





# Spreading the Hip-Hop Nation

Americanization of the World?



A photograph of a white door set in a wall. The door has a silver handle on the left side. Above the door, there are two small, dark, rectangular vents. The wall is a light, off-white color. The floor in front of the door is dark and appears to be made of concrete or asphalt. The lighting is somewhat dim, with a small light source visible above the door.

WHOLE LOTTA  
GANG SHIT!  
#ITCH!

A close-up photograph of the graffiti on the door. The text is written in red marker on a light-colored surface. The door handle is visible on the left side of the frame.

WHOLE LOTTA  
GANG SHIT!  
#ITCH!

# TRINITY INTERNATIONAL HIP-HOP FESTIVAL

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## Prop Dylan (Sweden)

December 13, 2015 | Posted by Greg in [Performers 2016](#)

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Prop Dylan has held the position as ambassador for Swedish Boom Bap since the solo debut in 2007. With over 600 live shows throughout Europe, Central America and the Middle East he has made his presence known in the world wide hip hop community.

Born and raised in the small industrial town of Borlänge he applied the hard working mentality to the music instead of going to the local steel mill. Without knowing anything about the music industry he focused on his craft to be one of the best in his region but has reached the top shelf as one of Europe's best rappers.



○ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14LGVjFLf64>

- Music as a medium
  - of identity construction/articulation
  - of collective memory
  
- How can we apply this to the globalization of rap?
  - What kind of identities does rap promote?
  - What kind of memories are mediated here?
  
- What role does the Anglosphere play?

- Cultural Globalization and the ‘Americanization’ of the World
- The Globalization of Hip Hop
- Language and Accent in Globalized Rap
- The Hip Hop Nation
- *Re-Contextualizing Identity and Memory*



# Cultural Globalization as 'Americanization' of the World



# Benjamin Barber: *Jihad vs. McWorld* (1995)

- Two scenarios after the Cold War:
  1. “Retribalization” of humankind → culture vs. culture + ‘Balkanization’ of nation states
  2. Integration and uniformity through economic, technological, ecological forces  
→ “pressing nations into one homogeneous global theme park, one McWorld tied together by communications, information, entertainment and commerce” (4)



- Spread of popular culture in the service of “expansionist commerce”
  - “Music videos, theater, books, and theme parks (...) are all constructed as image exports creating a common world taste around common logos, advertising slogans, stars, songs, brand names, jingles, and trademarks. Hard power yields to soft, while ideology is transmuted into a kind of videology that works through sound bites and film clips.” (17)

# Winfried Fluck: “Amerikanisierung und Modernisierung” (1999)

- “Selbst wenn Filme, Fernsehserien oder Pop Musik in Hongkong, Wien oder Berlin produziert werden, so orientieren sie sich heute in der Regel dennoch an amerikanischen Modellen. (...) Der Siegeszug amerikanischer Populärkultur (im folgenden als Oberbegriff für das benutzt, was oft auch als Massenkultur, Massenmedien oder Konsumkultur bezeichnet wird) kann als die wohl offensichtlichste und nachhaltigste Manifestation kultureller Amerikanisierung gesehen werden.” (55-6)



○ Two perspectives:

1. Liberating anti-authoritarian power of American pop culture
2. Cultural imperialism

1. Arrival of American youth-oriented popular culture in post-War Europe

- Against hierarchies → Democratizing function
- BUT: subversion on textual level vs. economic consolidation of status quo

2. Growing dominance of American media corporations

- 'Pseudo-culture' spreading solely through power of market domination + consumer manipulation
- BUT: Globalization = complex financial webs (corporations no longer the sole possession of American capital)

- “Meine These ist, dass die Entstehung der Populärkultur nach amerikanischem Muster im Kontext eines andauernden gesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Modernisierungsprozesses gesehen werden muss – wobei Modernisierung hier nicht im Sinne ökonomischer Modernisierungstheorien verstanden wird, sondern als Bezug auf eine **kulturelle Befreiungs- und Enthierarchisierungslogik der Moderne** und ein damit verbundenes **individuelles Selbsermächtigungsversprechen.**” (58)
- Cultural historical development in Western societies:
  - Barred access to education and culture **vs.** Rise of a culture *without* entry requirement
  - Music = especially accessible!



