audience," or is it possible—and, in fact, more likely—that the song reaches out from and speaks to several cultural frames at once? Finally, in how far does the song create a chance for listeners to undergo a transcultural aesthetic experience, and what challenges stand in the way of building a transnational peace movement through a multilingual song?

I then turn to "Insanlar," a bilingual Turkish-German track from Microphone Mafia's debut record *Vendetta* (1996), and "Insanlar—Menschen," a collaborative reworking of the song from Bejarano and Microphone Mafia's *La vita continua* (2013). While the original song responded to the much publicized arson attacks on immigrant lodgings across Germany in the early 1990s, the reworked version more generally addresses themes of war, terrorism, and ethnic and racial violence. After discussing the historical circumstances surrounding "Insanlar," I tease out the song's musical dimensions to illustrate how its production team managed to craft a piece of transcultural music. Which elements from "Insanlar," if any, became the basis for the Bejarano and Microphone Mafia collaboration? What rhetorical strategies are deployed to generate empathy for victims of racial and ethnic violence? Because both songs are performed in German and Turkish, one might expect to find instances of linguistic interaction and fusion. However, languages in "Insanlar—Menschen" are constrained to specific verses. Does it nevertheless constitute a transcultural text? Finally, if "Insanlar—Menschen," like "Schalom," possesses the ability to initiate a transcultural aesthetic experience in listeners, what additional measures do Bejarano and Microphone Mafia take up to help listeners have such an experience?

Drawing on a "constellation of musical traditions whose songs, sounds, and practices shape" their own original works,[17] the material in this final chapter provides yet another opportunity for understanding how hybrid musical practices and bi- and multilingual strategies coalesce to create an aesthetic 'unity effect.' On the one hand, these works speak profoundly to hip-hop's open aesthetic malleability; on the other, they further show how artists are able to work deftly in a range of musical traditions and languages to fashion transcultural works of art that stand to initiate a transcultural aesthetic experience. However, and this is especially true with regard to Bejarano & Microphone Mafia, there is a limit to how far such artworks can speak to audiences, primarily because multilingual works are challenging. In that sense, their work serves as

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[16] Jannis Androutsopoulos, "Multilingualism, Ethnicity and Genre in Germany's Migrant Hip Hop," in *The Languages of Global Hip Hop*, edited by Marina Terkourafi (New York: Continuum, 2010), 26.

[17] Katz, 23.

a 'foil' to the argument that highly stylized music of this nature is inherently emancipating or liberatory. Indeed, the challenging and at times 'opaque' nature of multilingual transcultural texts makes them difficult to approach, digest, and make sense of. Above all, because Dan Wolf and Tommy Shepherd's *Stateless* and Bejarano and Microphone Mafia's *La vita* series provide further evidence of transcultural aesthetics, they underscore the importance of expanding upon Baudrillard's concept.

The Americanization of the Holocaust, Aesthetic Experience, and the Transcultural Turn in Holocaust Remembrance

Writing about the so-called Americanization of the Holocaust, Hilene Flanzbaum argues that "on one level, the phrase simply groups many ways that the Holocaust has been represented in American culture; on another, it is political and theoretical quicksand, providing all the pitfalls of postulating about history, nation, and ideology."[18] Citing Alvin Rosenfeld and Michael Berenbaum, Flanzbaum notes that the Americanization of a mostly non-American tragedy has two primary implications. From a critical angle, Rosenfeld argues that American representations of the Holocaust tend to "downplay or deny the dark and brutal sides of life […] to place a preponderant emphasis on the saving power of individual and moral conduct."[19] Flanzbaum equates this type of Americanization with a certain "crassness, vulgarization, and selling out"[20] that potentially diminishes "the devastation of the Holocaust"[21] through the "sugarcoating of gruesome subject matter."[22] Conversely, Berenbaum asserts that American representations of the tragedy are able to "tell the story of the Holocaust in such a way that it would resonate not only with a survivor in New York and his children in San Francisco, but with a black leader from Atlanta, a Midwestern farmer, or a Northeastern industrialist."[23] Flanzbaum concludes that this form of Americanization constitutes the "necessary, and noble, evolution of Holocaust remembrance."[24] While it is beyond the scope of this study, one might recall the well documented instances of transatlantic business exchanges between the U.S. and Germany that not only enabled Hitler's rise to power but the Holocaust itself, thereby seriously questioning any claims that the Holocaust is somehow un-American.[25]

Ever since a dramatized version of *The Diary of Anne Frank* was brought to the stage in New York in 1955, the theater has been one of the main venues for working through the historical trauma of the Holocaust. Mirroring Rosenfeld's insights, social and cultural historian Joyce Antler notes that the stage production of Frank's diary "turned the story of the young victim into a life-affirming triumph" to quickly

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[18] Flanzbaum, 2.
[19] Cf. Flanzbaum, 4.
[20] Ibid., 5.
[21] Ibid, 3.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Cf. Flanzbaum, 5.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Two books that undertake this effort include Antony C. Sutton's 1976 work *Wall Street and the Rise of Hitler* (Forest Row: Clairview Books, 2010) and Edwin Black's *IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2001).

become a "Broadway hit [that] garnered all the top critics' awards, including a Tony and the Pulitzer Prize."[26] Nevertheless, Antler also argues that "the Holocaust on the American stage appeared distant from the conscience, memories, and conflicts of American Jews."[27] Furthering echoing Rosenfeld's observations, Antler writes that even though "[a]udiences did learn about the Holocaust" from the dramatization of a highly edited version of Frank's diary, "they were more likely to be inspired by Anne's courageous struggle than to confront the horrors of the Holocaust itself [or] see themselves suffering from its consequences."[28] Since that landmark production, plays such as *Broken Glass* (Arthur Miller, 1994), *Blue Light* (Cynthia Ozick, 1994), *Unfinished Stories* (Sybille Pearson, 1992), and *Kindertransport* (Diane Samuels, 1993) have positioned the Holocaust within American contexts.[29] Each of these plays, Antler writes, "probes the dilemmas of being Jewish, specifically the need to acknowledge the pain of the Holocaust and the existence of anti-Semitism—even Jewish anti-Semitism—in the contemporary world."[30] While *Stateless: A Hip-Hop Vaudeville* continues that trend, it is a unique addition in that it combines theater and hip-hop.

Warning that "cultural identities, whether African American or Jewish American, derived from imagined relationships with historical events are neither desirable nor inescapable,"[31] Walter Benn Michaels shares Rosenfeld's critical view. Discussing historical fiction that addresses American slavery or the Holocaust, Michaels notes that both events, like any tragedy, "can be and must be either remembered or forgotten."[32] Noting "the dependence of identity on memory,"[33] he observes that it "is racial identity that makes the experience of enslavement part of the history of African Americans today"[34] just as "memories of the Holocaust have sustained Jewish identity" in the second half of the 20th century.[35] Michaels further notes that it "is only when the events of the past can be imagined not only to have consequence for the present but to *live on* in the present that they can become part of our experience."[36] This is important because "a history that is learned," Michaels argues, "can be learned by anyone, and it can belong to anyone who learns it."[37] While *Stateless: A Hip-Hop Vaudeville* enables twenty-first century audiences to learn about the Holocaust, it more specifically sets out to teach the Wolf family history so non-family member may learn it.

Responding to Holocaust-themed works produced between the mid-1980s and 2000, Michaels argues that because some survivors of the Holocaust are still alive, the issue

> is not yet the transformation of history into memory [but] instead an effort
> to forestall what Pierre Vidal-Naquet has called the "transformation of
> memory into history." Once memory is transformed into history, it can

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[26] Joyce Antler, "'Three Thousand Miles Away': The Holocaust in Recent Works for the American Theater," in *The Americanization of the Holocaust*, edited by Hilene Flanzbaum (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 125.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid, 126.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Flanzbaum, 17.
[32] Michaels, 185.
[33] Ibid., 189.
[34] Ibid., 186.
[35] Ibid., 190.
[36] Ibid., 189.
[37] Ibid., 188-9.

no longer be relevant to the project of sustaining Jewish identity. Hence,
the outbreak […] of interest in the Holocaust must be understood less as
a response to the idea that people will cease to know about the Holocaust
than as a response that they will cease to remember it.[38]

Michaels holds that "the reader of the 'performative text'," e.g. a play, novel, poem, or song, "will be in the position not of someone who reads about the 'horror' and understands it; he or she will be in the position of 'facing horror.'"[39] Moreover, "just as the transformation of history into memory made it possible for people who did not live through slavery to remember it," Michaels claims that "the transformation of texts that 'make sense' of the Holocaust into events that 'enact' it makes it possible for people who did not live through the Holocaust to survive it."[40] It is here, then, that Fluck's notion of aesthetic experience becomes salient: "in order to acquire significance and to provide an aesthetic experience," works of art "have to be brought to life by means of an imaginative transfer by the reader"[41] (or audience). "In the act of reception," Fluck argues, "the fictional text or aesthetic object comes to represent two things at the same time: the world of the text and the imaginary elements added to it by the reader."[42] This process, he contends, leads to a "doubleness" in audiences because it "allows us to do two things at the same time: to articulate imaginary elements and to look at them from the outside."[43] Operating in this fashion, *Stateless* creates the opportunity for audiences to enact—or face horror, in Michaels' sense—and thereby learn Wolf's family history as he recovers it in the performative space of the stage.

Stateless is indicative of the so-called transcultural turn in Holocaust remembrance. Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson have argued that transcultural memory "is manifest in a rejection of the formerly pervasive model of container culture,"[44] originally posited in the eighteenth century by German scholar Johann Gottfried Herder,[45] "in favor of a more fluid and transient paradigm of relations between societies."[46] They further point out that even though "the idea of the nation arguably no longer provides a stable framework for analysis, it is not jettisoned but contextualized between the local and the global."[47] Citing the work of Stef Craps and Michael Rothberg on transcultural approaches to the Holocaust, Bond and Rapson point out that

some of the most influential work on the genocide has drawn attention to
the fact that the histories of 'the Holocaust, slavery, and colonial
domination are in fact interconnected, and by refusing to think them
through together (except in a competitive manner) we deprive ourselves
of an opportunity to gain greater insight into each of the different strands

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[38] Ibid., 189.
[39] Ibid., 191.
[40] Ibid., 193-4.
[41] Winfried Fluck, "Playing Indian: Aesthetic Experience, Recognition, Identity," in *Romance with America?: Essays on Culture, Literature, and American Studies*, edited by Laura Bieger and Johannes Voelz (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2009a), 434.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson, "Introduction" in *The Transcultural Turn: Interrogating Memory Between and Beyond Borders* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 9.
[45] Ibid., 7.
[46] Ibid., 9.
[47] Ibid.

of history and to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the dark underside of modernity.'[48]

Craps and Rothberg further state that "claims for the uniqueness of the suffering of the particular victim group to which one belongs tend to deny the capacity for, or the effectiveness of, transcultural empathy,"[49] i.e. empathy generated from the interaction of two or more cultures which extends outward, across, and into others. The commemoration of slavery and the Holocaust in one work addresses a vexing concern commentators in and outside the academy have identified, namely the danger of erasing of one social group's tragedy when another group's tragedy is memorialized.[50] Nevertheless, *Stateless* not only creates the opportunity for empathy to unfold between two distinct social groups, it allows anyone in the audience to learn about tragedy and to experience empathy across a number of social and cultural frames.

Melding Theatrical Techniques with Hip-Hop Aesthetics

As part of the canon of creative responses to the Holocaust,[51] *Stateless* is the only one that melds hip-hop with theater. As founding members of Felonius, a San Francisco Bay Area "collective of actors, rappers, musicians, beatboxers, educators and producers that combines conventional theater styles with the themes, language, music and aesthetics of Hip Hop to create original music and theater,"[52] Wolf and Shepherd strive to cross artistic, musical, and linguistic borders. The production deals with the Gebrüderwolf, Wolf's ancestors who shaped the cultural contours of Hamburg. The Landesjugendring Berlin e.V., a cultural organization dedicated to fostering self-organization, participation, and voluntary work in young people,[53] writes that as "singers, authors, comedians, and revue stars, the Gebrüderwolf suffused melodies from famous operettas with their own comedic lyrics to write and sing popular songs about the city of Hamburg

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[48] Ibid., 9-10.

[49] Stef Craps and Michael Rothberg, "Introduction*:* Transcultural Negotiations of Holocaust Memory," in *Criticism* 53/4 (2011): 518.

[50] Taking a cue from Michaels, Rothberg addresses this by highlighting the existence of a Holocaust Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., but the lack of a monument to commemorate the suffering of African Americans under institutional slavery and/or the brutality of Jim Crow laws. *See* Michael Rothberg, "Introduction: Theorizing Multidirectional Memory in a Transnational Age," in *Multidirectional Memory Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 1-3.

[51] For further reading on the international scope of theatrical productions dealing with the Holocaust, see Elinor Fuchs, *Plays of the Holocaust: An International Anthology* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1987). For a more comprehensive overview of a variety of media materials that deal with the Holocaust, see Judy Galens, *Experiencing the Holocaust: Novels, Nonfiction Books, Short Stories, Poems, Plays, Films & Songs* (Farmington Hills, Michigan: UXL, 2003).

[52] Dan Wolf. "Résumé (2015)," *Dan-Wolf.com*, accessed Mar 5, 2015, dan-wolf.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Dan-Wolf-Resume_2015_CV-Web_PLUS.pdf.

[53] According to the Landesjugendring Berlin website, "self-organization is the central structural feature of youth league work. Participation refers to the rights of children and young adults to shape all matters that affect them in which they are interested. Participation and self-organization leads to diversity and responsibility in voluntary work" (Selbstorganisation ist das zentrale Strukturmerkmal der Jugendverbandsarbeit. Mitbestimmung steht für das Recht von Kindern und Jugendlichen, in allen sie betreffenden und sie interessierenden Fragen mitzugestalten. Mitbestimmung und Selbstorganisation münden vielfach in der Übernahme von Verantwortung, in ehrenamtlichem Engagement). *See* "Selbstorganisation, Mitbestimmung & Ehrenamt," n.d., accessed Mar 5, 2015, ljrberlin.de/themen/wofür%20wir%20stehen.

between 1895 and 1933."[54] By "using the art of the Gebrüderwolf to find their lost identities," Wolf and Shepherd are "inspired by the melody of 'The Tüdelband Song' (a traditional song that today remains Hamburg's unofficial anthem) and a 42-page letter from Dan's grandfather" to create a "theatrical journey of discovery that shows how fate propels creativity to keep memory alive as well as how to cope with the past to be able to handle the consequences of Nazi terror."[55] Noting that the story is "a distinctly German-Jewish one that includes professional disbarment, extermination in concentration camps, and escape via Shanghai to the United States,"[56] the Landesjugendring emphasizes the play's transatlantic, multigenerational, bicultural, bilingual, and multidisciplinary scope. Combining hip-hop's D.I.Y. aesthetics with theater, live instrumentation, vaudeville shtick, history, and re-mixed folk songs,[57] *Stateless* travels fluidly back and forth between the past and present. Funded by cultural organizations in San Francisco as well as the Hamburg Culture Office, *Stateless* epitomizes binational, transatlantic cooperation and engagement.[58]

In terms of visual aesthetics, *Stateless* relies on props, lighting, costuming, and the movement of actors to, from, and around the stage to set scenes and create tension that provide the audience with an immersive experience. To that end, realia plays an important role. For instance, the handwritten letter from Wolf's grandfather becomes a prop. On the one hand, each actor physically handles it, and Wolf and Shepherd exchange the document at crucial moments. Second, enlargements of the letter, fashioned to resemble old, moldering paper, adorn the performance space as posters, and enlargements are laid across the stage to suggest prayer mats. Thus, through its aestheticization, the letter, itself an historical document, becomes a visual metaphor that Shepherd and Wolf physically handle, occupy, and move through. Other examples of realia include mock poster bills for Gebrüderwolf performances, 78rpm vinyl records, and old family photos. Other strategies explicitly link the play to hip-hop aesthetics. For instance, costuming choices—e.g. hoodies, vests, hats, sweat pants, and, in Wolf's case, jewelry, chains, and, in one key moment, a faux gold tooth—are rooted in hip-hop fashion. With Shepherd marshaling the play's aural soundscapes via a Boss

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[54] "In der Zeit von 1895 bis 1933 waren die „Gebrüder Wolf" Sänger und Autoren von populären Hamburger Liedern, Komödianten und Revuestars, die berühmte Operettenme- lodien mit ihren eigenen komödiantischen Texten verbanden." *See* "Jahresbericht 2006: Jugendliche bewegen Berlin – Visionen für eine jugendgerechte Stadt," n.d., *Landesjugendring Berlin e.V.,* 2006, accessed Jan 3, 2016, digital.zlb.de/viewer/content?action=application&sourcepath=15660854_2007_00/ljr_jahresbericht_2006.pdf&format=pdf.

[55] Ibid. "Dabei benutzen sie die Kunstform der „Gebrüder Wolf", um ihre verlorene Identität wieder zu finden. Mit der Melodie eines traditionellen Liedes (das „Tüdelband-Lied" ist bis heute Hamburgs heimliche Hymne) und einem 42-seitigen Brief von Dans Großvater verändert sich die Reise in ein HipHop-Theater. „stateless" ist eine schauspielerische Entdeckungsreise, die zeigt, wie ein Schicksal die Kreativität vorantreibt, um die Erinnerung wach halten, die Vergangenheit bewältigen und die Folgen des Naziterrors verarbeiten zu können."

[56] Ibid. "Ein Deutsch-Jüdisches Schicksal mit Berufsverbot, Ermordung im Konzentrationslager, Flucht über Shanghai in die USA."

[57] More information about the production can be found in the "See More" info box on YouTube. *See* "Full Length Hip Hop theater performance STATELESS featuring Dan Wolf and Tommy Shepherd aka Soulati," YouTube video, 58:31, posted by Dan Wolf, Mar 25, 2015, accessed Jan 3, 2016, youtube.com/watch?v=-jnmOnA77XY.

