

THE VIGOROUS LOCAL:  
CULTURE INDUSTRY, HIP-HOP AND THE POLITICS OF RESISTANCE  
IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

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CEREN MERT

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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Prof. Dr. Sencer Ayata  
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

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Prof. Dr. Yusuf Ziya Özcan  
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

---

Assoc. Prof. Meyda Yeğenoğlu-Mutman  
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc. Prof. Meyda Yeğenoğlu-Mutman

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mesut Yeğen

Assist. Prof. Dr. Asuman Suner

## **ABSTRACT**

**THE VIGOROUS LOCAL:  
CULTURE INDUSTRY, HIP-HOP AND THE POLITICS OF RESISTANCE  
IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION**

Mert, Ceren

M.S., Department of Sociology

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Meyda Yeğenoğlu-Mutman

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The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how music has become a significant means of communication in the process of globalization, and how it integrates the ‘global’ and the ‘local’ while enabling the aggrieved populations to speak through and to express their antagonistic stances. In addition to the discussions of globalization, this study analyzes the medium of music along the areas of media and identity politics. In this respect, it deliberates on the global and local features of hip-hop. Although born in the ghettos of Bronx, New York, this global youth culture has been adopted by other minority youths in order to voice their anger and frustration towards the exclusionist practices of the state, as well as racism and discrimination they face in their host countries. Accordingly, the second and third generation Turkish youths in Germany and South Asian youths in Britain have revealed their rage through the subversive lyrics they employed. Therefore, these lyrics can also be regarded as narratives that indicate these immigrant youths as representatives of resistance and defiance. Despite the fact that the musical works of these minority youths may be considered a product of the ‘culture industry’, this does not eliminate their resistive and subversive characteristics.

Keywords: Global, Local, Media, Culture Industry, Diaspora, Music, Hip-Hop, Immigrants, Resistance.

## ÖZ

YERELİN ZİNDE GÜCÜ:  
KÜRESELLEŞME ÇAĞINDA KÜLTÜR ENDÜSTRİSİ, HIP-HOP  
VE DİRENİŞ POLİTİKALARI

Mert, Ceren

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Sosyoloji Bölümü

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Bu tezin amacı, küreselleşme sürecinde müziğin nasıl önemli bir iletişim aracı haline geldiğini ve küresel ile yerel'i birleştirirken mağdur insanların kendilerini ve muhalif duruşlarını ifade etmelerine nasıl yardımcı olduğunu göstermektir. Bu çalışma, küreselleşme tartışmalarının yanısıra, medya ve kimlik politikaları alanları içinde müziğin iletişimsel boyutunu analiz etmektedir. Bu açıdan hip-hop'un küresel ve yerel özellikleri üzerinde durulmaktadır. New York kentinin Bronx bölgesinde ortaya çıkan bu küresel gençlik kültürü, yaşadıkları ülkelerde ırkçılık ve ayrımcılıkla, ayrıca devletin dışlayıcı uygulamaları ile karşı karşıya kalan diğer azınlık gençleri tarafından da benimsenmiş, ve duydukları öfke ve husumeti hip-hop aracılığıyla dile getirmişlerdir. Bu kapsamda, Almanya'da yaşayan ikinci ve üçüncü nesil Türk gençleri ile İngiltere'deki Güney Asyalı gençler kullandıkları başkaldırıcı lirikler kanalıyla duydukları öfkeyi dışarıya vurmuşlardır. Bu nedenle, bu lirikler, göçmen gençleri direniş ve meydan okuyuşun sözcüleri olarak gösteren öyküler olarak da görülebilir. Her ne kadar bu azınlık gençlerinin müzik yapıtları 'kültür endüstrisi'nin ürünleri olarak düşünülebilirse de, bu onların direnen ve başkaldıran özelliklerini yok edememiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Küresel, Yerel, Medya, Kültür Endüstrisi, Diaspora, Müzik, Hip-Hop, Göçmenler, Direniş.

To My Mother,  
for her love and continuous support

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Date: September 4, 2003

Signature:

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## INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to demonstrate how music, in the process of globalization, has become a significant means of communication as it consolidates the ‘global and the ‘local’ while enabling the aggrieved populations to speak through and to express their antagonistic stances. Besides the discussions on globalization, this thesis analyzes the medium of music along the lines of these two areas of study: the media and the identity politics. Accordingly, our perception of the world is being transformed immensely by globalization as it brings about a new experience of orientation and disorientation, as well as new senses of placed and placeless identity.<sup>1</sup> Being indispensable facets of globalization, the media and communication systems accelerate the course of action of globalization as they bring into view ‘different’ forms of lifestyles, cultures and habits which alters people’s apprehension of belongingness. The media and communication systems may therefore disrupt or strengthen the existing forms of national identification, as they can also bring about new forms of bonding and solidarity. Despite the fact that information technologies have been under the influence and power of the First World countries, and their endeavor to control and manipulate the local cultures have brought forth a cultural hegemony, they have themselves been effected by the reverse flows of non-Western ideas and practices.

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<sup>1</sup> David Morley and Kevin Robins, *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 121

The music media and industry are unique features of globalization, as they tend to create and promote cultural goods for consumption, which as a consequence become very influential in generating and remodeling lifestyles and subcultures around various musical tastes. They further have a considerable impact on the formation and fashioning of 'popular cultures', which they achieve through the profound impact of the cultural products they produce and exhibit. MTV, which is a fine example of global music media, is an effectual medium exactly in this aspect. By continuously displaying music video clips, or in other words, amalgamating sounds and images, it tends to promote the "popularity" of certain lifestyles and cultural forms. MTV further seeks to accomplish this by transforming locally specific cultures and sounds into global popular ones by emphasizing their distinctive characteristics, however in its intention to turn them into sites of consumption for its own capitalistic gain.

As globalization is not a linear process, that is, complete homogenization or de-territorialization, but is at the same time unceasing fragmentation, it also paves the way for the proliferation of new localities and identities. Accordingly, the so-called "locals" strive for peculiar modes of communication in order to claim their identities against the dominant discourses and narratives of the nation-states in where they occupy their own distinctive 'spaces of existence'. Music, in this respect, is a powerful medium of communication through which the local or diasporic peoples assert their own discrete identities. Consequently, music's profound association with social identities is intensified by globalization. As Steven Feld suggests, this intensification is a result of the ways that cultural separation and social exchange have been mutually increased by the transnational flows of technology, media and

popular culture.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, in the course of globalization, identities that are formed around music and musical styles have become more visible and audible than ever before. This especially holds true for the diasporic peoples, as music has become an efficient medium for their self-expression.

In this respect, the Turkish minority youths in Germany and the South Asian immigrant youths in Britain have appropriated a global youth culture and sound in claiming their particular identities against the exclusionist approaches that they endure in the countries they reside, that is, hip-hop. Although it initially came out from the ghettos of South Bronx area, New York, hip-hop's radical nature comes rather from its uses than from its origins as it allows other ethnic minorities to utilize its music and culture as a means of resistance and opposition. Incorporating their own "traditional" sounds into hip-hop, these ethnic minority youths have exerted their distinctive cultures and identities, while at the same time using hip-hop as a means of communication in calling forth a unity among their people. Conceiving themselves to be in a similar situation with that of the Blacks, that is, oppressed, neglected and "colored" in the societies they dwell, and against those negative images that is attributed to them in the media, they employ the identity that they bring forth via hip-hop culture and its music as a strategizing tool. It is an identity that they can make use of in positioning themselves against racism and discrimination.

Although hip-hop has a commercial side to it, as it is displayed on the global music media channels such as MTV, thus also becoming a popular entertainment, the

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<sup>2</sup> Steven Feld, "A Sweet Lullaby for World Music", in *Globalization*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 189

cultural works made or performed at the local grassroots levels cannot be undermined. Despite all the profit-oriented and homogenizing effects of the global media, it cannot totally obliterate local meanings, as well as it cannot entirely demolish the site of struggle and subversion of the local.

The first chapter is based on a general analysis on globalization and the media, particularly involving the aspects of the 'local' and the 'global', that is, the giant media corporations, how they produce a cultural hegemony over the localities and in the global arena. Thus, I initially started with a brief discussion of what globalization is, especially in terms of the communication systems and the mass media. Further, incorporating what 'ideology' meant within the argumentations of the mass media, I sought to reveal the theoretical framework on the mass media's, and the media texts' role on creating or promoting this dominant ideology. Moreover, I studied in-depth the rise of the global media, that also involved the analysis of a global media market and the transnational media corporations. What's more, I emphasized the debates on media imperialism and cultural hegemony and went through how the global media texts were received by the local cultures. And finally, I discussed the aspect of the media's role in bringing forth a national culture and an identity, which I believe is important within the issue of globalization. Now this first chapter focused on an overall issue of globalization and mass media, which I think is important for comprehending the status of music media and industry in the global context that is dealt in the third chapter. It is also crucial to view such a general argument on globalization and media to give a more profound insight on the 'culture industry', a concept brought forth by Adorno and Horkheimer, which comprises all the sectors of cultural production, including the media.

In the second chapter, I tried to review the claims made by Adorno and Horkheimer, as well as Benjamin, on the culture industry and the mass media. Nevertheless, I firstly started with the discussions on art and technology, which were essential as a pre-reading of the culture industry. This section embodied the debates between Benjamin and Adorno over the technological media, as well as the artworks, within the age of mechanical reproduction. Later on, for a more profound analysis on the ‘culture industry’, I went through how Adorno and Horkheimer thought of the latter, that is, as a process of standardization and homogenization by producing cultural goods in a manner that also transformed the culture itself into a commodity. Moreover, the critiques on mass culture made by Adorno and Horkheimer were also reflected.

In the third chapter, I tried to articulate some of the basic arguments made in the first two chapters. That is, by going through the music industry and media on a global scale and discussing how the giant music industries and media corporations engage in the production of a global popular culture. This situation is more clarified by analyzing the production of popular music, and especially through the global music media such as MTV. Thus, I elaborated on the music media and industry as a ‘culture industry’ and adopted Adorno and Horkheimer’s standpoints accordingly. Moreover, I went through the technological changes that took place in the music production and how this effected the mass marketing of popular music as well as popular culture. What’s more, I examined the popular music production in terms of the rise of the music video and music television. Thus, I searched through MTV in-depth and afterwards incorporated the debates on whether it was a postmodern phenomenon or not. Besides, I furthered this chapter by looking at how the once “white” audience-

oriented MTV (as it had avoided Black artists and their music making), in the later years, by the 1990s, started to show rap videos, thus paving the way for the hip-hop culture to enter the mainstream.

The fourth chapter started by discussing the globalization of music, and focused on some aspects of 'world music' and questioned whether it was one of the faces of the 'culture industry' or not. That is, while 'world music' appeared to give opportunity for diverse "local" sounds within the global music market, it also drew them into a more "global" musical array, thus making them, in a way, similar. Furthermore, I reflected certain theoretical points concerning the formation of identity through music. Then I studied the issue of post-colonial culture and the politics of resistance, where the Black diaspora was the focal point. In accordance with the fact, the place of music within the Black diaspora, and how music has been a medium for reflecting political resistance (e.g. the Rastafari movement via reggae music) was analyzed. Moreover, the influence of Black popular culture and music on the "white" youths was also presented. Additionally, I stressed some arguments concerning hip-hop as a hybrid and post-colonial political sound; and put forward how certain (electronic) music genres, those that are produced by digital technology, replaced racial affiliations by class division, and as a result how the Black diaspora resistance faded away.

In the last chapter, I deliberated on how hip-hop was also adopted by the Turkish and South Asian immigrant youths in Europe, in expressing their opposition and resistance against the discrimination and hostility they faced in their host countries. In other words, I examined how they incorporated a global youth culture and music, that is, hip-hop and rap, and how they localized it in order to speak out the hardships

they encountered. With that purpose, I went through the lyrics of the music groups, *Cartel* and *Islamic Force* in Germany, and *Asian Dub Foundation* and *Fun^Da^Mental* in Britain, in order to reveal the immigrants' rage and aversion towards the society's prejudice and the negative approaches of the media. Even though the cultural works of these youths could be considered as the products of the 'culture industry', they were yet resistive and subversive, and maintained their distinctive local characteristics. In this respect, these groups' appearance on global music media like MTV and VIVA TV did not eliminate their oppositional stances; just on the contrary, by means of mass media their voice became more resonant, enabling them to be heard on a larger scale.



## CHAPTER 1

### THE 'GLOBAL' AND THE 'LOCAL' IN THE DISCUSSIONS OF GLOBALIZATION AND MEDIA

In the process of globalization, some regions of the world have become overloaded with information disseminated by the media. In other words, those sections of the world –which are mainly the first world countries- have efficient technological means where information is made available by the mass media and access to that information is rather easier compared to those parts of the world that are deprived of it. Hence, there is an unequal appropriation of information as well as the related technological means. Therefore, is there a mass media domination (that is rather a “globalized” mass media) that leads to a cultural hegemony biased in favor of the first world countries? This is one of the main questions that I will try to cover in this chapter by looking at such issues as ideology, media hegemony, cultural imperialism, and so on. Accordingly, for Carruthers:

The content of the ‘globalized’ media broadly reflects the interests, concerns, and values of elites, and generally of *First World* elites... While some social theorists proclaim the emergence of a cosmopolitan global consciousness, others point to the stubborn preference of many audiences for national, regional or more local news.<sup>1</sup>

What’s more, if we assume that globalization always remains an unfinished project, then it should not be thought of as an almighty and an all-absorbing process. Consequently, the creation of a ‘global culture’, for Ien Ang, should not be perceived

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<sup>1</sup> Susan L. Carruthers, *The Media at War: Communication and Conflict in the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), p. 202 (emphasis mine)

as a straightforward homogenization practice. Ang interestingly maintains that globalization rather encompasses those processes of systemic desegregation in which the local cultures turn out to be thoroughly interdependent and interconnected.<sup>2</sup> As a result they lose their autonomous and ‘separate’ existence –thanks to the dissemination of mass-mediated culture, or in other words, a global culture evolved around mass media. Nonetheless, the loss of a separate existence should not be understood as the “removal” of local cultures, because the territories of the local (whether imagined or not) cannot be that easily abolished despite the fact that there is a ‘powerful’ global media. Also, in our contemporary world, through the appropriation of mass-mediated global flows and technologies, or in other words mass media and communications system, the local cultures tend to reproduce themselves everywhere.

For Fredric Jameson, for example, globalization is a ‘communicational’ concept, which repeatedly masks and transmits cultural or economic meanings. Although Jameson is against the idea that we should look at globalization solely through media or communicational terms, he is aware that their role in accelerating the globalization process is profound.<sup>3</sup> In this sense, Ien Ang suggests:

As we are moving towards the end of the century the communications industries, as part of the ever expanding capitalist system, have been in a process of profound economic and institutional restructuring and transformation, which can be characterized by accelerated transnationalization and globalization. We can see this in the emergence of truly global, decentred corporations in which diverse media products (film and television, press and publishing, music and video) are being combined and integrated into overarching

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<sup>2</sup> Ien Ang, *Living Room Wars: Rethinking Media Audiences for a Postmodern World* (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 153

<sup>3</sup> Frederic Jameson, “Globalization as a Philosophical Issue”, in *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, eds. Rob Wilson & Wimal Dissanayake (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 55

communications empires such as Bertelsmann, Murdoch, Berlusconi and Time Warner.<sup>4</sup>

Hence, one can maintain that looking through either by the cultural or the economic side (if it can easily be separated), the ‘global media’ and information technologies, to say it once more, cannot be scrubbed out from the globalization analysis, as both of these areas of study are the two sides of the same coin. Accordingly, one can witness the influence of transnational corporations (in this sense the giant media corporations), which transgress and go beyond the existing boundaries and disrupt the established territories. Correspondingly, this has deep political and cultural outcomes. Therefore, it is important to view media imperialism and the cultural hegemony brought by the former and its consequences on the ‘Third World’, and localities in general. Nevertheless, before that, it is crucial, I think, to talk briefly about mass media together with the ideology it imposes.

### **1.1 An Overview of Ideology within Mass Media**

According to Karl Marx, ideologies refer to definite forms of social consciousness, which make up a ‘superstructure’ that relies heavily upon and corresponds to that reality, or the ‘real foundation’ (of course together with legal and political relationships) that are constituted by the relations of production. Further, Marx also views ideologies as having a relative autonomy and their own distinctive properties. Moreover, the concept of ideology also carries within itself the implication of ‘distortion’. Actually, this second meaning is the most common usage, where it is

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<sup>4</sup> Ien Ang, *Living Room Wars: Rethinking Media Audiences for a Postmodern World* (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 142

been argued that Marx used ideology mostly in this sense.<sup>5</sup> Also, in a similar way, Louis Althusser defines ideology as a form in which human beings ‘live’ their relationship to the conditions of their existence: or as a form which represents back to them their relationship, to their conditions of existence. Thus, in this respect, ideology embraces the sphere of representations where an “imaginary” relationship to the conditions of existence is produced.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Marxists have used the concept of ideology when talking about ruling or dominant forms of mental representation. Hence, in the Marxian sense, ideology is profoundly concerned with the transmission of systems of signification across *class* lines. So how can media studies be related to such discussions of ideology? In other words, why is the (Marxian) notion of ideology important in the media analysis?

Ideology as a concept urges three main areas of concern in relation to the media. Initially, it involves the nature of the social control exerted over the media. At this stage, the focus is on the structure of the ownership of the media, and to what extent the ruling-class controls the operations of the media and how this can be secured. Secondly, the question is on how the signifying systems are passed on by the media as to achieve the effect of ‘misrecognition’ attributed to them. Lastly, but not the least, as seen in each of these areas of concern, the media, especially the state-owned media such as the BBC, occupy a position that is critical within the more general Marxist debates concerning the way in which the economic, political and ideological

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<sup>5</sup> Tony Bennett, “Theories of the Media, Theories of the Society”, in *Culture, Society and the Media*, eds. Michael Gurevitch et al (London & New York: Routledge, 1982), pp. 47-48

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48

levels of the social formation should be understood as relating to one another.<sup>7</sup> All in all, for Tony Bennett:

Marxist inquiry into the media is motivated by the need to furnish a knowledge of their workings that can be put to use in the production of subversive signifying systems which might offset the effects of dominant ideology and contribute to the formation of a revolutionary consciousness within oppressed social groups and classes.<sup>8</sup>

Many critics have also suggested that ideology should be extended to cover theories, ideas, texts and representations that legitimate the interests of the ruling gender and race, as well as class powers. In accordance with the fact, for Douglas Kellner:

Media culture... helps establish the hegemony of specific political groups and projects. Media culture produces representations that attempt to induce consent to certain political positions, getting members of the society to see specific ideologies as 'the way things are'... Popular cultural texts naturalize these positions and thus help mobilize consent to hegemonic political positions.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, according to Douglas Kellner, making a critique of hegemonic ideologies necessitates the indication of how certain positions in the cultural texts of media bring forth the reproduction of existing political ideologies in current political struggles. For instance, some films or popular music convey liberal or conservative positions, while on the other hand others articulate radical stances. Further, against those who restrict the study of ideology only to discursive textual propositions, Kellner asserts that ideology embodies discourses and figures, concepts and images, as well as theoretical positions and symbolic forms. He moreover states that such an expansion of the notion of ideology paves the way for the exploration of how images, figures, narratives, and symbolic forms make up part of the ideological

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.49

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Douglas Kellner, *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics Between the Modern and the Postmodern* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 59

representations of gender, sexuality, race and class in film and popular culture.<sup>10</sup> Kellner, in order to clarify his point, gives the film *Rambo* as an example. He upholds that to carry out a “multicultural” and figurative ideology critique of this film, it would not be enough to simply go against its militarist or imperialist ideology. Or attacking the ways that the militarism and imperialism of the film functions in favor of the imperialist interests by legitimating intervention in regions as Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Central America, and so forth. Rather one should *also*, according to Kellner, criticize the discourses and figures that compose the racial and gender problematics of the text. Thus, indicating how representations of the Vietnamese, the Russians, men, women, etc. are too a fundamental part of *Rambo*, and that it also represents a particular set of images of “white” male power. In addition, Kellner adds how this particular film reflects American “innocence” and strength, and warrior heroism, which act as a means of masculine and patriotic ideologies that were especially important during the Reagan era.<sup>11</sup>

Kellner, furthermore, states that the representations of popular cultural texts compose the political image through which individuals view the world, interpret political events, personalities, and so forth. Therefore he sees such figural analysis to be significant. Accordingly, he stresses that in a mass-mediated image culture, it is representations that help make up an individual’s view of the world, sense of personal identity and gender, socio-political thought and action, and so on. Hence, he claims that ideology is a process of representation, figure, image, and rhetoric, as much as it is a process of discourse and ideas. What’s more, it is through the creation of a set of representations that a hegemonic political ideology is formed, for Kellner

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 60

–such as New Right Conservatism. “Representations thus transcode political discourses and in turn mobilize sentiment, affection, perception, and assent toward political positions, such as the need for male warriors to protect and redeem society.”<sup>12</sup>

One can at this point ask: what about individuals who view such texts and images, are they totally unaware of such ideological underpinnings? This brings forward another issue: that is the media audience. Although we will go through this subject in terms of ‘consumers’ in the next chapter about *The Culture Industry*, I find it relevant to quote here the words of Schroder and Skovmand:

A picture is now beginning to emerge in which popular media audiences are characterized not only by degree of resilience to the dominant ideological meanings encoded in mainstream cultural products, but also by their cultural connoisseurship, their sensitive and often sophisticated appreciation of the aesthetic creations of the cultural industries.<sup>13</sup>

For this reason, one can argue that the media audiences are not altogether passive recipients as some critics would imply in the past, but are in a way, as Schroder and Skovmand suggest, cultural experts who are also resilient to the dominant ideological meanings. Nevertheless, one can still not underestimate the ideological influence of media texts and the cultural hegemony that they bring forth, which will be examined in-depth in the following pages when talking about the local effects of the mass media and communications system. However, before starting to discuss the cultural hegemony inserted by the media, it would be appropriate to study the historical processes that made possible the formation of a global mass media.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 60

<sup>13</sup> Kim C. Schroder and Michael Skovmand, “Introduction”, in *Media Cultures: Reappraising Transnational Media*, eds. M. Skovmand & K. Schroder (London & New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 4

## 1.2 The Rise of the Global Media: Towards An Ethical Dissolution?

‘Global capitalism’ needs ‘the global media’ in defining its features, where the latter is a necessary component of the former. Why? The reasons are many, but to sum up shortly one can say: first, the truly global media system being a very recent development reflects no small part of the globalization of the market economy, where one can suggest that it is even integral to the latter. Second, although the global media is only a part of an overall expansion and spread of an increasingly integrated global corporate system, it complements and supports the needs of other enterprises within the global market. For instance, the global media provides vehicles for advertising for the nonmedia enterprises. Also the global media’s news and entertainment yield an ideological environment which enables the political and economic domains to sustain themselves, which as a result paves the way for a profit-driven social order.<sup>14</sup>

Although the birth of an integrated global media market was in the late 1980s and did not reach its peak until the 1990s, the roots of the global media can be traced back to decades, even centuries earlier. According to James Lull, the starting point of modern Western media can be traced to the invention of the first mass communications technology in the mid fifteenth century Europe, which is the manual printing press. Lull writes that the emergence and growth of the printing press arouse a shift in the institutional power away from the church. The church previously controlled the flow of ideas and information through public channels, to new symbolic and cultural centers and networks. The first important social outcome of modern communications technology was therefore to challenge established lines of institutional authority.

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<sup>14</sup> Edward S. Herman and Robert W. McChesney, *The Global Media: The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism* (London & Washington: Cassell, 1997), p. 10



“With the advent of the printing press... a human community willingly harbored a nonreligious agent of social change, and permitted it to transform on a continual and systematic basis virtually every feature of social life.”<sup>15</sup> Moreover, for Lull, the further development of communication technology and the change of symbolic power from one institution to another brought up new ideological priorities. Consequently, media industries were commercial enterprises that were organized along capitalist lines from the very beginning. This was also true of film, radio, and television in the United States in the later centuries after the development of the printing press. For instance, in the United States the lawmakers initially granted that the new electronic media would be put to use for humanitarian and artistic purposes. Thus, in the 1920s, in the U.S., according to the legislation brought by the congressman, it was decided that radio, which was the then new medium, would not be used only as a commercial instrument. However, as it is not hard to imagine, the forces of the market subverted the previous aims of wanting to use the new media technologies for humanity’s benefit. Thus, instead of representing public interests and supporting citizens’ rights, most media agencies started to represent their own industry’s interests. This brings forth another fact: that is, as Lull explains, mass-mediated messages are produced by the industrialized capitalist societies as the same way commodities are produced. Accordingly, what becomes crucial in the media industries is the idea of profit – as a contrary to using the communication technologies solely for humanitarian and artistic purposes (which, as we mentioned above, was initially granted by the U.S. lawmakers in the early twentieth century).

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<sup>15</sup> James Lull, *Media, Communication, Culture: A Global Approach* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p. 117

The twentieth century, for Nick Stevenson, has also witnessed the development of a mass culture (and also the rise of an integrated global media market), which was based upon standardization, mass consumption and predictability. There was an extension of markets created by capital, as well as an extension of civil, political and social rights that played an important role in redefining webs of communication within society. Further, for Stevenson, the structural dominance of the press and television in this century brought forth the development of mass forms of media cultures.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, again within the twentieth century, as a result of technological developments, there was also a fast increase in the amount of information made available. Hence, such developments within the twentieth century have embraced the ideas of a global civil society, the decline of the national community and some regulative powers brought by the state.

What's more, before the 1980s and 1990s, it was through locally –or in other words domestically- owned radio, television and newspapers that the national media systems were represented. There were main import markets for film, TV shows, music and books that were basically dominated by U.S. firms. Hence, for Robert McChesney, prior to the 1980s and 1990s media systems were mostly national, whereas in the past few years a market for global commercial has emerged.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, according to Herman and McChesney, the general outlines of the contemporary media system became visible in the postwar years. Also, it was the combination of the global power of the U.S. and the imperial heritage of Britain that

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<sup>16</sup> Nick Stevenson, *The Transformation of the Media: Globalization, Morality and Ethics* (London & New York: Longman, 1999), p. 35

<sup>17</sup> Robert W. McChesney, "Global Media, Neoliberalism, and Imperialism", in *Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine* 52, no. 10 (2001): p. 1

helped to engender the contemporary media system, where as a result English turned out to be the 'global language'.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, they state:

This was of considerable value in assisting U.S. media activities abroad. At the same time, the dominant U.S. TNCs began to invest heavily overseas, and U.S. advertising agencies followed in their wake. The commercial media also moved abroad and began to consolidate and establish empires across formerly distinct media industries, with leading media firms acquiring significant holdings in film, music, publishing, and broadcasting.<sup>19</sup>

What's more, the global film industry was mainly under the control of some U.S. firms, such as Colombia, Twentieth Century-Fox, United Artists, MCA (Universal), Warner brothers, Paramount, and so on. Although there were huge domestic film industries in India and Japan, for example, Hollywood remained equivalent to the global export industry. The reason why it is crucial in pinpointing the effects of film industry and mainly Hollywood here is that, film exports increased enormously by the 1960s, where some U.S. studios were bringing about more income from foreign sources –thanks to the merits of global (corporate) capitalism and its boundary trespassing!- than from the U.S. market itself (however this fact not becoming the general rule until the 1990s). Hence, one can claim that the film industry in many respects stood as the pioneer of the advances brought by the global media system.

Nonetheless, television was the most important and profound media technology to emerge in the postwar era. The usage of television, as with other media, was initially centered around advanced capitalist nations. For instance, according to Edward Herman and Robert McChesney, there were more television sets in the U.S. than in

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<sup>18</sup> Edward S. Herman and Robert W. McChesney, *The Global Media: The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism* (London & Washington: Cassell, 1997), p. 18

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

the rest of the world combined, as late as 1961.<sup>20</sup> Even in the most profitable European markets and in the then newly independent Third World countries, television was placed as a nonprofit and sometimes noncommercial national service, which as a consequence limited the possibilities of the expansion of the global media. Again for Herman and McChesney, it was the demanding need for television programming that was seen as something to be commercially exploited. Once more, it was the U.S., by its economy, as well as its program producers who had the education and years of experience, to specialize and settle as the major force in this area in the world market. Furthermore, the predominant U.S. program producers, and for this reason the major U.S. program production studios, came to be the Hollywood film studios.<sup>21</sup> Also, by the 1970s, the “nature” of the emerging global media system was to a large extent visible. This was the largely ‘profit-driven’ system controlled by TNCs that were situated in the developed capitalist societies –mainly in the U.S. Moreover, the 1970s and 1980s also witnessed a campaign for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), which for Herman and McChesney, acted as a rhetorical challenge more than an organized political threat to the global status quo:

Much of the campaign was a ‘begging’ operation, asking western media firms to curtail profitable operations (while getting nothing in return) and western governments to donate capital for Third World communication investment, for no apparent reason except the spirit of Christian charity.<sup>22</sup>

What’s more, the decade of 1980 had ended with the newly emerged global media industry in a state of flux. Further, in 1990, for example, European television advertising spending per household was only one-quarter of that compared with the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 20

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 19

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 24

U.S. rate. Large sections of Asia had been hardly incorporated into the global commercial media market. A true global media market was coming into existence with its own logic and dynamics. However, later on in the 1990s, it was the coming together of print, radio, television, and the internet into an industry that used these mediums in its fullest range, –to provide information and entertainment in order to meet the interests of the largest possible audience- that were one of the main underpinnings which defined this era. As a consequence, there emerged an increasing global population that had an urge and desire to consume and process information. Also, it was again in the 1990s where the world had witnessed a rapid growth of production of (micro)media such as e-mail, mobile phones, and the file sharing networks (which one can say was a manifestation of the decreasing cost of technology), and it was through such mediums where people to people communication had started to take place. Hence, society had been faced with the challenge and opportunity to constitute a genuine dialogue and understanding – shortly, communication- with the overwhelming diversity and variety of the global space. In this respect, it would not be wrong to maintain that the period of the 1990s had been set for an important and significant turning point in the evolution of human communication. Overall, although the media systems were still mainly both national and local, the media acted across borders and continued to get stronger, which as a result had a profound impact on indigenous systems. The media markets were primarily seen as a single global market with having local subdivisions. The media markets' increasing growth was explained partly by the equally rapid degradation or elimination of many of the traditional, institutional, and legal barriers to cross the borders through transactions. What's more, the expansion of the media markets had been made easier by technological changes such as the growth of satellite

broadcasting, videocassette recorders, fiber optic cable and phone systems, and so on. Also, another important change in the 1990s was the increasing development of cross-border advertising, and trade and investment; which brought forth the demand for media and other communication services as a consequence.

