

# 힙합 문화, 하위문화, 그리고 이들 문화에 대한 사회·문화적 함축성: 독일, 한국 및 미국의 힙합 그룹들에 대한 비교분석을 중심으로

## Hip Hop Culture, Subculture, and the Social and Cultural Implications: A Comparative Case Study on Hip Hop Culture among Germany, Korea and the USA

게르케 사브리나\*, 백선기\*\*  
성균관대학교 예술학협동과정\*, 성균관대학교 신문방송학과\*\*

Sabrina Gerke(sabrina.gerke@yahoo.de)\*, Seon-Gi Baek(baek99@skku.edu)\*\*

### 요약

일반적으로 사람들은 자신들이 갖는 국적에 따라 분류되지만, 각 개인의 문화적 경향은 반드시 자신들이 속한 국적에 의해 결정되지 않는다. 오히려 하나의 문화적 배경을 가진 사람이라 하더라도 자신이 속한 하위문화에 따라 자신의 정체성과 다양성이 형성된다. 본 연구는 힙합 장르 노래에 대한 분석을 통해 미국, 독일, 한국의 하위문화적 속성을 밝혔다. 이를 위해 음원 판매액과 힙합의 역사에 관한 기존 연구를 토대로 각 국가에서 힙합이라는 장르가 출현한 시점 및 2016년의 가장 인기 있었던 노래를 각각 한 곡씩 총 여섯 곡을 선정해 기호학적으로 분석했다. 국가별 힙합의 초기 및 현재 모습에 대한 비교 분석결과, 흥미롭게도 힙합은 대상에 대한 묘사에 있어 점점 유사해져 가는 동시에, 더욱 개인주의적 경향을 띠고 있음을 공통적으로 지니고 있다. 그러나 세부적인 측면에서 각 국가 간 차이가 발견되었다. 미국 힙합에서는 대표적으로 아메리칸 드림(American Dream)에 대한 열망이 드러났으며, 독일의 힙합에서는 과도한 남성성 이미지가 강조되었다. 한편, 한국 힙합은 보다 일상적인 생각과 이야기를 중심으로 전개되는 양상을 띠었다. 나아가 비록 사회 비판의 도구로서 힙합이 갖는 중요도가 점차 감소하고는 있지만, 여전히 힙합은 강력한 문화적 반항이자 새로운 도전의 상징으로 인식되고 있다.

■ 중심어 : | 힙합 | 하위문화 | 문화연구 | 대중 음악 | 정체성 | 기호학 | 남성성 |

### Abstract

People are most commonly divided by their nationality, but that does not mean they share the same culture. Even for people from one cultural background, subcultures play an important role for diversity and identity, and popular music is one way to express them. This study analyzed 6 songs of the Hip Hop genre from the US, Germany and South Korea, with one song each from the time of first emergence of the term 'Hip Hop' and one song each from 2016, selected on the basis of popularity indicated by music record sales and specialist literature on the history of Hip Hop. Through semiotic analysis of early and recent Hip Hop in each country, the changes in popular Hip Hop over time were examined. The results of this study show that through standardization, Hip Hop in the three countries has superficially become more similar and more focused on the individual, but on a detailed level shows significant differences: while U.S. Hip Hop refers to the American Dream, German Hip Hop displays an extreme image of masculinity, and Korean Hip Hop deals with private thoughts. Although popular Hip Hop nowadays does not explicitly exercise social criticism it is still ascribed the symbolic significance of a rebellious and revolutionary cultural practice that can be used to criticize and change culture as well as society.

■ keyword : | Hip Hop | Subculture | Cultural Studies | Popular Music | Identity | Semiotics | Masculinity |

## I. Introduction

Among all existing music scenes, Hip Hop stands out as a comparatively young genre and for gaining great popularity in a short amount of time. It originates from urban areas in the USA and was first introduced by members of the African-American community, but it quickly spread from there and has been adapted by people of other ethnicities[1][2]. Because of its particular origin, Hip Hop is said to be full of expression and symbolism: the most important aspect of Hip Hop mentioned by Kato (2007) and Kruse (2016) is ‘credibility’, the genuineness of experiences that artists made in the past and of circumstances they live in [2][3]. The lyrics and their style of delivery through performances are important tools to generate and preserve said credibility. If one knows how to decipher the codes that are used by Hip Hop protagonists, then the lyrics offer valuable clues about the artist and their lives, and according to Hall & du Gay (1996) and Hebdige (2002) about the people who respond to those representation as well [4][5].

The exclusiveness of Hip Hop seems to be in stark contrast with the possibility of Hip Hop being consumed and produced by people of other ethnicities; nevertheless, the music and its corresponding lifestyle enjoy growing popularity. U.S. Hip Hop and its meaning for society has often been subject to research and discussion, but also Hip Hop in other countries has been researched. However, the phenomenon of how a culture which is lived and represented by one particular ethnic group is adapted and implemented by other ethnic groups is one that has yet to be researched in detail.

This study is aiming at clarifying what Hip Hop in each of the three chosen countries represents in order to understand the role of globalization and localization

for popular culture. Beyond that, such study is necessary because it makes aware about the nuances of Hip Hop which are often generalized as one. Even though the appearance is similar, there are differences that bear cultural significance which can help us understand other cultures and eliminate stereotypes.

## II. Literature Review

### 1. Culture and Subculture

Williams (1983) concludes that due to historical development, linguistic overlaps, and use of the term ‘culture’ in different schools of thought, culture is ‘[...] one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language[6].’ He suggests the following three different definitions of culture: ‘[...] (i) the independent and abstract noun which describes a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development, from the 18th century; (ii) the independent noun, whether used generally or specifically, which indicates a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general, from Herder and Klemm. But we have also to recognize (iii) the independent and abstract noun which describes the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity[6].’

Those definitions are not mutually exclusive, as for the subject of this study, Hip Hop, the definitions of culture as in (ii) and (iii) both apply. Hip Hop music is seen as an art form as it belongs to the field of music; therefore definition (iii) is accurate. But more importantly, since Hip Hop does not just describe a musical genre but evokes ideas of a lifestyle which includes behavior, apparel and ideology, definition (ii) bears high relevancy for this study - Hip Hop describes the practice of sharing the same way of life by a group of individuals[9]. Here it becomes apparent

how culture differs from society: people who refer to the same organizational institutions build a society, but not everyone in this society necessarily follows the same way of life, meaning that in one and the same society, several cultures can exist. Patten (2011) supports this by suggesting that culture '[...]' is what people share when they have shared subjection to a common formative context.', and states that the distinction of several cultures among the big category society '[...]' is a recognition that distinct processes of socialization operate on different groups of people[7].'