[58] Ibid. "Stateless has been developed in association with The Jewish Theater San Francisco, Z Space Studio, Intersection for the Arts/Hybrid Project, The Hub of the JCCSF and by the generous funding of the Hamburg Culture Office, TBA's CA$H Grant and the Performing Arts Assistance Program, Zellerbach Family Foundation, Wattis Foundation, WA Gerbode Foundation and the Robert Sillins Family Foundation. Dan Wolf also received the Individual Artist Grant from the San Francisco Arts Commission."

RC-20 digital loop pedal, a microphone, and amplifier (all of which are included as part of the staging), hip-hop aesthetics become most evident in the show's sound design.[59] Combining beatboxing with humming, singing, and the brusque scraping of the microphone, Shepherd utilizes a pallet of sounds that he manipulates, combines, and layers much like a hip-hop deejay. Aside from authentic period recordings of Gebrüderwolf songs,[60] Shepherd provides the sonic foundation for all of the play's musical sequences.

As the only performers, Wolf and Shepherd play a number of characters. Abruptly switching roles mid-scene (often without any visual cues), the amorphous nature of the characters constitute a form of character doubling that one might call role-switching.[61] Where Baudrillard speaks of the "loss of aesthetic particularity" in his original articulation of the concept of transaesthetics, the mutability of characters demonstrates another aspect of the play's transaesthetic nature. Along with diffuse temporal and spatial dimensions and amorphous personae, language too becomes mutable. While the vast majority of the play is performed in English, a number of scenes rely on German characters who speak English with heavily accented (and somewhat stereotypical) stage accents. Moreover, Wolf and Shepherd syncopate their English with German words, phrases, and shout-outs. Lines delivered entirely in German are mirrored immediately afterward in English, and English and German sometimes appear in one performer's utterance or, when both actors work together, as bilingual calls and responses. Much more than the mere conveyance of plot points or storyline, language instigates an array of emotional effects, ranging from the humorous, comforting, and empathetic to dislocation, defamiliarization, and, at key moments, the creation of double consciousness. In short, sound, song, music, melodies, raps, and spoken word combine with the aforementioned visual strategies to evoke a bilingual, binational, and multigenerational aesthetic. When these effects speak from and to various cultural spaces simultaneously and combine into an aesthetic 'unity effect,' they prime the viewer to undergo a transcultural aesthetic experience.

Exposition: Establishing Transculturality

The transcultural aesthetic premises of the play become apparent in its opening sequence.[62] With the performance space cast in near darkness, Shepherd, illuminated from above, stands up-stage at his loop station, entertaining the audience with his beatboxing skills. Building the musical accompaniment, Shepherd vocally mimics and physically mimes a deejay scratching at turntables. As he cuts an imaginary record back and forth, he verbally riffs on the *Plattdeutsch* (Low German) title of the Hamburg folk song "An de Eck steiht'n Jung mit'n Tüdelband,"[63] foreshadowing the song whose historical importance will become evident

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[59] Shepherd communicated the specifics of his equipment via Facebook Messenger on Nov 22, 2016.
[60] Original Gebrüderwolf recordings heard in the play include "Snuten un Poten" and "An de Eck steiht'n Jung mit'n Tüdelband."
[61] Role-switching, like code-switching (where one moves back and forth between two or more languages in one utterance) involves actors moving between two characters at any moment in a theatrical performance.
[62] The performance analyzed here was recorded in San Francisco on May 2, 2005. *See* "Full Length Hip Hop theater performance STATELESS featuring Dan Wolf and Tommy Shepherd aka Soulati," YouTube video, 58:31, posted by Dan Wolf, Mar 25, 2015, accessed Jan 5, 2016, youtube.com/watch?v=-jnmOnA77XY.
[63] This sequence occurs between 1:46 and 1:57.

as the play unfolds.[64] Moreover, Shepherd's performance opens up a diffuse linguistic space through two languages and one vernacular dialect. At the beginning of his verbal scratch, he transliterates the first third of the song title ("An de Eck steiht'") as "I'm the X state," a re-rendering of the play's title. But as Shepherd continues performing the oral scratch, he repeats "X" a number of times before rolling into the remainder of the German title ("steiht'n Jung mit'n"). He then repeats the contraction "mit'n"[65] until "mit" becomes swallowed up in a whirlwind of vocally simulated deejay scratches, an effect that is visually reinforced when Shepherd mimes a tornado funnel cloud with his hand.[66] By code-switching between the shared phonics of "X" (in English) and "Eck st" (German), Shepherd signifies on two languages at once. In this instance, both languages flatten into a translinguistic field that is neither English nor German, but both. Thus, by signifying on Low German and 'cutting' and 'scratching' back and forth between English and German, Shepherd opens a third space of linguistic 'statelessness.' Because a loss in aesthetic particularity is the defining trait of his performance, Shepherd's utterance is an example of transaesthetics.

Cast in low light, Wolf enters the stage. Deconstructing his looping vocal track, Shepherd reduces it to a minimalistic beat and exists. Wolf kneels and arranges pages from his grandfather's letter on the large, matt-like facsimiles laid out on the stage. Shepherd reenters and initiates what appears to be an improvised hip-hop cipher: a freestyle back and forth where each signifies on the other's name. Shepherd greets Wolf with "What up D to the W-O-L-F," to which Wolf replies "What up T to the 'Oh' double M-Y Shepherd."[67] After brief flourishes where they try to outdo each other, they embrace as homeboys. This verbal and physical salutation, borrowed from hip-hop culture and brought to the stage, is unorthodox for the theater. Players seldom, if ever, refer to each other by their real names; by doing so, Wolf and Shepherd aestheticize their real-life personae as fictional characters. Moreover, their physical embrace serves as a visual metaphor for how the play creatively juxtaposes, and at times even melds, the non-fictional with the fictional, the Holocaust with American slavery, English and German, and early twentieth-century Hamburg and late twentieth-century hip-hop culture. Wolf and Shepherd invite the audience to dally within the realms of fantasy and reality simultaneously. This blurring of the fictional and the actual contributes to the development of the play's 'stateless' space. Their portrayal of themselves as themselves anchors the play, which might otherwise be received as fiction, in reality. Understood in this manner, the spectator views the actors as historical agents in the present who represent the cultural spaces from which, and to which, they speak.

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[64] Although never translated in the show, the title in English could be "Boy on the Corner with a Hoop." I refer to it by its German title or, more simply, "An de Eck" for short.

[65] Linguistically speaking, "mit'n" is a contraction of the preposition "mit" (with) and the truncated accusative form of the male article "ein" ("einen")—that is to say, "mit einen." Here "mit'n" represents the vernacular dimensions of the Gebrüderwolf song Shepherd and Wolf will eventually update and modernize.

[66] Shepherd's mime harkens back to *The Wizard of Oz*, where Dorothy and Toto are swept away by a tornado. Similarly, the audience in *Stateless* is transported, among other places, back in time to 1920s Hamburg, Germany.

[67] The exchange occurs at the 3:50 mark.

Forging the Hansestadt Hamburg—Hip-Hop Connection

After the salutation routine, Shepherd inquires about the letter laid out on the stage. As Wolf begins delving into its contents, the two convey details of their family histories, which become intertwined. After Wolf matter-of-factly states, beginning at the 8:50 mark, that his grandfather was born in Hamburg, Germany, Wolf and Shepherd excitedly shout "Hamburg, Germany!!!" in unison. Pointing out renowned sites with emphatic gestures in an imagined urban space, they let loose a series of enthusiastic exclamations:

<div align="center">

DAN
The first city on the Elbe River after it comes inland from the North Sea.

TOMMY
'Next stop Altona.'

DAN
The Alster Lake.

TOMMY
'Next stop Reeperbahn.'

DAN
The red light district.

TOMMY
The Mach Bar.

DAN
The Molotov.

TOMMY
The Wagonbau.

DAN
I think it's *Waaganbau*. Look, the Opperettenhaus theater.[68]

</div>

In many ways, Wolf and Shepherd behave like excited tourists. Due to the absence of visual cues, their exclamations position the audience within one of the play's imagined geographical spaces. For members of the audience already familiar with these places, it requires little to no effort to imagine them. For those with little to no knowledge of the area and region, however, some effort is required. To that end cue words prime the imaginative process, and the names of renowned tourist destinations act as trigger words. A back-to-back utterance (Reeperbahn/The red light district) reinforces the suggestion by providing additional details. In addition to playing tourists, however, the duo performs other roles through slightly differing rhetorical registers, including that of a cartographer (Wolf), sightseeing tour bus guide (Shepherd), and language instructor (Wolf, via his correction of Shepherd's mispronunciation of *Waaganbau*). Subtle in effect, this delicate use of English and German foreshadows more dramatic code-switching to come. The sequence builds to the following exchange:

<div align="center">

DAN
Excuse me. (*Clearing throat and straightening up*) Entschuldigung.

TOMMY
Aaah, haha. Sprecken ze Deutsch?

</div>

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[68] Dan Wolf, 2005, *Stateless: A Hip-Hop Vaudeville* (unpublished script), n.p. The sequence takes place between 8:50 and 9:22.

DAN
(*Miming a soldier falling in line*) Hauptbahnhof.

TOMMY
Hip ban hop? (*Dancing*)

DAN
(*Miming "a little" with his fingers*) Oh, haha!! Ein bissian.

TOMMY
Ah, you *do* speak a little!!
(*Shepherd and Wolf shake hands*)

TOMMY/DAN
(*With backs to audience*) Welcome to Deutschland!!![69]

This sequence quite cleverly splices Hamburg and hip-hop together. After Wolf mirrors English and German (Excuse me/*Entschuldigung*), he dramatically exclaims "Hauptbahnhof" (main train station). Bilingually signifying on the double H in "Haupt" and "Hof," Shepherd replies "Hip ban Hop?" His utterance is important for two reasons: first, Shepherd demonstratively uses his active knowledge of hip-hop to liaison with an unfamiliar language and culture. (By contrast, he will profess an inability to understand German in later scenes.) Second, the bridge Shepherd builds is entirely phonetic. Where mimicry is an essential component to basic verbal communication, Shepherd's effort demonstrates an attempt to interface with a language by repeating what one hears. Underscoring his exploitation of this double H effect is the fact that Hamburg, as one of the main trading hubs in the Hanseatic League, presently uses the city-specific abbreviation "HH" on automobile license plates. Thus, hip-hop (HH) and Hansestadt Hamburg (HH) become aesthetically linked through the embellishment of a mutually shared consonant.

Because the play is a fictionalized period piece surrounding the horrors of the Holocaust, there is perhaps a subtler reason why Wolf and Shepherd signify on the letter. Double H is also the abbreviation for the so-called *Hitlergruß* (Heil Hitler) that signaled admiration, allegiance, and devotion to the infamous leader of the Third Reich. In extreme rightwing Neo Nazi subcultures in the United States and Germany today, the *Hitlergruß* is signified by the coded salutation "8-8." That is to say, where H is the eighth letter in the German and English alphabets, "8-8" functions as a stand-in for *Heil Hitler*. But since Wolf and Shepherd occupy and inscribe the double H with new meaning (Hansestadt Hamburg/hip-hop), their gesture is a subversive attempt to semantically disempower the secret 8-8 salutation. Thus, by emptying, refilling, and occupying the secret code of the present-day Neo Nazi movement, Wolf and Shepherd inscribe it with new meaning. Because this results from the interplay of two languages, the new content is neither German nor English, but both. (Indeed, hip-hop is the same in both languages.) If this is understood as

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[69] The sequence occurs between 9:23 and 9:39. In accordance with the script Wolf provided, I have maintained his intentional misspellings of German. According to email correspondence from Mar 9, 2016, Wolf claims the misspellings were made to ensure accurate pronunciation, especially since neither actor actually speaks German. At times I make corrections or additions to reflect the performance under analysis. A good example is "Ein bissian," which is a deliberate misspelling of *ein bisschen* (a little). In the script the whole line is, "Ahh, Top Rock. Ein bissian," but since the phrase "Top Rock" does not appear in the May 2005 performance recorded in San Francisco, I leave it out. Lastly, the parenthetical descriptions of how lines are delivered (including actor movements and emotive vocal inflections) are my additions. To conclude, the lines cited here are a hybrid of Wolf's original script and my own modifications that, I hope, more accurately reflect the May 2005 San Francisco performance.

indicative of what Baudrillard, in defining transaesthetics, described as a loss of aesthetic particularity, then it demonstrates the potential and opportunity for new meaning to arise through the aesthetic diffuseness of bilingual interplay.

Time-Hopping, Role-Switching, Defamiliarization, and Aesthetic Experience

As the play progresses, Wolf and Shepherd deploy a number of techniques to coax the audience into a fictionalized historical realm. To understand this in greater detail, the sequence after both shout "Welcome to Deutschland!!!" is particularly illustrative. As Wolf and Shepherd take on other roles, they suffuse Brechtian defamiliarization techniques with aesthetic experience to create distance between the audience and the actors to open up and exploit a psychological gap within the viewer.[70]

As Shepherd and Wolf continue their journey from Hamburg's well-known sites into a deeper, fictionalized historical space, the lights dim.[71] Crouched in near darkness Wolf asks "Aren't there a lot of…?," to which Shepherd shouts "Heil Hitler!!" Startled, Wolf declares "Fuckin' Nazis!" Tucking a necklace inside his shirt, he wonders out loud, "Won't they know I'm…?" Spinning around wildly and training an imaginary rifle on Wolf, Shepherd, mimicking a soldier, threateningly snarls "Halt, Jude!!" (Stop, Jew!!). Because both of Wolf's questions go unanswered, the audience must wonder to what he refers. In the first instance, Shepherd's outburst answers Wolf's dangling question; in the second, speakers of German and English would likely surmise from Shepherd's outburst that Wolf meant to say "Jew." Indeed, the medallion Wolf tucks into his shirt is a star of David; however, only astute audience members in the front rows would recognize this. Nevertheless, there are two blanks: Wolf's unfinished questions and the blank that arises from the lack of linguistic knowledge. In fictional narratives, these types of blanks, Fluck argues, are an "intentional, often carefully crafted, suspension of relations"[72] between what the viewer knows and does not know. In turn, these blanks coax us to "provide links for what is disconnected."[73] Where the viewer "has to become active in providing links for what is missing" to "actualize the literary text,"[74] these blanks are the essence of aesthetic experience in this scene. While gaps and blanks are exploited throughout the play for a number of reasons, here they transport the audience back in time to WW2-era Germany. It is the first instance of time-hopping, and it is one way the play creates a diffuse temporal landscape.

As a period piece, *Stateless* requires historically accurate villains. By emulating a Nazi soldier, Shepherd exploits an unconscious, culturally engrained stereotype. The Nazi-as-Ultimate-Evil trope, by now widely

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[70] German playwright Bertold Brecht developed the notion of defamiliarization (*Verfremdungseffekt*) as a theatrical technique to force audiences to not identify with characters in order to make connections on a conscious (as opposed to their subconscious) plane. *See* Brecht 1964, "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting," 91.

[71] The sequence occurs between 9:39 and 9:50.

[72] Winfried Fluck, "Why We Need Fiction: Reception Aesthetics, Literary Anthropology, *Funktionsgeschichte*," in *Romance with America?: Essays on Culture, Literature, and American Studies*, edited by Laura Bieger and Johannes Voelz (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2009b), 370.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

circulated in documentaries, films, television shows, and video games,[75] enables the audience to view Shepherd as the epitome of evil. However, this stereotype is conveyed completely by suggestion: no costume changes occur, and the only clues to trigger the association are an imaginary rifle and Shepherd's menacing German-language interjection. Beyond the use of Nazis for villainy, however, lies another purpose: the stereotype, albeit simple, requires members of the audience to disassociate themselves, if briefly, from identifying with Wolf or Shepherd directly. This use of Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* (defamiliarization) primes audience members to imagine themselves concurrently as Tommy, Dan, a Jew, and a German soldier. This, then, is one of the more notable instances for how language and theatrical dramatization interpolate the viewer into a number of positions at once. Character-driven role-switching, when combined with lines delivered in two languages, obliges the audience to psychologically enact, affirm, embrace, and even reject these personae. That a short, eleven-second sequence delivered by just two actors generates such an effect speaks to the power of two languages to trigger an aesthetic experience.[76]

Yet for its potential, this experience is illusory. After Shepherd shouts "Halt, Jude!!," Wolf, with hands up, calls out to him by his first name ("Tommy!"). Replying "What?" in a soft voice, Shepherd steps out of his Nazi role and returns to himself. Wolf, still with his hands up, replies, "Feel like everybody is lookin' at us," to which Shepherd responds, "Because everybody *is* looking at us." Having stepped out of their roles, the personal exchange between Wolf and Shepherd breaks the fourth wall that separates performers and viewers. As Brecht describes, when an actor "expresses his awareness of being watched, [t]he audience can no longer have the illusion of being the unseen spectator at an event that is really taking place."[77] On the one hand, the audience laughs and, through a moment of humor, decouples from the roles presented (Nazi/Jew).[78] On the other, audience members can no longer remain passive viewers. This results, as Fluck argues, in "a constant movement between present and absent elements through which we," as the audience, "try and compensate for the uncertainty of the reference and the ensuing determinacy of the

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[75] Within the scope of this study I cannot thoroughly catalogue how Nazis have become the archetype of ultimate evil in popular culture. In television, however, shows like *Hogan's Heroes* (CBS, 1965-71) and *Seinfeld* (NBC, 1989-98) elevated Nazis to the absurd in order to make them humorous. The cable network the History Channel (and Military History, its offshoot) have produced a glut of documentaries that characterize Nazis as ultimate evil. From *Zombie Lake* (1981) and *Dead Snow* (2009), there are a slew of horror films where zombies are depicted as Nazis. Quentin Tarantino's high-profile and very well received *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) depicted Nazis as cartoonish, pulp villains. In video gaming, Muse Software released *Castle Wolfenstein* (1981) and its follow-up *Beyond Castle Wolfenstein* (1984) for the Apple II computer. In both, Nazi soldiers utter phrases such as "Achtung!" (Attention!), "Komerad!" (Comrade!), "Was ist los?" (What's wrong?), "Halt!" (Stop), "Kommen Sie!" (Come here), "Ausweis" (Your papers), "Heil!" (Hail!), and "Anschlag!" (Attack!). Examples of both games are online. *See* "Apple II Game: Castle Wolfenstein (1981 Muse Software) [Longplay]," YouTube video, 1:34:41, posted by Old Classic Retro Gaming, Jun 5, 2011, accessed Oct 4, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=8fgok9eHqO8 and "Apple II Game: Beyond Castle Wolfenstein (1984 Muse Software) [Longplay]," YouTube video, 19:35, posted by Old Classic Retro Gaming, Jun 8, 2011, accessed Oct 4, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=Bf7z8kjza2c. While this is just a smattering of examples, all of them have contributed to cementing the Nazi as the ultimate evil in the popular imagination. For a brief overview (including the danger) of this phenomenon, see Richard J. Evans, "Why are we obsessed with the Nazis?," *The Guardian*, Feb 6, 2015, accessed Oct 4, 2017, theguardian.com/books/2015/feb/06/why-obsessed-nazis-third-reich. For a more in-depth treatment, see Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in History and Memory* (London: Little, Brown, 2015).
[76] The sequence occurs between 9:40 and 9:50.
[77] Brecht, 91-2.
[78] In the performance analyzed here, the audience laughs. The audience also laughed in a performance I watched in Berlin in the summer of 2006.

text."[79] Any associations the audience might have of either real or imagined Nazis and Jews, or Wolf and Shepherd—depicted earlier as homeboys—are not only fair game, but requirements to bring the play to life.

