VOL. 40, NO. 2 ETHNOMUSICOLOGY SPRING/SUMMER 1996

At the Crossroads: Rap Music and Its African Nexus

CHERYL L. KEYES UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

Rap music succeeded in becoming the most vital of popular music forms in the 1980s.[1] It began in the Bronx, New York, in the early 1970s, with itinerant African American disc jockeys called "mobile disc jockeys" (djs) who would mix pre-recorded hits alternately on two turntables while reciting party phrases to the crowd in a microphone. Because mixing records eventually became a competitive art in itself, mobile disc jockeys supplemented their verbal performances by hiring "rhyming emcees," thus giving precedent to rap's present-day form. By the late 1970s rap attracted the attention of music entrepreneurs, such as Sylvia and Joe Robinson of Sugarhill Records, who were enchanted with its rhyme and rhythmic aspects. Sugarhill Records' initial recording "Rapper's Delight" by Sugar Hill Gang, a trio from Englewood, New Jersey, bombarded the airwaves with street-derived rhymes recited over the disco-funk soundtrack of Chic's "Good Times." Within seven years of the Gang's release, this nascent expression gained much attention in the popular musical mainstream through the group Run-DMC from Queens, New York, who fused rap with hard rock as best illustrated in their rendition of Aerosmith's 1977 hit "Walk This Way."[2] By the 1980s, rap music—recordings, concert sales, television commercials and films—was a billion dollar industry.

Amid its commercial success, rap has been the subject of much controversy among critics. Some dismiss its cultural significance, positing that the music lacks artistic value and is little more than a commercial fad, while others share the view that rap is representative of a degenerate urban black youth culture (see Thomas 1986; Williams 1989; Adler & Gates 1990; Pearce 1990). Despite these views, some academics in the fields of sociology, political science, literary criticism, religion, and cultural studies began seriously questioning the significance of rap, thus mollifying its somewhat ominous appeal in the media (see Spencer et al. 1991; Wheeler 1991; Zook

1992; Baker 1993). Their research revealed that rap music expresses the everyday harsh realities of ghetto life and socio-political sentiments ranging from poverty, police brutality, and racial genocide to class and gender relations by an urban black youth constituency. Although these studies were primarily drawn from lyrical analyses rather than ethnographic inquiry, they nevertheless remain important in comprehending rap as a form of resistance and contestation.

By the late 1980s, scholars who were specifically intrigued by rap music djs' abilities at reconstructing old tunes into newer ones via digital sampling began placing rap at the center of postmodern criticism (see Goodwin 1988; Baker 1993; Rose 1994; Potter 1995). While postmodern interpretation further launched black "techno" forms into the discussion of popular mainstream scholarship, one of the growing concerns among African Americanists is that this paradigm often leads to "the decentering of the subject," the performer (Diawara 1992:7). Additionally, postmodern criticism tends to define rap music in modernity, thereby distancing it as both a verbal and musical form anchored in a cultural history, detaching it as a cultural process over time, and lessening the importance of rap music and its culture as a dynamic tradition.

While these aforementioned scholars have for the most part emphasized socio-cultural influences (such as social and environmental factors—ghetto, less privileged class, and so on) in the assessment of rap music, they have neglected to take other factors into account, such as musical change. Bruno Nettl, for example, posits that "the phenomenon of musical change results from a balance . . . between stability and continuity (the latter being 'change' of the 'internal' sort) and disturbances brought about by outside" (1983:184). A study of rap music should consider both socio-cultural and musical change that impact on and further reshape the development and direction of this musical form. Hence, I posit here that rap music developed in complex relations to two factors: the physical dismantlement of the Bronx in the late 1950s, which ultimately gave rise to gang culture, and the advent and commercialization of disco in the mid-1970s. As a result, African American youth forged in the crucible of the street a youth arts movement called "hip-hop" comprised mainly of djs, emcees, graffiti artists, and break dancers.[3] Hence hip-hop represents what I call cultural reversioning—the foregrounding (both consciously and unconsciously) of African-centered concepts in response to cultural takeovers, ruptures, and appropriations.

While a spate of research exists recounting West and Central African derivatives and retentions of black musical culture in general (see Waterman 1963; Oliver 1970; Kaufman and Guckin 1979; Nketia 1974; Wilson 1974; Maultsby 1990), this paper specifically explores Africanisms that are part

of the rap music tradition. The research presented in this study is based on fieldwork conducted in the New York City area (summer of 1986; 1992-94), Detroit (summer of 1991) and Los Angeles (1991; 1994-95). In setting the stage for ascertaining rap as a phenomenon grounded in Africanisms, it is important to begin with a discussion of the interdependent relationship between socio-cultural and musical change.

Socio-Cultural and Musical Change

Historically speaking, the concept of rappin—talking in rhythm over music or to an internally realized beat—can be traced from African bardic traditions to the rural oral southern-based expressive forms of African Americans.[4] Performers of these traditions, such as storytellers, blues singers, preachers, toasters and prison boasters, are all extolled for their artistic skills as well as their abilities to transmit cultural mores and sensibilities through performance. By the 1920s, southern black migrants had transported their traditions to the urban North and transformed them in this new context. For example, the storyteller and blues singer became the street corner jive talkers, while the preacher and toaster became the radio personality jocks.

Although the pretext for rap is embedded in past oral traditions, its development as a discernible musical genre began in the 1970s during the wake of the civil rights and black nationalist movements of the 1960s.[5] New social policies fostered by the Civil Rights Act and Affirmative Action helped to propel African Americans into full participation in various areas of mainstream American society which were formerly closed to them. These new political incentives also directly affected blacks in the music industry by giving them "an energy, a motivating dream" (George 1988:147) and fostering a new atmosphere of artistic freedom. Drawing from and expanding on musical concepts associated with past styles of jazz, blues, gospel, rhythm and blues, black rock 'n' roll, and soul, black artists created new and diverse forms of contemporary black popular music (Maultsby 1979:BM-10). Among the three most distinct contemporary black popular styles of the 1970s were funk, disco, and rap. Of these three, funk and disco were catalysts in the developmental stages of rap as a musical genre.

Funk was a term brought to musical prominence by jazz pianist Horace Silver to define "the return to the evocative feeling and expressiveness of traditional blues" (Shaw 1986:257) as captivated in the title and style of his 1953 composition "Opus de Funk." Moreover, funk in jazz culture of the 1950s was a style countering "the coldness, complexity, and intellectualism introduced into the music by Bop, Cool, West Coast, and Third Stream jazz" (ibid.). By the late 1960s, it was reformulated in a similar fashion by

soul singer James Brown to denote an earthy-gritty sonority, characterized specifically by Brown's preachy vocal style and his horn and rhythm sections' interlocking rhythmic "grooves." Several of Brown's songs bore the word in their titles, including "Ain't It Funky" (1969), "Funky Drummer" (1970), "Funky President" (1974), and "Too Funky in Here" (1989).

Brown's funk style was recycled in the music of Sly Stone and Kool and the Gang, producing such hits as "Thank You Fallettinme Be Mice Elf Agin" (1970) and "Funky Stuff" (1973), respectively. This style was further advanced by Larry Graham (former bass player of Sly Stone) of Graham Central Station, and George Clinton of Parliament-Funkadelic. Both Graham's and Clinton's musics were party-oriented, but they differed in many ways. Clinton, who coined the term P-Funk or pure/uncut funk, viewed his music as a way to induce a relaxing mood for his listeners. In establishing this mood, Clinton manipulated varied sound effects produced on the synthesizer while employing a rappin monologue loosely chanted over the music, dictating how to be and feel "cool." James Brown's stylistic influence on P-Funk is most prevalent in Parliament-Funkadelic's horn section, comprised chiefly of Brown's former instrumentalists. However, in discussing what he contends was the underlying essence of funk, Clinton states that "[Parliament] realized that blues was the key to that music. We just speeded blues up and called it 'funk' cause we knew it was a bad word to a lot of people" (Reid 1993:45).[6] In further intensifying the P-Funk vision, Clinton fostered Sly Stone's soul-punk concept in attire, which was befitting for Parliament-Funkadelic's extravagant galactic-centered live shows augmented with the landing of a spaceship called the Mothership. Another trademark of Clinton's image was the popularization of the funk sign—a clinched fist with index and pinky figure salute (a gesture appropriated by Hip-Hop's Godfather Afrika Bambaataa and his Zulu Nation). Larry Graham's music, on the other hand, can be described as "churchy" because of his use of a Hammond B-3 organ (commonly used in black gospel music) and gospel-based vocals. But more importantly, Graham's music was dominated by his bass playing style of pulling, thumping, and slapping the strings, "which became the trademark for defining the funk style" (Maultsby 1979:BM-22).