In contrast to culture, Williams (1983) defines '[...]' the culture of a distinguishable smaller group '[...]' as subculture[6]. This is important because not every member of society is socialized the same way, nor does the same socialization have the same effect on every person due to the unique predisposition of the individual. Patten (2011) concludes: 'The relevant features are not shared by all and only the members of the groups that are generally said to share cultures [8].' This argument can also function as an explanation to culture being subject to change - culture is not static, but dynamic, due to it being subject to constant renegotiation by participating members of the culture. As a result of this process, new mechanisms of expressions can be added, old mechanisms can be changed, or established mechanisms can be extracted and combined with other mechanisms, as Hebdige (2002) and Williams (1958) state [5][9]. It can be concluded that a subculture contains familiar sets of cultural expression so it can be identified as evolving from a mainstream culture, but at the same time it contains new sets of cultural expression.

Brown (2004) also illustrates that subculture naturally constantly changes over time, which is why it is no surprise that it also takes up new form and content when it moves to a different geographic

location; he bases this natural change on 'influence of new social, cultural and historical factors.', and Hip Hop is no exception to this rule[10].

## 2. Popular Culture and Hip Hop

Popular music is one facet of popular culture which surrounds us every day. Inextricably intertwined with music comes a whole set of codes and symbols that is expressed through band names, lyrics, album jackets, clothing and more. According to Storey, (2015) popular music can take up many forms, represented by e.g. different musical genres, and even music from the same genre can convey highly different opinions or messages[11]. It is possible that messages distributed via popular music can either nurture and reinforce prevalent opinions or serve as a medium to inspire counter opinions[11].

Hip Hop music first emerged in the early 1970s in the South Bronx of New York, located at the East Coast of the US [1][2]. According to Kato (2007), the so-called 'Hip Hop Nation' was a reaction to the growing gang violence in urban areas and tried to evoke social consciousness in people[2]. The notorious Gangster Rap which often is associated with materialism, violence and misogyny instead emerged at the West Coast and is represented by different artists [2][12].

Opposition against the hegemonic mainstream culture imposed onto members of the African-American community by the White population majority and demands for tolerance and recognition for their own culture found many different ways of articulation, one of which at some point was Hip Hop. Therefore, it should be seen as a form of expressing identity and affiliation at the time.

When talking about Hip Hop interpretations and performances, not only live performances on stage, but also music videos have to be considered. As Joe

(2014) states, media contents mirror current situations and/or social norms; for music videos that means they are not only marketing material – they can have a big influence on the audiences' perceptions of music and artists of certain genres due to their visual nature[13]. On one hand, it could give a clear image of something that otherwise would be unapproachable to the spectator, but on the other hand, it could mean a cementation of stereotypes[13].

Nowadays, the image of Hip Hop has changed a lot due to the emergence of different streams of interpretation, e.g. the aforementioned Gangster Rap; the often sexist, violent, misogynist images of that particular stream at one point have dominated the perception of Hip Hop in general of people who did and do not have much contact with it.<sup>1)</sup>

Kim (2014) depicts that other than music, Hip Hop also includes aesthetic forms of expression such as dance, design and visual arts[12]. Chang (2005) quotes DJ Kool Herc as follows: 'People talk about the four hip-hop elements: DJing, B-Boying, MCing, and Graffiti. I think that there are far more than those: the way you walk, the way you talk, the way you look, the way you communicate[14]'. This leads to one of the most remarkable characteristics ascribed to Hip Hop culture: there is the aspect of self-expression through subcultural practices as mentioned by Hebdige (2002), and the fact that its quality is judged by a degree of 'uniqueness of individual expressions that transcend the institutional boundaries', often described with the words 'badness', 'illness' and 'realness' which can be seen as the highest seals of approval possible according to Kato (2007) and Kruse

(2016)[2][3][5].

### III. Research questions, objects and methods

#### 1. Research questions

[Research Question 1] What are the similarities and differences of Hip Hop in Germany, USA and South Korea?

[Research Question 2] What kinds of images and cultural expressions are represented by Hip Hop music in each of those countries, and what are the implications?

#### 2. Research objects

For the purpose of this study it is necessary to choose research objects which not only entail music but also include visual images. Secondly, they should be widely acknowledged as similarly significant in their role as representatives of Hip Hop, which means that only artists that have been and are commercially successful should be considered. For the cultural image of Hip Hop it means that the most common representation will shape the masses' perception of the culture, as Joe (2014) illustrates[13]. This makes it necessary to choose research objects that are widely known as Hip Hop and can be objectively quantified by record sales and verified by music historiography.

From each country, two different artists that represent early and recent Hip Hop respectively were selected:

1) According to Kato (2007), a fact that refutes the common belief of Hip Hop culture being misogynist and sexist is the rise to fame and popularity of female Hip Hop music that made 'womanhood' the subject in the late 1990s, represented e.g. by Lauryn Hill ('The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill', 1998) or Erykah Badu[2]. This variation of Hip Hop can be seen as an alternative to the Gangster Rap movement.

Table 1. Research objects by time and country

	USA	Germany	Korea
Early Hip Hop	Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five (1982)	Die Fantastischen Vier (1992)	Seo Taiji & Boys (1992)
Recent Hip Hop	Drake (2016)	Kollegah (2016)	BewhY (2016)

The United States has been chosen for this study since it is the home country of Hip Hop; one has to understand the roots of a culture and its original shape in order to find and understand changes over time and due to social differences. On first look, the choice of German and Korean Hip Hop might seem arbitrary, but is rooted in the fact that the author of this study is a German living in Korea, speaking both languages fluently, thus being able to directly analyze the songs' lyrics without relying on translators and with first-hand cultural background knowledge. Furthermore, the research on Hip Hop e.g. in England is countless, but research on German or Korean Hip Hop in connection with cultural studies and not musicology in English is scarce. Germany and Korea are not seen as representative countries on their continents when it comes to popular music (rather England or Japan come to mind), but they still might offer important clues about European and Asian culture.

### 3. Research methods

Hip Hop musicians in most cases are perceived not just as musicians, but as protagonists of a bigger narrative which is a subsidiary but essential part of Hip Hop, as Chang (2005) states[14]. Since the representation of Hip Hop artists themselves takes up a big role in the culture as a means of communication, it needs to be analyzed.

A text that is delivered to a great number of people bears potential of becoming a part of the discourse,

and once it enters the discourse it can have an impact on social practices. As a part of a subculture, Hip Hop lyrics are likely to make use of special codes or expressions.