When the dialogue resumes, however, Wolf and Shepherd exploit this break to re-position the audience as spectators.

<div align="center">

DAN
What are they looking at?

TOMMY
Me. You.

DAN
I didn't think it would be like this.

TOMMY
In this country, we're the same.

DAN
Yeah, not from here.

TOMMY
Outsiders. (*Departs*)

DAN
What am I doing here? I can't stay here.
It's always been dangerous to ride this hemisphere.
I don't belong here. I'm not from here.
I don't feel right in my skin on the street with my fear here.

TOMMY
(*Enters*) Welkommen. Yes. You are Dan Wolf. Ich bin Jens.

DAN
You're Jens.

TOMMY
Ja, my Name.[80]

</div>

It is through the realization and conscious awareness of their own role as viewers that the audience again becomes a passive component in the performance. However, a new character, Jens, played by Shepherd, is introduced. This is accomplished through another instance of linguistic mirroring ("Ich bin Jens"/"You're Jens") and code-switching ("Ja, my Name"). Role-switching and the use of two languages not only alienates the viewer, it forces him or her to toggle back and forth, and even simultaneously occupy, a number of subject positions within a short span of time. Even though they are repositioned as passive viewers, the viewing experience is active, engaging, and even engrossing.

Shepherd's main function here, however, is to convey the history behind one of the folksongs Wolf's ancestors wrote. To do so, he cloaks himself as someone named Jens and claims to have assisted Wolf's great-great uncle in authoring "An de Eck steiht'n Jung mit'n Tüdelband."[81] To substantiate his claim, Shepherd sings along with a Gebrüderwolf recording, which fades in over the house PA system.[82] After a brief comedic exchange where Wolf demonstrates his limited German skills, Shepherd elaborates.

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[79] Fluck, 371.
[80] The sequence occurs between 10:05 and 10:48.
[81] Shepherd visually signals this character shift by donning a hat and vest.
[82] Shepherd sings along with the recording between 11:15 and 11:25.

TOMMY
You know the Tüdelband song?

DAN
No.

TOMMY
Oh, this is very famous song. Everybody knows the text to this song.
But nobody knows who wrote this text. You understand?
(*Wolf shakes head indicating "No" and sits*)

Ludwig Wolf, your great granduncle, wrote this song in
neunzehnhundert…ah…nineteen-eleven. All the Hamburg people know
this song. *(Singing)* "An de Eck steiht'n Jung mit'n Tüdelband…" Ah, the
song about the boy with ze hoop.
(*Shepherd produces a hoop and rolls it across the stage*)

DAN
So the song is about a Tüdelband.

TOMMY
A what?

DAN
A Tüdelband.

TOMMY
A Tootle bomb?

DAN
No, no. Tüdel-*band.*

TOMMY
Huh. What the fuck is a Tüdelband?[83]

The entire exchange plays with the notion of authority. Shepherd, as Jens, conveys intimate details about Wolf's family history. To visually reinforce his role as the bearer of knowledge, he rolls a hoop across the stage. Wolf then chases it down and grabs it. The hoop thus becomes a symbol representing the transfer of knowledge. By chasing down and grasping the hoop, Wolf *inherits* his family's cultural history.

Role-switching reinforces the transfer of knowledge to the audience. First, Shepherd morphs from Jens back to himself, which is visually shown through the removal of his vest and hat. Shepherd, who had just epitomized the embodiment of knowledge, takes on the role of the unknowing. Wolf, who previously knew nothing, now speaks about his family's past with agency, authority, and confidence. For Wolf to demonstrate knowledge of his ancestors' cultural contributions to Hamburg, Shepherd takes on the role of ignorance. Role-switching here thus serves a dual purpose: on the one hand, the technique allows the players to tell the story of the Gebrüderwolf twice, a repetitive technique that drives home historical facts. On the other, the viewer must occupy two positions at once (knowledge—ignorance) and switch between them in order to psychologically construct the narrative. The technique creates double-consciousness in the viewer, a condition that holds enormous potential not only to educate, but to create bicultural awareness in the viewer. More than simply facing the horror of the Holocaust (in Michaels' sense), the audience witnesses

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[83] The sequence occurs between 11:41 and 12:40.

the performed recuperation of Wolf family history. Thus, the audience plays an active role in reclaiming Wolf's family heritage, which, in turn, allows that heritage to be learned by non-family members.

Rappin' *op Platt*: Becoming Credible Transcultural Agents

Because Wolf and Shepherd toggle between different characters, languages, and cultural frames across periods of time, they become cultural translators. These varying degrees of in-between-ness come to fruition in the scene where they deliver an updated, twenty-first century hip-hop rendition of "An de Eck steiht'n Jung mit'n Tüdelband," the song Wolf's ancestors wrote and popularized. Working in *Plattdeutsch* (Low German, the dialect of Hamburg), a provisional English translation, and, ultimately, musical and linguistic African American vernacular, Wolf and Shepherd cross into and occupy a number of spaces simultaneously.[84] Wolf initiates the sequence:

<div align="center">

DAN
An de Eck steiht'n Jung mit'n Tüdelband

TOMMY
Ah...

DAN
in de anner Hand 'n Bodderbrot mit Kees

TOMMY
Like a nursery rhyme.

DAN
Wenn he blots nich mit de Been in'n Tüdel kummt
un dor liggt he ok all lang op de Nees.[85]

</div>

As Wolf recites the song, Shepherd interjects. In an attempt join in, and to help the audience gain access to the song, Shepherd suggests it resembles a nursery rhyme. This effort—reaching out with one's own cultural knowledge to apprehend a presently experienced unknown—exemplifies how viewers/listeners, via aesthetic experience, invest themselves in the psychological enactment of fictional narratives.[86] This procedure is vital for Shepherd—and through him, the viewer—to engage the song on a deeper level. Once Shepherd recognizes the song's nursery rhyme-like dimensions, he starts physically rocking back and forth. Enacting the rhythm of the lines through a kind of dance, he begins beatboxing.[87] Taking his cue, Wolf heightens the rhythm, intonation, stress, and meter and begins rapping:

<div align="center">

DAN
un he rasselt mit'n Dassel geg'n Kansteen,

</div>

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[84] Shepherd best exemplifies the ability to be in two places, and two people, at once. At one point (13:29-13:35), Wolf asks "You didn't hear the guy tell us about the song?" Shepherd replies "Nah, man, I tuned dude out. I thought he was speaking German." Viewers will thus understand Shepherd to have overheard the previous exchange even though he was, technically speaking, actively playing Jens.

[85] The sequence occurs between 13:35 and 13:47. Although written in vernacular (and cited from the unpublished script Wolf shared via email), the orthography of the song resembles almost verbatim the transcript compiled by Jochen Wiegandt. *See* Jochen Wiegandt, *An de Eck steiht'n Jung mit'n Tüdelband: Hamburger Liederbuch* (Hamburg: Dölling and Galitz Verlag, 2001), 8-9.

[86] A useful analogy might be how when apprehending cultural object X, we say it looks like cultural object Y, with Y being a piece we had encountered elsewhere. "X reminds me of Y" suggests that we understand heretofore instances of culture by bringing past cultural experience to the present.

[87] In the script provided by Dan Wolf, a clear direction is given: "TOMMY drops the beat (snare) on "Nees."

un he bitt sick ganz geheurig op de Tung.
As he opsteiht, seggt he: "Hett nich weh don!
Dat's'n Klacks för so'n Hamborger Jung!"[88]

The 'razzle-dazzle' of Wolf and Shepherd's performance—which includes, much like vaudeville, choreographed steps—allows the audience to engage with a 1920s Hamburg folksong through hip-hop.[89] With his recollection of childhood nursery rhymes and hip-hop knowledge and skills, Shepherd bridges time, countries, and language to enter, navigate, and pilot a cultural space and time of which he knows little—and one that, technically speaking, never existed. Audience members in a darkened theater who identify with hip-hop and nursery rhymes are able to follow his lead. In this way, Shepherd quite literally *shepherds* the audience back in time to explore Wolf's German-Jewish cultural heritage, which Wolf now reenacts through rap.

When Wolf reaches the end of the verse, he pauses and Shepherd stops beatboxing—but nevertheless continues dancing.[90] Choreography plays an important role here. As in the previous sequence where Shepherd (as Jens) physically passes the hoop to Wolf, the hoop is again passed as a visual signifier to convey understanding. First, Wolf wears the hoop over his shoulder and across his torso while he rhymes in Low German. He then slips out of the hoop and lets it fall to the ground to visually perform the song's story. But the move also allows him to physically *pass through* his family's history while being *surrounded* by it. The entire scene repeats, with slight modification, when Wolf translates the song into English.

DAN
On the corner stands a boy with a hoop.

TOMMY
(*Shepherd snaps fingers, points at Wolf, and picks up hoop*)
Tüdelband.

DAN
Right. In his other hand butter bread with cheese.

TOMMY
Ah, that's why he did that thing.

DAN
Hopefully he doesn't stumble with his feet.

TOMMY
Uh huh.

DAN
Oops, there he goes, yo, he falls and hits his nose, yeah.[91]

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[88] The sequence occurs between 13:48 and 13:58. Due to some minor orthographical deviation in Wolf's script, I have reconciled these lines with Wiegandt's transcript. Wiegandt, 8-9.

[89] Even though the Low German phrase "he rasselt mit'n Dassel" translates to "he bangs his head," I somewhat playfully interpret it here as "razzle-dazzle" because, implicitly, the line suggests that the boy is lucky to have not seriously bashed his head open. The German term "rasseln" literally means to jangle, rattle, clash, or clatter, thus suggesting a considerable degree of aural and visual bedazzlement. A non-German speaking audience member might very well hear "razzle-dazzle" when Wolf says "rasselt mit'n Dassel." Where Low German bridges German, English and Dutch, this type of trans-linguistic interpretation is entirely plausible. Case in point, Dan Wolf himself translates "he rasselt" as "he wrestles," which is indeed a very liberal translation.

[90] In this performance, the audience again laughs at this particular moment.

[91] The sequence occurs between 14:04 and 14:19.

Wolf repeats his choreographed motions and gestures verbatim when he recites the song in English. When he says "butter bread with cheese," Shepherd mirrors his hand gesture. Just as the physical passing of the hoop signifies the transfer of knowledge, Shepherd's mirroring demonstrates comprehension. After Wolf says "nose" in the last line, Shepherd, as with the version in *Plattdeutsch*, begins beatboxing. The sequence thus repeats, with Wolf now rapping in English.

<div align="center">

DAN
And he wrestles with his head against the curbstone
And he bites his tongue that's deep inside his throat
As he jumps up he says, "Check me, I'm bulletproof
That's nothin', ain't nothin' for the Hamburg City youth!"[92]

</div>

Wolf again allows the hoop to fall to the floor and steps out of it. However, Shepherd, like Wolf before him, picks up the hoop and slings it over his shoulder, holds it securely around his torso, and, like Wolf, lets the hoop fall to the floor. This short sequence visually conveys that non-family members are able to learn Wolf's family history. After Shepherd picks the hoop up off the ground, Wolf steals it back to symbolically perform the taking back of his history. With Shepherd beatboxing, he continues:

<div align="center">

DAN
Klau'n, klaun'n, Äppel wüllt wü klau'n,
ruck zuck öber'n Zaun.
Ein jeder aber kann es nicht,
denn muß aus Hamborg sein.

TOMMY
English, please.

DAN
Sorry. Steal, steal, apples we will steal.
Quickly let's get over the fence.

TOMMY
Come on, kick it.

DAN
Not everybody can do this.

TOMMY
You must be from Hamburg City![93]

</div>

Having continued in *Plattdeutsch*, Wolf switches to English at Shepherd's request. As Wolf nears the final line, Shepherd places his fingers on the hoop around Wolf's torso to physically and orally perform a deejay scratch. The circle is complete: not only have Wolf and Shepherd successfully melded 1920s Hamburg folk music to twenty-first century hip-hop, their entire exchange demonstrates the enactment and transference of historical cultural knowledge—first back and forth between each other, but also to the audience.

We would be remiss to overlook that this bilingual, transatlantic, and multigenerational culture-work occurs through two working class cultures. Tüdelband, as Wolf explains to Shepherd before performing the song, was a street game played by children in 1920s Hamburg; hip-hop culture was developed by African and Latino American youth residing in housing projects in The Bronx in the 1970s. If we consider the

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[92] The sequence occurs between 14:19 and 14:30.
[93] The sequence occurs between 14:30 and 14:49.

importance of 'the 'hood' in hip-hop and 'the corner' in working class urban milieus, these interconnections take on greater significance. Conveyed bilingually and reinforced through repeated and replicated choreography and mimicked gesture, "The Tüdelband Song," as a twenty-first century remix and updated rendition of "An de Eck steiht'n Jung mit'n Tüdelband," becomes a transcultural aesthetic object in service to the resuscitation, recuperation, and conveyance of Wolf's German-Jewish heritage.

      The salience of the scene becomes apparent as it reaches apex, with Wolf springing into his own self-penned rhyme:

<div align="center">

DAN
For centuries on corners in ciphers we congregate.
Style to make the world dance, my art it elevates.
Stood in line for bread and cheese government please,
We a nation of refugees from overseas.
Survival tactics, survivalist from the actions brought by racist factions,
Only mathematics they fuck with is subtraction,
Attract weak minded right wing Aryan devil practice.
Before we concentrated in camps, temples were destroyed,
I burn bright like 8-day oil lamps.
So catch a glimpse and don't stumble,
I battle contemporary gladiators who want my world to crumble.

</div>

With "For centuries," Wolf widens the song's scope. Rapping "in ciphers we congregate," he refers, albeit cryptically, to Jews in exodus across Europe through the adroit use of "cipher," hip-hop parlance for a rhyming circle. (Indeed, a Tüdelband is a hoop—a circle.) The historical dimensions come into focus when he raps, "We a nation of refugees from overseas." While these lines connect him and his German Jewish ancestors to the Jewish diaspora across time and space, audience members might reflect on their own family histories and origins. However, when Wolf raps "racist factions" and "Only mathematics they fuck with is subtraction," he returns to Nazi Germany and the Holocaust—yet another instance of time-hopping. With "weak minded right wing Aryan devil practice," Wolf conjures how Hitler and his regime beguiled Germans into enacting racist policies of ethnic murder. Flipping the script on the term concentration camp, Wolf raps "concentrated in camps" to suggest that those who survived did so because they maintained focus. "Temples were destroyed" evokes Kristallnacht, but also the violence visited upon Jews across the eons—a past not relegated, however, to history. Concluding his rhyme by stating that he battles "contemporary gladiators who want my world to crumble," Wolf refers to present-day Neo Nazis and members of the extreme right who harbor a desire to again visit violence upon Jews. While the past is history, Wolf raps to prevent the past from repeating in the future.

      As the song continues Wolf turns personal, but also more explicit.

<div align="center">

DAN
I call this a comeback.
You better ask where I've been to arrive where I'm at.
Born by the bay, simple twist of fate USA,
Went back in time to see if I can still relate.
I steal my future back, who stole my past.
I fed a culture they fed us gas.
And now I'm back to get clean for future scenes,
Dreams led me to my voice and to my quest.
I steal my future back, who stole my past.

</div>

> I fed a culture they fed us gas.
> And now I'm back to get clean for future scenes,
> Dreams led me to this voice and to my quest.[94]

Inverting LL Cool J's well-known line "Don't call it a comeback,"[95] Wolf raps "I call this a comeback" to channel the spirit of his ancestors. He portrays himself not only as a Jew, but every Jew, including members of the Gebrüderwolf, who were exterminated in the Holocaust ("I fed a culture, they fed us gas"). The double iteration of the last four lines allows the audience to ruminate on what is at stake: "Help me find my history, Help me find my wealth." By making explicit that the audience has a role in recouping his family history, Wolf might overplay his hand. Yet even without this deliberate call, the audience cannot be passive spectators: they must be active and involved. Given the numerous ways the play activates them, this seems to be its ultimate power: activating people who did not experience past transgressions in order to find restitution for those who did, but also to prevent future calamity. Aesthetic experience, then, is no longer simply the mechanism by which narratives come alive, it is how knowledge is conveyed and activism is engrained. Similar techniques are deployed towards similar ends in the work of Bejarano and Microphone Mafia.

