

Hip-Hop Made in Germany: From Old School to the Kanaksta Movement

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The November 2000 issue of the German weekly *Focus* reads as follows:

Whether hamburger, Hollywood stars, or hip-hop—what young people love and buy, obviously, needs to come from across the Atlantic. The United States is the role model for our youth. Whatever comes from over there is simply cool.¹

The *Focus* article goes on, however, to give a measured assessment of the perceived threat to “German” culture and “German” youth by U.S. popular culture imports. It questions the notion of “Americanization” typically defined as the most pernicious form of cultural imperialism, where U.S. popular culture products invade and taint authentic cultures, if not wipe them out altogether. Defining Americanization as cultural imperialism is not particularly helpful in analyzing transatlantic transfers of popular music culture.² The binary opposition of an economic and cultural power center versus an economically weak and therefore powerless margin does not correctly describe the relationship between the United States and Europe. Of the “big five” transnational record companies, only one is in U.S. hands—Time-Warner-WEA. One belongs to a Japanese multinational company, Sony-CBS, and the others are in European hands with one of the largest conglomerates, BMG-RCA, headquartered in Germany.³

The transformation of the U.S. music channel MTV, whose show *Yo! MTV Raps* helped to disseminate hip-hop to a broad audience, serves as another example that contests the cultural imperialism the-

ory. MTV was forced to adjust to local contexts in today's global but highly fragmented media landscape. In order to stay competitive, it became necessary for MTV to offer local programming instead of the global Anglo-American one that it initially aired. In Germany, Viva, which started in 1993, successfully challenged the monopoly of MTV and its monolingual policy (i.e., the use of English lyrics only) that excluded indigenous German rock, pop, and hip-hop music.⁴ These examples show that the assumption that economic power translates into an unmediated cultural effect is just as problematic as the jargon of authenticity and globalization that the cultural imperialism thesis employs. Arjun Appadurai's approach to cultural transfers represents a more adequate conceptualization of the messy processes that are going on globally. He maintains that

the new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models (even those which might account for multiple centers and peripheries). . . . at least as rapidly as forces from various metropolises are brought into new societies they tend to become indigenised in one or another way: this is true of music and housing styles as much as it is true of science and terrorism, spectacles and constitutions.⁵

When attempting to understand the U.S.-European relationship, Rob Kroes and others have argued in a similar vein that the transatlantic transfer of popular culture is more usefully conceptualized as a form of "creolization" or hybridization, that is, an appropriation via negotiation of the incoming pop culture products based on the specific structure, traditions, and needs or interests of the indigenous culture(s) rather than the one-way street paradigm implicit in the term "Americanization."⁶ This holds true for the reception and adaptations of hip-hop culture in Germany as well. I want to emphasize the plural, "adaptations," since there is not just one single adaptation of the U.S. model. Both gender and socioethnic positions were and are determining variables in the way hip-hop was and is received.

In spite of the diversity found in German hip-hop culture, three dominant strains of adapting the U.S. model can be distinguished. The Old School, that is, the pioneers of hip-hop active since the early 1980s, developed a vague idea of a transnational hip-hop community that was still strongly indebted to the U.S. model of message rap. The New School, which emerged almost concurrently with unification and

became the focus of the music industry's attention, saw itself as stepping out of the shadow of U.S. popular culture. Hip-hop was for them *Die letzte Besatzermusik*. In fact, Die Fantastischen Vier (also known as Fanta 4), the commercially most successful rap crew to date, titled their (auto)biography with this neologism.⁷ Finally, the second and third generation of immigrants adopted rap music in order to forge an alternative identity in opposition and outside of the confines of ethnicity, race, and nationality.

The Old School: Postnational Identity in the Age of Global Hip-Hop

From the perspective of the Old School, hip-hop today is a story of the betrayal of its origins, ideals, and community or, in other words, of hip-hop's fall from grace for commercial reasons. The memories of Old Schoolers such as Cora E. or members of Advanced Chemistry, Fresh Familee, King Size Terror, and Rock da Most conjure up images of tight-knit communities of local practitioners well versed in and insisting on hip-hop's trinity of rap music (DJ-ing/MC-ing), break dancing, and graffiti.⁸ In the Old School narratives—whether in raps or interviews—hip-hop features itself as saving its practitioners and German youth in general from drifting into delinquency and as giving their lives meaning and purpose. One of the most well-known raps on this topic is perhaps Cora E.'s “Schlüsselkind” (Latchkey kid), which is a tribute to the transformative power of hip-hop culture and directly refers to the country of its origin, the United States:

I almost drowned but was lucky the wave from the United States
threw me back onto land
Started to live, became active, and dreamed for the first time
without being asleep
There was something waiting for me and I went for it
Something I could get and I stayed on it and that's how it began
that I was able to achieve something
I wanted to rap like Shante.⁹