Three methods as used by Baek (2004) were applied for a comprehensive semiotic analysis of Hip Hop lyrics in the three different cultures[15]. Through category analysis, the preferred topics in the songs were identified by grouping them in categories. Through lexicalization analysis, meaningful and representative symbols were determined based on the frequency of use. Lastly, via music video sequence analysis, the cultural and societal significance of the lyrics and visual representation for society and culture were found.<sup>2)</sup>

## IV. Results

### 1. U.S. Hip Hop

#### 1.1 Category analysis

The results of the category analysis show that the categories in 'The Message' can be summarized as <social criticism>, as they revolve around difficult 'living conditions', describe the 'struggle to survive' and 'danger' in everyday life, and deal with the feeling of 'hopelessness'. The explicit experiences classified in the subcategories are presented as personal experiences of the narrator, and they are without exception negative experiences that have led the narrator to 'give up on hopes of a better life'. Since

2) The possible point of criticism that the introduction and the conclusion of this paper do not fully match could result from misperceptions about semiotics. Because of the limited length of this paper, some parts of the conclusion were not fully discussed. The purpose of this study was to identify meaningful signs and representations of Hip Hop through the use of various research methods. Such kind of misunderstanding would be resolved in case of publication of the whole paper. However during the conclusion chapter, the social and cultural significance of Hip Hop is discussed in the original length.

the narrator does not live isolated but in an environment shared by many people, the issues he mentions bear social significance. By performing the song, the narrator is taking the issues towards a broader public, and the language to describe it is graphic and drastic.

Table 2. Category Analysis of U.S. Hip Hop

Artist & Song	Categories	Subcategories	
Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five – The Message	struggle to survive	mental fight physical fight immoral actions illegal actions religion, faith	
	living conditions	chaos, ghetto dirt, bad hygiene bad infrastructure noise bad health	
	hopelessness	resignation capitulation, surrender no power to change sth losing motivation	
	danger	weapons threats attacks	criminality violence
Drake – Hotline Bling	recollections	description of the woman actions of the woman trigger for the situation	
	feelings & emotions	desperation loneliness	exhaustion sadness
	description, perception of the female	party girl popular globetrotter independent different than before	

The categories of ‘Hotline Bling’ however belong to the field of <personal relationships>, in detail the ‘recollections’ of a previous relationship, and emotional consequences, in particular ‘feelings’ and ‘descriptions/perceptions’ of and by the narrator. The song does not involve or address the audience since the person addressed by ‘you’ turns out to be one particular female, leaving the rest of the audience as spectators. The narrator’s recollections imply that the relationship between him and the female has drastically changed, and emotional statements reveal that he regrets the change and feels distressed and

lonely. His depictions however have no bearing or consequences for the audience except for those who can relate with his misfortune, giving them a chance to empathize and to reflect on their own situation.

1.2 Lexicalization analysis

Table 3. Lexicalization analysis of U.S. Hip Hop

Artist & Song	Over-lexicalization		Under-lexicalization
Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five – The Message	you jungle can’t edge		money car livin’
Drake – Hotline Bling	you need to call used to cell phone late night	love hotline bling can only mean one thing city I left	someone else never girls wonder hangin’

The lexicalization analysis of ‘The Message’ shows that the previously mentioned address of the audience via the pronoun ‘you’ is used frequently: as the narration shifts from first person to second person, a prognosis of their life under the previously described conditions is given to the audience. Their involvement forces the audience to imagine themselves in the described situation, to relate with the issues of the narrator, and in the best case make them empathize with him. Interestingly, there is no plea or appeal to the audience to change something about the situation, although the narrator himself points out clearly that he has lost all hope to be able to change anything on his own by the overuse of the word ‘can’t’. The image of the ‘jungle’ is used to evoke connotations of chaos, wilderness, danger and especially survival within the audience, giving them an idea of the environment within a split second. The word ‘edge’ symbolically stands for the gravity of the circumstances: standing on the edge, one can see the danger, and one wrong movement can lead to irreversible harm. The words that are used less frequently are ‘money’ and ‘car’,

symbols for wealth and independence, which do not play a big role in the narrator's life as he does not possess either of them. Lastly, the verb 'livin'' is being mentioned scarcely as a contrasting notion to the image of survival since it does not accurately reflect the narrator's way of life.










As for 'Hotline Bling', the pronoun 'you' is overused as well, leading the focus from the narrator onto the female who is addressed by it. The common use of the word 'love' reveals that the topic of the narration is of personal nature; the mention of 'late night' in connection with 'love' indicates an emotional key moment which stands for delay, insufficiency and low priority, as it symbolizes the end of the day. The regular communication between the two parties is described by the overuse of 'to call' and 'cell phone', emphasizing that there is no direct communication between them, implying distance and probable complications in their relationship. This impression is intensified by the use of 'hotline' which stands for the means of communication for business inquiries or urgent problems, making the relationship seem even less intimate. The use of 'I left' shows that the narrator himself realizes his action is the trigger for the situation. At the same time it stands for his loneliness and the distance between him and the female, especially in connection with the 'city' that she is still staying in, symbolizing entertainment, night life, high population and work. The term 'can only mean one thing' expresses a certain degree of experience or knowledge of the narrator, and with its negative connotation of an unavoidable situation, it stands for a possible deadlock in the relationship.

Looking at the words that are used scarcely, the word 'never' shows unavoidability, impossibility while referring to the female. It turns out that the narrator criticizes her changed behavior, calling her free time activity dismissingly 'hangin'' and using terms for

her company ('someone else' or 'girls') that express his contempt.

### 1.3 Music video sequence analysis

Table 4. Analysis of 'The Message'

	Image	Linguistic Coverage (Lyrics)
1		It's like a jungle sometimes It makes me wonder how I keep from goin' under
2		Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice
3		I tried to get away but I couldn't get far 'Cause a man with a tow truck repossessed my car
4		It's like a jungle sometimes It makes me wonder how I keep from goin' under
5		Crazy lady, livin' in a bag Eatin' outta garbage pails, used to be a fag hag
6		Don't push me cause I'm close to the edge I'm trying not to lose my head
7		Wear a shirt and tie and run with the creeps Cause it's all about money, ain't a damn thing funny
8		Stabbed that man right in his heart Gave him a transplant for a brand new start
10		Drivin' big cars, spendin' twenties and tens And you'll wanna grow up to be just like them, huh

The analysis of the music video for ‘The message’ reveals that the images provided strongly coincide with the narration and intensify their testimony. In a few cases, the depicted images do not show exactly what is verbally expressed, but offer culturally established signs (icons, indices) to represent the content as accurately as possible and evoke certain connotations. In order to understand the video in connection with the music, the observer has to possess a certain cultural knowledge. The cultural knowledge that is required for ‘The Message’ is not very specific; the majority of the signs that are used for visual representation are common in most civilized cultures and not specific to a subculture. The most interesting finding from the video analysis is the choice of the word ‘jungle’ for the surroundings, the city: with this, a new symbol for inhumane living conditions has been established for everyone who has an idea about what a jungle in fact is.

As for ‘Hotline Bling’, the results of the music video analysis confirm what the category and lexicalization analysis have constituted: the spotlight is on the narrator, the video’s main protagonist, and his mimics and gestures are well documented which complies with the narration’s focus on his emotions and thoughts.