Profiles in Courage: Establishing Antiwar/Pro-Peace Bona Fides

Before considering the collaborative work of Bejarano and Microphone Mafia, it is important understand who these artists are, where they come from, and what they have done. Founded in 1989 in Köln-Flittard, a district in northwestern Cologne,[96] Microphone Mafia remains one of Germany's preeminent multilingual hip-hop groups. Initially known as T.C.A Microphone Mafia (the prefix for which was modeled after west coast gangsta rap legends N.W.A), T.C.A first stood for "tough cool aces," pro-masculine sentiments visually conveyed in the poolroom Mafioso cover shot for *Vendetta* (1996), the group's first full-length release. The prefix was later modified to "therapy contra animosity," a decision that reveals the group's desire to move away from tough, male posturing to confront racial and ethnic bigotry and cultural chauvinism.[97] The decision to rap in multiple languages reflects the group's origins: German, Turkish, Italian, Kölsch (the regional dialect of Cologne), and a variety of other languages are all spoken in Köln-

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[94] The sequence occurs between 15:20 and 15:50.

[95] LL Cool J's smash hit "Mama Said Knock You Out" (1990) opens with "Don't call it a comeback." Wolf's creative reuse of the phrase demonstrates his roots in hip-hop culture, but also his ability to re-use hip-hop lingo to serve his political-cultural project. *See* LL Cool J [James Todd Smith], "Mama Said Knock You Out," song lyrics, transcribed by Steven, Genius Media Group, accessed Oct 7, 2017, genius.com/Ll-cool-j-mama-said-knock-you-out-lyrics.

[96] "MIC Mafia," n.d., *MicrophoneMafia.com,* accessed May 17, 2017, microphone-mafia.com/mic-mafia.html. For a more detailed account of the group's origins, see Murat Güngör and Hannes Loh, *Fear of a Kanak Planet: HipHop zwischen Weltkultur und Nazi-Rap* (Höfen: Hannibal, 2002), 177-179.

[97] While Güngör and Loh report that "T.C.A" stood for "Therapy Against Animosity," Kutlu Yurtseven communicated the two meanings of T.C.A to me via social media on June 17, 2016. He also affirms at live events that the band had always taken a stand against racism. *See* Güngör and Loh, 178.

Flittard.[98] The group's profile from Day-Glo Records elaborates on the decision to experiment with multilingual rhymes:

> Microphone Mafia's rap concept was radical enough: rather than emulating the ghetto slang of their rap role models—or, as they had previously tried, clumsily forming German rhymes—the group instead focused on a hitherto unheard mix of Italian, Neapolitan, Turkish, and English. Of course no one understood all the lyrics, but who [in Germany] understood the slang of American artists with the English they had learned in school? The tenor was always clear, and Microphone Mafia's flow on *Vendetta* is truly remarkable.[99]

The profile further asserts that the group's multiethnic make-up was highly regarded:

> With *Vendetta* Microphone Mafia was quickly held up by people of good will who advocated, sometimes with little understanding, for a multicultural society, and for obvious reasons: a German, an Italian, and two Turks who had been friends since childhood were living proof that people from different countries and cultures in Germany could live side by side and even befriend one another.[100]

Most importantly, the group stood for tolerance at a time when rightwing violence against perceived ethnic Others was on the rise. The burning of a temporary housing facility for Roma asylum-seekers and Vietnamese guest workers in August 1992 in Lichtenhagen, a northwest district of Rostock, Germany, was one high-profile example.[101]

The musical arrangements on *Vendetta* bear out the group's commitment to cultural diversity. Many of the songs contain instruments uncommon to rap at the time. "Say What," which draws connections to the American Black power movement, includes a xylophone and an Irish flute.[102] "International," which was first released on *Hip-Hop Hurra: Rap gegen Rechts* (Rough Trade Records, 1993),[103] a compilation of artists united against racism, foregrounds the *zurna*, a Turkish wind instrument. Likewise, "No!," an antiracism

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[98] "In Flittard, unserer home base, spricht man deutsch, türkisch, italienisch, jede Menge andere Sprachen—und natürlich Kölsch." *See* "MIC Mafia."

[99] "Das Rap-Konzept der Mafia war schon radikal genug: statt die amerikanischen Vorbilder mit ihrem Ghetto-Slang nachzuahmen, statt die damals noch eher unbeholfenen Versuche, die deutsche Sprache zu rhymes zu formen, fortzusetzen, konzentrierten sich Microphone Mafia auf einen bis dato ungehörten Sprachmix aus Italienisch, Neapolitanisch, Türkisch und Englisch. Natürlich hat nicht jeder jedes Wort verstanden, aber wer versteht schon die amerikanischen Rapper, die doch eine so geläufige Schulsprache wie Englisch benutzen? Der Sinn wird allemal klar und der Flow, den die Mafia auf "Vendetta" hinlegt, ist wahrlich bemerkenswert." *See* "Vendetta," *Day-Glo Records*, n.d., accessed May 17, 2017, day-glo.de/vendetta.htm.

[100] Ibid. "Mit 'Vendetta' wurde Microphone Mafia schnell zum Vorzeigeobjekt all derjenigen, die aus gutem Willen und mit meist wenig Verständnis für die 'Multikulturelle Gesellschaft' plädieren. Klar doch, bei einem Deutschen, einem Italiener und zwei Türken, die seit Schultagen miteinander befreundet sind, bietet es sich an, sie als lebendigen Beweis dafür zu präsentieren, daß in Deutschland Menschen aus verschiedensten Ländern und Kulturen zusammenleben und sogar befreundet sein können."

[101] Sweers describes in considerable detail the events in Rostock that were publicized, and even aggravated, by the German mainstream media. *See* Britta Sweers, "Music against Fascism: Applied Ethnomusicology in Rostock, Germany," in *Music and Conflict*, edited by John Moran O'Connell and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 194-197. For a comprehensive list of cities that bore witness to violence against immigrants, see Kautny, 411-412.

[102] "Microphone Mafia—Say What!," YouTube video, 3:18, posted by HaschrebellHD, Feb 14, 2007, accessed May 17, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=NiY6i1F3Kr8.

[103] Güngör and Loh, 178.

song with lyrics in Turkish, English, Neapolitan, German, and a smattering of Spanish,[104] contains a sample of a *ney*, a reed instrument common to Persian and Turkish music.[105] While weaving instruments into arrangements with heavy, syncopated hip-hop beats and deejay scratching prompted Elflein to position Microphone Mafia's early work within so-called oriental hip-hop,[106] lyrics in four or five languages make the group's output far more than the emulation of American rap. Indeed, there was—and remains—nothing remotely similar to it in the United States. For these efforts the group was awarded a prize by the CIVIS Media Foundation for their work in promoting integration and cultural diversity in Europe.[107] Musical and linguistic diversity, however, came at a cost: the VIVA music network rejected the video for "No!" on the grounds that it didn't contain any German rhymes.[108] As a result, *Vendetta* was by and large a commercial failure, which prompted the group to turn to more conventional themes and predominantly German rhymes.[109] Nevertheless, Microphone Mafia continue to produce material in two or more languages.

Born on December 15, 1924, Esther Bejarano (née Loewy) is a Holocaust survivor, singer, and peace activist who lied to Nazi officials about her ability to play the accordion in order to survive internment at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.[110] Her deception allowed her to perform in the camp's *Mädchenchor* (Women's Orchestra), an ensemble that played music to calm new arrivals at the camp. Eventually, Esther was relocated to Ravensbrück, an internment camp from which she managed to escape after the last remaining prisoners were sent on a *Todesmarsch* (death march) on May 3, 1945 from the village of Karow to the small town of Plau am See in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Germany.[111] In addition to sparing her life, Esther's decision to lie about her musical abilities began what would become a lifelong commitment to confronting fascism, extreme right ideology, racism, and war through music. She began her first group, Siebenschön, in the 1970s.[112] By the 1980s, Esther founded the band Coincidence with daughter Edna (former vocalist with German rock band The Rattles), son Joram (bass), Wilfried Hesse (cello), and Clemens Völker (guitar).[113] After a lineup change that brought Cornelia Gottberg (cello) and Martina

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[104] "Türkçe Rap in ilk klibi—Tca Microphone Mafia—No," YouTube video, 4:01, posted by Türkçe Eski Okul—Turkish Oldschool—Master of Turkrap, June 22, 2014, accessed May 17, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=TbH7_yHwn6g.

[105] Kutlu Yurtseven graciously answered my questions about ancillary instruments used on *Vendetta*.

[106] Elflein described their early efforts as "an example of the 'Oriental Hip-Hop in the German diaspora'," which is somewhat ridiculous considering their music was produced in Cologne—and not, say, in Milwaukee or any other city that might actually have a significant German diaspora abroad. *See* Elflein, 263.

[107] Güngör and Loh, 179.

[108] Ibid. "Aber VIVA hat das mit der Begründung abgelehnt, dass da keine deutschen Reime gekickt werden."

[109] The group's profile at Day-Glo Records includes the following: "Genutzt hat es der Mafia wenig: kein Sender hat 'Say What' auf seine Playlist gesetzt, der in Istanbul gedrehte Video-Clip brachte es auf zwei VIVA-Einsätze. Die Konsequenz der Mafia: Schluß mit Multikulti! Jetzt wird auf deutsch zurückgeschlagen." *See* "Microphone Mafia," *Day-Glo Records*, n.d., accessed May 17, 2017, day-glo.de.

[110] Esther Bejarano and Antonella Romeo, *Erinnerungen: Vom Mädchenorchester in Auschwitz zur Rap-Band* (Hamburg: LAIKA-Verlag, 2013), 38.

[111] "Konzert für das Leben mit Esther Bejarano & Microphone Mafia am 27.05.2016 in Königs Wusterhausen," Die Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes—Bund der Antifaschisten im Landkreis Dahme Spreewald e.V. (The Association of Persecutees of the Nazi Regime/Federation of Antifascists), n.d., accessed May 17, 2017, vvn-bdaimlds.jimdo.com.

[112] Bejarano and Romeo, 193.

[113] Ibid., 194.

Romeike (guitar) to the group, the band released *Lider fars Lebn—Lieder für das Leben* (1995) (Songs for Life). The album contains a robust selection of antifascist and antiwar peace songs from the European Jewish diaspora in Hebrew ("Laila Laila"/Night Time), Yiddish ("Zog nit keyn mol"/Never Say), Roma ("Nje buditsche"), Turkish ("Karli kayin ormani"/In The Snowy Night Woods), German ("Ballade von der 'Judenhure' Marie Sanders"), English ("No man's land—Greenfields of France"), and Greek ("To Sfaifo"/The Abattoir). Even though each song on the record is performed in its respective language, the entire collection speaks from, for, and to many countries and cultures. As a collected body of work, the record is decidedly transcultural.

The album contains a rendition of "Shir LaShalom," a peace anthem written by two Israelis, Yaakov Rotblit (lyrics) and Yair Rosenblum (music), in the wake of Israel's Six-Day War in 1967. As "one of the most famous songs in the Israeli Pantheon,"[114] "Shir LaShalom" was "Israel's version of the flower generation message," one that "army commanders objected to [because of] the hold it gained on young Israelis."[115] Given that Rosenblum had "served as the musical director for the Israel Defense Forces [choir] in the 1960s and 1970s,"[116] the consternation military leaders felt is not without a sense of irony: a view from inside the military machine fosters an appreciation for peace. Rooted in controversy, Marsha Edelman writes that

> continuing tensions were a source of fear to some and frustration to others. The same young people who had fought the war, and whose friends and brothers were dying in its aftermath, began to rally. Yaakov Rotblit […] was their spokesperson, angering the religious establishment and the government alike with his irreverent lyrics; Yair Rosenblum borrowed the international vocabulary of 'rock and roll' to sound their urgent 'Shir le-Shalom' (Song for Peace).[117]

As Edelman notes the song is indebted to rock, and a recording from 1970 by Miri Aloni with the Nachal Musical Theater Group (Lehakat Hanachal) bears that out.[118] Opening pensively with a warm jazz/rock guitar solo played overtop electric bass, the song's tempo steadily increases. The orchestration swells to a bombast of percussion that eventually takes on an urgent, frenetic energy by the song's conclusion. In stark contrast, the Coincidence version resembles a simple folksong. Instrumentation is limited to cello, classical guitar, bass, and tambourine, and aside from the chorus (which is delivered in double time to recreate the urgency of the original), a consistent tempo is maintained throughout.

Lyrically, the Coincidence rendition remains faithful to Rotblit's original.[119] The first three verses invoke hope (Let the sun rise/And give the morning light), acknowledgement of the war dead (He whose

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[114] "A Song of Peace," *eTeacher Hebrew: Online Language Academy* (blog), accessed Sept 8, 2017, blog.eteacherhebrew.com/israel-history/a-song-of-peace/.

[115] Jerrold Kessel, "Israeli peace song symbolizes a movement," Nov 13, 1995, *CNN World News*, accessed Sept 8, 2017, edition.cnn.com/WORLD/9511/rabin/11-14/index.html.

[116] "A Song of Peace."

[117] Marsha Bryan Edelman, *Discovering Jewish Music* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2003), 235.

[118] This version of "Shir LaShalom" is available at iTunes. *See* "Shir LaShalom," YouTube video, 5:36, posted by Yuval Plg, July 26, 2012, accessed Sept 8, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=Sz8O0OcAA3c.

[119] For ease of reading, I only supply the English translation of Rotblit's lines.

candle was blown out), acceptance (A bitter cry won't wake him/Won't bring him back), and the futility of celebrating military victories (Here—neither the victory cheer/Nor songs of praise will help).[120] In the chorus, Esther and Edna sing

<div dir="rtl">

לשלום שיר שירו רק לכן
</div>

Lachen rak schiru schir l'shalom
So just sing a song for peace

<div dir="rtl">

תפילה תלחשו אל
</div>

Al tilchaschu t'fila
Do not whisper a prayer

<div dir="rtl">

לשלום שיר תשירו מוטב
</div>

Rak schiru schiru schir l'shalom
Better sing a song for peace

<div dir="rtl">

.גדולה בצעקה
</div>

Bizeaka gedola
With a big shout.[121]

The chorus implores listeners to be neither silent nor simply hope for peace, but to raise their voices and demand it. Thus, the song beseeches people to become active and involved in a mass movement for peace. In the Coincidence version, those sentiments are sonically reinforced by the sound of a live audience clapping along during the last two renditions of the chorus. Even though the song makes an ardent demand for action, the reach of that message is limited to speakers of Hebrew, either within Israel or across the global Jewish diaspora. In that sense, "Shir LaShalom" possesses significant transnational potential, albeit for speakers of Hebrew. Since the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995, shortly after he publically sang the song with Miri Aloni,[122] "Shir LaShalom" has become the peace anthem for Israel's antiwar movement. As will become evident, however, the song reaches larger audiences when additional languages are added to enhance Rotblit and Rosenblum's original.

Widening the Cipher: Bejarano and Microphone Mafia's "Schalom"

Coincidence's efforts to catalogue antifascist and antiwar songs took on a renewed urgency with their collaborative work with Microphone Mafia. In 2009 the Bejaranos paired with Kutlu Yurtseven and Rosario Pennino, two of the group's founding members, to fuse their folk music with hip-hop. Two albums ensued, *Per la vita* (*For Life,* 2012) and *La vita continua* (*Life Continues*, 2013), both of which contain reworked material from their oeuvres. Culling from their repertoires—or, in hip-hop parlance, digging in their own crates—the group produces antifascist music for a new generation of listeners.

The project is unabashedly interventionist. Antonella Romeo, co-author of Esther Bejarano's memoir, writes that the group "see[s] their music as an answer to Neo Nazis who use music as a propaganda

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[120] For the English transcript, see "Shir LaShalom—A Song for Peace," *Rotblit.co.il*, accessed Sept 8, 2017, rotblit.co.il/shir_lashalom/shir_lashalom_en.htm.

[121] This transcript is a composite. For the original Hebrew and English, see "Shir LaShalom—A Song for Peace," n.d., *Rotblit.co.il*, accessed Sept 8, 2017, rotblit.co.il/shir_lashalom/shir_lashalom_he.htm and rotblit.co.il/shir_lashalom/shir_lashalom_en.htm. The transliterated Hebrew, which follows German orthography, appears in the liner notes to *Lider fars Lebn* and was prepared by Nissim Bejarano.

[122] Kessel.

tool to bamboozle young people in schoolyards with CDs that mask nationalistic, xenophobic lyrics with pulsating rhythms." When the German Trade Union Confederation (Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund) asked how "music that indoctrinates by exploiting the basest of instincts, and thereby creates the ideological basis of rightwing extremism, can be repelled and neutralized,"[123] Yurtseven and Pennino, who had previously worked with the organization, answered the call. Esther recounts how Yurtseven

> contacted me by phone and said, "Hello, this is the Microphone Mafia." I answered, "Whaaat? The mafia? I don't want anything to do with the mafia." Then he said, "not *the* mafia, that's just what we're called." I replied, "You couldn't find a better name? What kind of stupid name is that?" That's how we got started. He explained that they wanted to make a CD with me, my daughter Edna, and my son Joram. Of course I said I'd be fine with that, but I couldn't imagine what rap was like and told him they would have to show me. They came to visit and explained what they had in mind. Shortly thereafter we went into a studio in Hamburg and produced a CD. […] Kutlu […] took our traditional songs and made rap lyrics out of them.[124]

In line with their interventionist approach to educate young people about the dangers of fascism and rightwing extremism, the group released *Per la vita* (2010), a documentary film that includes pedagogical materials for teachers,[125] and *Esther Bejarano & Microphone Mafia, "70 Jahre Befreiung vom Faschismus—Nie wieder Krieg! Nie wieder Faschismus!"* (2015), a double DVD that includes concert footage and readings from Esther's memoir released to mark the seventieth anniversary of the end of World War Two.[126]

The opening track from *Per la vita* (2010), "Schalom" (Peace), expands upon many of the themes in Rotblit and Rosenblum's original. Musically, it departs from both the Nachal Music Theater Group's 1970 recording and Coincidence's 1995 cover. Even though a snippet of Gottberg's cello from the Coincidence version becomes a recurring motif, "Schalom" contains much more instrumentation, including syncopated hip-hop beats, synthesized strings, swirling keyboard effects, a prominent harpsicord riff, and an entirely new bass line performed by Joram Bejarano. Furthermore, where the tempo in "Shir LaShalom" begins slowly, picks up speed, and hits a frenetic pace, "Schalom" is slow, plodding, and deliberate. Unlike the

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[123] Bejarano and Romeo, 32. "Sie verstehen ihre Musik als seine Antwort auf die Neonazis, die Musik als Propagandamittel einsetzen und den jungen Menschen auf den Schulhöfen CDs mit antreibenden Rhythmen und nationalistischen, ausländerfeindlichen Texten unterjubeln. Wie kann man diese Musikalische Indoktrinierung abwehren und neutralisieren, die sich die niederesten Instinkte zunutze macht und damit den ideologischen Nährboden für den Rechtsextremismus schafft? Diese Frage hat sich der Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB) gestellt und den Rappern als Auftrag gegegen."