At this point one might ask whether there has occurred an image of the media as if it were an “almighty” or an “omnipotent” mechanism, as a result of the media TNCs border trespassing and thus blurring the boundaries? Or, whether the global media markets in the late twentieth century have paved the way for a new “global consciousness”, where the media became both the destiny and the representative of humanity? In this respect, Tehranian maintains:

the infrastructure of global civilization is quickly growing through transnational media events and transnational networks such as CNN, BBC World Service, Star TV, MTV, the Internet, and NGOs... The media events of the last few decades have brought about a new global consciousness of the common human destiny... Anwar Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem,...the Gulf War, and the handshake between Yitzhak Rabin and Yassir Arafat have heightened a sense of globality in locality.<sup>23</sup>

Nonetheless, one cannot ignore the fact that there have also been oppositions towards the development of the global media system. Accordingly, for McChesney:

While media conglomerates press for policies to facilitate their domination of markets throughout the world, strong traditions of protection for domestic media and cultural industries persist. Nations ranging from Norway, Denmark, and Spain to Mexico, South Africa, and South Korea keep their small domestic film production industries alive with government subsidies.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Majid Tehranian, *Global Communication and World Politics: Domination, Development, and Discourse* (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999), pp. 45-46

<sup>24</sup> Robert W. McChesney, “Global Media, Neoliberalism, and Imperialism”, in *Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine* 52, no. 10 (2001): p. 29

Of course there is a lot more to say when talking about the rise of the global media, however my major preoccupation with this chapter is where the ‘Third World’ stands –or localities in general- within the global media’s imperialistic strategy. Are the “local” forms of communication disappearing, as a result of the ideological and hegemonic imperial notions projected by the media? Also, to what extent are the media industries of local music, film, news, etc. are effective in creating their own local cultures? Or, are they getting totally absorbed inside the mainstream global media and its hegemonic enforcement? Hence, in the following pages I will discuss these and other related questions.

### **1.2.1 Media Imperialism and Cultural Hegemony**

As James Curran and Myung-Jin Park underline, the modernization problematic in the 1960s viewed the developing and the Third World countries to follow the path of the “West”.<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, Daniel Lerner maintained that good communication was essential if the aim was to build a “modern” world. In this respect, Lerner claimed that a modern communication system enabled the transition from “traditional” to “modern”; or in other words, by means of modern communication systems, modernity displaced “tradition”. Lerner’s explanation for this was that new ideas and information could diffuse and expand people’s horizons. Further, for him, the political system could thus be matured so that it could have the flexibility to adopt and respond to change. Therefore, Lerner advocated that the media could inform people of things outside their village and encourage them to have opinions about public affairs, where as a result he believed that people could be turned out into a

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<sup>25</sup> James Curran and Myung-Jin Park, “Beyond Globalization Theory”, in *De-Westernizing Media Studies*, eds. James Curran & Myung-Jin Park (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 5

participant public. For this reason, he saw a close connection between mass media and political democracy.<sup>26</sup> However, for Curran and Park:

This is not how ‘modernization’ in fact took place in many pro-Western developing countries. The national development model was invoked to justify a repressive political system and the arbitrary exercise of political power. The media system was directed toward maintaining control rather than educating for democracy. In other words, modernization theory was used to restrict freedom of expression and to justify political indoctrination.<sup>27</sup>

In this respect, for Curran and Park, “tradition” was seen within the modernization theory as something to be defeated, instead of a legitimate element of civil society. Further communication was not viewed as an open-ended system of collective dialogue, but it was rather thought of as a trust-building exercise between leaders and the led.

Furthermore, as Curran and Park stresses, against this modernization theory, from the late 1960s and onwards there started to emerge a new mode of analysis concerning the media and communications studies that was basically focused around the term ‘media imperialism’. Within this media imperialism paradigm, it was asserted that American aid programs offered to developing countries, and the ‘free flow of information policies’ forwarded by the American state, had done nothing but support the American media industry in its interest to gain international supremacy. Accordingly, within an exploitative system of global economic relations, the “modernization” of developing countries was far from being close to self-sufficiency; just on the contrary they accommodated dependency. Modernization theory advocated American capitalist values and interests while wearing away the

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 4- 5

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 5



local cultures in the process of global homogenization.<sup>28</sup> Respectively, for Oliver Boyd-Barrett, media imperialism is:

either the product of the expanding of influence as part of a deliberate commercial or political strategy, or else disseminated unintentionally and without clear direction in a much more general process of political, social or economic influence, such as during the European colonial period in Africa and Asia. This influence is absorbed by countries either through contact, such as under colonialism, or is adopted by them as part of a deliberate commercial or political strategy.<sup>29</sup>

What's more, just like Boyd-Barrett, those who have centered around the discussions of media imperialism mainly focused on terms such as 'dependency' and 'domination' –where one comes across the *dependency theory* that originally came out from Latin America- and have also articulated these in their critical discourse on media and communications. Accordingly, for the neo-Marxist theories of dependency, the collapse of older forms of direct control brought about by imperialism, was replaced by new forms of manipulation, among which media imperialism was only a small section of it. Further, even when modern media such as the press was brought to the 'Third World', it was done so in the language of the colonialist. Hence, this paved the way for cultural power as it legitimated the languages and cultural practices of the colonizer.<sup>30</sup> Hence, one of the main contributions of the dependency theorists, in terms of their methodology, was their investigation of the structural relations that gave way to the unequal relations between rich and poor societies. Thus, they moved their studies beyond the *attitudes* of the world's poor. Moreover, according to this theory, the twentieth century transnational corporations (TNCs) played exactly the same role –but of course under

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6

<sup>29</sup> Geoffrey Reeves, *Communications and the 'Third World'* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 55

<sup>30</sup> Robert L. Stevenson, *Communication, Development, and the Third World: The Global Politics of Information*, (New York & London: Longman, 1988), p. 6

a different form and heading- as those imperial armies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Hence, according to this view, mass media and media TNCs played a vital role in the twentieth century, as persuasion was achieved mainly through the media apparatuses, rather than brutal force and armies like that of the preceding centuries. Nevertheless, one of the major blindness of the dependency theory and its advocates, I believe, was that it relieved people and the 'Third World' governments from taking responsibility for their actions. Or in other words, within the dependency theory, everything was reflected as being the fault of the 'outside forces', that is the new 'imperial powers' of the West. In this respect, Robert L. Stevenson ironically writes:

Why were 'Dallas' and Disney cartoons as popular in the Third World as they were in the United States? Not because of the universal appeal of fantasy programming, but because the communication TNCs first created the demand for it, then sold the programs to satisfy the demand. Why did Third World countries rely so heavily on the Western news agencies? Not because the Western agency files were fast, reliable, and interesting, but because the TNCs that controlled the news prevented the development of alternative organizations to challenge their hegemony.<sup>31</sup>

In this respect, for R. Stevenson, dependency theory was an appealing explanation for the sad state of the Third World a decade or two after liberation from colonialism.

Again to go back to Boyd-Barrett, he maintains that there are four dimensions of media imperialism.<sup>32</sup> *The first dimension* is that communication technologies were developed in the industrialized capitalist world and were initially exported as part of colonial relations, and second as part of the expansion of international capitalism. Hence, for Boyd-Barrett, the dependent societies were generally forced to adapt the

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 7

<sup>32</sup> Geoffrey Reeves, *Communications and the 'Third World'* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 55

means of technology that was established in the advanced capitalist countries. This as a result also brought forth technological dependence. *The second dimension* of media imperialism, in terms of Boyd-Barrett, is the set of industrial arrangements. That is the structure of organization and finance behind the shape of a communications vehicle. In particular, the growth of transnational media corporations, which after Second World War exported their finance, as well as their industrial and organization arrangements. Furthermore, the purchasing of media technology has come to mean that there occurred dependent nations within the *financial* and *organizational* structures of late capitalism; or to put it this way, most of ‘Third World’ and developing nations did not have the capital to purchase the newly produced communication technologies which paved the way for *international relations* based on *dependency*. For instance, shortly after the independence of many African and Asian countries, Britain and France as major colonial powers “helped” to determine the set of industrial arrangements in these societies. Respectively, for Boyd-Barrett, this was done in accordance with ruling interests, even if justified. Thus, he asserts:

in terms of adopting the media to the national development effort, including promotion of national unity... The main broadcasting organizations in Britain, France, and the United States (BBC, ORTF, NBC, CBS) provided models of operation, or were directly responsible for setting up transmission and supplying equipment and personnel, to many ‘dependent’ countries<sup>33</sup>

Lastly, the *third* and *fourth dimensions* of media imperialism, according to Boyd-Barrett, are the values of practice. Accordingly, this refers to notions of professionalism, objectivity and detachment, and media content and market penetration. For Boyd-Barrett, the latter are the most apparent forms of media imperialism, and involve television programs, films, books, magazines, records and

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 56

tapes, and other cultural commodities, as well as advertisements. The ideological positions that the media contents express are significant as they are, “positions which are frequently held to be at variance either with those of the host society or with the aspirations of those groups and classes in the host society which are committed to an alternative course of development and disengagement from imperialism.”<sup>34</sup>

As was discussed before, media imperialism thesis incorporated within itself theories of the dependency school, thus viewing the major imperial power as the U.S. Also, within this theoretical framework, underdevelopment was seen mainly as a result of the imperial-ideological enforcement of this country, and the communication systems being the major medium in achieving this. Now although media imperialism theory was a challenge to modernization attempts, with Japan gaining power, there occurred a ‘dislocation’ –let us say- in the critical thinking of the media and cultural studies. As a result, during the 1980s and 1990s, the media imperialism thesis came under attack. One of the reasons for this was that the notion of a one-way flow of communication and impact of the West was challenged by the counter-argument that global flows, or in other words communication systems, were “multidirectional.” Accordingly, it was argued that the enterprises of global media were forced to adapt to local cultures, where they came together with their local partners in order to sustain their expansion. For instance, some critics have argued that it is too simplistic to view the international television market as a single global entity, which is dominated by Hollywood. To support their counter-arguments, such critics claim that the rapidly expanding regional markets are giving rise to main centers of television

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 57

production in Mexico, Brazil, India, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, and thus giving service to different language groups.

The second attack on the thesis of media imperialism has been on its underestimation of local resistance to American superiority and power. Critics at this point maintain that there is a consumer resistance towards American television programs as well, where they state that according to some researches made, there has been seen an undeniable factor that indicates a profound preference for locally made programs. Also, this second main line of attack on media imperialism asserts that there is a political resistance too, where a number of states have come to support local media traditions and social networks. What's more, it is also argued that in the case of *Dallas* television series, for example, different viewers, from Japan to Israel, have acquired different meanings depending on the distinct belief systems and cultural backgrounds they were part of.

At this stage, the defenders of media imperialism studies respond by saying that complexity is being called upon to obscure the fact that there still exists a Western cultural domination. Thus, they contend that although the activity of the media and communications system may be multidirectional (the idea that media and communication flows are not linear processes), there still remains the fact that this is still very unequal. Accordingly, some advocates of media imperialism thesis claim that it has been the U.S. owned transnational media corporations that have emerged as the most powerful in the continuously expanding media export market. Also, thinkers such as Boyd-Barrett argue that American or Western enterprises continue to exert their power in key sectors such as film, news, computer operating systems,

etc., which indicates that there still is a profound Western hegemony. What's more, the second counter-argument brought by media imperialism thesis is that there is a global cultural diversity, however being reshaped by an underlying hegemonic relations. For instance, according to Stuart Hall, dominant strain of mass culture "remains centered in the West... and it always speaks English." Although, the global mass culture responds to cultural differences, "it is wanting to recognize and absorb those differences within the larger, overarching framework of what is essentially an American conception of the world."<sup>35</sup> Also, another example can be the case where a local campaign was carried out against the killing of street children. In this case it was only when the local campaigners wanted help from international agencies such as Amnesty International, and thus succeeded in getting the attention of American and European media, that they managed to secure a change in the law.<sup>36</sup>

### **1.3 Power of the 'Local'?**

According to Chris Barker, globalization, together with media, may also result in 'reversal flows', where a global production of the local emerges.<sup>37</sup> This, he states, is termed as 'glocalization' –or this concept may also come to mean the localization of the global as well. Therefore, within globalization, media and communications are not linear processes –where there exists only a one-way flow of information, which is from the core to the periphery- as critics of media and cultural imperialism would assume. Accordingly, for Barker, globalization is also a process that produces the 'local', where the discourse of globalization also embodies within itself the capitalist

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted from James Curran and Myung-Jin Park, "Beyond Globalization Theory", in *De-Westernizing Media Studies*, eds. James Curran & Myung-Jin Park (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 6

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8

<sup>37</sup> Chris Barker, *Television, Globalization and Cultural Identities* (Buckingham & Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1999), p. 42

marketing and has also an increasing orientation towards differentiated local markets.

Thus, he maintains:

To question the idea that globalization is constituted as a monolithic one-way flow from the west-to-the-rest is to raise the issue of 'reverse' flow, the impact of non-western ideas and practices on the west. For example, the global impact of Reggae, Rap, Hip-Hop and 'World Music' and the export of telenovelas from Latin American to the USA and Europe.<sup>38</sup>

Nevertheless, for Barker, the 'Anglo-American' television, within the global context, does have an impact on the creation of a western capitalist modernity. However, he upholds that this does not wipe out (although it embodies) the pre-existing cultural forms of the localities.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, in order to indicate how the media within the globalization process fuses into the localities, Ien Ang states that "a wide variety of dispersed locales are, at this structural level, and assuming that they are so 'fortunate' to be able to receive CNN directly, symbolically bound together by the simultaneous appearance of the same images on the TV screen."<sup>40</sup> Nonetheless, similarly to Barker's claim, that Anglo-American television cannot extinguish the pre-existing cultural forms of localities, Ang also maintains that the images received from global media such as the CNN would have a different interpretation by the localities. Or in other words, the electronic screen images would thus be filtered according to the local realities. Thus, Ang stresses that global media, although having an affect, cannot totally dominate local meanings. Another reason for this, in Ang's view, is that 'space' cannot be abolished because of each locality's specific character.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ien Ang, *Living Room Wars: Rethinking Media Audiences for a Postmodern World* (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 151

Therefore, as one can understand from the discussions of both Barker and Ang, what we call 'local' is not at all something to be underestimated. Just the opposite; the local does have power and in this sense has a profound influence on the global (media) marketing mechanisms; or in other words there is also a reverse flow of images and meanings. At this point one can also give the example of commodification and sale of so-called "ethnic" food and clothing, and view how these have become popular in the West. In this case, it can be maintained that the global market is too influenced by local tastes and thus imports them, although behind this is the idea of profit. Moreover, I think that just as Barker has implied, music genres and styles such as reggae, hip-hop, rap, and so forth are actually locally influenced global tastes. Or the import of entertainment programs like the 'telenovelas' (soap operas) from Latin America to most of the First World countries point out to the fact that media and communications within a globalized context do not act in a linear way. Further, the suggestion made by Ang also shows that the meanings generated from the global media, as in the case of CNN, will vary from locality to locality, and therefore will be filtered through each locality's own interpretive schemes. Hence, the local meanings cannot be fully controlled. Just the opposite, they are necessary for the survival of global markets.

What's more, Jonathan Bignell talks about how some transnational brands adopt cultural references that are locally specific.<sup>41</sup> For instance, in the late 1980s there was a business cooperation between Madonna's firm and Pepsi-Cola, where MTV commercials showed parts of Madonna's 'Like a Prayer' video. In these commercials

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<sup>41</sup> Jonathan Bignell, *Postmodern Media Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 173



of MTV, the leading character –Madonna- was having an ambiguous sensual and religious encounter –most probably in fantasy- with a Black saint’s icon who appeared to come to life in a church. Now on March 2, 1989 MTV viewers in forty different countries saw a commercial where an Aborigine, or in other words a Native Australian, was running across a desert –in California rather than in Australia!- to a bar where Madonna’s ‘Like a Prayer’ Pepsi commercial was playing on the TV screen. However, later on, Pepsi had to cancel out some parts of this commercial video because there were some protests made against it. Mainly the attacks came from two different groups: firstly, there were protests that came from some religious, as well as ethnic, groups who claimed that this specific commercial video offended the Catholic imagery, –because as we noted earlier Madonna was having both a sensual and a religious encounter with the icon of a Black priest- and further that there was a (proto-)colonial representation of the Aborigine. In this respect the commercial was opposed because such a use of the Catholic imagery was thought to devalue the morality inherent in Catholic Christianity, and further it was argued that there was a playing with seduction and sexuality in an illegitimate way. Moreover, the second line of attack came mostly from the postcolonial critics who focused on the appropriation of the Native Australian imagery in the commercial video, where the postcolonial critics asserted that it brought forth with itself stereotypes of traditional cultures. Hence, such a strategy of stereotyping, according to these postcolonial critics, was done in order to assimilate such traditional cultures into a consumerist world, which, sooner or later, resulted in their destruction. However, the crucial point here –I believe- is that in both incidences, be it the attack made by the religious or ethnic groups, or the postcolonial objections, it is as Bignell emphasizes:

the value of the traditional was asserted as the other to a postmodern global media text. But at the same time, the protests’ success was made

possible by the recognition of cultural, religious and ethnic difference by the global corporate culture. Homogenization seems to give way to difference and local agency, supporting a definition of the postmodern based on the valuation of difference.<sup>42</sup>

So, I would ask: had there not been a global media, would people (as in the case of those opposing the stereotypical portrayals and representations of traditional cultures in MTV and Pepsi's commercial videos, that I have referred above) have as much information and knowledge about the traditional local cultures as they do now? Such a question is not asked in order to advocate the implicit hegemonic enforcement of the global media, but to make the reader be aware that the so-called "global" and the "local" are interconnected more than ever, and that the knowledge of what we support –i.e. the local cultures- is mainly provided through the mechanisms of actually what we resist – i.e. the global media. Accordingly, in terms of Ella Shohat and Robert Stam:

By facilitating a mediated engagement with 'distant' peoples, the media 'deterritorialize' the process of imagining communities. And while the media can destroy community and fashion solitude by turning spectators into atomized consumers or self-entertaining monads, they can also fashion community and alternative affiliations. Just as media can exoticize and 'otherize' cultures, they can also promote multicultural coalitions.<sup>43</sup>

Now, in the next section, I will take a close look at the role of media in the creation of a national culture and identity.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 175

<sup>43</sup> Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, "From the Imperial Family to the Transnational Imaginary: Media Spectatorship in the Age of Globalization", in *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, eds. Rob Wilson & Wimal Dissanayake (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 145

#### 1.4 Media and the Formation of National Culture and Identity

In the course of his argument, that globalization is a widespread postmodern phenomenon that differs from modernization and modernity as it tends on the one hand to universalize culture, and on the other separates culture into various local and discursive forms, Arjun Appadurai brings forth his own terminology when naming different domains –or ‘five dimensions of global cultural flows’ to use his words. These are: mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, ideoscapes and ethnoscap<sup>44</sup>. However, I will only mention mediascapes and ideoscapes briefly as it is these areas, and their intersection, that involves our concern right now. Accordingly, for Appadurai, mediascapes –together with ideoscapes- are tightly linked landscapes of images. He maintains that:

mediascapes refer both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, and film-production studios), which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world, and to the images of the world created by these media.<sup>45</sup>

Whether produced by private or state interests, these mediascapes are often image-centered. Therefore, according to Appadurai, mediascapes also involve those scripts that are created through the ‘imagined’ lives of those who experience and transform them, as well as those of others living in other places. He further suggests that these scripts (which the mediascapes involve) get separated into complex sets of metaphors by which people live. The reason for this, Appadurai claims, is that these scripts help

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<sup>44</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 33

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 35

to establish narratives of the 'Other', as well as proto-narratives of possible lives and fantasies that could trigger the desire for acquisition and movement.<sup>46</sup>

What's more, for Appadurai, ideoscapes are also conjunctions of images (just like mediascapes), however being most of the time political. Further, he claims that they are often interconnected with the ideologies of states and the counter-ideologies of movements that are overtly oriented to capturing state power. Also, these ideoscapes are made up of elements of the Enlightenment worldview, according to Appadurai, which consists of a chain of ideas, terms, and images that are as follows: *freedom, welfare, right, sovereignty, and democracy*.<sup>47</sup> As was stated earlier, all the global cultural flows take place among the five areas (i.e. ethnoscapescapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes). Accordingly, for Appadurai, "between ideoscapes and mediascapes (as in many countries in the Middle East and Asia) where the lifestyles represented on both national and international television and cinema completely overwhelm and undermine the rhetoric of national politics."<sup>48</sup> Now, for Appadurai, the individual nation-states may either support or block particular global cultural flows. Also, he stresses that national and international mediascapes are exploited by nation-states to subdue separatists or even those ideas that are different. Accordingly, how do the nation-states exploit these mediascapes? Would one of the ways be to invoke a national identity and culture in the media? In this sense, according to Mike Featherstone, "the images that are constructed through television and the cinema are a necessary part in the process of the formation of a

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 35-36

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 36

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 40

nation, especially in their capacity to bridge the public and the private.”<sup>49</sup> For instance, the British film industry in World War II played a significant role in mobilizing a national identity as a result of its production of common adversary representations.

What’s more, according to J. Martin-Barbero, in his analysis of the mass media within Latin American countries, film and radio gave people, who were situated in different regions and provinces, their first taste, so to say, of nation.<sup>50</sup> Respectively,

Martin-Barbero writes:

Before the appearance and growth of radio, the country was a patchwork of regions, each separate and isolated. Before 1940, Colombia could very well call itself a country of countries rather than a nation. Hyperbole aside, radio allowed the country to experience an invisible national unity, a cultural identity shared simultaneously by the people of the coast, Antioquia, Pasto, Santander and Bagota.”<sup>51</sup>

Further, from the period of 1930 to the late 1950s, Latin American nationalism and mass culture was partly formed through the experience of the media, says Martin-Barbero. In the case of Mexico, for instance, the cinema stood as an important social domain, as film constituted the basis of mass culture until 1950. Cinema was not experienced particularly as an artistic or industrial occasion by the Latin American public. Rather what they saw in films were the possibility of adopting and experimenting new habits, and viewing codes of daily life. Such a public did not go to cinemas to watch movies in order to dream, but to learn, for example, the styles and fashions of the actors, where the public learned to recognize, and as a

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<sup>49</sup> Mike Featherstone, “Localism, Globalism, and Cultural Identity”, in *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, eds. Rob Wilson & Wimal Dissanayake (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 57

<sup>50</sup> J. Martin-Barbero, *Communication, Culture and Hegemony: From the Media to Mediations* (London, Newbury Park & New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993), p. 164

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165

consequence to transform themselves. For Martin-Barbero, cinema was thus the social mediation that brought with itself a new cultural experience. For this exact reason, in other words, cinema became the popular (urban) culture's first language. Also, it was film that embodied the craving and desire of the masses to make themselves socially visible. Thus, film managed to create a national body by allowing people to "see" themselves, which is not to claim that film gave them a nationality, but made them able to experience themselves as a single nation.<sup>52</sup>

Overall, as Ang argues:

While the transnational communications system tends to disrupt existing forms of national identification, it also offers opportunities of new forms of bonding and solidarity, new ways of forging cultural communities... The circulation and consumption of ethnically specific information and entertainment on video serves to construct and maintain cross-national 'electronic communities' of geographically dispersed peoples who would otherwise lose their ties with tradition and its active perpetuation.<sup>53</sup>

Thus, media can be a threat to the existing national identities by constantly drawing new boundaries on the one hand –media acting as an apparatus of conflict; but on the other hand, it can also help to construct national identities, which we have seen clearly in the case of film in Latin America –media being a mechanism of reconciliation and solidarity.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 166

<sup>53</sup> Ien Ang, *Living Room Wars: Rethinking Media Audiences for a Postmodern World* (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 147

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE CULTURE INDUSTRY (A PATH TOWARDS ‘SAMENESS’ AND ‘HOMOGENEITY’?)**

Within the critical sociology of Frankfurt School media industry is seen as a means of exerting power and domination. Its members followed an unorthodox line of Marxist inquiry. Further, if the music media and industry is to be studied later on, in the proceeding chapter, I believe discussing the concept of ‘culture industry’ will give a more in-depth, critical and analytical insight and awareness on this issue. Therefore, this chapter will function as a theoretical background for the proceeding discussions of, as I have just mentioned, music media and industry.

However, before moving on to the discussion of culture industry (as well as the creation of a mass culture), I think it is necessary to start with the debate between Adorno and Benjamin on the issue of artwork in the age of mechanical reproduction; because such an argument can be seen as the bedrock on which the notion of culture industry evolved.

#### **2.1 Art and Technology: A Pre-Reading of The Culture Industry**

According to Armand Mattelart and Michèle Mattelart, Adorno and Horkheimer have overestimated art –by looking at the conjuncture of art and technology- as a result of seeing it as the root of revolutionary undertakings within society. Therefore,

they maintain that Adorno and Horkheimer have ignored other, very different aspects of the conjunction of art and technology –which unfortunately they do not specify clearly enough. Also, again according to Mattelart and Mattelart, Walter Benjamin – who is another member of the Frankfurt School- too overestimates art in this sense, and such a situation is rather explicit in his essay titled “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”, written in 1933. Accordingly, Armand and Michèle Mattelart state:

In this work, Benjamin demonstrated why the cinema could only exist in an era of mechanical reproduction as opposed to simple production of unique works. In his view, the very principle of mechanical reproduction rendered the old conception of what he calls ‘auratic’ art obsolete. Adorno and Horkheimer may also have stigmatized mass culture because the process of manufacturing it undermined a certain notion of art as sacred.<sup>1</sup>

The principle of mechanical reproduction, for Benjamin, is the accelerated intensity of the technical reproduction of art. This has developed more and more in each era, and finally became fully available around the 1900s. This is because it was around this period that technical reproduction reached a standard that not only permitted it to reproduce all transmitted artworks, but also to secure a place of its own among the artistic processes.<sup>2</sup> As a consequence, the technique of reproduction detached the reproduced object, or artwork, from the terrain of tradition, for Benjamin. In other words, “traditional” art, that is, ‘auratic’ art, according to him, was rendered as outmoded.

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<sup>1</sup> Armand Mattelart and Michèle Mattelart, *Theories of Communication: A Short Introduction* (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1998), pp. 61-62

<sup>2</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London: Fontana, 1973), pp. 220-221



Mattelart and Mattelart, moreover, see the writings of Adorno and Horkheimer as a protest against the interference and profound dissemination of technology into the world of culture. Furthermore, following Armand and Michèle Mattelart, we might say that the common ground for the discussions of these Frankfurt School members (Adorno, Horkheimer and Benjamin) is based on the idea of ‘reproducibility’ of cultural products, as a result of technological means and their control. Thus, cultural production has come to be modeled by an industrial mode of production system that has resulted in the standardization of the former. These were all accomplished, of course, in order to enhance social control and economic profitability. In this respect, for Armand and Michèle Mattelart, the criticism of culture industry made by Adorno and Horkheimer derives actually from their nostalgia for cultural experience that is independent of any technological intrusion.<sup>3</sup> We should nonetheless underline here that such a point is very important for our study, as we will later on –in the proceeding chapters- see how technology has been coupled with cultural products, such as music, more than ever.

To go back to Walter Benjamin, the principle that lies beneath an artwork is its reproducibility. This is because by means of imitation, artifacts that are man-made can be copied in a similar fashion. Accordingly, replicas are made by students who practice their craft, by masters who intend to spread their work, and by those people (or institutions) who aim at gaining profit. Nevertheless, for Benjamin, the notion of mechanical reproduction (of an artwork) opened up a new era in this respect. Even before the invention of the printing press, where texts and scripts became reproducible, with the use of woodcut, for example, graphic art for the first time

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<sup>3</sup> Armand Mattelart and Michèle Mattelart, *Theories of Communication: A Short Introduction* (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1998), p. 62

came to be reproduced mechanically. As I mentioned before, every work of art around the 1900s, according to Benjamin, could be reproduced, thanks to the improvement of technical reproduction. This also changed the way of influencing the public. In other words, the reaction of the masses toward art was altered and thus transformed by means of art's mechanical reproduction. For instance, "the reactionary attitude toward a Picasso painting changes into the progressive reaction toward a Chaplin movie."<sup>4</sup> At the same time however, within the artistic process, artworks also captured a place of their own.

Benjamin, moreover, argues that reproduction techniques separate the work of art—in terms of a reproduced object— from their traditional dimension. Such an aspect urges Benjamin to be preoccupied with the issue of *authenticity* and *uniqueness*, as well as traditional authority—which he refers to as the 'aura'— of the work of art. For Benjamin, the prerequisite for something to be authentic necessitates the presence of the original. This is because the realm of authenticity exists beyond what is technical and technically reproducible. Therefore, Benjamin insists that for a work of art to be *unique*, it should be firmly fixed within the scope of tradition. In this respect he writes:

It is significant that the existence of the work of art *with reference to its aura* is never entirely separated from its ritual function. In other words, the unique value of the "authentic" work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value... for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual. To an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London: Fontana, 1973), p. 236

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 225-226 (emphasis mine)

Benjamin, however, sees new cultural technologies as being progressive –an argument criticized by Adorno as we will see later. Benjamin views photography and film as being both the supporter –or to be more precise, them being potent- as well as being the consequence of freedom and democratic access to art. Furthermore, Benjamin tries to explore the technological medium of film, whether or not it exists in the domain of ‘auratic art’, or whether it paves the way for totally different possibilities of arrangements. In this respect Benjamin maintains that the object in a film is viewed by means of this new cultural technology, which of course in this case is the camera. Thus, how we come to be able to distinguish the matter of subject in a film is no more than the way it is presented to us. Therefore, the mode of delivery and the primary factor is this new technological medium for Benjamin. Thus, the different angles and close ups of the camera influences what we perceive of the thing that is presented to us. Hence, contrary to the participants present in a religious rite or ceremony, the audience identify themselves with the actor. Nonetheless, for Benjamin, this identification is actually the process of identifying with the camera itself. Accordingly, just the opposite of participants approaching cult values in rituals, the audience put themselves in camera’s position.<sup>6</sup> Hence, we can conclude from Benjamin’s discussion that while there is a one to one correspondence among the participants toward the subject matter in religious rites, with the development of new technologies such as the camera that is used in shooting films, such a participation involves the mediation of the camera. Correspondingly, the latter reproduces a work of art that is also subject to technical reproducibility, and from then onwards is able to enter the market scene.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 228-233

So for Benjamin, this decline of the aura indicates a cultural deterioration, or decrease, of what is experienced as well as a decline of the face-to-face experience. Moreover, with the detachment of the ritual and cult values from the work of art, a new era of crises is developed; a crisis that renews mankind where art becomes intertwined with politics. However, it would be misleading to think that Benjamin views this new era, which embraces technological reproducibility, in negative terms. In fact, just the opposite holds true; such a process is something completely positive for Benjamin as he sees it to be liberating –for it enables the rebirth of a new mankind and new relations. Accordingly, as Barry Smart denotes:

For Benjamin the new forces of artistic production and reproduction hold out the prospect... of the creation of new social relations between artists and audiences, writers and readers, producers and consumers of text. Technical means of reproduction raise the prospect of art ceasing to be the privilege of a few.<sup>7</sup>

So the ‘popular’ and ‘progressive’ development of the new media, such as film, photography, radio and recorded music, makes available the means through which the more traditional modes of artistic production themselves may actually be transformed.