The key words in the discourse of the Old School are those on which the Old School in the United States was built: respect, doing one's own thing, active participation and not just passive consumption, peace and nonviolence, education, independence, community, and realism. The

Old School did not equate “realness” with “street credibility” as defined by U.S. hip-hop. Quite to the contrary, the German Old School was aware of the differences between the situation in the United States and their own. “Realness” was a synonym for being true to oneself or, in other words, for a concept of authenticity. Many raps of the Old School address this issue and reject unreflected imitation of U.S. hip-hop as clichés and as the betrayal of the concept of realness. MC René, for instance, intones:

I cannot relate to street violence, so it would be fake to
have a gun go off, many love the topics that are trendy,
the themes that fly by on MTV, but where is your
personality collective clichés, will claim victory over facts,
no, 'cause rap is communication, expression, modern
conversation. A rapper who copies others is a copy for whom
I will never have respect.¹⁰

Whether diss rap, brag rap, or message rap, language plays an important role in rap music. Initially, during the 1980s, many German MCs rapped in English though not exclusively. To equate the use of English raps by homegrown rappers with Americanization is a reductive reading of the complicated process of transatlantic cultural transfers. It forgets about German history, namely, that there was no untainted German folk traditions left after Nazism on which an alternative popular music and youth culture could have been built. U.S. popular culture, especially those examples originating from African-American musical traditions, was the only valid tune that held the promise of liberation. In this context, the predominance of English within popular culture makes sense as a distancing device from the Nazi past and as an attempt to participate in a global intercultural community of dissent challenging mainstream culture. As to the latter, the function of English for popular music culture is comparable to the use of English in the international scientific community.

Furthermore, when hip-hop was adopted in Germany it was the Old School of U.S. hip-hop that was appropriated, that is, the message rap of Grandmaster Flash and the Glorious Five and the idea of the Zulu Nation developed by Afrika Bambaata. This school, however, represented a critique of white America.¹¹ U.S. message rap, therefore, precluded an easy identification with mainstream white America—or, to be more precise, with the myth that the United States is the land of

freedom, prosperity, and equal opportunity for all. Under the sign of the Zulu Nation, U.S. hip-hop functioned like other adaptations of artistic expressions of African-Americans by white audiences.¹² Hip-hop was read and embraced as a genuine articulation of dissent or resistance to mainstream culture and was imagined to transcend the specific national and social situation. In other words, hip-hop inherited the rebel image of rock 'n' roll.

As previously pointed out, the German hip-hop scene was from the beginning aware of the differences between the social situation in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and in the United States and understood that a simple identification with disenfranchised African-Americans would be untenable. Yet, the inner city as presented by U.S. hip-hop culture through music, videos, and film became the metaphor of oppression and resistance with which the German Old School identified and from which it constructed its vague self-understanding as a transnational, multicultural community in opposition to everything that is reminiscent of mainstream. As one Old Schooler, DJ Cutfaster, put it in lamenting the decay of hip-hop into commercial pop: "Most people have forgotten that hip-hop functions as a mouthpiece against violence and oppression and ultimately against the ghetto, which has become the metaphor for the deplorable state of our world."¹³

The Old School had an ideological investment in hip-hop that precluded a crossover into the mainstream. Its practitioners envisioned and propagated hip-hop as an underground community that needed to keep its distance from and to create resistance to mainstream culture in order to avoid co-optation. This hip-hop culture was defined in an inclusive rather than exclusive manner, with the big exception of gender. The recollections of the Old School, therefore, emphasize that hip-hop in its early golden years transcended national, ethnic, racial, and linguistic identifications. In the words of a rap by Cora E., one of the few female rappers,

nationalities come together as a subculture
in spite of the different languages there is understanding
no matter where you come from, hip-hop grants you asylum.¹⁴

Many hip-hop crews were indeed multiethnic or multiracial and multilingual. Advanced Chemistry—with its members of Italian, Haitian-German, and Ghanese-German family background—or Fresh Familee—with Tachi from Turkey, Suli from Macedonia, and Higgi from Morocco—may serve here as examples. Many insiders refer to

the importance of break dancing for immigrant youth and their strong numbers among the B-Boys during the 1980s.¹⁵ Hip-hop was learned by doing, that is, by watching and copying from the short break-dance sequence in the movie *Flashdance* or the U.S. documentaries *Wild Style* and *Beat Street*. All of these creative expressions did not require taking expensive lessons. As fresh imports, break dancing, graffiti, rapping, and DJ-ing created a free-for-all because they were not yet coded in terms of ethnicity or nationality and social class like most other after-school activities.¹⁶ Hence, articulating the relationship between U.S. hip-hop and hip-hop made in Germany in terms of an analogy between the situation of specific social groups, then, makes sense to a certain extent.¹⁷ Yet, it is important to remember that this is only one facet of the complex transatlantic transfer of hip-hop culture; the adaptation of hip-hop by German middle-class kids is a different story.

