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| In his widely quoted book The Black Atlantic (1993) Paul Gilroy described the emergence of Hip-Hop and Rap in the New York of the late 1970's as a prolific cross-fertilization of African American cultures with their Caribbean counterparts. The adoption and adaptation of a broad conglomerate of music, dance, social idioms, protest culture and fashion-trends allowed entire generations of young (male) Africans to assume a simultaneously black, modern and cosmopolitan identity. The 1990s eventually saw the creation of new styles such as South-African Kwaito, Ghanaian Hiplife, Kenyan Genge, Tanzanian Bongo Flava or Ugandan Lugaflow, as well as the further development of Francophone rap models in linguistically like-minded countries such as Senegal and to a lesser extent Gabun or Côte d'Ivoire. In almost all of these countries the Africanization of Hip-Hop culture was marked by considerable differences from mainstream (read: American) models. It neither permits a sharp distinction between Hip-Hop as a (sub)cultural lifestyle and Rap as (artistic) practice, nor must it be confused with eventually commercialized and stereotyped expression of gangsterism in socially marginalized suburbs. |
| **African Hip-Hop Music**  In his widely quoted book *The Black Atlantic* (1993) Paul Gilroy described the emergence of Hip-Hop and Rap in the New York of the late 1970's as a prolific cross-fertilization of African American cultures with their Caribbean counterparts. The focus on the genre's hybrid and essentially non-essential character prompted the renowned black British cultural theorist to downplay somewhat shallow and yet continuously invoked connections to (West) African performing traditions: in his book, Africa remains a glaring void and is neither treated as a performative source nor acknowledged as a potential area of adherence to the genre.    Well before Gilroy launched his influential and momentous theory, first waves of Hip-Hop-music had already crossed the very ocean that is used as his book's chief metaphor: The adoption and adaptation of a broad conglomerate of music, dance, social idioms, protest culture and fashion-trends allowed entire generations of young (male) Africans to assume a simultaneously black, modern and cosmopolitan identity. The 1990s eventually saw the creation of new styles such as South-African Kwaito, Ghanaian Hiplife, Kenyan Genge, Tanzanian Bongo Flava or Ugandan Lugaflow, as well as the further development of Francophone rap models in linguistically like-minded countries such as Senegal and to a lesser extent Gabun or Côte d'Ivoire. In almost all of these countries the Africanization of Hip-Hop culture was marked by considerable differences from mainstream (read: American) models. It neither permits a sharp distinction between Hip-Hop as a (sub)cultural lifestyle and Rap as (artistic) practice, nor must it be confused with eventually commercialized and stereotyped expression of gangsterism in socially marginalized suburbs. Ghanaian Hiplife, for instance, initially thrived in a couple of renowned boarding schools, whose peculiar atmosphere allowed students to display a blending of slang expressions with a highly versatile code-mixing between Twi and English during entertainments or sport competitions. But not only the crucial role of educated youth with sufficient leisure time and access to audio and recordings from the diaspora has to be sharply distinguished from Hip-Hop's American roots. Principal targets of the genre's social critique such as disenfranchisement and social discrimination are obviously based on different grounds in Africa than in the once racially separated United States or in Europe. Through the increasing use of indigenous languages, globally spread images of gangsterism could on the one hand easily be tamed and combined with educational campaigning, religious messages, political propaganda and (post)-proverbial speech or morality tales. Old school social critique on the other hand became – for instance in South Africa – increasingly sidelined by deliberate displays of affluence and black consumerism.  Whose Modernity and Whence Origins?  For quite some time neither Popular Music Studies, in spite of its early recognition of rap's global extensions as varieties of an internationally malleable youth culture, nor mainstream (ethno)musicology paid more than passing attention to these developments. (A casual glance at the 2004 and 2011 editions of Forman and Neal's Hip Hop-Reader *That's the Joint* serves as an instructive case in point.) Through a number of recent books and articles, not only the genre's sundry origins in Africa, but also its scope and prospective future gradually however turn into a major bone of contention, that boils down to the confrontation of tradition's implicit modernity with modernity's explicit past: While scholars have weighed and debated the importance of features such as speech melody, the presence of persistent rhythmical patterns and textual allusions in songs or story-telling to construe a direct link between African traditional music and Hip-Hop, there are also arguments against an all to neat and captivating sociocultural narrative. Not only the initially mentioned emphasis on Hip-Hop's transnational character, but also the genre's inherently oppositional stance, which does not concur with the affirmative function of griot's or jeli's praise appellations point to a more general participation in a larger network of black orality. For an inevitably open-ended question such as speech song's “boomeranging” back to Africa, the motives and authority of the speaker thus tend to offer greater insight than the actual issue at stake: There is a considerable gap between an (ethno)musicological comparison of vocal rendition in rap and traditional performance, identity politics that includes the transfer of semantically charged buzz-words like “griot” to the US, the coming to voice of the African youth within an existing fabric of social hierarchies and cultural conventions: African Hip-Hop, in particular in its initial stage, faced stiff opposition from elders and traditional elites, which in turn encouraged the stress of “imagined commonalities” with pre-colonial traditions and the communicative features in earlier types of Popular Music.  