AISHA S. DURHAM
Let's Get Free, A Soundtrack for Revolution: A Textual Analysis of Black Power and Counterhegemony the Debut Rap Album by Dead Prez
(Under the Direction of Dr. Dwight E. Brooks)

Twenty years ago, ghetto youth sent a S.O.S signal to the world through radio airwaves in a rap song called "The Message." It was dawn of a new genre of rap that expressed a politicized consciousness of urban youth in hip-hop culture. It ushered in hip-hop nationalism. This work examines black power of hip-hop nationalism and counterhegemony in Dead Prez rap texts. I employ the concept of hegemony to discuss how Dead Prez use rap as a communicative tool to educate and empower marginalized youth in popular culture. Through a textual reading of spoken word on four rap tracks, I address ways in which the duo challenge white supremacy and capitalism, yet maintain masculinist constructions of black empowerment. Specifically, I address Afrocentric identity as the construction of class consciousness, anti-capitalism, and direct and indirect forms of oppression in the state and in civil society/popular culture.

INDEX WORDS: Dead Prez, rap music, hip-hop nationalism, hegemony, identity, black power, Afrocentrcity, black cultural aesthetic, youth subculture

LET'S GET FREE, A SOUNDTRACK FOR REVOLUTION: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF BLACK POWER AND COUNTERHEGEMONY IN THE DEBUT RAP ALBUM BY DEAD PREZ

by

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DEDICATION

Hip-Hop Heaven

R.I.P. D.J. Wood

(Formally known as Sherwood Durham)

Woven braids with wooden beads on bottom bunkbeads
Bebopping to battered BOOMboxes
Blaring for *BeatStreet* wannabes
Breakdancing on broken-down cardboard boxes.

The Kiiiiiings of Rock/Rap
Force D Mcs to Run
Track Nike jogging suits
Too high, too fly, two-tone
Denim B-Boy blues
Just too Koooooool
For Jehri-curl caps,
Shags hang down like rattails from Kangol hats.

Checkerboard bombers embrace African Eskimos,
Adidas shell toes talk from tongues between unlaced holes,
Asking
Where did those days go?

Hip-Hop Heaven.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am because God is. To be inspired is to be motivated by divine influence. It is with this belief that I am reassured in knowing that all things and all beings I have come in contact with through my life’s journey are more than circumstance. I thank God for permitting me to walk in the footsteps of those who shed blood, sweat and tears so that I may have the privilege to pay homage to them in word. I thank God for my family – in blood and spirit. I thank God for my Diggs Town trinity. I am not me without you. Thank you God for all my soul sisters who take this journey with me. There are no empty silences. Our existence attests to our strength. I thank God for my spiritual metamorphosis in a Richmond cocoon where a special person told me I am equip with everything I am destined to do if I only allow myself to “be.” I am. Through my grammatical stumbles and philosophical stutters, special thanks goes to my educators – street teachers and academicians – who supply the language I yearn in order to display myself in prose. Words are the sustenance to my soul; when laced with that perfect beat, I walk on sunshine. And God, I am most thankful for my parents whose lives epitomize what it means to walk with you. I was poor, but never impoverished. I am enriched by your wisdom. Mama and Dad: You are my rock.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I Need A Beat: My Life Story in Hip-Hop

It could have been any evening in the early 80s when the heat from fried fish and boiled potatoes made the third layer of chipped paint on cinderblock walls sweat. Those of us who could bear the occasional cool breeze from a lone fan propped in the kitchen window by a thick dictionary sat in the living room bopping our heads to the Motown sounds in the dark.

At night, I anticipated making the familiar trek down the dirt path with my uncle to a place known to people in the Diggs Park housing project as the "Big Field." It was an open-air space in the center of the neighborhood where rusted horses swung atop a carpet of broken beer bottles. It was a place where young and old dared to dream. In the 80s the "Big Field" would become our hip-hop mecca and I awaited the summer night to make my pilgrimage.

On the concrete basketball court-turned-dance floor, the rhythm of Afrika Bambaataa pulsated through our bodies motioning us to bus-stop or snake. The brave hearted among us contorted their bodies on a broken-down cardboard box in a new dance called breaking.

It could have been any evening in the early 80s when my brother barred me from our bedroom during a "recording session." Using our mother's veto power to enter the

"studio," I would tiptoe to my toy trunk of Barbie etceteras for a chance to watch him make music. He keyed tunes on his synthesizer, looped beats on his drum machine while rummaging through milk crates to mix R&B oldies and new rap records on a turntable set. On some days, neighborhood lyricists would cram into our bedroom flipping through their spiral notebooks to look for that special rhyme to fit the perfect beat.

The music my brother helped to create is a part of a larger cultural phenomenon called hip-hop. Breakdancing, graffiti writing, beatboxing, deejaying and emceeing are privileged artistic expressions of hip-hop culture. The three latter artistic expressions encompass rap music. Tricia Rose, an authority on hip-hop culture, defines rap as storytelling accompanied by highly rhythmic, electronically based beats (Rose, 1994a, p. 2). Electronic beats distinguish rap from other spoken word artforms, such as those produced by the Last Poets who fuse spoken word with drum beats (Rose, 1994a, Fernando 1994). Rose's definition of rap relies on the use an electronic instrument. This emphasis not only erases an entire aspect of the culture, but it ignores the material reality of poor youth who created rap music without access or appropriation of an electronic instrument. Through beatboxing, hip-hoppers use their bodies as a vocal percussion instrument to mimic recorded sounds and/or create rhythms. Pioneers of rap perfected freestyle or acappella rhyming in school cafeterias, on basketball courts or street corners. "La Di

Da Di," remains a popular song in canon of rap music. Performed by the self-proclaimed original human beatbox Doug E. Fresh of The Get Fresh Crew, this song builds off the commercial success of other huge beatbox acts like the Fat Boys. Today, its artistry continues to influence beatbox artists like Biz Markie and Razhel. Because of these omissions, I have expanded Rose's original definition to recapture creative cultural artforms. In this work, I refer to rap as storytelling accompanied by highly rhythmic beats that may be produced electronically (through mixing, scratching, sampling etc.) or through beatboxing; rap may also encompass acappella rhyme called freestyle.

The rap of hip-hop culture rose from the ruins of the ghetto streets during the 70s in the South Bronx, New York where poverty and dilapidation were commonplace. Its honest and unapologetic take on crime and poverty resonated with my brothers and me in a Virginia housing project 350 miles away. Like our Northern kin, we were the daughters of disillusioned civil rights protestors who watched Kennedy killed and King's dreams deferred. We were the sons of frustrated fathers who went away to fight in Vietnam and came home to face serial unemployment. We identified with their stories. We recognized the "Great Society" President Johnson envisioned for our parents in the 60s passed by our ghetto. In 1980, at the time of hip-hop's evolution, 31 percent of all African-Americans lived in poverty (Szatmary, 1996, p. 288). By 1989, the top one percent controlled 48.1 percent of the country's financial

wealth (Marable, 1995, p. 7). The Reagan administration had flipped the script on the War on Poverty. Proponents of Reaganomics waged war on poor people. They waged war on us.

In the midst of massive government cutbacks on social welfare programs, our parents continued to put stock in meritocracy. They continued to slave double shifts at the nearby Ford Plant and Norfolk Naval Shipyard; they continued to work construction jobs, style hair, babysit and sell five-dollar Sunday dinners to stay afloat. Drowning, we found time to create. We found a way to send a S.O.S signal to the world through radio airwaves in a rap song called "The Message."

One [Hip-Hop] Nation Under a Groove: Youth Come to Black Consciousnesses

"The Message" is one of the earliest commercial recordings of a rap song that embodies the politicized consciousness of the urban poor. Performed by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five in 1982, "The Message" delivers critical social commentary on the state of Black America. The racial injustice and class disparities these rappers address remain popular themes in a subgenre of rap music scholars call "political" (Rose, 1994a), "black nationalist" (Henderson, 1996), "conscious" (Shomari, 1995) or "nation conscious" (Eure & Spady, 1991). (Distinctions among these terms will be explored in the literature review.) All encompass hip-hop nationalism, which itself

is a contemporary example of the Black Arts Movement (Henderson, 1996). During the sixties, artists like Amiri Baraka used the cultural arena to call attention to the black power movement. Drawing from the sixties, hip-hop nationalism addresses self-determination, cultural pride, economic self-sufficiency, racial solidarity and collective survival for oppressed groups (Zook, 1995, p. 519).

I got this message as a child. We watched Civil Rights documentaries like "Eyes on the Prize" in the living room where African art and a silhouette of Martin Luther King, Jr. hung. We used art to talk about black folk. If I wrote a poem about being a black girl, my father would suggest I read poems by Maya Angelou. We would then talk about black aestheticism as a radical stance in white America. My father and mother gave us the black consciousness of Marvin Gaye, Curtis Mayfield and Stevie Wonder. My brother and I offered our rendition of consciousness in "The Message." Both musical styles ushered us into the black nationalism my brother and I later identified in hip-hop.

More than my father's afro or dashiki, or works I read by black power proponents Nikki Giovanni, Angela Davis and Julius Lester, rap videos on Yo-MTV and BET-Rap City served as my formal introduction to hip-hop nationalism. I recognized its multilayered language – one of hip-hop, the other of black nationalism. It was offbeat and familiar at the same time. Hip-hop nationalism just looked different. Initially, its visual aesthetic appealed to me. I traded my

Puma sneakers for black leather army boots. I tied a red, black and green medallion over a Malcolm X T-shirt during the Public Enemy explosion. The success of this black nationalist rap group opened the floodgates for a deluge of similar ones to follow. For three minutes, KRS-One schooled me on black inventors and the human divisions of Mongoloid, Negroid and Caucasoid in the song "You Must Learn" (1989). Rap took me around the world. I learned not only how to spell African countries, but I understood South African apartheid when I listened to "A.F.R.I.C.A." by Stetsasonic (1986). When I heard the songs of Islam-influenced rap groups like Brand Nubian and Poor Righteous Teachers, I thought it my destiny as "Aisha" (name of wife of Prophet Muhammad) to convert to Islam. I did not. Aisha means life. I felt I could not live with the strict dress code and diet, or the masculinist construction of God.

I did, however, adopt the pseudonym Isis after the name of a female rap member in the Afrocentric group the X-Clan. I did not know the historical significance of her name until I read about the Egyptian Goddess in the public school library; I did know the rapper's nose ring, leather crown and statue commanded attention. Like Aisha in Islam, I found limitations with identifying solely with the Egyptian Goddess for women; Isis is posited as a supernatural being (we could never be) and devotee to a patriarchal God. Still, the female rapper Isis and others like Queen Latifah provided alternative images for young

women in hip-hop who did not identify with the skeezer/ho depiction or the Tomboy. The ho highlighted black woman's sexuality, while the Tom-Boy image de-emphasized sexuality for women who wanted to be taken seriously in the rap world. The "Queen" portrayal by women centered our voices at the same time Afrocentric male rappers used this image to police us. The Queen image stripped black women of humanity, since she was elevated to god-like status. Our black male protectors placed us on a pedestal of the venerated Madonna. If we slipped (often by our failing to live up to the unfair double standard of sexual piety) we became the ho. The feminine representations in some Islam-influenced and Afrocentric rap in hip-hop nationalism remains a site of struggle for black women who adopt cultural pride and the idea of a collective struggle without reverting to reductive constructions of woman or femininity. The Isis image invited me to hip-hop nationalism. Queen Latifah's message of female empowerment resonates.

The message of sixties black power hip-hop style takes many forms. Like Public Enemy, Latifah uses Malcolm X voiceovers to address black nationalism to a hip-hop audience. She incorporates what she calls a "prowoman" (Rose, 1994a, p. 177) stance, refashioning feminism and black nationalism for a female audience. Today, the rap duo Dead Prez use similar voiceovers from black nationalists and themes of black power from Black Panther Party in a presentation similar to gangsta rap and delivery

harkening the likes of KRS-One and Public Enemy to bring hip-hop to black consciousness.