In contrast, disco music of the 1970s was rooted in a musical formula associated with the music of Barry White and Philadelphia International Records.[7] The musical basis of disco was an orchestral arrangement over a rhythm section—underlying bass drum accenting on all four beats, subdivided by the hi-hat cymbal—and soul vocals. Furthermore, "disco gave prominence to the record producer and the disc jockey—the former for his skill in manipulating the new sophisticated recording technology, and the latter for his ability to use changes in tempo, volume, and mood to manipulate dancers on the floor" (Shaw 1986:251).

By the mid-1970s European producers, including Pete Bellotte and Giorgio Moroder, entered the disco scene by modifying it with a pop female soloist, an eighth-note bass line figure outlining the roots of chords, and a shift in tempo from a moderate beat to a faster one. Music critic Nelson George further contends,

> Disco movers and shakers were not record executives but club deejays. Most were gay men with a singular attitude toward American culture, black as well as white. They elevated female vocalists like [Donna] Summer, Gloria Gaynor, Diana Ross, Loleatta Holloway, Melba Moore, and Grace Jones to diva status, while black male singers were essentially shunned. Funk, which in the late seventies was enjoying great popularity in the South and Midwest, was rarely on their playlists. It was too raw and unsophisticated, and one thing dear to the hearts of disco fans, gay and straight, was feeling a pseudosophistication. (1988:154)

In the quest for commercial success, creativity had given way to formula, and the very excitement and challenge for which the music makers had long striven were beginning to fade away (Joe 1980: 31). As a result, 1970s disco became distorted, altered, less dynamic, farther removed from its cultural base, and recognized as "a white, middle-class, youth-to-middle age phenomenon" (Shaw 1986:250). This radical change was felt among black youth, particularly those in New York City observed Bill Adler, an independent rap music publicist and critic:

> In New York City in the mid-1970s, the dominant black popular music was disco as it was every place else. The difference about New York was that kids were funk fiends who weren't getting their vitamins from disco music. It was 'too nervous,' in their terminology, which meant, too fast. It was too gay. It was something, but it just didn't move them and so they were thrown back into their own resources and what happened was that they started to . . . play a lot of James Brown. . . . His old records were . . . staples, and Kool and the Gang, and heavy funk like that developed. I mean part of it just had to do with there being a lot of neighborhood parks in New York City . . . and what kind of music [was] played in those parks by the disc jockeys there. (interviewed in Keyes 1986a)

While the commercialization of disco did indeed make an impact on the redirection of black popular music, some scholars have argued otherwise. With the reduction of monetary support for the New York City public school system music programs, particularly the instrumental music curriculum, inner city youth reacted to this drastic change by relying on their own voices—for example, the resurgence of street corner *a cappella* singing and the popularization of the human beat box (vocal rhythmic simulation of a drum)—and by becoming more interested in musical technology (such as turntables and synthesizers) ushered in by disco.[8]

Disco was not the only reason why rap music evolved in the New York City area; rap grew in response to a number of socio-economical factors idiosyncratic to the Bronx. In the 1950s, "the Bronx was known as the borough of apartment buildings where rent controls . . . were usually kept in the family, handed down" (Hager 1984:1). But by 1959, Robert Moses, Park Commissioner, ordered that an expressway be built through the Bronx. Accordingly, "the middle-class Italian, German, Irish, and Jewish neighborhoods disappeared overnight. Impoverished black and Hispanic families, who dominated the southern end of the borough, drifted north. Along with the poor came their perennial problems: crime, drug addiction, [and] unemployment" (ibid:2-3). As a result of the expressway, property owners sold apartments at lower rates to slumlords who neglected apartment upkeep, yet charged exorbitant rent. African American and Hispanic residents were forced to live in dilapidated housing and rodent-infested conditions. Exacerbating matters, some slumlords ceased paying taxes on their property. "They devised lucrative schemes to evade taxes by hiring someone to force residents out by burning down the apartments hoping to receive, in return, insurance payoffs" (Chalfant 1993).

As conditions worsened, crime escalated. Some youth felt the need to form neighborhood groups or gangs to police their apartments, housing projects, streets, and neighborhoods from outside invaders. As soon as one gang formed, so did others, eventually leading to fierce territory rivalry (see Fecher and Chalfant 1993). By 1973, statistics revealed that New York City gangs totalled 315, with over 19,000 members (George 1992:11). Additionally, there were numerous reported incidents involving rapes, murders, and as one writer recalls, unspeakable rites of passage (Hager 1984:5-11).

Gang activity affected not only the outdoor environs, but also the club scene. As one jockey recollects, "it got too dangerous for people to go to discos" (quoted in ibid.:32). As a result, disc jockeys like Kool "DJ" Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, and Grandmaster Flash took their talents from the neighborhood clubs to schoolyards and parks. As The Real Roxanne vividly remembers: "People used to do jams [parties] outside in the schoolyard or handball court. Someone used to bring . . . two turntables out and plug [them] into the lamp post and that's how they got their power. People would listen and dance to the music out in the streets" (quoted in Keyes 1986g).

The most innovative of street jockeys, whose mixing techniques immensely influenced the future direction and production of rap music, was Jamaican-born Clive Campbell, known as Kool "DJ" Herc. He tailored his disc jockeying style after the dub music jockeys of Jamaica (such as Duke Reid and U Roy) by mixing musical fragments referred to by street jockeys as "breaks" or "break beats" from various recordings in order to create an

entire new soundtrack.[9] Afrika Bambaataa and Grandmaster Flash, both contemporaries of Herc, were known for their mixing styles as well. For example, Bambaataa perfected Herc's style by including a variety of musical styles ranging from soul, funk, and commercial jingles in his mixes. Joseph "Grandmaster Flash" Sadler, on the other hand, introduced mixing techniques: backspinning and cutting (also known as phasing). Backspinning, which requires having a copy of the same record on two turntables, is executed by rotating one record counterclockwise to the desired beat then rotating the second record counterclockwise to the same location, creating an echo effect. Cutting is executed when the disc jockey repeats a word or phrase in a rhythmic manner on one turntable during or in between the beats of another recording played on the second turntable. This technique is similar to "riding gain" employed by black personality radio jockeys of the 1950s (see Williams 1986:76–90). Grandwizard Theodore, a protégé of Flash, invented another mixing technique called "scratching": moving a record back and forth in a rhythmic manner while the tone arm's needle remains in the groove of the record, thereby producing a scratch-like sound.

Since mixing records had become an art in itself, some djs felt the need for an emcee. For example, at many of his performances, Bambaataa was also accompanied by three emcees: Cowboy (not to be mistaken as Cowboy of the Furious Five), Mr. Biggs, and Queen Kenya. When Kool "DJ" Herc hired Clark Kent, Jay Cee, and Pebblee-Poo, they became known as the Herculords. Other noted emcees during this phase were DJ Hollywood, Sweet G, Busy Bee, Kurtis Blow, Grandmaster Caz, and Lovebug Starski. Emcees talked intermittently, using phrases like "get up" and "jam to the beat," and recited rhyming couplets to motivate the audience to dance while the dj mixed records. However, it was Grandmaster Flash's emcees, The Furious Five (Melle Mel, Kid Creole, Cowboy, Raheim, and Mr. Ness), who set the stage for rappin in rhythm to music through a concept which I call "trading phrases"—the exchange of rhyming couplets or phrases between emcees in a percussive, witty fashion, and in synchrony with the djs' music, as illustrated by their 1980 hit "Freedom" (see Figure 1).