Benjamin therefore has a positive outlook on the age of mechanical reproduction –an age resulting in the decline of artwork’s aura- and he sees the new cultural technologies to be inherently progressive. Such a view stems from his Marxist background; because although Marx himself saw the separation of the product from the worker, who had produced it initially, to cause alienation, the emergence of wage labor –brought forth by the capitalist mode of production- was nevertheless seen as

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<sup>7</sup> Barry Smart, *Modern Conditions, Postmodern Controversies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 113

something libratory in the sense that the worker now had a relative autonomy compared to the surfs in the feudal ages. Similarly, as Lambert Zuidervaart writes:

The cinema has the potential to be an instrument of emancipating the masses. Although Benjamin recognizes that ‘the movie-makers’ capital’ thwarts the potential, and that fascists misuse the new medium for reactionary purposes, he believes this new ‘force of production’ challenges the prevailing ‘relations of production’<sup>8</sup>

Although Adorno appreciated and maintained some of Benjamin’s arguments, he regarded Benjamin to be very optimistic in terms of his views on the new technologies. Accordingly, “As Adorno observed... in its attempt to establish a direct link between emancipatory expectation and industrial technique, conceived of as independent of a mediating human consciousness, Benjamin’s argument suffered from an inherent technological determinism.”<sup>9</sup> Now, both Adorno and Benjamin saw a progressive side to the decline of (traditional) auratic art. Nevertheless, the difference between them was that Benjamin ascribed this decline to the profound influence of mass media, whereas Adorno insisted that such a decline of ‘auratic art’ was due to the technical advances of modern art. Further, Adorno emphasized the importance of ‘autonomous art’, as a contrary to ‘committed art’ (we will come to this discussion of Adorno later on) and accused Benjamin for not taking into consideration the progressive side of autonomous art, and also ignoring the regressive dimension of mass mediated art. Adorno hence criticized Benjamin’s view where Benjamin asserted that mass mediated technologies of (art) production such as film was an agent for collective self-emancipation. However, for Adorno, film and

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<sup>8</sup> Lambert Zuidervaart, *Adorno’s Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991), p. 30

<sup>9</sup> Jessica Evans, “Victor Burgin’s Polysemic Dreamcoat”, in *Art Has No History!: The Making and Unmaking of Modern Art*, ed. John Roberts (London and New York: Verso, 1994), p.213

radio have come to form the bases of the capitalist system. For instance, Adorno, together with Horkheimer, argue:

Movies and radio need no longer pretend to be art. The truth that they are just business is made into an ideology in order to justify the rubbish they deliberately produce. They call themselves industries; and when their directors' incomes are published, any doubt about the social utility of the finished products is removed.<sup>10</sup>

Contrary to Benjamin's assertion that art in our age of mechanical reproduction loses its aura, thanks to the mass media, Adorno argued just the opposite by giving *mass (mediated) music* as an example of artistic production. According to Adorno, mass music increased rather than declined art's aura. He claimed that not only jazz music was recorded for mainstream purposes, but even classical music was produced in such a way that it could be listened easily. Thus, for Adorno "together with sport and film, mass music and the new listening help to escape from the whole infantile milieu impossible."<sup>11</sup> Continuing his examples from the music industry, Adorno stressed that one could observe fetishism prevailing even in the success of music production. Recorded music faced commodification –although most of us have the illusion as if it was produced to enter the market in order to serve the needs of the consumers. For this reason, Adorno saw fetishism to correspond to the worsening of listening to music, where he claimed that in today's world a lot of listeners could get impressed too easily by listening to Toscanini, for example.<sup>12</sup>

Adorno, furthermore, distinguished 'autonomous art' from that of 'committed art' where he maintained that the latter initially aimed at creating a political change by

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<sup>10</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Continuum, 1996), p. 121

<sup>11</sup> Theodor Adorno, "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening", in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 41

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31

trying to remodel and alter the political attitudes; nevertheless for him such an intention often failed. On the other hand, autonomous art did not have an intention to change the political thinking of the society, however it somehow influenced and changed them. As an example of committed art Adorno gave Brecht's theatrical plays. Here, he asserted that Brecht's plays were in an urge to shift the audience's consciousness and action by making them political (in order to achieve this, Brecht, by using certain aesthetic reductions, tried to transform the traditional theater). For instance, in the play *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, that was staged in 1941, Adorno indicated that the political vision was not represented in its true form, where, in this case, fascism was treated as if it was an accident or crime, rather than portraying it as the outcome of the concentration of social power. Therefore, for Adorno, "bad" politics (e.g. Brecht's "misrepresentation" of political reality) effected the work of art which in turn became "bad" art, and vice versa. Furthermore, discussing the fall of traditional auratic art (or in other words the decline of art's aura), where for Adorno this was due to the technical advances of modern art, we can argue here to what extent this committed art of Brecht –that results in being a "bad" art for Adorno- is actually a result of certain technical mediations where Brecht tried to transform and move beyond traditional theater; or whether it was only the effect of Brecht's projection of the social reality in a distorted manner as Adorno claims it to be? Hence, I assume, Adorno falls into a paradoxical situation; because on the one hand he claims that the reason for the decline of auratic art is a result of the technical advances of modern art, and on the other hand he accuses Brecht's play to fail in changing the political attitudes of the people as a result of his distorted representation of political reality. Which one would be true? Therefore, I believe, Adorno's proclamation is not sufficient enough in explaining the failure of committed art.

## 2.2 The Culture Industry In-Depth

Before discussing culture industry as a term initially used by Adorno and Horkheimer (as well as their line of reasoning based on this issue), let me shortly give the socio-historical roots of the term culture industry and lay out briefly the social and historical contexts that urged such thinkers as Adorno and Horkheimer to come up with such a concept. The term *culture industry* was developed to understand the basic transformations that occurred in the ‘superstructure’ of capitalist societies, where such transformations resulted in monopoly capitalism. Also, such transformations were profound enough to call into question the Marxian separation of economy and culture, or base and superstructure. Correspondingly, for Ferenc Fehér:

Marx assumed that capitalism was hostile to art and literature by which he simply meant that a society based on generalized commodity relations and commodity fetishism is too prosaic and hedonistic to be passionately involved in activities judged ‘according to the measure of beauty’, which he regarded as the one commensurate with the emancipated human being.<sup>13</sup>

It was only in the mid twentieth century that theories of culture industry arose; theories that assumed artworks were consciously controlled and manipulated by certain organized sections of the capitalist system. Consequently, Marx’s ideas were based primarily on the realities of liberal capitalism and the latter’s ideology of the free market, as well its belief that culture has its autonomy. Whereas on the other hand, “20<sup>th</sup>-century capitalism has ‘reunified’ economy and culture by subsuming the

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<sup>13</sup> Ferenc Fehér, “The Pyrrhic Victory of Art in its War of Liberation”, in *Postmodern Conditions*, eds. Andrew Milner, et al (New York: Berg, 1990), p.83



cultural under the economic, by reorganizing the body of cultural meanings and symbolic significations to fit the logic of the commodity.”<sup>14</sup>

In this respect, in his article “Adorno in Reverse: From Hollywood to Richard Wagner”, Andreas Huyssen, paraphrasing Adorno, states that the new technological media –also being the means of reproduction and dissemination- was a great help to monopoly capitalism in repressing and holding back older forms of popular cultures. Therefore monopoly capitalism homogenized all and every local discourse around the rule of commodity, –as well as blocking the way of any resistance to emerge- and assimilated them into its system. Accordingly, with the development of consumer society, the commodity itself became image, representation and spectacle, just as how works of art came to be enjoyed as commodities, which ended up in the aestheticization of the commodity.<sup>15</sup>

Now the concept ‘culture industry’ was for the first time used –at least as a term to be used critically in the sociological analysis- in the book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, published by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in 1947. Being one of the leading figures of Frankfurt School, Adorno and Horkheimer took a critical unorthodox Marxist standpoint, and in the chapter *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception*, they maintained ironically that “the whole world is made to pass through the filter of the culture industry”<sup>16</sup> Most probably one of their reasons in coming up with such a conclusion was that they studied the transformation of the culture itself into a commodity, as a result of the industrial

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<sup>14</sup> Andreas Huyssen, “Adorno in Reverse: From Hollywood to Richard Wagner”, in *New German Critique*, no.29 (1983): pp. 13-14

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14

<sup>16</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, (New York: Continuum, 1996), p.126

production of cultural goods as a global phenomena. For this reason, films, radio programs, magazines, etc. that are all within the confines of cultural production, have a similar technological rationality, just like the organizational planning and schemes of mass production in the automobile industry. In this respect, the culture industry, through its use of a highly developed technology, brings forth ‘standardization’ where the distinction between the logic of work and the social system ceases to exist.<sup>17</sup>

For Adorno and Horkheimer, something has been planned for everyone. They state that there has emerged a hierarchical situation among the mass produced products, and thus people are provided with these according to their economic and social position. Hence, instead of the consumers choosing (for) themselves, the culture industry selects the appropriate products for the consumers. In other words, the culture industry comprises the production of those works that are used for reproduction and mass consumption, which as a result organizes “free time”. For instance, a person during his/her leisure time has to be content with what is offered in television, radio, etc., or to be more precise, s(he) should be satisfied with what the manufacturers of the culture industry provide.<sup>18</sup> In this sense, for Adorno and Horkheimer, “under monopoly all mass culture is identical.”<sup>19</sup>

The culture industry, after all, for Adorno, acts as an integration mechanism in liberal democratic societies, where it is also an alternative to that of the integration

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 121

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 123-124

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 121

politically achieved under fascism.<sup>20</sup> Being a part of the capitalist system, the culture industry also bears the characteristics of the former where exchange value is what becomes significant and permeates even the use value of a cultural product. Accordingly, for Adorno, the commodified production of Toscanini's music, for example, engenders listeners that get impressed by this music too quickly. We can argue that the consumption of this music is due mostly to its exchange value where the listeners do not really consume this music because of its use value; thus what becomes important is the etiquette of listening to it, as well as its status within the (art) market.<sup>21</sup> Thus, as Bernstein very well summarizes:

Cultural production is an integrated component of the capitalist economy as a whole. Culture is no longer the repository of a reflective comprehension of the present in terms of a redeemed future; the culture industry forsakes the promise of happiness in the name of the degraded utopia of the present. This is the ironic presentation of the present.<sup>22</sup>

It would hence be suitable to uphold from these words that the production of the culture industry functions within and as a part of the capitalist system where its production goes hand in hand with that of the capitalist economy. Following this, “the culture industry inevitably brought about the bankruptcy of culture, reducing it to a mere commodity.”<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, as I have just mentioned, listening to Toscanini's music for the sake of its etiquette, –or in other words, for its exchange value- the cultural products of the culture industry “are no longer *also* commodities,

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<sup>20</sup> J.M. Bernstein, “Introduction”, in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 4

<sup>21</sup> Theodor Adorno, “On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening”, in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 34

<sup>22</sup> J.M. Bernstein, “Introduction”, in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 8

<sup>23</sup> Armand Mattelart and Michèle Mattelart, *Theories of Communication: A Short Introduction* (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1998), p. 61

they are commodities through and through.”<sup>24</sup> Therefore, we can say, the culture industry puts on a price-tag for every *cultural commodity* it produces, which eliminates the critical power of the latter, while also making any trace of the authentic experience it may have to disappear.

What’s more, for Adorno, the culture industry acts as a harmonizing process, or in other words, it reconciles high art with low art that have been separated for thousands of years; nevertheless damaging both of them. As a result of the effect of high art being programmed by the culture industry, it is deprived of its seriousness, says Adorno, whereas low art is brought under chains where its resistive character is taken away, again by the culture industry.<sup>25</sup> After all, for Adorno, what stands out as being initially resistive towards the unity of the system is directly integrated and repressed by the culture industry. Now, such a “unifying” character of the culture industry, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, is also the evidence of what will happen in politics. In their view, differentiations between certain films, stories, magazines, etc. do not originate from the subject matter, but what becomes actually important is the classification, organization and the labeling of consumers.<sup>26</sup> As I highlighted before, the public is thus provided with a hierarchical range of mass produced products that are made up of varying qualities. In this respect, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that everyone is made to behave in conformity with his/her previously determined and indexed level, where they choose the category of mass product that is suitable for his/her type. Hence, they maintain that “consumers appear as statistics on research organization charts, and are divided by income groups into red, green, and blue

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<sup>24</sup> Theodor Adorno, “Culture Industry Reconsidered,” in *New German Critique*, no. 6 (1975): p. 13

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12

<sup>26</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, (New York: Continuum, 1996), p. 123

areas; the technique is that used for any type of propaganda.”<sup>27</sup> As one can observe, these words of Adorno and Horkheimer are an indicator –despite its covertness- of what they mean by when they claim that the evidence of what will happen in the area of politics, is that of the “ruthless” unity inherent in the culture industry; uniting and grouping in the name of homogeneity.

It would thus not be wrong to argue that the concept of culture industry embodies both culture and commodification (to the degree that the culture industry leaves no meaning and signification unharmed); and for Adorno, modernist art is exactly the result of this conjuncture. Furthermore, what Adorno means by ‘modern art’ is also the contemporary achievement of novelty, or in other words, originality. Hence for him, modern art, striving to reach the point of novelty, can be viewed as being the aesthetic counterpart of the expanding reproduction of capital. Now, for Huyssen, Adorno’s claim that modernist art is the conjuncture of culture and commodification is on the one hand too Marxist, and on the other hand not Marxist enough. According to Huyssen, such a theory of capitalist culture is too Marxist in the sense that it strictly employs a limited reading of Marx’s theory of commodity fetishism when discussing the cultural products produced by the culture industry. Whereas it is not Marxist enough because the attention is turned away from praxis, and neglects the struggles for meaning, symbols and images, which make up the social and cultural aspects of life, for Huyssen, even when the mass media try to include them.<sup>28</sup> What’s more, although Huyssen admits that Adorno’s insight on how the commodification of culture and its effects are permeated in every cultural product is true, he nevertheless

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Andreas Huyssen, “Adorno in Reverse: From Hollywood to Richard Wagner”, in *New German Critique*, no.29 (1983): pp. 14-15

denies that the function and use of such cultural products are totally controlled by corporate intentions, and that exchange value has altogether replaced the use value.

In this respect, Huyssen writes:

The double danger of Adorno's theory is that the specificity of cultural products is wiped out and the consumer is imagined in a state of passive regression. If cultural products were commodities through and through and had only exchange value, they would no longer be able to fulfill their function in the processes of ideological reproduction.<sup>29</sup>

Therefore Huyssen upholds that these cultural products sustain the use value for capital, and for this reason they are also apt to act as a point of struggle and subversion. Moreover, he believes that the culture industry has a crucial role in satisfying and legitimizing the cultural needs, and for this very fact alone it does fulfill public functions. Now, for Huyssen, the point where culture industry aims to homogenize even social contradictions, or to articulate those that deviate from its ideology (of course nothing but those ideologies of capitalism that it is a part of already), can also become an area of contest and struggle.

In accordance with the fact, Ferenc Fehér, in his article "The Pyrrhic Victory of Art in its War of Liberation: Remarks on the Postmodernist Intermezzo", in a different but similar perspective proposes that although the whole theory of the culture industry were to be proved right, the idea that the influences and ideologies that arose from those manipulative centers, have never been 'economic ideologies' in the strictest sense of the word. It is the internal dynamic of the culture industry itself that aims at enforcing culture as a commodity, and in this respect, for Fehér, those leading figures and the advocators of the culture industry for example could still influence the audience as well as those creative artists in a successful way. The

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 15

reason for this, he believes, is that even the ideology of such a successful influence – in this example of his- is ought to be ‘non-economic’ in nature, because otherwise he assumes the spell of the culture industry would be broken. For Fehér:

In this sense, the *spiritual* influence of the economic over the aesthetic sphere... has always been... *indirect*. It is precisely this circumstance that made a special struggle for autonomy on the part of art and literature against the economic sphere quite superfluous, irrespective of the sociologically extremely relevant issue as to what extent artists and art works are still dependent on the culture industry.<sup>30</sup>

### **2.3 Media, Mass Culture, and a Re-view of the Culture Industry**

Before starting this section, it is important to emphasize that Adorno has been more significant for this study, especially his ideas on the culture industry. For this reason, I dwelled more on Adorno than Horkheimer, as Adorno’s individual works were also concerned with the cultural significance of the mass media. The works of Horkheimer, on the other hand, followed a different path of philosophical and sociological inquiry, where his intention was directed mostly on the investigation of the meanings and practices of reason and rationality rather than the media as such. Also, another crucial point to be made here is that, the collective work of Adorno and Horkheimer was intended to reveal why and how could something barbaric as Nazism, and of course fascism, appear on the scene of European culture. Therefore, as I have paraphrased before, Adorno viewed the culture industry to be an alternative to the integration acquired under politically fascist regimes. In this respect, the instrumental rationality that embraces the whole procedure of the capitalist system, for Adorno, and consequently the functioning of the culture industry is also worth noting. What’s more, the notion of mass culture will also be discussed: firstly because Adorno saw it as a product of the culture industry, and secondly because the

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<sup>30</sup> Ferenc Fehér, “The Pyrrhic Victory of Art in its War of Liberation”, in *Postmodern Conditions*, eds. Andrew Milner, et al (New York: Berg, 1990), pp. 83-84

notion of mass culture is important if we are to later on, in the proceeding chapter, look at the music media and industry. This is because the concept of mass culture will cast light, I believe, on such terms as popular music and culture that we will eventually run across.

First of all, let me clarify why Adorno and Horkheimer, as I have discussed so far, have always mentioned of a culture *industry* and not culture *industries*. This will also sum up some main arguments that were previously presented. Basically, they have done this because they envisioned every branch of the media to have the tendency to function as a uniform and monolithic system. Accordingly, as Keith Tester explains:

For Adorno and Horkheimer there is simply no significant difference between what the movies do to literature and what photographs in magazines do to paintings. They believe that it is misplaced and wrong to make any distinctions between different media forms and different media texts.<sup>31</sup>

Consequently, for Adorno and Horkheimer, films, radio and magazines constitute such a system that they cannot be differentiated among their parts, and therefore they constitute a uniform whole. They even go so far as to claim that the aesthetic activities of political opposites have become ‘one’ as a result of their obedience to the *iron system*’s rhythm –no surprise they call it the *Dialectic* of Enlightenment! This is the reason why they maintain that under monopoly all mass culture gains an identical status, where the monolithic and monopolistic function of the culture industry is nothing but the accomplishment of standardization and mass production.

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<sup>31</sup> Keith Tester, *Media, Culture and Morality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 39



As a result of this standardization and mass production, as I have mentioned previously, Adorno and Horkheimer claim that it would be wrong to make any distinction between different media forms and texts, as they are part of a uniform whole. Furthermore, Adorno refused to name something as the 'mass media', as he believed that such a phrase was rather harmless, which according to him blurred the true nature of the media. Also, such a phrase, for Adorno, gave the impression as if the media's business was to serve a mass that it was also concerned about. Or to put it differently, talking about a mass media implied, according to Adorno, as if the 'mass' was the subject, towards which the media activity was directed. He asserted that such a paradigm was a deception and a myth, therefore totally wrong. Accordingly, he wrote that "the customer is not king, as the culture industry would have us believe, not its subject but its object. The very word mass-media, specially honed for the culture industry, already shifts the accent onto harmless terrain."<sup>32</sup> Hence, Adorno believed that the masses got, or received, what was decided to be given to them. This decision, for him, was made by nothing other than the culture industry!

Such understandings of Adorno, and Horkheimer, can be clearly seen in some of their comments on the cinema. Such comments can of course also be applied to television as well. What they suggest is that "real life is becoming indistinguishable from the movies. The sound film... leaves no room for imagination or reflection on the part of the audience."<sup>33</sup> These words of Adorno and Horkheimer can be thought of as cinema (or rather movies, films), limiting and hindering the imaginative

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<sup>32</sup> Theodor Adorno, "Culture Industry Reconsidered", in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 85

<sup>33</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, (New York: Continuum, 1996), p.126

abilities of the audience –whereas art ought to be a stimulating force for them. Might this be because, according to their point of view, films are produced by cinematographic techniques and thus do not reveal a ‘meaning’? Accordingly, for Adorno:

Film is faced with the dilemma of finding a procedure which neither lapses into arts-and-crafts nor slips into a mode. The obvious answer today... is that of montage which does not interfere with things but rather arranges them in a constellation akin to that of writing... It seems illusory that through the renunciation of all meaning, ...meaning will emerge from the reproduced material itself.<sup>34</sup>

Hence, according to Adorno, there still resides a gap between the most progressive inclinations or tendencies in the visual arts and those of film –no matter how radical the intentions of the latter are. Nevertheless, for Adorno, what is still the promising potential of film is its interaction with other media, –those that fuse together with film- such as certain kinds of music. Probably an example of such an interaction with other media, that merges into film, would be the ‘video-clips’ of certain musicians in our contemporary world (something most probably not yet present when Adorno started writing all these) that we watch in music channels on television.

For Adorno and Horkheimer, the areas which the cinema permeate stops being art in its fullest meaning of the word, because all the technical effects of the cinema are stunting indeed, where they engender a lot of noise and movement which in fact overwhelms our abilities to think and judge after all. Nevertheless one might ask why those areas that the cinema touches, ceases to be art in its true and fullest meaning? This is because “the *fusion* of culture and entertainment that is taking place today

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<sup>34</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, “Transparencies on Film”, in *New German Critique*, no. 24/25 (Fall 81/ Winter 82): pp. 202-203

leads not only to devaluation of culture, but inevitably to an intellectualization of amusement.”<sup>35</sup> In this respect, it would also be worth quoting these words of Adorno:

The color film demolishes the genial old tavern to a greater extent than bombs ever could: the film exterminates its *image*. No homeland can survive being processed by the films which celebrate it, and which thereby turn the unique character on which it thrives into an interchangeable sameness.<sup>36</sup>

Again, everything at this point melts down to the notion of culture industry. For the basic claim of Adorno and Horkheimer in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is that the oppositional and critical aspects of art have been profoundly destroyed. The culture industry have taken things such as books, paintings and pieces of music and converted them into films, posters or records in order to make money and entertain the audience by making them stop thinking about their everyday problems.<sup>37</sup> Hence, what has become the ideal is the ‘amusement’ itself; which at the same time has deprived the masses to set higher ideals –as amusement took the place of higher things.

Adorno and Horkheimer state that such a consequence of the fusion of culture and entertainment, that I mentioned above, is apparent from the very fact that only the copy appears; for example, the *photograph* in the movie theater, or the *recording* on the radio, and so forth. I should at this point also underline the fact that, contrary to those critics –e.g. Tony Bennett- who assume culture to be basically day-to-day life, Adorno believes that culture ought to be something distinct from the “paralyzed”, or “numb” relations of the ‘status quo’ of the everyday life. This is because for Adorno,

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<sup>35</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, (New York: Continuum, 1996), p. 143 (emphasis mine)

<sup>36</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, “Culture Industry Reconsidered”, in *New German Critique*, no. 6 (1975): p. 16

<sup>37</sup> Keith Tester, *Media, Culture and Morality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 38

daily life is static and nothing other than something where people get trapped in routines, which as a result hinders them from engaging in the performance of new things. Therefore, Adorno states that everyday life is rather oppressive and repressive where people are all made to understand the demands of “real life”, thus conforming to its competitive realm. On the contrary, for him, ‘Culture’ is something that transcends the system of self-preservation of the species, and for this reason involves a ‘critical’ impulse towards the status quo and its institutions. ‘Culture’, in this sense, is to be involved in critical action –actually for Adorno culture is nothing if it is not critical!<sup>38</sup>

So to go back to Adorno and Horkheimer’s argument about the destruction of the critical and oppositional dimension of art, –by turning artworks into mere entertainment objects in the name of profit, and entertainment of the audience so that they can forget about their everyday problems- we can comment that, in a way such a procedure is nothing but a leveling mechanism of the liberal capitalist societies. What’s more, what we can bring out from such discussions of Adorno and Horkheimer is that, what we know of *de facto* ‘Culture’ becomes nothing but a commercial experience. In this sense, “the commercial character of culture causes the difference between culture and practical life to disappear... On all sides the borderline between culture and empirical reality becomes more and more indistinct.”<sup>39</sup> Therefore, Adorno upholds that starting with the industrial age a work of art was fashionable to the extent of its master’s (or the professional in this area) ability in promoting the right attitudes and “which has entered into alliance with

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 37

<sup>39</sup> Theodor Adorno, “The Schema of Mass Culture”, in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 53

*reification* insofar as it proffers precisely for a disenchanted world, for the realm of the prosaic and even the banausic, a poetry of its own nourished upon the work ethic.”<sup>40</sup> Respectively, it would not be wrong for us to argue that the culture industry in a way is nothing but the promoter of such a reification of art. Also we can comment that the culture industry, from the beginning of the industrial era, started to operate as a leveling mechanism of the everyday life, which consequently demolished what was ‘critical’ of ‘Culture’, and created people who were apt to conform to the capitalist system. So in this sense, a ‘mass culture’ was engendered, which as I emphasized earlier, under monopoly took on an identical status, according to Adorno and Horkheimer.

For Adorno, what characterizes mass culture is adaptation, and such an adaptive character, which is for him a kind of a monopolistic filter that protects it from the outside influences, represents an adjustment to the consumers as well. Nevertheless, it also paves the way for alienation, and thus creating the urge for consumers, or in other words the individuals, to have a sense of belonging –I assume- because he states that “if mass culture has already become one great exhibition, then everyone who stumbles into it feels as lonely as a stranger on an exhibition site.”<sup>41</sup> This is where, according to him, ‘information’ enters the scene. He maintains that the endless exhibition is also the endless bureau of information that puts pressure on the unfortunate visitor and feeds him/her with leaflets, guides and radio recommendations, which as a result saves each person from appearing stupid as everyone else. Therefore, Adorno writes that mass culture is a system of signals that actually signals itself. The millions who previously belonged to the underclass, and

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid. (emphasis mine)

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 71

thus were prevented from the enjoyment of cultural goods, have now been captured within it –again thanks to the culture industry!- where they provide a welcome pretext for this new orientation towards information, for Adorno.

Adorno also asserts that it is a matter of evaluation that every genuine experience of art is devalued into. Therefore, the consumer is made to recognize what is offered to him/her, where the cultural object in question is reflected as the final product that has become what it is, waiting to be identified. This, according to Adorno, is the universal informational character, which puts a stamp on the radical alienation between the consumer and the product. As a result, the consumer finds him/herself restricted, or limited only with this information that has been given beforehand, when his/her own experience becomes inadequate. Further, the mechanism trains the consumer to look as if well informed on pain of losing prestige among other people, as well as to abandon the more abrupt process of real experience.<sup>42</sup> In a similar way, Horkheimer in his essay “Art and Mass Culture”, in his work *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, beholds that even the experience of an individual faced with an artwork is nothing more than the organized experience which the society enforces on him/her. Accordingly, he writes that “the individual’s experience embodied in a work of art has no less validity than the organized experience society brings to bear for the control of nature. Although its criterion lies in itself alone, art is knowledge no less than science is.”<sup>43</sup> Also, another important point that Horkheimer makes in this solo work of his is that art has today lost its communicative function as the individuals have started to become aware of the aesthetic quality of a work of art through recognizing the feelings that it evokes as being their own. What’s more, Horkheimer

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 70-71

<sup>43</sup> Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory: Selected Essays* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972), p. 273

ironically writes that there has emerged a gulf between art and communication, where, for him, the medium of language even intensifies such an abyss. He justifies this claim by contending that in order to win the consent of the masses, the dictators even *lie* –this is the medium of language here- more than before.<sup>44</sup> Thus, one might interrogate insofar: are we entering a phase of irrationality?

As I have underlined several times, the aim of Adorno –as well as other members of the Frankfurt School- was to reveal how a horrible and barbaric thing like fascism could occur in one of the leading centers of Europe such as Germany. Consequently, Adorno’s theories –together with Horkheimer- tended to unfold such a phenomena. The culture industry, as I have emphasized before, acted as an alternative mechanism –in the liberal capitalist societies- to the fascistic regimes, in terms of integration of society achieved through repressive unification. In this respect, for Adorno and Horkheimer, “the culture industry is also barbaric in a cultural and a moral sense. This is because it too prevents thought; because it too consigns man to wallow in immaturity and thus denies the chance of enlightenment.”<sup>45</sup> Hence, if fascism is to be considered as an irrational phenomena, I believe it is also necessary to discuss briefly Adorno’s views on ‘rationality’ and ‘irrationality’ as it will give a clearer insight on the system which the culture industry acts through, as well as the general arguments on mass culture that is one way or another formed by the culture industry.

### **2.3.1 Enlightened Reason as Irrationality**

To start with, Adorno and Horkheimer, again in their work *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, analyze Enlightenment’s self-destruction. They go through the

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 278-279

<sup>45</sup> Keith Tester, *Media, Culture and Morality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 49

definition of enlightenment according to that which is used by Immanuel Kant in 1784, where Kant defined it as the humankind's emancipation from his *immaturity*, a notion which he saw it as the inability to use one's own understanding, unless there is the guidance of another. Accordingly, Adorno and Horkheimer maintain that the very same rationality that paves the way for people's freedom from the strain of mythic powers, thus allowing a progressive superiority over nature, also creates –due to its intrinsic character- a return to myth again, as well as going back to new and even harsher forms of domination. In accordance with the fact, that which applies for such a reversal is *enlightened reason*, for Adorno and Horkheimer, where it identifies itself with rationality and considers the particular under the universal. Consequently, according to them, this brings forth the *instrumental rationality*. Instrumental rationality neglects the intrinsic properties of things; properties that allow each thing to have its own sensuous, social and historical particularity for the sake of the *subject*. Hence, such a rationality considers 'unlike' things as 'like', therefore having power over the conceptual realm.<sup>46</sup> So then, it would be appropriate for us to assert that the culture industry, so far as we have discussed, acts within this instrumental rationality!

Instrumental rationality, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, shuts itself to the true purpose of Enlightenment –that which Kant had once relied so much!- which are freedom and happiness. Hence, the economic organization of modern capitalist societies is the final means to realize this instrumental reason, thus bringing forth the self-destruction of Enlightenment, for Adorno and Horkheimer. The reason for this is

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<sup>46</sup> J.M. Bernstein, "Introduction", in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 4



that everything produced within capitalism –this of course also involves the cultural production under the culture industry, as the latter is a part of the capitalist system- is not done so in order to meet the needs and desires of human beings, but for the market itself, and for sake of profit and gaining more capital. Hence, enlightened or instrumental rationality involves the domination of use value by exchange value; where it disregards the intrinsic properties of things. Moreover, Adorno contends that instrumental rationality in the form of culture industry thus functions against reason and the reasoning subject; and according to him this is where the substantial *irrationality* of enlightened reason dwells! This is because, the culture industry provides pleasure for its consumers, which for Adorno is an amusement offered to individuals that also means “freedom” from thought and negation; that which also distances and blinds people from their final remaining thought of resistance.

One can oppose to Adorno’s view that individuals are to such a great extent manipulated and deceived by the culture industry, and therefore are totally passive. Nevertheless, for Adorno (together with Horkheimer), what is so successful about the culture industry is its advertising mechanisms, where the consumers feel an urge to buy and use its products, although they see through them (hence Adorno believes mass culture to be an ‘unadorned make-up’).<sup>47</sup> Respectively, Adorno studies such a “bewitching” aspect of the advertising mechanisms of the culture industry by analyzing the astrology column of the *Los Angeles Times*, where he also gets preoccupied with the possibility of ‘seeing through and obeying at the same time’. Such a study of his is rather interesting in the sense that he later on comes up with the idea that “irrational rationality” of astrology is similar actually to that of fascism;

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<sup>47</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, (New York: Continuum, 1996), p. 167

because astrology makes people respond with dependency as well, as it “shows” people how they should perceive their worlds. Thus, Adorno maintains:

the world appears to most people today more as a “*system*” than ever before, covered by an *all-comprising net of organization with no loopholes* where the individual could “*hide*”...It is *this reality situation* which has so many and obvious similarities with paranoid systems of thinking that it seems to invite such patterns of intellectual behavior, as well as compulsive attitudes.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, in his essay “The Stars Down to Earth”, from which I have just quoted, Adorno tries to approach a better understanding of the nature and motivations of large-scale social phenomena, which also embody a distinctively irrational character.