“Somewhere Between N.W.A. and P.E.”: An Overview of Dead Prez

Dead Prez are the recent inductees into hip-hop nationalism. Members M1 (Lavon Alfred a.k.a. Mutulu Olugbala) and Sticman (Clayton Gavin) coined the group name to refer to the slang term for money (i.e., dead presidents, benjamins, etc.) and the name implies the assassination of America’s chief executive who serves as the leader of exploitative systems that oppress poor people globally. In an interview with the *Toronto Star*, M1 said Dead Prez equals “kill the system” (Infantry, 2000, p. EN01). Since their 2000 album debut of “Let’s Get Free,” the duo participated in the Rap the Vote campaign to promote youth activism and registered new young voters for the presidential election (PR Newswire, 2000); they also performed at a concert for the New York police slain West African immigrant Amadou Diallo (Murthi, 2001). This past year, M1 and Sticman joined their predecessors Public Enemy at the annual Black August concert which raises funds for the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, a youth organization promoting black power. The two have laid their voices on wax for albums (i.e., *No More Prisons*) supporting the fight to free who they call political prisoners, such as Mumia Abu-Jamal, Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin and Assata Shakur – all former members of the Black Panther Party (Heimlich, 2001,

021). Their “raptivism” is not merely a musical act. M1 and Sticman are members of their International People’s Democratic Uhuru Movement, a division of the African People’s Socialist Party. Since meeting in college at Florida A&M University, they have participated in clothing drives and food programs. The mission of the Uhuru movement resembles the Black Panther Party 10-point platform (see INPDUM website; Heath, 1976). For example, the first platform calls for black self-determination. The INPDUM platform reads:

> We demand international democratic rights and self-determination for African People (www.inpdumchicago.com)

The Black Panther Party Platform reads:

> We want freedom. We wan t power to the destiny of our Black Community. (Heath, 1976, p. 247)

Despite the incarceration of Panther women, like Assata Shakur, both organizations emphasize the release of black/African men in prison. Both attest to the masculinization of black power and black men’s myopic vision to liberate black men in particular oppressed by white supremacy. For example, the INPDUM Platform reads:

> We demand an end to the colonial court and prison systems which the majority of African man [sic] incarcerated, on probation or parole, and the

> immediate release of all political prisoners and prisoners of war. (www.inpdumchicago.com)

The Black Panther Party Platform reads:

> We want freedom for all black men in federal, state, county, and city prisons and jails (Heath, 1976, p. 247)

Although they differ in specific identity labels (black and African), INPDUM reflects the Black Panther Party tradition in their general call for self-determination for people of African descent. Dead Prez, as members of INPDUM, bring politics to popular culture to attract youth to the black power movement. Discussing political education and rap, M1 said:

> Most crucial is the notion of reaching hip-hop youth where they're at, speaking to them in a familiar language, but simultaneously providing information they don't normally have access to. (Caramanica, 1999, p. 3)

The Internet is one place where Dead Prez reach youth. The radio is another. M1 adds:

> "We recognize that music is a powerful form of culture… So we are just trying to reflect our political understanding of the world. Every day we face capitalistic exploitation, terrorism by the police and the inability to have the same opportunity

> at employment as other people…” (Infantry, 2000, p. EN 01)

Dead Prez use rap as a communicative tool to educate and mobilize politically apathetic and disenfranchised youth. Culture is the site where Dead Prez challenge our perception of capitalism, of the black self, of democracy, etc. Antonio Gramsci developed the concept of hegemony to address how people like M1 and Sticman use culture (civil society) to resist oppression by the dominant group. Hegemony refers to the maintenance of power by combination of force and consent (SPN 1971, p. 80, n. 49). Though pockets of resistance exist, subordinate groups often participate in their own oppression by adopting dominant ideology. Such is the case for poor hip-hop heads subscription to capitalism and consumerism. Also, subordinated groups may not have the language to articulate oppression thereby creating ideological terrain to produce a class consciousness that can provide space to promote a counterhegemony. I use the concept of hegemony to examine black power representation and counterhegemony in Dead Prez lyrics. In its most general sense, I refer to counterhegemony as those discourses that challenge the popular and/or dominant discourse. Dead Prez challenge the dominant ideologies of capitalism and white supremacy with socialist and Afrocentric stances. The two provide counterhegemony for hip-hop youth by giving them the language from which youth are able to articulate their

various forms of oppression. By contextualizing our contemporary fight for social change in the politic of black power and the style of hip-hop, I argue their lyrics may serve as counterhegemonic discourse.

Two questions guide this work:

(1) In what ways do Dead Prez represent black power in the rap music texts?

(2) In what ways do Dead Prez represent counterhegemonic discourse?

Conducting research on Dead Prez is vital to understand rap as a communicative tool. When they weave socio-political black power themes of yesteryear in modern-day hip-hop vernacular, they offer fresh ways talk about rap music and black nationalism. This work will add to overall body of literature on rap music and hip-hop culture. It will specifically address the political aspects of rap, black nationalism in hip-hop culture, Afrocentricity as an oppositional worldview to Eurocentricism apparent in white supremacist ideology, Afrocentric identity as a black cultural aesthetic, and rap as resistance. Perhaps what sets the group apart from their predecessors is their renunciation of organized religion as a necessary base for mass resistance. This renunciation, along with the INPDUM politic, Dead Prez resurrect the

black power of the Black Panther Party. They reflect what I refer to as Black Power Rap.

As a member of the hip-hop community, this research reflects my commitment to centering marginalized voices. I use my privilege as an "intellectual" to articulate the frustrations and aspirations of my community. My multivocality allows me to infiltrate the echelon of academia at the same time breaking down "high theory" to my sisters and brothers in my hometown housing project. Through mentoring and delivering public lectures to youth in my housing project as well as writing, I address the awesome power of youth in hip-hop culture to change the world. I tell them that our very way of being (through language, dress and worldview) is echoed throughout the world. Like Dead Prez, I use my position in society to disseminate this social awareness and black consciousness to empower youth. This is the impetus for this work. It is a purpose of black power rap.

A Blueprint for Black Power: Thesis Overview

I have situated myself inside the hip-hop community. I do so, not merely to add validity to my work, but to show my lifelong participation in a cultural arena that has inspired me and given me a space where I have a voice. Hip-hop nationalism, in particular, has provided the most radical voices that consistently challenge white supremacy. Although I feel most at home in this space, it continues to be a site of struggle where I grapple with its progressive

critiques of race and its reductive postulations of black male superiority in romantic relationships and the family. The Review of Literature explores some of these contradictions. In the Review, I distinguish the black nationalism of Black Panther Party from other formulations. I also locate black power rap as an extension of black nationalist rap noted by some scholars as "political", "conscious" and "nation conscious" rap. The discussion of black power as an alternative narrative to the dominant ideology of white supremacy and capitalism is useful before exploring the concept of hegemony in detail in Chapter Three. After positing Dead Prez within hip-hop nationalism, the following chapter outlines my method of analysis. I examine spoken word from four rap tracks through an interpretative method called textual analysis. My discussion of the spoken word from Dead Prez rap music texts will address: (1) Afrocentric identity as the construction of class consciousness, (2) Anti-capitalism as a socialist stance of black power in hip-hop nationalism, and (3) Direct and indirect forms of oppression in the state and in civil society/popular culture. It is my hope, through this analysis, you – the reader – will recognize that the duo are more than a "Public Enemy No. 2." They are in a class of their own in the cultural arena fighting to Dead the Prez – to kill the systems that stifle all of us.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

From Hip-Hop to Black Power to Hip-Hop Nationalism

Much of the scholarship awarded to rap as a cultural text emphasizes its violent and misogynistic aspects (see cultural criticism from Dyson, 1993 and 1996). Similar to the way race discourse conjures blackness, rap critiques about gender and/or rap in general primarily focus on negative depictions of women, thereby overlooking the way the music also constructs a masculinist identity for the black man as aggressive – "hard". The mad rapper (Translation: The angry black male) is outfitted in Timberland boots, baggy jeans and the quintessential white tank top called a "wife-beater." Rappers adopt both homophobic and misogynist language echoed in the black and larger communities. Within a hip-hop nationalist context, the male rapper's aggressive counterstance is further achieved aesthetically by wearing all-black attire. Along the hip-hop continuum of gangsta to black nationalism, N.W.A. (Niggas With an Attitude) and Public Enemy – two of the most popular rap groups in history who discuss the plight of the black male – adopt this look harkening to the Black Panthers.

Rappers not only recall 60s style black nationalism by reviving its look, but they also adopt the notion of the emasculated black man. In this, white supremacy is the

culprit that disrupts the "natural" relationship between black men and women in the family. The black man, therefore, must reassert his manhood as breadwinner and protector of "his" wife and children. By doing so, he purportedly redeems the devalued black woman. Hip-hop nationalism elevates her from the subhuman status of chicken and pigeon to Isis and Earth Mother – supernatural, nonhuman beings. Black nationalists' polarization of black women is indicative of patriarchal depictions of women in general. At the same time rappers provide a counterhegemonic analysis of racism and classism, they support patriarchy (Rose 1994a, p. 30; Decker 1994). In this chapter I will examine the construction of gender and race within the black power of hip-hop nationalism. To do so, however, I draw from the previous scholarship on hip-hop nationalism, which the frame hip-hop nationalism as a challenge to popular hip-hop and place it in a larger framework of black nationalism.

Rap as Resistance: An Overview of Hip-Hop Nationalism

Rap research is interdisciplinary in focus drawing from linguistics, history and political science to mass media studies, musicology and cultural studies. Michael E. Dyson and Tricia Rose are two of the most prolific writers on rap and hip-hop culture who come from traditional academic disciplines of Religious Studies and History respectively. Both place rap within a larger socio-historical context of protest songs. Rap is resistance.

Rose, Dyson, and other scholars argue that rap is similar to earlier African-American musical traditions, such as gospel and blues. Rap music also incorporates Afrodiasporic musical traditions, such as call and response, the dozens and toasting (Potter 1995; Rose 1994a, Rose 1994b; Martinez 1997; Dyson 1993, 1996).

Rose provides the most useful examination of rap music. She not only devotes a section to various dimensions of hip-hop culture, but she also explores less chartered territory of black women's agency within rap music texts. Black women participate in a genre of music that overwhelmingly degrades them, but Rose argues they also write "feminist" texts in response to their marginalization in hip-hop culture and the dominant culture. Rap songs by female artists like Queen Latifah serve as oppositional text within an oppositional text. Rap challenges what is defined as music by sampling, scratching and using prerecorded material. It is oppositional because it privileges the voices of those who are silenced in society. Latifah uses this opposition with rap music texts to challenge not only what constitutes music, but she challenges rap misogyny as well.

This idea of opposition within opposition can be extended to Rose's discussions of what she calls "political" rap. Rose makes no distinction between gangsta and black nationalism to denote a text as political. She argues: "To dismiss rappers who do not choose 'political' subjects as having no politically resistive role ignores

the complex web of institutional policing to which all rappers are subjected…" (Rose 1994a, p. 124).

Rose conceptualizes political rap different from other scholars who exclude gangsta rap from the club of hip-hop nationalism. Some take an Afrocentric approach to talk about rap in hip-hop nationalism (Eure & Spady, 1991; Henderson, 1996). Afrocentricism, in theory, resists cultural and political domination present with the western ideology (Chowdhury, 1997). For black youth indoctrinated with the idea of Africa as backward, blacks as savage and uncivilized, Afrocentricity claims to armor youth with the weapon of a reconstructed history to resist white supremacy. Imagined or not, Egypt epitomizes the intellectual and cultural superiority of Africans prior to European Enlightenment. Ethiopia as the origin of humankind takes a backseat in this perspective. Wortham (1992) argues proponents of Afrocentricism engage in essentialist politics. For example, she contends proponents of Afrocentricity use ancient culture to posit African culture and its descendants not as equal, but superior. Like Wortham, Decker argues, Afrocentrists rely on western conceptions of civilization to frame Egypt as the "cradle of all civilization" (Decker, 1994, p. 115). In its most extreme cases, it calls for black separatism (Chowdury, 1997; McCartney, 1992). This approach is less helpful to address black power as a class-based movement, but it does help to distinguish types of nationalism in hip-hop culture. For example, Decker (1994) suggests two types of

nationalism within hip-hop culture: Place and Time. Youth use "place", like the Afrocentric construction of Egypt, to create a collective black consciousness, while youth who use "time" incorporate racial apartheid specifically of the 60s to contextualize their parent's plight with racism as their own.

Hashim Shomari (1995) relies on Decker's description of time to define what he calls conscious rap music. He first defines nationalism in the context of the black American resistance struggle. Then, he extends this definition to rap. Shomari defines nationalism as those who self-identify as nationalists and those who are politically active. Similar to Shomari, Henderson (1996) requires the degree of political activity of the rapper to determine black nationalism in rap music. Henderson suggests rappers who merely talk about change engage in "mythic action" (316). If rappers are apolitical, they are not nationalists; therefore, their rap music cannot constitute political rap, he contends. Henderson outlines three foci of hip-hop nationalism in rap music that include: (1) Racial solidarity based on skin tone, (2) brotherhood and (3) commonality of culture. He criticizes commercial rap because of its misogyny at the same time using "brotherhood" as an appropriate category to discuss nationalism. Henderson advises we adopt his masculinist construction of hip-hop and revert to Afrocentricism to redeem black womanhood. He fails to acknowledge patriarchy within black nationalism. Henderson's examination of black

nationalism and Afrocentricity in the good old days of hip-hop culture verges on nostalgia and romanticism.

Despite Henderson's back-in-the-day reminiscences, he does provide an insightful way of addressing black power in rap music that is similar to Shomari. Both place rap music specifically within a nationalist context that is explicitly political. They juxtapose black nationalist rap with the black nationalist movement in order to examine its political articulations. At first glance, their definitions of nationalism appear less useful for an interpretative analysis of rap music texts because it requires me to know the political actions of rappers. A reworked definition of black nationalism, however, based on spoken word provided on Dead Prez album may help to address black power in rap music texts.

Defining hip-hop nationalism, Shomari identifies two strands: Petty bourgeoisie nationalists and revolutionaries. Prior to this distinct breakdown he notes rap as rebellion or revolution. His conception of hip-hop nationalism derives from a Harold Cruse (1968) elaboration of the black freedom struggle in the United States. Though Shomari attempts to make a distinction between gangsta rap and black nationalist rap, his nationalist category fails to adequately characterize the petty bourgeoisie as nationalists because they adopt aspects of rebellion that are not revolutionary (Shomari, 1995). For example, instead of staying independents to create progressive rap music texts, rappers sign with the handful major of recording

labels (none of which are black-owned) that award artists with accolades if they choose to espouse misogyny and materialism.