[124] Ibid., 168-169. "Kutlu und Rossi hatten schon viel mit dem DGB gemacht. Sie wollten eine CD Machen gegen die Musik, die die Nazis in den Schulen in Umlauf bringen. Kutlu, der Turk, hat mich angerufen und gesagt: Guten Tag, hier spricht Microphone Mafia. Ich habe geantwortet: Wasss! Maafia? Ich möchte mit der Mafia nichts zu tun haben. Dann sagte er: Wir sind nicht die Mafia, wir heißen nur so. Einen schöneren Namen habt ihr nicht gefunden? Was ist das für ein beknackter Name? So sind wir ins Gespräch gekommen. Sie haben mir erklärt, dass sie eine CD mit mir, meiner Tochter Edna und meinem Sohn Joram machen wollten. Ich sagte natürlich, dass ich einverstanden sei: Ich kann mir zwar nicht vorstellen, was Rap ist, aber ihr könnt es mir ja zeigen. So sind sie zu mir gekommen und haben mir alles erklärt. Kurz danach sind wir in ein Aufnahmestudio in Hamburg gegangen und haben die CD hier produziert […] Kutlu schreibt wunderschöne Texte, er nimmt unsere traditionellen Lieder und macht einen Rap-Text daraus."

[125] *Per la vita*, dir. by Katharina Obens (Hamburg: Katharina Obens/Auschwitz-Komitee in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 2010), DVD.

[126] *Esther Bejarano & Microphone Mafia, "70 Jahre Befreiung von Faschismus—Nie wieder Krieg! Nie wieder Faschismus!,"* no director (Fulda, Germany: FilmReflex, 2015), DVD.

tempo shift in the Coincidence cover, the hip-hop version adheres to a strict number of beats per minute. Because "Schalom" differs so dramatically, it would be a mistake to refer to it as a cover, tribute, or, in Baudrillard's sense, aesthetic simulation. Like "The Tüdelband Song" in *Stateless*, "Schalom" is an original work informed and inspired by Rotblit/Rosenblum, the Nachal Theater Group, and Coincidence. Because Yurtseven and Pennino rap in German, Turkish, and Neapolitan Italian, "Schalom" lifts the Rotblit/Rosenblum original out of its monolingual context and extends it into four distinct cultural frames.

In the first verse, Rossi raps:

> Ich sing' Schalom ich will den Weltfrieden ich will die Welt siegen sehn
> *I sing peace I want world peace I want to see the world win*
> Damit sie nicht im Buch mit sieben Siegeln steht
> *So it doesn't end up in the Book of Seven Seals*
> Ich frage mich wie soll das alles nur so weitergehen
> *I wonder how everything is supposed to continue*
> Wenn Militärkonflikte auf der Tagesordnung stehen
> *When military conflicts are the order of the day*
> Ich sehe junge Soldaten, die können es kaum erwarten
> *I see young soldiers who can hardly wait*
> Stehen in den Startlöchern um Unheil zu starten
> *Raring to go to start bringing disaster*
> Doch ihre Augen verraten, wo werden wir begraben sein
> *But their eyes betray where we'll be buried*
> Medaillen ohne Brust und eine Witwe die weint
> *Medals without chests and a widow in tears.*[127]

Due to the double meaning of *Schalom* (peace/hello), Rossi issues a simple declaration ("Ich sing' Schalom ich will den Weltfrieden"/I sing hello/peace I want world peace), but then quickly switches gears to characterize a world in the throes of endless war, fueled in part by naïve young soldiers, eager to wreak havoc. Rossi invokes the Seven Seals from the Book of Revelations to warn against apocalyptic cataclysm should war-making go uncontested. Rapping "Medaillen ohne Brusten und eine Witwe die weint" (Medals without chests and a window in tears), Rossi cuts through the rhetoric that tricks young men into sacrificing themselves and, through that sacrifice, allows them to turn away from those they love.

Edna Bejarano then sings, in Hebrew, the chorus from "Shir LaShalom":

> תפילה תלחשו אל ,לשלום שיר שירו רק לכן
> *So just sing a song for peace, don't whisper a prayer*
> !גדולה בצעקה לשלום שיר שירו רק לכן
> *Better sing a song for peace with a big shout!*

As an example of what Androutsopoulos calls external-stanza switching, i.e. the isolated use of another language in a stanza or chorus, the singing of Rotblit's lyrics in Hebrew gives the song a bilingual feel while linking up the desire for peace in German-speaking countries to the peace movement in Israel. This shift

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[127] Because a transcript for "Schalom" did not exist, one had to be generated. While I transcribed the German, Cynara Frobel (a native German speaker) corrected a few inconsistencies. Özlem Filiz, a native Turkish speaker, transcribed the Turkish, which Kutlu Yurtseven generously double-checked. Antonella Iannaccone, a native speaker of Neapolitan Italian, transcribed Rossi's Neapolitan raps and also provided his rhymes in standard Italian. My thanks and gratitude to Elena Furlanetto for putting me in touch with Antonella.

into Hebrew subtly begins what by the song's conclusion will become an effort to establish and sustain a transnational peace movement.

Kutlu moves away from Rossi's war theme in the second verse, rapping:

> Ich ziehe durch die Welt ich bin einsam und allein
> *I push through the world I'm lonely and alone*
> klopft' an vielen Türen doch sie ließen mich nicht rein
> *Knocked on lots of doors but they wouldn't let me in*
> Sie riefen mich zu sich nun stoßen sie mich zurück
> *They beckoned me to come but now kick me back*
> Mein Haupt ist gesenkt zu viele Tränen verdrückt
> *My head lowered so many tears shed*
> Sorgenbedrückt schau ich um mich sehe was passiert
> *Glum worried I look what's going down around me*
> Bin ich nicht ihr Leitmotiv, dass ihr Leben grundiert
> *I'm not the leitmotif that undercoats their lives*
> Gewalt, Hass, Tod weil zu viele Menschen schwiegen
> *Violence, hate, death because so many remained silent*
> Ihr fragt nach meinem Namen, sie nennen mich Frieden
> *You ask for my name, they call me Peace.*

The opening lines characterize a person who feels alone and unable to find his place in the world, an ambiguity that builds empathy in listeners who have felt similarly for any number of reasons, but especially for perceived ethnic Others in Germany. By line 3 this sentiment comes into tighter relief. Kutlu raps "Sie riefen mich zu sich" (They beckoned me to come) and "nun stoßen sie mich zurück" (but now kick me back), a sentiment anyone might understand, especially given the general feelings of abjection conveyed in line 4 (zu viele Tränen verdruckt"/so many tears shed) and line 5 ("Sorgenbedrückt"/Glum worried). However, the use of *Leitmotiv* (leitmotif) in line 6 establishes a narrative perspective from the point of view ethnic Others—specifically, the foreign guest workers who came to Germany.[128] This is underscored when, in line 7, Kutlu references violence ("Gewalt, Hass, Tod weil zu viele Menschen schwiegen"/Violence, hate, death because so many remained silent), a line that somewhat ambiguously refers to the Second World War and the Holocaust, but also, because of the narrative shift, to violence committed against foreigners in a unified Germany. By the final line, Kutlu advocates for remaining peaceful even in the face of aggression: "Ihr fragt nach meinem Namen, sie nennen mich Frieden" (You ask for my name, they call me Peace). Kutlu's use of general, commonly felt emotions combined with his subtle shift to the voice of the ethnic Other and a call for restraint over reprisals enhance the song's core message. That call for peace is immediately reinforced with another rendition of the chorus.

Because German and Hebrew occur independent of each other, the song up to this point adheres to Androutsopoulos's notion of external-stanza switching, following a "one speaker/one stanza/one language principle [...] with each rapper delivering a stanza in their preferred language."[129] Verse three, however,

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[128] Loentz details the debate around the concept of *Leitkultur* that took place in Germany between 2000 and 2004 after Günther Beckstein, the Bavarian CDU Minister of the Interior, insisted that foreigners seeking to become German citizens be required to learn about the country's Christian heritage, the role of the Enlightenment, and humanism. *See* Elizabeth Loentz, "Yiddish, Kanak Sprach, Klezmer, and HipHop: Ethnolect, Minority Culture, Multiculturalism, and Stereotype in Germany," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 25, no. 1 (Fall 2006): 46.
[129] Androutsopoulos, 30.

signals a double shift: Rossi raps the first half in Neapolitan Italian, Kutlu the second half in Turkish. An example of "participant-related codeswitching,"[130] Androutsopoulos argues that rap groups commonly utilize this technique to narrate "a different take of the same story."[131] But because Rossi and Kutlu take up different subjects, the technique must be deployed for another purpose. Rossi raps:

> e viv a la viv a libertá
> *Long live, long live freedom*
> nun c sta nisciun ca ma po´rubba, xké mo stamm ca
> *No one can rob me because we are already here*
> e ricimm a veritá comm é bell sta serata ca
> *And let's face it how beautiful the evening is*
> senza guerr e senza bomb e carramata
> *Without war, without bombs, without tanks.*

On one hand, Rossi conveys the sense of joy associated with the cessation of military conflict; on the other, when he raps "nun c sta nisciun ca ma po´rubba, xké mo stamm ca" (No one can rob me because we are already here), he narrates from the point of view of a war refugee and, like Kutlu before him, an ethnic Other. He concludes by affirming a sentiment many can connect with: a world "senza guerr e senza bomb e senz carramata" (without war, without bombs, without tanks). Thus, without ever stating *pace*, *serenità*, *tranquilità*, or *ordine pubblico* (Italian expressions for peace), Rossi communicates the song's core theme by intentionally leaving a blank that listeners must imaginatively fill—a cornerstone of aesthetic experience.

Kutlu then revisits sentiments from verse two, rapping:

> Beni çağıran siz, yine de iten siz,
> *You're the one calling me, then pushing me away*
> yüzüme baktınız fakat beni görmediniz,
> *You look at me, but you didn't you see me*
> Bilmediği bayram etiyle it avlanamaz,
> *You don't know, the end doesn't justify the means*
> Barış namına bunca canlar yakılamaz
> *On behalf of peace so many cannot be burned.*

The shift to Turkish signals a change in subject matter, but more importantly a shift in narrative perspective and, thus, the intended audience. Because Kutlu characterized himself as *Frieden* (Peace) at the end of verse two, the second person singular (you) in the first line can no longer refer to the Germans who historically called foreign guest workers to Germany. Instead, Kutlu now addresses Turkish speakers who call for peace, but reject it. Furthermore, in line 2 he suggests that those who want peace neither recognize nor accept it even when it stands before them. In lines 3 and 4 he admonishes those who seek peace through non-peaceful means—for instance, through preemptive war, interventionist humanitarian military action, or street violence. The last line contains a provocative immolation metaphor to underscore the second half of line three (the end doesn't justify the means). Switching languages, embodying peace, and adopting a more general theme that references arson attacks, the Holocaust, and military action, Kutlu universally condemns

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[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid., 31.

any use of force carried out in the name of peace. Thus, by its conclusion, the song radically advocates for *absolute peace*. A final double rendition of the chorus in Hebrew reinforces those sentiments.

The use of four languages in "Schalom" make it a transcultural work because as a complete text unto itself, the song speaks from, for, to, and across four cultures. If hip-hop and rap music are seen as predominantly (though not exclusively) African American cultural forms, then that number expands to five. That such cultural and linguistic dynamism is attained in a song dedicated to peace, one of hip-hop's core fundamental principles, should be no great surprise: peace, like love and war, is a universal ideal that resonates across all human societies. Like other multilingual rap songs, the multilingualism in "Schalom" "underscores that what is being narrated represents a collective experience that transcends linguistic borders."[132] Further still, the use of four languages creates the opportunity for listeners to undergo a transcultural aesthetic experience. Although people with access to two or more of these languages are more likely to have such an experience, curious monolingual listeners might be inspired to explore any of the other languages on offer. At the same time, however, the method by which the song's transculturality is achieved paradoxically becomes a barrier. None of lyrics to the songs on *Per la vita* appear in the album's liner notes, and even though web addresses are listed in the CD inlay card, the lyrics appear neither there nor at any popular online lyrics databases. Thus, while the song does achieve a high degree of transculturality, the inability to access its multilingual lyrics presents a challenge. The group would seek to help listeners overcome that challenge on *La vita continua* (2013), their follow-up release.

Infusing Turkish-German Rap with the Arabesque: "Insanlar"

While "Schalom" emerged from 'digging' into Coincidence's back catalogue, "Insanlar—Menschen" (2013) was inspired by "Insanlar," a track that appeared on *Vendetta* (1996). Translated as "People," "Mankind," "Human," or "Humanity," the song was recorded three years earlier for *SOS Deutschland—Stop Rassismus! Stop Faschismus!* (1993, Day-Glo/Rough Trade Records), a compilation of antifascist and antiracism songs. Initiated by and attributed to Bülent Eskimez, a Frankfurt/Istanbul-based Turkish pop singer, "Insanlar" was a response to a series of arson attacks that had taken place across Germany in the early 1990s—specifically, one on a Turkish home in the city of Solingen, North-Rhine Westphalia on May 29, 1993 in which five Turkish women and girls died. The incident set off a wave of xenophobic attacks carried out later that year with increasing brutality.[133]

This musical response to racially motivated xenophobic violence ushered in the so-called migrant era of hip-hop in Germany, which Androutsopoulos "dates back to the aftermath of German unification."[134] Initiated by "Fremd im eigenen Land" (A Foreigner at Home) by the Heidelberg-based group Advanced

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[132] Ibid.

[133] "Appendix," in *Antisemitism and Xenophobia in Germany after Unification*, edited by Hermann Kurthen, Werner Bergmann, and Rainer Erb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 278. For a list of attacks carried out across Germany, see Kautny, 411-412.

[134] Androutsopoulos, 22.

Chemistry in November 1992,[135] Androutsopoulos argues that "rap artists reacted against racist aggression and appropriated the tradition of protest or message rap to articulate their voices and viewpoints."[136] He further notes that "some migrant rappers, especially of Turkish descent," began "aggressively affirming their ethnic identity and pride" by "exploring new symbolic resources in music and language," including experimentation with "samples of arabesque/oriental music."[137] Further still, he argues, following Güngör and Loh, that this "phase witnesses a turn to migrant languages—sometimes exclusively Turkish throughout a record, sometimes in several languages in the same record or song," a period known as the "linguistic Babylon" of German hip hop.[138] Some of the best examples of this era include Ratingen-based Fresh Familee's "Ahmet Gündüz" (1993)[139] and "Multilingual" (1994), but also Advanced Chemistry's "Polyglott Poets" (1995), a crew song that purportedly contains 16 languages and dialects.[140]

Produced by Tonio Neuhaus and Xanu Lexa of the Bielefeld-based hip-hop/crossover group N-Factor,[141] "Insanlar" may have been inspired by a song of the same name recorded in 1989 by prolific Kurdish-Turkish musician İbrahim Tatlıses.[142] For instance, where bongos in the introductory bars to the Eskimez/Microphone Mafia song work in tandem with a snare drum to build tension, bongos underpin the lead vocal in Tatlıses's song. Furthermore, both rely heavily on orchestral strings. In the Neuhaus/Lexa production, bells, cymbals, and gong clangs hint at the Arabesque, a hybrid musical form dating back "to mostly Egyptian popular music and films of the 1920s and '30s"[143] that intermixes "Egyptian film music with powerful dance rhythms, Arabic vocal and orchestral conventions, and later […] western rock, pop, and dance music."[144] Because the thematic concerns of Arabesque lean toward a "philosophy of fatalism," which, in turn, has led to the style being regarded as music of suffering,[145] use of the form in a rap song that contests violence against perceived racial and ethnic Others in Germany is particularly apropos. While use of the Arabesque in "Insanlar" reflects what musicologist Ralph J. Poole characterizes as "the rising

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[135] Sascha Verlan and Hannes Loh, *35 Jahre HipHop in Deutschland* (Hofen: Hannibal), 554.

[136] Androutsopoulos, 22.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Both Simon Strick and I have written about "Ahmet Gündüz" in considerable detail. *See* Simon Strick, "Competent Krauts—Following the Cultural Translations of Hip-Hop to Germany," in *Traveling Sounds: Music, Migration, and Identity in the U.S. and Beyond*, edited by Wilfried Raussert and John Miller Jones (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2008), 265-288 and Terence Kumpf, "Beyond Multiculturalism: The Transculturating Potential of Hip-Hop in Germany," in *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, edited by Sina A. Nitzsche and Walter Grünzweig (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2013), 207-225.

[140] Because "Polyglott Poets" emerged from a collaboration of an array of MCs (many of whom are no longer active), the lyrics were never written down, thus leaving the song, at least for now, beyond the reach of analysis. Nevertheless, my thanks to Iman Soltani, brother of Babak Soltani, a member of the Iserlohn-based Anarchist Academy, who affirmed via email, after asking Advanced Chemistry's Toni-L, that a transcript for the song does not exist.

[141] As a stand-alone group, N-Factor recorded and released material between 1989 and 1992. *See* Verlan and Loh, 550-553 and "N-Factor," *Discogs*, n.d., accessed May 24, 2017, discogs.com/artist/61702-N-Factor.

[142] For the Tatlıses song, *see* "Ibrahim Tatlıses—Insanlar," YouTube video, 3:14, posted by ALLaboutIBO, Aug 24, 2011, accessed Sept 22, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=rLHttrMLPvg.