## 2. German Hip Hop

### 2.1 Category analysis

Table 5. Category Analysis of German Hip Hop

Artist & Song	Categories	Subcategories	
Die Fantasi-schen Vier - Die da!?!'	positivity	positive attitude positive experience entertainment	
	emotions & feelings	love empathy	longing
	interaction with the woman	dating rituals having meals starting a relationship	
	characterization of the woman	good looks interests	mysterious cheater

Kollegah - Pharao	attitude	indifference determination superiority	strong belief in himself contempt
	personal experiences/past	bad experiences weak appearance confessions hard work endurance, stamina illegal activities	
	characterization of critics/competition	weak stupid losers opportunists inauthentic, fake joke	deserve no respect homosexual (no real men) slaves (of the industry)
	personal description/assessment	authentic strong determined honest (no criminal) good physical constitution corresponding to the ideal of manliness dangerous intimidating powerful, ruler rich unstoppable	
	achievements	music awards financial security status symbols (car) power to move the earth shaping popular culture	
	symbols of power/wealth	sarcophagus made of gold extravagance pride diamonds	authority emperor pharaoh

The results reveal that both German songs deal with personal issues concerning the narrators; the presentation style and nature of those issues however could not be any more different. While ‘Die da!?!’ revolves around two narrators telling each other about their <dating experiences> with a potential female partner, ‘Pharao’ deals with the narrator’s own <hard way to success>. The main categories in ‘Die da!?!’ are ‘positivity’ in general, ‘emotions & feelings’ and a mysterious ‘woman’ and the narrator’s interactions with and descriptions of her. Interestingly, while the narrators are heterosexual men, their ‘emotions & feelings’ are mentioned numerously throughout the song, which contradicts the prevalent image of masculinity in Hip Hop, offering an alternative concept of masculinity.



Looking at the subcategories of 'entertainment', 'love', 'dating rituals' and 'good looks', a predominance of positive connotation is detected, and the only negatively connoted subcategory is the characterization of the woman as a 'cheater'.

In 'Pharaoh' however, the ratio of positive and negative connotations turned out to be more balanced: the main categories 'attitude', 'personal assessment/characterization', 'achievements' and 'symbols of power/wealth' and the subcategories contained in them are mostly positively connoted, whereas 'personal experience/past' and 'characterization of critics/competition' contain negative connotations. This leads to an important finding: the positively connoted categories apply to the narrator, namely his character and his achievements, while the negatively connoted categories mainly concern opponents of the narrator or his difficult past. It also leads to the assumption that this dichotomy is used to elevate the narrator and his present status and degrade his competition. While some of the subcategories concerning the narrator are used to characterize his physical appearance, most of the subcategories refer to his character which therefore takes up a more important role. Among the subcategories belonging to 'characterization of critics/competition', 'homosexuality' stands out for revealing a concept of masculinity: the narrator himself serves as the image of a 'real man' by not revealing his emotion, not showing any weakness and being physically strong, claiming that his competition and critics are not, labeling them as 'gay'. He therefore applies the stereotype that homosexuals are more feminine, emotional, submissive or weaker than 'real men', reinforcing it and using it as an insult.

## 2.2 Lexicalization analysis

Table 6. Lexicalization analysis of German Hip Hop

Artist & Song	Over-Lexicalization	Under-Lexicalization
Die Fantastischen Vier - Die da!?!	I her/she friday	now weekend entrance woman together never
Kollegah - Pharaoh	I pharaoh rap gold you German	fuck it/you I know don' t give a shit never trouble, hassle doesn' t matter

The lexicalization analysis of 'Die da!?!' shows an overuse of the personal pronoun 'I', clearly putting the focus on the narrator and his point of view, and the second most used vocabulary is 'she' and 'her', both referring to the mystery woman, thus establishing the main theme of the song. The use of the personal pronouns over the less frequently used noun 'woman' indicates a certain degree of closeness and attraction of the narrator to the mystery woman. The only other word that is being overused is 'Friday', defining a key moment for the protagonist and the development of the story. It also symbolizes the beginning of the weekend, meaning free time, entertainment and the time to meet potential partners. The word 'entrance' is used rarely but has significance as it determines the place of action; the scarcely used words 'now' and 'never' create tension and put emphasis on time as a condition and the main issue of the relationship.

Compared to 'Die da!?!', the song 'Pharaoh' contains more overused words, especially the personal pronoun 'I'; this presents as a similarity between the two songs as it as well spotlights the narrator. The overused words 'pharaoh', 'gold' and 'German' which also refer to the narrator confirm this presupposition, characterizing him as powerful, even intimidating and almost godlike, successful and wealthy. Another important subject is revealed through the overuse of 'you', creating a contrast to the narrator as well as it establishes a recipient of his story. Instead of many

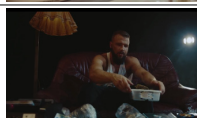
cases of overuse, the lyrics show a high density of synonyms and only one repetition of the hook, correlating to the ideal of ‘rap’, which is underlined by the frequent use of the word. The detected rarely used words all refer to the narrator, either expressing his determination through ‘to not give a shit’ and ‘doesn’t matter’, or his feeling of intellectual superiority and disrespect for others through the use of ‘fuck you’ and ‘I know’.

### 2.3 Music video sequence analysis

The analysis of the music video for ‘Die da!?!’ reveals that the main story told in the lyrics and the story displayed visually do not coincide. However, the relaxed and entertaining aspect can be found in both parts: in the lyrics, the positive connotation of categories and words is mirrored by a funny, almost ridiculing hopping dance that seems to satirize the term ‘Hip Hop’. The lyrics evolve around one very simple matter - dating experiences and the search for the mystery woman, and interestingly a respectful method to date a woman, almost in the traditional way of courting, which seems to oppose the strong and fast pronunciation of the rap and Hip Hop beats. While many of the words are shortened into a more colloquial form and sound very informal and almost like slang, other words like ‘rendezvous’ or ‘Sunday tea’ evoke a strong contrast - they give the impression of higher education, high culture, tradition and conservatism, opposing the image of the speakers belonging to a young generation of light-minded clubbers. The video however does not display the same decency: four attractive, lightly dressed women are separately shown having problems with their cars and being picked-up by the protagonists without showing hesitation. Such spontaneous behavior implies unconventionality and lets the protagonists appear confident, brisk, convincing and popular with

women, in short: manly. It is important to note however that the video does not have to necessarily be taken literal. The funny dance, the contrast of an expensive car in a run-down neighborhood while the men are reportedly hard-pressed for money, the mundane attire of the women and their unusual behavior are all aspects that in connection with the lyrics can be seen as expressions of parody.