Adorno asserts that irrationality should not be necessarily seen as the adaptation of those policies that are fully separated of individual and collective ego aims. Just the opposite holds true for him, as he maintains that irrationality is found on those cases where the rational self-interest, in its fullest meaning, is forced to its extremes so that it turns out to be irrational –which is also the historical fate of enlightened reason that he upholds in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* together with Horkheimer.<sup>49</sup> Hence, on the surface, what appears to be the rationality of common sense advice that is provided by astrology columns is an example to irrationality. Also, it would not be wrong for us to argue here that, by grouping individuals according to the ‘given’ zodiac signs that we see in magazines –magazines are also a part of the culture industry just as the radio, movies, jazz, etc. are, for Adorno and Horkheimer- is also another way of standardizing them, which is also another way of contributing to the creation of modern mass culture. What’s more, Adorno believes astrology to be a modern

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<sup>48</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, “The Stars Down to Earth” in *Adorno: The Stars Down to Earth: and Other Essays on the Irrational in Culture*, ed. Stephen Crook (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 115 (emphasis mine)

<sup>49</sup> J.M. Bernstein, “Introduction”, in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 11

occultism, but its difference between what was seen to be occult in the previous ages is that it is an institutionalized, objectified and to a large extent socialized phenomena –thanks to the merits of the media!<sup>50</sup> He maintains that in the astrology columns that we see in newspapers and magazines of large circulation, the mechanics –or in a way, we can say the roots- of the astrological system are never revealed to the public.<sup>51</sup> Thus, while astrology maintains its sustenance by distancing itself from seriousness, it also permits belief and obedience on the part of the readers where they do not have to overtly give up the claims of rational evidence of science. Nevertheless, as Stephen Crook very well summarizes, Adorno’s point is as follows:

If the unseriousness of fascist propaganda has a considerable element of joking and showmanship, the unseriousness of the secondary, minimalist, occultism of Righter’s column is more directly cognitive...The fact that people do not “believe in” astrology no more prevents them from attending to Righter’s column than the fact that they do not “believe in” advertising prevents them from functioning as consumers.<sup>52</sup>

Now in the last section of this chapter, I will discuss some of Adorno’s ideas on music, which is also complementary to the culture industry theory as it is also part of the media, communication and entertainment sectors (as the musical production can be viewed as an integral part of cultural production, and its distribution being controlled by the culture industry in the contemporary world of ours). What’s more, even his essay on Wagner\*, for example, was written for the purpose of analyzing the social and cultural roots of German fascism.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 12

<sup>51</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, “The Stars Down to Earth”, in *Adorno: The Stars Down to Earth: and Other Essays on the Irrational in Culture*, ed. Stephen Crook (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 42

<sup>52</sup> Stephen Crook, “Introduction”, in *Adorno: The Stars Down to Earth: and Other Essays on the Irrational in Culture*, ed. Stephen Crook (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 16

\* For a more detailed analysis on this subject read: Theodor W. Adorno, *In Search of Wagner* (London: New Left Books, 1981)

## 2.4 Some Remarks of Adorno on Music

Within the confines of classical Marxist theory, music would be a part of the superstructure (besides, composing music is not “a relational term” in the way work and labor power are for Marx). For Lambert Zuidervaart, if human beings struggle with basic conflicts in the forms of social consciousness, as Marx contends, then “Adorno’s view of music as a microcosmic type of “production” is less odd than innovative”<sup>53</sup> Hence, Adorno talks also about music in the basic categories of ‘productive forces’, ‘relations of production’, etc., where he upholds that some of musical production is defined by its opposition to the culture industry. Moreover, Adorno states that the musical ‘relations of production’ are those of economic and ideological conditions to which each tone and the reaction to each tone come together. Such relations encompass the musical mentality and the taste of audiences. Further, for Adorno, musical ‘forces of production’ include compositional activities and methods, performance activities and abilities, and finally, the means of mechanical reproduction. Using such definitions, Adorno comes to create a variable dialectic of forces and relations within music production. According to him, productive forces can alter and transform the relations of production; such as for example, Wagner’s contributions having changed public taste as Adorno maintains.<sup>54</sup> Now what is the place of musical production, its distribution, as well as its reproduction within the (music) market? Also, how does public taste change through music; is there an influence of the culture industry in this respect?

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<sup>53</sup> Lambert Zuidervaart, *Adorno’s Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991), p. 104

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 104 & 106

According to Max Paddison's analysis of Adorno, it is with reproduction as distribution and marketing that we can come across the issue of musical work as performance, which as a result turns itself more towards consumption rather than to the demands of musical production. In this sense, music's marketing and distribution should be understood as part of the area of consumption. Furthermore, because music is also under the domination of the mode of production of monopoly capitalism, the musical forces of production and the autonomy of the musical work both enter the domain of the culture industry's power as well, as they become part of the process of industrial production itself. According to Adorno, as a consequence of culture industry acting as a filtering mechanism, there emerges a process of pre-selection that creates public taste parallel to the demands of the capitalist market economy and which has the effect of standardization of taste. Hence, such a process is a crucial aspect of the mediation of music and society.<sup>55</sup> This is because, for Adorno, until the musical distribution gets down all the way to the masses, it is under the sway of various processes of social selection and guidance by such powers as industries, concert agencies, festival managements, and so on. Consequently, Adorno states that:

All this enters into the listeners' preferences; their needs are merely dragged along. Ahead of everything comes the control by the giant concerns in which electrical, recording and broadcasting industries are overtly and covertly merged in the economically most advanced countries. As the concentration and the power of the distributive agencies increase, freedom in the choice of what to hear tends to decrease; in this respect, integrated music no longer differs from any other consumer commodities.<sup>56</sup>

According to these words of Adorno, the primary relationship is between the work as performance and the 'culture industry' as institutionalized marketing. Hence, as Max

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<sup>55</sup> Max Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 198-199

<sup>56</sup> Quoted from *ibid.*, p. 199

Paddison stresses in his same work, the outcome of this relation is the reified musical work as commodity, that is, the triumph of exchange-value over use-value.

Adorno furthermore asserts that the musical work as performance acquires a function within the social relations of production, which for him is entertainment. Such a function he says, transforms the meaning of autonomous music. With his nostalgia towards the 'great music of the past' –which was not yet dominated by the idea of profit, according to Adorno- he maintains that profit making inclinations of the contemporary capitalist age have also made the production of music overtly for the market, therefore turning it into a commodity form. Now although Adorno contended that music's commodity nature was not a new aspect, such a fact still remained:

whereas in the nineteenth century music-making formed part of the private lives of bourgeois families, now, with the technology of radio and film, which belonged to powerful monopolies, and with unlimited access to the total capitalist propaganda apparatus, it had become most exclusively an event of the marketplace.<sup>57</sup>

Nevertheless, although the musical production from then onwards was maintained through its exchange value, therefore music being alienated from the bourgeois listening public, Adorno found this moment of alienation to be positive in the sense that it gave music a degree of autonomy and thus a revolutionary potential. Adorno believed that just as (critical) theory changed the present consciousness of the masses, the music was ought to do the similar thing.

Adorno moreover detested and looked down on any music, be it compositions or performances that he saw was affirmative with the inherently totalitarian tendencies

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<sup>57</sup> Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), p. 37

of the late bourgeois society. For instance, his writings on Wagner also aimed at revealing the social background of German fascism in the nineteenth century. “Given the pressures of times –Hitler’s affiliation with Bayreuth and the incorporation of Wagner into the fascist culture machine- Wagner’s work turned out to be the logical place for such an investigation.”<sup>58</sup> According to Adorno, although Wagner represented the most advanced stage in the progress of music and opera, as a composer-conductor Wagner concealed the increasing alienation of the composer from the audience by conceiving his music “in terms of the gesture of striking a blow and by incorporating the audience into the work through calculated effects... in the name of the listener, anyone whose feelings accord with any measure other than the beat of the music is silenced.”<sup>59</sup> Thus, according to Adorno, the audience of Wagner turns out to be “the reified object of calculation by the artist.”<sup>60</sup> It is the same attempt, for Adorno, which the culture industry enforces over the consumer –or fascism, fascist propaganda, over the masses. Now, let us look at some of the points Adorno made on jazz music, because this would be a perfect example for his ideas on the relationship between the culture industry and the musical reproduction.

In opposition to those claims made by jazz devotees, that jazz music was good music, that it was serious and creative, informal and primitive, etc., Adorno asserted that jazz music lacked seriousness. He also thought that it was just the antithesis of anything being under the category of ‘avant-garde’ or ‘progressive’. Like every other product of the culture industry, Adorno saw jazz as realizing, aesthetically, the technologies of control and domination that defined mass industrial and mass

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<sup>58</sup> Andreas Huyssen, “Adorno in Reverse: From Hollywood to Richard Wagner”, in *New German Critique*, no.29 (1983): p. 29

<sup>59</sup> Quoted from *ibid.*, p. 31

<sup>60</sup> Quoted from *ibid.*

political modernity. Adorno denied the claims on jazz music's improvisatory character in any serious sense, and even objected the viewpoint that it was genuinely of African origin.<sup>61</sup> Thus, as Robert Witkin explains, "Adorno insists that jazz is a commodity in the strict sense... Jazz, argues Adorno, seeks to improve its marketability while masking its commodity character. Moreover, the mask itself, those moments of excess, of vibrancy, are precisely what increases that marketability."<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, it is worth noting at this point that Adorno elaborated on jazz in the context of mass culture. Therefore, he was concerned with jazz as it was becoming very appealing for the masses and thus penetrating society.

What's more, Adorno viewed the relationship between jazz and African –or Black- people to be no more vital than the skin of the black man functioning as a colorful effect; as did the silver of the saxophone! Additionally, Adorno also made another suggestion for his dismissal of the black origins of jazz music. He stated that the early jazz music was made up of the music of slaves and the singing of servant girls. If this is seen, according to him, as a vitality in which American music sought to revive itself, it is rather a vitality that is not drawn from the wild but from those domesticated people under enslavement. Further, against those claims about jazz's African background and its development as an original and localized expression with strong ethnic roots long before it was altered by the culture industry, Adorno views it as follows: "Whatever was wild, untrammled, original or even African in this music had...been destroyed by the culture industry when the music had been appropriated as the basis of a mass culture."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Robert W. Witkin, *Adorno on Music* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 161-162

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172



So overall, Adorno saw jazz music as an example of the “terrible” inclinations that could be related with the culture industry. Hence, he rejected the notion of jazz being innovative and rebellious (be it in terms of the musicians, or a specific oppressed social group), because he saw it as another commodity form of culture industry in order to sell more products. Even if there were some innovative motives in its early years, culture industry, for Adorno, destroyed it and made it operate under its strict regulations of standardization. For this reason, he claimed that whenever jazz seemed to be at its most revolutionary stage, it was in fact at its most obedient point.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE MUSIC MEDIA AND INDUSTRY (AND MTV, CULTURE INDUSTRY PAR EXCELLENCE?)

Why is it the music media and industry that this chapter particularly focuses on, and sees it as a crucial aspect to be analyzed? Firstly, because ‘music’ alone is one of the major mediums of communication, and it is a mixture of personal, social, as well as cultural signification that differs from other forms of communication. Secondly, as the focus of this study is an analysis of media and globalization, the music media and industry are very important “global” phenomena that should always be questioned, as they also bring into view the images of the so-called “global” and “local”. Thus, global music media display the local identities worldwide, which are mostly done in a distorted manner due to the media corporations’ “ruling” ideologies. Also, media’s ‘cultural hegemony’ can be asserted by the music media profoundly, as it strongly influences, negotiates and challenges identities, especially those of the youth. Furthermore, referring back to the notion of ‘culture industry’ in the previous chapter, –and of course to Adorno and Horkheimer- I will also in this chapter critically reflect whether giant music media corporations and industries (such as MTV) act as a homogenizing factor. What’s more, I will also discuss whether or not the technological improvements that have more or less changed the feature of musical products, challenged our way of listening and even visualizing music –e.g. the music videos.

### 3.1 An Overview of the Music Industry on a Global Scale

To start with, I should note that the industrial roots of music is initially important to analyze as it has been with the rise of monopoly capitalism that the major corporations have come to assert power on what should be made “popular” and what should, so to say, remain “unpopular”. Thus, the dissemination of various musical styles throughout the globe cannot be unrelated to the development of capitalism and its inherent ideology. In this respect, for D.C. Robinson:

the twentieth-century ascent of Anglo-American popular music to international dominance depended upon a number of interrelated factors: the evolution of monopoly capitalism, the advantageous economic position of the United States..., the development of recording and electronic communication technologies with U.S. capitalism...<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, as it is obvious from the above quotation, the music industry is not separate from society’s economic and technological background, and the musical product that becomes popular worldwide is also strongly related to capitalistic relations. Further, as music production is not a static phenomenon, similar to other symbolic practices (in this sense as D.C. Robinson et al. argue, it is also ideological), music either reproduces or challenges the existing social structures. One might also suggest that the distribution and consumption of music are also altered by the changes that take place within the social system.<sup>2</sup>

Some large powerful capitalist corporations have come to dominate the (recorded) popular music industry starting from the early years of the twentieth century, which has thus increased the globalization of media and communication networks. Moreover, according to Keith Negus, major companies such as EMI Music,

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<sup>1</sup> D. C. Robinson et al., *Music at the Margins: Popular Music and Global Cultural Diversity* (Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991), p. 32

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33

Polygram, Sony Music Entertainment, Warner Music International and the BMG Music Group have been carrying out the work of production, manufacture and distribution of the nearly 70 per cent of the recorded popular music that has been sold in recent years. Further, big transnational corporations that are concerned with leisure and entertainment media, electronic and industrial manufacturing, etc. own these major recording music industries that I have just named above. For instance, EMI is owned by Thorn-EMI, a British based company that is interested in lighting, musical and electrical retail outlets, computer software and electronic technology and the likes; and Polygram belongs to the Dutch based Philips corporation where the latter is concerned with areas similar to Thorn-EMI that I have just mentioned.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, “the globalization of communications media and geographical expansion of transnational corporations has provided more opportunities for, and increased the significance of the marketing and promotion of recording artists across the planet.”<sup>4</sup>

With reference to the previous chapter on the ‘culture industry’, do not these statements on the globalization of communication media and the diffusion of the transnational corporations throughout the world indicate what Adorno and Horkheimer envisioned a couple of decades ago? That ‘culture’ itself turned into a commodity, where everything within the confines of cultural production came to have a similar technological rationality which was the same as the organizational planning and schemes as the mass production of automobiles, for example. What’s more, the words of Keith Negus that I have quoted above, that the globalization of

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<sup>3</sup> Keith Negus, *Producing Pop: Culture and Conflict in the Poplar Music Industry* (London, New York, Melbourne and Auckland: Edward Arnold, 1992), pp. 1-2

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7

communications media and the diffusion of transnational corporations throughout the world inevitably paved the way for the area of marketing to become a primarily important issue, is also a very similar notion to what Adorno had written on music long ago. Accordingly, in the last section of the previous chapter on *Some Remarks of Adorno on Music*, I emphasized Adorno's nostalgia towards the 'great music of the past', which was not then dominated by the idea of profit, and therefore marketing was not then significant issue as it is now. Consequently, such profit making urges of the contemporary capitalist period of today, also turned the production of music into a commodity form as it is mainly produced for the market. Moreover, as Adorno and Horkheimer argue about mass culture taking on an identical character that is brought forth by monopoly, is this also similar to what is being a result of the globalization of the communications media of our age, that is, in the end creating homogeneous cultures and identities? Thus, I will try to give an insight on such and similar questions in the following and/or later discussions of this study.

### **3.2 Popular Music Production**

Production of music underlines, as well as relates, various domains of musical invention. However it also acts as a mediator and/or representation of various class, ethnic, generational, gender and taste groups. Especially popular music acts in a twofold manner, on the one hand it upholds the musical conventions of the contemporary era, and on the other hand it radicalizes those as a result of both maintaining and challenging social relationships of production. For instance, it was in the sixteenth century Europe where there occurred a rapid musical innovation, which was visible in the dominance of rationally organized harmony, tonality, meter

etc. of the so-called cultured music form of that time.<sup>5</sup> Thus, as D.C. Robinson et al. argue:

This movement of music from religious rite to secular entertainment and the ‘hiring’ of musicians for music production indicated a new and complex relation between music and money. Music increasingly became a marker of class separation –the ‘classical’ music of the nobility and...the church diverging from the ‘popular’ music of the ‘people’...<sup>6</sup>

Thus, taking into consideration these words of D.C. Robinson et al. it would not be wrong to argue that from this century onwards, there started to emerge a sense of ‘popular’ music, while music itself became a medium that was also a part of profit and money relations. Hence, it is crucial, I believe, at this point to discuss the terms ‘popular’ as well as popular music and culture in order gain a deeper insight.

### **3.2.1 Popular Music via Mass Media, Popular Culture, and Technological Change**

Jon Stratton, similar to the discussions of Adorno and Horkheimer, maintains that popular music industry is not a unique culture industry, as he views all culture industries under capitalism functioning in a similar manner. In his article “What is ‘Popular Music’?”, Stratton argues that popular music is constructed through the conjunction of the domains of the ‘economic’ and the ‘discursive’. He furthermore upholds that popular music is situated within a non-rational discourse. This is because, for Stratton, popular music industry, like other culture industries, is unable to function as a rational goal-oriented capitalist industry, as the products are not developed according to a notion of use-value. As a result, popular music industry under capitalism operates partially with a non-rational discourse. This is because in

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<sup>5</sup> D. C. Robinson et al., *Music at the Margins: Popular Music and Global Cultural Diversity* (Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991), pp. 33-35

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 35

practice every so often one or other feature of its operation may appear to dominate.

Hence, Stratton asserts:

on the one hand the rational manipulation manifested in the constructed nature of such popular groups as the Osmonds and the Jackson 5 or on the other hand the eruption of irrationality associated with the anti-capitalism of the Sex Pistols. These apparently erratic swings in the mode of manifestation of popular music reflect an essentially stable contradiction where rational capitalism meets –indeed generates the conditions for- romantic non-rational inspiration.<sup>7</sup>

What's more, for Stratton, although they have systems that are alike in orientation, both the music press and radio operate within their own, different, economic systems, which is very unlike that of the record companies. Selling records, for example, is not important in monetary terms for the music press and radio as it is for the record companies. Likewise, it is the number of copies that is sold, for a music paper, and the amount of listeners it can attract, for a radio station that becomes the crucial point. Consequently, these institutions (the music press and radio) stress the musical, cultural, aspect of a record while de-emphasizing the economic aspect. In this respect, Stratton maintains that the emphasis on the importance of music by means of the music press and radio not only increase the cultural loading of the music, but also distracts the consumer from the economic transaction involved in buying the record.<sup>8</sup>

Although the music press and radio seem to be economically separated from the music that passes through them, they have importance and significance to the degree of the importance that is given to the music by *the public* (where the music press and radio act as channels). That is, the music press and radio may be simply viewed as cultural gatekeepers giving “non-economical” judgments on record preferences.

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<sup>7</sup> Jon Stratton, “What Is ‘Popular Music’?”, in *Sociological Review* 31, no. 2 (1983): p. 294

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294-295

Therefore, when records are played on the radio or reviewed in the press, they can be thought of as non-economic. Accordingly, it is this “non-economical” aspect that gives a cultural legitimacy to these organizations, which, according to Stratton, have to confess that they are at bottom economically oriented.<sup>9</sup> Further, music on the radio satisfies a different function to records that are bought. For instance, a person may “like” something, hence the record may therefore be ‘popular’ in that sense, but if s(he) does not buy it, the record is therefore in another sense ‘unpopular’.<sup>10</sup> In this respect, the discourse of popular music is a product of the capitalist economic practice.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, it is also important to underline Simon Frith’s view at this point, because he argues that on many occasions popular music do not necessarily need to be “sold to the public at all. The musical commodity can circulate within the media, generating income from the exploitation of performing rights alone.”<sup>12</sup>

D.C. Robinson et al. suggest that the term *popular* in our contemporary world is mostly associated with commercial success rather than with appreciation (of an artwork). In accordance with the fact, the word “popular” in today’s music world acts as a measurement; a measurement that is concerned with the number of people who buy a specific musician’s or group’s album, or come to see his/her/their performance. Therefore, popular music within the confines of the definition ‘commercial success’ has to do with the production and marketing systems of entertainment industries like television, film, radio, publishing, and the recording industry, according to Robinson et al. What’s more, the goal of the popular music industry and the major recording companies is to make money from as many record, cassette, CD, etc. sales as

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 297-298

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 298 & 300

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 308

<sup>12</sup> Quoted from Keith Negus, *Popular Music in Theory: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 56



possible. In order to achieve this, the industry attempts to increase the number of consumers throughout the world and to maximize profits by bringing about additional income from associated advertising revenues and the like.<sup>13</sup> Robinson et al., furthermore, highlight an important issue as they suggest:

A further way to define popular music is by describing its musical characteristics. However, the definitions of music that come from the disciplines of musicology and ethnomusicology are historically grounded in Western ideas of music. As a result such definitions frequently do not do justice to the amazing array of alternative popular music genres, many of which are based on non-Western music systems. For instance, Nettl (1985) argues that various types of Western music may have more in common than the varieties of world popular music.<sup>14</sup>

It is nevertheless argued that in no other culture than the West is there a sharp line between “popular music” and other kinds. For instance, in Iran it is simply called “Iranian music”, which actually comes to embody the categories of classical and folk music. In India, further, it is called “film music”; in Africa, the different music genres are categorized individually; and in Indonesia the most “popular” music genre, which is interestingly a mixture of Portuguese and Indonesian materials with a general modern Western overlay, is called ‘Kroncong’. In this respect, what makes popular music “popular” should actually be seen as a specific “social quality” of music that is defined by the relationships in which the music works and has effects. In other words, popular music has come to be defined as “popular”, or has the “quality” of being popular, only within these relationships of meaning, form, and structure. Accordingly, it is these relationships that exert specific internal structural organization on music, for example, “a time frame that fits broadcasting limitations,

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<sup>13</sup> D. C. Robinson et al., *Music at the Margins: Popular Music and Global Cultural Diversity* (Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991), p. 10

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 11

a strong rhythmic structure where dancing is the dominant use of popular music, a structural organization that is producible without a written score where music is improvised from performance to performance...”<sup>15</sup>

For Roy Shuker on the other hand, popular music is situated within the area of popular culture and therefore it must be studied within this scope. In other words, to study popular music also means to study popular culture. In this respect, initially, he starts to investigate the word ‘popular’ and the term ‘popular culture’. Accordingly, ‘popular’ is a term that is highly debatable. According to Shuker:

For some it means appealing to the people, whereas for others it means something much more grounded in or ‘of’ the people. The former usage generally refers to commercially produced forms of popular culture, while the latter is reserved for forms of ‘folk’ popular culture, associated with local community-based production and individual craftspeople. In relation to popular music, for example, this is the distinction often made between folk music, especially when acoustically based, and the chart-oriented products of the record companies.<sup>16</sup>

Shuker, moreover, argues that there is a reciprocal relationship between popular culture and the mass media. He explains the term ‘mass media’ as referring to print, aural, and visual communication on a large scale, and then views the term ‘popular’ as something –a person, product, practice, belief, etc.– that is commonly liked or approved of by a large audience or the public in general. When this is applied to the media, it means that specific television programs, films, records, books, magazines, etc. are widely consumed. Hence, for Shuker, it is by ratings surveys and sales figures that their popularity is implied. Accordingly, to a degree, this definition of ‘popularity’ regards popular cultural texts as material, concrete things (in other

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 12

<sup>16</sup> Roy Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 3

words it reifies them), thus reduces them to the status of objects to be bought and sold in the market. Hence, Shuker argues that in this sense, that is when talking about popular as ‘commercial’, markets are an undeniable feature of popular culture.<sup>17</sup>

As was emphasized before, ‘popularity’ is at the core of popular culture as different products and figures are accepted and approved socially. Therefore, in a way, Shuker upholds that *the popular are mass* and *the mass are popular*. Again as I highlighted above, popular culture and mass media have reciprocal, or in other words symbiotic, relationship. This is because each is dependent on the other, and in a close collaboration. For Shuker, the media transmits the majority of the popular culture, while the contemporary popular culture in the US, UK, and New Zealand, for example, makes up the majority of mass media content. Commercial forms of popular culture, be it film, music, etc., depend highly on mass marketing and publicizing on the basis of multi-media (for example, the mass marketing campaigns in different products that followed the release of *Batman* and *Dick Tracy* such as the posters, t-shirts, games, etc.). Also within the mass marketing of popular music, music reproduction can be made in various texts such as the vinyl, audio tape, compact disc, digital audio tape, and video, including on variations within these such as the dance mix, the cassette single, and so on. The music can thus be spread out to public in a variety of ways including radio airplay, discos and nightclubs, television music shows and MTV-style channels, and live performances. Following these there can be advertising reviews concerning the text or performance, as well as interviews with the performer(s) in the different publications of the press, and the likes. Thus,

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

considering all these facts and assumptions, Roy Shuker asks what ‘popular music’ is.

For Shuker, at the core of the majority of the various forms of ‘popular music’ there is an underlying tension between the creativity of the act of ‘making music’ (which for Shuker, although interesting, is equally valid for both popular and unpopular music) and the commercial nature of its production and dissemination.<sup>18</sup> He also maintains that another attempt to define popular music is its relationship to technology. In this respect, some authors maintain a distinction between a ‘folk mode’ that is based on live performance, and a mass culture form associated with recording. Nevertheless, for Shuker, popular music cannot be easily reduced to whether or not it uses technology, because those who want their music to reach a wider audience must record anyway, which is a process that is technological in character. Accordingly, he gives the example of hip-hop and writes that this particular style was developed by the underprivileged urban Blacks who used the turntable and drum machines.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, Shuker asserts that with a term like ‘popular culture’ it would be wrong to attach a definite meaning to it, as it is a changing cultural phenomenon itself.<sup>20</sup>

Simon Frith views popular music via technological change in a similar way. For Frith, music “machines”, contrary to what most of the mass media critics from both left and right have suggested, are not dehumanizing. The main reason for him is that initially, it was technological developments that made the present notion of musical

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 9

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 10

“authenticity” possible. The previously unreproducible aspects of performance, such as improvisation, spontaneity were reproduced exactly by the recording devices. Thus, for Frith, this “enabled Afro-American music to replace European art and folk musics at the heart of Western popular culture (and the global reach of white American capital).”<sup>21</sup> Such technological changes, for Frith, influenced not just what type of music people listened to, but also *how* they listened to it. Thus recording made available a public means of communication, and its continuous technological development, particularly since the development of the electrical microphone, furthered the possibilities of expression in all genres of pop. Further, according to Frith:

Out of such developments came the star system –the marketing of individual performers as spuriously “knowable” friends and idols- but out of these same developments also came new means of self-definition, musical identities that could (as in “minority” cultures and subcultures) challenge the common sense of bourgeois ideology.<sup>22</sup>

Frith further argues that technological change has also been a crucial source of resistance towards the corporate control of popular music. For instance, technological enhancements such as blank tapes, video cassettes, etc. offered the music consumer to record the preferred music sample at home. Also devices such as Walkmans or Discmans enabled people to carry the music they liked around with them. These according to Frith, brought forth new technological habits that challenged old record company ways of listening to music. Hence, I assume, such technological developments allowed in a way –although of course not totally- the consumer to not fully be under the imposition of popular music radios and record companies. However, to continue, according to Frith, the mechanization of popular

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<sup>21</sup> Simon Frith, “Industrialization of Popular Music”, in *Popular Music and Communication*, ed. J. Lull (Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1992), p. 69

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

music has not been a simple history of capitalist takeover. In this respect, he gives the examples of how ‘Jamaican dub culture’ and ‘New York hip-hop’ took over the technology of recording, and which thus weakened the status of the record as a finished product. Accordingly, the techniques –or rather I believe we should call the art of- ‘scratching’ and ‘mixing’ that evolved challenged the notion of copyright.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Frith, by recalling what he names as “the sound of the streets”, again in his same article, maintains that if one is to define music as human activity, then the industrialization of music has not hindered people from using it to express private joys or public grief. Just the opposite is true for him; that the industrialization of music, that is of course through enormous technological developments, has enabled people new means of self expression, as well as new ways of having an impact, and especially new ideas of what music can be. For instance, for Frith, although street music is certainly conceived as an industrial noise by many, it is nonetheless a human noise! Hence, for him, perhaps the most exciting and political music of the 1990s are those hip-hop sounds of young urban Black bands like ‘Public Enemy’; or in other words groups that largely depend on the latest technology and the “inspiration” of the “street”. However, I will examine thoroughly such musical genres built around the latest technology in the next chapter. I will now continue my discussions of popular music production in-depth via the music video and television in the following sections.

### **3.3 Music Television, Music Video Phenomenon, and Producing Pop**

According to Andrew Goodwin, most forms of media have basically been supported economically by direct commodity production, by advertising, or by the blending of

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 70

these two, where he asserts that this is not completely true of the music business. This is because, for him, records, cassettes, and compact discs are the commodity forms of the music industry, where such products have to be altered, or in other words shifted, for making profits. Even then, without combining them with other 'popular' products such as posters, teen magazines, live performances, film, radio, TV, etc., these will not carry out a 'pop' meaning. Thus, as one can observe, the music industry is actually profoundly multi-textual as it incorporates various forms of popular cultural products. Nevertheless, for Goodwin, this can also be the case for other media as well. For instance, in relation to the music industry, the 1989 Warner Bros. film *Batman* came out with the '80s popular star Prince's the *Batman the Movie LP* and the soundtrack from the film itself. Further, it also published Batman comic books, merchandised Batman bubble gum, breakfast cereal, and so forth.<sup>24</sup> So, does this example once more indicate that Adorno and Horkheimer's argument on the culture industry is valid even today, that the cultural products are dominated by the entertainment industry's aim of gaining profit, and promoting what is, or will be, mainstream and popular, and thus creating 'sameness' within (mass) culture? However, if we are to proceed our discussions, it is also useful here to emphasize a distinction made by Nicholas Garnham, following Theodor Adorno, which is basically between those media industries that distribute products and are fundamentally mass-produced, like recorded forms such as film, TV, etc., and those media, including music, that are based on the mass circulation of preindustrial cultural form. The significance of such a separation of the music (media) industry from other media industries, according to Goodwin, is that it shows an existing contradiction that lies inside the music industry itself. Thus he writes:

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<sup>24</sup> Andrew Goodwin, *Dancing in the Distraction Factory: Music Television and Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 25-27

between inherently mass-produced commodity forms such as records and cassettes (which produce profit but insufficient meaning) and preindustrial forms of promotion such as live performance (which help to “complete” the package of meaning, but which until the 1980s generally failed to generate profit even when organized on a mass scale). These observations also demonstrate why isolated analysis of individual texts is inadequate for our understanding of the increasingly intertextual processes of the mass media.<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, Goodwin claims that music video clips should be analyzed within a framework that defines the role of pop performances within their essentially “promotional” role on the basis of a ‘mutidiscursive industry’.<sup>26</sup> Hence, in the next section I will try to explore music video, as well as its crucial role and function, within the music industry business in a more detailed manner.