The New School: Commercialization and Nationalization

Even when using the Old School's notion of authenticity or sense of realness as a measure for authentic or valid appropriation, the happy-go-lucky party rap music of the New School (for which the Stuttgart-based, solidly middle-class crew *Fantastische Vier* functioned as a midwife) cannot be chided as inauthentic. The music critic Günther Jacob convincingly argues that, in the global pop culture arena, artistic, especially musical, forms can be rightfully appropriated by various groups around the globe. Hence he rejects the critique of white European hip-hop artists as engaging in pure posturing because they have not experienced racial discrimination as black rap musicians have. Jacob maintains: "They [white hip-hops] engage in posturing only if they imitate contents and attitudes that have no relationship to their own life world or are only aesthetically mediated."¹⁸

Like the Old School, the middle-class party hip-hops of the 1990s appropriated the musical forms of U.S. hip-hop in their own way. Nevertheless, the New School was also most critical of the one-to-one equation of the United States and Germany, emphasizing instead the differences between their own social situation and that of African-American youth. Already in 1991, Fanta 4 realized the imitation of U.S. hip-hop as clichéd and intoned:

It has nothing to do with hip-hop
to rest on one's old ghetto image

for one it makes sense for me to tell who I am and where I
 come from
 and there indeed it is not that bad.”¹⁹

However, New and Old School were at odds in their understanding of how hip-hop and mainstream culture should relate to each other—it is the ever recurring problem of selling out to the mainstream for commercial gain. The New School crew Fanta 4 admits in its (auto)biography that they had no political agenda but were only interested in becoming popular, to go mainstream from the very beginning, and to pursue this goal strategically.

Fanta 4’s and other hip-hop crews’ switch to rapping predominantly, if not exclusively, in German was motivated by several factors, including the crossover potential. Another reason could be simply insufficient knowledge of English. In fact, one member of Fettes Brot, a New School crew, bluntly admitted that to be the case.²⁰ More importantly and within the logic of rapping, the switch to German made sense since rap wants to communicate with its audience. The desire to be understood by the audience, in terms of both conveying a message and showing off one’s rhetorical skills, was therefore the primary motivating factor. Rapping in German was not an issue until Fanta 4’s German party rap stormed the charts in 1991, after which the music industry realized that the resurgence of national sentiment in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall “opened up the space for the commercialization of a new nationally coded youth culture.”²¹ As one of the recent historiographers of hip-hop pointed out bitterly, “nationalities and language did not play a role in the hip-hop scene until Fantastische Vier turned being German into a brand.”²²

As much as the Old School rapped against nationalism and racism and attempted to hold on to its ideal of a transnational, multicultural hip-hop identity of dissent,²³ the music industry’s commodification strategies led to the differentiation of popular music and youth culture along national or ethnic lines. The year 1991 saw the arrival of the first sampler under the music industry’s new national flag of “Deutsch Rap,” whose title *Krauts with Attitude* clearly refers to the U.S. crew NWA (Niggers with Attitude). The cover of the record utilized Germany’s national colors of black, red, and gold. The liner notes include a call for opposing the strong influence of English, meaning the Anglo-American influence of popular culture. Oddly enough, of the fifteen songs, only three were in German, one was in French, and the rest were in English.²⁴

Even if the switch to rapping in German was initially made to facilitate the genuine adaptation of African-American music culture to the German situation (as well as to attempt to step out of the shadow of U.S. hip-hop), the music industry's marketing strategies reinforced the ethnic differentiation and politics of exclusion typical for postwar West German society. Adegoke Odukoya, who defines himself as Afro-German and was a member of the multiethnic crew Weep Not Child, summed it up: "All of a sudden, there was a definition of German hip-hop that no longer included many crews. All those who rapped in English or told their story in Turkish or Yugoslavian no longer felt at home and also were no longer welcome."²⁵

From Oriental Hip-Hop to Kanakstas

The ethnonational differentiation in hip-hop was dubbed "Oriental Hip-Hop" to designate and market those multinational or multiethnic crews who used their other language(s), which was frequently, but not exclusively, Turkish. At the same time when *Krauts with Attitude* was released, the Nuremberg crew King Size Terror released their first vinyl with a Turkish language rap called "Bir Yabancimin Hayati" (The life of the stranger). Both of these releases represent examples of how hip-hop got caught up in this market-driven ethnic labeling. As a *taz* article on the Turkish rap crew Cartel points out, rapping consistently in Turkish was not necessarily a choice but rather the result of being defined by mainstream culture as different, more precisely defined within the framework of Orientalist discourse as the exoticized other and marketed as such.²⁶