Table 7. Analysis of ‘Pharao’

	Image	Linguistic Coverage (Lyrics)
1		But I rather fixed it and didn't lament, talk and wait
2		Personal lyrics by Kollegah were rarity I didn't process the pressure through my tracks
3		I took the pimp image to extremes, wrote stories, of course that shit is exaggerated I never had whores working the streets for me
4		The only German selling haze after coming back from trips to the Netherlands
5		That's no gangster attitude, that's who I am I stand up straight in front of those fuckwits, no matter how tough they are
6		It's all an illusion, the hunt for mammon is a trap Fuck cash! No matter what your situation is, stay straight
7		Proud as a pharaoh Rule the people like a pharaoh
8		Fuck it! At no point did I doubt myself Showed that every line killed, for years I rhymed for cents until I had success
9		K to the O, emperor, pharaoh of German rap

The music video for ‘Pharao’ shows strong congruence of lyrics and video: the visual images are almost exact duplicates of the contents delivered through the verbal narration, and in the case of more generally described situations, meaningful and specific visual interpretations are given to represent the song’s message in accordance with the artist’s intentions. Such a music video enables intensification of the song’s message and a visualization of the narrator’s personal thoughts and memories that otherwise could not be experienced by the audience. As mentioned above, the song focuses on the narrator’s views: this concept is reflected in the music video by the constant focus on the narrator who for the largest part of the video is looking at the audience and the fact that most of his opponents are faceless. Although the lyrics mention negative experiences and sum up the struggles of the past, the narrator is never displayed as weak or shown in an inferior position. On the contrary, he is portrayed in various positions of power, ultimately staging himself as a modern pharaoh, a symbol for almost godlike reign. The conclusion to be drawn from this depiction is to not take on the narrator because he will eventually win like he always used to. The music video underlines that intimidating threat through its dark setting and depictions of graphic violence.

### 3. Korean Hip Hop

#### 3.1 Category analysis

Table 8. Category Analysis of Korean Hip Hop

Artist & Song	Categories	Subcategories	
Seo Taiji & Boys – I know	inevitable situation	departure bad timing despair being left	giving up hurtful honesty
	dramatization	plea exaggeration emphasis	question revelation
	recollection of the past	affection beautiful	"my everything"

		looks "the one"	memories
		emotions	love
BewhY – Shalom	concerning the self	greatness, extraordinariness constant self-improvement best rapper role model, icon irreversibility of his status self-confidence	
	religion	god, god's omnipotence peace, bringer of peace fate, predestination punishment for committed sins	
	actions	ignoring negative energies imagining the things he wants turn away from the rappers want to bring peace taking the glory away from others take away peace	
	characterization of others	insults chasers of money and ego untruthful mimics liars, gossipers, pretenders disgusting	

The two research objects representing Korean popular Hip Hop show very different results for category, lexicalization and video sequence analysis. The most important conclusion is that ‘I know’ and ‘Shalom’ do not share any similarities except for the focus on the narrator as leading character, hence proposing different Hip Hop images. ‘I know’ revolves around the <end of a relationship>, whereas ‘Shalom’ deals with the narrator’s <success and superiority> over competitors. Corresponding with the discrepancy of the main theme, the results show a difference in portrayal of the respective narrator’s masculinity. The main categories in ‘I know’ are the ‘inevitability of the situation’, the ‘dramatization’ of said situation by the narrator, his ‘emotions’ and ‘recollections of the past’. A similarly big significance of both the relationship issue and the narrator is made obvious through the subcategories ‘despair’, ‘giving up’, ‘plea’, all of which are negatively connoted, emphasizing the urgency of the matter. The subcategories ‘affection’, ‘love’ and ‘sadness’ present a spectrum of relatable emotions which are used to affect the audience and the specifically mentioned addressee.

In ‘Shalom’ however, the main categories show different focal points, ‘concerning the self’, his ‘actions’, justification through ‘religion’ and ‘characterizations of others’. The narrator and his actions are characterized by subcategories such as ‘greatness’, ‘role model’, ‘best rapper’ and ‘ignoring negative energies’, ‘bringing peace’, all of which are positively connoted. He is also portrayed as threatening and powerful by ‘taking away glory’ or ‘taking away peace’, and a certain degree of despise and aggressive behavior is expressed through the characterization of others as ‘liars, gossipers and pretenders’ and the use of ‘insults’, contributing to the perception of the narrator as intimidating and superior. These findings induce a dichotomous structure of the song: elevation of the protagonist on one hand and degradation of competitors on the other.

### 3.2 Lexicalization analysis

Table 9. Lexicalization analysis of Korean Hip Hop

Artist & Song	Over-Lexicalization	Under-Lexicalization
Seo Taiji & Boys - I know	you I really mind, heart leave	to flow now crying smile love
BewhY - SHALOM	I shalom want to give p u n i s h m e n t , disaster the best	someone to block to kill god BewhY rapper

The conclusions drawn from the category analysis are supported by most of the findings of the lexicalization analysis. In the case of ‘I know’, the overuse of the words ‘you’ and ‘I’ symbolizes the relationship theme of the song, putting the narrator in focus while addressing his love interest. The importance of the narrator’s emotions is reflected through frequent mention of ‘mind’ or ‘heart’; the trigger action for the situation as well as the fear of

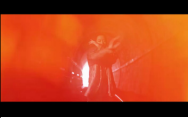

being abandoned is expressed through the word ‘to leave’. Less frequently used to avoid the notion of weakness or exaggeration, the use of ‘crying’ stands for the narrator’s despair as he openly admits to his sadness. This is significant because it defies the convention that ‘real men do not show their emotions’, weakening the gender stereotype and thus offering a different concept of masculinity. The words ‘really’ and ‘now’ underline the narrator’s disbelief in the inevitable break-up, also symbolized by ‘flow’, while he attempts to evoke sympathy with the positively connoted words ‘smile’ and ‘love’ in context with his recollections.






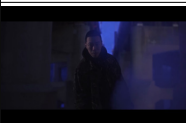

In ‘Shalom’, the power structure turns out more unbalanced: there is an overuse of the personal pronoun ‘I’ and no significant use of the word ‘you’, leaving all the spotlight on the narrator. His power is symbolized by numerous mentions of ‘the best’ and the repetition of his name, ‘BewhY’, putting him above his competitors who are of so low relevance to him that they are not identified individually but categorized as ‘rapper’. An outstanding finding of the analysis is the justification of the narrator’s actions and opinions through religion: not only is his status as ‘the best’ God-given, but also the punishment for anyone who tries to stand in the narrator’s way and dispute his outstanding position, as this action is compared to one of the seven deadly sins deserving the same consequences. At the same time that religion carries a negative connotation, it is also mentioned in a positively connoted manner through the overuse of the word peace in Hebrew language, ‘shalom’. The choice of this version of the word signifies closeness to the origins of Christianity and implies a strong belief in God. The suggestion of proximity to God is intensified by an overuse of the phrase ‘I want to give’, declaring him a bringer of peace, chosen by God.