### **3.3.1 Analyzing Music Video In-Depth**

To understand in a more in-depth manner of the character of today’s music industry and business, it is also crucial to underline the birth of (promotional) music videos. Further, again as Goodwin states, the pop performance, or in other words the performance of what is attributed to popular music and culture, had always a highly promotional role. Hence, the evolvement of the promotional music video can also be viewed as a means of commodifying the business of promotion in a more influential way. Such an area of business accelerated, and the promotional music video became a trend in the 1980s and 1990s by the extended use of corporate sponsorship, as well as the spreading economic role of merchandising –e.g. the sale of programs, T-shirts, and other tour materials- in tour budgets. In accordance with the fact, it would be sensible to argue that the music industry, in its venture of promoting pop music internationally, started to use music video in order to come up with a more cost-

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 27

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.



effective and efficient method.<sup>27</sup> For this reason, it can be argued that the music video phenomenon is highly tied up with the area of popular music and culture. Moreover, viewing the significance of music video is also a necessary area of discussion when developing arguments around music television such as MTV.

Music video, according to James Lull, has become one of life's realities in the domain of popular culture. Firstly because the phenomenon of music video brought out huge concerns about its effects on young people; secondly, the music industry, which saw music video production and programming as an indispensable source for marketing, became a major area of interest; and finally by means of music video, musicians –as well as producers, engineers, etc.- got the chance to go through their material visually and aurally. In this respect, what basically defines music video, for Lull, is that:

It reverses the normative aesthetic and semiotic relationship between picture and sound in television and film, in that the visuals are there to enhance the sound rather than the other way around (that is, a “visual track” accompanies the sound rather than a “sound track” accompanying visuals).<sup>28</sup>

For Lull, music video, something where the conventions of popular radio are used, and is transmitted by cable television technology where pictures are sent as well as sounds, is a distinctive type of medium. In this respect, popular videos, just like television commercials, are highly exposed as they are repeated frequently. Also, Lull mentions that people are highly concerned that the music video destroys the imagination of youngsters as they hand over ready-made and repeated interpretations

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 28

<sup>28</sup> James Lull, “Popular Music and Communication: An Introduction”, in *Popular Music and Communication*, ed. James Lull (Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: Sage Publication, 1992), p.

of popular songs.<sup>29</sup> Likewise, how such concepts as violence, sexuality, etc. are presented –or would it be more appropriate to say, those which *are thought* to present- on music videos has brought forth strong reactions. What’s more, such reactions may also be coupled with the anger for the use of those distinctive characteristics attributed to the “local” –e.g. using images of the native peoples and recalling so-called “traditional” lifestyles for the sake of their “exoticism” and “eccentricity”. Accordingly, music videos may also use what are actually specific to some local cultures. In this respect, as I mentioned in the first chapter, the huge transnational brand Pepsi-Cola cooperated with Madonna’s firm in the late 1980s, where Pepsi commercials on MTV contained extracts of Madonna’s ‘Like a Prayer’ video. Now MTV, which can be described briefly as a U.S. owned capitalist enterprise, has the intentions of bringing non-American music to the U.S. market, as well as to create desires for the American products outside of the U.S. Moreover, MTV addresses a youth culture with supposed shared concerns and consumer desires. Thus, MTV’s slogans as ‘One world, one image, one channel: MTV’ celebrate the effacement of difference by global consumerism. Hence, as I wrote in the first chapter, MTV formed a business synergy with Madonna’s firm and Pepsi. Thus, the commercials on this music TV showed a leading character, that was Madonna, having an ambiguous religious and sensual encounter with a Black saint’s icon who appeared to come to life in a church. Furthermore, in 1989, in forty different countries, MTV audiences saw a commercial on MTV in which an Aborigine (Native Australian) was running across a desert (in California, rather than in Australia!) to a bar where Madonna’s ‘Like a Prayer’ Pepsi commercial was playing on the TV screen. This is a fine example in revealing the development of the

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 12

promotional music video as a means of commodifying the ‘business of promotion’ in a more influential way (that is, promoting and spreading the economic role of merchandizing). Nonetheless, such an example is also rather appropriate in showing how some transnational brands adopt cultural references that are locally specific. Accordingly, for Jonathan Bignell, “this appears to be an example of the promotion of a univalent commodity capitalism, able to connect soft drinks with pop music in a colossal marketing system which is invariant across national, regional and local cultures.”<sup>30</sup>

Cathy Schwichtenberg, in her article “Music Video: The Popular Pleasures of Visual Music”, maintains that music videos should be examined as part of a complex context, which involves the performers as well as industries and audience who, as a result, assign meanings (that can definitely be diverse) to the music and the visual material in the videos. Accordingly, Schwichtenberg denotes:

Of course, *total control* over what music videos look like and signify can never be exerted by the music industry, nor is there *total resistance* to the videos from below where audiences engage in differential acts of consumption and interpretation. Audiences are neither victims of “mind managing” nor are they completely free to interpret music videos any way they like.<sup>31</sup>

This implies that the audience is not as passive as some critics would argue (an argument that I have reviewed in the first and second chapters). The culture industry’s ability to control cultural production, like the music video, is not as strict

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<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Bignell, *Postmodern Media Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 174

<sup>31</sup> Cathy Schwichtenberg, “Music Video: The Popular Pleasures of Visual Music”, in *Popular Music and Communication*, ed. James Lull (Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: Sage Publication, 1992), p. 117 (emphasis mine)

and powerful as some theorists such as Adorno and Horkheimer would underline. Or is it not?

### **3.3.2 MTV: The Amalgamation of Sound and Vision**

The starting point of music video actually dates back to August 1, 1981 for some critics, which is the day when MTV Music Television was born. For such critics, the birth of MTV was the founding moment of music video. Nevertheless, the mixture of music and visuals has been around for some time and therefore has been culturally omnipresent. Thought in this way, music has always been represented visually in one form or another. For instance, in everyday life, album covers, live music performances, pictures in music magazines as well as in TV shows and commercials, etc. are all indicators of visual imagery that one way or another accompanies music experience (that is effecting how music is experienced). Accordingly, all of such visual representation forms are important and necessary in creating an audience that are also popular music consumers.<sup>32</sup>

The growth of cable television in the 1980s paved the way for the creation of specialized program services seeking specific groups, rather than mass audiences. Moreover, the development of satellite communications system enabled the means for program services to be transmitted to cable systems throughout the country. Further, in the latter part of the 1980s, there started a trend towards specialized programming which, as a result, was enhanced by the advancement of existing cable systems, and so on.<sup>33</sup> However, “the future embrace of video music was aided by

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 118

<sup>33</sup> Jack Banks, *Monopoly Television: MTV's Quest to Control the Music* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1996), p. 30

technological developments in television audio that increased consumer interest in the presentation of music on television...MTV's self-promotions in its early years stressed the fact that viewers could hear it in stereo."<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless, according to Jack Banks, apart from the technological developments' aid on video music and its presentation on television, the growth and progress of a program service based on music video was also made easier by general economic trends in the 1980s. For instance, the retail record business reported by then that there had been a loss of 400 million dollars in record sales within three years; that is between 1978 and 1981. Thus, the time could not be better when Robert Pittman (MTV's young executive then, and a former radio program manager) presented his plan to the record industry. Furthermore, "by getting record companies to supply videos, MTV ensured that the videos would look like advertisements for record company products... The music industry was, after all, operating from the same commercial imperatives as the cable television industries."<sup>35</sup>

*Warner Communication* company\* was the first company to take advantage of these conditions that were favorable to the development of music video. Warner executives, further, believed that a channel that evolved around music would attract the younger audience; where rock music at that time was a central element of a youth-oriented subculture. Also, the executives thought that a program service built up of video music clips would be a cheap source of programming that could be

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Lisa A. Lewis, *Gender Politics and MTV: Voicing the Difference* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), p. 24

\* After American Express bought 50 percent of Warner's cable division in 1979, *Warner Communications* was split into two: *Warner Amex Cable Communications* and *Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment Company* (WASEC). Warner Amex Cable continued to be responsible for the operation of its cable companies, and WASEC was developed to further specialized program services for cable.

constituted faster than any other proposed service. Furthermore, John A. Lack (the then executive vice president of programming and marketing of Warner Cable) and Robert Pittman “felt their plan for a music video channel could take advantage of the pronounced recession in the recording business and radio’s stodgy conservatism by creating new consumer excitement in rock music that would revitalize the industry.”<sup>36</sup>

What’s more, Pittman, basing his argument on the WASEC’s research (a survey made with 600-750 people aged between twenty to forty), justified his claim that MTV should have a rock oriented format, thus largely avoiding rhythm and blues by showing the research results which indicated that the average MTV viewer would be suburban “white” male with a strong commitment to rock music, and an equally strong aversion to the then contemporary soul music (?!). In this respect, Banks argues:

MTV’s playlist would pander to the ethnocentric nature of its core audience by playing almost exclusively white rock artists. According to him, the primary audience for black-oriented music was in major urban areas that were not yet wired for cable and thus unable to receive Warner’s program service.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, MTV was born on August 1, 1981 and the story went on...

It is very crucial here, I believe, to underline what kind of an audience MTV, the world’s largest music media, aimed at reaching in its early years, and later on how the focal point changed. This is to show whether or not the entertainment industry – like our Frankfurt critics have once maintained- acts also as a mechanism that helps

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<sup>36</sup> Jack Banks, *Monopoly Television: MTV’s Quest to Control the Music* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1996), p. 32

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34

to engender and/or promote a mass culture, while homogenizing cultural products. Thus, later on we will also eventually and hopefully get an insight of whether entertainment industry and media have profoundly served for the creation of a global (popular) culture. Nonetheless, before that, I think it is also important to discuss whether MTV lies within a postmodernist discourse or not.

### **3.4 MTV: A Postmodern Discourse?**

One of the basic presuppositions of postmodern theory is that *signifiers* (sounds, images) have come to be more crucial than their *signifieds* (concepts that the signifiers stand for). The general idea is that the society we live in, or in a broader sense the world we live in, is a consumer of images, and therefore is not very much preoccupied with what those images represent or mean. Accordingly, for John Fiske, the originality of MTV lies in three dimensions and those are: the emphasis given to the signifier rather than the signified; the “openness” of its textual structure; and lastly having a non-conventional and thus a possible oppositional audience.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, one of the many interesting points Fiske makes is his statement on ‘MTV as orgasm’ as he writes: “MTV is orgasm –when signifiers explode in pleasure in the body in an excess of the physical. No ideology, no social control can organize an orgasm. Only freedom can. All orgasms are democratic: all ideology is autocratic. This is the politics of pleasure.”<sup>39</sup> For Fiske, the body and its orgasms are within the confines of pleasure as resistance; and it is the body which reads, and the senses which experience MTV. Therefore he claims that the experience of MTV is pleasure. Thus he writes.

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<sup>38</sup> John Fiske, “MTV: Post-Structural, Post-Modern”, in *The Postmodern Presence: Readings on Postmodernism in American Culture and Society*, ed. Arthur Asa Berger (Walnut Creek, London and New Delhi: AltaMira Press, 1998), p. 167

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168

MTV is experience as pleasure...The plurality of meanings in video clips makes us talk of their senses, not of their sense...MTV's (over)valuation of the signifier allows a resistance to the mainstream, whose ideological work is done on the plane of the signified. MTV is to TV as youth is to the middle aged mortgagee, or as sensation is to (common) sense. Youth offends middle age, sensation offends common sense, and fetishizing the signifier offends that hegemonic signified.<sup>40</sup>

Within this sarcastically written article of Fiske, it is furthermore maintained that ideology is inherent in the 'form' rather than in the 'context', and in this respect MTV, although having a capitalistic mode of production, carries a radical transformative potential. This is because, for Fiske, the openness of the text, that is the MTV videos, allows a range of radical meanings to proliferate. Hence, he even asks if capitalism has thus finally provided an anti-capitalist mode, and the result according to him is that although MTV is a product of capitalism, it is also the means of resisting it. One of the evidences of such a reasoning, for Fiske, is the importance MTV gives to fashion. According to him, such signifiers as clothes, make-up, hair, etc. are all short-lived, everchanging, and thus oppositional to the established world and its norms. The 'style' of MTV is for this reason subversive, and Fiske gives the example of Tina Turner and claims that the high heels, leather mini-skirt, and the sexy walk of hers are taken out of sexist patriarchy into the rights of the feminine; and their energy, aggressiveness, etc. are thus all made to stand in opposition to the patriarchy that produced them in the first place.

For Kaplan, as a cable channel the main force of MTV is *consumption* on a variety of levels ranging from the 'literal' (e.g. selling the goods of the sponsors, the pop/rock stars' records, and MTV itself) to the 'psychological' (e.g. selling the image, the

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 168-169



“look”, the style, etc.).<sup>41</sup> Further, in her attempt to search whether MTV is a postmodern, even avant-garde, anti-aesthetic discourse, Kaplan incorporates the ideas of such theorists like Jacques Lacan, Fredric Jameson, Lawrence Grossberg, Jean Baudrillard, Emile Benveniste, and so on. For instance, citing Benveniste’s argument that many MTV videos are actually “discourse” rather than “history” in that they make visible their sources of enunciation and comment on their processes of production, Kaplan maintains:

Yet these devices do not go along with an ideologically subversive stance toward dominant culture as in the “proper” avant-garde text of Benveniste’s model. The aesthetic discourse dominant in western culture from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century has polarized the popular/realist commercial text and the “high art” modernist one, making impossible a text that was at once avant-garde and popular.<sup>42</sup>

Nevertheless, for Kaplan, this is what MTV eventually is! Thus, MTV, according to her, blurs the boundaries between that of popular and avant-garde art, just like it blurs the distinctions between past, present, and future. “MTV...calling upon all the separate traditions, re-shaping and re-using them for its own ends, flattening them out into one continuous present of the 24-hour video flow...The stance of the texts is that there is one time continuum in which all exists...”<sup>43</sup> MTV thus erases all those boundaries between past and present via displaying those film genres and art movements that belong to different historical periods. For this reason, there appears to be one time continuum, and past, present, and future do not indicate major time blocks, but rather a process of time which one can call upon will, according to Kaplan.

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<sup>41</sup> E. Ann Kaplan, *Rocking Around the Clock: Music Television, Postmodernism, and Consumer Culture* (New York and London: Methuen, 1987), p. 143

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 40

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 144

However, at this point one might ask: to what extent can MTV videos be considered art? As was discussed in the previous chapter, Walter Benjamin viewed the mass mediated technologies of (art) production, such as film, as a means for collective self-emancipation. Obviously there was no such thing as music videos at the time of Benjamin, Adorno and Horkheimer. Nevertheless, their views can still be adopted for this period, as music videos are basically the incorporation of images. Now, as I then talked about, Benjamin saw the new cultural technologies like film and photography as being both the source and consequence of freedom and democratic access to art. On the other hand, Adorno and Horkheimer maintained that as film and radio came to constitute the bases of the capitalist system, they needed not to pretend to be art. This is because, they claimed that they were just business turned into an ideology. Respectively, does this not hold true for MTV? MTV is also a part of the capitalist system and the latter's ideology. Nonetheless, is there really an avant-garde side to MTV's music videos as Kaplan argues? Or as Adorno had once argued about jazz music, is MTV too the anti-thesis of anything belonging to the category of 'avant-garde' or 'progressive'?

For Kaplan, the new postmodern universe, which gives importance to the "look" (the surfaces, textures, the self-as-commodity) threatens to reduce everything to the image/representation/simulacrum. Television embodies all this procedure. Thus, Kaplan reviews Baudrillard's argument on the televisual apparatus. Accordingly, Baudrillard states that the latter is the manifestation of a new stage of consciousness, in which everything is reduced to the status of "simulations", where "fiction" and "reality" is fused under the realm of "simulacra". In this respect, Kaplan upholds that MTV in particular manifests exactly this argument of Baudrillard. What's more, for

Kaplan, what also composes MTV as a postmodernist discourse, is that the videos displayed on this channel generally blurs the distinctions between a “subject” and an “image”. Similarly, appropriating Baudrillard’s ideas, Kaplan argues that the old notion of “self” is also simply reduced to an “image”. As a result of the development of modern forms of advertising, and of the ‘department-store window’, television thus became one of the most important changes at the turn of the twentieth century. Hence, everything re-joined under an “image”.<sup>44</sup>

Kaplan, furthermore, underlines that MTV being a cable channel based on *consumption* is also a consequence of its continuous advertisement programs, where MTV positions the watcher in the mode of perpetually hoping that the next ad-segment will satisfy the desire for plenitude –that is for completeness, fullness. Basically, the channel keeps the viewer in the mode of consuming more deeply, as its items are all too short. What’s more, Kaplan argues that since it is the ad that is the ‘mode of address’, MTV relies on interlocking the viewer on the level of unsatisfied desire. “This remains in the psyche from the moment of entry into the Lacanian symbolic, and is available from channeling in various directions.”<sup>45</sup> If in Lacanian terms the signifier was the phallus, for Kaplan, it is not surprising that MTV mainly addresses the desire for the phallus remaining in the psyche of both sexes. For her, this in a way accounts for the dominance on the MTV videos featuring “white” male stars.

Kaplan reaches such a point by mainly using the theories of Lacan. For Lacan, the “mirror-phase” was the moment where the child saw itself in the mirror, where a

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 44

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 143

relationship to its image started to take place. This marked the moment of awareness where the child thought it was one with the mother. Afterwards the child recognized its image displayed in the mirror as an entity separate from itself (Lacan called this ‘ideal imago’) and which resulted in a *split* subject (e.g. both mother and non-mother; this side of the mirror and within the mirror). Such an ideal ego formed during the mirror phase was important as the child began to *desire* for the mother that would continue throughout its life.<sup>46</sup> In this respect, for Kaplan, MTV, like most television, rather positions the subject at the moment of discovery of *split* subjectivity. Many videos, through the use of aesthetic devices, calls upon not plenitude but that split subjectivity. However, at another level that split subjectivity in turn brings forth the desire for plenitude, which we somehow aim at reaching through continued consumption, for Kaplan, and that partly avoids us from falling into emptiness.<sup>47</sup>

Jameson and Grossberg, the two Marxist critics, argue that postmodernist texts like MTV do not take a critical position from which to speak. This is mainly because the ‘subject’ is fragmented or decentered in postmodern discourse, as we have seen explicitly from the examples of Baudrillard and Lacan. Jameson and Grossberg speak from a point of ‘history’ that reveals a position of “truth” about the world – such a stance of course comes from their Marxist standpoint. They see the contemporary youth culture to be in danger as they maintain that it is devoid of being explicitly critical, especially toward the on-going events.<sup>48</sup> Even when Grossberg speaks of punk rock music for example, he believes it to be too nihilistic, having too

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 42

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 43-44

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 145

much despair, and therefore making this youth culture having no hope to challenge the existing social formations from which they are actually alienated. Moreover, for Jameson, who appropriates Lacan's and Baudrillard's theories, the breaking down of the relationship between signifiers and everything melting into an image, as well as the fading away of the distinctions between past, present, and future, where there is an intense experience of the present, is 'schizophrenia', –or schizophrenic experience- which for him is also something that identifies postmodernism –and thus MTV.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, for Kaplan, such a Marxist notion of history that views the latter as a discourse that speaks from a point of "truth" is problematic, as it may hinder Jameson from seeing the challenge of a historical positioning that may well be progressive. Accordingly, in this case of MTV for example, video artists are usually playing with standard high art and popular culture images in a manner that is self-conscious, thus paving the way for a 'liberating sense' through challenging the previous traditional boundaries.<sup>50</sup>

For Andrew Goodwin, music television is no more a coherent object than "pop music" is. For this reason, he argues that identifying music television with politics or aesthetics that is unified in character is not possible. Therefore, he maintains that rather than trying to enforce a unity that does not exist, he aims at focusing on specific issues by going over the postmodern analyses of music television itself. Goodwin thus attempts to come up with the question of ideology. The reasons for such an attempt are several. Nevertheless, mainly this is due to postmodern criticism's embodiment of a number of absences that leaves spaces for scholars to go back and forth between cultural pessimism and cultural optimism in a way that is

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 146

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 47

unproductive, since it indicates political criticism to be a matter of *mood*. How? To support this idea, Goodwin shows that the postmodern focus on ‘surface’ (as was mentioned before, everything within the postmodern discourse was reduced to an image, or “looks”), although very revealing and productive, from time to time became a part of the criticism itself. Therefore, an inspection about a cultural form, for Goodwin, at some stages turned out to occupy an epistemological –as well as in some instances ontological- position. Again for Goodwin, this quite often took place at the expense of observing the possibilities of depth. Thus, Goodwin goes after this subject together with intertextuality and pastiche\*. This is because he wants to demonstrate how the debate needs to be also combined with a political economic and ideological analysis of music television.<sup>51</sup> According to Goodwin, “postmodern analyses often present this idea\*\* via a one-dimensional account of changing notions of history in pop music, tending to use all instances of quoting from pop’s past as though they were simple examples of ‘pastiche’.”<sup>52</sup> Such a discussion is important for a political analysis of music television mainly for two reasons, according to Goodwin. First, it makes up the basis for a model of reading the texts in which audiences consume “on the surface”, through a fragmented sense of self. Second, the argument ignores some crucial economic determinations in the process of intertextuality. Nonetheless, Goodwin also marks that music television’s intertextuality, as well as its articulation of popular cultural history, is often blank. “The textual “quotes” are blank because we are asked neither to criticize nor to

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\* In music television, the practice of the variety of ways in which music video clips “quote” from other texts is usually labeled as “pastiche”.

<sup>51</sup> Andrew Goodwin, *Dancing in the Distraction Factory: Music Television and Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 156-157

\*\* Ascribing to Baudrillard’s view of postmodern culture: that is texts increasingly referring to each other (where signifier-signified relation is weakened as it is argued that signifiers only refer to other signifiers), and where “simulations” have replaced the *real*.

<sup>52</sup> Andrew Goodwin, *Dancing in the Distraction Factory: Music Television and Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 159

endorse them”<sup>53</sup> Such words are also insightful for we can argue at this point that MTV, the culture industry *par excellence*, destroys culture, as it overlooks the importance of the ability to criticize, just as Adorno would argue. Further, again to recall Adorno and Horkheimer, by turning artworks into mere entertainment objects makes people forget their everyday problems; which is also a result of the fusion of culture and entertainment. Is MTV not doing precisely the same job: that is destroying the youths’ critical judgment by making them enter into a dream-like world? Or would this not exactly be the case, as Kaplan would argue, that MTV videos being a mixture of high art and popular culture self-consciously creates a liberating sense as it challenges the previous traditional boundaries?

To continue, Goodwin thus underlines that the issue of music television should be analyzed under the subject of ‘ideology’, which, according to him, postmodern analyses lack due to their ahistorical paradigm. It is important to note here that, as was previously discussed, Kaplan’s analyses of MTV (by the guidance of postmodern critiques) most of the time supported the idea that intertextuality and pastiche were supposedly used to blur the historical distinctions, hence, blurred the conventional notions of past, present and future that were lost within the images of the MTV video clips. However, for Goodwin, considering MTV a ‘schizophrenic’ refusal of rational, liberal-humanist, discourse (just as what Kaplan does) creates a nihilistic –and amoral- universe of representation. Accordingly, this stands parallel to other postmodern texts, and ignores also the realm of political and social engagement as they are generally recognized. Such a consideration, for Goodwin, eventually engenders either a pessimistic diagnosis, or indicates that postmodern culture is made

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 160

up of ‘new forms of political resistance’ (an idea that is supported by both Kaplan and Fiske).<sup>54</sup> What’s more, another significant issue for Goodwin, as I have just emphasized above, is that postmodern analysis is mainly ahistorical, and such an aspect, for him, constitutes a problem as it stands blind to the ways in which the televisual medium –in this case, MTV- has changed. According to Goodwin, the development of music television needs to be read ideologically, and thus he maintains that there is a need for a political economy of the media in order to offer an ideological reading. Such a reading, he asserts, also involves a consideration of how economic and political shifts may affect patterns of programming.

### **3.5 MTV: Black’N’White, Rock’N’Rap!**

Music television, for Jody Berland, is restricted by the essentials of a universal semantic, that is, which discursively and technically promises to reach the viewer wherever he or she is. “As an industry it must produce viewers on a grand scale, seeking more widely available gestures and proximities. Thus MTV, the first cross-country rock’n’roll station, once tried to excuse its omission of black musicians.”<sup>55</sup> Respectively, again in the same article of Berland, one of MTV executive’s words are quoted as follows: “You have to play music we think an entire country is going to like...”<sup>56</sup> Therefore, in the early years of MTV ‘album oriented rock’ (AOR) and ‘New Pop’ –e.g. Duran Duran, Culture Club, Wham!, etc.- were dominant in the playlist. Both of these music genres were controlled and managed by “white” musicians. This was roughly between 1981-1983, which is classified by Goodwin as

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<sup>54</sup> Andrew Goodwin, “Fatal Distractions: MTV Meets Postmodern Theory”, in *Sound and Vision: The Music Video Reader*, eds. Simon Frith et al. (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 46

<sup>55</sup> Jody Berland, “Sound, Image and Social Space: Music Video and Media Reconstruction”, in *Sound and Vision: The Music Video Reader*, eds. Simon Frith et al. (London and New York : Routledge, 1993), p. 36

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.



the first phase of MTV. Hence, MTV was accused in its first seventeen months of racism in its programming policy. MTV based its playlist on the principle of American radio at that time, which viewed rock and ‘urban contemporary’ –dance music that was often produced by Black artists; and we will see how popular this would become later on thanks to the culture industry!- as incompatible. Consequently, Blacks were largely excluded from the MTV screens in those years in the name of music policy –however, with the exception of Black VJ J.J. Jackson.<sup>57</sup>

The second phase of MTV, according to Goodwin, is between 1983 and 1985, which saw a shift in both music and programming policy. MTV outspread from the main US urban centers on the coasts and into the mid-West cities and towns and thus became appealing to the population out there. Actually, many MTV insiders saw the year 1985 as the true beginning of this channel, as it was at this point in time that it became accessible also in key centers such as Manhattan and Los Angeles –this was because MTV was not offered on cable systems in New York and Los Angeles in its early phase, due to a lack of national media attention to this new program service. In these years MTV mostly showed heavy metal video clips –as the New Pop had gone out of fashion (as a result of MTV’s start and spread from the main urban centers into the cities of Mid-West, where it appealed to the rock via heavy metal tastes of its new population). Therefore, MTV was criticized both by the liberals –who charged MTV mainly for sexism and racism- and the conservatives –who accused MTV of television violence. MTV in opposition to its rivals attacked them by economically signing deals with six major record companies. Here, could it be possible to argue

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<sup>57</sup> Andrew Goodwin, “Fatal Distractions: MTV Meets Postmodern Theory”, in *Sound and Vision: The Music Video Reader*, eds. Simon Frith et al. (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 49

that this is an evidence of how “money”, or in other words economic power, has become the major tool for even exerting power over the social/cultural sphere of society –or rather in this case, the profound influence of a major music media and industry like MTV over the ‘global (popular) culture’ via its economic power- in the ever more “globalizing” world of ours? To continue however, for Goodwin, “in this phase MTV programmed heavy metal with a vengeance and in doing so keyed into one of the evergreen forms of American popular culture.”<sup>58</sup>

1986 and onwards, again according to Goodwin, can be considered as the third phase of MTV. For him, this was the stage that represented a wide musical scope and a fastened move towards a more traditional “televisual” schedule. In this respect, Goodwin writes:

In February 1985 MTV had announced a cut-back in commitment to heavy-metal clips...as MTV was viewed by insiders and critics alike as bland and outdated. For a service that was dependent on viewer perception that it was on the ‘cutting edge’ of pop culture, this was potentially disastrous.<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless, with the departure of Robert Pittman from MTV in August 1986 brought about new trends that were seen in this music channel, for Goodwin. Accordingly, from this time onwards, although rock or heavy-metal music was still prevalent, MTV started to screen a wider variety of rock and pop music than ever before. Thus, the issue of racism in a way got resolved by these two developments: firstly, the emergence of rap acted as a crossover music as it combined “black” and “white” musical forms. Thus MTV began to show the video clips of groups and artists such as Beastie Boys, as well as Aerosmith’s ‘Walk This Way’ featuring hip-

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<sup>58</sup> Andrew Goodwin, “Fatal Distractions: MTV Meets Postmodern Theory”, in *Sound and Vision: The Music Video Reader*, eds. Simon Frith et al (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 51

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52

hop/rap duo Run DMC, and Beach Boys' 'Wipe Out' featuring, again another rap group, Fat Boys. Secondly, the success of Black heavy-metal act named Living Colour was screened heavily on MTV throughout 1989. Hence, along with rock and heavy-metal music, rap had also been successful and influential within American music in the 1980s, for Goodwin, and this was especially seen in such MTV programs as *Yo! MTV Raps* –of course other kinds of music such as popular dance music, hard rock, “alternative” music, etc. were reflected throughout the programs such as *Club MTV*, *Headbangers' Ball* and *120 Minutes*.<sup>60</sup>

What's more, for James Lull, by the early 1990s rap too became a widespread commercial phenomenon, that was played in the mainstream radio stations and dance clubs. In accordance with the fact, Lull states that:

In the 1980s, MTV Music Television avoided presenting black music and black imagery as it tried to carve out a “rock” image –a deliberate, if unstated, policy that was based on the belief that black artists would chase away the large white audience. But by 1990 MTV was showing rap videos and its highest rated program was a weekly feature of wall-to-wall rap.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, James Lull, in his same article, argues that hip-hop subcultural styles and rap phrasing (it should be noted here that rap is a part of the hip-hop culture, and not something external to it) became powerful vehicles especially for television commercials that promoted all kinds of products, particularly the “ultra-trendy” and expensive athletic shoes and accessories. There also emerged American television series that featured rap singers –e.g. *The Fresh Prince of Bell Air* featuring the now worldwide popular rap artist Will Smith. All in all, hip-hop culture fused into almost

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 52-53

<sup>61</sup> James Lull, “Popular Music and Communication: An Introduction”, in *Popular Music and Communication*, ed. J. Lull (Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1992), p. 10

every area of mainstream popular culture. Now, to articulate once more, is not MTV a culture industry *par excellence*? Hip-hop culture, the once “music and culture of resistance”, has turned out to be a (global) popular culture via the culture industry, and particularly MTV. So was our Frankfurt School geniuses right when they claimed that the whole world was indeed made to pass through the filter of the culture industry? On the other hand, there still remains the fact that there will always be either new genres within the same subculture, or different subcultures and identities that emerge and be under the categories of “unpopular” or “underground”. However, the point is that will they sooner or later be captured by the mainstream popular culture –again thanks to the culture industry and mass media? So, from next chapter onwards I will concentrate on the resistive character of Black musics, its fusion into almost every musical sound, and whether or not it is subdued by the culture industry. I will attempt to elaborate on these issues via identity politics.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **GLOBALIZATION OF MUSIC, AND THE “BLACK” AND “WHITE” CROSSOVERS (POST-COLONIAL SOUNDS AND IDENTITIES OF THE BLACK DIASPORA)**

In this chapter my aim is to discuss music and globalization of music in the context of identity politics. The focal point of this chapter will thus evolve around the “black” (diaspora) musics. For instance, how a subcultural style like hip-hop, that draws on a mixture of Caribbean and African-American sounds, while revealing the hardships of Blacks living in the ghettos also gave rise to a distinct mode of feeling, that is, ‘lived blackness’ in the era of postindustrial capitalism. On the contrary, in this chapter I will also question whether the resistive character of “black” musics started to fade away due to their fusion into digitally reproduced electronic sounds, as a result of the latter’s transcendence of racial loyalties.