In light of this discourse and politics of exclusion, it is perhaps not surprising that U.S. hip-hop gained significance for immigrant youth again in the 1990s. This sociopolitical situation invited drawing, in particular, on the gangsta rap genre that was at the same time popular and controversial in the United States.²⁷ The most striking similarity between U.S. gangsta rap and hip-hop made in Germany is the reappropriation of ethnic slurs such as *Kanake* or *Kümmel* hurled at the immigrants by Germans. Already in 1994, the band Fresh Familee, for instance, problematized the derogatory term *Kanake* and German stereotypes about immigrant men with their rap "Sexy Kanake," and the MC Afrob has several raps in which he uses the equally insulting term *Kaffer* for people of Black-African or Caribbean descent. Today many young immigrants, primarily young Turks who grew up in Germany, refer to themselves as Kanakstas. The name *Kanaksta* likens

itself to the U.S. hip-hop model by combining the German slur for immigrant—*Kanake*—with U.S. slang (“gangsta”).

In the introduction to his book *Kanak Sprak*, Feridun Zaimoglu, who positioned himself as a spokesperson for the Kanaksta concept in the public sphere, articulates the parallel between the United States and Germany:

The foundation of this community is still a negative self-confidence as it articulates itself superficially in the seeming self-recrimination: Kanake! This derogatory term becomes a word of recognition and for identification that binds these “*Lumpenethnier*” together. Analogous to the black-consciousness movement in the United States, the various subidentities of immigrants recognize the broader thematic contexts and connections.²⁸

In Zaimoglu’s two anthologies—*Kanak Sprak*, which features only men, and *Koppstoff*, which features only women²⁹—several Kanakstas give their position on the situation of the second and third generation of immigrants in Germany. They maintain that hip-hop is a means to reassert themselves against both the politics of exclusion and the multicultural discourse that often assigns the immigrants an exoticized ethnic identity. The language used in these anthologies indeed resembles rapping and serves a dual purpose: to give voice to the anger and frustration of the second and third generation of immigrants and to codify a new vernacular, “Kanak Sprak,” that is, a “metropolitan jargon” as Zaimoglu calls it himself.³⁰ At the same time, however, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the African-American vernaculars emerged in a historically very different situation from the “Kanak Sprak” used by parts of the immigrant community in Germany. The two should therefore not be equated with one another.

The question arises as to how to evaluate this appropriation of the gangsta rap postures by or for the Kanaksta concept. On the one hand, the Kanaksta concept is eager to shatter the media’s infatuation with the immigrant as an inner-city kid torn between two cultures.³¹ On the other hand, the Kanaksta concept adopts the slang and posturing of the U.S. gangsta rap, that is, the ghetto image, as a provocation of mainstream society, including the contemporary German multicultural peaceniks. Yet, instead of reading the Kanaksta phenomenon as a form of unreflected Americanization, I contend that it is a deliberately marked adaptation in direct response to mainstream culture’s

paranoid invocation of U.S. race relations, for which the inner city has become a negative symbol of social decay and of the failure of the multicultural society.

A *Spiegel* cover story may serve here as one concrete example. In this article on the socioethnic disparity of German society, *Der Spiegel* repeatedly compared the situation in German cities with its increasing ethnic differentiation and clashes between immigrant and German youth to the “gang wars in the slums of the big cities in the United States.”³² In addition, *Der Spiegel* connected German inner-city youth, that is, immigrants, with hip-hop and violence by inserting an interview with a Turkish rapper into the title story.³³ The most visible articulation of the Kanaksta movement to date, the group Kanak Attak,³⁴ founded in 1998, responded to the *Spiegel* article directly by using the cover on its first Web site. Not only are Kanak Attak events accompanied by hip-hop music, but the group relies on the hip-hop concept of sampling as the guiding principle for their attempts to escape the politics of ethnic identification, or rather stigmatization, as clearly stated in its manifesto:

Kanak Attak is a community of different people from diverse backgrounds who share a commitment to eradicate racism from German society. Kanak Attak is not interested in questions about passport or heritage, in fact it challenges such questions in the first place. . . . Our common position consists of an attack against the “Kanakisation” of specific groups of people through racist ascriptions which denies people their social, legal and political rights. Kanak Attak is therefore anti-nationalist, anti-racist and rejects every single form of identity politics, as supported by ethnic absolutist thinking.³⁵

While appropriating the language and posture of U.S. gangsta rap, this group does not, however, pick up on separatist tendencies, that is, the black nationalism of some U.S. hip-hop artists. To the contrary, the Kanakstas appear to return to the idea of a transnational and transethnic identity that was in a far less articulated way the foundation of the Old School’s self-understanding in the 1980s. Being a Kanaksta is therefore not tied to ethnicity or nationality, that is, being an immigrant to Germany, but instead defined as an attitude expressing opposition to mainstream culture, including the left-liberal concept of multiculturalism, and as an attitude that embraces difference. As one early member of the Kanak Attak put it in an interview: “This moment of

difference that we propagate is not simply one that can be ethnicized. Instead it is a political difference, a difference to the mainstream. Or perhaps an opposition against conformity.”³⁶