Tunde Adeleke (1998) does not reference hip-hop, but does provide an evaluation of black nationalism translatable to hip-hop culture. Like Shomari, Adeleke also identifies two strands of nationalism: Racist and Classist. The latter recognizes capitalism/imperialism as the chief oppressor and uses class as a rallying point for political mobilization. Adeleke suggests most United States nationalists groups fall into the category of racist nationalism, which highlights Afrocentricity – an African essence Adeleke maintains is imagined. Manning Marable (1995) argues both racist and classist forms of nationalism are problematic. For black separatists, Marable warns, their racial status is no longer a pivotal argument. Blacks are no longer the only subordinated racial minority. Other groups, like Latin Americans, claim marginality status today (Marable, 1995, p. 4). Also class or socialist nationalism incorporate black capitalism (buy black owned/produced products) to amass capital from working class – a contradiction of the socialist stance (Marable, 1995, p. 4; Newton, 1973; Newton 1972, p. 93). Marable replaces both strands by incorporating what he calls transformation, which redistributes resources and democratizes state power. At the same time Marable argues socialism has failed, he articulates a socialist agenda that resembles the class-based black nationalism of the

Black Panther Party. Where Marable fails to provide a "new" category of nationalism, he does problematize nationalism for the post-Civil Rights hip-hop generation in which marginalization will have to be redefined and revolution must be viewed as a coalition effort among non-black subjugated groups.

Marable situates nationalism within a political framework to discuss the explosion of neo-nationalism within hip-hop culture. He suggests our attraction to race-separatists groups like the Nation of Islam has as much to do with its direct attack of white supremacy as it is our rejection of organizations like the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) who support administrations like President Bill Clinton who helped to pave the way for the "most punitive crime and welfare bills in our history" (Cha-Jua & Lang, 1999, p. 14). Cha-Jua and Lang admonish those who confuse activism for symbolic mobilization events, such as the Million – Man, Woman, Youth – March. Social commentary is not necessarily social activism, they contend (1999, p. 15). Extending their description of nationalism and/or radicalism to hip-hop, it reiterates Henderson's emphasis on political activism. Both underestimate the power of culture as a conduit of politically educating and mobilizing black youth. Also, I argue creating alternative texts such as those in hip-hop nationalism to popular gangsta hip-hop is necessary work to produce the counterhegemony Henderson, and Cha-Jua and Lang espouse.

Cha-Jua and Lang to devalue the aesthetic of black nationalism, yet it has been Maulana Karenga's construction of an Afrocentric racial identity that resonates with the hip-hop generation. Newton (1972) suggests his concept of black power derived from Karenga's Afrocentricity, but the Black Panther Party also transformed the concept. "Black power" takes on multiple interpretations depending on the context (Jones & Jeffries, 1998; McCartney, 1992). It became more than black pride. It became more than Karenga's cultural nationalism or the Nation of Islam's "buy black" capitalism. The Black Panther Party transformed the concept of black power into a socialist ideology. The Black Panther Party did not espouse separatism as a means of attaining the black power that the former SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) member Stokely Carmichael proposed (Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967; McCartney, 1992). The Black Panther Party did adopt the black power of Julius Lester (1968). Racial solidarity and black militancy were not a priori factors to building coalitions with other groups to secure liberation. The Panthers' ability to align with groups like the White Panther Party and the Brown Berets helped to spread their interpretation of radicalism throughout the United States and in non-black communities. Their alliance with Third World guerilla and militia groups in Vietnam and other parts of Asia made the Black Panther Party an international revolutionary icon. No doubt, the Black Panther Party acknowledged the racial apartheid African-Americans in the

United States during Jim Crow, but the Black Panther Party refused to evoke Garveyite ethos of going back to Africa. Racial and economic apartheid was not a black thing. Therefore, Black Panther Party members considered the Afrocentricism Karenga proposed to be unnecessary (Matthews, 1998; Newton, 1972). Karenga's cultural nationalism or "pork chop nationalism" (Newtown, 1972, p. 92) assumed cultural identity would bring black people freedom. It was reactionary rather than revolutionary in its espousal of black power in nationalism (92).

If Karenga and his U.S. organization depicted the "natural" relationship between black men and women, then black power translated to black men over-power-ing black women. Elaine Brown (1994) recalled extreme gender roles played out in the Afrocentric organization. She recounts sisters outfitted in dresses draped to their ankles who permitted men to eat first. Dinner was followed by a roundtable discussion for men and dishwashing for women. Feminist cultural critic, Michele Wallace (1995), recounts her experience with black nationalism:

> …I learned… No, I wasn't to wear makeup, but yes I had to wear long skirts that I could barely walk in. No, I wasn't to go to the beauty parlor, but yes, I was to spend hours cornrolling my hair. No, I wasn't to flirt with or take shit off white men, but yes, I was to sleep with and take unending shit off black men. No, I wasn't to watch television or red *Vogue* or *Ladies' Home Journal*, but yes, I should keep my mouth

> shut. I would still have to iron, sew, cook, and have babies" (Wallace, 1995, p. 221)

The writings of Wallace, Brown and other women in the black power movement provide insight to the reality versus the rhetoric of egalitarianism (Matthews, 1998; Jennings, 1998; Cleaver & Katsiaficas, 2001). For example, Matthews (1998) said despite the sexual harassment she experienced by her superior in the Party, she contends, "…I felt there was no other place in America where I could fully be my Black revolutionary self" (p. 263).

By the early 70s the Black Panther Party became a "woman's party" – due in large part to the incarceration, assassination and exile of Panther men, the de-emphasis of the paramilitary and the increase of community service programs (Matthews, 1998). Despite the prevalence of Panther women in numbers, popular cultural productions of the Party depict the militant black male with the gun. The images of the likes of Afeni Shakur, Assasta Shakur and Elaine Brown are far and few between. The popularized image of the Black Panther Party for the hip-hop generation remains a masculinist one. Even so, rap lyrics and music videos selectively reference this male image, perhaps, because it is more threatening to the white society than Panther women serving food at free breakfast programs. Yet, Panther women fought alongside men in armed resistance. They too were beaten and jailed. To only recount a single depiction of the Black Panther Party is to

erase the contributions of women in the black resistance struggle. In her tribute "Ladies First," Queen Latifah reminds the hip-hop generation of our foremothers by flashing pictures of Angela Davis, Sojourner Truth and Winnie Mandela (Rose, 1994a, p. 164). In his 2000 album, rapper Common adds after reading her autobiography, he had to write a song titled "A Song for Assata" to pay tribute to sisters in the struggle.

Charles Jones (1998) argues these cultural transmissions provide an alternative and assessable source of knowledge about the Black Panther Party for the hip-hop culture. For youth who do not receive knowledge about the Panthers from home, school and social institutions, black nationalist rap encourages them to explore history (Millner, 1991, p. 3). I cite my life experience as an example: Not all my friends had a father in the home knowledgeable about the Panthers, yet we all of us had radios and access to cable television where we heard and listened to Public Enemy and Boogie Down Production spouting black history. We recalled history in rhyme. Jones and the majority of scholars researching black nationalist rap music, cite the group Public Enemy as the forerunner to fuse black nationalism and with rap music (Millner, 1991; Rose, 1994a; Eure & Spady, 1991; Henderson, 1996; Jones, 1998).

Dead Prez lyrics evolve from earlier types of political and conscious rap like Public Enemy, but they also differ from their black nationalist predecessors. Both

incorporate the Afrocentric aesthetic and the black power politic to link the 60s past to the present, but instead of evoking race-separatist teachings by the Nation of Islam or the Five Percent Nation, Dead Prez primarily draw from black power of Black Panther Party refashioned in the International People's Democratic Uhuru Movement. I refer to Dead Prez lyrics as black power rap because (1) self-identify as nationalists, (2) recount class-based black power of Black Panther Party in terms of socialism, (3) call for revolution that is envisioned outside the current socio-political hierarchy and capitalist system (4) eschew organized religion as a necessary political base to create class consciousness.

In the following chapters, I will describe hip-hop nationalism as subcultural form, and address how black nationalist and black power rap emerge as alternative narratives to critique race, class and gender politics within hip-hop and the dominant culture. By using Antonio Gramsci's development of hegemony as my conceptual framework to perform a textual analysis, I examine ways in which Dead Prez represent black power and counterhegemonic discourse in the spoken word provided in their rap music texts.

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

"It's Bigger Than Hip-Hop": Organic Intellectuals Deliver Counterhegemony of Black Power To Generation Ne"X"t

Ghetto lingo, rap music and street fashion that once defined a localized group of black and Latin-American youth mark mainstream American popular culture. Today, you can spot elements of hip-hop culture from the Monday morning cartoons to the Sunday evening gospel telecasts. Seething beneath its funky rhyme and oft-mentioned money-hoes-cars-clothes exterior is another realm of the rap world too visible to be called underground. Its call[ing] is freedom. Its rhetoric revives 60s black nationalism. Its rap is black power. Its movement surfaces in the youth culture of hip-hop.

Black power rap blends the politic of nationalism in the black resistance struggle and the black oral traditions like the dozens and signification to serve as a medium for political education and mobilization for marginalized youth. In this chapter, I will situate hip-hop nationalism within a larger framework that resembles subculture analyses in British cultural studies. I refer to hip-hop nationalism as a subculture of hip-hop, while black nationalist rap and black power rap refer to specific subgenres of rap music. I will attempt to show how the Gramscian concept of hegemony, rather than classical

Marxist social theory, serves as a more useful framework to examine black power in rap music texts. Hegemony recognizes class rule as a combination of force and consent, locates power in civil society, affords agency to subordinate classes, and acknowledges coalition building – all necessary to achieve a successful revolution. Also, Gramsci identifies revolution as a process rather than an act. Pockets of resistance are ever-present, but the dominant class constantly interrupts their resistance by recuperation and containment (SPN 1971, p. 55). These, along with subordinate class complicity, impede the process of revolution. I argue, black power rap is counterhegemonic discourse produced by subordinate, disenfranchised black youth not only to resist socio-cultural and political dominance, but also to empower politically apathetic youth with black consciousness so they may serve as agents of social change.

The academic inquiry into youth subcultures like hip-hop nationalism is nothing new. From mods, Teds, skinheads and punk-rockers, researchers from The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University assumed the task of observing youth subcultures not only to understand their life-styles, but also to critique ways in which they conformed, contested and resisted the dominant culture. They refused to read off the term mass as a synonym for the manipulated. Rather, Larry Grossberg (1996) argues subordinated people seek ways to transform

and improve their position. This is not to say their ways are always progressive. Grossberg contends:

> They live with, within and against their subordination, attempting to make the best of what they are given, to win a bit more control over their lives, to extend themselves and resources. (1996, p. 185)

The emergence of hip-hop culture testifies to this effect. Poor black and Hispanic youth who did not own drum sets or guitars, used their bodies to mimic rhythms in a hip-hop creative expression known as beatboxing. Those deejays with access to old vinyl records, turntables and amplifiers collaborated with emcees who rhymed over electronically produced rhythms to create what we know today as rap music. Still in the seventies, few outside the New York area could hear this new style of music. Without major record label deals, rap practitioners did not have the resources to mass produce, market and distribute their music. Without access to radio airwaves, reaching a larger audience proved to be difficult, but not impossible. If deejays could not deliver "The Message" by plugging amplifiers to streetlight poles on neighborhood corners at block parties, they sold dubbed tapes of their performances that helped to spread hip-hop culture to the world.

British Cultural Studies, Youth Subcultures and Hegemony

The Birmingham tradition of cultural studies or British cultural studies situates youth subcultures within a structural framework and centralizes questions of knowledge, power, meaning, subjectivity, identity and agency in their analysis (Jordan & Weedon, 2000, p. 167). Outlining youth subcultures in the introduction to *Resistance Through Rituals*, Stuart Hall links the former with the "parent" working-class culture. Though distinctive in its look, youth subcultures experience and respond to the same basic problems as their parent culture. By "classing" both, researchers engage in discourse already laden with power. In doing so, Hall and others argue youth [working-class] subcultures relate to the dominant culture in similar ways as their parent culture. As a member of the subordinate class/culture, they relate to dominant culture through active negotiation, resistance and struggle (Clarke et.al, 1975, pp. 101-103).

To understand how the dominant group maintains power, The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies researchers incorporate the Gramscian reading of hegemony. Hegemony is never explicitly defined in *Prison Notebooks* (1971) and it is not a central concept of Marxist social theory (Bocock, 1987, p. 22). Gramsci refers to hegemony as the:

> "Spontaneous" consent of the great masses to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is "historically" caused by the prestige (and consequent

> confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (SPN, 1971, p. 12)

The dominant group may also exercise force, but consent should always dominate so when force is used it appears to be based on the consent of the majority (SPN, 1971, p. 80, n. 49). The power in hegemonic rule is its ability to lead, to define the agenda, shape preferences and contain opposition (Clarke et. al, 1975, pp. 101-102; Grossberg, 1993, p. 56).

The media provide an outlet from dominant class in civil society to disseminate hegemony throughout culture. Media practitioners have the ability to define and set agenda. Tricia Rose (1994c) and Michael E. Dyson (1996) contend media vilify the rap artist and rap music similar to the way they demonize young black men. Media (both entertainment and news) frame both as embodiments of drug culture, amorality and crime. By juxtaposing the ghetto rap with suburbia, media posit rap practitioners as culprits of social ills who poison the purity of their nuclear-drug/crime-free suburban families. This representation reflects white supremacist ideology, which informs how black and non-black alike perceive rap. Hip-hop acts pay for or provide increased security because managers anticipate violence. Such is the case for Dead Prez who have been “blacklisted” from major concert venues, such as the Wetlands and Irving Plaza in New York. Irving Plaza

managers objected to a Dead Prez performance that denounced N.Y. police officers for the assault of Haitian immigrant Abner Louima and the killing of West Indian immigrant Amadou Diallo. Managers feared the crowd would be violent. When security officers were notified some songs referred to police brutality, they refused service, in effect ensuring no concert. Not so for the "Born in America" rocker Bruce Springstein, who touted a similar theme when he performed the Diallo inspired song "41 shots" at the Wetlands (Lee, 2000, pp. 47-49).