#### **4.1 Globalization of Music**

It is by globalization, Steven Feld contends, that music’s profound association with social identities has been deepened. Such intensification is a consequence of the ways that cultural separation and social exchange have been mutually accelerated by the transnational flows of technology, media, and popular culture. Hence, identities

formed around music and musical styles have come to be more visible and transient, as well as more audible than ever before.<sup>1</sup> Further, Feld argues:

Our era is increasingly dominated by fantasies and realizations of sonic virtuality. Not only does contemporary technology make all musical worlds actually or potentially transportable and hearable in all others... As sonic virtuality is increasingly naturalized, everyone's musical world will be felt and experienced as both more definite and more vague, specific yet blurred, particular but general, in place and in motion.<sup>2</sup>

What's more, for Feld, it is the recorded form of music that circulates commercially and thus defines the authenticity of globalization of music. Such a process, according to Feld, is the consequence of the sound recording technologies, which has taken only one hundred years to develop and expand the sound (sonic) exchange to a point that overwhelms prior and recent histories of travel, migration, contact, colonization, diaspora, and dispersal. Hence, the music industry, which is both the hero and the villain of this situation, has triumphed a great deal over the past century. By regulating the recording and reproduction technologies with other entertainment and publication media, the music industry has achieved the key capitalist goal of the "everlasting" expansion of the global market. Also, within the discourse of musical globalization, Feld maintains that "tensions around the meanings of sonic heterogeneity and homogeneity precisely parallel other tensions that characterize global processes of separation and mixing, with an emphasis on stylistic genericization, hybridization, and revitalization."<sup>3</sup> Thus, for Steven Feld, if globalization encompasses within itself complicated pluralities, uneven experiences, and unified powers, he also rightly asks how these have an effect over the world of

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<sup>1</sup> Steven Feld, "A Sweet Lullaby for World Music", in *Globalization*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 189

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 190

music? Accordingly, he finds it appropriate to focus on ‘world music’, as he suggests narratives that celebrate world music tend to naturalize and normalize globalization. This he finds it to be a similar process of the once “modernization” narratives that tried to naturalize the transforming waves of intercultural histories.<sup>4</sup>

#### **4.1.1 World Music**

In the name of celebrating and promoting musical diversity, in the early 1960s, the phrase *world music* was circulated initially by academics. According to Steven Feld, there was however a terminological dualism that distinguished *world music* from *music*. Thus, such a terminology actually helped the academy to study those musics perceived as non-Western or ethnically ‘other’, or in other words those sounds that were different from what was thought as musics characteristic of the West. Hence, for Feld ‘world music’ had an academically liberal mission; that was to resist the dominant tendency of music institutions and publics to regard *music* to be an equivalent to Western European art musics. “And in practical terms, the world music idea was meant to have a pluralizing effect on Western conservatories, by promoting the hiring of non-Western performers and the study of non-Western performance practices and repertoires.”<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the relationship of colonizing and the colonized generally stayed as an untouched issue when distinguishing *music* from *world music*. This was mainly due the understanding of ‘world music’ to be equivalent to musics of non-Europeans, European peasants, and marginalized ethnic or racial minorities. Moreover, Feld finds it to be interesting if *world music* had been overtly termed as *third world music*. He maintains that this is actually what has happened outside the academy, in the world of commerce. Although commercial

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 190 & 197

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 191

recordings were increasingly made in every corner of the world since the beginning of this century, from the invention of the phonograph onwards, the development of a highly visible commercial documentary music recording industry became firmer in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>6</sup> Thus, Feld writes:

This took place when the phrase *third world* made new marketing sense of the diverse set of previous categories loosely conjoining academic and commercial enterprise, namely, recordings variously labeled and sold as *primitive, exotic, tribal, ethnic, folk, traditional, or international*.<sup>7</sup>

Hence, for Feld, what seemed to be much in common of these recordings were actually based on their politics of representation. They were generally representations of a world where the audibility of intercultural effects were either mixed down, or muted. It was by the agitation of independence movements, anticolonial demonstrations, and the powerful nationalist struggles of the late 1950s and early 1960s that took place in Africa, Asia, and Latin America that stimulated a commercial desire for authentic musical pieces in the marketplace. Nevertheless, as Feld suggests, those political struggles were not widely heard on popular recordings or celebrated in the commercial marketplace for their own “authenticity” for another decade.<sup>8</sup> It was as if those intercultural, or in other words those faraway, local musics were waiting for international labels to test for the multiculturalist, migrant, and middle-class ethnic buyers?!

To recall now once again Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, they claimed that ‘culture’ impressed the same stamp on everything. This was to such a large degree that, according to Adorno, even the standardization of mass products had to

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 191-192

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 192

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



standardize the demand of each product to be irreplaceably unique. Accordingly, for John Hutnyk, in our age, the increasing differences have become repetitive to the extent that commodities offer consumers only more and more of the same. Thus, discussing the popularity of ‘world music’ under such themes, Hutnyk provides a different view on the debates about hybridity within culture. Accordingly, ‘world music’, argues Hutnyk, has come to be seen by the music industry as a potentially profitable, exciting, expansive and a popular way forward in contemporary music. In this respect, he gives the example of Womad Music Festival\* in the UK. For Hutnyk, Womad is interesting as it is reflective of “capitalist cultural production at both ideological and economic registers. The commercialization of music and the evacuation of politics at such events deserves comment...”<sup>9</sup> Hutnyk, further, writes that the Womad audiences are considerably diverse where bands and musicians from every corner of the world are brought to Europe to perform. He thus comments as follows:

A multi-perspective approach to Womad enable a focus upon World Music as a kind of commercial aural travel-consumption, where the festival, with its collections of ‘representative’ musicians, assembled from ‘remote’ corners of the world, is a (very) late-twentieth-century version of the Great Exhibitions of the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup>

According to Hutnyk, what has been offered to listeners, audiences in the Womad gatherings for the past decade has been a musical ‘multiculture’. Such a musical ‘multiculture’ is sampled according to the ethnic marketing categories, which Hutnyk argues is often mistaken today as intercultural relations. Although Womad, argues

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\* WOMAD (World of Music Arts and Dance) is a “world music” festival, which took place over 20 countries with more than 100 events and festivals throughout the world until now, was for the first time organized by Peter Gabriel (former member of the group *Genesis*) in 1982. However, John Hutnyk in his article mostly concentrates on the Womad Music Festival in Reading, UK, in 1994.

<sup>9</sup> John Hutnyk, “Adorno at Womad: South Asian Crossovers and the Limits of Hybridity-Talk”, in *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*, eds. Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood (London & New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997), p. 107

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108

Hutnyk, allows more ‘traditional’ forms of South Asian music, –e.g. Bhangra or Qawwali- in the UK it is post-Bhangra musicians and performers who are dominant within the popular Asian music scene.<sup>11</sup> Hence, at this point I would ask: taking into consideration the discussions of globalization, has the ‘local’ been integrated into the ‘global’ to such an extent that this is also reflected in music; especially ‘world music’ *par excellence*? Also, having in mind the arguments of the ‘culture industry’, is ‘world music’ one of the faces of the music industry that on the one hand looks as if it is giving opportunity for diversity and difference, however on the other hand it is drawing the ‘local’ sounds into a more ‘global’ musical array? Thus, in a way making them similar? Accordingly, the post-Bhangra performers do not all trace their musical heritage back to the popular form of rural Punjabi harvest dance music, for example. Hence, for Hutnyk, Womad is a venue for several different, however complementary, forms of Asian-influenced musical production. Such forms vary from folk Bhangra to urban punk jungle tunes. Yet, he argues, all these musical arrays can easily be grouped under the category of ‘traditionalism’, which are only relieved within an eclectic global sampling. For this reason, through Womad or similar festivals Asian music in Britain gain a ‘mainstream’ look, for Hutnyk. What’s more, they also serve in favor for commercialization of everything: for example, sales of “multicultural fast foods”, the CD of such festivals, jewelry, candles, incense, small-label recordings, and so on.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, for Hutnyk “Womad seems to maintain a form of *nationalist cultural essentialism* that must remain blind to the inconsistencies of its own designations. At this time *crossover* articulates a ‘world music’, which in *white hands* often also loses its political edge.”<sup>13</sup> This is

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 108-110

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 111 (emphasis mine)

because the so called “oppositional” cultures (cultures that seem to be “different” and “marginal”, that is, from a Western perspective) are introduced to the audience via ‘world music’ for the sake of their marketability, rather than for the purpose of articulating a critique of colonialism and repression. As Garafalo states, “it is more than a coincidence that the development of charity rock, with its primary focus on Africa [Band Aid, Live Aid, etc.], paralleled the emergence of “world beat”, a marketing category dominated by African and African-influenced sounds.”<sup>14</sup>

Respectively, Steven Feld notes that any hybrid or traditional musical style can easily and indiscriminately be grouped by the single market label as *world music*. This according to him is a consequence of the commercial triumph of global musical industrialization.<sup>15</sup> Also, as Hutnyk writes, music from the periphery or other corners of the world is provided –again thanks to the global music industries- as unique entertainment in a similar fashion as food or clothes work like wallpaper in an endless aural and visual, or even tasty simulacra. Now as with almost everything, the media is too responsible for such an “ethnic craze” of the “western” subjects. As Hutnyk underlines, the reports of CNN on Womad that was held in 1994 paid little importance to the basic politics of this festival and rather focused on what was most ‘exotic’ of the musicians. Further, the CNN reporter celebrated Womad as an example of human harmony and togetherness, and as Hutnyk stresses, the tone was more of a tribute to the organizers of the festival as well as to those who attended. The only mentioned non-musical aspect of this event was the money collected as an

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<sup>14</sup> Quoted from *ibid.*, p. 113

<sup>15</sup> Steven Feld, “A Sweet Lullaby for World Music”, in *Globalization*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 195-196

aid for the hospitalized children in Bosnia.<sup>16</sup> In this respect, John Hutnyk emphasizes:

What this restricted and edited marketing of ‘oppositional’ cultures does is to bring contradictory impulses into the happy relationship of a capitalism that can sell –and usually neutralize- everything under the sign of value. Everything can be equated to everything else (the beat of authenticity stimulates the rhythm of charity).<sup>17</sup>

This is exactly the case, for Hutnyk, where the efforts of intellectuals to bring about marginal discourses, like Black musics, into the commercial and public sphere are to unravel such contradictions. Now from this point onwards, in order to specify the arguments insofar more clearly, that is within the general concern of this thesis (globalization, the music media and industry, and the identities thus created), the discussions will be based largely on the cases of Black (diasporic) musics, as well as the “black” and “white” crossovers.

#### **4.2 Identity Politics via Music**

For Simon Frith, the identity politics in recent years has brought forth new claims of cultural essentialism. For instance, the assertions that only African-Americans can admire and enjoy African-American music, that there is a fundamental difference between male and female composition, and that the ‘globalization’ of a local sound is a form of “cultural genocide.” For Frith, although such assumptions may seem rather straightforward at first sight, they are less convincing in the everyday practice of music making and listening. Thus, he asks how we can make sense of the apparent love of European listeners and musicians for the music of the African diaspora?

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<sup>16</sup> John Hutnyk, “Adorno at Womad: South Asian Crossovers and the Limits of Hybridity-Talk”, in *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*, eds. Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood (London & New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997), pp. 112-113

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113

Accordingly, Frith argues that although music may be procreated in the first place by the people who first make and use it, as ‘experience’, music has a life of its own. He furthermore paraphrases Marx and explains that somewhere in his work Marx has written that it is rather easy to analytically go through from cultural to material, that is, to interpret culture, to read it ideologically, or to assign social conditions to it. Nevertheless, the difficult process is actually the other way round, that is to indicate how the *base* produced this *superstructure*, or in other words to interpret why an idea or experience takes on a particular artistic or aesthetic form, –and not another- which is equally ‘reflective’ or ‘representative’ of its conditions of production. In accordance with the fact, for Frith, the question should rather evolve around how art comes to make its own claims, -in other circumstances- for itself.<sup>18</sup>

Taking into consideration the issue of the aesthetics of popular music, Frith reverses the general critical and academic argument. That is, instead of asking how a specific piece of music or performance mirrors the people, the issue according to him should be how a particular piece of music or performance produces *subjects*, as well as how it creates and forms an experience, –a musical and an aesthetic experience- that we can only make meaning of it by taking on both a subjective and a collective identity.

Hence, Frith argues as follows:

My argument here... rests on two premises: first, that identity is *mobile*, a process not a thing, a becoming not a being; second, that our experience of music...is best understood as an experience of this *self-in-process*. Music, like identity, is both performance and story, describes the social in the individual and the individual in the social...; identity, like music, is a matter of both ethics and aesthetics.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Simon Frith, “Music and Identity”, in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, eds. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 108-109

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109

Thereupon, within the question of identity via music, Frith upholds that the point he is trying to come up with is not the case where a social group has beliefs where this is later articulated in its music. Rather it is the music, he argues, which is an aesthetic practice, articulates *in itself* an understanding of both group relations and individuality. Such an understanding, further, is based on which ethical codes and social ideologies are understood.<sup>20</sup> Deriving from such a viewpoint, Frith also describes the distinction between high and low culture as not something caused by distinctive –class-bound- tastes, but rather as an effect of various social activities.<sup>21</sup> Not quite agreeing personally with such an understanding of Frith, I believe such a debate will be apparent in the later arguments on various music genres and those identities that evolve around it. Now let us go through the debates on post-colonial culture and music, and the way identities created accordingly. Further, the focal point of my analysis will evolve around the music of Black diaspora when analyzing such notions as globalization, music, resistance, hybridity, identities, and so forth.

#### **4.3 Post-Colonial Culture and the Politics of Resistance**

George Lipsitz argues that the major defining characteristics of the post-colonial era are displacement and migration, multi-culturalism and multi-lingualism, and split subjects and divided loyalties. He further stresses that the post-colonial culture paves the way for the impossibility of any national identity. It incorporates the diverse and diffuse elements that create a nation into a unified totality. Similarly, for Lipsitz, post-colonial art too exposes the inadequacy of national “imagined communities” to keep track of, regulate, and remedy the eruptive contradictions of global structures of economic, political, and cultural power. What’s more, according to Lipsitz, the crisis

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 110-111

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 112

signaled by the emergence of post-colonial literature, art, and music is the crisis encountering movements for progressive social change all around the world. The distressed populations for more than a century have either hoped to seize control of the nation state, or at least used its mechanisms to get their share from the capital.<sup>22</sup> However, as Lipsitz upholds, these traditional strategies for social change have been frustrated by the emergence of “fast capital” and the equally rapid mobility of ideas, images, and people across national boundaries. Nevertheless, new forms of resistance have accompanied new forms of domination, he argues.

For Lipsitz, one of the reason why post-colonial art among some readers of the post-imperial countries have become so popular is the shared disillusionment with the nation state and the latter’s failed promises. Also the recent preoccupation with post-colonial art within Western consciousness is the quest for novelty, boredom with familiar paradigms, and the fascination about –but according to Lipsitz, no respect for- the “exotic”. Moreover, for Lipsitz, it would be false to ever underestimate the venal, or in other words the corrupted, intentions and effects of the Euro-American appropriations of African, Asian, and Latin American cultures. However, according to him, it would also be a great mistake to neglect the post-colonial perspectives’ strategic significance for theorizing the present moment in world history.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, he upholds that “The strategies of signification and grammars of opposition developed among post-colonial peoples speak powerfully to the paradoxically fragmented and interconnected world created by new structures of

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<sup>22</sup> George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (London & New York: Verso, 1997), p. 29

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30

commerce culture and technology.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, Lipsitz maintains that it may well be the diasporic communities of displaced Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans that are best prepared for political controversy and cultural conflict. “These populations, long accustomed to code switching, syncretism, and hybridity may prove far more important for what they *possess* in cultural terms than for what they appear to *lack* in the political lexicon of the nation state.”<sup>25</sup> Thereupon, Lipsitz gives the example of ‘Black nationalism’. He writes that throughout the Black Atlantic world one function of Black nationalism was always to ignore national categories: in other words, to bring about national minorities into global majorities by creating a solidarity among “people of color” all around the globe. Nevertheless, he also stresses that the Black populations have also been open to other kinds of internationalism as well. For instance, the Black communists in Alabama in the 1930s, or Rastafarianism which was an important force within Jamaican politics, and which evolved around a notion of a “Black Man’s Bible” that merged the experiences and perspectives of Jamaican migrant workers in diverse sites of the world.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, I will now view the Black diaspora and its political and cultural expressions in-depth, as an example for the post-colonial politics of resistance in the field of music.

#### **4.3.1 The Creation of Collective Memory and the Place of Music within the Black Diaspora**

For Ingrid Monson, when one refers to the concept ‘diaspora’ such related notions as dispersion, exile, ethnicity, nationalism, transnationalism, postcolonialism and globalization are evoked in one’s mind. Further, the word ‘African’ in front of the

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<sup>24</sup> George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (London & New York: Verso, 1997), p. 30

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*



term adds the concept of race and racism, which immediately calls forth the debates that are based on Pan-Africanism, Black nationalism, essentialism and hybridity. What's more, the notion 'African diaspora' conjoins the questions of history, modernity, and cultural memory. In this respect, Monson claims:

If the Jewish diaspora was the quintessential example of diaspora before the 1960s, the African diaspora has surely become the paradigmatic case for the closing years of the twentieth century. If the fact of dispersion, exile, and migration has been the traditional point of departure for defining diaspora, then the continuing experience of racial oppression has been crucial in the emergence of the transnational identities and ideologies of the African diaspora.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, at this stage it is crucial, I assume, to briefly highlight the importance of the formation of a collective memory. This is because it is also according to this memory that people start to oppose societal hardships they face, and thus reach out for their "own" history and traditions.

In terms of David W. Blight, people both create and recreate narratives as a response to the continuously changing political social circumstances. Thus he argues:

The incessant human quest for identity and communion makes it such that culture itself could hardly exist without these social dimensions of memory. Collective memory is held together by the confidence derived from association... Memories are not merely reproduced; they are *constructed* in all various cultural forms: music, dance, fiction, poetry, and historical scholarship.<sup>28</sup>

Consequently, within the Black Atlantic –and of course the Black diaspora- each generation of slaves, as well as freeborn blacks, have created new musical genres and different styles of performance. We can also maintain at this point that in the case of

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<sup>27</sup> Ingrid Monson, "Introduction", in *The African Diaspora: A Musical Perspective*, ed. Ingrid Monson (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), p.1

<sup>28</sup> David W. Blight, "W.E.B. Du Bois and the Struggle for African Historical Memory", in *History and Memory in African-American Culture*, eds. Geneviève Fabre & Robert O'Meally (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.52

the Black Atlantic, the emotional power of a collective memory has always been strongly achieved through music.

For Paul Gilroy, in his work *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, even during the time of slavery music was a form of self-expression of the slaves as it represented their experiences of racial terror. Thus, for Gilroy, music can be used to challenge the privileged conceptions of both language and writing as dominant expressions of human consciousness. He also states that the self-identity, political culture, and aesthetics that distinguish Black communities have been built through their music. One of the main reasons for this is that people from the Black Atlantic, during the time of slavery and their life on the plantations, were largely prevented from having an access to literacy. Hence, music was their most powerful tool for self-expression and identity formation. Accordingly, Gilroy upholds that “the power and significance of music within the black Atlantic have grown in inverse proportion to the limited expressive power of language.”<sup>29</sup> For this reason, music cannot be separated from the life of the Black community (as if it can from any other community!). One of the main notions that are inherent in the music making of the African and African-derived cultures is that it is a group activity where everyone in the group participates. Thus music-making serves to unite Black people around a common purpose within a cohesive group.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, later on in this chapter we will also see how such a notion inherent in music-making of the Blacks have dissolved within the electronic dance music scene. Thus, this will make us

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<sup>29</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London & New York: Verso, 1993), p.74

<sup>30</sup> Portia K. Maultsby, “Africanisms in African-American Music”, in *Africanisms in American Culture*, ed. Joseph E. Holloway (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University press, 1990), p. 187

wonder whether the collective cultural memory and spirit of the Black Atlantic has started to vanish.

What's more, the social settings (or context) of society in different periods have influenced the Black diaspora and their music making. As a result, their inclination to readopt their African past was always mediated through music. For instance, according to Portia K. Maultsby:

The ambiance of southern jukejoints transferred to blues bars, lounges, and clubs, which became the center of social gatherings in urban cities. Southern music traditions –blues and jazz- were central to the activity in these establishments... In response to new surroundings, the familiar sounds of the past soon were transformed into an urban black music tradition.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, Maultsby, in the same article, states that many soul music performers have advocated the awareness of an African heritage, as well as having encouraged the practice of African traditions. Hence, this has promoted the concept of “black pride”, where the era of ‘soul music’, again for Maultsby, reawakened the consciousness of an African past. Additionally, soul music, which was highly inspired by the Black Power movement, encouraged the rejection of values and standards of the society as a whole, while bringing forth the urge to return to the values of an African past. Accordingly, many soul music artists were advocators of the Black Power movement. Similarly jazz music, where specifically ‘Free Jazz’, –a sub-genre of jazz music- for example, was the product of some Black jazz musicians’ influence of the civil rights movement in the late 1950s, where they aimed at spreading the concept of ‘freedom’, and thus opposed some major rules and norms of “classical” jazz music. Therefore, be it the urban Black music tradition such as jazz, or the Blacks’ rural

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 203

musical tradition such as blues, –which was also later brought into the urban cities and was mixed with jazz music, where rhythm and blues (R&B) was born- music was always a medium of self-expression, a tool for reaction and an opposition to racial domination and discrimination for the Black diaspora. Thus, also a recollection of a collective memory!

Overall, music, more than any other cultural discourse, embodies the cultural values of the African diaspora. Just as how such notions as racism, slavery, and colonialism are crucial to the construction of the idea of Africa, ‘blackness’ as a term has been shaped around European dominance. It is in accordance with this fact that the idea of ‘Black musics’ came about in opposition to this racial domination –as I have gone through in the above discussions. I should now go through some important political aspects that are related to the African diaspora such as *Pan-Africanism*. There are mainly two reasons for this: firstly, it is crucial if we are to understand the resistive power in the musics of Black diaspora. Secondly, it will act as a good theoretical framework when we come across how the political schema inherent in the Black diaspora has also influenced Black popular music and culture (as well as other youth subcultures and their music making, both past and present).

#### **4.3.2 Pan-Africanism and the Rastafari Movement**

Pan-Africanism dates all the way back to the eighteenth century. Rather than originating from Africa itself, Pan-Africanism came originally from the New World. As a result of the slavery in the Americas and the Caribbean, people of African origin had a strong desire for their ancestral homeland and the freedom and dignity that it represented. Pan-Africanism took on various forms, ranging from the

campaign of Prince Hall\* to the Pan-African Movement in the first half of the twentieth century, which were based in the United States and where Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. Du Bois were the two important leaders –although in different respects. Marcus Garvey, like many preachers preceding him, used biblical references to point out to Ethiopia, which as a consequence evoked the strong emotions of Black Christians. Garvey dreamt of creating a nation where the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) would be the leading force. His most popular slogans were ‘Back to Africa’ and ‘Africa for the Africans’. This, ironically, suited the racist ideology of the Ku Klux Klan as the latter also desired a “pure” community, like Garvey, and wanted the Africans out. On the contrary, W.E.B. Du Bois was an altogether different figure compared to Garvey as he was profoundly engaged in academic research and rather aimed to improve the social conditions of the African-Americans. Further, Du Bois was also the founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Accordingly, Du Bois viewed the problems of the Black Americans and Africans in an internationalist way, and asserted that these were a part of a general struggle for justice. After looking briefly at Pan-Africanism, now let us go through a movement that embraces Pan-Africanism profoundly and also, I assume, is significant to discuss at this point as it is intertwined with music. This is the Rastafari movement which has attracted a lot of “black” followers in the Black diaspora, as well as having an impact on “white” youth and their music making. So what is Rastafarianism?

To start with, Rastafarianism is conceived by many as a religion, a doctrine and a way of life; an ideology of perceiving the world. Accordingly, Rastafarianism should

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\* Prince Hall was a Black priest in Boston who unsuccessfully campaigned for help from the State Assembly in returning the poor Blacks to Africa in 1787.

be seen both as a religion and a movement that has been shaped by the African diaspora with the awareness that Black people are ‘African exiles’ outside their ancestral homeland. Moreover, Rastafarianism, rooted deeply in the Jamaican popular culture, has its own peculiar mode of speech, musical forms, and content, which are profoundly Jamaican in character. Now the first Rastafarians were seen after the occasion where Haile Selassie became the Emperor of Ethiopia in 1930. The coronation of Haile Selassie was greeted with joy and enthusiasm throughout the Caribbean, because it was the crowning of a Black king. However in 1935, when Mussolini invaded Ethiopia, there emerged an immense support in the West Indies for Haile Selassie and the Ethiopian people. Nevertheless, the support for this Black king took its extreme form in Jamaica, where soon there appeared three Black preachers and their followers who insisted that the Emperor –Haile Selassie- was nothing less than the Living God. What’s more, this Italian invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935 created an enormous wave of pro-Ethiopianist sentiments among Blacks across the African continent and the Caribbean, as well as Europe and the United States. Particularly, for the people of the Black diaspora, this invasion of Ethiopia by Mussolini was viewed as an attack on the dominant symbol of African pride and cultural sovereignty. For instance, in Harlem, there were thousands of African-Americans who marched and signed petitions wanting the U.S. government to give permission to them to fight on behalf of the Ethiopians. In Trinidad, this crisis in the “black world” coincided with the emergence of calypso music and there was a blossoming of Caribbean music industry. Now these Calypsos illustrated the crisis from a Black perspective, and were carried by West Indian seaman throughout the Black Atlantic. Hence music, to underline it once more, served to crystallize the shared sentiments of racial pride within African and African-American culture.

What's more, the Rastafarian movement was influenced a great deal by Marcus Garvey's teachings about a future African king. As Dick Hebdige points out about Garvey, he urged his followers to " 'Look to Africa for the crowning of a black king for He shall be the Redeemer.' When Selassie was crowned, Garvey's words were remembered. And Rastafarians proclaimed the Ethiopian Emperor as the black Messiah."<sup>32</sup>

When most people today hear the word *Rastafari*, Bob Marley, "the king of reggae", is evoked in their minds. Of course Bob Marley did a lot in popularizing and spreading the ideas and messages of Rastafarianism. However, reggae, as a popular music representing the populist Black protest and experience is rooted in Jamaican nationalism, which emerged in Jamaica only during the early 1970s. Yet, it was at least thirty years prior to the emergence of reggae music that Rastafarianism in Jamaica evolved. As I mentioned previously, it was originated by an African-oriented culture that was rooted in the "spiritual" vision of returning back to the African homeland. It was since the early 1930s that Rastafarianism in Jamaica developed a culture based on an Afro-centric reading of the bible. Accordingly, Rastafarians viewed their religion as a blend of the "purest" forms of both Judaism and Christianity, where they also accepted the Egyptian origins of both of these religions. Nevertheless, it was with the advent of reggae music that Rastafarianism dispersed throughout the Caribbean, to North American and European urban centers such as London, New York, Amsterdam, Toronto and Washington D.C., as well as to the African continent itself. Of course one of the major reasons of the spread of the Rastafari movement was the migration of people from the West Indies. In this

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<sup>32</sup> Dick Hebdige, *Cut'N'Mix: Culture, Identity and Caribbean Music* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 52

respect Barry Chevannes suggests that “Reggae music has been a powerful medium of communicating the message and spirit of Rastafarianism in North America, succeeding in neutralizing the negative impact of the movement’s misperceived association with crime and violence.”<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, most second and third generation Caribbeans in Britain perceive themselves as a Black group or community more than their parents. For this reason, a majority of them consider themselves to be “black”, and to be a part of the oppressed minority within the British society. Therefore Rastafarianism also had a deep impact and attracted a lot of Black youth in Britain. It contributed enormously to the Black counter-culture within the African diaspora against white dominance.<sup>34</sup> Also, Simon Jones in his book *Black Culture, White Youth: The Reggae Tradition from JA to UK* talks about how Birmingham has been a point of conjuncture where there has been an intense encounter between its “black” and “white” working-class communities.

Likewise Jones maintains:

The level of white participation in black and black-defined leisure spaces generally began to increase noticeably in the early 1980s, precipitated partly by changes in the musical culture of young blacks. The growing convergence of soul and reggae cultures...served to bring about a unique crossover of musical and cultural influences between black and white youth.<sup>35</sup>

Consequently, there was also an appropriation of “black” styles of dress and dance by the “white” youth as well. Further, although at first sight it may seem unthinkable that “whites” could too identify themselves with a pan-African political philosophy,

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<sup>33</sup> Barry Chevannes, *Rastafari: Roots and Ideology* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1994), p. 273

<sup>34</sup> Winston James, “Migration, Racism and Identity Formation: The Caribbean Experience in Britain”, in *Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain*, eds. Winston James and Clive Harris (London & New York: Verso, 1993), pp. 251-252

<sup>35</sup> Simon Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth: The Reggae Tradition from JA to UK* (London: Macmillan Education LTD, 1988), p. 139



the “white” youth adopted the movement’s main themes and discourses according to their own experiences. Thus, for these “white” youth, Rastafari was conceived in its non-specific and universal ways. For instance, the Rastafarian mottos such as ‘Jah\* no partial’ and ‘Rasta\*\* is no color’ were notions that transcended race and color; therefore Rastafarianism being very appealing for these “white” youth. Hence, I find it here worth quoting the words of a “white” person who has adopted the ideology of Rastafarianism:

If people ask me ‘am I a white Rasta?’, I’ll say ‘no’ ‘cos you’re contradicting yourself by saying *white* Rasta, because Rasta is no color, Rasta is like water, clear!... God has no partiality... A black man or a white man isn’t better than anybody else. The only thing that makes one person better than another is whether they’re living right or wrong, not what color they are... My skin’s white, but that’s just my physical form, inside I don’t consider myself white. The only thing that makes me aware of my color is when I look in the mirror, or when people tell me, and I realize I’m a material thing, otherwise I try and live spiritual.<sup>36</sup>

After discussing how such a movement characteristic of the Black Atlantic have been adopted by the “white” youths, let us now go through ‘black popular culture’ and its place within the general popular/mass culture, and later on see its effects on the youth subcultures.

#### **4.4 Black Popular Culture**

For Stuart Hall, ‘black popular culture’ in its strict sense does not contain pure forms at all. They are a product of the Black people’s engagement across cultural boundaries and their negotiations of dominant or subordinate positions. For this

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\*Jah in Rasta speech is a term used as a synonym for Emperor Haile Selassie as the manifestation of the Godhead. The term derives from the Old Testament where it appears as an archaic form of ‘Jehovah’.