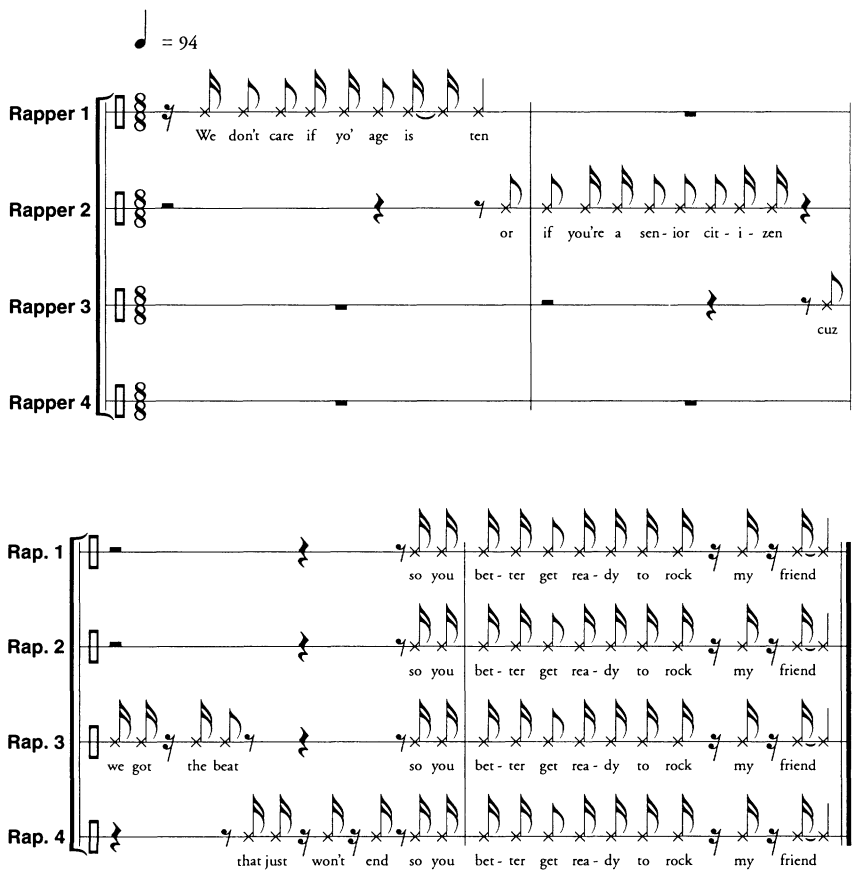
In their efforts to curtail violence, mobile djs' mastery at mixing records made them heroes in their boroughs. But other djs, particularly Afrika Bambaataa, drifted towards religious and political organizations, including the Nation of Islam, to deter street youth from gang activity. Bambaataa, a former gang member himself, explains his attraction to Islam and its influence in his life.

> What got me excited first was when James Brown came out with "Say it Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud." . . . I decided to get into the Nation of Islam. It put

> a change on me. It got me to respect people even though they might not like us because we [were] Muslims. The Nation of Islam was doing things that America had been trying to [do] for a while—taking people from the streets like junkies and prostitutes and cleaning them up. Rehabilitating them like the jail system wasn't doing. (quoted in Toop 1991:59)

Through the teachings and philosophy of the Nation of Islam, Bambaataa envisioned a way to terminate street violence in his Southeast Bronx residence called The Bronx River Project. In 1973 he formed a non-violent organization called the Youth Organization, which was eventually renamed the Zulu Nation. As Bambaataa explains, the Zulu Nation is "a huge young adult and youth organization . . . which incorporates people that are into

Figure 1: "Freedom" performed by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, 1979



break dancing . . . deejaying and graffiti artists. I had them to battle against each other in a nonviolent way like rapper against rapper rather than knife against knife" (quoted in Keyes 1986d). While providing a deterrent to gang violence in his community, Bambaataa established the foundation for a youth arts movement known as hip-hop. According to Bambaataa, the word "hip-hop" is traced to Lovebug Starski, a South Bronx disc jockey, who also "used to have a party and . . . [would] always say, 'hip hop you don't stop that makes your body rock.' So I just . . . started using the word 'hip-hop' to name this type of culture and then it caught on" (ibid.). Bambaataa's concept of hip-hop not only encompassed urban street expressions, it also embodied an attitude rendered in the form of gestures, language, and stylized dress associated with street culture.

Hip-hop was not conceived as an ethnically homogeneous expression comprised solely of and for African Americans. During its early development, many hip-hop innovators were of African-Caribbean and Hispanic (mainly Puerto Rican) descent. For instance, djs like Kool Herc, Bambaataa, and Flash were African-Caribbean and Charlie Chase was Puerto Rican (see Toop 1984 and 1991; Hebdige 1987; Flores 1993). Moreover, an ethnically mixed proportion of youth were graffiti artists, but Puerto Rican hip-hoppers dominated in break dancing, while United States blacks and African Caribbeans mainly performed as mobile disc jockeys and emcees. It is this cultural intersection or African diasporic blending of the latter group that ultimately provided the basis for a rap music aesthetic. The following section develops a deep structural analysis of these cultural junctures as displayed in the rap music-making process.

Rap at Its African Crossroad

Highlighted in a rap performance are black language, rhetorical style, music-making practices, and non-musica-lingual features. An initial discussion of rap can begin with its linguistic component, which is the most controversial yet misunderstood aspect of this genre.

During my study of rap music, I discovered that people who reacted negatively to this music often were unable to decode its language. However, its language is meaningful and intelligible to members of the rap community. Rap's verbal style is derived from a nonstandard dialect that thrives within African American street culture, properly called black street speech (Baugh 1983:5). The term "nonstandard" does not suggest here that rap language or street speech is grammatically incorrect when compared to mainstream English, but rather the term defines the constant reinvention and variation of new terminologies associated with street speech (see also Sidran 1980:110–11). For example, black street speakers since the 1960s

used the word "bad" to mean "good" or "exceptional." Determining the meaning of "bad" as something opposite to something "good" depends solely on the speaker's vocal inflections, verbal stress, facial expression, and the context in which "bad" is used. In the 1980s, rap music lyricists began replacing "bad" with the words "def," "dope," and "phat" (pronounced fat) to describe something good or exceptional (see Fab Five Freddy 1992; Major 1994).

While most of rap's lexicon derives from mainstream English, the meaning of a word may be two-fold or, as the above suggested, it may be solely determined by the vocal inflections of the speaker. Hence, it is not surprising that rappers interpret their art as "talking but . . . [having] a melody in itself" (Keyes 1986d), "a rhythm in itself" (Keyes 1986h), and "rhythmic chanting" (Keyes 1986c). What performers define as melodic qualities in rap, scholars refer to as tonal semantics, "the use of voice rhythm and vocal inflections" (Smitherman 1986:134). Meaning is achieved, therefore, by accenting certain words or syllables in a rhythmic manner, thereby creating fluidity within the text (see Figure 2). However, consistent with the application of syllabic stress is the use of vocal inflections. Similar to the musical concept called tonic accent, meaning is then conveyed by a raised vocal inflection (as indicated in capital letters, see Figure 3).

In addition to paralingual features, rappers may choose to describe a situation or person as "dissin" (an insult) or "giving props" (a praise) in an implied manner broadly referred to as signification. In his groundbreaking study *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Criticism,* Henry Louis Gates explores the relationship between African and African American vernacular tradition through the art of signification, or "signifyin" as pronounced among African Americans. Quoting Claudia Mitchell-Kernan,

Figure 2: "Don't Believe the Hype" performed by Chuck D of Public Enemy, 1988

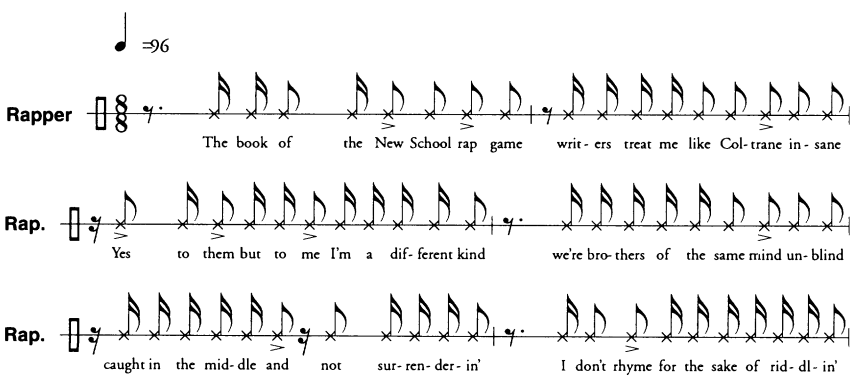
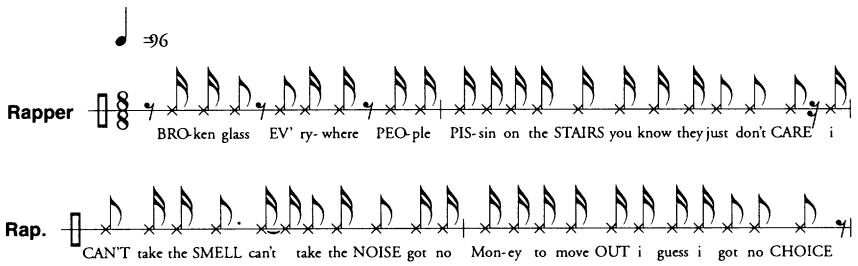