More than an example of racism, the treatment of rap is indicative of its media [mis]representation that it incites violence. To some extent, black youth buy into this idea too. We undergo dehumanizing body frisks and purse/wallet searches "for our protection." Police officers on horseback patrol the incoming crowd. After shows, the same police officers harass concert-goers about loitering, herd us inside orange-coned walkways and advise us to go home "for our protection." We are pissed, but we do not resist – for our protection.

Gramsci's emphasis on the dominant group's ability to lead, set agenda, and contain opposition without relying solely on force cannot be underestimated. The power of the dominant group is not so much in its ability to use direct force to contain opposition, but their ability to indoctrinate all classes with their hegemony to the point where subordinate classes often comply with laws to their disadvantage. For example, concert halls are commonly

outlined with police officers on horseback. We do not resist searches, or our right to assemble peaceably. To leave immediately, appears commonsensical for those of us who equate rap with violence. Hip-hop youth did not collectively disarticulate rap as violent until we began to place rap in a larger framework. Rap's treatment in society was unlike that of the blues, rhythm and blues and rock – all attributed to black American influence. Historically, media negatively framed the latter musical genres for their "nontraditional" musical style as well as for the people who created the art. Hip-hop nationalism provided a space to critique the ideology of white supremacy linking rap with other black musical traditions. We could see how white supremacist ideology went beyond politicians in white houses, but our art and our minds.

The Battle of Hegemony in the Terrain of Ideology

Hegemony can work through ideology. Gramsci attempts to distinguish ideology from its Freudian psychoanalytic conceptualization by harkening to Marxism where – in terms of philosophy of praxis – ideology comprises the superstructure. Gramsci does not dismiss the utility of this conceptualization of ideology completely (arguing instead that it can create "terrain" where masses may be mobilized – even if in the imaginary), but he argues ideology alone will not change the structure (1971, pp. 375-377). Ideological work is connected to economic and political struggles (Grossberg, 1993, p. 56). For example,

Black Panther Party member Bobby Seale ran and loss a mayoral seat in Oakland, California. He did, however, win more than 40 percent of the vote. This percentage attests to the ideological work of the Black Panther Party to bring nearly half of the voting population to a state of black consciousness. They permeated California with counterhegemony of black power in less than a decade. Conrad Muhammad, the self-proclaimed hip-hop minister and Nation of Islam member, suggests rappers should also run for local office. He argues if rappers love the 'hood so much, they should take a part-time city spot to have a hand in the money the funnels the system, which affect the type of services and programs available in poor communities. Muhammad adds, rappers in the community already have a bona-fide "fan" – potential voter – base (Caramanica, 1999, p. 4).

Muhammad and members of Black Panther Party drawing from Marxist writers like Gramsci, connect ideology to practice. Louis Althusser, who also helped to develop ideology, relies on Freudian psychoanalysis and the structural anthropology of Claude Levi-Strauss (Cormack, 1992, p. 10); it is his Marxist reading of Gramsci that helps him to describe the function of ideology – particularly the role Ideological States Apparatuses (ISAs). Ideological States Apparatuses, such as schools and churches, indoctrinate people into their respective class. Althusser alludes to civil society as the site of struggle, but power – in terms of domination – differs

little when he describes the role of Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) controlled directly by the State. Without the separation, Robert Bocock argues, Althusser's conception resembles a non-statist approach to hegemony (1984, p. 25).

What makes the concept of hegemony viable, then, is its emphasis on agency and the fluidity of power. No group is guaranteed power by virtue of class. Moreover, hegemony is not solely an attribute of the rich to be exercised on the masses. Chantal Mouffe contends Althusser maintains an "economistic" conception where domination is narrowly explored (1981, p. 179). Hall expounds on the limitations of Althusser's conception of ideology by pointing that he gives little space where we can see anything but the reproduction of dominant ideology (1982, p. 78). Power – or the maintenance thereof – is more complex than Althusser surmises. Hegemony must be maintained.

Gramsci breaks with classical Marxist theory by not only rejecting the one-dimensional formulations of the State, but also rejecting economic determinism (Lears, 1985, p. 569; Coben, 1995, p. 37; Bocock, 1984, pp. 21-22). By this, Gramsci is able to locate power outside political (public) sphere of the State and in the private sphere – civil society – thereby providing another site of struggle for the working class. He disrupts the "top-down model" (Lears, 1985, p. 587) in which power in terms of dominance can only be a tool of the rich. Gramsci, in a sense, gives power to the people by asserting agency and activity.

Power to the People: Asserting Counterhegemony by Reconstructing "Class"

It may be important at this point to stress Gramsci is still a Marxist. He relies on conceptions, such as working-class, proletariat and bourgeois to further develop hegemony, yet these are not taken-for-granted terms that are static. Also, Gramsci contributes to Marxism when he opens up the fixed categories of class. It no longer has to be defined solely in terms of its relationship to production. For Gramsci, organic intellectuals (who may be – in relation to production – part of the bourgeois) are as important in the exercise of hegemony as the working class. It is the organic intellectual who works on behalf of working class to assimilate and conquer ideologically the traditional intellectuals (SPN, 1971, p. 10). Creating what he refers to as a "historic bloc", or a coalition beyond class, is imperative to achieve successful revolution.

Even so, class can be constitutive. Mouffe (1981), Hall (1982) and Bocock (1987) explore how groups, other than the economically exploited, have articulated their subordinated status in terms of power relations between groups. Such is the case for women, gays and black Americans in the United States.

The Black Panther Party's articulation of race and class oppression in terms of white supremacy and capitalism in 60s, exemplify the ideological struggle between the dominant and subordinate group. The Black Panther Party's

political work is commendable, but their ability to disarticulate the United States conception of democracy, capitalism and white supremacy is far reaching. They were able to rearticulate democracy in terms of black enfranchisement. Panthers incorporated the United States Preamble opening of "We the people" into their black nationalist discourse – enabling black folk to recognize themselves as citizenry of a political society of which they had been legally denied under Jim Crow. They addressed the free-market rhetoric of capitalism; capitalism produced gross inequality. Panthers advocated distribution of wealth in terms of socialism. More importantly, Panthers replaced cultural denigration of African people with black pride. They adopted the term black, not as a cultural or ethnic identifier, but as a discursive strategy. Black power was antithetical to American power – white power. By achieving black power, the Black Panther Party hoped to dismantle white supremacy. Black pride, more than other aspects of the Black Panther Party, is the lasting legacy that of black power that lives in hip-hop nationalism.

Black pride of the Black Panther Party is revived in its televisual image. For my generation, who know of the Black Panther Party through Hollywood films and news reels, the aesthetic of black power – is the black beret, powder-blue shirt, and black leather jacket and pants. It is the picture of the black men and women with guns. It is the picture of the saluting black fist. For hip-hop culture,

it is the vision of young poor black youth standing up to "the man".

Black Power Rap and Counterhegemony

Mainstream rap is unabashedly gangsta. Topics of social importance such as police brutality are explored, but it can hardly be labeled revolutionary in a socio-political sense today. Black power rappers, as members of the hip-hop nationalist subculture, actively engage in reclaiming the revolutionary aspects of the music and the culture by rearticulating rap music in terms of an old school hip-hop culture and using the term "hip-hop music" to replace "rap". The term "rap" is in the midst of a discursive battle where it may no longer only refer to music, but may also connote commercialism, sell-out, business, the negative aspect of hip-hop music, etc. Shomari, a proponent of hip-hop nationalism, explains:

> Hip hop music, as opposed to commercialized rap music, can play a positive role in raising the socio-political consciousness of black youth, by acting as an alternative source of information distinct from capitalist-controlled mass media. (1995, p. 47)

Even so, a refrain from KRS-One's (2001) latest album echoes, "Rap is something you do. Hip hop is something you live." In this, rap becomes a job. Any person can learn the skill of rhyming, but it does not necessarily mean its hip-hop. For some nationalists, hip-hop encompasses a

standpoint of marginality. For others, it blatantly means you have to be black. Rappers like KRS-One attempt to reclaim the music (in terms of hip-hop) as a cultural production by those who participate in the culture, not merely those who consume its artifacts. Rose argues this distinction goes back to the idea that hip-hop practitioners produced rap (and other subcultural artifacts) "for the love of it." Though this is not completely untrue, Rose contends, artists began marketing their art as soon as they recognized they could make a profit from it (1994, p. 40). Perhaps their attempt to claim the "essence" of rap is a reaction to the glorification of one genre of rap music in mainstream culture and the commodification of a "for us, by us" artifact that black youth no longer owns.

Dead Prez lyrics address the "commercial" state of rap music from a hip-hop nationalist perspective that counters ideologies of white supremacy and [black] capitalism within hip-hop culture and the larger community. I use the concept of hegemony because it disrupts static notions of power as being only a tool of the elite. Dynamics of power flow through all spheres of society, including popular culture. Power may be unbalanced, but it is fluid. Also, by looking at power in terms of the political (state), economical, and cultural (civil society), I am able to see the importance of the discursive struggle for self-determination in popular culture, which is tied to the political arena. Popular culture, is perhaps, the most important sphere.

Popular culture is youth culture. Hip-hop is one of the most profitable and popular cultural artforms in the world today. Dead Prez recast the black resistance struggle in the cultural arena similar to the 60s Black Arts Movement where art was used to spotlight nationalist politics (see Gladney, 1995). For poor, young black and Hispanic youth hip-hop is a megaphone to world. It is, according to Public Enemy's Chuck D, our black CNN. Hip-hop provides a platform for youth who otherwise would not be heard. Therefore, popular culture is strategic site to struggle for self-determination – for social change.

Glenn Jordan and Chris Weedon (2000) suggest access to the means of cultural production is crucial to create counterhegemonic narratives to enact social change (172). Hegemony accounts for agency of people to create counterhegemonic discourse, while taking into account their material limitations simultaneously. For example, no more than five record companies control the marketing, production and distribution of all music we see on television and hear on the radio in the world. Not only must Dead Prez negotiate with major record labels to mass produce and distribute rap songs, they must work within a preexisting archetype whose image is masculinist and language is often-time misogynist and homophobic. Its mass appeal has as much to do with the typical rap representations (i.e., the gangsta look) as its refrain of black power.

Dead Prez recognize the enormity of hip-hop culture as it relates to the hip-hop movement and a global socialist movement. If they did not, I do not suppose artists like Dead Prez and KRS-One would not recast rap within a nationalist discourse. For Dead Prez, the politics of art is politics. They are the organic intellectuals Gramsci lauds. Gramsci suggests the working [subordinate] class achieves hegemony quicker and more effectively if they assimilate and conquer ideologically over the traditional intellectuals, while simultaneously pushing forth their own agenda embodied in organic intellectuals (SPN, 1971, p. 10). Dead Prez, as organic intellectuals, disseminate hegemony of marginalized poor black and Hispanic youth to entire society through hip-hop culture. It is, according to Dead Prez, bigger than hip-hop. Rap is but one tool to educate people, to empower people to become agents of revolution.

Let’s get free.

CHAPTER 4
METHOD

The Textual Analysis, The Analysis of [Me]thod: The "Police State" Pilot Study

I created categories, such as the government as conspirators and government as enemy. I cited Black Panther Party members as speakers for the voiceovers on the rap music texts. I did not address social constructions outside of race.

I stood before a three-member committee of seasoned qualitative researchers who examined my results of my pilot study, which was a textual analysis I performed on a Dead Prez rap song "Police State." Their assessment: Content analysis, transcript unreliability and researcher detachment. My attempt to defend my findings revealed as much about me, the researcher, as the counterhegemonic discourse in rap music texts I purported to address.

So, I went back. I went back to examine my assumptions about rap music, Dead Prez, counterhegemony, etc. Dead Prez was a breath of fresh air from the suffocation of bling-bling materialist rap I became accustomed to hearing on the radio and seeing in rap

videos. The flipside of Puff Daddy's glamour was the grimy, raw and in-your-face revolutionary rap of the Rastafari looking duo. To show a cohesive front with Dead Prez, I detached my feminist self. By doing so, I could articulate a genderless socialism. I did not realize at the time that I de-emphasized their lyrical contradictions and bound them by a sole black power identity, I constructed the multivocal Dead Prez into a simple hip-hop replica of the Black Panther Party.

I mention my experience from the pilot study to acknowledge the awesome power of the researcher's ability to construct reality for our self and the audience. From the study, I am more mindful of voice – the voice of the researcher and the subject (Dead Prez lyrics). I am mindful researchers bring our "selves" to bear on the text. Shulamit Reinhartz (1997) suggests we not only bring the self to the field, we also create the self in the field. We may be the research-based self, the brought self (that is historically, socially and personally created out of standpoints) or the situationally created self (Lincoln & Guba 2000, p. 183). In the pilot study, I compartementalized my varied selves not recognizing the richness of my analysis had every bit to do with my multiple selves as a hip-hop head, black feminist, researcher, etc. Textual analysis is interpretive. The very way I examine Dead Prez rap songs is filtered through these multiple selves.

Since the autobiographical narrative in the Introduction, I prefaced these filters in order for you to see why it was necessary me to redefine rap, address the various dimensions of black power as it relates to hip-hop, and discuss Dead Prez in terms of hip-hop nationalism. In this chapter I define what constitutes text in this study and return to my central questions in order to take you through the process of textual analysis:

(1) In what ways do Dead Prez represent black power?

(2) In what ways do Dead Prez represent counter-hegemonic discourse?