\*\* ‘Rasta’ is the shortened way of saying ‘Rastafari’ in colloquial speech.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted from Simon Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth: The Reggae Tradition from JA to UK* (London: Macmillan Education LTD, 1988), p. 191

reason, black popular culture refers to adaptations, or in other words they are hybrid spaces of the overall popular culture.<sup>37</sup> For Kobena Mercer, for example, this is also a process that is necessary for a diaspora aesthetic. What's more, for Mercer, the mixing and fusion of the different elements to call into being new and hybridized identities also indicate to the ways of surviving and developing in conditions of crisis and transition. Hence, he maintains that "the emergence of new insights on the question of "identity" from black British positions and perspectives must be seen as holding out the prospect of an alternative and pernicious responses to the crisis of our times."<sup>38</sup> According to Hall, although "black" people and "black" communities and traditions become visible and are represented in popular culture in deformed, incorporated, and inauthentic forms, we still see within the figures and the repertoires on which popular culture extracts, the experiences that stand behind them. Thus he states:

In its expressivity, its musicality, its orality, in its rich, deep, and varied attention to speech, in its inflections toward the vernacular and the local, in its rich production of counternarratives, and above all, in its metaphorical use of the musical vocabulary, black popular culture has enabled the surfacing, inside the mixed and contradictory modes even of some mainstream popular culture, of elements of a discourse that is different—other forms of life, other traditions of representation.<sup>39</sup>

What's more, for Hall, in the 1990s the black popular culture has been internally more separated than before, that is: by locality, neighborhood, generation, ethnic background, cultural tradition, political outlook, class difference, and gender and

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<sup>37</sup> Stuart Hall, "What Is This "Black" in Black Popular Culture?", in *Black Popular Culture: A Project by Michele Wallace*, ed. Gina Dent (New York: The New Press, 1998), p. 28

<sup>38</sup> Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle* (New York & London: Routledge, 1994), p. 5

<sup>39</sup> Stuart Hall, "What Is This "Black" in Black Popular Culture?", in *Black Popular Culture: A Project by Michele Wallace*, ed. Gina Dent (New York: The New Press, 1998), p. 27

sexuality. Hence, for Hall, the popular culture of the “blacks” is far less “collectivist” than it was previously, say the 1970s.<sup>40</sup> However, for John Hutnyk:

Diversity is now recognized... But surely this does not necessarily mean abandonment of any ‘collectivist’ spirit, since one can retain this and still be differentiated, by locality, neighborhood, generation, ethnic background, cultural tradition, class gradation, gender and sexuality –as if it were ever any different in the 1970s.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, according to Hutnyk, to suggest that 1970s has been underlined only by a collectivist Black anti-racism makes the cultural and political flows that made these differentiations possible in the first place seem less important.

For Paul Gilroy, the common ground that embodies Black cultural practice and Black political aspirations has been a curious and enduring modern phenomena.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, he argues that “the living, non-traditional tradition of black vernacular self-fashioning, culture-making, play and antiphonic communal conversation is complex and complicated by its historic relationship to the covert public worlds of a subaltern modernity.”<sup>43</sup> Like many other colonized and conquered peoples, the slaves were slowly, and not always hesitantly, drawn into the world that their owners defined and regulated, according to Gilroy. And as they internalized the new languages, understandings, and spiritual codes of this new realm, in which their survival was conditional, they did not always abandon the alternative European habits that were boiled down into living memories of a foregoing history and social

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<sup>40</sup> Stuart Hall, “Black and White Television, in *Remote Control: Dilemmas of Black Intervention in British Film and TV.*, ed. June Givanni (London: British Film Institute, 1995), p. 16

<sup>41</sup> John Hutnyk, “Adorno at Womad: South Asian Crossovers and the Limits of Hybridity-Talk”, in *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*, eds. Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood (London & New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997), p. 121

<sup>42</sup> Paul Gilroy, “...To Be Real?: The Dissident Forms of Black Expressive Culture”, in *Let’s Get It On: The Politics of Black Performance*, ed. Catherine Ugwu (Seattle & London: Bay Press & ICA, 1995), p. 12

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13

life. However, Gilroy also notes that in terms of the dominant groups, nowhere was colonialism and slavery successful in isolating themselves from the “disruptive” and “contaminating” effects produced by those they dominated. Thus the dominant groups were too transformed by the historically “novel” conditions of their dominance.<sup>44</sup> They were in particular, Gilroy stresses, “affected by an uneasy intimacy in which their slaves, bondspeople and servants...were able to shift the fulcrum around which the interests of these by-now-racialised groups moved, seeking equilibrium but never finding it for long enough to claim reliable stability.”<sup>45</sup> Consequently, for Gilroy, survival in slave regimes, or in other extreme conditions that are part of the colonial order, made possible the acquisition and improvement of what we might conceive as performance skills. And it is performance, Gilroy upholds, that was the core of the cultural intermixture process. Moreover, the “creolized creativity” became one of the main elements of popular culture, according to Gilroy.<sup>46</sup> I would suggest at this point that what Gilroy means with creolized creativity is the hybrid (aesthetic) forms within the general theme of popular culture. For him, it is this –creolized creativity- which made ‘resistance’ and ‘accommodation’ two complementary notions. Now within this “hybrid” context of black popular culture, what is the place of music produced within the Black diaspora?

#### **4.4.1 Hip-Hop: A Post-Colonial Political Sound?**

For Paul Gilroy, it is interesting that music has come to be termed as authentic at the very moment when it has developed into new styles that are somehow hybrid in

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-14

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 14

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 14-16

character.<sup>47</sup> Hip-hop, for example, has neither been ethnically pure nor has it been a specific African-American product. It rather came into existence as a mutant, a mutant result of fusion and intermixture with Caribbean cultures such as Jamaica and Puerto Rico.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, rap music has been another hybrid form that took shape as a consequence of the social relations of the South Bronx area in New York, where Jamaican sound-system and culture, together with specific technological innovations, had an influence over rap. This in turn had largely transformed the Black diaspora's sense of itself in America, as well as a large portion of the popular music industry too.<sup>49</sup> Thus the music born out of the Black diaspora gave rise to a feeling of a distinct mode of 'lived blackness', where new conglomerations of black communities were created.<sup>50</sup> Therefore music, which was once ultimately important as a representation of the expressive practices of the Blacks in the times of slavery (as they were mostly illiterate and music was one of their strongest medium of self-expression), also acquired a new place and significance in our contemporary world. Some new and hybrid styles of music created in the Black diaspora became a means of calling forth a utopia of racial authenticity –which for Gilroy is something denied everywhere, but nonetheless something searched for.<sup>51</sup>

The new music genres that are created by the Black diaspora are the result of what Gilroy calls 'double consciousness'. Double consciousness arises from being neither

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<sup>47</sup> Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London & New York: Serpent's Tail, 1993), p. 6

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp 6-7

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 125

<sup>50</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London & New York: Verso, 1993), p.82

<sup>51</sup> Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London & New York: Serpent's Tail, 1993), p. 5

totally assimilated to the new culture, nor being able to preserve the old folkways.<sup>52</sup> As a result, people from the diaspora unavoidably transform the cultures they pass through; or in Simon Reynolds's view, they unsettle wherever they settle. For instance, London, whose popular culture mixes Indian, Jamaican, and imported Black-American music and style, is an example to the existing hybrid forms, where a particular culture is always transformed through music.<sup>53</sup> There have also been some Asian settlers in Britain, who, in "reinventing" their own ethnicity, have borrowed the music and the sound system of the Caribbean and soul and hip-hop styles of Black America, as well as (deejaying) techniques such as mixing, scratching and sampling<sup>54</sup> (we will see them in detail in the next chapter). In turn, this process has produced a new mode of cultural production, as well as an identity formation, that has matched it. Further, to underlie more clearly how popular music of the Black diaspora influenced such new modes of cultural production and identities that fit into it, we can recall once again the case of hip-hop and rap. Now although originated in the ghettos of the United States, through the process of *transculturation* –which is the intermixing of different cultural forms, for James Lull- hip-hop culture and rap has traveled all over the world where it has encountered and influenced many kinds of local popular music. For instance, when rap music was exported to Indonesia, the sounds that were imported took on local features, where in this case rap was sung in local languages that referred to this country's own personalities, conditions and situations.<sup>55</sup> The last example, I believe, was important to show the profound influence of Black diaspora music where we witness the creation of new identities

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 121

<sup>53</sup> Simon Reynolds (04.11.2001): "Hybrid Fidelity", in <http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/0017/reynolds.php>

<sup>54</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London & New York: Verso, 1993), p.82

<sup>55</sup> James Lull, *Media, Communication, Culture: A Global Approach* (Cambridge: polity Press, 1995), pp. 155-156

through music outside of the Black diaspora itself. Now rap is only a particular cultural element within the general social movement of hip-hop. So, I will focus now briefly on some resistive character, or politics of hip-hop and afterwards discuss some influence of “black” sounds on electronic dance music.

For Lipsitz, hip-hop culture’s global popularity –that is rap music, graffiti, break dancing, its fashion, etc.- has been one of the most significant recent manifestations of post-colonial culture on a global scale. Lipsitz further argues that –what Gilroy calls- the “diasporic intimacy”, that is connecting cultural production and reception among people of African descent in the Caribbean, the U.S., Europe, and Africa, has paved the way for a cultural formation that also embodies political implications. What’s more, although hip-hop is circulated throughout the world from the metropolitan countries as a commodity that is marketed by centralized monopolizes, –MTV can be a well example for this- it nonetheless functions as a channel for ideas and images which articulates within itself, according to Lipsitz, subaltern sensitivities. African culture, he further argues, appeared as an important subtext within world popular culture at a period where most African people have less power and fewer resources than almost at any previous time in history. Furthermore, hip-hop reflects a form of politics that suited perfectly the post-colonial era. How? In terms of Lipsitz, it brings together a community through performance, as well as it defines real and imagined relations between people that speak to the realities of displacement, disillusion, and despair generated by the severe economy of post-

industrial capitalism.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, it is worth quoting Tricia Rose at this stage where she writes as follows:

Emerging from the intersection of lack and desire in the postindustrial city, hip hop manages the painful contradictions of social alienation and prophetic imagination. Hip hop is an Afro-diasporic cultural form which attempts to negotiate the experiences of marginalization, ...and oppression within the cultural imperatives of African-American and Caribbean history, identity and community.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, the tension between the cultural divisions generated by the industrial oppression and those cultural ties that bind together the Black diaspora, have all paved the way for the development of hip-hop. Hence, hip-hop negotiates the experiences of marginalization of the Black diaspora. In other words, hip-hop tries to negotiate new economic and technological conditions, as well as new patterns of race, class and gender oppression of the postindustrial urban life of America. Moreover, as I mentioned earlier, hip-hop music and culture is based largely on a variety of African-Caribbean and African-American musical, oral, and dance forms and practices. Accordingly, by appropriating African-American expressive culture, hip-hop asserts its own identity within a society that rarely recognizes the African diaspora's significance of such practices.

As was discussed previously, hip-hop music and culture was born mainly out of South Bronx. This has been a poor area of New York City, where there has always been numerous impoverished neighborhoods of "black" and Hispanic communities. In an area where a lot of young people of "color" were prevented from having an access to some socio-economic opportunities that were provided to the larger

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<sup>56</sup> George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (London & New York: Verso, 1997), p. 36

<sup>57</sup> Tricia Rose, "A Style Nobody Can Deal With: Politics, Style and the Postindustrial City in Hip Hop", in *Microphone Fiends: Youth Music, Youth Culture*, eds. Andrew Ross and Tricia Rose (New York & London: Routledge, 1994), p. 71



sections of the city, hip-hop contained within itself a nationalist character; a character that one way or another challenged the U.S. nationalism. For Jeffrey Louis Decker, for example, this nationalist character of hip-hop, just like Black nationalism, provided an imaginative map for those African-Americans, –especially the youth, of course- who longed for ending the institutionalized tradition of slavery and thus creating self-sufficient organizations. For Decker, although hip-hop nationalists have never been politicians in its strict sense of the word, through their music, they got involved in the production of cultural politics that has been related to the everyday struggles of working-class blacks and the urban poor.<sup>58</sup>

#### **4.4.2 Electronic Sounds Transcending the ‘Local’: Fading Away of the Black Diaspora Resistance?**

Black (diaspora) musics have a deep impact even on today’s worldwide electronic dance music scene. This is definitely important, I believe, in order to overview and understand the “peculiarities” of globalization, and how music can transcend race and racial affiliations by replacing them with (class-bound) social activities. Further, this type of music was a source of dislocation and exclusion for some Black youth from the “traditional” diasporic culture, where they found themselves in a “multicultural”, or even a transcultural setting more then ever before. For instance, the seventies’ Black vocal music was profoundly integrated into disco\*, which, according Sherley A. Williams, can be viewed as the Black “domination” of disco. “For the first time in its long history on this continent, Black popular music was in

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<sup>58</sup> Jeffrey Louis Decker, “The State of Rap: Time and Place in Hip Hop Nationalism”, in *Microphone Fiends: Youth Music, Youth Culture*, eds. Andrew Ross and Tricia Rose (New York & London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 100-101

\* Disco is not only a venue for music listening and dancing, but it is also a specific music genre. The name also suggests technologically reproduced music “on disk”, not performed. Disco is electronic dance club music, which is revived by the infusions of Hi-NRG, hip-hop, house, techno-rave, etc.

danger of being completely absorbed by the mainstream it had previously defied.”<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, *house music*, or more specifically ‘Chicago house’, that is a descendent of disco, was born out of a ‘double exclusion’, to use Simon Reynolds’ words, because it was not just Black, but gay and Black. Hence, Chicago house emerged mainly from a gay-Black scene.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, Hillegonda Rietveld, in her article “The House Sound of Chicago”, argues that since 1986 the name ‘house’ within the music scene has at times been used as a marketing tool in the mainstream record industry as well as in a more marginalized cultural context. Rietveld writes that the meaning of the term has changed over time and especially within particular social and cultural settings. Nonetheless, the music it referred to initially has been developed historically in an African-American environment, within the North American urban centers such as New York and more specifically Chicago. Accordingly, the term ‘house music’ was pronounced in order to underline a kind of urban DIY (do-it-yourself) electronic disco music which articulated African-American cultural music tradition that can be traced to jazz, funk, soul music and gospel, and where these were mixed with European music styles like electronic trance and electronic pop music. However, as Rietveld stresses, due to having no tight connections with an African-American history and politics, some of house music’s original characteristics were subdued when it entered the European market and became successful in Europe. Nevertheless, in Chicago, where this type of music first originated (that is, in other words, in an urban layout) it was the dance club ‘The Warehouse’ where house music was played by DJ Frankie Knuckles and the audiences were mostly homosexuals, male and

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<sup>59</sup> Sherley Anne Williams, “Two Words on Music: Black Community”, in *Black Popular Culture: A Project by Michele Wallace*, ed. Gina Dent (New York: The New Press, 1998), p. 164

<sup>60</sup> Simon Reynolds, *Generation Ecstasy: Into the World of Techno and Rave Culture* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), p. 64

female, who were mostly from an African-American and Latino background. Thus,

Rietveld upholds:

the Chicago-produced dance music which acquired the tag ‘house music’ has come into existence in a space created by an exclusion of certain identities in a racist and homophobic American society. In the face of racial and sexual discrimination, the production and consumption of this music has generated a sense of community, of belonging, thereby creating its own definitions of ‘normality’.<sup>61</sup>

Also, some of today’s “famous” “black” DJs, –Juan Atkins, Derrick May, Kevin Saunderson- who are the pioneers of a special genre called ‘Detroit techno’, belonged to a new generation of Detroit-area Black youth who grew up more accustomed to affluence. This was partly due to the racially integrated United Auto Workers union, where their parents or grandparents worked as auto workers at Ford, GM, or Chrysler and earned considerably more than those living in the ghettos. Hence, within this socio-cultural and political context of Detroit, we can say that class division displaced racial royalties. “Ironically, it was automation, computerization, robotics, and technological advances in manufacturing that fueled the city’s precipitous loss of blue-collar jobs –the same developments that would pave the way for techno.”<sup>62</sup> The Detroit Black youth belonging to the middle class, who made possible the existence of this specific electronic music genre, looked down on hip-hop and despised it as they viewed it being a ghetto music. On the other hand, ‘jungle’, another genre of electronic dance music, have incorporated the sounds of African-American and African-Caribbean diaspora, such as hip-hop, and blended this with techno, thus creating another hybrid form of electronic dance music. In his article “Fishing for a New Religion”, Michael McMillan stresses that in Britain’s

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<sup>61</sup> Hillegonda Rietveld, “The House Sound of Chicago”, in *The Clubcultures Reader: Readings in Popular Cultural Studies*, ed. Steve Redhead, et al (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), p. 107

<sup>62</sup> Mike Rubin, “Techno: Days of Future Past”, in *Modulations-A History of Electronic Music: Throbbing Words on Sound*, ed. Peter Shapiro, Project Director. Iara Lee (New York: Caipirinha Productions, 2000), p. 113

urban centers subcultural expressions in the form of language, dress, style, dance and music has been dominated by black popular culture, which is a process of cultural exchange that he claims is never acknowledged. He writes that Black DJs *Shut and Dance* re-appropriated the acid/techno/warehouse sound, mixed techno with dancehall rhythms as well as dub and ragga, and called it 'Jungle' or 'Jung-list'. McMillan further notes that according to the legend, the term Jung-list originated from the words 'jungle bunny' and 'jungle bunny music', which were used by "white" racist bouncers on the club scene in order to describe the "black" DJs, as well as the music they played and the crowd who followed them. "Consequently, a pejorative term became re-appropriated, just like 'nigger'."<sup>63</sup>

According to Simon Reynolds, reconnecting the Bronx to Kingston, jungle is the latest and greatest "postslave", postcolonial hybrids generated within what Paul Gilroy named as 'the Black Atlantic'. In other words, jungle is the melting pot of the different musics of African-American / Afro-Caribbean diaspora. Furthermore, Reynolds stresses that the true meaning of "junglist" (those who are a fan of jungle) is defined not by color, but by class. This is because all working-class urban youth are "niggas" (niggers) in the eyes of authority. He also claims that within the United Kingdom, junglist youth make up a sort of internal colony. That is, for Reynolds, a ghetto of surplus labor and potential criminals who are under surveillance by the police. Jungle is often acclaimed as the first significant and truly indigenous *Black British* music.<sup>64</sup> Accordingly, Reynolds asserts:

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<sup>63</sup> Michael McMillan, "Fishing For A New Religion", in *Let's Get It On: The Politics of Black Performance*, ed. Catherine Ugwu (Seattle & London: Bay Press & ICA, 1995), p. 193

<sup>64</sup> Simon Reynolds, *Generation Ecstasy: Into the World of Techno and Rave Culture* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), pp. 258-259

This notion\* obscures the fact that alongside hip-hop and reggae, the third crucial constituent of jungle is whiter-than-white...But even if one concedes jungle's musical 'blackness' as self evident, this only makes it all the more striking that from day one more than half of the leading DJs and producers have been white.<sup>65</sup>

Hence, as one can observe from these words of Reynolds, in the digitally and technologically embedded era of our contemporary world, the sounds have transcended racial boundaries. The *intermixing* of racial and ethnic identities either between the audience and the DJ/producer, or between the racial background of the music and the music-maker has been more profound than ever. For instance, although the pioneers of (Detroit) techno music have been Blacks, the audience of this kind of music has been most of the time White. Or as I have mentioned, although jungle is another genre of electronic dance music that also blends African/Caribbean sounds, many of its DJ/producers have been White. Consequently, Gilroy views dance music as one of the domains of contemporary "transculture". He believes that clubs and raves\* (where electronic dance music is played) are where the discourse of *purism* versus *hybridity* is mostly heated. One of the reasons he gives for this is that the youth cultures and identities created around the club and rave settings, focus primarily on the styles and scenes, rather than the individual artists (as contrary to rock music); hence it is a collective thing.<sup>66</sup>

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\* That is jungle being considered as a Black British music.

<sup>65</sup> Simon Reynolds, *Generation Ecstasy: Into the World of Techno and Rave Culture* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), p. 259

\* A rave is a gathering or a party where people, especially the youth, come together in order to listen to music and dance all night long. The predominant type of music heard at a rave is techno or house. Music is played by DJs, who use turntables to spin records and a mixer to manipulate sounds. In addition to sounds, a rave is often visually pleasing where there are visuals projected on screens, as well as lasers and other lightening effects. One of the important characteristics of raves is that they are gatherings usually made up of racially diverse people from different backgrounds.

<sup>66</sup> Simon Reynolds (04.11.2001): "Pure Fusion: Multiculture versus Monoculture", in <http://members.aol.com/blissout/purefusion.htm> pp. 4-5

The examples of how the (“underground”) electronic dance music was influenced by Blacks are many, but my point is rather to show how it also was a source of dislocating and transcending race and racial affiliations of the Black diaspora youth. Thus, as an outcome, there appears new reterritorializations through music, creating new identities. For instance, Reynolds calls such new identities as ‘post-racial peoples’ –such as ravers, snowboarders, etc.- that are based around consumption and leisure, as well as racial mixing. Now after viewing some of the examples of how “black hybrid spaces” have influenced such “underground” music movements (or in other words electronic dance music), and thus have transcended race and racial affiliation, –that were once part of the post-colonial culture of the Black diaspora- let us lastly overview the relationship between the ‘underground’ culture and the mass media. Or in other words the relationship between the “unpopular culture” and the culture industry!

#### **4.5 Moving Towards the Underground**

According to Sarah Thornton, the conception that authentic culture stands outside media and commerce is something resilient. She maintains that such beliefs imagine as if grassroots, or in other words authentic, cultures resist and struggle with a colonizing mass-mediated corporate world. However, for Thornton, every music scene has its relations with the media that can be distinctive. For instance, in the case of electronic dance music scene micromedia such as flyers and listings are the means by which the club or party organizers bring the crowd together. Also, the *music press* both document and construct subcultures, while the *mass media* like the tabloids

develop, as well as they distort and misrepresent, youth movements.<sup>67</sup> Adorno argued that music, like other forms of art, should have the potential to prove the listeners to think critically about the world. Nevertheless, he viewed popular music to be produced only for the purpose of entertainment, which led to passivity. However, what about the so called “underground” music genres (at least not being mainstream initially) that I have emphasized previously; are these cultural productions that stand outside the culture industry’s homogenizing effects? Are the crowd, or more specifically the youth, that gather around such “underground” music events (in clubs or raves) are devoid of being critical? Would it be right to claim that they are too embedded within the mass culture? Accordingly, discussing the media’s relation (as the media is a part of the culture industry for Adorno and Horkheimer) with the “underground” music scene, we will hopefully get a clearer insight for such questions as well.

Thornton underlines that the word “underground” is the expression used by clubbers to indicate things that are subcultural.\* Beyond being trendy or fashionable, underground sounds and styles are “authentic”, and are in opposition to those that are mass-produced and mass-consumed. Further, Thornton claims that undergrounds signify exclusive worlds whose main theme is not elitism, however whose parameters generally relate to particular crowds. “They delight in parental incomprehension, negative newspaper coverage and that best blessing in disguise, the BBC ban. More than anything else, then, undergrounds define themselves against

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<sup>67</sup> Sarah Thornton, “Moral Panic, the Media and British Rave Culture”, in *Microphone Fiends: Youth Music, Youth Culture*, eds. Andrew Ross and Tricia Rose (New York & London: Routledge, 1994), p. 176

\* Nevertheless, I find it crucial to emphasize at this point that the terms “clubber” and “clubbing” has also in recent years gained a mainstream meaning. Hence, “underground” may not always be used by, and related to, clubbers, but rather and more strongly it applies to the electronic dance music scene and culture that is even more unpopular compared to the mass/popular music scene.

the mass media.”<sup>68</sup> What’s more, she argues that undergrounds are vague constructions and their crowds avoid definitive social categorization. Nonetheless, the fact is that underground crowds are attached to sounds. To paraphrase the words of a label manager that Thornton quotes in her article, it is said that there are more radical records, which have a smaller and more selective audience at every moment in time. Such sounds, according to the label manager, will later on be the next generation of sounds where people will all be used to, and this s(he) explains, is what s(he) refers to as ‘underground’.<sup>69</sup>

For Thornton, again in her same article, culture industries do not only incorporate but also generate ideas as well as they incite, or in other words provoke, culture. She stresses that there are particular sectors of record and publishing industries that specialize in the production of “anticommercial” culture. Hence, she pinpoints to the fact that cultural studies have tended to exaggerate the homogeneity and conformity of the products of the cultural industry. Thus, they have as a consequence overstated the presence of resistance as well. What’s more, Thornton maintains that subcultural studies have tended to state that youth subcultures are subversive until the very moment they are represented by the mass media. Such studies, she claims, have insisted that these kinds of cultures of taste become politically relevant (not to be confused with activist organizations) only when they were defined as such. In other words, she argues, depreciating media coverage is not the final result, that is, the verdict, but actually the means of their resistance.

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<sup>68</sup> Sarah Thornton, “Moral Panic, the Media and British Rave Culture”, in *Microphone Fiends: Youth Music, Youth Culture*, eds. Andrew Ross and Tricia Rose (New York & London: Routledge, 1994), p. 177

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.



## CHAPTER 5

### RESISTIVE SOUNDS OF EUROPE'S "ADOPTED" CHILDREN

It is between a simultaneous interplay of the global and the local that the modern individual has become subject to. The new identities, formed by either individuals or groups, are acquired by going back to basics in the age of *glocalism*. This cultural identity formation is done with respect to 'authentic' culture, ethnicity, and all that is related to the homeland, which in turn becomes a significant source of identity politics. Also, the modern subject makes use of the instruments that are granted to him/her by the contemporary means of globalism such as communication and transportation.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, one of the most profound and effective means of communication is *music*. In this respect, for example, Simon Frith argues that both group relations and individuality are articulated within music, on the basis of which ethical codes and social ideologies are comprehended. Frith, furthermore, denotes:

Music making and music listening, that is to say, are bodily matters, involve what one might call *social movements*. In this respect, musical pleasure is not derived *from* fantasy -it is not *mediated* by daydreams- but is experienced directly: music gives us a real experience of what the ideal could be.<sup>2</sup>

Hip-hop, for Tom Cheeseman, has all the characteristics of a subcultural *movement*; however it may best be described as the original commodity form of DJ culture, in

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<sup>1</sup> Ayhan Kaya, "Aesthetics of Diaspora: Contemporary Minstrels in Turkish Berlin", in *Journal of Ethnic and Migrant Studies* 28, no. 1 (2002): p. 43

<sup>2</sup> Simon Frith, "Music and Identity", in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, eds. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996), p. 123

which rap is its percussive lyric component. Therefore, although the style emerged in street and entered the dancehall culture in the late 1970s in Bronx, it became known throughout the world by the discovery that the DJ's means of ephemeral, live production for the dancefloor (that is, two turntables and a mixing deck), could be used to produce saleable goods. In this respect, Cheeseman writes:

Hip hop now stands for the most conservative strand in DJ music, deploying samples in a defiantly "modernist" way, as referenced or at least referencable citations selected for the historical and local connotations, rather than entirely deconstructing them as has become the norm in most DJ culture.<sup>3</sup>

Insofar, Cheeseman also upholds that hip-hop has facilitated as a cross-over between the "specialized" dance market and the general pop market, where the marketing factor has been significant in allowing hip-hop to maintain an identity as the indicator of both a subculture and a brand. On the other hand, this fact of hip-hop cannot at all be undermined: as I will try to illustrate in the examples of how hip-hop was articulated in the musical works of Asian immigrants in Britain and the second and third generation Turkish youngsters in Germany, this style has also enabled the minority to speak through, of the racist incidents that they faced in everyday life. Thus, although I will too criticize the market and commercial aspects of hip-hop in these cases I will present, my main argument will be around how this style and its music acted as a means of resistance. I will also demonstrate how hip-hop even acted as a means of informing and educating those youths in the ghettos, or immigrant enclaves (let alone its "white" counterpart) about racial and class discrimination that is salient in "fortress" Europe. Accordingly, in this chapter, I will work through such issues by analyzing the lyrics of

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<sup>3</sup> Tom Cheeseman, "Polyglot Politics: Hip Hop in Germany", in *Debatte* 6, no. 2 (1998): p. 195

*Asian Dub Foundation* and *Fun<sup>Da</sup>Mental* in Britain, and *Cartel* and *Islamic Force* in Germany.

### **5.1 Hip-Hop: A Global Sound with a Local Texture**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, hip-hop culture, originally born in the ghettos of the South Bronx area, aimed at revealing the oppression, inequality and racism that the Black youth faced in the postindustrial city. It should be emphasized again at this point that, as Tricia Rose notes: “rap music is only one cultural element within the larger *social movement of hip hop*... Rap’s musical elements and its use of music technology are crucial aspects of the use and development of the form, and are absolutely critical to the evolution of hip hop generally.”<sup>4</sup> Also, as George Lipsitz underlines, the first manifestations of hip-hop culture, that is, rap music, break dancing, graffiti, wild style fashions, etc. were seen in the early 1970s when a member of a New York street gang (the Black Spades), who called himself Africa Bambaataa (Kevin Donovan), formed the “Zulu Nation”.<sup>\*</sup> As Lipsitz maintains:

Confronted by the ways in which displacement by urban renewal, economic recession, and fiscal crisis of the state combined to create desperate circumstances for inner city youths, Bambaataa tried to channel the anger and enthusiasm of young people in the South Bronx away from gang fighting and into music, dance, and graffiti.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Tricia Rose, “A Style Nobody Can Deal With: Politics, Style and the Postindustrial City in Hip Hop”, in *Microphone Fiends: Youth Music, Youth Culture*, Andrew Ross and Tricia Rose (New York & London: Routledge, 1994), p. 72 (emphasis mine)

<sup>\*</sup> It was after the 1964 British film *Zulu* directed by Cy Endfield and starring Michael Caine that Bambaataa named his “Zulu Nation”. The film pictured the Zulus as savages who opposed the British Empire’s “civilizing mission”. However, Bambaataa, as a Black-American, whose parents had migrated to New York from Barbados, in contrast saw the Zulus as heroic warriors who resisted oppression. Hence, he used this example of the Zulus to inspire his efforts to reply to oppression and racism in the U.S.A.

<sup>5</sup> George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (London & New York: Verso, 1997), p. 26

In the Zulu Nation, Bambaataa intended to replace fights and drugs, which prevailed in the ghettos, with rap, dance and hip-hop. He wanted, in other words, to transform the gang structure in the ghettos into a positive force. In accordance with the fact, those inner-city youths who found themselves as unwanted citizens, and unwanted students by those schools encountering severe budget cuts, and even unwanted as consumers by merchants, -who called for police to keep these poor youth away from affluent buyers of luxury items- Bambaataa and his Zulu Nation used their knowledge as consumers of popular music to become skilled producers of it. For instance, as was the case of many hip-hop DJs in the proceeding years, Bambaataa proved himself to be a talented “mixer” and sound system operator where he provided non-stop danceable beats from a wide variety of musical styles. Thus, the Zulu Nation, among a number of other projects, sought to utilize hip-hop in New York and other U.S. cities as a means of pacifying gang wars, in which the main idea was: “symbolic competitions in the hip hop skills would sublimate inter-gang conflicts, channeling competitive urges in at least harmless, and possibly productive directions.”<sup>6</sup>

Hip-hop, however, was also adopted by other minority youth groups living in other parts of the world as a means of resisting the dominant regimes of representation and thus incorporating themselves into the mainstream.