### 3.3 Music video sequence analysis

The analysis of the music video for ‘I Know’ shows that the images do not reflect the narration except for in a few cases of emotional expressions: the body language used in the video intensifies the desperation and sadness when the protagonists clench their fists, hold their chests, raise their arms in helplessness and eventually even go down on their knees. However the act of crying, the supposedly most heartbreaking part of the narrator’s emotional confession, is not depicted in the music video. Furthermore, other parts of the video feature a fast and powerful choreography resembling breakdance, involving the whole body and matching well with the beat, but also strongly contrasting with the emotionality of the song. This all leads to the conclusion that the video is not intended to duplicate the song’s lyrics, but to either produce a balance by limiting visual emotional outbursts, or to produce a role concept that allows both emotionality and masculinity. The setting of the video mostly shows a custom-made décor with graffiti-like writing spelling the name of the group within a white space; the artificial environment makes it impossible to recognize any location, and even the shots taken on the industrial building later in the video do not even provide any clues as to where the video is shot.

Table 10. Analysis of ‘Shalom’

	Image	Linguistic Coverage (Lyrics)
1		I don't need to engrave my name into my lyrics, anyway you'll know it, it's a matter of course; like the fact that the god that made me is almighty
2		Big booty hoes n bitches I will pass them over Running after money and fame, such conceit

3		If you try to stop me you'll be punished If I kill them all, I also will be punished
4		I want to give Shalom Shalom I want to give Shalom Shalom
5		I am taking all the glory that you guys had Taking the peace from rappers who shout for "peace" In this movie the role of "the best" is mine
6		The present me already existed 4 years ago, right here in BewhY's head
7		Above my head There is god alone, I say, no one can touch that
8		To someone, I'm an icon To someone, role model To someone, I'm a man and To someone, I'm a problem
9		Going hungry in this life Will from now on be an exception Best rapper BEWHY

The music video analysis of ‘Shalom’ confirms the results of the category and lexicalization analysis: the protagonist is shown alone throughout almost the entire video, thus leading to an absolute focus on him. Apart from that, the video does not exhibit much conformity with the lyrics: none of the narrator’s recollections are portrayed, competitors are not shown either, and most importantly the narrator’s body language contrasts what would be expected from someone that claims being better off than anyone else. Instead, the video is serving as a mood generator and for accentuation of meaningful passages in the lyrics: from the first frame, the narrator is shown from worm’s-eye view which gives an intimidating and overpowering impression, and this technique is a

recurring method throughout the video. Another significant visual accentuation can be seen during the hook when the narrator's face, previously hidden in the dark, is illuminated by a spotlight at the moment the 'divine punishment' is mentioned. All in all, darkness, alternation of light and shadow, fog and other stylistic techniques procure a mystification of the narrator that in connection with the religious symbols in the lyrics create an impression of supernatural, if not divine presence. The narrator himself consequently throws his arms in a seemingly angry manner, while in other settings he transmits a sense of concern and despair by raising his hands to the sky or covering his face, and then again there are scenes where he casually dances in the twilight.

## V. Discussion

### 1. Differences between early and recent Hip Hop

Table 11. Elements of U.S. Hip Hop

Early Hip Hop	Recent Hip Hop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ involvement of the audience</li> <li>★ social issue</li> <li>★ material, emotional difficulties</li> <li>★ present situation and outlook on the future</li> <li>★ situation induced by exogenous forces</li> <li>★ intimidation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ exclusion of the audience</li> <li>★ personal issue</li> <li>★ emotional difficulties</li> <li>★ present situation and recollection of past</li> <li>★ situation induced by endogenous forces</li> <li>★ criticism and advice</li> </ul>

The songs 'The Message' and 'Hotline Bling' deal with remarkably different topics, suggesting the preference has changed heavily within the 33 years that lie between the releases of the two songs. It is Drake's history of starting as a rapper that has absolutely influenced the public's perception of him and his affiliations: the analyzed song 'Hotline Bling' does not contain real 'rap' as known from early Hip Hop, nevertheless, he and his music in total are associated with Hip Hop. However, it is important to

emphasize that although 'Hotline Bling' reached peak positions in several Billboard Charts rankings, it is not identified as pure Hip Hop music, but also labeled as R&B. It is legitimate to say that the overall image of the interpreter has shaped the public's perception of him although the song does contain little of the parameters common in early Hip Hop.

The evolution and diversification of Hip Hop in general and the music in detail can be explained through social and historical changes. In the United States, the social and political situation in the 1980s was a different one from the situation in 2016. This by no means says that nowadays issues like bad living conditions presented in 'The Message' do not exist anymore; the research as depicted in [Table 11] simply shows that representations of other issues seem to be more appealing to the masses than they have in the 1980s. Instead of social commentary, a personal issue becomes the main topic which also changes the nature of direction and style of speech. In summary, while the elements of the songs conveyed by the lyrics are similar, they differ highly in regards of style. The issue presented in 'Hotline Bling' certainly appears more trivial than the struggle for survival. For society this change means first of all, it is possible that Hip Hop musicians no longer write and produce socially critical music, hence it cannot be sold and therefore not become popular, either. In the case that critical Hip Hop still exists, it is possible that for the masses, social criticism is not as relatable anymore and therefore not able to become popular. Furthermore, it is also possible that relationship issues are considered more relevant than an outcry of social criticism which could imply the surrender to or the acceptance of the social situation in the United States. Lastly, the image of a single male within a relatively neutral setting instead of a group of men in a run-down urban area might allow a greater number

of people to identify with this interpreter's music, thus making it more commercially successful.

Table 12. Elements of German Hip Hop

Early Hip Hop	Recent Hip Hop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ personal issue</li> <li>★ present situation</li> <li>★ exclusion of the audience</li> <li>★ entertaining, colloquial language</li> <li>★ exhilarated or relaxed mood</li> <li>★ open end</li> <li>★ loose concept of masculinity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ personal issue</li> <li>★ present situation and recollection of past</li> <li>★ addressing the audience</li> <li>★ intimidating and graphic language</li> <li>★ serious and tense mood</li> <li>★ serious conclusion</li> <li>★ narrow concept of masculinity</li> </ul>

The results show that early popular German Hip Hop expressed images which differ fundamentally from the representation offered by recent popular Hip Hop. Although there is a higher degree of congruence as to what types of categories are covered by the narration than with U.S. Hip Hop, they still differ in style. The mood as well as the language in both songs could not be more different, and the audience is presented with two very different concepts of masculinity. 'Die da!?!' impresses with its lack of substance, documenting a small aspect of daily life without offering any advice, moral or conclusion. The generic matter of subject makes it easy to relate but does not bear any social or political meaning, thus making the language it is written in and the caricaturing video the only real characteristics, leading to the label 'Deutschrap' (= German rap). 'Pharao' follows the tradition of a special form of U.S. Hip Hop that promotes the rise from rags to riches where the rag is not only poor and hard-working but also a criminal, and where criminality is glorified; hence the song and its representations can be assigned to the category 'Gangster Rap'.

The change of topic and representation within German popular Hip Hop indicates one important conceptual change: early German Hip Hop presented as a new form of musical entertainment, offering an

alternative to the hitherto dominating English-language Hip Hop. While a polarizing topic would have probably scared off large parts of the audience, an understandable, thus easily relatable theme made it possible for the song to grow on people from various backgrounds, even if they had not been interested in English-language Hip Hop. Recent German popular Hip Hop satisfies a different demand: it offers a strong and clear image of male identity that can be aspired to as an ideal by those who feel similar hardships. The implication that can be derived is that German Hip Hop has matured from musical peculiarity into an identity-generating cultural practice with a strong, masculine, aggressive role which is embraced by the audience.