## ○ Why America?

- Multi-ethnic + multicultural makeup → focus on developing easily understandable, non-verbal, performative, predominantly visual/aural modes of expression
- „ständige Reduktion der Rezeptionsvoraussetzungen“ (63)

→ New possibilities of self-empowerment on the side of the recipient/consumer!

## ○ Why popular music?

- No claim of information → creation of “Stimmungsräume” (subliminal effect)
- Evocation of decontextualized images + vague sensations + diffuse feelings →  
Mirroring the lack of structure of the imaginary
- Music videos: “die Bilder fungieren aufgrund ihrer narrativen Diskontinuität vor allem als Stimulans und Fundus für ein eigenes imaginäres Skript” (66)

# The Globalization of Hip Hop





# From local to regional

- 1970s New York City → South Bronx as “home of the hip hop culture”
- “Hip hop gives voice to the tensions and contradictions in the **public urban landscape** during a period of substantial transformation in **New York** and attempts to seize the shifting urban terrain, to make it work on behalf of the **dispossessed**.” (Tricia Rose, *Black Noise*, 1994, 22)

○ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoYZf-lBF\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoYZf-lBF_U)



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- Spread of hip hop from New York to Philadelphia and Los Angeles, later to more “geographically marginal” cities like Seattle, etc. → “emergence of distinctive regional rap sounds and styles” + “strong local allegiances and territorial rivalries” (Murray Forman, “Represent”, 2004, 202)

○ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u31FO\\_4d9TY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u31FO_4d9TY)



# From the ‘ghetto’ to the ‘hood’

- “In the United States, the ‘inner-city slum’ or urban ‘ghetto’ stands as an **ideogram of salient non-white others**: disenfranchised ‘poor people concentrated in derelict cores and inner suburbs’ (Davis 2007:31). [...] Confined to ‘the racialized core of the U.S. metropolis’, the ‘ghetto’ is envisioned as a template of violence and illegality, as **a negative social space** that breeds and reproduces criminality (Wacquant 2008:2).” (Uli Linke, “Racializing Cities, Naturalizing Space”, 2013, 6)
- “The hood is, however, regularly constructed within the **discursive frame of the ‘home’** [...]” (Forman, “Represent”, 208)

# From (African-)American to Global

- “[Rap] emerges as a voice for black and Latino youth which, as a large subset of North America’s socially disenfranchised population, is at risk of being lost in the combined transformations of domestic and global economies that are altering North America’s urban cultures today.” (Forman, “Represent”, 220)
- “Hip-hop and rap **cannot be viewed simply as an expression of African American culture**; it has become a vehicle for global youth affiliations and a tool for reworking local identity all over the world.” (Tony Mitchell, “Another Root: Hip hop outside the USA”, *Global Noise*, 2001, 2)



# From *Black Noise* to *Global Noise*

- Rap as “vehicle for various forms of youth protest” (Mitchell 10)
  - Articulation of experiences/grievances of ethnic minorities
  - Formulation of political statements on class, race, gender, social conditions
  - Expression of “migrant diasporic cultures”
- Process of ‘**glocalization**’ → Adaptation of a global phenomenon (e.g., popular music) to local conditions
- Recombination of rap with “local linguistic, musical, and political contexts” (Mitchell 10)

# Language and Accent in Globalized Rap



I am speaking in name of the people who are suffering

2:13 / 4:17



○ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nGsiM-8hiE>

○ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RqQGUK7Na4>



○ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InV6Sde5i-o>

○ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCXKR\\_abkf8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCXKR_abkf8)



- Why do some rappers choose to adopt a more local accent while others opt for a markedly American accent?
- Would this prove the theory of an 'Americanization' of the world?