Figure 3: "The Message" performed by Melle Mel, 1982



Henry Louis Gates agrees that

> signifying incorporates essentially a folk notion that dictionary entries for words are not always sufficient for interpreting meanings or messages, or that meaning goes beyond such interpretations. Complimentary remarks may be delivered in a left-handed fashion. A particular utterance may be an insult in one context and not another. What pretends to be informative may intend to be persuasive. The hearer is thus constrained to attend to all potential meaning carrying symbolic systems in speech events—the total universe. (1988:81-82)

Linguist Geneva Smitherman further lists specific characteristics of signifyin(g) in the following manner: indirection, circumlocution, metaphorical-imagistic (but [with] images rooted in the everyday, real world), humorous, ironic rhythmic fluency and sound; teachy but not preachy, directed at person or persons usually present in the situational context, punning, play on word, and introduction of the semantically or logically unexpected (1986:121). It is not uncommon for rappers to make use of a variety of these traits, and others which are too numerous to cite here. However, the most common feature of signifyin found in rap is "metaphorical-imagistic . . . rooted in the everyday real . . . world" of ghetto America (ibid.). As one interviewee contends, rap artists use their texts to create "lyrical movies" (Keyes 1992a). Rap music producer Larry Smith acknowledges this characteristic in the songs of rap pioneer Melle Mel: Melle Mel has a voice and . . . is the Langston Hughes of the music. Yeah, I'm saying when he paints [raps], he paints a picture. He describes with words and you see everything Mel tells you. Everything! Everything!" (Keyes 1986e).

In "The Message" (1982) Melle Mel alludes to the ghetto as "a jungle," thereby creating for his listeners an allusion to the ghetto in the refrain: "Don't push me 'cause I'm close to the edge. I'm trying not to lose my head. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! It's like a jungle sometimes, it makes me wonder how I keep from going under."[10] "The Message," unfolds through vivid imagery detailing the grim realities of life in the ghetto for the average inner city youth who grows up "livin' second rate, [where ones] eyes . . . sing a song

of deep hate"; it cogently lists those alternative lifestyles including "thugs, pimps, [drug] pushers" which a ghetto youth is most destined to follow, thus leading to the tragic demise of one who "lived so fast and died so young."

Several years after the release of "The Message," similar rap songs abounded recounting ghetto lore, from "Ghetto Bastard" (1991) by Naughty By Nature, and "The Ghetto" (1990) by Too Short to the most poignant and controversial "gangsta" raps—"A Gangsta's Fairytale" (1990) and "The Drive-By" (1990) by Ice Cube. As these titles suggest, rap music communicates in picturesque terms the ongoing afflictions of inner city youth who feel politically, economically, and socially marginalized in mainstream America.

But despite these expressions of discontent, some rap artists use their music as a form of catharsis to transform discord into peace. For instance, MC Lyte directs her listeners in "Lyte the MC" (1988) to "Release all the anger, all the aggravation. Convert it into words, it's sort of like conversation." Rap lyric's mutable potential is predicated on what communication scholars call "the power of the word," *nommo,* which permeates orality throughout the African diaspora. In discussing the efficacy of *nommo,* Ceola Baber suggests that "*nommo* generates the energy needed to deal with life's twists and turns; sustains our [blacks'] spirits in the face of insurmountable odds [and] transforms psychological suffering into external denouncements . . . and verbal recognition of self-worth and personal attributes" (1987:83).

Since African American culture views the spoken word with high regard, rap music predominantly utilizes the artifice and art similar to other black oral performances. Quoting Cornel West, black cultural critic Michael Dyson states that "the rap artist combines the potent tradition in black culture: the preacher and singer, [who] appeal to the rhetorical practices eloquently honed in African American religious practices" (1989:50). While it is perhaps more apparent how rap resembles preaching, its African religious nexus is less pronounced and more subtle. Among the corpus of text analyzed, there is occasional reference to the West and Central African concept known as "crossroads," which represent "the juncture of the spiritual realm and the phenomenal world" (Drewal 1992:205). Accordingly, "the points of literal intersection [are] where one might go to offer sacrifice or prayer to ancestors. . . . The crossroads, also, function as a powerful symbol in African American folklore . . . as legends of black musicians going to crossroads and trading their guitars with spirits to confirm or enhance their talents (Thompson 1990: 153; 154).

The crossroads concept is not alien to black folksong tradition like the blues. Bluesman Robert Johnson's "Cross Road Blues" remains the most well known of these songs. Legend has it that Johnson sold his soul to the devil

in exchange for his musical success; but after realizing his mistake, he supposedly wrote "Cross Road Blues" as a repentant plea to God for forgiveness. The following is an excerpt from that song:

> I went to the crossroad fell down on my knees
> I went to the crossroad fell down on my knees
> Asked the Lord above have mercy, now save poor Bob, if
> you please.
> (Ibid.:154)

The crossroad concept is more abstract in rap than in the blues. In "To the Crossroads," Isis and Professor X of X-Clan rap about the creation of the world and humankind through their identification with ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) deities—Isis as "Divine Woman/Mother" (of Horus, Son of Osiris) and Professor X as Ra, the Sun deity.

> Isis:
> The I in my old song. I'm deeper and beneath those who ain't strong. The radiant rising sun, the bright light in the world of none . . . we'll take a walk with the black and the bold. I'll take you there and we'll meet at the crossroads.
> Professor X:
> I am Ra from whom time begins. Rising away, severing the wind, turning. I'm the hub of the wheel, the Day Star hovering over the end of the sea. I'm not the harvest. I'm the seed. Off to the crossroad we go!

"Crossroad" is used here in a traditional African cosmic sense, meaning the place where all spiritual forces or creations are activated—at the hub of the wheel. Furthermore, it is Isis, the Divine Mother, who figuratively escorts one to Ra, "from whom time begins." In a sense Ra, positioned at the hub of the wheel, parallels the deity Esu-Elegbara, who in the Yoruba tradition is the guardian of the crossroads.

Africanisms also appear in abstract levels of performance, such as time. In rap music performance, the concept of time is technically complex. While scholars concur that the Western concept of linear time is not sufficient for the analysis of African music, they confirm that time in African music is viewed as a network of layered structures (see Nketia 1974; Chernoff 1979; Stone 1985; Jackson 1987). Rap music participants broadly conceive of time in a musical and social sense as outer and inner time. Outer time is measured by "homogeneous and measurable devices, clocks and metronome" (Stone 1982:9) whereas inner time is unmeasurable but consciously experienced. The African concepts of outer and inner time have been applied also in the study of African-derived forms in the United States (Burnim 1985; Jackson 1987). Joyce Jackson, a scholar of the black sacred music tradition, found there exists an interdependent relationship between outer and inner time. She notes that the reckoning of time "does not totally operate in a Western mode or meter, but rather in an additional inter-

nal mode or inner time. Inner timing . . . [is] implied or suggested by outer timing and actions" (1987:171).

Time operates very similarly in the rap tradition. There is a special concept of timing first realized in an inner sense as "the beat." For dancers, a rap song must have a certain beat within a particular tempo: one can dance to the music only when the rhythm feels right. One audience member indicates that the right "beat" is felt through a certain tempo: "The beat is important. . . . More people like a beat to dance to and rap music has that downbeat to dance to it. It's easier for us to dance to [that beat]; when we go to a garage and hear that fast upbeat music and can't dance to that" (Keyes 1986f). Here, the "downbeat" refers to a moderate paced tempo which may vary from slow (80–88 beats per minute) to moderate (92–132 beats per minute). The beat is set by the rap disc jockey, who operates as timekeeper. The disc jockey must have an inner sense of knowing just how fast or slow to set the tempo. As one interviewee remarks, "the dj is like the drummer. . . . His job is to make sure everything goes steady, and if the beat messes up, everybody is going to know because everybody wasn't on the beat" (Keyes 1986b). The disc jockey, then, relies on a pitch control, a built-in mechanism on the turntable, that allows one to accelerate or slow down the tempo. In this sense, the beat is first internally reckoned through inner timing and later coordinated through outer time by a pitch control.

While outer and inner time are relevant to a rap dj, sound in general must also be sustained through repetition. John Chernoff comments in his study on Ghanaian drumming that the repetition of a well-chosen rhythm continually reaffirms the power of the music by locking that rhythm, and the people listening or dancing to it, into a dynamic and open structure. The power of music is not only captured by repetition, it is magnified (1979:112). Similarly, rap djs are revered for their sustaining prowess on the turntables; however, they do not sustain their music by repeating the same record, but rather by selecting a danceable tempo with the pitch control, then spinning a succession of records for a long period of time. This mixing concept involves a few constraints.