The development of Hip Hop in Germany proceeded nearly reversed to the development in the United States, where the music was born from the culture, while in Germany the culture was created around the music. Regardless of how much the interpreters of early popular Hip Hop in Germany were inspired by the original, it took up a different shape if only for the reason that the roots for social criticism by members of the African-American community did not exist in Germany, thus making it impossible to represent the same ideas. The representation offered in 'Pharao' implies that a great number of Germans identifies with it or at least appreciates it. Following conclusions can be drawn: firstly, other representations do not offer the same qualities, thus making the strong, masculine, intimidating role of 'Pharao' unique and necessary. Secondly, aggressive and intimidating representations provide a new chance for interpreters to bridge a gap in the German music market, which is why they use American gangster rap as a template for German 'pimp rap' while adjusting it to the local cultural context.

Table 13. Elements of Korean Hip Hop

Early Hip Hop	Recent Hip Hop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ personal issue</li> <li>★ recollections of the past and present situation</li> <li>★ one single addressee</li> <li>★ formal language</li> <li>★ diverting mood</li> <li>★ open end</li> <li>★ loose concept of masculinity</li> <li>★ debasement of the protagonist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ personal issue</li> <li>★ recollection of the past, present situation and outlook on the future</li> <li>★ monologue, no clear address</li> <li>★ intimidating and graphic language</li> <li>★ serious and tense mood</li> <li>★ serious conclusion</li> <li>★ narrow concept of masculinity</li> <li>★ elevation of the protagonist</li> </ul>

The songs ‘I know’ and ‘Shalom’ are generally dealing with different topics, and there is a balance of congruence and difference in terms of stylistic elements. The difference that stands out the most is the style of language which is formal in ‘I know’ since it is directed at a love interest, but informal and graphic in ‘Shalom’ as it is a verbalization of personal thoughts. Furthermore, the images of masculinity delivered are without doubt antithetic. Besides the musical technique rap and a dance that reminds of breakdance, ‘I know’ does not show any other sign of original Hip Hop, which implies that not Hip Hop as a whole, but only technical elements were adapted in Korea. This is supported by the use of the term ‘rap dance’ instead of ‘Hip Hop’ for the musical genre: in literature about Hip Hop history like Kim (2008), the beginning of the genre is described highly ambiguously, depending on whether the music is actually seen as a cultural practice or simply as a music genre[16]. Early Hip Hop as seen in the United States did not have a natural origin in Korea, just like Hip Hop in Germany did not. Still, it did not adapt in the same way, and one possible explanation for that can be found in the cultural characters of the two nations: Germany in 1992 was a country shortly after reunification, with a stable economy, as a part of the European Union benefitting from its favorable geographic position in the center of Europe in terms of cultural exchange and open-mindedness. Korea on

the other hand was still slowly recovering from the aftermaths of imperialism, war and dictatorship, not having experienced a lot of cultural exchange due to its geographic isolation. An important fact is that Korean society has been and still is strongly influenced by Confucianism, which made it hard for a subculture like Hip Hop with its image of opposition to be adopted in the exact same way. The mere use of rap and exotic dance routines was in fact enough to cause uproars in society which is a strong indicator for the degree of homogeneity of Korean culture, thus implying that all other parts contained in the song like the mentioned categories or the concept of masculinity had already been established and socially accepted as Kim (2008) depicts[16].

‘Shalom’ however shows a new image of masculinity and is more egocentric than ‘I know’: it does not begin to establish a relationship by mentioning another person or romance at all but only discusses the narrator and his ideas and opinions. In addition, the song seems more provocative and rebellious due to its intimidating language and the narrator’s elevation of himself. The dimension of change from early to recent Korean Hip Hop indicates a similarly big change in society that had to occur in order for the song to be able to become commercially successful. Culturally, the apparent assimilation of recent Korean Hip Hop to preferred practices of U.S. gangster rap does not speak in favor of an evolution towards a uniquely Korean kind of Hip Hop. It implies that instead of more cultural diversity represented by an amalgamation of different musical and cultural practices, there is a trend towards standardization of culture. One characteristic that distinguishes ‘Shalom’ from actual gangster rap is the consistent reference to religion and the implied knowledge of the bible, while Christian religion is not inherently Korean. Therefore, it is not meaningful in the sense that it represents



Korean culture, but it at least makes the song itself socially relevant as it gives people an artistic medium to reflect on religion and offers an alternative to other, probably more conformist cultural practices.

## 2. Differences between nations

The most obvious differences between early U.S. and German Hip Hop are the mood and the message conveyed: the 'hopelessness' expressed in 'The Message' and the positivity in 'Die da!?!'. One crucial source of inspiration to do Hip Hop for Die Fantastischen Vier was Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five's 'The Message', brought to Germany and played in clubs of the subculture for US soldiers stationed there[17]. The influence is only slightly visible in the video where the setting is similarly run down like in 'The Message' and the men are dressed in a way that does not match with their environment. The obvious difference in character can be explained by the songs' origin: 'The Message' was born from within the subculture and modeled as a means to denunciate prevalent injustice, regardless of whether it was the group's intent or manufactured, according to Wang (2003)[18]. In Germany there was no comparable race conflict, which is why 'Die da!?!' only adapted the musical stylistics. Therefore it does not take the same significance for society, but it still is valuable for culture, for it marks the beginning of the German Hip Hop music genre.

When looking at recent American Hip Hop, it is quite intriguing to see that the topic of the song and its tame lyrics contradict the style of early U.S. popular Hip Hop, which is associated with provocative or abusive lyrics about serious conflicts like difficult living conditions, criminality and discrimination. None of these topics are mentioned in the song; its musical style seems to be completely detached from the contents, and the beat as only

remaining characteristic of Hip Hop music can be seen in a new context. This proves that it is not necessary for Hip Hop to display the aggression it is often associated with: the lyrics of the songs could very well be exchanged with lyrics of a rock ballad or a pop love song, and it would not change the overall mood or image of the song. It much rather seems that the song's musical style is merely a sign of the current music trend and not connected to the image of Hip Hop. The lack of specific subcultural references in U.S. popular Hip Hop music has one important meaning for American culture: popular culture and its products do not necessarily have to bear significance for subcultures, whereas subcultural practices can have significance for popular culture in the sense that they can influence the musical style or the mechanisms. This does not mean that the practices still bear the same meaning or even any meaning at all to people outside the subculture.