[143] Ralph J. Poole, "Arabesk: Nomadic Tales, Oriental Beats, and Hybrid Looks," in *Dichotonies: Gender and Music*, edited by Beate Neumeier (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2007), 249.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid., 249.

translocation of [Arabesque] musical production to western European countries,"[146] it is also indicative of the numerous "translations and imitations"[147] that spawned the form. With roots in so-called low culture,[148] Arabesque appealed to Turkey's "low-income working-class milieu."[149] "Insanlar," however, is more than the translocation of the Arabesque. The fusion of rap and Arabesque bridges the music cultures of Egypt, Turkey, Germany, and the United States. Because it constitutes music making across national, cultural, and linguistic borders, it is an example of transcultural music *par excellence.*

The chorus occurs at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end, where it is repeated twice for emphasis. In its first iteration, the chorus is exclusively monolingual, with Eskimez singing:

> İnsanlar insanlar
> *People people*
> İnsani uyurken yakan insanlar
> *People who burn people while they're sleeping*
> İnsani kalleşce yakan insanlar
> *People who treacherously burn human beings.*[150]

While Eskimez admonishes Germans who brazenly torch migrant homes, only listeners who speak Turkish can appreciate his condemnation. By its second iteration, however, the chorus becomes bilingual. While Eskimez sings, Rossi raps:

> İnsanlar [Menschen brennen, doch Du bist still] insanlar
> *People [People burn but you are silent] people*
> İnsanlar yanarken sen sus diyorsun
> *You say when people are burning*
> İnsanı uyurken yakan insanlar
> *People who burn people while they're sleeping*
> İnsanı kalleşce yakan [Menschen brennen, doch du bist still] insanlar
> *People who treacherously burn [People burn but you are silent] human beings.*

The use of two languages not only speaks from, to, and across two distinct, but interrelated, cultures simultaneously, this passage figures two audiences and calls on members of both to be human in the face of inhuman acts. Because the two utterances are carefully overlaid each other through the mixing process (lines 1 and 4), listeners must navigate both languages at once. As a result, the message of condemnation now resonates among speakers of Turkish and German through a bilingual aural aesthetic that is neither German nor Turkish, but both. Moreover, the message is not just for perpetrators (or Germans who remain silent), but Turks who dare not speak out, possibly for fear of reprisal. This is underscored in line two when Kutlu raps, "İnsanlar yanarken sen sus diyorsun" (You say when people are burning). The overall effect is powerful. While "Insanlar" addressed arson attacks on perceived ethnic Others in Germany in the early to mid-1990s, it sadly remains poignant today amidst not only the rise of the rightwing Alternative für

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[146] Ibid., 254.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid., 254.
[149] Ibid., 249.
[150] My thanks to Özlem Filiz for preparing a transcript of the Turkish lyrics.

Deutschland (AfD/Alternative for Germany),[151] but violence that continues to be carried out against migrants and refugees across the country. The high-profile burning of a bus of refugees in Clausnitz, a small town near the city of Bautzen in eastern Saxony in February 2016, was one of 1000 reported attacks in that year alone.[152]

A Renewed Plea for Humanity: "Insanlar—Menschen" (2013)

The reworked version of "Insanlar—Menschen" (2013) twenty years later injects additional thematic content to achieve a slightly broader, and thus more universal, message. Coproduced with Esther Bejarano and Coincidence, the musical composition bears little, if any, resemblance to the original. Instead of relying on musical elements from the Neuhaus/Lexa production, the arrangement utilizes samples from Turkish progressive rock icon Cem Karaca's "İstanbul'u Dinliyorum" (I Am Listening to Istanbul), a musical-spoken performance of a poem with the same title by Turkish poet Orhan Veli Kanık.[153] Sounds decontextualized from the Karaca recording include an ascending/descending piano riff, classical guitar, hi-hat, and a melancholy violin passage,[154] to which additional string arrangements were added in the studio to create emphasis.[155] Because "Insanlar—Menschen" uses samples and re-performed material, it is a rare instance of what Justin A. Williams, following Serge Lacasse, calls autosonic (direct sampling) and allosonic (performative replaying) citation.[156] With bombastic, and noticeably slower, hip-hop percussion, the resulting composition is subdued and creates a sonorous atmosphere well suited for contemplative reflection.

Because none of the music from the original is reused, the 'digging' into Microphone Mafia's back catalogue entails the creative reuse of their rhymes. Rossi opens the song, rapping:

> Und ich seh' Menschen die laufen Menschen die schreien
> *I see people running people screaming*
> Ich seh' Kinder mit ängstlichen Blicken die weinen
> *I see kids scared to death and crying*
> Ich seh' den Teufel momentan diese Welt regieren
> *I see the world being ruled by devils*
> Ich seh' wie Menschen sich gegenseitig grausam massakrieren

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[151] In the federal elections of Fall 2017, Germany's rebranded far-right party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) received 12.6% of the vote, an increase of 7.9% from 2013. *See* "Wahl 2017," 2017, *Der Spiegel*, Oct 13, accessed Oct 15, 2017, spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/bundestagswahl-2017-alle-ergebnisse-im-ueberblick-a-1167247.html.

[152] Jenny Hill, 2016, "Migrant attacks reveal dark side of Germany," *BBC News*, Feb 22, accessed Oct 10, 2017, bbc.com/news/world-europe-35633318.

[153] For Kanık's poem, both in the original Turkish and in English translation, *see* "İstanbul'u Dinliyorum," n.d., *Turkish Language Class: Free Online Turkish Language Resource*, accessed Sept 23, 2017, turkishclass.com/poem_193. Moreover, Microphone Mafia is not the only rap group to draw inspiration from Karnık. Thomas Solomon reports that the Istanbul-based group *Nefret* directly quotes the very same poem in "Istanbul," a song on their album *Meclis-i Aʾlâ – Istanbul* (High Council – Istanbul, 2000). *See* Thomas Solomon, "'Listening to Istanbul': Imagining Place in Turkish Rap Music," *Studia Musicologa Norvegica* 31 (2005): 51-78.

[154] The passage sampled occurs between 3:12 and 3:16. *See* "Cem Karaca–Istanbulu Dinliyorum," YouTube video, 4:10, posted by flipperr34, Jan 14, 2007, accessed Sept 23, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=sff8ZxJnxMc.

[155] Kutlu Yurtseven divulged these details during our interview on August 24, 2016.

[156] Justin A. Williams, "Intertextuality, sampling, and copyright," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop*, edited by Justin A. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 208.

> *I see how people cruelly massacre each other.*[157]

To regulate the rhythm of the line, Rossi truncates the active first person singular *ich sehe* to *ich seh'* by eliminating an unnecessary syllable. Intended or not, his aesthetic decision aurally invokes English (I say), which in turn imparts credibility to the first person narrative he weaves. (This also harkens back to Laufenberg's ethnomimetic mirroring of Wonder Mike's opening lines from "Rapper's Delight" in "Rapper's Deutsch.") Here, the first four lines show Rossi bearing witness to acts of inhumanity. The first two lines describe a scene of mayhem, despair, and emotional pain. In a sense, these lines evoke Pueblo Picasso's famous anti-war painting *Guernica*, which immortalized the bombing of a Spanish town in World War Two. However, the presence of children and the lack of war symbols such as tanks, planes, soldiers, or bombs figure not a scene of military conflict, but one of general terror—perhaps the immediate aftermath of a terrorist attack in an urban center. In a marked contrast to hip-hop's competitive male posturing where rhetorical displays of violence and aggression function as metaphors for strength and power, Rossi does not celebrate these cruel acts. Instead, he identifies leaders who carry them out as "Teufel" (devils).

In the lines immediately following, Rossi describes how actions and reactions test our humanity:

> Die Menschheit ist auf dem Tiefpunkt auf Brechen und Biegen
> *Mankind at rock bottom bending and breaking*
> Wollen Kriege führen und die Schwachen besiegen
> *Wanting to wage wars and conquer the weak*
> Wo bleibt der humane Gedanke (ej) Gott hab uns selig
> *Where do humane thoughts reside (hey) god rest our soul*
> Wir wollen immer mehr und das ist noch viel zu wenig
> *We always want more and still it's never enough.*

Suggesting that the desire to wage war brings mankind to its breaking point (line 1), Rossi hypothetically asks where our humanity lies. Invoking god to put retaliatory impulses to rest, he ballasts that call with the somewhat ambiguous "Wir wollen immer mehr" (we always want more) and "das ist noch viel zu wenig" (still it's never enough). On the one hand, the line exposes the bloodlust for revenge that resides in victims, their family members, and friends; on the other, the metaphor of greed and lack reveals the insatiability of vengeance. Because the line follows the rhetorical question "Wo bleibt der humane Gedanke" (Where do humane thoughts reside?), humanity is figured as that thing we want most. In the first instance, Rossi warns that never-ending cycles of violence—a natural and, in many cases, very human response—diminish our humanity; in the second, he suggests that no matter how much humanity we possess, we always want more. Thus, his ambiguous fusing of 'positive' humanity (*humane Gedanke*/humane thoughts) and 'negative' humanity (the desire for revenge) allows for a contradictory double reading.

Rossi then makes an appeal for solidarity and intervention, rapping:

> Also rücken wir zusammen wie ein Krisenstab
> *Let's come together like an emergency task force*
> Lasst uns die Welt von oben sehen wie auf einem Riesenrad

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[157] Relying on the transcript in the liner notes to *La vita continua*, I nevertheless have made minor changes to better reflect the performance on the recording. For example, even though the transcript reads "Ich sehe" Rossi clearly truncates his pronunciation to *ich seh'*.

> *Let's look upon the world as if from a ferris wheel*
> Lasst uns von vorn beginnen zusammen sind wir stark
> *Let's start from the top together we are strong*
> Menschlichkeit ist das was bleibt an einem schlechten Tag
> *Humanity is what remains when everything goes wrong.*

To band listeners together, Rossi suggests they close the ranks (*zusammenrücken*) and form an emergency task force (*Krisenstab*). After calling for perspective and an investment to begin anew, he suggests that humanity (*Menschlichkeit*) is what remains, which immediately precedes the bilingual chorus:

> Insanlar, Insanlar, Insanlar – Menschen leiden, doch Du bist still
> *People, humans, humanity – people suffer but you are silent*
> Insanlar, Insanlar, Insanlar – Menschen brennen, doch Du bist still
> *People, humans, humanity – people burn but you are silent.*

A partial allosonic quotation of the 1993 recording, the chorus is a bilingual utterance aimed at Turkish, German, and bilingual Turkish-German speakers. After Esther Bejarano and Kutlu ominously sing out *İnsanlar* (Turkish for "people," "humans" or "humanity"), Rossi rejoins with "Menschen leiden, doch Du bist still" (people suffer but you are silent), a slight variation on the original, and "Menschen brennen, doch Du bist still" (people burn but you are silent), a verbatim re-rendering of the original. The provocative use of *brennen* (to burn) evokes, on the one hand, victims of arson attacks; on the other, the belligerent members of Germany's far-right community who, seething with hatred, are emboldened to commit gross acts of violence. The phrase "doch Du bist still" (but you are silent) individually targets people who do not intervene when such acts are carried out, but also the silent majority who remain quiet after such crimes have been committed. While Rossi twice calls for solidarity by imploring the many to become a collective ("Lasst uns"/let us), his use of the second person singular *Du* (you) is informal, direct, and personal. While the chorus is at once a condemnation of those who lack courage to speak out, listeners are encouraged, mostly due a subtly implied sentiment of guilt, to be courageous. Thus, the bilingual chorus figures and addresses three audiences—victims, aggressors, and silent spectators—and calls them to action for different reasons.

In the second verse, Kutlu rhymes in Turkish, rapping:

> Eskidene denk edine edermiş demişler
> *They say what goes around comes around*
> Keskin sirke küpüne zararmış öğrettiler
> *Anger they taught us only hurts you*
> Hainlik, sinsilik, aldı gitti bencillik
> *Treachery and spitefulness lead to discord*
> İki satirlik insanları bir türlü çözemedik
> *I cannot recognize people divided in two*
> Bitirdik hayat dediğimizi yitirdik
> *We never knew the value*
> bu dünyanın kıymetini hiç bir zaman bilemedik
> *of this world that we have lost*
> insan olduğu yerde, yaslar sel olup akıyor
> *Wherever people are tears become torrential streams*
> insanlar acı çekerken şakşakçılar susuyor.
> *While people suffer the claque is silent.*[158]

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[158] As before, Özlem Filiz provided a transcript of Kutlu's Turkish rhymes, which he double checked for accuracy.

Because Kutlu raps exclusively in Turkish, these lines may seem intended for, or only available to, Turkish speakers. However, a German translation in the liner notes makes them available to speakers of German. The first two lines, along with the first half of line three, are lifted nearly verbatim from the third verse of "Insanlar." These lines assert that negative emotions such as anger, treachery, and spitefulness ultimately hurt those who submit to them. In that sense, Kutlu, like Rossi before him, warns against the impulse to retaliate. With "İki satirlik insanları bir türlü çözemedik" (I cannot recognize people divided in two), Kutlu makes a plea for those who are angry—for instance, the family members, friends, or colleagues of victims— to become neither internally conflicted nor to lose their sense of community. Where rage and anger blind, those driven by the lust for revenge are incapable of understanding what is lost if they lash out in anger. After stressing that pain and suffering are universal (line 7), Kutlu raps "insanlar acı çekerken şakşakçılar susuyor" (While people suffer the claque is silent") to suggest that followers ("şakşakçılar"/claque) too often mimic those who fail to speak out. Kutlu thus condemns not only those who remain silent, but people unwilling to separate themselves from the pack to step forward and lead.

After another rendition of chorus, Kutlu delivers the final verse in German:

> Menschen leiden, es wird wieder einmal weggeblickt
> *People suffer and again people look away*
> Helft mit! Das Hass und Zorn im Keim erstickt
> *Help nip hate and anger in the bud*
> Ein Konflikt der bei jedem selbst anfängt,
> *Conflicts that begin in each and every one*
> und das Gehirn einengt
> *constrict the brain*
> Die Spirale der Gewalt sich in die Herzen einbrennt
> *The cycle of violence burns deep in hearts*
> Es ist so laut wenn wir alle lieber schweigen
> *It is deafening when we prefer to stay silent*
> Wer eröffnet den Kampf gegen kollektives Schweigen
> *Who initiates the fight against collective silence?*
> Tränen fließen unter gleichgültigen Blicken
> *Tears flow beneath apathetic gazes*
> Sag, bist Du auch von denen die lieber wegblicken.
> *Tell me, are you one of those who would rather look away?*

The verse touches upon apathy, complicity, and guilt—sentiments of collective guilt that anyone educated in the German public school system would be familiar with.[159] The second line, also in the 1993 version (but originally rapped by Rossi), is an unequivocal call ("Helft mit!"/help!) for everyone to work together to prevent hate and anger from flourishing ("Das Hass und Zorn im Keim erstickt"/nip hate and anger in the bud). Lines 3 and 4, also recycled from the original single, were rapped by Microphone Mafia member Dennis 'Dio' Morel. Here, Kutlu builds on an enjambed multiclausal line to deliver one of the more rhythmically beautiful moments of the song: "Die Spirale der Gewalt sich in die Herzen einbrennt" (The cycle of violence burns deep in hearts). Rhythmically, it is a near perfect match to "İki satirlik insanları bir

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159 Here I am referring to the concept of collective guilt originally coined by Carl Jung in 1945 which accounts for teaching subsequent generations responsibility for beginning WW2 and carrying out the Holocaust. *See* Theodor Adorno, *Guilt and Defense: On the Legacies of National Socialism in Postwar Germany*, translated and edited by Jeffery K. Olick and Andrew J. Perrin (London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 24-25.

türlü çözemedik" (I cannot recognize people divided in two) from the previous verse. Kutlu then riffs on the verb *schweigen* (to remain silent) and the noun *Schweigen* (silence) to ask, "Wer eröffnet den Kampf gegen kollektives Schweigen" (Who initiates the fight against collective silence?). As a hypothetical question that goes unanswered, the listener is left to fill in the blank with either 'me' or 'us,' particularly because the song repeatedly posits the need for communality, solidarity, and collective action. As a carefully crafted gap in accord with Fluck's understanding of aesthetic experience (but also because the line is delivered in German), ethnic Germans *and* bilingual Turkish Germans would become activated when receiving the song. In that sense, both are invited to reflect on what they can do to speak out to contest acts of violence and brutality. Identifying apathy as unacceptable, the last line calls on the listener to reflect in how far he or she fails to acknowledge inhumanity. Kutlu again disavows—and invites the listener to disavow—those who remain silent. As the chorus closes out the song, it again underscores the moral bankruptcy, and perhaps even complicity, of choosing to remain silent in the face of inhumanity—sentiments that ring out across two languages and multiple generations in the wake of the Second World War and German unification.

Even though the primary performance languages are relegated to specific verses, "Insanlar—Menschen" manages to speak to two distinct, yet interrelated, communities. While the chorus is rapped and sung in two languages, the Turkish and German lyrics, unlike in the Eskimez original, remain separate. Although there are no examples of code-switching, language blending, or aural overlay (via the mixing process), the song as a whole still stands to position listeners within two overlapping cultural spaces at once. In how far this effectively invokes empathy and triggers reflection is unknown; however, given that a complete German transcript of the Turkish lyrics are provided in the liner notes, non-Turkish speaking listeners are enabled, and even invited, to reflect on the song's themes. As a result, monolingual speakers of Turkish and German as well as bilingual Turkish-German speakers stand to undergo an aesthetic experience. For instance, reading the German translation while listening to Turkish raps, non-Turkish speakers can experience both languages; likewise, the same can be said for Turkish speakers who read along with the German transcript while listening to the Turkish raps. That act of listening, reading, and reflecting is very likely to produce a transcultural aesthetic experience in anyone who undertakes it.