Defining Text

Earlier I defined rap as storytelling accompanied by highly rhythmic beats that may be produced electronically (through mixing, scratching, sampling etc.) or through beatboxing; rap may also encompass acappella rhyme called freestyle. Rap music resembles oral traditions of other Afrodiasporic music that incorporate harmony, polyrhythmic layering and repetition (Rose, 1994a, pp. 65-66). The emcee uses voice (inflection, tone, etc.) to convey what spoken word cannot.

For the purpose of this research, I will examine "spoken word." Spoken word refers to voiceovers, chants and rap lyrics. Other musicological aspects of rap, mentioned earlier, will not be incorporated in my analysis. Spoken word is not provided in the CD jacket. Other than the reference to a voiceover by the International People's

Democratic Uhuru Movement, chairman Omali Yeshitela, no speakers are referenced. In the pilot study, I supplemented my initial transcription of Dead Prez lyrics with those of volunteers published on websites www.ohhla.com and www.sing365.com. Through multiple re-readings I found these lyrics to be unreliable. For example, Ron Brown, the former commerce secretary under the Clinton Administration, died in a plane crash in April 1996. The volunteer at www.sing365.com cited Bob Brown. The fact that Dead Prez suspect that one of the top African American government officials was murdered, rather than killed adds to my interpretation of mistrust Dead Prez have of the government. I bracketed discrepancies beforehand. This time, however, I have opted rely on my reading. I use brackets to show interruptions, garbled speech, and unclear passages.

I analyze four rap songs: (1) "I'm a [sic] African," (2) "Hip Hop," (3) "Police State" and (4) "Propaganda." I selected these songs because they explicitly address the three spheres where hegemony operates: The economic, state and civil society. Also, the songs allow me to address the process of producing counterhegemony. First, organic intellectuals (who I note are Dead Prez) help to create "class" consciousness. Then, organic intellectuals aid to disseminate the hegemony created from this consciousness to other areas of society. Dead Prez use hip-hop culture, specifically rap music – a dominant musical artform in United States. Dead Prez use dimensions of black power,

such as Afrocentricity, to challenge dominant constructions of the black self, capitalism and white supremacy. It may be important to reiterate, these songs serve as a representation of Dead Prez. A song on the album addresses a vegan lifestyle, while another talks about the beauty of a summer's day. Other songs address black love. If I incorporated these songs, no doubt, another representation of Dead Prez would emerge. It is in my discussion of black power that the four songs comprise my analysis.

The Layout

In Chapter Three, I examined Gramscian development of hegemony adapted from Marxism. The concept of hegemony views class as constituted and constitutive (Bocock, 1987, p. 16). Gramsci draws from the economic determinist that class is constituted, and extracts from Foucault the notion of class as constitutive thereby creating a middle ground. The constitutive subjectivity is crucial to create class consciousness, which is necessary to articulate counterhegemony. The Black Panther Party constructed an Afrocentric identity to posit "black" in terms of an economic and racially exploited class under white supremacy in the United States. I use the song, "I'm African" to address the Afrocentric identity to construct a class consciousness for hip-hop youth.

Like the Black Panther Party, Dead Prez separate themselves from other nationalists in their espousal of socialism. I use the rap track "Hip Hop" to address anti-

capitalism. I use “Police State” and “Propaganda” to discuss the direct and indirect forms of oppression.

<u>The Stuart Hall Process of Textual Analysis</u>

In the Introduction to *Paper Voices* (1975) Stuart Hall outlines the process of textual analysis. First Hall advises the researcher to initially absorb as much as possible through what he calls a “long preliminary soak” (15). Larry Grossberg elaborates by adding that a full reading encompasses a critical analysis of the content, structure, attitude, values and assumptions of the text (1993, p. 36). In this reading, I examine how Dead Prez represent black power *and* how their lyrics represent counterhegemonic discourse. In addition to addressing attitude, assumptions, etc., I analyze how Dead Prez use people, places and artifacts that conjure notions of black power. Together, they provide insight to the worldview of Dead Prez; they also help me to delve beyond what is said superficially to examine how these representations support and/or contradict that worldview. According to Hall, these representations connect meaning and language to culture (Hall, 1997a, p. 15). Language is therefore a signifier.

Dead Prez take on the role of “social actors” (Hall, 1997a, p. 25) who use the elements of hip-hop culture (i.e., the rap dis) and black power lingo to construct 60s style nationalism for today’s youth. The lyrics or the language of Dead Prez become important not only for what is said, but who said it. Dead Prez situate themselves on the

margin of society, aligning their voice with other oppressed people. Their voice becomes resistance against silence, resistance to disengagement, resistance to marginalization (Lincoln, 1995, p. 282). Language is deployed strategically. It is discursive. By discourse, I mean, the production of knowledge through language (Hall, 1997a, p. 44). To recognize language as construction is to see how the dominant culture can frame us. To recognize this is also to see how we can use language to empower ourselves by providing alternative ways of seeing the world.

After performing a full reading of the text, I must consider why the Dead Prez texts are popular. If they are oppositional, what is its appeal? How is this oppositional text able to reach a mass audience? In my discussion of Dead Prez, I show how they blend the outlaw identity popular in gangta rap (use of profanity and explicit speech attacking the government, as well as the visual representation) with black power. Also, I reiterate concept of hegemony here to show how oppositional texts can be utilized by the dominant culture to show our society can be seen as “open” at the same time people’s voices are marginalized.

Finally, Hall advises cultural studies researchers “work back” and place the text in its social, historical and cultural context (Hall, 1975, p. 21). I place Dead Prez within hip-hop nationalism. By doing so, I can discuss not only how Dead Prez challenge the dominant society by

providing alternative ways of seeing (and being), but I will show how Dead Prez as a part of hip-hop nationalism challenges the negative aspects of popular rap as well.

Rather than a recipe for textual analysis, Hall's approach to analyzing the text serve as a guide for grappling with the complexity Dead Prez whose rap lyrics are a part of hip-hop culture, yet the oppositional because they critique consumerism and white supremacist construction of the black self in hip-hop culture and the dominant society. The following chapter explores: (1) Afrocentric identity as the construction of class consciousness, (2) Anti-capitalism as a socialist stance of black power in hip-hop nationalism, and (3) Direct and indirect forms of oppression in the state and in civil society/popular culture.

CHAPTER 5

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

"It Ain't Where You From, It's Where Ya' At": Constructing an Afrocentric Identity in the Textual Field

> Loving blackness as political resistance transforms our ways of looking and being, and thus creates the conditions necessary for us to move against the forces of domination and death and reclaim black life. (hooks, 1992, p. 20)

I am looking at the [wo]man in the mirror… My fingers trace multi-textured tresses. Outkast's *Aquemini* (1998) album whispers, "Hold on, be strong," at the same time scissors slice ten inches of a fifteen year history of straightened hair.

Budding locks opened my eyes to a person I had not recognized since childhood. In the mirror, the little girl smiled. It was before the little girl ran to her mother asking if she was cursed with daddy's dark skin. It was before the little girl braved scalp and ear burns from hot combs and relaxers so she could pass only as white beauty's default.

Shedding the cocoon of straightened hair transformed my own way of looking. I am moving from an assimilationist mentality through a process of decolonization. It is out of love for my black self that I reclaim my roots and use hair as a symbolic of my resistance to white supremacy.

In my textual analysis, I show how Dead Prez also use the symbolic of hair to resist white supremacy. Dead Prez represent black power through black cultural aesthetics, like hair, as well as through dress, black men and the gun. Black power, for Dead Prez, is rooted in an Afrocentric identity where cultural aesthetics, like hair, are naturalized. The Afrocentric identity and black cultural aestheticism Dead Prez use serve as an oppositional stance to the dominant culture and popular hip-hop culture. They redefine rap and reclaim popular hip-hop within the domain of hip-hop nationalism from mainstream non-black enterprise, denounce capitalism as a key to liberation, and blame the system of white supremacy for the oppression of Africans -- directly (i.e., in the penal system) and indirectly (i.e., through religion and media). It is with this oppositional stance in hip-hop nationalism and the Afrocentric identity within black power that Dead Prez represent counterhegemonic discourse.

<u>Men At Work, Under [Self-]Construction: Dead Prez use cultural aesthetics to create an Afrocentric Identity</u>

Black love is an antithesis to white supremacy. Internalized and institutionalized racism kill us. It

retards any effort to assert black self-determination. When Dead Prez open their debut album with the song, "I'm a African," they not only offer us new ways of seeing our black selves, they use identity as a prelude to talk about other radical ways of seeing, of being. Hip-hop heads undergo an ideological basic training in decolonization that redefines what it means to be black.

Hall suggests racialized discourse is structured by a set of binary oppositions where white/European becomes symbolic of civility and black/African connotes savagery (Hall, 1997b, p. 243). Afrocentricity, in a generic sense, resists cultural and political domination present within this racialized discourse. Dead Prez do not rely on semantic inversion to valorize blackness – indicative of reductive formulations of Afrocentricity. Rather, they use "black" to create an Afrocentric identity in black power. By claiming an African identity, Dead Prez link our political fight for self-determination with other black revolutionaries, particularly those in "Third World." In doing so, they break down nation-state boundaries that blind us from seeing that our liberation struggle in America is the same as other African's all over the world.

Dead Prez employ Pan-African colors, hair and the gun to represent a cultural aesthetic of an Afrocentric identity of black power. For example, Sticman opens the first verse of "I'm a African" by laying out a visual metaphor. He uses Pan-African colors red, black and green to refer to blood, guns and marijuana respectively. In

fighting mode, he says he is outfitted in camouflage fatigues and dashikis ("African," 9) blending the militant look of the Black Panther Party with cultural nationalism of Karenga. Similarly in "Police State" he refers to Pan-African colors to address inner-city crime by gang members who use colors to mark kin, territory and the enemy. Sticman suggests gang members organize under black nationalism to fight white supremacy instead of themselves ("African," 19).

The Symbolic of Hair

By the fourth verse of "I'm a African," Sticman's identity is not so much wrapped up these Pan-African colors and clothes as it is locked to his hair he claims is natural. In both the first and fourth verses, dreadlocks serve as an unwavering marker of African identity.

Whether permed or locked, Kobena Mercer (1987) contends hair is cultivated – making all styles unnatural despite its degree of chemical dependency, or lack thereof, to alter its texture (pp. 422-423). Mercer, however, does not discount its symbolic value. Hair, as I elaborated through my personal experience, can be seen as a political act of resistance. Dreadlocks, like the Afro of the sixties, mark a "liberating rupture" where devalued attributes of blackness signify beauty (p. 421). Mercer contends:

> As elements of everyday life, these black styles in hair and dress helped to underline massive shifts in

> popular aspirations among black people and participated in a populist logic of rupture. (p. 423)

The Afrocentric aesthetic of the dreadlock is rooted in Rastafari – a religion and/or socio-cultural way of life, and political movement established in Jamaica. Some date Rastafari to the Garveyite “Back to Africa” movement of the 1930s, while others suggest it has fragmented as a religion and/or political movement. Dreadlocks, reggae, etc. are its distinct cultural forms that were synthesized a decade later. Rastafarians interpret the Bible (used to enslave Africans) from an Afrocentric perspective, which posits Africans as God’s chosen people, Ethiopia as Zion and the living God as a black man who physically inhabits the Earth. Also, Rastafarians perceive Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia (whose name was Ras Tafari Makonnen pre-coronation) as the reincarnation of Christ. Like reggae music, the dreadlock serves as another form of cultural resistance to white supremacy. M1 employs the image of Peter Tosh, a Rastafarian reggae artist, to show how radical ways of seeing (and being) threaten white supremacy:

> He was saying if you black, then you African, so they had to kill him and make him a villain. I feel him. Dun was trying to drop us a real gem… (“African,” 37-42)

The jewel in M1's second and third verse is his connection to African resistance on the continent and the Diaspora. He likens his position as an African in the inner-city ghetto to a slave ("African," Verse Two). The atrocities filmed in the Alex Haley saga "Roots" cannot compare to the brutality he experiences in daily life, which are too "gory" for cable television (see "African," 14-16). Still, in subjugation he is a runaway slave. M1 rejects his slave status just as he denounces his American nationality ("African," 19-20). Both labels deny freedom. Echoing M1, Sticman refuses any political label to construct his identity other than black nationalist. Sticman claims he would have been a member of the Black Panther Party during its heyday ("Propaganda," 33). His identity within black nationalism perhaps would have been reflective of the stereotypic image we recall of the Black Panther Party. In the same sentence he denounces these political labels, Sticman tells us he is not a punk, an effeminate man – reverting to reductive conceptions of masculinity ("African," 54). In any event, both Sticman and M1 recognize they are Africans first in the United States waging war against the systems of oppression that exploit people of color. Both members recognize the commonality of white supremacist oppression: Africans in the United States under slavery, Africans in South Africa like Steve Biko under Apartheid, and Africans in Jamaica like Peter Tosh under British imperialism.

The image of Peter Tosh is significant for other reasons. First, Tosh literally led a grassroots movement to legalize marijuana in the 70s. (The title track of his 1976 album is called "Legalize It.") Rastafarians use marijuana in ritual practices to achieve an altered state of consciousness, which helps them to better understand the self, God and the universe. To Rastafarians, marijuana is a sacred herb. Sticman adopts this concept of marijuana as natural, as an herb (see "African," 8-9). By doing so, he challenges the dominant construction of marijuana as a "drug" that is an illegal narcotic. By saying it is an herb, Sticman is also separating what is "natural" from "man-made" drugs like crack cocaine. When Sticman attaches smoking marijuana to dreadlocks, he reinforces the notion of natural that constructs his African identity.