During the early years of rap, djs used to spin records by simply dovetailing one record into the next, with a slight gap between each record. One way to facilitate continuity was the use of the twelve-inch disc (see note 9) which extended the playing time of a record from three to fifteen minutes. One artist recalls how djs would stand and "hold their thumbs for like fifteen minutes" (Keyes 1993), while waiting for a record to simply fade into oblivion before cuing-up the next disc. Disc jockeys soon created ways in which records could play continually for several hours without interrupting the "flow" of the music. One disc jockey known for his extended play concept was Pete "DJ" Jones of the Bronx. Dj extraordinaire Grandmaster

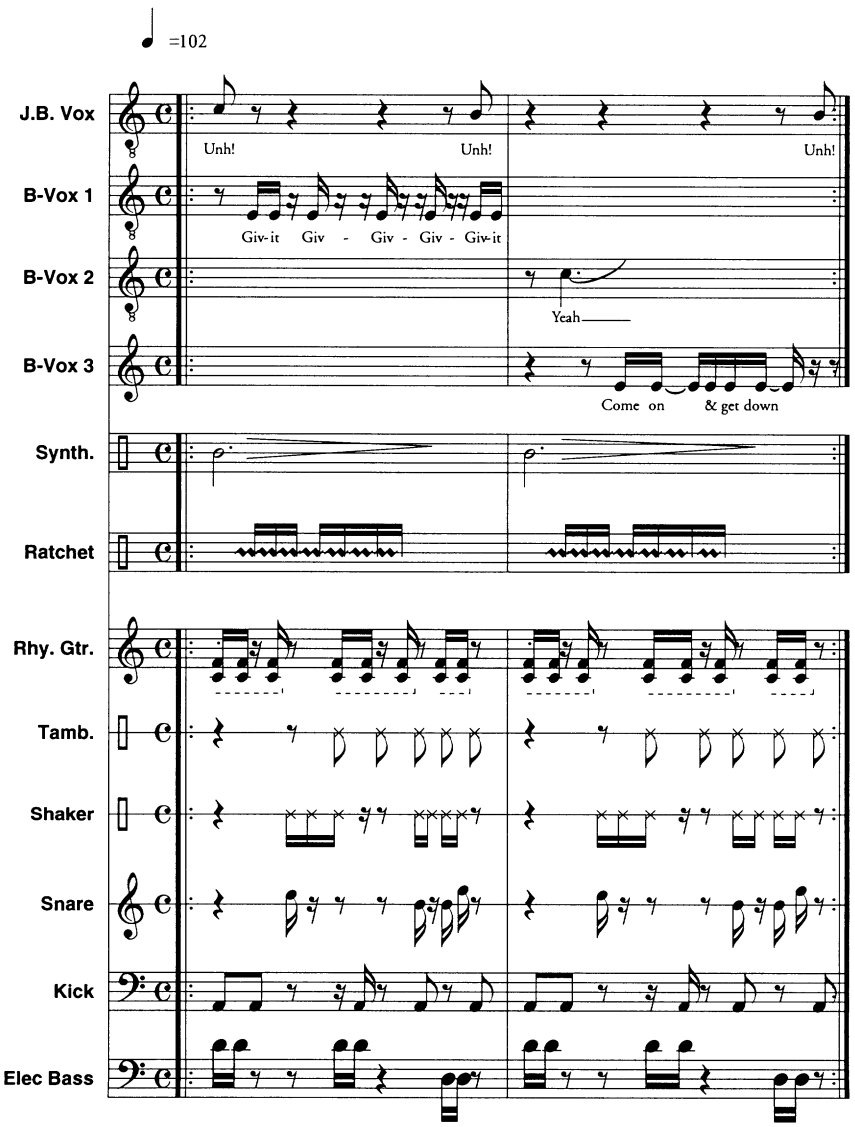
Flash remembers "the way he [Pete] would connect the records. Some of the djs I used to watch [back then] used to let the record play all the way to the end then play the next one with the gap in between. I found it quite amazing that Pete kept the record going, going, going, all night long. That's how he acquired the name Pete 'With the Funky Beat DJ' Jones" (Keyes 1993). In addition, Jones had a switch on his turntable system that allowed him to hear what was playing on one turntable before playing it aloud. Grandmaster Flash, a student of electronics, later invented an apparatus allowing him to cue up a record while the other is played through the speakers. He accomplished this with an external amplifier, headphones (later a one-ear headphone), and a single-pole double-throw switch, which he glued to his mixer.

By the mid-1980s, the manual process of mixing music as described above was supplemented with digital sampling. Sampling allows djs to take bits and pieces of "breaks" from records, and mix and mingle them into musical collages of sounds (Kemp 1989:68). Hip-hop musicians can extend the duration of a sound—from long to short fragments—in a looping fashion indefinitely with a sampler. Thus, when deemed necessary, rap djs rely on ingenuity to manipulate, or alter state-of-the-art technology in conforming to African-derived cultural practices.

Time is an element that does not stand alone in a rhythmic sense, but exists in conjunction with other parameters such as timbre and texture. Rap djs experiment with and bend the norms of timbre and texture homogeneity in accordance with a non-Western music aesthetic. Ethnomusicologist Portia K. Maultsby observes that "the unique sound associated with black music results from the manipulation of timbre, texture and shaping in ways uncommon to Western practice. Musicians bring intensity to their performance by alternating lyrical, percussive, and raspy timbres; juxtaposing vocal and instrumental textures; changing pitch and dynamic levels; alternating straight with vibrato tones; and weaving moans, shouts, grunts, hollers, and screams into the melody (1990:191-92). Through digital sampling rap djs successfully accomplish the fusing of various timbres and textures—a voluminous bass sound (such as bass guitar and drum), strident piercing quality (such as high glissando sounds), static "noise," harmonic dissonance, and a battery of vocal ornamentations, from James Brown's yells, grunts, moans, and shouts to speech excerpts. According to rap music producer Cedric Singleton, founder of Black Market Records in Sacramento, Public Enemy is the quintessence of this rap mixing concept because of their use of "a whole lot of sampling. They get a groove going and build on top of that groove, and build on top of that groove; they just build on top of grooves [yet another groove]." (Keyes 1992; see also Walser 1995: 199-203). Public Enemy's music, which is masterminded by the Bomb

Squad (a production team composed of Hank Shocklee, Eric Sadler, and others), implemented dissonant sonorities—booming bass guitar and kick (bass) drum sounds, interlocking speech and music rhythms, and a boisterous, aggressive rap style—as best exemplified in Kyra Gaunt's transcription (1993) of "Fight the Power" (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Introduction to "Fight the Power" performed by Public Enemy



Moreover, texture and timbre qualities are distinct to geographical regions. For example, in areas considered to have a "car culture" like Miami, Florida and Los Angeles, California, the booming bass and closed-kick (short delay in sound) bass drum quality tend to dominate in mixes: car culture has impacted rap music to the point where disc jockeys in these areas specifically mix a soundtrack not for home stereo systems but rather for automobile systems. It is for this reason that rap musicians coined the term "jeep beats" when referring to soundtracks with a booming bass quality. Rap producer Marley Marl contends that rap is music made for steering (cruising), as in volumes 1 and 2 of his album, *Steering Pleasure.* Marl states that he made this album "for people who wanna have som'n cool playin' in their rides. [Moreover] You won't get the same effect if you play the tracks through a regular system; you need a hype car system. The beats are programmed to make the speakers howl, you know what I'm sayin'" (Nelson 1991).

Regional styles of rap are not, however, without the influence of the East Coast. New York dj Marley Marl credits himself for specifically introducing what has come to be known as the Miami bass sound.

> Yup. I went down to Miami with Roxanne Shante. She would go freestyle [perform extemporaneous rap] in the middle of the show [at] Luke's [Campbell] club. I pressed "start" on the [Roland-TR] 808 [drum machine]. Everybody was like . . . "what is dat?!" Luke ran, started staring at the machine like it was an alien. Then, he started asking a whole bunch of questions. . . . they didn't have the Miami bass until me and Shante brought it down, like all those Arthur Baker jams, "Planet Rock," "Play at Your Own Risk." (Nelson 1991:39)

Interestingly, there are varied uses of the Roland TR-808. For example, in the Oakland/San Francisco Bay area:

> the only thing is they [Bay area musicians] use the sound kick [bass] drum but they use it in a different manner. See it's a Miami sound. In Oakland it's more . . . of the same thing, but it's not opened up. The delay on it is not as long as in Miami. . . . It's more like "boom" like in a hall coming out of Miami, than more of a solid kick coming from Oakland. The sound in Los Angeles is more of a sample-driven type of sound. (Keyes 1992)

In addition, the Los Angeles sound is dominated by rapper-producer Dr. Dre, who creates "a variation on the theme of a bass sound" (ibid.) adapted from the music of Parliament. The East Coast sound, on the other hand, incorporates the heavy bass with horn riffs (James Brown and bebop/fusion jazz influences) as well as Jamaican reggae dancehall music.