- Two stages of appropriation of rap and hip hop outside the USA:
  1. Mimicking US models → **Adoption**
  2. Increasing syncretism + incorporation of local linguistic/musical features → **Adaptation**
  
- “If we only have a vision of a global spread of hip hop or English, emanating from one source before becoming localized through the appropriation of various cultural or linguistic forms, we may be missing the dynamics of change, struggle and appropriation.” (Tony Mitchell, “Hip-hop as dusty foot philosophy”, 3)



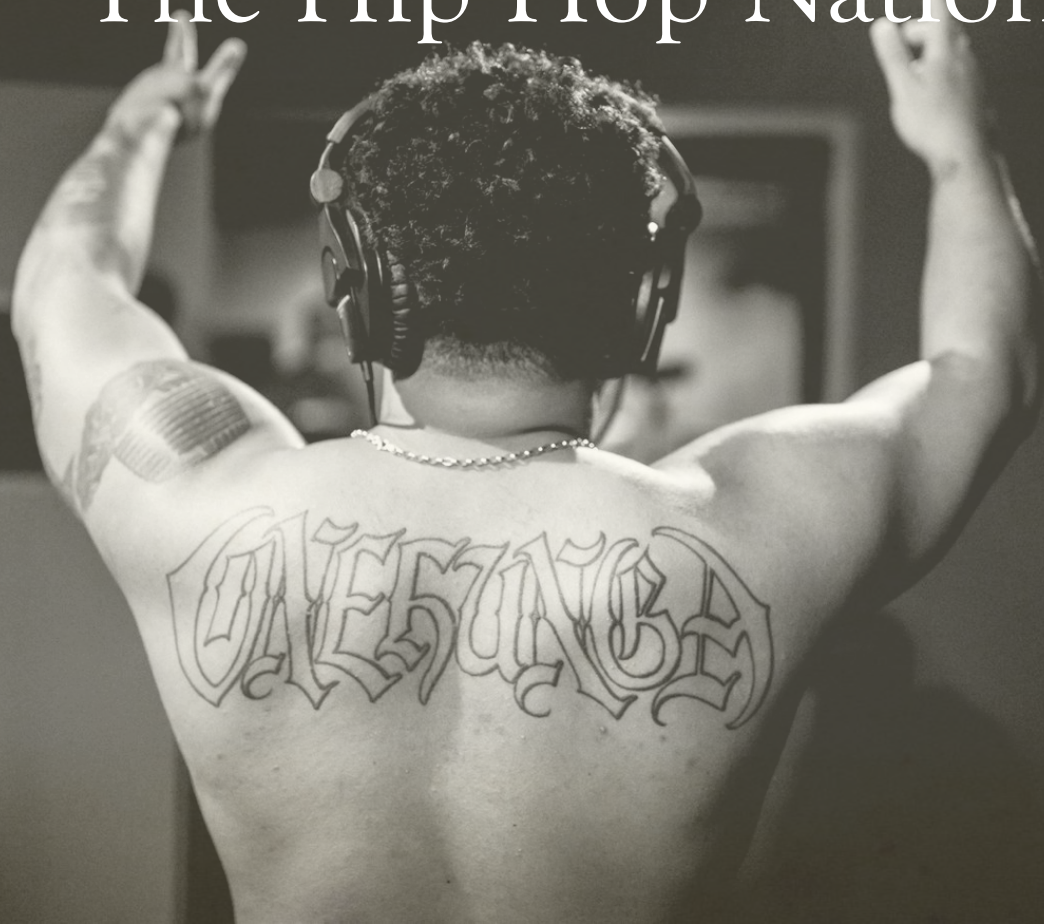
- “[A] distinctive feature of the new Black British identity is the extent to which it has been Americanized. Its ideal images, its stylistic references are very powerfully Black American. Even though the style may be indigenized, given a British home grown stamp, all leads come from Afro-America. The lines of Black transatlantic communication grow ever more complex and intense. And that too has consequences for the relation to Blackness.” (Stuart Hall, “Frontlines and Backyards”, 2000, 137)
- “[Rap in London] looks out and plots cultural connections with African Americans, while at the same time **looking in and reconstituting the local aesthetics of South London**. The language and style of South London are thus laced with symbols and cultural fragments from urban America and the Caribbean that are rearranged in a unique way.” (Les Back, *New Ethnicities and Urban Culture*, 1996, 209)