In spite of this embrace of difference and the fact that the Kanak Attak group in Berlin thematizes issues of gender and sexual preferences, the larger context of hip-hop made in Germany shares with the U.S. hip-hop scene a problematic approach to gender, with respect to both the content of the lyrics and the limited number of female hip-hop artists. Without exonerating hip-hop culture on the issue of gender, it is important to remember that popular music culture did not start the exclusion of women from certain cultural activities and also did not invent misogyny but rather represents a reflection of these prevalent features in patriarchal societies around the globe.³⁷ The limited German discussion on hip-hop and gender is split into two camps: In the one camp are those who reject misogynist raps as indecent, either from a moral or from a feminist perspective. In the other camp are those who argue that these lyrics and machismo postures should not be taken literally or seriously since they are nothing but a game. While these two main positions cut across gender lines, this should not obscure a fact that Holly Kruse has highlighted in her discussion of gender in popular music culture, namely, that “the power relationships in production and consumption” of all popular music have “attempted to limit the roles and meanings available to women” in the popular music world.³⁸

The patriarchal power relationships in production and consumption are generally, though not uniformly, hostile to women who seek to deviate from their prescribed gender role. Hip-hop culture is no exception. While many raps rearticulate gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes, others confront them critically, such as Fischmob’s “4’55,” which speaks out against rape and the widespread stereotype that women wearing sexy clothes are actually asking for it.³⁹ A consensus exists, however, across most genres of popular music culture that female artists’ looks are as important as, if not more important than, their music, reinforcing a predominantly male expectation that women should wear sexually titillating outfits no matter their musical talents. This was most recently documented in an on-line magazine, *www.hiphop.de*, which calls itself “The Hip Hop Community on the Internet.” In one of the chatrooms, entitled “Hip Hop Girlz,” the following statement triggered an ongoing exchange on women and hip-hop: “Here anything can be posted from people who feel that girls should wear nothing but baggys (okay, almost nothing else) to those who think that females have no clue about hip-hop.”⁴⁰ This statement was accompanied by a photo of a scantily clad woman showing off her

cleavage titled “HipHopBunny.” The contributions to this chatroom rearticulate the notion that hip-hop is still a male-dominated music genre in which women represent a minority and can occupy only a narrowly defined set of roles.

Interestingly, the few female hip-hop artists who seem to have made it refrain from addressing these issues; that is, they appear oblivious to the long tradition in the music world of prescribing women’s role within it by either marginalizing their contributions or excluding them altogether as performers. At least one female hip-hop artist, Sabrina Setlur, has attempted to capitalize on male fantasies for her own advantage. Although opinion as to whether Setlur’s music qualifies as hip-hop is divided, she started out as a part of Moses Pelham and Thomas Hofmann’s rap crew, Rödelsheimer Hartreim Projekt, whose marketing strategy was to present itself as the evil and violent counterpart to the squeaky clean party hip-hop of the Fantastische Vier.⁴¹ Setlur initially used the stage name “Schwester S,” with obvious reference to the African-American hip-hop vernacular. The bi-racial Setlur shares with female U.S. rappers the darker hue of her skin and (with some of them) a penchant for glamorous and sexy fashion. Since her first CD *S ist soweit* (S. is ready) was released in 1995 on Pelham Power Production’s label, Setlur has gained notoriety in the press not for her music but for her looks and her private life. The media’s infatuation with Setlur serves as an example of how female rappers and hip-hop fans are still under the spell of the male gaze, which reduces women to their physical appearance.

The two other leading women of German hip-hop—Cora E., especially in her rap “And the MC is female,” and the newcomer from East Germany, Pyranja, who released her first CD in the fall of 2000—fault their own gender for the situation for lacking the courage and drive to make it in the hip-hop world.⁴² Based on these examples, it appears that some of the leading female rappers in Germany do not want to dwell on the gendered nature of the music business as long as they can be successful, even if it means reinforcing stereotypes or accepting the status of a novelty act. One is left to wonder why rap music, which has won recognition for its ability to thematize ethnic and racial inequalities, falls silent when confronted with the problem of gender.

How gender and ethnic or national identity intersect represents a complex issue that requires more research, especially for the German context. For instance, the extent to which Setlur’s bi-racial heritage plays a role in the hip-hop community’s and the media’s preception of her would be an interesting case in point. Without such detailed research and because of the minority status of women in German hip-

hop, it is hard to assess whether and, if so, how gender affects transatlantic transfers of music culture. For now, it is only possible to answer the question—How American is hip-hop made in Germany?—in more general terms.