Most hip-hop musicians prefer a certain "noise" level in their finished mix. This propensity for certain "noises" or "buzzy-like" musical timbres peculiar to African-derived music reflects "an artist's preference . . . for environmental factors as part of the musical event" (Wilson 1974:70). En-

vironmental sonorities unique to rap mixes are what I refer to as cityscape sounds—sirens, blaring automobile horns, and so on. One of the earliest rap songs to incorporate cityscape sounds is "The Message." In the latter segment of "The Message," Grandmaster Flash incorporates sounds of the urban landscape from automobile horns to sirens, underscoring a conversation among members of his group The Furious Five. These sounds, along with the members speaking in street language, intensify the ambience of city life as depicted in the lyrics of this song.

Another factor consistent with environmental sounds and idiosyncratic to hip-hop music is "popping." When interviewing rap djs I discovered, to my amazement, their use of "old records for that popping sound" in producing a "dirty" mix (Keyes 1992). In this tradition, one does not assume that a person who has been professionally trained to mix music on a sound board has the aptitude to mix "dirty" as well. As one rap music producer recalls,

> I had a guy mix it [a rap tune] that does rock. A . . . guy that mixes rock, he's not a rap mixer. I could have mixed the record better than he could 'cause I did the record and I know what the record's supposed to sound like. They got reverb on stuff that didn't need to have reverb. They got it sounding nice and clean. And every record that I've done since then, I've done on eight tracks. I haven't done it on twenty-four track studio, even though we can afford to do it on twenty four. We've done it real grimy and dirty and it works better. . . . the popping on the record . . . [is] the essence of the music. . . . After a while, you listen to some old record, hear that popping; it takes you back. That's really the aesthetic value to it. (ibid.)

Among the many raps that employ the popping sound is "Passin Me By" (1993) by Pharcyde. The song begins with a sampled excerpt of Quincy Jones' arrangement of Sebastian-Boone-Sebastian's "Summer in the City" (1973), accompanied by a constant popping sound, which is the result of what seemingly is a poorly preserved record. But to rappers, popping sounds undoubtedly corroborate the essence of "funk": a return to fundamentals, earthiness as reproduced by old scratched-up records.

Despite the fact that dissonant sonorities dominate in a rap music mix, some hearers automatically infer that hip-hop musicians have limited or no knowledge of musical harmony: "There's no regard for harmonic rules. Like in the case of sampling one harmonic texture and juxtaposing that with another that has the same beat, but is in a totally different key. . . . They're just kind of thrown together. Sometimes when you're ignorant you can do something that no one has done, because you're not aware of what the rules and the habits are" (Norris 1993:85). According to Hank Shocklee, lack of knowledge about conventional music harmony has nothing to do with dissonance in rap: rather, atonality is a predilection. Shocklee justifies his use

of harmonic dissonance in a provocative article by music critic Tom Moon: "Eric (Chuck D) sings on key, while I'm like, fuck the key. I'm looking for a mood, a feeling. So some things are purposely out of key. Like Son of Bazerk . . . I work with him by having what's behind him in key, otherwise you lose Bazerk. If I put things in key behind Chuck D, you lose Chuck, because his vocal is smooth. So you have to put it against abrasion" (1991:72). As the above statement implies, ambience ("mood") and the juxtaposition of timbres ("smooth"/"abrasion") interlock to purposely create polarities of opposite extremes.

By the 1990s, hip-hop djs began experimenting with soundtracks and mixes which narrowed the gap between dissonant and harmonic sounds via extended jazz breaks. Mixing jazz with hip-hop music is not a new idea according to Grandmaster Flash, because he used to mix jazz breaks in his music during the early days of rap (Keyes 1993). In the late 1980s, his concept was advanced by Tribe Called Quest, followed by DJ Premiere of Gangstarr and Digable Planets and US3 in the 1990s. "Some rap critics note that because of the overly used funk breaks, rap artists sought other musical styles to sample including jazz (Norris 1993:82–87). Nevertheless, the most common styles of jazz sampled by rap djs are essentially hard and soul jazz, identified by a driving drum and ride cymbal beats, a blues form and tonality, and a laid-back mellow feel. In mixing jazz with hip-hop music, rap musicians remain, nonetheless, committed to a street sound through the use of "jeep beats." For example, on *Jazzmatazz* (1993) rapper Guru wanted to ensure a street style first by recording cityscape sounds and funky grooves, and then having jazz performers—Courtney Pine, Donald Byrd, and Branford Marsalis—"play behind the rhymes and over the [jeep] beats" rather than on top of the beats (ibid.:83). The rap/jazz fusion has caused some rappers to perform in a quasi-scatting manner, as Mikah Nine of Freestyle Fellowship does in "Innercity Boundaries" (1993). Although Mikah Nine will admit that he studies jazz and scat singing, he cautions that one should not readily assume that scat-like rap will ultimately mitigate rap's "hardcoreness," because rawness can be lyrically maintained via gangstalore rhymes (ibid.:86). Thus, the rap/jazz fusion further demonstrates the juxtaposition of textural polarities from hardcore/rawness (such as jeep beats) to smoothcore/mellowness (such as aspects of hard and soul jazz), recontextualizing jazz through a hip-hop prism.

Rap music is undoubtedly an amalgam of street language coding, style, and musical sounds. Through its creative processes, rap represents a continuity of African-derived concepts consciously as well as unconsciously. But on a non-musica-lingual level, Africanisms are further suggested through posturing, dress, jewelry, and hairstyles, all of which suggest political statements about an artist. For example, the African ritual gesture generally

known as a libation—the pouring of a beverage towards the ground in acknowledging deceased relatives, community members, or ancestors—is adopted in the videos of gangsta-labeled rappers such as Geto Boys and Tupac Shakur. In music videos, rappers are occasionally observed pouring beer from a 40 (quart of beer) towards the ground in recognition of "dead homies" (neighborhood peers) whose lives have been lost through gang-related violence. Africanisms are even more apparent in clothing. With the resurgence of black nationalism in the late 1980s, some rappers chose to wear traditional African clothes: kente hats, fezzes or kufi (crowns) with the Kemetic ankh emblem, and other such apparel. Many of the dance-oriented rap acts (such as Hammer) inaugurated the extra-blousy pants worn by African Islamic males. Articles of jewelry also signify political statements. Gold chains, bracelets, and earrings are considered trademarks of most rappers; for example, male rappers are known for wearing large, seemingly heavy gold necklaces, whereas females place more emphasis on large, seemingly heavy gold earrings. According to rapper Schoolly-D, wearing gold goes beyond displaying who is the richest, but symbolizes, as in Africa, the best among physical and verbal warriors (1988:52). By 1988, some rap artists began substituting gold jewelry with the soul-on-a-rope leather medallion in which the continent Africa or the African Nationalist Congress's colors (red, black, and yellow) are represented. In addition, hairstyles, from elaborate braiding and dreadlocks to Afros (West Coast style), are as effective as clothing in conveying an artist's political sentiment.

Other dress paraphernalia are sunglasses, which convey an air of "coolness." Prior to the popularity of sunglasses worn by rappers, George Clinton of Parliament, who was known for wearing oversized sunglasses, once exclaimed in "P-Funk" (1975) "That's the law around here. You got to wear yo' sunglasses so you can feel cool." Although it is somewhat difficult to pinpoint exactly whether the cool concept among rap artists is indeed an African retention, scholar Robert Farris Thompson traces a possible connection of coolness to that of the Yoruba of Nigeria. He contends that "'coolness,' then, is a part of character, and character objectifies proper custom. To the degree that we live generously and discreetly, exhibiting grace under pressure, our appearance and our acts gradually assume virtual royal power" (Thompson 1983:16). While some scholars have argued against being overly concerned with African origins or Ur-forms (as the folklorist might say), it is nonetheless striking that rap artists execute their rhymes in a reposeful manner while strutting or dancing on stage to a hardcore beat in total control without sweating profusely. While watching rap artist Kool Moe Dee perform "I Go To Work" on *The Arsenio Hall Show,* I noticed that he did not perspire when strutting from side to side and mingling with the audience during the musical interludes, although he was dressed in a

leather long-sleeved outfit with fez and sunglasses. But as one of my students from the "hood" [ghetto] stated, rap artists often carry to the stage a street persona. Thus, it is important in the hood that no matter how tough a situation is, one should not break or lose his cool; if he does, then he "looses his clout amongst peers and is considered a whimp, a punk" (Castillo 1993). Perhaps Kool Moe Dee's name is appropriate, because of his ability to remain cool, calm, and controlled under the spotlight. Moreover, Kool Moe Dee's riveting performance is also reminiscent of John Chernoff's observation of the Dagomba dancers of Ghana: "The beauty of the dance was in the expression of calm on the man's face as he heard the music; if the head is cool, then the body is cool" (Chernoff 1979:149).