Because this bilingual aesthetic experience plays out in a musical form predominantly viewed as African American, "Insanlar—Menschen," especially because it contains a sample of music from Cem Karaca's "Istanbul'u Dinliyorum," must be understood a transcultural work of art. Like "Schalom," which strives to establish and sustain a peace movement across cultural and national borders, "Insanlar—Menschen" calls upon people to embrace humanity. In a world marked by rising acts of inhumanity—be they state-sponsored war, acts of terrorism, or street violence—the necessity for interventionist work of this kind seems more important than ever. Even if these songs do not achieve their stated aims, their musical and linguistic aesthetics might diminish, or even eliminate, perceived divisions constructed along racial, linguistic, and cultural divides. If that is the case, creative works such as these may have the power to convince audiences to imagine themselves not as separate and divided, but interconnected. While such an

affect might be difficult to measure, it could nevertheless be palpable. To determine in how far this is the case, however, would require further investigation and research.

Conclusions

Like those in the preceding chapters, the works studied here indicate that Baudrillard's term transaesthetics, while applicable as a starting point, insufficiently describes their aesthetic circumstances. Dan Wolf and Tommy Shepherd's work in *Stateless: A Hip-Hop Vaudeville* demonstrates how connections between hip-hop culture and Hamburg can be forged in a transatlantic space. Perhaps the best example is the way in which the duo fuses hip-hop with Hansestadt Hamburg via a double H construction that mirrors, but also disempowers, the coded Neo Nazi greeting "8-8," a numerical abbreviation for *Heil Hitler* which is not only used in Germany, but in Neo Nazi circles in the United States. Contra to what Baudrillard originally postulated, this particular example clearly illustrates that aesthetic 'collapse' or 'blurring' does not axiomatically lead to a loss in aesthetic particularity devoid of any liberating potential. Instead, it shows that aesthetic blurring between two countries and cultures is a powerful, and potentially empowering, strategy to intervene and disrupt the power of Neo Nazis. For Wolf, who is a descendent of the Hamburg cabaret team the Gebrüderwolf, this is particularly salient. By drawing upon his own bicultural capital as an American Jew of German extraction with longstanding ties to the San Francisco hip-hop scene, Wolf is able to reclaim his lost family heritage, but also potentially disrupt Neo Nazi scenes on both sides of the Atlantic by positing a substitute for extreme rightwing bigotry and chauvinism. This has ramifications for Shepherd, especially when we recognize that extreme rightwing ideologies such as racial superiority arose from, and still exist in, the United States and Germany. By utilizing the theater as a performative contact zone, Wolf and Shepherd present audiences with the opportunity to explore, and learn, Wolf's family heritage. This process of exploration and learning occurs through a number of strategies that result in a transcultural aesthetic experience. Whether or not audiences recognize, understand, and appreciate any (or all) of these strategies remains to be answered, but as I argued in my analysis there seems to be ample opportunity for this to occur.

Bejarano and Microphone Mafia rely on similar, if albeit different, strategies to coax listeners into bi- and more-cultural spaces. Rapping and singing in Turkish, German, Neapolitan Italian, and Hebrew, the group, which culls from their own oeuvres, draws inspiration from the antifascist musical traditions of the Jewish diaspora to craft rap songs that speak to a new generation. Their aim is to confront and contest not only extreme rightwing bigotry, hate, and violence, but also to challenge the impulses for war, terrorism, and random street violence, the latter of which ethnic Others in Germany have borne the brunt since the early 1990s. By utilizing universal themes such as peace, war, and humanity that resonate across cultures, Bejarano and Microphone Mafia make a compelling argument. Although there are almost no examples of linguistic fusions or blending, their work should be understood as transcultural art because it speaks from, to, and across a number of cultural frameworks simultaneously, and listeners are required to navigate a robust and challenging linguistic landscape. While the lyrics to "Schalom" might be difficult to access

because a lyric transcript appears neither in popular online databases nor in the CD liner notes, the group provided a transcript in German on their follow-up release *La vita continua* so that non-native speakers can access the Turkish and Neapolitan rhymes in "Insanlar—Menschen." By listening, audiences can experience all of these languages; however, if native German speakers read along to the German translation while listening to the song, then they are able to experience Turkish and Neapolitan in translation while reading German. The same can be said of native Turkish (or Neapolitan) speakers who listen and read the German translation. This may be a disorienting experience for some, but for others, especially for those who are interested in the song's message, this might be an empowering experience. In either case, the listener can accept, but also even reject, the song's message. However, even if they ultimately reject it, listeners must nevertheless experience it. In that sense, listeners who are not open to the song's message still have to enact those sentiments via aesthetic experience. Thus, the navigation of bi- and multilingual material, even if rejected, requires enactment. In this way, the song is by no means coercive: it remains for the listener to decide. These songs, like many others on their official releases, possess significant potential to trigger a transcultural aesthetic experience in listeners. Whether or not listeners engage in the manner suggested would require further research; nevertheless, work of this type, especially in a world where extreme rightwing violence against perceived ethnic Others in Germany (and elsewhere) shows little sign of abating, is worthy not only of study, but active support. With connections to (African) American hip-hop, this material, which unfolds in numerous languages overtop music from multiple traditions and origins, illustrates the need to redefine more accurately the term transaesthetics to mean transcultural aesthetics, precisely because these works are transcultural, transatlantic, and even transhemispheric in nature.

Conclusions: The New Transaesthetics and Its Implications

The social, cultural, and economic transformation of Cuba resulted from an influx of people from around the world to service the sugar economy, and Fernando Ortiz developed his transculturation model to theorize how complex social and cultural changes take place negatively and positively. He also suggested that North America, Europe, and Africa were similarly transformed when inhabitants adopted and adapted Cuba's second major agricultural export, tobacco, thereby making it their own. To understand the positive and negative dimensions of these developments would be a huge undertaking, but some metaphorical conclusions can be drawn. Sugar delights, but it can lead to obesity and diabetes. Tobacco excites, inspires, and relaxes, but it also causes heart disease and cancer. These are just two additional 'counterpoints' that emerge from Ortizian thought. What more are there?

While the above is true for sugar and tobacco and Cuba, the same can be said of hip-hop culture. With roots in the Caribbean, hip-hop has not only transformed the United States and Germany, but every other country where it has been received—certainly in terms of consumption, but also via its enactment through the creation of new music. If transculturation takes place through adoption and adaption, this happened in both countries. In the United States, Jamaican soundsystem culture and microphone toasting became the basis of hip-hop deejaying and emceeing courtesy of Clive Campbell (DJ Kool Herc), who brought the practice to New York. In Germany, hip-hop itself was new—totally new and exciting, an 'energy' as Tonn reports. In the early stages of this transculturation process, ethnomimesis, both in the U.S. and Germany, allowed burgeoning artists to imitate progenitors and, thus, begin elaborating hip-hop's musical and linguistic aesthetics. If we apply Ortiz's basic understanding of the sensorial appeal of sugar and tobacco to rap music, we can superficially conclude that all three are addictive to varying degrees. However, hip-hop culture, like sugar (which is sweet and sticky), binds people, as H. Samy Alim has suggested, into a Global Hip Hop Nation that traverses national and cultural boundaries. In that sense, Alim's insight underscores the *acculturative* power of hip-hop. If and when elders fear that hip-hop is a destructive force, then we can also apprehend its *deculturative* (or destructive) power. As an artform that borrows from the past to fuse multiple cultural components into new musical aesthetic objects, rap music can be described as *neocultural*. Because all three aspects of Ortiz's transculturation model are satisfied, we can understand hip-hop to be a transcultural artform.

The above applies even when hip-hop arose in The Bronx in the 1970s. Early founding hip-hop deejays had diverse record collections, and it was from those records that they decontextualized specific percussive elements and refashioned them to create breakbeats, the rhythmic core of rap music. By doing so, they drew an array of musical materials into what has, until now, been understood as an African American artform. Like Ortiz suggested with the adoption and adaptation of tobacco, these deejays fused African American music with music from numerous Latino traditions, but also European music. Early

important examples include the creative reuse of the UK group The Shadow's "Apache" (via the Incredible Bongo Band cover) as well as the UK prog rock band Babe Ruth's "The Mexican." (With titles like these, is it any wonder why *ethnicity* is such an important part of rap music?) When Afrika Bambaataa and producers Arthur Baker and John Robie utilized elements from the Düsseldorf electro-synth group Kraftwerk's "Trans Europe Express" and "Numbers" to craft the beat for "Planet Rock" (1982),[1] they engaged in transcultural music production. (Is it any wonder why hip-hop is global and *trans*?) Along with James Brown's "Funky Drummer," all of these sources, and many more, inform the breakbeat. While this creative methodology is an Afro diasporic musical practice (both in the U.S. and abroad), the utilization of music from many traditions infuses hip-hop with additional sounds, thereby giving it its transcultural textures. Where commentators from Danny Hoch, Joseph Schloss, Mark Katz, and Justin Williams to Horst Tonn and Simon Strick have identified the resulting compositions as 'something new,' this musical creation is indicative of transculturation (particularly neoculturation), i.e. the creation of new cultural forms. That is true in Germany, but it was also the case in the racially, ethnically, and culturally mixed Bronx.

Throughout this study I have argued that bi- and multilingual rap music yields transaesthetics due to transcultural music making practices. I have also attempted to tease out examples of the 'traces' or 'residues' of those processes. Rather than understand what results as 'aesthetic blurring' or a 'confusion of categories' as Baudrillard argued, these musical aesthetic circumstances retain enough distinctiveness to still be recognizable and discreet. As Paulina Tendera and Wojciech Rubiś note with regard to so-called world music, "even when […] mixed [musical] components result in a new compositional and aesthetic quality, they remain nonetheless recognisable as pieces borrowed from different identifiable cultures. In this way, transculturalism characterises the process of injecting an alien element into a culture, but at the same time preserving it within this culture as a foreign element."[2] Thus, there is no aesthetic 'collapse' as Baudrillard claimed. Instead, mixed musical forms can be appreciated for their particularity and their blended nature. When hip-hop producers fashion new compositions from diverse source material, we could speak of transcultural vernacular music, especially when those musical elements originate among common people outside of 'official' cultural institutions. Since I intend to resuscitate Baudrillard's term and inject it with additional qualifications, this is an important redefinition of transaesthetics because it places power in the hands of creators.

In bi- and multilingual lyrics, there is a significant amount of linguistic mixing and blending; in many cases, there is also a large degree of aesthetic distortion: words are abused, bent, broken, and fused, and sometimes words come to mean something else entirely. Nigga/*Digga* are excellent examples of this. To some extent, Baudrillard's original conceptualization of transaesthetics holds true. However, we also see the emergence of neologisms that I refer to as transcultural vernacular. As a productive development, this calls

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[1] Brewster and Broughton provide a thorough overview of the production work behind "Planet Rock." *See* Bill Brewster and Frank Broughton, *Last Night A DJ Saved My Life: The History of the Disc Jockey* (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 264-266.

[2] Paulina Tendera and Wojciech Rubiś, "World Music: a transcultural phenomenon," *Studio Musica Treviso*, 2016, accessed Aug 10, 2018, studiomusicatreviso.it/icnmc/library/Paper_20_2016.pdf.

into question the predominantly negative judgment Baudrillard suggested with his term transaesthetics. Whether or not these strange new transcultural vernacular forms continue circulating would require another study. Nevertheless, bi- and multilingual rap music presents a strong argument for why the term transaesthetics should be expanded to include notions such as transatlantic, transnational, transcultural, transhemispheric, and even transsexual and transgender. It is important to note that these additional qualifications emerge from the works analyzed in this study. In that sense, this new articulation of transaesthetics is the result of inductive, and not deductive, reasoning. In other words, transaesthetics arises from people engaged in creative practices, and that coincides with Ortiz's transculturation model, especially since he emphasized its productive and destructive dimensions.

What are we to make of this development in popular culture? What does it say about the United States and Germany today, and why is it significant? On the one hand, I have attempted to show, following Winfried Fluck's work in aesthetic experience, how such music can initiate a transcultural aesthetic experience in listeners. This is where its significance lies. Bi- and multilingual rap, much like Wolfgang Welsch asserted, illustrates that our modern world is not constrained by unitary or monolithic notions of cultural or national identity. American and German culture are already inherently mixed and blended, and this music reveals that. On the other hand, this music has contributed to the transformation of both societies. Whether or not that will continue remains to be seen. But as I have argued with close readings of primary texts, once people are exposed to such material, they must navigate it and, following Fluck, enact and bring it to life by way of psychological transfer. If audiences graft the musical and linguistic elements onto their own senses of self (or what they understand to be their senses of self), then this type of music will very likely produce a 'transculturating' effect. Whether or not audiences receive the music in this manner is a question that would require further research, but it is one worth investigating.

There is good reason to consider its impact. As Dirk Hoerder, Yvonne Hébert, and Irina Schmitt have written:

> Societies of the 21st century are composed of many intersecting cultures, defined by status as citizens or recent immigrants; by age, gender, sex, and sexuality; by access to resources; by hierarchies based on physical markers such as colour of skin, and many other aspects. Past-oriented segments of state populations decry the loss of national identities, constructed as an essentialized characteristic of citizens' identities. In some societies, the debate hinges on the loss of a world remembered as cohesive; in others, the potentialities of diversity and multiple options are placed centre-stage. In most societies, the agents in the debate are adults in working life and older people who bemoan a perceived loss of a national cultural consensus. What is lacking in this set-up of the debate is the young generation, those who will determine future societies.[3]

Three aspects of this quote are salient. First, American and German society already constitute intermixed and blended cultures. In that sense, and much like Welsch suggested, we have already entered a period of

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[3] Dirk Hoerder, Yvonne Hébert, and Irina Schmitt, "Introduction: Transculturation and the Accumulation of Social Capital: Understanding Histories and Decoding the Present of Young People," in *Negotiating Transcultural Lives: Belongings and Social Capital among Youth in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Dirk Hoerder, Yvonne Hébert, and Irina Schmitt (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2005), 11.

transculturality. Second, the observation that adults and older people too often decry the failure or corrosive force of popular culture undercuts not only Baudrillard's claim that art from the modernist period onward had failed, but that he was not well-situated to make such a claim. Third, the young people of today will be the adults of tomorrow, and how they understand the world, not to mention how they engage with it, will play a central role in defining Germany, the United States, and many other countries well into the future. Hoerder, Hébert, and Schmitt further argue that "[t]ransculturation is the process of individuals and societies changing themselves by integrating diverse cultural life-ways into dynamic new ones."[4] From the earliest experiments of bilingual rhyming in Germany and the U.S., but also in the ever more intricate forms that have emerged since, their observation is especially apropos in the context of this study.

This has ramifications for cultural production, reception, and the subsequent identities that result. Addressing identity formation and identification, Hoerder, Hébert, and Schmitt write that

> [w]ithin many-cultured as well as transcultural constellations of social relations, adolescents and adults alike engage in processes of negotiating identities. From the poststructuralist perspective, the 'problem of identity' is to create meaningful identifications while avoiding fixation and keeping one's options open. Each and every person's identifications are subject to change and are negotiated over time and space, and this involves multiple attachments, as well as multiple social, psychological, and cultural dimensions in everyday life. Within limits of power, the self is constantly re-created and performed in systems of meanings and relationships, through language and symbols.[5]

There is potential for bi- and multilingual rap music to assist people in understanding the transcultural contours of the world they inhabit, but also to build affiliations and allegiances ("multiple attachments") across perceived borders and boundaries, be they cultural, national, or linguistic. (Indeed, I befriended people from Germany, Turkey, Greece, Spain, France, and still other countries simply by carrying out this study.) Thus, it seems sensible to consider not only how bi- and multilingual rap music influences people, but how it can actually assist them in the ongoing process of identification via the sorts of identity constructions they 'crystalize' in the process of listening, no matter how fleeting or temporary those crystallizations might be. One of the memorable moments of this study occurred when I encountered a German man in his late-sixties or early seventies outside Idiots Records on Rheinische Strasse in Dortmund. He was wearing a Run-DMC hat.

The central concern here is whether or not people are able to imagine themselves as something more than they are—indeed, if they are able to imagine, and thereby understand, themselves as something they are not or even *think* they are not. Fluck would argue that this is the entire purpose of cultural materials. Art works, especially mediated cultural materials, allow for self-extension,[6] and we expose ourselves to art again and again to extend ourselves. Ethnicity, with all of its ambiguity, offers one way to understand the implications of repeat exposure and self-extension. But where Stuart Hall has emphasized the importance

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[4] Ibid., 13.

[5] Ibid., 17.

[6] The concept of media as self-extension is the core principle of Marshall McLuhan's theory about media and how it affects us, oftentimes withour our knowing. *See* Marshall McLuhan, Quentin Fiore, and Jerome Agel, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (New York: Bantam Book, 1967).

of interrogating the term ethnicity due to how it "functions in the dominant discourse, from its equivalence with nationalism, imperialism, racism, and the state,"[7] he nevertheless recognized that so-called ethnic forms of culture highlight "that we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture without being contained by that position."[8] Hall identified this as "the politics of ethnicity predicated on difference and diversity,"[9] and this was central to his notion of 'new ethnicities,' i.e. that ethnic identities can be invented and take on many combinations and orientations. As I have shown throughout this study, hip-hoppers often speak from and to multiple places at once. As a result, their work speaks across a number of places simultaneously. If bi- and multilingual rap represents a 'mesh' of music and languages, traditions and histories, and even ethnicities (no matter if they are constructed or 'real'), what happens when listeners with no connection to those places, histories, cultures, or experiences come into contact with them?