Future Developments and Directions for Research  In a similar vein opinions begin to differ on the actual scope of the genre. While in spite of some notable exceptions, African Hip-Hop to date remains a primarily male medium of expression, different perspectives on (street) authenticity and the role of political activism leave considerable room for interpretation. Two earlier essay-collection from 2011 and 2012 respectively, *Native Tongues,* edited by sociologist P. Khalil Saucier and *Hip Hop Africa*, edited by musicologist Eric Charry, put particular emphasis on Hip-Hop's African varieties as a broad spectrum of adaptation and conversions. A recent issue of the *Journal of Panafrican Studies* on the other hand seeks to isolate forms of African Hip-Hop with stronger leanings to African-American models from these adaptations. Hardly surprising then some of its articles exhibit a faintly disguised impatience with styles that appear to distort the genre's critical attitude, be it (black) consumerism or an overtly apolitical focus on “crunky” and danceable beat patterns. Due to their somewhat one-sided focus on Hip-Hop's role within the protest movements against vastly different governments like that of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe or Abdoulaye Wade in Senegal these articles are however, to an even greater extent than the essays assembled in Charrys volume, ignoring the technical, artistic and musical dimension of African Hip-Hop production.  Relatively few authors have (in the vein of Adam Bradley's groundbreaking *Book of Rhymes*) addressed the literary qualities of African Hip-Hop and even fewer ventured to study the practical interrelation of these lyrics, that in many languages coincide with tonal movements such as „downstep“ and „downdrift“, with a multidimensional and signifying framework of beat-patterns and background sound. While a solid knowledge on the regional varieties of African Hip Hop music and its dissemination, appreciation and appropriation by a steadily growing cultural industry has now been established, it is about time to complement this information with a more holistic investigation of its structure, production and composition.  Selected Further Readings:  Due to the limited available space this article offers a general overview on Hip-Hop's African extensions and thus has to refrain from the discussion of individual songs and artists. Their names can however be easily ascertained from the following selection of post-2000 books and articles:  a) Essay Collections  Saucier, P. Khalil (ed.). *Native Tongues. The African Hip Hop Reader*, Trenton: Africa World Press 2011 (contains contributions by Catherine Appert on Senegal, Daniel Künzler on Mali/Burkina Faso, Caroline Mose on Kenya, Remi Warner on South Africa, Harry Nii Koney Odamtten on Ghana as well as various other essays and interviews with individual artists)  Charry, Eric (ed.). *Hip Hop Africa. New African Music in a Globalizing World*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2012 (with contributions by Jesse W. Shipley on Ghana, Lee Watkins in South Africa, Patricia Tang on Senegal, John Fenn on Malawi, Dorothea E. Schulz on Mali, Stephanie Shonekan on Nigeria, Jean Ngoya Kidula on Kenya and Alex Perullo on Tanzania).  *Journal of Panafrican Studies* 6/3 (2013), Special issue on African Hip-Hop, ed. by Msia Kibona Clark (with contributions by Msia Mbona Clark on Tanzania, Marame Gueye and Damon Sajnani on Senegal, Katja Kellerer on Zimbabwe, Lanisa Kitchiner on South-Africa, Mickie Mwanza Koster, Carolin Mosse and Shani Omari on Kenya and Stephanie Shonekan on Nigeria)  b) Monographs  Ntarangwi, Mwenda. *East African Hip-Hop. Youth Culture and Globalization*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press 2009.  Wetaba, Aggrey Nganyi R. *Kenyan Hip-Hop as Site of Negotiating Urban Youth Identities in Nairobi*, Göttingen 2009.  Osumare, Halifu. *The Hiplife in Ghana. West African Indigenization of Hip-Hop*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012.  Jesse Weaver Shipley. *Living the Hiplife. Celebrity and Entrepreneurship in Ghanaian Popular Music*, Durham/London: Duke University Press 2013.  Fatou Kandé Senghor. *Wala bok ou l'histoire orale du hip hop au Sénégal*, Dakar:Amalion 2014.  c) Selected Other Articles  Keyes, Cheryl L. “At the Crossroads. Rap Music and its African Nexus.“ *Ethnomusicology* 40/2 (1996), 223-248.  Fenn, John and Perullo, Alex. “Language choice and hip hop in Tanzania and Malawi.“ *Popular Music and Society* 24/3, (2000), 73-93.  Gesthuizen, Thomas and Haas, Jan Peter “'Ndani ya bongo: Kiswahili rap keeping it real.” Gunderson, Frank and Barz, Gregory (eds.), '*Mashindano!' Competitive music performance in East Africa*, Dar Es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publications, 2000, 279-294.  Auzanneau, Michelle, “Rap in Libreville, Gabon: An Urban Sociolinguistic Space“, in: Durand, Alain Philippe (ed.), *Blanc, Black, Beur. Rap Music and Hip-Hop Culture in the Francophone World*, Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2002, 106-125.  Englert, Birgit. “Bongo Flava Still Hidden' Rap from Morogoro, Tanzania.“ *Stichproben* 5/3 (2003), 73-93.  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