Some critics remain oblivious to the cultural significance and meaning of this tradition and the context which gives life to its expressiveness. But rap continues to "bum-rush" mainstream America on its own cultural terms where black street language, culture, and aesthetics prevail. In this regard, rap grew in response to the geopolitics of the Bronx which contributed to the outgrowth of gang culture. Musically disco and funk were, in contrasting ways, creative impetes for rap. Where clubs became the house for disco music, the streets became the context for rap. When disco was commodified in the American mainstream, overshadowing those black artists who primarily appealed to African American listeners, mobile disc jockeys recaptured their community's taste by mixing funk records rather than commercial disco. As a result, musical change along with socio-cultural and geopolitical discord paved the way for a youth arts movement called hip-hop whose ideology totally rejected the mainstream dress code, middle-classism, and alternative culture that disco seemingly promulgated in lieu of rawness, streetism, and unadulterated blackness. Rap music is much more than dance music. It is a display of cultural values and aesthetics, a vehicle for social control and cohesiveness, a political forum, and more importantly, a phenomenon of consciousness.

Notes

1. This paper was inspired by the panel "The African Nexus with World Music," organized and chaired by Jacqueline DjeDje at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Rochester, NY, 15-18 October 1986. I wish to thank J.A.K. Njoku for sharing his comments on an earlier draft of this paper; Abdoulaye N'Gom for his invaluable remarks on a later draft of this study, Kyra Gaunt for allowing me to use her transcription of Public Enemy's "Fight the Power"; and Simeon Pillich for sharing Thulani Davis's speech with me. I express much gratitude to the Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship for Minorities for funding parts of this research paper. Earlier drafts of this paper were presented at the panel "Politics & Performance in African & the African Diaspora," The Intercultural Performance Colloquium, New York University, 22 October 1992; and the panel "Africanisms in Hip-Hop

Music" at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Ethnomusicology, Oxford, Mississippi, 27–31 October 1993.

2. While "rock and roll" initially emerged in the 1950s as a euphemism for rhythm and blues associated mainly with white cover artists of black popular styles, the fusion of rap with rock ironically led to Run-DMC's crossover appeal to a white audience. In addition, the group became the first rap act to appear on syndicated rock television, Music Television Video (MTV).

3. In my analysis of hip-hop, I prefer to call it a youth arts movement rather than a culture for the following reason. Hip-hop, as I will explain further, is an expression that embodies those attitudes, language, dress, and gestures affiliated with street culture. However, its development as an identifiable expression emerged during the wake of the Black Nationalist/Power Movement among African American and Hispanic youth. Similar to hip-hop, Black Power articulated an attitude rendered in the form of language, music, dress, gestures, which embodied soul. By the 1970s, hip-hop became an expression of urban black youth "street" culture dictating its own expressive codes as soul did in the 1960s. More importantly, both soul and hip-hop articulate the sum total of urban black youth's frustrations toward and alienation from the American mainstream, though at specific times in history.

4. Similar to Henry Louis Gates's rationale for the respelling of signifying as ***signifyin*** to account for black speakers' pronunciation (1988:46), I have chosen to spell rapping throughout my text without the *g*.

5. Rap music artists credit black nationalist poets of the 1960s—The Last Poets, The Watts Prophets, and Gil Scott-Heron—as the forerunners of rappin to music. Unlike rappin to the musical accompaniment of disc jockeys, the 1960s poets recited in rhythm to African percussion instruments or, as Gil Scott-Heron did, with a small rhythm section. Other artists who rap musicians acclaim as their precursors include soul and funk artists such as Isaac Hayes, Barry White, Millie Jackson, and George Clinton. These artists did not recite in rhyme and to the beat of the music, rather they spoke casually in a stylized manner over a musical accompaniment. For a history of rap see Keyes 1996.

6. Robert Farris Thompson traces the etymology of "funk" to the Ki-Kongo word ***lu-fuki***, translated as "bad body odor." He also finds that "funk" is interpreted among the Cajun in Louisiana as "fumet"—aroma of food and wine. He contends that the Ki-Kongo word is closer in form and meaning for praising someone for the integrity of their art, for having "worked out" to achieve their aims. Although Thompson states that the Kongo find positive energy in funkiness, particularly in the smell of a hardworking elder as good luck, it denotes in jazz/black English earthiness, a return to fundamentals (1983).

7. According to popular music critic Radcliffe A. Joe, "disco" originated from the French word ***discotheque***. In the pre-World War II era, the operator of a Parisian bar catering to jazz enthusiasts is said to have used the name "La Discotheque" for his establishment. Hence, during and after the war, the discotheque concept remained affiliated with Parisian bars that incorporated live and recorded jazz performances. Although the French coined the word, it appears that it was never applied to the concept of dancing in a commercial club to recorded music until much later, with club owners like Jean Castel, Paul Pacine and Regina Zylberberg (Joe 1980:12). With the introduction of Chubby Checker's twist in the US in the 1960s, this dance was appropriated in Paris, leading to the replacement of jazz with rhythm & blues music in the discotheques. While Joe states that the US simply borrowed the term "disco" from its French derivative rather than its concept, disco in the US, particularly during the 1970s, centered around the record spinning disc jockey and the musical production processes associated with the disco sound (ibid.).

8. At the NEA Conference in Chicago (14 April 1994), author Thulani Davis delivered the keynote address, "The Artist in Society." Davis stated that the days of instruments in the classroom had been replaced by "street arts like rap . . . [hence] those little instruments we once learned to play in the classroom, those [days] are gone." This statement fueled a discussion about the "demise of black music," in which the majority of the audience cited the lack of funding for the arts in public schools as a major reason for the evolution of rap music.

9. The "breaks" concept derives from a disco disc jockey named Tom Moulton who conceived the idea of extending a record's playing time from seven-inch single—remixing it to double or triple its playing time—onto a twelve-inch disk. Another objective of the twelve-inch disk was to create added disk space needed to . . . "enhance and prolong the pulsating tempo of the rhythm and percussions breaks [sections]" for a dance/disco audience (Joe 1980:63). Street jockeys use "breaks" similarly, referring to a percussion vamp section comprised of timbales, congas, and bongos. One of Herc's most popularly used breaks was "Apache" by The Incredible Bongo Band. By the mid-1980s, breaks or break beats were simply musical motifs from past pre-recorded hits used in a rap music mix.

10. "The Message" ranks as the first politically-toned rap in the annals of popular music history. According to Sugar Hill Records co-founder Joe Robinson, it was written and performed by Melle Mel and Duke Bootee, a percussionist in the house band of Sugar Hill Records. The lyrics here, however, are performed by Melle Mel.

11. Jazz/rap fusion was first labelled among English djs as "acid jazz" in the 1980s. Since the 1990s, US-based artists who fuse jazz with rap do not refer to their music as "acid jazz"; but the term is being employed by the music industry as a label for this type of rap.

References

Adler, Jerry, and David Gates et al. 1990. "Rap Rage." *Newsweek* (March 19):56-63.

Baber, Ceola. 1987. "The Artistry and Artifice of Black Communication." In *Expressively Black: The Cultural Basis of Ethnic Identity*, edited by Geneva Gay and Willie L. Baber, 75-108. New York: Praeger.

Baker, Houston A. Jr. 1993. *Black Studies: Rap, and The Academy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Baugh, John. 1983. *Black Street Speech: Its History, Structure and Survival* (Texas Linguistics Series). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Berman, Marshall. 1982. *All That is Solid Melts into the Air*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Burnim, Mellonee. 1985. "The Black Gospel Music Tradition: A Complex of Ideology, Aesthetic, and Behavior." In *More than Dancing: Essays on Afro-American Music and Musicians*, edited by Irene V. Jackson, 147-167. Westport: Greenwood Press.

Castillo, Raphael, 1993. Classroom comment with the author, New York University, Manhattan, October 11.

Chalfant, Henry. 1993. Telephone conversation with the author, Manhattan, June 23.

Chernoff, John Miller. 1979. *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Collins, Glen. 1988. "Now Rap is 'Bum-Rushing' the Mainstream." *New York Times* (August 29):Y-13; 15.

Davis, Thulani. 1994. "The Artist in Society." Keynote address delivered at the NEA Conference, Chicago, April 14.