Other than the dreadlock and marijuana, Tosh also becomes the symbolic of black – black resistance. Steve Biko and Tosh are posited as black revolutionaries ("African," 11) similar to Huey P. Newton ("Propaganda," 34; "Police State," 23).

The Gun

Adopting the discourse of marijuana as a natural herb and the cultural aesthetic the dreadlock to construct an African identity from Rastafari is selective for Dead Prez who do not take its non-violent ethic of peace and love. Black liberation is perceived throughout the four rap songs as an armed struggle ("Police State," 51, 58; "Hip-Hop," 8;

"Propaganda," 37). In separate verses, Dead Prez refer to "the gun in my palm" ("African," 6 and 18). Also, guns are not reserved for self-defense as was the case for Black Panther Party (formerly known as the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense). Guns could be used to attack (see "Hip-Hop," 8-10). Sticman employs the gun to represent Black Panthers whom, with gun in tow, marched to California State Capitol to protest bill that would deny the right of citizens to carry a loaded gun in public. It was America's introduction to the militant group via mass media. Referencing this image of attacking a government-run office, Sticman said:

> I say we all rush the Pentagon, pull out the guns… ("Propaganda," 37)

Also:

> I'm down for runnin' up on them crackers in they city hall ("Hip-Hop," 26)

Feminist scholar Rosalyn Baxandall (2001) argues the symbolic extension of manhood and patriarchal power is represented with the gun (p. 237). It is the image Dead Prez adopt. Dead Prez member, Lavon Alfred, assumes the rap pseudonym of a machine gun, M1. The gun, perhaps, is a tool that equalizes "men" on a race hierarchy in which white is superior.

Translating an Afrocentric Identity to Hip-hop Audience

The image of the gun epitomizes the oppositional identity echoed in hip-hop culture. For example, two of the most outspoken groups in hip-hop history donned all-black attire reflective of the Black Panther Party "urban guerilla attire" (Mercer, 1987, p. 423). Perhaps it is why Sticman positions Dead Prez within the hip-hop continuum of the gangsta N.W.A. (Niggaz With an Attitude) and the black nationalist Public Enemy ("African," 10). Their repetition of "A-F-R-I-C-A" harkens to the black nationalist rap song by Stetsasonic. It is the hip-hop "shout out" with a Pan-African twist ("African," 44-46).

Just as Sticman blends the militant look of the Black Panther Party with cultural nationalism with dashikis and fatigues ("African," 9), he builds a bridge between the two traditions of black nationalism represented in hip-hop culture. Sticman's repeats fuck the police/cop to signify this bridge ("African," 13 and 48). Like the Stetsasonic song, Sticman deploys the N.W.A. gangsta rap title "Fuck the Police" to evoke an attitude of contempt for the police at the same time addressing the cop as the symbolic (like Uncle Sam) of white supremacist oppression.

For Sticman, white supremacy in the United States is not only the culprit for the devaluation the black body, it is also responsible for economic disenfranchisement of Africans globally. First, Sticman reminds us that his mother is not lazy as the discourse about black women

purports. Rather, she is a mother who has worked "…all of her life and still struggling" ("African," 56). Also, he reminds us that most of the brothers have to sell drugs to survive ("African," 55). In other verses selling drugs is justified, yet M1 tells youth that selling drugs, rapping or playing basketball should not be our only ways of achieving freedom ("African," 36). Economic wealth will not get us freedom. M1 contends, our eyes should be focused on the North Star. Our minds should be focused on freedom.

Throughout their rap songs, freedom is a goal not yet achieved. Despite our political enfranchisement and assimilation to dominant society, African people in the United States are yet to be free. Dead Prez do not evoke an Afrocentric identity simply because of their African origin. M1 addresses Afrocentricity as a state of mind, an oppositional worldview ("African," 34 and 46) already present with hip-hop culture. Dead Prez use the oppositional identity of hip-hop culture to construct an African identity. This identity has discursive value similar to way "black" was deployed by Panthers during the sixties liberation struggle. Also, adopting an Afrocentric identity serves a political act of resistance evident in their hair, dress and Pan-African construction of history. Opposition would not be opposition just because it defies the dominant culture (i.e., wearing baggy jeans and/or underclothes in public, using profanity, etc); an oppositional identity would be rooted in Afrocentricism. For hip-hoppers, "I'm a African" creates the "class"

consciousness of an African subjectivity. It is the prelude to black power in hip-hop nationalism.

The Real-ity Rap of Mo' Money, No Freedom: Dead Prez use Black Power to Challenge Black Capitalism in Hip-Hop Culture

Dead Prez represent counterhegemonic discourse by subscribing to anti-capitalism in hip-hop culture and the dominant society. A distinct aspect of the Black Panther Party is its adopting of socialism. The International People's Democratic Uhuru Movement, which Dead Prez are members, is a division of the African People's Socialist Party. Rather than addressing socialism explicitly, Dead Prez use hip-hop nationalism to discuss material wealth as a false sense of freedom. In "Hip Hop" Dead Prez critique the iced-out "thug" in designer gear standing by a luxury car in front of a mansion housing wall-to-wall half-naked women… It is an archetype, in which Sticman adds:

> Nigga all y'all records sound the same./I'm sick of that fake thug, R&B, rap scenario all day on the radio/Same scenes in the video/Monotonous material. ("Hip-Hop," 34-36)

In this passage, Sticman addresses the young black capitalist of the rap world who helps to usher poor youth into a trance of hedonistic consumerism. With an opening mic check (to make sure you hear them) and two verses (to

get straight to the point), Sticman and M1 repeat the hook so it can vibrate through the walls of our consciousness:

It’s bigger than hip-hop. Translation: Life is more than getting money.

It’s a hard sell, especially to the poor hip-hoppers who learn early on the power of C.R.E.A.M. (an acronym coined by Wu-Tang to refer to: Cash Rules Everything Around Me). Some of us are 80s babies, the daughters and sons of the “Me” generation. We believe anything can be commodified – even freedom.

We see the capitalist’s billboard that reads: You too can be rich. We buy it.

Our participation in capitalism thwarts any effort to make a radical movement realized. hooks argues, black capitalists invest in the very systems of that oppress us. For those of us living in capitalism systems, she suggests we live commonly and redistribute our wealth (1995, pp. 258-259). Sticman echoes this sentiment. He wants to live “…a way of life based off the common need,” (“Police State,” 30). Both Sticman and M1 address our subscription to capitalism and consumerism by demystifying the rap world in their track titled, “Hip Hop.”

The “Real” Hip-Hop

Earlier I presented how Dead Prez constructed an African identity based on what they considered to be natural. On a hip-hop binary where black nationalists preach “truth,” mainstream rap is posited as unreal – a

creation of greedy music executives who use sex and drugs to sell records. Yet, hip-hop nationalists lead the movement to transform the word "rap" where it may no longer refer only to music, but it may connote commercialism or the business aspect of the culture as well.

Hip-hop nationalists distance themselves from the mainstream label "rap." Instead, they adopt the term hip-hop. Hip-hop recalls the old days. It is an early community catch phrase describing our cultural revolution. It also signifies the beginning, the origin, the essence of the culture… This idea of an essence harkens to their construction of the natural. They use the term "real hip-hop" similar to the way they posit the dreadlock and marijuana. All have been demonized by the dominant culture. Sticman concludes the rap by reinforcing the distinction by saying: "This is real hip-hop" ("Hip-Hop," 43).

Because of its commodification, some hip-hop nationalists hold the dominant group responsible for the negative aspects gangsta rap, such as consumerism, turf battles, and the dehumanization of women and other gender minorities. In this rap world, "…poor folks got the millions and my woman's disrespected" ("Hip-Hop," 18).

In hip-hop nationalism, the black women's exploitation is tied to white supremacy and capitalism, not patriarchy. Feminist critiques of the black power movement reveal black men were more concerned about assuming the position of the patriarch denied them under white supremacy (Murray, 1970;

hooks, 1994; Ware, 2000). Discussing black women in the black power movement, Celestine Ware (2000) argues "naturalism" meant a return to world defined and ruled by men (p. 107). At the same time M1 addresses the devalued status of black women he uses the possessive to address black women ("Hip-Hop," 18). (It is arguable whether he is using the "my" to refer to kinship as in "my" sister, or asserting hierarchal power under patriarchy.) In any event, the fact that hip-hop nationalists posit black women's dehumanization as an aspect mainstream rap without critiquing its constructions is problematic. Though not referenced in this particular rap, the pedestalization of woman as Earth Mother or Isis in hip-hop nationalism strips women of her humanity as well.

The devalued position of women in hip-hop is the same for the rapper. Rappers, irrespective of gender are exploited to serve interests of capitalist music industry. Both black women and men have little control over representation. Rappers do not reap the majority of benefits from their artistry. Expenses, such as distribution and production, have left some of most talented rappers famous and penniless (i.e., MC Hammer). (see Rose, 1994d, pp. 124-146.) Sticman argues:

> These record labels slang our tapes like dope./ You can be next in line and signed, and still be writing rhymes and broke. ("Hip-Hop," 38-39)

He adds:

> Nigga don’t think these record deals gonna feed your seeds and pay your bills/because they not. (“Hip Hop,” 29-30)

The rapper’s position in the industry is indicative of their status in society where they have little control over their daily lives. Hip-hop, then, becomes a metaphor for life – a life lived under surveillance by cops on the block (“Hip-Hop,” 44). That rappers are ordinary people still fighting racism is one point M1 tries to bring home:

> In the real world,/ these just people with ideas./ They just like me and you when the smoke and cameras disappear./Again the real world is bigger than all these fake ass records/ when poor folks got the millions and my woman's disrespected./ If you check 1,2, my word of advice to you is just relax./ Just do what you got to do, if that don't work then kick the facts. (“Hip-Hop,” 14-20)

Despite hip-hop’s misrepresentation by rappers, M1 and Sticman don’t “player hate” (see “Hip-Hop,” 20, 42). In fact, they encourage rappers to get money that is necessary to fulfill needs, not necessarily their wants. Dead Prez want the hip-hop generation to understand black power is not in black capitalism. Sticman offers an alternative vision of wealth. He asks:

> You would rather a have a Lexus, or justice, a dream or some substance? A Beamer, a necklace or freedom? (“Hip-Hop,” 40-41)

Sticman’s statement is significant for three reasons: First, the juxtapositions are incomparable – which is the point I think he tries to convey. Also, freedom and justice are not products we can buy. Sticman advises us not to copy the one the richest rap monguls Master P, but live the life of freedom fighters like Huey P (“Police State,” 23, 23). In “Hip Hop” Dead Prez show how black capitalism is still capitalism. It will not procure freedom. Finally, Dead Prez reinforce the Black Panther Party style of black power, which is rooted in socialism.

The State and Civil Society

The economic sphere is one of three areas where the dominant group can exercise hegemony. The fact that hip-hop youth have absorbed consumerism and hedonistic materialism even in the midst of their gross poverty attests to the strength of capitalism in this country. Many Americans view socialism as oppressive, if not completely undesirable. As mentioned earlier, advocating socialism is a hard sale to hip-hop heads, but Dead Prez attempt to link capitalism to other forms of oppression under white supremacy to make it digestible. In “Police State” and “Propaganda” Dead Prez address hegemonic power of white

supremacy in other spheres of influence: The State and civil society.

By its title, "Police State" would connote a totalitarian political regime in which the people's subjugation is involuntary and forced. For most, the United States is antithetical to this postulation. America signifies freedom, plurality and meritocracy. Yet, throughout the hook Dead Prez tell another story. For them, the United States is a police state where black folk have little control over our lives.

The State, in the view of International People's Democratic Uhuru Movement Chairman Omali Yeshitela, is a repressive organization ("Police State," 4-8). Yeshitela adopts a Marxist approach to the State where police only work on behalf of the rich. Rather than stressing an economist conception of the State, Dead Prez develop Yeshitela's idea of the State as repressive to show our Army and Navy that fight terrorism abroad is an arm of the State that is similar to the police who terrorize the lives of black youth. For Dead Prez, the police (including the FBI, CIA and the penal system) deny citizen rights ("Police State," 20,21; "Hip-Hop," 44). On the one hand, Dead Prez talk about the right of privacy guaranteed under the Constitution, but denounce their United States nationality in "I'm a African." From this example, we see that Dead Prez use nationhood only when it is convenient in upholding their political agenda. This reference is similar to their construction of "natural" and adoption Rastafarianism.

In any event, the State curtails or contains counterhegemony through surveillance. It is repeated in all four songs. For example, Sticman adds:

> F.B.I. spying on us through the radio antennas/ And them hidden cameras in the streetlight watching society… ("Police State," 20-21)

In other songs, police circle neighborhoods ("Hip-Hop," 44) and engage in unlawful activities to undermine the efforts subjugated groups to mobilize and collectively resist oppression. Dead Prez assertions are not unfounded and thus it becomes an easier "sell" to the hip-hop generation. The Federal Bureau of Investigation started COINTELPRO (or counterintelligence programs) to thwart black nationalism. The state (under FBI and CIA) planted informants and worked with local police to dismantle the Black Panther Party. In "Propaganda," Sticman said:

> Thirty one years ago I woulda been a Panther. They killed Huey cause they knew he had the answer. (33-34)

It is interesting to note, Sticman would have been a Panther not at its inception in 1966, but three years later – the year of massive COINTELPRO efforts by the State. In 1969, the police raided the Black Panther Party Chicago headquarters and killed Panther leader Fred Hampton. Fred Hampton's voiceover is included at the conclusion of "Police State." Hampton tells us we have to remember: "I am the people, I'm not the pig" (64). In other songs on the

album Dead Prez make reference to Fred Hampton as a revolutionary. They refer to Fred Hampton and his son, Fred Hampton, Jr. interchangeably, thereby framing sixties plight for black self-determination as a contemporary one for the hip-hop generation. Fred Hampton, who Dead Prez call a political prisoner, has been imprisoned by contemporary COINTELPRO efforts (see "Behind Enemy Lines"). At the time of the album debut, Fred Hampton Jr. was in prison. The black nationalist who served time for arson charges, has been freed this year.