Behold my kool style  
While I greet the funk with my Māori  
Want to roughen up  
On the bass guitar  
My skills allow me  
Break the tension  
Or the tackle  
Like Jonah Lomu on attack  
I've paid my dues from here to Timbukto and back  
Mad  
If I had my crew up in the house  
It makes the difference  
It is my preference  
Refer to reference  
Crack the ill styles  
With my patu  
To open up you  
In the meanwhile  
I still pursue  
To inject you with my horiest intelligence  
So intelligent  
Make way for the native to fall back on your heels

I stop the sun up  
Just like my legendary prophet god  
like son of Papatūānuku  
Māui to make the days longer  
Erupt at once like Ruaumoko  
King of volcanoes  
Commotion like it was The Springbok Tour  
The only one representing my hori ways  
Tautoko te mahi o tēnei ra just about every day



# The Hip Hop Nation



# Marina Terkourafi (ed.): *The Languages of Global Hip Hop* (2010)

- Intensely political character of hip hop:
  - **'connective marginalities'** → global reinterpretations of blackness to address marginality and difference in other contexts
- Importance of authenticity in hip hop:
  - Form: sampling local sounds + using national languages/code-switching + using regional dialects
  - Content: local characters and place names + addressing broader issues of local importance
  - Culture: Black inner-city roots + Adoption of African American English (AAE)  
→ Development of a **"new global Hip Hop Nation Language (HHNL)"** (8)



- “[...] this ‘invasion’ of English ‘from below’ can generate quite different **indexicalities and attitudes** from those that usually accompany mainstream ideologies about the spread of (Standard) English from ‘above’ [...].” (8)



swidt

ALFRED & CHURCH



Used to dress like I was Eazy-E

Then I went harlem w/ dipset wit' it

Up In Smoke Tour on DVD

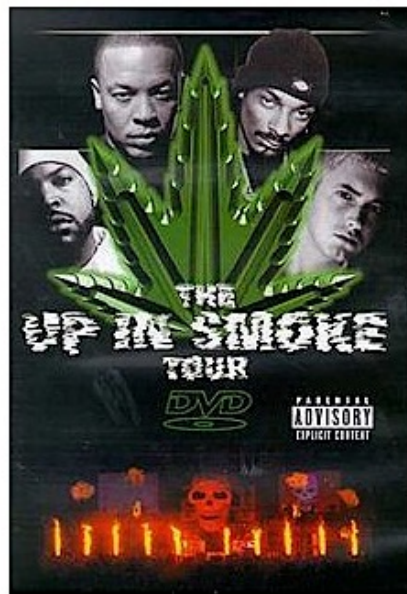
Onehunga on the chest, printed

Old english for the text wit' it

SWIDT 266

7 months ago

The most memorable tour visual of the millenium.



Upvote

Share

This is my territory

My side of town rockin blue was mandatory

Stoneyhunga, got the super powers (woo)

This is ferguson after hours (woo)

This is Felix street, where the projects

Got feins lookin for a needle

See me indicatin' tryna make a left

Police think I'm runnin from a theft

NEW ZEALAND

# Bash, bling and blood

20 Aug, 2007 12:48pm

3 minutes to read



New Zealand gang members mimic their US counterparts. Photo / Glenn Jeffrey

By: Patrick Gower



## KEY POINTS:

Don't be fooled by the idiotic hand-signals and chaotic street-fights - the street gangs have a dangerous criminal edge.