While popular music and youth culture in Germany might respond to the impetus of U.S. popular music models, this transatlantic transfer cannot adequately be described as a form of cultural imperialism but rather as a reworking of U.S. models in response to domestic constellations. At the same time, the adaptation of hip-hop in Germany shows that the United States still functions as the foil and/or projection screen for conceptualizing a multiethnic/multiracial, multilingual, and transnational hip-hop community for both the Old School and the Kanakstas. Yet, different aspects of hip-hop culture in the United States became relevant depending on the socioethnic position of the hip-hop practitioners and the current sociopolitical situation. German hip-hop started out as a transnational and cosmopolitan youth subculture that was indebted to Afrika Bambaata's idea of the Zulu Nation and employed, at first, predominantly English raps. It became, however, enmeshed in the discourse on national identity in the wake of unification. With the marketing categories "Deutsch-Rap" and "Oriental Hip-Hop," the music industry articulated and utilized these growing national sentiments for its reintegration of rap music into mainstream culture. Whereas the Old School's switch to German was analogous to the U.S. Old School's idea of message rap, that is, edutainment, the signifying practices from appropriation of derogatory terms to a minority street vernacular was more important for the Kanaksta concept. U.S. popular culture may still be the primary point of reference for both mainstream and dissident youth cultures. Yet, the various youth subcultures that appropriate U.S. popular culture show themselves to be aware of the differences between their own situation and that in the United States. The three strains of hip-hop made in Germany are therefore good examples of the process of creolization or hybridization that characterizes transatlantic transfers of popular music culture, and they challenge the negative notion of Americanization as cultural imperialism.

NOTES

1. Alex Wolfsgrubern, "We want you, and you . . ." *Focus* 46 (November 2000): 50. "Ob Hamburger, Hollywoodstar oder Hip-hop, was von der Jugend geliebt und gekauft wird, muss offenbar von jenseits des Atlantiks kommen.

Amerika ist für die Jugend Vorbild. Was von dort kommt ist einfach cool." All translations in the essay are my own.

2. For a discussion of the concept and theory of cultural imperialism, see John Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism* (London: Pinter, 1991). For a critique of the cultural imperialism theory's usefulness for popular music culture, see Tony Mitchell, *Popular Music and Local Identity: Rock, Pop, and Rap in Europe and Oceania* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1996), esp. chap. 3.

3. Mitchell, *Popular Music and Local Identity*, 52.

4. See Gerald Traufetter, "Die Vermischung der Weltkulturen," *Der Spiegel* 44 (2000), 234–38, and "'Ich bin die Mama, die Schwester mit dem Hammer.' Der Musikkanal Viva bringt MTV in Zugzwang," *Die Welt*, February 10, 1996. On-line archive: <http://www.deldaten/1996102/10/0210Ku99270.htm>

5. Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Public Culture* 2, no. 2 (spring 1990): 5–6.

6. Rob Kroes, "Americanisation: What Are We Talking About?" in *Cultural Transmissions and Receptions: American Mass Culture in Europe*, ed. R. Kroes, R. W. Rydell, and D. F. J. Bosscher (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1993), 302–18. After completion of this essay, Mark Pennay's article "Rap in Germany," which also emphasizes the significance of the specific local context for understanding German hip-hop, was published in the fall of 2001 in *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop outside the USA*, ed. Tony Mitchell (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 111–32.

7. Die Fantastischen Vier, *Die letzte Besatzermusik: Die Autobiographie*, ed. Ralf Niemczyk (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1999).

8. See, for example, Sebastian Krekow and Jens Steiner, *Bei uns geht einiges: Die deutsche Hip hop-Szene* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf and Schwarzkopf, 2000), 12–13, as well as statements by several hip-hop artists in this historiography.

9. Cora E., "Schlüsselkind," *Corage* (EMI, 1996).

ich ertrank fast sank doch hatte Glück die Welle aus Amerika
spülte mich wieder an Land zurück begann zu leben wurd
aktiv und hab zum ersten Mal geträumt ohne daß ich schlief
da war Etwas das auf mich wartete also ging ich
Etwas das ich bekomme kann bleib ich dran also fing es an
dass ich Etwas erreichen kann . . . ich wollte rappen wie Shante.

10. MC René, "Untergrundunterhaltung," *Renevolution* (MZEE, 1995).

Ich habe keinen Bezug zu Gewalt auf Asphalt, deshalb
wäre es Betrug, wenn die Waffe losknallt, viele lieben die
Themen, die im Trend liegen, Rigidimidgi-Schemen, die
über MTV fliegen, aber wo ist die Persönlichkeit geblieben,
kollektive Klischees, die über Tatsachen siegen, nein, denn
Rap ist Kommunikation, Ausdrucksform, moderne
Konversation. Ein Rapper, der kopiert, ist nur eine Kopie,
Respekt für 'ne Kopie bekommst Du von mir nie."

See also MC Réne, "Nur im Original," on the same CD, as well as Advanced Chemistry, "Alte Schule," *Advanced Chemistry* (360 Degree Records, 1995), and Hardkor Kingz, "Sprengt die Brücken," <<http://www.epoxweb.de/lyrics/hiphopyricsesk.htm>>.