Making another reference to the "Propaganda" hook, the "they" who killed Huey Newton is the State. It is not the drug dealer who actually shot Newton in a dispute in 1989. Their construction the death of a black revolutionary is repeated in "I'm a African" when the "they" who kill Peter Tosh is not his old friend Dennis Lobban, but the State ("African," 39).

The Police, or the State, are responsible for the death of black revolutionaries, the disruption of black nationalism as well as cover-ups of these and other crimes. In separate songs M1 suggests the space travel is a cover up. For example: No more secret space launches ("Police State," 45). And:

> No one knows if there's UFOs or any life on Mars, or what they doing when they up in the stars ("Propaganda," 22-23)

Even so, the State is responsible for duping us through cover-ups. In “Propaganda,” a woman’s voice sings: “Police is telling lies fooling millions” (59). Government conspiracy is a popular refrain in both “Police State” and “Propaganda.” Not only do Dead Prez reject the fact Peter Tosh and Huey Newton are shot and killed by the hands of their “brothers” over personal disputes, they do not believe Rastafarian reggae artist Bob Marley died from cancer (see “Propaganda,” 32). In “Propaganda” Sticman wonders:

> …what secrets went down with Ron Brown?/ Who burnt churches to the ground with no evidence found?/ It's not coincidence, it's been too many steady incidents./ It coulda been the Klan who put that bomb at the Olympics,/ but it probably was the FBI, deep at the core,/ ‘cause if they make us all panic then they can start Martial Law (“Propaganda,” 53-58)

Sticman’s assertion is startling, especially in our post-September 11 society in which organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and his International People’s Democratic Uhuru Movement argue the State is using this incident to enact the counter-terrorism laws that restrict citizen freedom guaranteed under the Constitution.

Disseminated six months after the September 11 incident, the ACLU press release highlighted recent changes that include:

- Concealing information concerning hundreds of Arabs and Muslims still being detained in the investigation
- Monitoring confidential attorney-client conversations
- Enforcing immigration laws based on race, ethnicity and country of origin
- Pushing the passage of the USA Patriot Act
- Increasing powers of law enforcement agencies (see ACLU website at www.aclu.org)

Even so the President, who in times of public danger (i.e., terrorism), can declare Martial Law in which individual rights are suspended. For example, under Martial Law our right to petition the State may be suspended because the courts in a generic sense are shut down. For this reason, M1 said he does not believe the President either ("Propaganda," 25). In an almost eerie projection, Sticman suggests the current state of world is a "sign of the times, terrorism on the rise. Commercial airplanes, falling out the sky like flies ("Propaganda," 51-52).

The rap Sticman and M1 provide for hip-hop is a political education on the State. In both songs, they take the warranted suspension that hip-hoppers already have the State to show how the government could be responsible for other atrocities yet to be documented. It is why, in separate songs Dead Prez leave a "paper trail." M1 adds: It's documented, I meant it ("Police State," 55); while

Sticman blames the condition of black folk on the State and is not afraid to say it on the radio – on a mass medium he is sure the State has traced ("African," 57). Dead Prez live to spread seeds of information that may empower people just by becoming consciousness the power structure and global events that affect the daily lives of hip-hop youth ("Police State," 33). The repercussion of disseminating this counterhegemony may be death (as was the case of their black revolutionaries), but Sticman assumes this possible fate by saying, "I'll take slug for the cause like Huey P." ("Police State," 23). Like Huey Newton, Sticman and M1 (in spoken word anyway) live for and die for the people.

Civil Society

Dead Prez recognize that Martial Law can be more effectively enforced if the State creates panic among its citizens. A major component of hegemony is leadership within civil society, where dominance is maintained through the consent of the oppressed rather than through force like we have witnessed with the police in the sphere of the State. When forced is used, it will appear commonsensical. Civil society comprises organizations and institutions not run by the government. Religious institutions and the mass media are two places where Dead Prez critique the hegemonic hold over African people.

Earlier in chapters one and two, I discussed the Panther's version of black power did not rely on religion as a base to mobilize and resist white supremacist

oppression, like the Nation of Islam. For Sticman, religion/God is a construction of man. It is God who is not merciful as we are made to believe. He adds:

> If God made man, then why the hell would he put us here? I thought he's supposed to be the all loving. The same God who let Hitler put the Jews in the oven. ("Propaganda,"40-42)

Aside from religion Sticman later equates to tradition or the vehicle used to maintain status quo, mass media serve as a powerful tool to wield subordination. The media is propaganda. It is the site of mass brainwashing.

In the aptly titled "Propaganda," the rap track opens with news snippets that cover in-house terrorism like the bomb found at the Olympics in Atlanta to the "economy" (not the people) that support the President. The hook of the track explains their perspective of the media in a nutshell. The television lies. M1 asks:

> Tell me, who's got control of your mind or your worldview? Is it the news or the movie you're taking your girl to? ("Propaganda," 17-18)

Interestingly, M1 does not distinguish the news from other forms of media. From the outset they use "facts" from the news to support their position that media is propaganda later in the song. This would suggest a media lie supplanted by a kernel of truth. Dead Prez extract what they consider the "truth" by using only news snippets to

support their propaganda. Even so, the idea of "reality" television is put into question. Sticman suggests cop shows like "Cops" helps to reify the portrayal of black youth as criminals. For Sticman it is but another way proponents of white supremacy exploits black people for their monetary gain:

> For your TV screen is telling lies to your vision./ Every channel got some brainwashed cop shit to watch/ running up in niggas cribs claiming that they heard shots. ("Propaganda," 46-48)

When Sticman reiterates M1's question by asking in Verse Two who has control over our worldview, Sticman identifies sites where hegemony is exercised: Big corporations that signify the capitalism, the pigs that signify the State, and Media that signify civil society. In order to awaken from the hypnotic (26) or brainwashed (47) state is to become conscious that we have been miseducated. Like the State cover-up to contain counterhegemony and reinforce their agenda, the notion of miseducation suggests intent on behalf of supporters of white supremacy to keep people oppressed because they do not have the "facts" or know reality.

M1 advises us to be media literate to understand how white supremacy operates in civil society:

> He [the president] filling our head with lies, got us hypnotized. When he be speaking in code words about

> crime and poverty, drugs, welfare, prisons, guns and robbery. It really means us… (“Propaganda,” 26-29).

In this passage, he is also addressing the racialized discourse surrounding black youth. It is similar to Sticman in “I’m a African” who mentions his mother a hardworker, rather than the lazy welfare queen popularized in contemporary media. Like Sticman, M1 provides an alternative depiction of black people that challenges the dominant constructions in popular culture. Their analyses provide media literacy for the hip-hop generation so that we have information necessary to possibly critique public policy issues that affect our lives.

Perhaps what is most significant about “Propaganda” is the connection Dead Prez make between language and representation to power. Hall notes (1997c) discourse “…regulates conduct, makes up or constructs identities and subjectivities and defines the way certain things are represented, thought about practiced and studied (p. 6). Dead Prez see how the information, even disseminated through news, is not devoid of white supremacist constructions of “black.”

The media organizations like NBC, TNT and CBS differ little in their construction of “black” as pathological and/or criminal than state-run organizations like the FBI, CIA and ATF (the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms). State-run organizations represent direct and violent means of maintaining hegemony. Interestingly, Dead Prez add the Klu Klux Klan who used mob violence to terrorize African

Americans participating in black resistance struggles. Dead Prez show a structural hierarchy or a juxtaposition between "offical" terrorism through State-funded COINTELPRO programs and mob violence by the KKK. By doing so, Dead Prez incorporate show white supremacy oppression carried on the various levels. Where one is organized, the other like media is dispersed yet ever present. This song reinforces how hegemony operates in the three spheres the economic (IRS), the State and civil society. It shows us that the maintenance of power can be both direct and indirect. It is white supremacy:

> …Controlling our lives. This ain't living,/no this ain't living ("Propaganda," 62-63)

Conclusion: Remembering the "Big Field" of Hip-Hop

The rap Dead Prez provide are their propaganda, so to speak. They use mass communication to put forth their perception of reality – a reality where the lives of black youth are controlled by white supremacy. By contextualizing our contemporary fight for self-determination in the ongoing struggle to produce social change in terms of Afrocentricity, socialism and black empowerment, I argue their lyrics serve as counterhegemonic discourse. Two questions guided this work: (1) In what ways do Dead Prez represent black power in the rap music texts? (2) In what ways do Dead Prez represent counterhegemonic discourse?

Dead Prez draw from political and cultural aesthetic of black power. They bridge cultural nationalism and the

militant look of the Black Panther Party to represent this aesthetic, while harkening to Afrocentricism by positing hair, herb and the patriarchal family as "natural." Amongst the consumerist rap in popular culture, Dead Prez advocate anti-capitalism. Instead of supporting white supremacy, they promote black power. They employ the gun and the black revolutionaries to represent black power.

Dead Prez utilize: The masculinist construction of black power through Afrocentricism that reinforces patriarchy, the misrepresentation of Black Panther Party as the young black male with a gun standing up to "the man," and the image of black men internationally to represent power. All hinder radical social change. It not only denies black women subjectivity, power and humanity, it limits and erases her contribution to the black resistance struggle.

Still, I view it is counterhegemonic. It is a counterhegemony that does not exist without contradictions. Larry Grossberg contends:

> People live their positions in complex, contradictory, and active ways; they reproduce and resist their subordination; they seek ways of transforming and improving their position according to their own imagined possibilities and resources. (1996, p. 185)

Grossberg adds that it is in popular culture we can understand the possibilities of subordination and resistance that are open within the structure of domination

(1996, p. 185). The same media that provide white supremacist images of black folk also provide the masculinist image of the Black Panther. For me, it would have been "revolutionary" to incorporate the images of Panther women who also risk their lives for freedom as well. I suspect for some women, as was the case when I read Dead Prez, the idea of collective struggle is appealing. It may be possible that Dead Prez have carved a space in hip-hop nationalism through black power rap where feminist rappers who identify with aspects of nationalism have an opportunity to critique this construction similar to the answer-raps of our hip-hop past.

Further research must be conducted on gender representation, particularly in hip-hop nationalism to understand how Dead Prez and other rap groups interpret power. It continually stumps me when I see the two at the forefront attacking white supremacy, yet they seem blind to how their masculinist constructions of power confine both black men and women. I urge others in media studies to continue to explore how rap can be used as a communicative tool to disseminate counterhegemonic discourse. Rap encompasses more than the spoken word I examined. Four songs do some justice to provide a representation of Dead Prez, but an analysis of the album would have given the reader a more complex and comprehensive picture of the duo. This is a clear limitation of the research. Also, I overlooked other musicological aspects such as beats per minute, scratching and sampling, etc. that contribute to

the rap songs. I could have contributed to my discussion of rap as counterhegemonic. When Dead Prez weave socio-political black power themes of yesteryear in modern-day hip-hop vernacular, they give us the language to articulate our own oppression. By viewing culture (in language, dress, music, etc.) as a place to resist white supremacy, it gives us some sense of power. Hegemony is viable because it emphasizes agency and the fluidity of power. No group is guaranteed power by virtue of class. Dead Prez rap music texts show that we can be agents of social change by using the means we have available to educate. That means [is] hip-hop.

That means [us] hip-hop. Every day we change the world. With two-line rhymes, turntables, milk crates of vinyl oldies and ingenious imaginations, we transformed the dilapidation of the ghetto to a concrete utopia. In our "Big Fields" we resurrected the BPP with BDP. In the "Big Fields" we carved our cultural space called hip-hop. Hip-Hop remains a terrain where, just by existing, we are validated. It remains a terrain where we recognize that many untold stories are our everyday atrocities made real in rhyme. Dead Prez say it best: "It's Bigger Than Hip-Hop." For many of us, hip-hop culture is a conduit from which our conceptions about race, class and gender flow. At the heart of hip-hop is that "Big Field." It is our mecca. It is our base. It is our terrain where we can nurture one another, educate one another, and mobilize to

enact political and social changes to ultimately Dead the Prez – or, kill the systems that stifle us.

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APPENDICES

A I’m a African

B Hip-Hop

C Police State

D Propaganda

APPENDIX A

I'm a [sic] African

1 Yo turn this motherfucking shit up!

2 Ha ha ha, what? Uhuru [foreign language xxxx]

3 Rwanda. Nigeria.

[background: Africa's in the house]

4 My nigga Dionne, Abu

[background: Africa’s in the house they get petrified.]