They don't just want to bash, they want the "bling" too.

The street gang phenomenon began with Los Angeles arch-rivals the Bloods and Crips 40 years ago and has since spread across the world through rap and hip-hop culture.

Imitations have been seen in one form or another on the New Zealand streets since the 1990s, with "wannabes" sporting the red bandanna of the Bloods or blue of the Crips.



 SWIDT 266

7 months ago

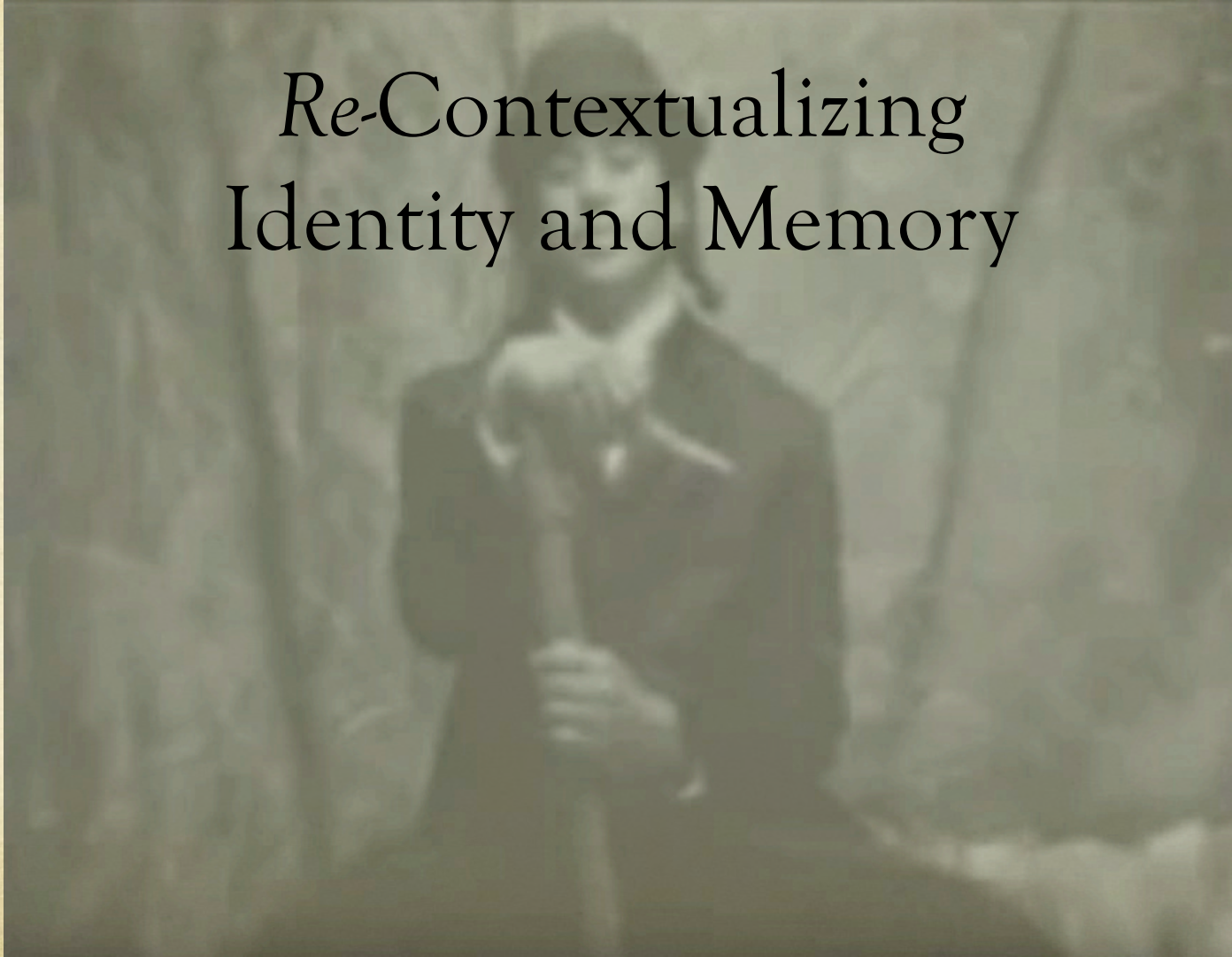
This is our little introduction into what Onehunga was like before our neighborhood was drowning in Gentrification. What Auckland was like early to mid 2000s. Back when a one stage bus fare was 70c. Back when every dairy had a Street Fighter arcade machine & it only cost 20c to play. Back when we used to wag school to play Counter-Strike.