11. See the following historical accounts of U.S. hip-hop culture: Alan Light, ed., *The VIBE History of Hip-hop* (New York: Three River Press, 1999); Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1994); and, as a German resource, Ulf Poschardt, *DJ-Culture: Diskjockeys und Popkultur* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1997).

12. For a discussion of this reappropriation within the United States, see Russell A. Potter, *Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip-Hop and the Politics of Postmodernism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995); for the earlier German context, that is, the adaptation of jazz and rock 'n' roll, see Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

13. Quoted in Sascha Verlan and Hannes Loh, *20 Jahre Hip-hop in Deutschland* (Höfen: Hannibal, 2000), 84: "Die meisten haben vergessen, dass Hip-hop ein Sprachrohr ist gegen Gewalt und Unterdrückung, letztlich gegen das Ghetto, das zur Metapher für Missstände in der Welt wird."

14. Cora E., "Könnt ihr mich hör'n?" *Könnt ihr mich hör'n?* (Buback, 1993).

nationalitäten komm' zusamm' in einem untergrund
trotz verschied'ner sprachen herrscht verständigung
egal woher du kommst, hip-hop gibt dir asyl.

15. See, for example, the rap "Eski Okul" (Old school) by Boulevard Bou, which like many other raps can be found on this Web site: <<http://www.epoxweb.de/lyrics/hiphopyricsesk.htm>>:

Anfang 80 als alles begann,
brachten viele meiner Brüder die Breakdancebewegung voran . . .
Soviele Türken und Kurden waren dabei, . . .

16. See Annette Weber, "Du kannst es dir nicht aussuchen," *die tageszeitung*, June 27, 1995, 16.

17. On this issue see, for example, Andreas Welskop, who was the initiator of the government-sponsored SWAT Posse in Berlin, in Krekow and Steiner, *Bei uns geht einiges*, 138–49.

18. Günther Jacob, *Agit-Pop: Schwarze Musik und weiße Hörer* (Berlin and Amsterdam: Edition ID-Archiv, 1993), 206. "Zu Posern werden sie [white hip-hop] erst, wenn sie Inhalte und Haltungen imitieren, die in ihrer eigenen Lebenssituation keine oder nur ästhetisch vermittelte Voraussetzungen haben."

19. Fantastische Vier, "Hip-hop Musik," *Vier gewinnt* (Sony, 1992).

es hat ein für allemal mit hip-hop nichts zu tun
sich auf seinem alten ghettoimage auszuruhen
zum einen hats für mich den sinn zu sagen wer ich bin
zu beschreiben wo ich herkomm und da ists halt nicht so schlimm.

See also Smudo, who is a member of Fantastische Vier, and Torch of Advanced Chemistry in Krekow and Steiner, *Bei uns geht einiges*, 40 and 52f.

20. Schiffmeister in Krekow and Steiner, *Bei uns geht einiges*, 154: "Mein Schul-Englisch hat nie dazu gereicht, in einer anständigen Rap-Band zu sein oder das zu tun, was ich mir unter Rap vorgestellt habe. Das hätte ich nie auf englisch machen können. Deshalb fand ich den Schritt relativ logisch."

21. Dietmar Elflein, "From Krauts with Attitudes to Turks with Attitudes: Some Aspects of Hip-hop History in Germany," *Popular Music* 17, no. 3 (1998): 257.

22. Verlan and Loh, *20 Jahre Hip-hop in Deutschland*, 44: "In der Hip-hop-Szene hatten Nationalitäten und Sprachen nie eine Rolle gespielt, die Fantastischen Vier machten Deutschsein zu einem Markenzeichen."

23. Some of the most striking examples of opposing xenophobia and nationalism from the early 1990s are Fresh Familee, "Ahmet Gündüz," *Coming from Ratinga* (1991); Advanced Chemistry, *Fremd im eigenen Land* (MZEE, 1992), and "Operation §3," *Advanced Chemistry* (360 Degree Records, 1995); State of Departmentz, "Auf der Jagd nach 3. Oktober" and "Mach meinen Kumpel nicht an!" *Reimexplosion* (Rap Nation, 1994); "Weep Not Child," *From Hoyerswerda to Rostock* (Buback, 1993), and *Halt keine Gewalt! Hip-hop Aktivisten Gegen Gewalt* (Juiceful, 1994); and Toni L., *Dummerweise* (360 Degree Records, 1996).

24. See also Elflein, "From Krauts with Attitudes to Turks with Attitudes," 258.

25. Quoted in Verlan and Loh, *20 Jahre Hip-hop in Deutschland*, 143: "Plötzlich kam eine Definition von 'deutschem Hip-hop' zustande, wo viele Gruppen nicht mehr drin vorkamen. Alle jene, die auf Englisch gerappt haben oder ihre Story auf Türkisch oder Jugoslawisch erzählt haben, fühlten sich da nicht mehr zuhause, waren auch nicht mehr willkommen."