Floya Anthias has written about what she calls 'translocational positionality,' a term she argues more accurately characterizes "a number of aspects of our modern world, partly as a contrast to the idea of diasporic identity as hybridity."[10] Given that transculturation arises through asymmetrical relations of power, Anthias' concept is worth considering. She writes:

> Social locations can be thought of as social spaces defined by boundaries on the one hand and hierarchies on the other hand. Therefore, when we think of our social locations we are forced to think of them in relation to each other, and also in terms of some of the contradictions we live in through our differential location within the boundaries in terms of hierarchies. The notion of 'location' recognises the importance of context, the situated nature of claims and attributions and their production in complex and shifting locales.[11]

"Positionality," she maintains, "combines a reference to social position (as a set of effectivities, or an *outcome*) and social positioning (as a set of practices, actions and meanings: as *process*)."[12] Thus, "positionality is the space at the intersection of structure (social position/social effects) and agency (social positioning/meaning and practice)."[13] The advantage of positionality is that it "recognizes variability, with some processes leading to more complex, contradictory and at times dialogical positionalities than others."[14] "This," Anthias claims, "is what is meant by the term 'translocational.'"[15] Because translocational positionality suggests that "our locations are multiple and span a number of terrains,"[16] the term "allow[s] us to develop radical conceptualisations of difference and inequality which are non-essentialist and therefore dynamic and

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[7] Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, edited by Kuan-Hsing Chen and David Morley (New York: Routledge, 1996), 447.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Floya Anthias, "Belongings in a Globalising and Unequal World: rethinking translocations," in *The Situated Politics of Belonging*, edited by Nira Yuval-Davis, Kalpana Kannabiran, and Ulrike Vieten (London: Sage, 2006), 27.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

changeable."[17] Anthias further asserts that "new identities are seen to be tied to a globalised and transnational social fabric rather than one bounded by the nation-state."[18] This is useful for people who repeatedly expose themselves to transcultural art such as bi- and multilingual rap music. In how far can people imagine themselves as constituting, or occupying, a range of subject positions?

It is helpful to acknowledge that people already do this at the local, national, and international level. One can be a son/daughter, friend/foe, lover/partner, offspring *and* parent, a regional agent (west coaster), a citizen of a country (American), a foreign national (German American), a racial or ethnic subject (African American, New York Rican, Turkish German, and so forth), or even a 'citizen-of-the-world.' None of these are mutually exclusive, and one can affiliate or identify with many of them at the same time. To this one might add political orientations such as a radical antiwar Republican, a neoliberal pro-war ('blue dog') Democrat, an anarcho-Green environmentalist, and, further still, sexual and gender orientations such as straight, gay, bi-, transsexual, transgendered, intersex, pansexual, and so forth. In all of these instances, and any combination thereof, we imagine ourselves to occupy a number of positions along a spectrum of social, cultural, geographical, political, gendered, and sexual locations. Anthias' translocational positionality concept helps to explain how people can, and likely do, identify across a spectrum of identity markers *through* culture. Where the aesthetics of bi- and multilingual rap (or any other cultural form) enable this, then one of the potentials of transaesthetics is that it opens up ways to conceptualize ourselves as complex social beings.

With regard to race, Russell A. Potter, following Paul Gilroy and W.E.B. DuBois, argued that instilling multiple racial consciousness in listeners was one of rap music's greatest potentials. Why shouldn't popular music, and art more generally, be able to posit still further formulations? Is this not the power of art in the widest sense? If bi- and multilingual rap music accomplishes this (and my readings of songs in this study suggest it does), then this further undercuts Baudrillard's claim that art from the modernist period onward results in 'false liberation.' It would seem, then, that the new transaesthetics I am arguing for holds liberating potential in terms of cultural production, reception, and the identities that result from making or receiving such cultural materials. If we understand rap music, no matter where it is produced or by whom, as a multiethnic transcultural phenomenon, then the aesthetic experience it offers us may result in transethnic identities, orientations, and affiliations—that is to say, blended ethnic identities.[19] This could have profound implications for how we understand ourselves and the world. However, it might also be one reason why people are turned off by such music, namely because it challenges the simple ways we are able to comfortably understand ourselves and the world around us.

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., 25.

[19] I have written about the potential for hip-hop to instill the notion of transethnic identities elsewhere. *See* Terence Kumpf, "Beyond Multiculturalism: The Transculturating Potential of Hip-Hop in Germany," in *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, edited by Sina A. Nitzsche and Walter Grünzweig (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2013), 207-225.

These ruminations on identity are neither speculative nor the domain of scholars sitting high atop their comfortable ivory towers. One of the songs I hoped to analyze in this study (but did not due to its comparative orientation) was "No Puedo Explicar" (I Can't Explain) by the Minneapolis-based duo Los Nativos. The group, which consists of Xilam Balam (Jermain Ybarra) and Felipe Cuauhtil (Felipe Espinoza-Day), "transports an aboriginal musical alliance while staying true to the Hip Hop culture." Part of this 'staying true' entails "integrating Hip Hop, Jazz, Funk, Rhythm and Blues, Tejano, Mariachi, Salsa and Cumbia" into their music. With lyrics "accented by broken Spanish and English," Los Nativos strive to create "political motivation, community awareness and [bring attention to] current events […] to give the listener a sense of what's going on in their world."[20] In the closing moments of "No Puedo Explicar," the listener is presented with a multivoiced spoken word address that aurally figures the struggle for identity:

> Who? Who?
> Who are you?
> *Qué? Como?* What?
> I don't, I don't understand
> *Qué?* What are you sayin'?
> I'm tryin' to figure out myself
> *Míchigan de nord Aztlán*
> *Qué vita?* What?
> I'm tryin' to figure that out myself.
> *Míchigan*
> You don't know what you're talking about, come on.
> *Míchicano*
> I don't know, I don't know.
> *Qué? Qué?*
> Listen to what you're saying.
> Stop, stop, please, stop.
> I don't know what you're talkin' about.
> What? What? *Qué?*
> Who are you? Hey, come on bro. *Qué pasó?*
> I don't know, I don't know. Who?
> I'm tryin' to figure that out. *Mira*
> Yo, yo. You're crazy. Who are you?
> Stop, stop, please, please, stop.
> What? Come on, bro.
> *Míchicano, Míchicano, Míchicano,* indigenous.

This tapestry of contesting voices illustrates the difficulty of navigating multiple cultural spaces at once. Where I have argued extensively for the liberating potential of transcultural art, I close with this example because I believe it adroitly makes the opposing claim: that struggles for identity can be very real for someone who feels caught 'betwixt' and 'between' two or more cultures. Here, the passage speaks to the tension between American, Mexican, and Indigenous identity. This sequence likely resonates with listeners who are familiar with that feeling. But for those unfamiliar with such an existential crisis, this twenty-seven second 'outro' provides them with the opportunity to undergo a powerful aesthetic experience. The Spanish elements—often mirroring what is spoken in English—are so basic that monolingual English speakers can be transported into a contentious space of indecision that results in a lack of certainty about *who they are.*

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[20] "Los Nativos (About)," *Facebook*, accessed Aug 23, 2018, facebook.com/pg/losnativos/about/?ref=page_internal.

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However, it can also exclude them entirely. Thus, the passage illustrates how transcultural states of consciousness may also be frustrating. Indeed, Xilam and Felipe's performance is laced with tension and consternation. No matter how many times I have listened to this song I still find it disorienting, and I think that is the point. In the spirit of full disclosure, I am not certain if this transcript is 100% accurate, namely "Míchigan de nord Aztlán." Nevertheless, *Míchicano*, which is a mash-up of *Míchigan* and *Chicano,* is an invented term to denote an indigenous Michigan native who identifies as Chicano. Minneapolis is far removed from the US-Mexico border Pancho McFarland and others have written about, and perhaps this term is common in Minneapolis and I am simply unfamiliar with it. Nonetheless, it is a neologism. In that sense, it is a 'trace' or 'residue' of the creative processes of transculturation. As a transaesthetic utterance, it is made by common people speaking about their experience. With regard to identity formation as an ongoing process within asymmetrical relations of power, this passage captures contesting voices struggling to gain recognition not only for themselves, but in the eyes of others. Considering the circumstances from which Ortiz developed his concept of transculturation, this Los Nativos song shows what that inner and social struggle must be like.

More research would need to be undertaken to determine if audiences receive such music in the manner suggested, especially if we wish to know that with any degree of seriousness or certainty. In that sense, intersubjective verifiability through a group of test participants might yield interesting findings. Lucila Vargas's work in binational, bicultural, and cross-cultural identity construction in Latina teens in the United States already indicates that young people receive and process media texts in the manner suggested.[21] Moreover, Vargas shows how one might go about conducting an ethnographic study to determine if my claim, based on the analysis of songs in this study, holds up. However, one might simply consider that the artists in this study, no matter where they are located or what their backgrounds are, already prove my point. By responding to hip-hop culture (which, at its roots, was already culturally diverse), these artists have produced and continue to produce rap music that is eclectic, stylized, complex, challenging, but also rewarding. Put another way, the transcultural contours of rap music have been present from the start, and artists have been amplifying and magnifying its transculturality ever since.

What does this entail for Germany? Writing about how migrant youth have utilized popular culture to "articulate agency" and thereby contest the notion that they, in relation to the German master cultural narrative known as *Leitkultur*, are not "illiterate and speech-less,"[22] sociologist Irina Schmitt refers to young people as emblematic of a 'transcultural avant-garde.' She writes:

> Not only explicit interventions, such as the examples presented here, emphasize this point. Rather, everyday interactions—conflictual or as friendly negotiation— lead to adaptations and changes in all members of society. 'Transcultural', in that sense, is meant to point to the inherent instability of cultures, as well as to the continuous changes 'happening' to individual and group identifications. Transculturalism is also a task: The transculturation of German society has to be

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[21] Lucila Vargas, *Latina Teens, Migration, and Popular Culture* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).
[22] Irina Schmitt, "Germany speaking? Rap and Kanak Attak, and Dominant Discourses on Language," in *Negotiating Transcultural Lives: Belongings and Social Capital among Youth in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Dirk Hoerder, Yvonne Hébert, and Irina Schmitt (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2005), 214.

conceptualized and promoted. To gain an understanding of young people in Germany as a diverse group with a variety of identifications—cultural, gender specific, political, religious, …—is an important step. Young people find many ways of positioning themselves. Intervention is necessary where existing social stratifications—based for example on gender or socio-economic status—are reproduced and reinscribed. Yet, most importantly we have to position young people with migration experiences as integral to our allegedly mono-culturally and mono-lingually constructed society.[23]

I share Schmitt's view that transculturation can and should be promoted among young people, for example, through the promotion of transcultural awareness to help neuter marginalization tactics based on racism, cultural chauvinism, and bigotry. However, there is no good reason why transcultural awareness should not be promoted among adults. If immigrant youth in Germany understand the transcultural shape of the world they inhabit (and, by their very existence, create), then helping adults to understand the world in a similar manner could disarm the attitudes that give rise to bigoted, chauvinistic ethnic and racial violence. In that sense, the 'transcultural avant-garde' Schmitt speaks of need not, and should not, be solely limited to young people. Indeed, Esther Bejarano, in her early nineties at the time of writing, is a nonagenarian, and her creative collaborator, Kutlu Yurtseven (who was part of the second wave of hip-hop in Germany), is in his mid-40s. Clearly hip-hop culture resonates beyond youth demographics, and we would be remiss to underestimate its power and appeal to adults, some of whom are already fans.

What does viewing hip-hop culture as a transcultural phenomenon and this new articulation of transaesthetics hold for the United States? For starters, it will likely be viewed as a 'threat' to the project of black cultural politics. However, there is no need for this to be the case. When Stuart Hall wrote that "black politics has […] been underpinned by a deep absence or more typically an evasive silence with reference to class,"[24] he identified its weakness, possibly due to how it overlooks those who contribute to make so-called black culture 'happen.' Given the distances between the manufacturers of musical equipment (advanced turntables, samplers, and computer-based hardware and software) and the hip-hoppers who utilize those technologies, the synergistic work of people who never actually meet has enabled hip-hop artists, no matter the color of their skin or ethnic backgrounds, to create dynamic work. In that sense, deejaying/production (and, in this study, emceeing) practices possess an undeniable transnational orientation that opens an important class dynamic, one that too often remains an unspoken aspect of rap music and popular music more generally, no matter where it is produced or by whom. While hip-hop culture will continue to be understood as one more example of Afro diasporic music (and, as such, the cultural output of African Americans), approaching it as a transcultural phenomenon may productively problematize black cultural politics, especially since Africans were drawn into transculturation against their will via the colonial slave system. Terms that could be of use in this effort include Trans African American music, Trans African-American music, trans afro American music, transafroamerican music, Trans Afroamerican, trans afro Americanism, trans-afro Americanism, Trans Afroamericanism, Trans Afro American, or transafro music.

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[23] Ibid., 229-230.
[24] Hall, 446.

A delimited Boolean search for most of these terms brought up zero results at Google. The only two that returned results were transafro music (a record label out of Uganda with offices in Perth, Australia) and Trans Afro American, which directed to websites that specialize in transsexual pornography. (Sookee and Mykki Blanco's work to edify queer/trans people seems salient here.) If we apply Ortiz's transculturation model to the necessary and ongoing project of black cultural politics, there seems to be many ways to develop those politics for what might be called Afro American diaspora music in the transcultural zone. Any of the aforementioned terms could stake a claim for 'ownership' of transaesthetics for communities of color. Not only is that important, it is a real opportunity.

If Ortiz was correct, then transculturation has been a part of the African (American) experience long before the United States was founded. Where hip-hoppers, whether they are aware of it or not, have been behaving 'transculturally' for half a century, then transculturation does not stand in opposition to black cultural practices and politics. Like any of the creative cultural agents providing numerous cultural inputs, artists of all colors, creeds, and beliefs have defined hip-hop's transcultural contours. In that sense, Ortiz's concept, if deployed carefully, might actually *bolster* black cultural politics. With regard to thinking beyond, or getting around, multiculturalism (which serves to shore up power for the dominant culture by making concessions to minorities), transculturation might be one strategy to *further* the agenda of black cultural politics. Given how people of color in the United States remain locked in an existential battle to gain access to social, cultural, political, and economic capital, any strategies to help achieve equality should be embraced. Precisely because of their history of oppression, subjugation, and marginalization (which still occurs, albeit in different forms), African Americans, but also Latina/o Americans, already have a legitimate claim to transculturation. Whether, or in how far, cultural theorists decide to exploit it remains for them to decide.

To be sure, Ortiz did not argue that transculturation resulted in harmonious, just, and equitable societies. He simply devised the term to explain complex social, cultural, and economic change, some of which was productive and some of which was destructive. Even though the conditions from which transculturation emerged were marked by highly asymmetrical relations of power, there is some indication that transculturation diminishes those circumstances, especially once it becomes the driving force in cultural production and representation. This has certainly been the case in the United States and Germany, where people have utilized hip-hop culture to gain recognition and respect as well as to justify claims for social, economic, and cultural opportunity. The United States, more so than Germany, is an agglomeration of people, cultures, ethnicities, and—if anyone still believes in the word—races. In addition to serving larger claims for equality, understanding the cultural development of the United States through Ortiz's transculturation model might problematize what we know, or what we think we mean, when we say 'American,' especially with regard to so-called 'American' forms of popular culture. Since the United States has been informed by a range of people and cultures for the last 300 years, can cultural forms such as hip-hop, rock 'n' roll, or jazz simply be called 'American' or 'African American,' or does doing so erase their social and cultural complexities? Rather than reduce cultural forms to quasi-nationalistic categories (or, further still, qualify them with formerly hyphenated prefixes tied to notions of the nation-state, race, and

ethnicity), recognizing that 'America' is more than 'American' could help to better understand the complexity of cultural expressions that have arisen there. While careful work is needed, transculturation holds some potential to accomplish that, and it is worth considering how the concept can be deployed productively in the United States—certainly with regard to rap music and hip-hop culture, but also in a more general sense. Since Ortiz already suggested its applicability to North America, perhaps it is time we heed his call and apply his concept to understand the past and present.

What we learn might surprise us.

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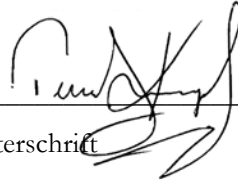---. 2016c. "My Nene." *Mykki*, !K7 Records !K7341LP, compact disc.

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Plagiatserklärung

Ich versichere, dass ich die Arbeit selbständig und nur mit den angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmitteln angefertigt und dass ich alle Stellen der Arbeit, die aus anderen Werken dem Wortlaut oder dem Sinne nach entnommen sind, kenntlich gemacht habe. Einige Passagen aus Kapitel 5, insbesondere Teile über der Berliner Rapper*in Sookee, wurden in einem Artikel mit dem Titel „From Queering to Trans*imagining: Sookee's Trans*/Feminist Hip-Hop" veröffentlicht. Der Artikel erschien in *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 3, 1/2 aus Mai 2016. Diese Passagen machen etwa 2% der gesamten Dissertation aus. Darüber hinaus habe ich keine Arbeit mit ähnlichem Inhalt an einer anderen Stelle eingereicht.
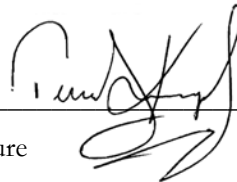
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Statement on Plagiarism

I hereby affirm that this dissertation was written by me and in my own words, except for quotations from published and unpublished sources which are clearly indicated and acknowledged. I am conscious that the incorporation of material from other works or a paraphrase of such material without acknowledgment will be treated as plagiarism, subject to the custom and usage of the subject, according to university regulations. Some passages from Chapter 5, specifically portions on the Berlin rapper Sookee, were published in an article I wrote titled "From Queering to Trans*imagining: Sookee's Trans*/Feminist Hip-Hop." The article appeared in *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 3, 1/2 from May 2016. These passages constitute approximately 2% of the entire dissertation.

Dortmund, 04.09.2018

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Date, Signature

Dear Readers,

A revised version of this dissertation will be published in book form with the title *Hip Hop in the Transcultural Zone* in late 2021 or early 2022. Please refer to the final hardcopy for all citations.

If you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached via email at terence.kumpf@gmail.com.
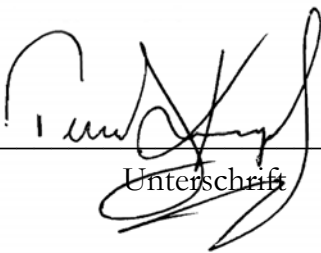
Thank you!

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Liebe Leserinnen, liebe Leser,

Am Ende 2021 oder Anfang 2022 wird eine überarbeitete Version dieser Dissertation als Buch mit dem Titel *Hip Hop in the Transcultural Zone* erscheinen. Bitte beziehen Sie sich für alle Zitate auf die endgültige Hardcopy.

Für weitere Fragen stehe ich unter terence.kumpf@gmail.com gerne zur Verfügung.

Vielen Dank!

Chemnitz, 20.06.2021 _____
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