This is Onehunga

- “[Hip hop] is almost always about the **celebration of roots** in place, neighbourhood, home, family, and nation. It is this dominant aspect of topos and geography which makes rap such a fertile area of study, particularly in its manifestations outside the USA.” (Tony Mitchell, “Hip hop as a ‘glocal’ subculture”, 4)



*Re-Contextualizing  
Identity and Memory*



Mobb Deep  
"Shook Ones"







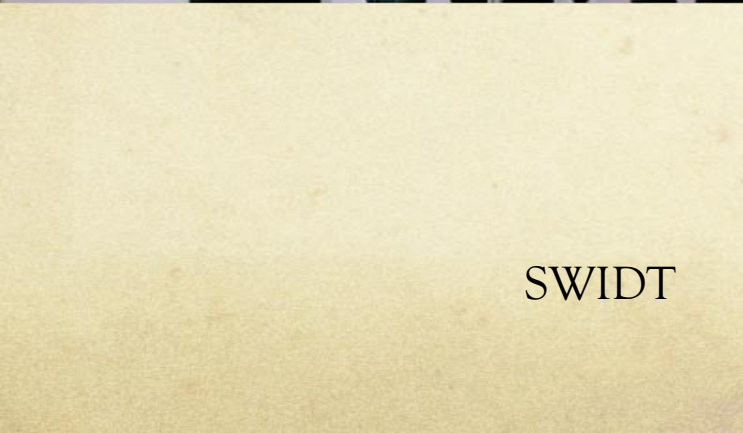
Mobb Deep



SWIDT



NWA



SWIDT





- “New Zealand has a population of approximately 4.4 million people (Statistics New Zealand, 2010). Maori are the indigenous peoples and make up 15% of the population. The other major ethnic groupings are European (77% of the population), Pacific (7%) and Asian (10%). There are stark ethnic disparities in health and socioeconomic position (SEP) in New Zealand. **Maori and Pacific people** experience lower life expectancy and health disadvantage across most mortality and morbidity indicators compared to European, as well as socioeconomic disadvantage in areas such as housing, education, income, and employment.” (Ricci Harris et al, “The pervasive effects of racism”)



Dam Native

Portrait of Maori family  
Late 19<sup>th</sup> century







Dam Native



Mete Kīngi te Rangi Paetahi

- “Ideas about remembering otherwise and remembering obligation are particularly compelling for an analysis of Indigenous film and video that, through **counter-memorial practices**, confront histories of colonization and the attempted genocide of Indigenous people. [...] Indigenous challenges to the conditions of domination and dispossession that result from past and present colonization are not simply counter measures but are **necessary interventions for Indigenous survival.**” (Janice Hladki, “Remembering Otherwise”, 2014, 96)



# Hip Hop and the ‘Other Anglosphere’

- *In spite of* commercial success: Hip Hop as expression of minorities
- Beginning as representation of ‘America’s Other’ → Adoption of language, symbols, motifs and images by ‘Others’ across the world
- Hip Hop as ultimate expression of **“Selbstermächtigungsversprechen”**
- “Wir werden nicht amerikanisiert. Wir ‘amerikanisieren’ uns selbs.”

(Winfried Fluck, “Amerikanisierung und Modernisierung”, 70)