[Verse 1 Stic]

5 Nigga the red is for the blood in my arm

6 The black is for the gun in my palm

7 And the green is for the tram that grows natural like locks on Africans

8 Holding the smoke from the herb in my abdomen

9 Camouflage fatigues and daishikis

10 Somewhere in between N.W.A. and P.E.

11 I'm black like Steve Biko

12 Raised in the ghetto by the people

13 Fuck the police, you know how we do

[Verse 2 M1]

14 A yo my life is like “Roots”

15 It's a true story

16 It's too gory for them televised fables on cable

17 I'm a runaway slave watching the North Star

18 Shackles on my forearm, running with the gun in my palm

19 I'm an African.

20 Never was an African-American

21 Blacker than black, I take it back to my origin

22 Same skin hated by the klansmen

23 Big nose and lips, big hips and butts dancing. What?

[HOOK M1 and Stic]

24 I'm a African, I'm a African [louder]

25 And I know what's happening

26 I'm a African, I'm a African [louder]

27 And I know what's happening

28 You a African? You a African? [louder]

29 Do you know what's happening?

30 I'm a African, I'm a African, [louder]

31 And I know what's happening.

[Female voice]

32 It's plain to see. You can't change me cuz I'm people army for life (4x)

[Speaker unknown]

33 Where you from fool?

[Verse 3 M1]

34 No I wasn't born in Ghana, but Africa is my momma

35 And I did not end up here from bad karma

36 Or for B-Ball, selling mad crack or rapping

37 Peter Tosh tried to tell us what happened

38 He was saying if you black, then you African

39 So they had to kill him, and make him a villain

40 Cuz he was teaching the children.

41 I feel him.

42 Dun was trying to drop us a real gem

43 That's why we bucking holes in the ceiling when we hear it.

[HOOK M1 and Stic]

[M1 and Stic]

44   A-F-R-I-C-A, Puerto Rico, Haiti, and J.A.

45   New York and Cali, F-L-A

46   No it aint 'bout where you stay, it's ‘bout the motherland

(repeat 2X)

[Verse 4 Stic]

47   It's that tank top, flip flop, Knotty dread lock

48   Fuck a cop. Hip hop

49   Make your head bop

50   Bounce to this socialist movement

51   My environment made me the nigga I am

52   Uncle Sam came and got me and the rest my fam’

53   Tried to infiltrate and murder off the best of my clan

54   I'm not American, punk, Democrat or Republican

55   Remember that most of the cats we know be hustling

56   My momma work all her life and still struggling

57   I blame it on the government and say it on the radio. What?

58   And if you don't already know

59   All these Uncle Tom ass kissing niggas gotta go.

APPENDIX B

Hip-Hop

[M1]

1 Uh. Uh. Uh. 1, 2. 1, 2.

2 Uh. Uh. 1, 2. Uh. Uh. 1,2. 1,2.

[Sticman]

3 All my dogs

Hook [Sticman and M1]

4 It's bigger than hip hop, hip hop, hip hop, hip

5 It's bigger than hip hop, hip hop, hip hop, hip hop

[Verse One: M1]

6 Uh. One thing 'bout music, when it hit, you feel no pain.

7 White folks say it controls your brain, I know better than that, that's game

8 And we ready for that, two soldiers head of the pack, matter of fact who got the gat?

9 And where my army at?

10 Rather attack, then not react.

11 Back the beats.

12 It don't reflect on how many records get sold on sex, drugs, and rock and roll,

13 Whether your project's put on hold

14 In the real world,

15 These just people with ideas.

16 They just like me and you when the smoke and cameras disappear.

17 Again the real world [background: world], is bigger than all these fake ass records

18 When poor folks got the millions and my woman's disrespected.

19 If you check 1,2, my word of advice to you is just relax.

20 Just do what you got to do, if that don't work then kick the facts.

21 If you a fighter, rider, ?bout'er?, flame ignitor, crowd exciter

22 Or you wanna just get high, then just say it.

23 But then if you a liar-liar, pants on fire, wolf-cry agent with a wire

24 I'm gonna know it when I play it

Hook

[Verse Two: Sticman]

25 Uh. Who shot Biggie Smalls? If we don't get them, they gonna get us all

26 I'm down for runnin' up on them crackers in they city hall

27 We ride for y'all.

28 All my dogs stay real.

29 Nigga don't think these record deals gonna feed your seeds and pay your bills

30 Because they not.

31 Emcees get a little bit of love and think they hot

32 Talking 'bout how much money they got.

33 Nigga all y'all records sound the same.

34 I'm sick of that fake thug, R & B, rap scenario all day on the radio

35 Same scenes in the video.

36 Monotonous material.

37 Y'all don't here me though.

38 These record labels slang our tapes like dope.

39 You can be next in line and signed, and still be writing rhymes and broke

40 You would rather have a Lexus, or justice, a dream or some substance?

41 A Beamer, a necklace or freedom?

42 Still, a nigga like me don't player hate, I just stay awake

43 This real hip hop,

44 And it don't stop 'til we get the po-po off the block.

45 They call it...

hook (repeat 2xs)

[M1 and Sticman]

46 DP's got that crazy shit. We keep it crunked up,

47 John Blazen shit. [background: What?]

48 DP's got that crazy shit. We keep it crunked up,
49 John Blazen shit. [background: What a nigga wanna do?]
50 DP's got that crazy shit. We keep it crunked up,
51 John Blazen shit. [background: 1,2. 1,2]
52 DP's got that crazy shit. We keep it crunked up,
53 John Blazen shit.
54 DP's got that crazy shit.
55 We keep it crunked up.

56 They call it… [background echo: call it]
57 Fake, fake, fake records

APPENDIX C

Police State

[Speaker: Omali Yeshitela, …]

1 You have the emergence in human society
2 Of this thing that's called the State
3 What is the State?
4 The State is this organized bureaucracy.
5 It is the police department.
6 It is the Army, the Navy
7 It is the prison system, the courts, and what have you.
8 This is the State. It is a repressive organization,
9 But the state, and gee, well, you know, you've got to have the police,
10 Cause… If there were no police,
11 Look at what you'd be doing to yourselves!
12 You'd be killing each other if there were no police!
13 But the reality is…
14 The police become necessary in human society,
15 Only at that junction in human society
16 where it is spite between those who have and those who ain't got

[Verse One: Sticman]

17 I throw a Molotov cocktail at the precinct, you know how we think
18 Organize the hood under I Ching banners
19 Red, Black and Green instead of gang bandanas
20 F.B.I. spying on us through the radio antennas
21 And them hidden cameras in the streetlight watching society
22 With no respect for the people's right to privacy
23 I'll take a slug for the cause like Huey P.
24 While all you fake niggaz try to copy Master P.
25 I want to be free to live, able to have what I need to live
26 Bring the power back to the street, where the people live
27 We sick of workin for crumbs and fillin up the prisons,

28 Dyin over money and relyin on religion for help,
29 We do for self like ants in a colony,
30 organize the wealth into a socialist economy,
31 A way of life based off the common need,
32 And all my comrades is ready,
33 We just spreadin the seed.

[Hook: M1 and Sticman]
34 The average Black male
35 Live a third of his life in a jail cell
36 Cause the world is controlled by the white male
37 And the people don't never get justice
38 And the women don't never get respected
39 And the problems don't never get solved
40 And the jobs don't never pay enough
41 So the rent always be late; can you relate?
42 We livin’ in a police state

[Verse Two: M1]
43 No more bondage,
44 No more political mobsters,
45 No more secret space launches
46 Government departments started it in the projects,
47 Material objects, thousands up in the closets
48 Could've been invested in a future for my comrades
49 Battle contacts, primitive weapons out in combat
50 Many never come back
51 Pretty niggaz be running with gats
52 Rather get shot in they back than fire back
53 We tired of that - corporations hirin blacks
54 Denyin the facts, exploitin us all over the map
54 That's why I write the shit I write in my raps
55 It's documented, I meant it
56 Every day of the week, I live in it; breathing it

57 It's more than just fucking believing it

58 I'm holding M1s, rolling up my sleeves and shit

59 It's cee-lo for push-ups now, many headed for one conclusion

60 Niggaz ain't ready for revolution

[Hook: M1 and Sticman]

[background: police sirens]

[Speaker unknown] [Fred Hampton, Jr.]

61 I am a revolutionary

62 And you're gonna have to keep on sayin that,

63 You're gonna have to say that I am a proletariat.

64 I am the people, I'm not the pig.

[Speaker unknown]

65 Guiliani you are full of shit!

66 And anybody that's down with you!

67 You could man - make things better for us

68 And you cutting the welfare out,

69 knowing damn well when you cut the welfare out,

70 A person gonna do crime…

APPENDIX D

Propaganda

[News snippets]

1 Let me now turn, to our program for the future...[interrupt]

2 The economy right now, is extremely supportive of the president

3 And his policies [interrupt]

4 FBI scientists have found chemical traces,

5 Consistent with a bomb or a missle,

6 On a piece of wreckage... [interrupt]

7 Police using clubs and tear gas against demonstrators...[interrupt]

8 They called me a mother-[sound: bleep]so-and-so

9 And a white facist. Like they said,

10 You're getting some of your own medicine

[Hook 1: Female voice sings]

11 Telling lies, to our vision

12 Telling lies, to our children

13 Telling lies, to our babies

14 Only truth, can take us right on ahead

[Verse One: M1]

15 You can't fool all the people all of the time

16 But if you fool the right ones, then the rest will fall behind

17 Tell me who's got control of your mind? your world view?

18 Is it the news or the movie you're taking your girl to? (uh)

19 Know what I'm saying cause Uncle Sam got a plan

20 If you examine what they telling us then you will understand

21 What they planting in the seeds of the next generation

22 Feeding our children miseducation

23 No one knows if there's UFOs or any life on Mars

24 Or what they doing when they up in the stars

25 Because i don't believe a word of what the president said

26 He filling our head with lies got us hypnotized
27 When he be speaking in code words about crime and poverty
28 Drugs, welfare, prisons, guns and robbery
29 It really means us, there's no excuse for the slander
30 But what's good for the goose,
31 Is still good for the gander see [interrupt Sticman]

[Hook 2: Sticman and M1]
32 I don't believe Bob Marley died from cancer
33 Thirty one years ago I woulda been a panther
34 They killed Huey cause they knew he had the answer
35 The views that you see in the news is propaganda

[Hook 1]

[Verse Two: Sticman]
36 I don't want no computer chip in my arm
37 I don't wanna die by a nuclear bomb
37 I say we all rush the pentagon, pull out guns
38 And grab the intercom, my first word's will be I believe
39 Man made God, outta ignorance and fear
40 If God made man, then why the hell would he put us here?
41 I thought he's supposed to be the all loving
42 The same God who let Hitler put the Jews in the oven
43 We don't fall for the regular shit, they try to feed us
44 All this half-ass leadership, flipping position
45 They turn politician and shut the hell up and follow tradition
46 For your TV screen, is telling lies to your vision
47 Every channel got some brainwashed cop shit to watch
48 Running up in niggas cribs claiming that they heard shots
49 It's a plot, but busta can you tell me who's greedier?
50 Big corporations, the pigs or the media?
51 Sign of the times, terrorism on the rise
52 Commercial airplanes, falling out the sky like flies

53   Make me wonder what secrets went down with Ron Brown

54   Who burnt churches to the ground with no evidence found?

55   It's not coincidence, it's been too many steady incidents

56   It coulda been the Klan who put that bomb at the Olympics

57   But it probably was the FBI, deep at the core

58   Cause if they make us all panic then they can start Martial Law

[Hook 2: Repeat 2xs]

59   Police is telling lies fooling millions

60   What are they teaching our kids in these school buildings?

61   Televised, enterprise in all the killing

62   Controlling our lives, this ain't living

63   No this ain't living

[Chant: Repeat 2xs]

64   FBI, CIA

65   ATF, KKK

66   IRS, TNT

67   CBS, NBC

[Hook 1]

[Speaker: Huey P. Newton]
…Uh, we view each other uh, with uh, a great love and a great understanding and that we try to expand this to the general, uh, black population and also people, oppressed people all over the world, and, I
[Speaker: Huey P. Newton - continued]
think that uh, we differ from uhmm... uh, some other groups simply because we understand the system better than uh, most uh, groups understand the system, and uh, with this realization, uh, we attempt to form a strong political base based in the community with the only

strength that we have and that's the strength of uh, a potentially destructive force if we don't get freedom.

APPENDIX E

INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC UHURU MOVEMENT PLATFORM

Retreived from INPDUM Website at

http://www.inpdumchicago.com/platform.html

1. We Demand International Democratic Rights and Self Determination for African People.
2. We Demand Community Control of the Police in the African Community and the Immediate Withdrawal of the Terroristic [sic] Police and U.S. Military Forces from the African Community.
3. We Demand Community Control the Schools and Mandatory African History in Public Schools.
4. We Demand African Community Control of Health Care.
5. We Demand Community Control of Housing.
6. We Demand the Removal of Parasitic Merchants and Slumlords from the African Community.
7. We Demand an End to the Colonial Court and Prison Systems which have the Majority of African Man [sic] Incarcerated, on Probation or Parole, Prisoners and Prisoners of War.
8. We Demand an End to the Theft, Kidnapping, Sale, Abuse, and Removal of African Children from their Communities under the Genocidal Foster Care System.
9. We Demand an End to the Political and Social Oppression and Economic Exploitation of African Women.
10. We Demand Reparations for African People.

INPDUM Platform (Continued)

11. We Demand a United Nations Supervised Plebiscite to Determine the Will of the African Community as to their National Destiny.
12. We Demand an End to the Political Economy of the Counterinsurgency; the Parasitic Relationship that Benefits the White Population with Millions of Dollars for jobs, Resources and a Stabilized Economy off of the Counterinsurgency (war) on African People.

[Website image of Black Panther]

APPENDIX F

BLACK PANTHER PARTY PLATFORM(1970)

Retreived from Heath, 1976, p. 247

WHAT WE WANT

1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.
2. We want full employment of our people.
3. We want an end to the robbery by the capitalist of our Black Community.
4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.
5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.
6. We want all black men exempt from military service.
7. We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER [author's emphasis] of black people.
8. We want freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county, and city prisons and jails.
9. We want all black people when brought to trail to be tried in a court by a jury of their peer group or people from their black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States.

BPP Platform (Continued)

10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. And as our major political objective, a United Nations – supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny.

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