Regarding Korean Hip Hop and its representations, Joe (2014) offers interesting findings: she discovered that compared to women, men are displayed as more adventurous, dominant, aggressive/offensive and violent. She concludes that music videos of different musical genres serve different gender roles, and in the case of Hip Hop/R&B and other black music, there is a strong tendency to display men using the aforementioned characteristics[13]. Those characteristics apply to the music video example for recent Korean Hip Hop ("Shalom"), suggesting either a development towards or the existence of a more stereotypical image of masculinity. This implies that Korean society might be more patriarchic than American or German society, or it could be seen as an attempt to recreate the success of Gangster Rap in the United States. At the least it shows the influence that American music videos have had on recent Korean Hip Hop and apparently seem to appeal to

Korean audiences but in a way that they can relate to it without difficulties. Brown (2004) summarizes this process as follows: 'As the subculture is communicated over time and through space-going through successive iterations with differing personnel and external circumstances-it articulates with new influences, musical and otherwise. It is out of these "communicative links" that sense is generated[10].' In general, Shalom can be seen as a result of "glocal content production" as mentioned by Kwon (2016) to first of all sell "new" products in Korea[19]. No matter how americanized BewhY and his music may appear due to certain signifiers, they are a product of the "Korean Wave" business and as such are intended to generate profits before anything else. In any case, the image of authenticity that accompanies U.S. Hip Hop because of its history has transferred to Korean Hip Hop to a limited extent.

It can be concluded that Hip Hop has lost a lot of its symbolism and its force of expression, especially since it has mixed more and more with other musical and stylistic genres. Still, it is attributed great social and cultural significance not just because of certain representations, but due to its connotation as a counter-culture. Hip Hop today cannot be detached from this background; at the same time, the emergence of Hip Hop is not tied to historic circumstances. Its mechanisms feed from historic relevance but they are not reduced to their past use, meaning they are relevant still today in the sense that they can be used to express an alternative identity or role, a way to oppose the mainstream or status quo. That even applies although Hip Hop has become a part of the mainstream, which is why a change over time in each country has been identified.

As Hip Hop music has become a part of popular culture, it needs to be acknowledged as a form of entertainment, a channel for distraction from daily life

and a way to generate a lot of money. In order to appeal to as many people as possible, it has to provide themes that are easy to understand and fit the taste of most of these people which is only possible by referring to a macroscopic level. Popularization of culture leads to standardization of culture. The representations of problems like those used in 'The Message' are not the standard; if they cannot find the same appeal worldwide because they are not the standard, they will not sell, thus not become popular.

It can be assumed that for the benefit of economic success, standardization will only carry on, and fostered by the internet, standardized forms of Hip Hop will be shared globally. On one hand such development could lead to the formation of a homogeneous idea of Hip Hop music and subculture which could help to erase misunderstandings based on cultural stereotypes as mentioned above. On the other hand, a homogeneous idea of Hip Hop would not leave much room for cultural diversity, slowly pushing away subcultures until they disappear.

As indicated, capitalism has had an effect on Hip Hop: with the emancipation of a musical genre, its commercialization and exploitation of subcultural practices for image and marketing purposes has risen to a level where the mechanisms of Hip Hop music can be completely dissociated from the culture they were developed in. People might reject the music if it is connected to certain representations or ideologies, and in order to sell better, producers try to remove as much ideology as possible. The representation of Hip Hop then becomes a stencil that the consumer can fill with their own assumptions, interpretations and ideology, and in a diverse society that can lead to a diverse range of perception of Hip Hop.

## VI. Conclusion

Hip Hop in each country offers possible roles which can be adapted, but it does not provide an original lifestyle anymore; it needs to entail one feature that is connoted with Hip Hop to be perceived as Hip Hop with the masses, when in fact it does not share any other similarities with original Hip Hop and more with other genres or cultures, and this phenomenon can be explained by the concept of 'mythology' by Roland Barthes (1991) who stated 'since myth is a type of speech, everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse. Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message: there are formal limits to myth, there are no 'substantial' ones[20].' That is why Hip Hop is not tied to race, ethnicity or nationality. What is transported via Hip Hop is not culture itself, it consists of too many variables to be transmitted and adapted exactly the way it was when it first emerged. It is the mechanisms of artistic expression of the music and art, rap, dance, beats and graffiti that are acknowledged to be inherently Hip Hop and shared by different cultures. Although showing a tendency towards similarity and standardization, each country's Hip Hop takes up a slightly different form: the development of U.S. Hip Hop shows a change from social and racial topics to a visualization of the American Dream by which it negates its very own roots. German Hip Hop started detached from those very roots and adapted characteristics of later, more aggressive styles of American Gangster Rap adding a new image of masculinity without real reference to the social and political situation. Korean Hip Hop only used one mechanism of U.S. Hip Hop, rap, which made it hard to identify it as Hip Hop at first and then visually aligned to the style of Gangster Rap while in terms of content, it opened up a completely new direction by dealing with religious contents.

Depending on the demand of identity options and the social or even political circumstances, Hip Hop music and its representations change their form. As long as one of the aforementioned mechanisms, or better what people believe are these mechanisms, are used in a song, people will label it as 'Hip Hop', even if the content of the lyrics does not exactly correlate. This is why audiences who do not possess a certain cultural knowledge will see superficial conformity and mistake it for signifiers, thus transfer the image of early Hip Hop which bears symbolic significance as a rebellious and revolutionary cultural practice onto recent Hip Hop. Despite certain similarities, Hip Hop in those three countries cannot be generalized but has to be seen as different subcultures.

If this conclusion can be drawn for Hip Hop as a part of popular culture, it can be drawn for other genres of popular culture as well: while globalization leads to a certain degree of standardization, it also opens the door for stereotypes and ignorance towards more or less subtle differences. In the case of Hip Hop this means that although on a microscopic level there is no real common ground, there is a similarity on a larger scale that makes nuances inaccessible to the unknowing audience. Research and education has to be conducted while aware of this fact, and coming generations must be taught that despite globalization one has to be attentive to social and political circumstances when consuming and discussing popular culture.

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### 저 자 소 개

#### 게르케 사브리나(Sabrina Gerke)

준회원



- 2013년 9월 : 파더본대학교 대중음악과 신문방송학(학사)
- 2015년 9월 ~ 현재 : 성균관대학교 예술학협동과정(석사과정)

<관심분야> : 대중음악, 대중문화, 문화연구, 기호학, 문화교류

#### 백 선 기(Seon-Gi Baek)

정회원



- 1979년 : 성균관대학교 신문방송학과(학사)
- 1981년 : 서울대학교 신문방송학과(석사)
- 1985년 : 서울대학교 신문방송학과(박사과정 수료)

• 1989년 : Univ. of Minnesota, Communication Studies 전공(박사)

• 1990년 ~ 1997년 : 경북대학교 신문방송학과 교수

• 1997년 ~ 현재 : 성균관대학교 신문방송학과 교수

• 현재 : PACA 회장, WCA 회장, IAMCR 국제평의회 의원

• 한국방송학회 회장 및 한국기호학회 부회장 등 역임

<관심분야>: 기호학, 대중문화, 문화연구, 담론연구