Diawara, Manthia. 1992. "Black Studies, Cultural Studies: Performative Acts." *AfterImage* (October):6-7.

Dery, Mark. 1990. "Public Enemy: Confrontation." *Keyboard* (September):81-96.

Drewal, Margaret Thompson. 1992. *Yoruba Ritual: Performers, Play, Agency*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Dyson, Michael. 1989. "Culture of Hip-Hop." *Zeta* (June):44-50.

Fab Five Freddy. 1992. *Words & Phrases of the Hip-Hop Generation*. Stamford, CT:Longmeadow Press.

Flores, Juan. 1993. "Puerto Rican and Proud, Boyee!" *Centro de Estudios Puertorriquenos* V(1):22-32.

Gates, Henry Louis Jr. 1988. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Gaunt, Kyra D. 1993. "An' It Ain't Mozart: Hip-Hop, Polytexturality, and Reconstruction in the Music of Public Enemy." Paper and transcription resented at the Thirty-eighth Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Oxford, MS, 29-31 October.

George, Nelson. 1988. *The Death of Rhythm and Blues.* New York: Plume.

———. 1992. *Buppies, B-Boys, Baps & Bohos: Notes on Post-Soul Black Culture.* New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Goodwin, Andrew. 1988. "Sample and Hold: Pop Music in the Digital Age of Reproduction." *Critical Quarterly* 30(3):34-39.

Hager, Steven. 1984. *Hip-hop: The Illustrated History of Break Dancing, Rap Music, and Graffiti.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Hebdige, Dick. 1987. *Cut n Mix: Culture, Identity and Caribbean Music.* London: Methuen.

Jackson, Joyce. 1987. "The Performing Black Quartet: An Expression of Cultural Values and Aesthetics." Ph.D. diss., Indiana University.

Joe, Radcliffe A. 1980. *The Business of Disco.* New York: Billboard Books/Watson-Guptill.

Kaufman, Frederick and John Guckin. 1979. *The African Roots of Jazz.* New York: Alfred Publishing Company.

Kemp, Mar. 1989. "Name That Tune: Sampling—Whose Music Is It Anyway?" *Option* (May-June):66-69; 129.

Keyes, Cheryl 1986a. Interview with Bill Adler, New York, May 23.

———. 1986b. Interview with Jimmy Spicer, Bill Stephney, and Dynasty, New York, May 23.

———. 1986c. Interview with Melle Mel, Manhattan, June 7.

———. 1986d. Interview with Afrika Bambaataa, Manhattan, June 10.

———. 1986e. Telephone interview with Larry Smith, Brooklyn, July 12.

———. 1986f. Interview with Vicki and Valerie, Manhattan, July 15.

———. 1986g. Telephone interview with The Real Roxanne, Brooklyn, July 30.

———. 1986h. Interview with Marc Blake, Long Island, August 24.

———. 1991. "Rappin' to the Beat: Rap Music as Street Culture among African Americans." Ph.D. diss., Indiana University.

———. 1992. Interview with Cedric Singleton, Manhattan,October 12.

———. 1993. Interview with Grandmaster Flash, Manhattan, March 4.

———. 1996 "Rap." In *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History.* 5 vols. Edited by Jack Salzman, David Lionel Smith, and Cornel West. New York: Macmillan Press, 4:2266-69.

Major, Clarence. 1994. *Juba to Jive: A Dictionary of African-American Slang.* New York: Penguin.

Maultsby, Portia K. 1979. "A Health Diversity Evolves from Creative Freedom." *Billboard* (June 9):BM-10; 22; 28.

———. 1990. "Africanisms in African-American Music." In *Africanisms in American Culture*, edited by Joseph E. Holloway, 185-210. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.

Mollenkopf, John and Manuel Castells, editors. 1991. *Dual City: Restructuring New York.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Moon, Tom. 1991. "Public Enemy's Bomb Squad." *Musician* (October): 69-72; 76.

n.a. 1990. *Rappin* (July):24; 31.

Nelson, Havelock. 1991. "Marley Marl: Soul Controller, Sole Survivor." *The Source: The Magazine of Hip-Hop Music, Culture & Politics* (October):36-39.

Nettl, Bruno. 1983. *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Twenty-Nine Issues and Concepts.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Nketia, J.H. Kwabena. 1974. "African Roots of Music in the Americas: An African View." *Black Perspective in Music* 2:82-88.

———. 1974 *The Music of Africa.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Norris, Chris. 1993. "Old School, New School, Cool School." *Option* (September/October):82-87.

Oliver, Paul. 1970. *Savannah Syncopators: African Retentions in the Blues*. New York: Stein and Day.
Pearce, John Ed. 1990. "Rappin Rap." *The Courier-Journal Magazine* (July 29):14-15.
Potter, Russell A. 1995. *Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip-Hop and the Politics of Postmodernism*. Albany, State University of New York Press.
Reid, Vernon. 1993. "The Vibe Q: George Clinton." *Vibe* 1(3): 44-49.
Rose, Tricia. 1994. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press.
Romain, Louis. 1992. "X-Clan: Roots & Boots." *The Source: The Magazine of Hip-Hop Music Culture & Politics* (May):32-36.
Schoolly-D. 1988. "The Meaning of Gold." *Spin* (October):52.
Sidran, Ben. 1981. *Black Talk*. New York: Da Capo.
Shaw, Arnold. 1986. *Black Popular Music in America: From the Spirituals, Minstrels, and Ragtime to Soul, Disco, and Hip-Hop*. New York: Schirmer Books.
Smitherman, Geneva. [1977] 1986 Reprint. *Talkin and Testifyin*. Detroit: Wayne State University.
Spencer, Jon Michael et al. 1991. "The Emergency of Black and The Emergence of Rap [Series of Articles]." *Black Sacred Music: Journal of Theomusicology* 5(1).
Stone, Ruth M. 1982. *Let the Inside Be Sweet*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
———. 1985. "In Search of Time in African Music." *Music Theory Spectrum* 7:139-48
Thomas, Don. 1986 "Puttin' the Rap on Rap Attacks." *Big Red*. (July):2-21.
Thompson, Robert Farris. 1983. *Flash of the Spirit*. New York: Vintage.
———. 1990. "Kongo Influences on African-American Artistic Culture." In *Africanisms in American Culture*, edited by Joseph E. Holloway, 148-84. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Toop, David. [1984] 1991. *Rap attack 2: African Rap to Global Hip Hop*. Revised and Expanded Edition. New York: Serpent's Tail.
Walser, Robert. 1995. "Rhythm, Rhyme, and Rhetoric in the Music of Public Enemy." *Ethnomusicology* 39 (2):193-217.
Waterman, Richard. 1963. "On Flogging a Dead Horse: Lessons Learned from the Africanisms Controversy." *Ethnomusicology* 7:83-87.
Wheeler, Elizabeth. 1991. "Most of My Heroes Don't Appear on No Stamps: The Dialogics of Rap Music." *Journal of Black Music Research* 11(2):191-226.
Williams, Gilbert. 1986. "The Black Disc Jockey as a Cultural Hero." *Popular Music and Society* 10(3):79-90.
Williams, Juan. 1989. "Fighting Words." *The Washington Post* (October):G1; G8-9.
Wilson, Olly. 1974. "The Significance of the Relationship Between Afro-American Music and West African Music." *Black Perspective in Music*. 2 (Spring):3-22.
———. 1983. "Black Music as an Art Form." *Black Music Research Journal*. 3:1-32
Zook, Krystal. 1992. "Reconstructions of Nationalist Thought in Black Music and Culture." In *Rocking the Boat: Mass Music and Mass Movements*, edited by Reebee Garofalo, 255-266. Boston: South End Press.

Discography

Clinton, George. [1975 original performance] 1977. "P-Funk." *Parliament Live: P-Funk Earth Tour* Casablanca NPLP 7053.
Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five. [12" disc] 1979. *Freedom*. Sugar Hill SH-249.
MC Lyte. 1988. "Lyte the MC." *Lyte as A Rock* First Priority Music 7 90905-1.
Melle Mel & Duke Bootee. 1982. *The Message* [12" disc]. Sugar Hill SH-582.
Isis. 1990. "To the Crossroads." *Isis: Rebel Soul* Island/4th and B'Way 444 030-4.

Public Enemy. 1988. "Don't Believe the Hype." *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* Def Jam BFW 44303.
———. 1989. *Fight the Power* [EP]. Motown MOTC-1972.

Filmography

Flyin' Cut Sleeves. 1993. Co-Produced by Rita Fecher and Henry Chalfant, dist. New York: Cinema Guild.