26. On Orientalism see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), and *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993). See also the comments by Alper in Weber, "Du kannst es dir nicht aussuchen," 16: "Irgendwann wird klar, daß du es dir nicht aussuchen kannst, daß das die andern für dich tun."

27. Verlan and Loh date this orientation toward gangsta rap from the United States at the end of 1995 in their *20 Jahre Hip-hop in Deutschland*, 282; see also Akay in Feridun Zaimoglu, *Kanak Sprak: 24 Mißtöne vom Rande der Gesellschaft* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1995), 25. On the controversy surrounding U.S. gangsta rap, see Rose, *Black Noise*, esp. chap. 4.

28. Zaimoglu, *Kanak Sprak*, 17.

Noch ist das tragende Element dieser Community ein negatives Selbstbewußtsein, wie es in der scheinbaren Selbstbezeichnung seinen oberflächlichen Ausdruck findet: Kanake! Dieses verunglimpfende Hetzwort wird zum identitätsstiftenden Kennwort, zur verbindenden Klammer dieser "Lumpenethnier." Analog zur Black-consciousness-Bewegung in den U.S.A. werden sich die einzelnen Kanak-Subidentitäten zunehmend übergreifender Zusammenhänge und Inhalte bewußt.

29. Feridun Zaimoglu, *Koppstoff: Kanaka Sprak vom Rande der Gesellschaft* (Hamburg: EVA/Rotbuch, 1998).

30. Zaimoglu claims in Verlan and Loh, *20 Jahre Hip-hop in Deutschland*, 156, that this vernacular is authentic, that is, that he simply recorded it. See, on this claim, Petra Fachinger's chapter, "Writing Back to Liberal Discourse: Feridun Zaimoglu's Grotesque Realism," in her monograph *Rewriting Germany from the Margins: "Other" German Literature of the 1980s and 1990s*. (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 98–111.

31. See Kanak Attak, "Manifesto: Kanak Attak and Basta!" which can be found on the following Web site: <http://www.passagiere.de/ka/manifest_dt.htm>; see also Tachi and Ade on this issue, both in Verlan and Loh, *20 Jahre Hip-hop in Deutschland*, 138–42.

32. "Zeitbomben in den Vorstädten," *Der Spiegel* 16 (1997): 79.

33. "Ich muß blöd gewesen sein": Rapper Hakan Durmus über seine Zeit in der Kreuzberger Türken-Gang *36 Boys*, *Der Spiegel* 16 (1997): 88.

34. On Kanak Attak, see their Web site: <<http://www.kanak-attak.de>>; Verlan and Loh, *20 Jahre Hip-hop*, 155–65; and Thomas Jahn, "Türksun = Du bist Türke: HipHop, House und Pop: In den türkischen Ghettos von München, Köln, Berlin pocht ein neues Wir-Gefühl," *Die Zeit* 3 (January 19, 1996), 21. See also the respective entry in Carmine Chiellino, ed., *Interkulturelle Literatur in Deutschland: Ein Handbuch* (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2000), 445–46.

35. Kanak Attak, "Manifesto."

36. Laura in "Dieser Song gehört uns! Interview mit Imran Ayata, Laura Mestre Vives and Vanessa Barth von Kanak Attak," *diskus: Frankfurter StudentInnen Zeitschrift* 1 (May 1999).

37. For a detailed history of the difficulties women had to break into rock music and rock-related genres, see Lucy O'Brien, *She Bop: The Definitive History of Women in Rock, Pop, and Soul* (London: Penguin Books, 1995).

38. Holly Kruse, "Gender," in *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture*, ed. Bruce Horner and Thomas Swiss (Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 85.

39. Fischmob, "4'55," *Männer können ihre . . .* (Plattenmeister, 1995).

40. Here is the entire entry to the chatroom: "Wie sieht's aus mit einem kleinen Topic ueber Maedchen, Hip-hop und wie die beiden zusammenpassen . . . ??? Hier kann alles rein, von Leuten, die finden, dass Maedels nix anderes tragen sollten als Baggys (na ja, FAST nix anderes) bis zu denen, die meinen das die weibliche Seite keine Ahnung von Hip-hop hat . . . !!! Ich fange dann mal an und lasse Bilder sprechen." Bild: "HipHopBunnyo4.jpg."

41. On Moses P. and the Rödelheimer Hartreim Projekt, see Verlan and Loh, *20 Jahre Hip-hop*, 187–89, 249–51.

42. Cora E., "Und der MC ist weiblich," *Corage* (EMI, 1996). See also Pyranja's statements in Krekow and Steiner, *Bei uns geht einiges*, 284–85, and in Verlan and Loh, *20 Jahre Hip-hop*, 258–67.