The dominant regimes of representation, writes Kaya, are done, carried out, in a way that the ethnic, or minority groups are perceived and presented by the majority society in a stereotypical manner. For this reason, he maintains:

Hip-hop is a youth culture that enables ethnic minority youths to use both their own ‘authentic’ cultural capital and global transcultural capital in

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<sup>6</sup> Tom Cheeseman, “Polyglot Politics: Hip Hop in Germany”, in *Debatte* 6, no. 2 (1998): p. 206

constructing and articulating their identities. It provides the diasporic youth with a ground where they can use their ethnicity as a strategizing tool to articulate their identities in response to the majority nationalism and racism.<sup>7</sup>

Accordingly, resulting from their need to confront unemployment, exclusion, poverty and racism, the youngsters made use of ‘authentic’ culture as a strategizing mechanism in the process of identity formation. Nonetheless, as Kaya also exemplifies:

Turkish youngsters, while having a sense of looking backward, also tend to transcend the exclusionist policies of the German nation-state by exhibiting a transnational articulation of culture. In fact, what makes these youngsters hip-hop youth are not the particularistic cultural sources, but universalist constituents.<sup>8</sup>

These words of Kaya are another evidence of hip-hop culture being a global popular youth culture, which in itself articulates the ‘local’ -or the local context. In this sense, it is through the usage of a variety of ways in the global hip-hop culture that the ethnic minority youths on the one hand resist, as I have mentioned before, the dominant regimes of representations, and on the other hand, assimilate themselves into the mainstream. He further writes:

Rap, graffiti, dance and the ‘cool’ look are some examples. All these particular aspects of hip-hop culture attempt to localize power and to create a distance between the already-excluded youth group and the legitimate forms of institutions such as police, education and media.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, for Kaya, it is by means of rap, graffiti, dance, etc., which the hip-hop culture embodies, that the immigrant youths, as in the case of Turkish youngsters, localize power in order to confront those institutions in which they are represented or approached

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<sup>7</sup> Ayhan Kaya, “Aesthetics of Diaspora: Contemporary Minstrels in Turkish Berlin”, in *Journal of Ethnic and Migrant Studies* 28, no. 1 (2002): p. 43

<sup>8</sup> Ayhan Kaya, ‘*Sicher in Kreuzberg*’ *Constructing Diasporas: Turkish Hip-Hop Youth in Berlin* (New Brunswick & London: Transaction Publishers, 2001), p. 165

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

negatively. According to him, those youngsters, via all these particular aspects of hip-hop, try to get away from the limited boundaries of the ‘ghetto’ life. Hence, hip-hop has become a *tool for resistance*, as well as it has also been *incorporated within the mainstream global popular culture*. This is because, through the global music media like MTV or VIVA TV -which is a German local television in the form of MTV- rap music videos are shown frequently on television, thus making hip-hop culture and style a commercial phenomenon. Overall, as James Lull expresses, through the process of *transculturation*, that is, the intermixing of different cultural forms, hip-hop culture and rap has traveled the world encountering and influencing all sorts of local popular music.<sup>10</sup>

That is exactly what happened with the hip-hop culture that the Turkish youths in Germany incorporated themselves into. For instance, groups such as *Cartel* and *Islamic Force* are popular among the second and third generation German-Turks, and according to Ayşe S. Çağlar, it is around these bands and their music that a particular type of music, style of entertainment and collective identity has been formed. Çağlar notes that although the music of such Turkish rap groups in Germany is a mixture of various musical elements and instruments, that is, it incorporates styles and traditions from both Turkey and Germany, “it would be misleading to reduce the heterogeneity of this musical style to a simple crossover between Turkish and German elements. Rather images, styles and elements from black, Asian and world pop music are part of the mixture as much as anything else.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, integrating local sounds within hip-hop

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<sup>10</sup> James Lull, *Media, Communication, Culture: A Global Approach* (Cambridge: Polity press, 1995), p. 155

<sup>11</sup> Ayşe S. Çağlar, “Constructing Metaphors and the Transnationalisation of Spaces in Berlin”, in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27, no. 4 (2001): p. 608

enables the ethnic youths, just like the Turkish youth in Germany, to incorporate themselves into a global youth culture. This is because, hip-hop culture has become a global (popular) youth culture, and by means of rap music and hip-hop culture, these Turkish youth represent the discrimination they encounter in the German society.

Like ‘Black nationalism’, hip-hop nationalism provided an imaginative map for the Black youth who wanted to end the institutionalized legacy of slavery and aimed at creating self-sufficient organizations, which included, for instance, black business and Afro-centric school curriculums. Hence, at certain moments, rappers, or more generally the hip-hop youth, resemble to what Antonio Gramsci once called ‘organic intellectuals’, as they uncover the everyday struggles of the urban poor and the hardships they face in the ghettos. “Hip hop nationalists are organic cultural intellectuals to the degree that their activities are directly linked to the everyday struggles of black folk and their music critically engages the popular knowledge of which they are a part.”<sup>12</sup> The same also applies for those Turkish hip-hop youth in Germany, as they too express their identities through a protest music like rap, as well as graffiti and break dancing, as Kaya writes:

The expression of cultural identity accordingly, makes the oppositional, resistive identities even stronger. The diasporic youth acquire these oppositional identities within the dialectical process of their encounters with those who discriminate and have a prejudice towards them as a result of xenophobia.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Jeffrey Louis Decker, “The State of Rap: Time and Place in Hip-Hop Nationalism”, in *Microphone Fiends: Youth Music, Youth Culture*, eds. Andrew Ross and Tricia Rose (New York & London: Routledge, 1994), p. 102

<sup>13</sup> Ayhan Kaya, ‘Sicher in Kreuzberg’ Berlin’deki Küçük İstanbul: Diasporada Kimliğin Oluşumu (İstanbul: Bûke Yayıncılık, 2000), p. 165 (own translation): “Kültürel kimliğin bu şekilde ifade edilmesi, muhalif kimliklerin daha da güçlenmesini beraberinde getirir. Diasporik gençlik, bu muhalif kimlikleri, kendilerine karşı dışlayıcı bir önyargıya sahip olan yabancı düşmanlarıyla girdikleri diyalektik süreç içerisinde edinirler.”

What's more, the racist attacks in Germany towards the Turks in Mölln in 1992 and in Solingen in 1993 brought forth a huge reaction within the Turkish diaspora, where the Turkish rap groups also showed their resistance towards these attacks with the immediate harsh responses they gave. Hence, within the Turkish diaspora in Western Europe, such music groups have paved the way for a more profound anti-racist consciousness through their music.

Although this particular global youth culture initially came out from New York, it is the postindustrial city and urban life, for Tricia Rose, and its oppression and marginalization of racial and ethnic "Others" -e.g. Black-American youth- that gave birth to hip-hop culture and its development and spread throughout the world. "Hip hop replicates and reimagines the experiences of urban life and symbolically appropriates urban space through sampling, attitude, dance, style and sound effects."<sup>14</sup> In this respect, the case of hip-hop culture and rap music among the Turkish youth in Germany, is also an indication of how the youth of a culturally distinct immigrant population (that is, distinct compared to the African diasporic youth in the U.S.) found a common voice -via hip-hop culture- in their attempts to come to terms with life in a western European country. Or in other words, this is the localization of hip-hop where authors like George Lipsitz argue:

the radical nature of hip hop comes less from its origins than from its uses. The flexibility of African musical forms encourages innovation and adaptation... Tricia Rose has argued against reducing hip hop to its origins in African music or African-American oral traditions, but instead calls for

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<sup>14</sup> Tricia Rose, "A Style Nobody Can Deal With: Politics, Style and the Postindustrial City in Hip Hop", in *Microphone Fiends: Youth Music, Youth Culture*, Andrew Ross and Tricia Rose (New York & London: Routledge, 1994), p. 71



an understanding of hip hop as “secondary orality”, the deployment of oral traditions in an age of electronic reproduction.<sup>15</sup>

Hence, due to hip-hop culture’s emphasis on the urban life inequalities, where it gave voice to oppressed and marginalized youth, it was easily adapted by other immigrant youths of western Europe as well; such as the Turkish youth in Germany, or the Asian immigrants in Britain. Therefore, as Andy Bennett suggests, “hip hop cannot be reduced to singular or essentialist explanations but must be understood rather as a series of strategies which are worked out and staged in response to particular issues encountered in local situations.”<sup>16</sup>

Consequently, *before* starting the discussions and analysis on the Turkish rap groups in Germany and reviewing in a more in-depth way how hip-hop culture has transformed the transnational social spaces of Turkish youngsters, I believe it would be very insightful to talk about how hip-hop has also been incorporated by Asians in Britain. This is because, as it will be witnessed throughout the arguments, Asian immigrants in Britain, just like Turks in Germany, have articulated their ‘authentic’ cultural sounds -as well as some electronic dance sounds- in their music making via *hip-hop*, and accordingly reacted against racism and discrimination in the UK. Hence, going through hip-hop culture via the Asian immigrants in Britain will help us understand more profoundly the innate “hybridity”, and the global as well as local aspects of hip-hop, and will also make us comprehend the case of Turkish hip-hop scene in Germany more reflectively.

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<sup>15</sup> George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (London & New York: Verso, 1997), p. 37

<sup>16</sup> Andy Bennett, “Hip Hop am Main: The Localization of Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture”, in *Media, Culture & Society* 21, no. 1 (1999): pp. 80-81

### 5.1.1 Resisting the British Hegemony via Hip-Hop: The Sounds of the Asian Dub Foundation and Fun^Da^Mental

It was in 1993 that the racist British National Party (BNP) gained an electoral success in East London and paved the way for an increase of racialized violence in this area. Further, due to the Asian and Afro-Caribbean working-class population and their social marginalization within London's East End, as well as the higher unemployment rate of these people, that the prominent British Asian musicians/groups like *Asian Dub Foundation* (ADF) and *Fun^Da^Mental* participated in anti-racist campaigns through their live musical performances (although such groups are visibly 'Asian' in identification, they are involved in Black political groupings). According to Ashley Dawson, the rise of militant hip-hop groups should not be a surprise if one bears in mind this social context of East London, and thus the UK in general. However, she also asserts:

What is surprising is that the majority of British hip-hop groups come from the Asian rather than the West Indian community, unsettling essentializing equations of African ancestry and hip-hop style. Predominantly Asian bands such as ADF, Hustlers HC, Kaliphz, and FUN^DA^MENTAL are taking up the formal qualities of flow and rupture that animate US hip-hop culture and are using them to articulate an unflinching anti-racist politics.<sup>17</sup>

Accordingly, formed in 1993 during a music technology workshop that was organized and assisted by an anti-racist coalition based in London's East End, ADF is one of the interesting and fine examples of the recirculation of 'Black nationalism' in hip-hop culture. Also, ADF has strong ties with organizations such as Youth Connection that are involved in community organizing and education in London's East End. Again as Dawson underlines:

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<sup>17</sup> Ashley Dawson, "This is the Digital Underclass?: Asian Dub Foundation and Hip-Hop Cosmopolitanism", in *Social Semiotics* 12, no. 1 (2002), p. 32

This background in Britain's deeply-rooted tradition of autonomous anti-racist organizing figures prominently in ADF's music, which often challenges the inequalities perpetrated by the justice system. In this instance, the group re-activates collective memories of black British resistance to racist attacks.<sup>18</sup>

ADF, originally fronted by *Deedar* (vocals), has rapped in a "political" manner, where the group's lyric-writing has been shared together by its members; hence drawing on diverse experience. ADF, incorporating bhangra sound at the background of their music, have fused this together with hip-hop and rap, and also mixed it with some electronic dance beats -such as techno, house and jungle, and even world music! Master D (who also does the vocals and rapping) had an early role in the formation of ADF, and from which *State of Bengal* and *Fun^Da^Mental* were also formed. This history of ADF has also been confirmed by other members to be an important aspect of coherence for the band's project: *Chandrasonic* (guitars), Dr Das (bass), *Pandit G* (turntables), and *Sun-J* (technology and keyboards) complete the line-up. What's more, for John Hutnyk, unlike most outfits of the music industry, ADF are related to a range of social projects and campaign groups. For instance, in terms of racial conflict in Britain, ADF has raised the profile of the campaign in order to seek justice for a man -Satpal Ram- imprisoned for defending himself from attack by some racist whites at a South Asian restaurant. Therefore, ADF was successful in bringing the Satpal Ram Campaign\* to a wider attention. For instance, in many of their party flyers (which are also a part of micro media) these words were written: "Self Defense Is No Offense", which were also a part

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

\* In November 1986, at a restaurant in Birmingham, Satpal Ram was attacked by six "whites", one of whom glassed him in the face. Satpal Ram, an Asian immigrant in Britain, while trying to defend himself injured this attacker who later died because of refusing medical treatment. However, Satpal was imprisoned for murder, although self-defense is no offense in British law! There was an appeal in November 1995 but was rejected, despite the full-page photograph of Satpal after having been beaten by the prison officers!

of the lyrics of their song 'Free Satpal Ram' in their album *Rafi's Revenge* (London Records). Accordingly, ADF incorporates the theme of self-defense in a broader context of political narrative, which includes migrant and anti-colonial sentiments as well.<sup>19</sup> For instance, in the song 'Jericho', in their album *Facts and Fictions* (Nation Records), they try to present the idea of 'self-defense' within a more general political consciousness, and apart from this, they also marvelously, I think, reflect their anti-colonial standpoint:

### **Jericho**

The music, we use it, we're making a stand,  
I wouldn't call this a green and pleasant land  
A conscious response is what we demand  
Challenge the system and those in command  
Express your opinion, it's your domain  
If you fail to do this, you're partly to blame  
My heart is beating no retreat  
The battle continues  
We'll suffer no defeat  
This war you've been waging  
It's time we were raging  
In our minds and on the streets  
Sample this  
It's an education  
The sounds of the Asian Dub Foundation.

...

An Asian background  
That's what's reflected  
But this militant vibe  
Ain't what you expected  
With your liberal minds  
You patronize our culture  
Scanning the surface like vultures  
With your tourist mentality  
We're still the natives  
You're multicultural  
But we're anti-racist

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<sup>19</sup> John Hutnyk, *Critique of Exotica: Music, Politics and the Culture Industry* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), p. 73

We ain't ethnic, exotic or eclectic  
The only 'e' we use is electric...

Furthermore, they have also contributed to campaigns around the 1994 Criminal Justice Act, against Operation Eagle Eye, and numerous other campaigns. Moreover, ADF's association with Community Music\* is explicitly connected to education, consolidation and politicization work among youth of London's East End. In this respect, it was with a program in music making and media, MIDI techniques as well as performance skills and mixing that this work of Community Music -in collaboration with ADF- in East London began. Hence, ADF has worked along community projects and sought to spread the understanding of anti-racism in Britain, but also worldwide. For Hutnyk:

ADF tends to a local politics organized in a more internationalist vein, and this has to be explained in several registers: in part the character of ADF's local politics is a response to the opportunism of the left in Europe... In part the politics of ADF is a heritage born of solidarity with oppressed peoples everywhere, but evidenced in the history of specific South Asian struggles.<sup>20</sup>

ADF, for instance, also challenges the British ideologies of racial subordination and underline the intertwined nature of 'race' and class power in Britain, where their song 'PKNB' (which also tries to demonstrate the problem of housing in East London), again in their album *Facts and Fictions*, would be a great example to this:

### **PKNB**

All this talk about housing

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\* 'Community Music' embodies a wide range of activities. It covers musicians working outside formal settings: e.g. in schools, prisons or hospitals. It further involves the development of music in under-resourced areas and with disadvantaged people, and it covers the development of creative partnerships between people of different skills and cultures.

<sup>20</sup> John Hutnyk, *Critique of Exotica: Music, Politics and the Culture Industry* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), p. 187

Just a method of arousing  
bad feeling  
Appealing to people's prejudice  
And then they redirect  
their lack of self-respect  
Towards a visible target  
a visible target

You seem to have forgotten  
that the apple has always been rotten  
And that black people are not  
the cause of your problems  
Black people are not  
the cause of your problems

We're often told that this  
country's bursting at the seams.  
We're never told that there  
are in fact more people leaving  
than entering.

Immigration has become  
synonymous with black people  
Yet over sixty percent of  
immigrants are white...

'Things were good in the  
good olden days' they say  
'Jobs in the factories'  
(economic slaves!)  
'We kept our doors open  
right throughout the day'  
(But poverty was such  
that there was nothing to  
nick anyway!)  
Black people constitute  
less than six per cent  
of the population

Common sense -  
misinformation received  
By the common man  
You've been just as deceived  
An effect that was planned  
by the powers that be  
A most effective tool  
for division and rule...

It should also be noted at this stage that Southwest Asian immigrants -together with Afro-Caribbean immigrants- became “black” in Britain, which is an identity that they do not generally have in their home countries, but which becomes prominent to them in England as a result of racism that is directed at them from outside their communities. Nonetheless, such an identity is also useful in the sense that it becomes a device for building unity within and across aggrieved populations.<sup>21</sup> This situation is again highly visible in these words of ADF’s song ‘TH9’, from their same album:

### **TH9**

Like coffee without milk (!)  
We’re too black too strong  
For too many years man  
you’ve had your fun  
Now it’s time...  
For us to hit and run  
‘Cos we’re second generation  
But we’re not second class  
Now the wrath of the Asian  
will hit you like a blast...

Thus, together with such militant Asian hip-hop groups like Fun^Da^Mental, ADF revives the anti-essentialist politics of blackness that characterized Britain in the late 1970s and 1980s. According to this tradition, for Dawson:

blackness is not an immutable somatic characteristic, but rather derives from the processes of racialization and forms of anti-racist community solidarity forged in post-war Britain. In reviving this tradition, ADF also re-animates the project of uniting Britain’s racialized groups behind a positive, oppositional identity.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (London & New York: Verso, 1997), p. 126

<sup>22</sup> Ashley Dawson, “‘This is the Digital Underclass’: Asian Dub Foundation and Hip-Hop Cosmopolitanism”, in *Social Semiotics* 12, no. 1 (2002), p. 40

Hence, these lyrics of ADF also sarcastically refer to the ignorance of prejudices; because contrary to the general thought that most immigrants are “black” it is “white” people who still make up the largest portion of the population. Thus, as it is apparent from the words of ‘PKNB’, ADF reflects the hatred and detestation for the colonial and imperial British hegemony. Hence, through an “us” and “they”, or “we” and “them” dichotomy, as the “Other” was a concept that was used for the colonized, oppressed and/or “colored” peoples throughout the history (and which is rather explicit in ‘Jericho’ in sentences like “With your liberal minds, You patronize our culture”, and “We ain’t ethnic, exotic or eclectic”), they work out their (and their community’s) -Southwest Asian- identity through “black” identity. We should now view briefly the group Fun^Da^Mental to complement our discussion.

Just like ADF, Fun^Da^Mental too emerged from London with similar intentions: that is, to challenge the British system and act as a reactionary force towards racism in London’s East End, as well as against inequalities and oppressions worldwide. Further, Fun^Da^Mental can also be thought as a multiracial band as it embodies Asian as well as Afro-Caribbean members: *Amir Ali* (lyrics), *Inder Matharu* (lyrics and percussion), *Propa-Gandhi* (music), *Dave D Watts* (samples) and *Count Dubulah* (bass and guitar). Their music is a mixture of elements from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, which are fused into Western hip-hop rhythms and rap, as well as dance-beats. They further incorporate samples of speeches of, for example, Malcolm X, the Black Panthers, Gandhi or the controversial Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan -as they were very much influenced by the American Black Power Movement in the late 1960s and Farrakhan. For this reason, Fun^Da^Mental to some degree also integrates the Islamic



and modern leftist anti-racist opinions with the Black Power movements of the '60s. Nevertheless, as we will also review in the case of *Islamic Force* in Germany later on, this aspect of Islam is rather symbolic than essentialist, as it functions as an identity politics, I might say, that stands against the “white Christian European” subject positions (this aspect is also highly visible by the group’s name as well). What’s more, for them, the political message that is presented through the lyrics even plays a bigger role than the music itself and as they pointed out in a magazine called CARF (Campaign Against Racism and Fascism) in 1994:

Always has been. The musical platform means people take notice and take it seriously. The music in itself makes a statement -the clashes of culture, fighting. Some of the clashes are about who we’ve been, how we feel, how I feel as a second generation Asian and how the third generation feel. There’s a lot of anger, a lot of beauty, humbleness, aggressiveness, frustration, sincerity and passion that makes the music what it is.<sup>23</sup>

Fun^Da^Mental’s basic message, like ADF, is also to fight against racism, and as second generation immigrants, and as a multiracial band, they support the unity between Asians and Afro-Caribbeans. Further, they work with Asian organizations like the Asian Youth Movement, the Indian Workers Association, and the Anti-Racist Committee. Fun^Da-Mental too speak of a ‘self-defense’ and have contributed to making such a concept more public. This kind of self-defense and the demand for direct action against racism can be seen from the lyrics of their song ‘Dog-Tribe’ in their album *Seize the Time* (Beggars Banquet, 1994):

### **Dog-Tribe**

What’s the thing that makes a black man insane?  
Deranged and wanna give a man pain?

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<sup>23</sup> Quoted from Markus Biedermann (29.08.2003): “FUN^DA^MENTAL: Dog-Tribe Politics”, in <http://home.t-online.de/home/mbieder/texte/Fundamental.pdf> p. 3

Practicalities, similarities, immortalities of what you call a racist dream.

Skin-headed warrior fightin' for the country, killing black children, burning Bengalis. Enough is enough. ...

...

There comes a time when enough is enough,  
Afro-Caribbeans, Asians together is tough,  
our defense is on attack, minds are made up,  
Bodies are fighting back. Self defense is no offense  
And we're ready, ready for a collision with the opposition  
It won't be a suicide mission, and one thing about me, I'm  
not afraid to die 'gee'  
And after me, there will always be another brother.

The words "Afro-Caribbeans, Asians together is tough" again reveal the desire for a self-defense of these people under a unified "common" identity -as in the case of ADF. These words, for Biedermann, in his article "FUN^DA^MENTAL: Dog-Tribe Politics", also correspond with the fact that rap music (and thus hip-hop culture) is considered to have a transnational impact. Accordingly, Fun^Da^Mental also write: "What's the thing that makes a black man insane?" and "Skin-headed warrior fightin' for the country, killing black children, burning Bengalis. Enough is enough". These words are also a call for a coalition among the oppressed races and ethnicities, which, I believe, can also be interpreted as unification under a "shared" identity, that is, "blackness". In this respect, it is worth quoting Gilroy:

The unifying notion of an open blackness has been largely rejected and replaced by more particularistic conceptions of cultural difference. This retreat from a politically constructed notion of racial solidarity has initiated a compensatory recovery of narrowly ethnic culture and identity.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London & New York: Verso, 1993), p. 86

It is also crucial to mention at this point the music video of ‘Dog-Tribe’, as it was banned later on due to its explicit message of racial assault that Asians, and accordingly “colored” people face in everyday life. Now ‘Dog-Tribe’, as Hutnyk explains, is a five-minute, shot in black and white production that tells the story of a racist attack by three white youth/skinheads upon a lone Asian. Officially, violent scenes shown in the video clip was the reason given for this banning, because the camera lingered too long over the scene where the lone Asian got kicked and beaten. Also another reason was the Islamic symbols used in the video (e.g. a scarf with an emblem of Islam). Nevertheless, although the video clip of ‘Dog-Tribe’ was banned by the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) in Britain, it was shown on MTV only after 10 p.m.<sup>25</sup> As I discussed in the third chapter, music videos were mainly born out of promoting and spreading the economic role of merchandizing. This can also be done by means of promoting the creation and consumption of “lifestyles”, just like MTV. I believe MTV as a culture industry *par excellence* would not show music clips -especially in day-time- which do not fit into its culture concept. Hence, most of the time when such subversive clips are shown, they are done so to promote a fashion, to promote the rise of sales, and make consumption more indiscriminate. So, although Fun^Da^Mental’s ‘Dog-Tribe’ clip was screened only after 10 p.m., would this be an indication that it entered the culture industry’s homogenizing effect and lost its resistive power altogether? Such questions will hopefully be answered below.

We can, insofar, consider the works of ADF and Fun^Da^Mental as both comprising the global and the local aspects, and, as John Hutnyk emphasizes, the work of ADF and

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<sup>25</sup> John Hutnyk, *Critique of Exotica: Music, Politics and the Culture Industry* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), pp. 56 & 59

other such cultural activists cannot be easily located in some simple “push and pull” model of a *globalizing* culture industry.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, despite ADF and Fun^Da^Mental’s political struggle via their music, there should also be a critical question that should be asked at this point: if such a revolutionary politics -or a politics of ‘difference’- of British Asian hip-hop groups become an emblem that is worn like a t-shirt, or poster, then does this not mean that they have also become nothing more than a style? Hence, I would argue that even revolutionary groups like ADF and Fun^Da^Mental have to a *certain extent* not been able to escape the vicissitudes of the ‘culture industry’ and thus the capitalist market economy. What’s more, according to Hutnyk:

Hybridity itself stops short of political action, and ADF are well aware of the dangers of such condensations imposed by academic and mainstream categorizations. Yet they recognize the importance of inserting this message into the media flows of MTV, Star TV, pop shows and talkback.<sup>27</sup>

Consequently, Adorno underlines that “Even music that is different can survive economically and hence socially only under the wing of the Culture Industry it detests.”<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, on the contrary, the question should also involve: to what extent there is a secret presence of resistance -if there is any- within the cultural products of the culture industry? Accordingly, Adorno maintains that, “it is a delicate question whether the liquidation of aesthetic intrication and development represents the liquidation of every last trace of resistance or rather the medium of its secret omnipresence.”<sup>29</sup> Therefore, I insist once more that the criticisms should be based on overall two dual points: how far can the groups that are considered to be a part of the hip-hop culture like

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 216

<sup>27</sup> John Hutnyk, “Adorno at Womad: South Asian Crossovers and the Limits of Hybridity-Talk”, in *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*, eds. Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood (London & New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997), p. 131

<sup>28</sup> Quoted from John Hutnyk, *Critique of Exotica: Music, Politics and the Culture Industry* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), p. 215

<sup>29</sup> Theodor Adorno, “The Schema of Mass Culture”, in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 67

ADF and Fun^Da^Mental (which also embody electronic dance and world music, and is formed by *mainly* Asians in Britain), and those that I will go through in the next section like *Cartel* and *Islamic Force* (formed by *mainly* Turks in Germany), although incorporating revolutionary politics in their music, can actually escape the alteration of the ‘culture industry’ and thus the market? Secondly, is there some kind of a ‘secret omnipresence’ of resistance -as Adorno writes- in the cultural productions of such groups? Nonetheless, it becomes apparent -by analyzing these groups and the lyrics of their songs- how hip-hop culture and music carry within itself a ‘local’ site of oppositional power -as well as ‘global’ contexts. Hence, although there may be a commercial side to hip-hop (as I have highlighted in the beginning of this chapter), the “cultural works” that are done on -and on behalf of- the local grassroots levels cannot be ignored (!) which can also be an answer to whether there is a presence of resistance in such musical products.

As was mentioned in the second chapter, Andreas Huyssen upholds that the double danger of Adorno’s theory is that the specificity of cultural products is destroyed and that the consumer is conceived in a state of passive regression. Accordingly, Huyssen writes:

If cultural products were commodities through and through and had only exchange value, they would no longer even be able to fulfill their function in the processes of ideological reproduction. Since they do preserve this use value for capital, however, they also provide a locus for struggle and subversion.<sup>30</sup>

Huyssen, furthermore, rightly criticizes Adorno arguing that while he acknowledged that there were limitations to the reification of human subjects through the culture industry

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<sup>30</sup> Andreas Huyssen, “Adorno in Reverse: From Hollywood to Richard Wagner”, in *New German Critique*, no. 29 (1983): p. 15

which made resistance thinkable at the level of the subject, Adorno never asked himself whether such limitations could be situated in the mass cultural commodities themselves.<sup>31</sup> Hence, at this point I would strongly insist that there is a site of resistance, even a considerable one, in the (cultural) works of ADF and Fun^Da^Mental -also in those works of Turkish hip-hop groups that I will concentrate in the next section- although they can be considered a product of the culture industry!

### **5.1.2 Germany's Rebellious Immigrants: Cartel and Islamic Force**

Against the issues relating to racism and the problem of national identity that is experienced by young people of ethnic minority groups in Germany, hip-hop has been a strong and influential medium. The majority of interest in hip-hop has come from the young people of immigrant *Gastarbeiter* (guest worker) families especially like those originating from Turkey.<sup>32</sup> In Frankfurt am Main, for instance, although there are few occurrences of racial violence, -however this being on the increase for Andy Bennett- racism is experienced in other ways. Out of 500.000 people in Frankfurt, 25 per cent are foreign in origin. However, many "foreign" people in the city live as *Gastarbeiter* (which is a situation that is applicable to Germany as a whole), and many of these people have a relatively poor command of the German language and work in minor positions in the labor market. Further, they are often viewed as second rate citizens, which is also a label that is ascribed to their children although many of them were born and educated in Germany and speak the language fluently, and often have a skilled trade, or, in the recent years, increasingly a university education.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 21

<sup>32</sup> Andy Bennett, "Hip Hop am Main: The Localization of Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture", in *Media, Culture & Society* 21, no. 1 (1999): pp. 77-78

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 83

Accordingly, in a context like this, popular music plays a vital role in constructing solidarity within and across immigrant communities, while at the same time enabling a ground for negotiation and contestation between groups. Thus, music, (and in this case specifically hip-hop) is a powerful but easily recognizable indicator of cultural identity. Also, as a highly visible -and audible- commodity, popular music comes to stand for the specificity of social experience in identifiable communities when it captures the attention, engagement, and even allegiance of people from many different social locations.<sup>34</sup> In this respect, the German hip-hop scene, or rather a diverse number of local scenes (as hip-hop culture is identifiable through strong attachment to a local peer group), has been in existence since the early 1980s. Also, imported films on hip-hop such as *Wild Style* (1982) and *Beat Street* (1984) brought forth the first early rap hits in their U.S. inner-city “underclass” Afro-American, Afro-Caribbean, Puerto Rican and other Hispanic street life context, and presented the main pillars, or “skills”, of hip-hop worldwide: breakdancing, “writing” (e.g. graffiti), rapping, and DJing. For Dietmar Elflein: “this occurred at the very moment when, in many cities, the first large cohorts of children of “Gastarbeiter” were reaching an age where they needed to find a youth culture to participate in.”<sup>35</sup> The reception of hip-hop by these youth was also shared with a plenty of their “German” peers. However, from the beginning, the various urban hip-hop scenes featured a high percentage of so-called “foreigners” (that is with or without German nationality), as well as those youth of mixed parentage, where many groups were actually “multi-ethnic”. Hence, for Cheeseman, in Germany, from 1980s onward, hip-hop’s multi-culturalism, as well as its radical elements representing anti-

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<sup>34</sup> George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (London & New York: Verso, 1997), p. 126

<sup>35</sup> Quoted from Tom Cheeseman, “Polyglot Politics: Hip Hop in Germany”, in *Debatte* 6, no. 2 (1998): p. 196

capitalism, anarchism, anti-fascism and anti-racism, brought much out of the underground and established it as a legitimate subcultural form that stimulated both commercial and pedagogical interests.<sup>36</sup> Accordingly, *Cartel* and *Islamic Force* were fine examples within such a context of Germany's hip-hop scene.

*Cartel*, a *gangsta rap*\* group in Germany, presents a form of diasporic cultural politics as it positions itself against racism, capitalist exploitation and cultural displacement. Therefore, *Cartel* can also be classified under 'cultural nationalist rap' as it embodies profoundly the nationalistic character of hip-hop.<sup>37</sup> Initiated by a producer in Berlin called Ozan Sinan, *Cartel* is actually a music project made up of three different rap groups coming from various regions of Germany: *Karakan* based in Nuremberg, *Da Crime Posse* based in Kiel and an MC from West Berlin called *Erci-E*. However, as a group, *Cartel* consists of seven members: five Turkish, one Afro-Cuban and one German. Thus, *Cartel* came up with an album that had the same name with the group, that is, *Cartel* (Mercury, 1995); and immediately after the release of their album they attracted a lot of attention. As a result of the huge interest towards them in Europe, especially in Germany, *Cartel* even got the chance to be on MTV. Hence, it was due to *Cartel*'s sudden popularity in Europe, and accordingly through the huge media corporations like MTV and some other European channels, that they were initially heard in Turkey. Furthermore, *Cartel*, with its members generally dressed in black and having Turkish motives on their T-shirts, and together with the nationalistic lyrics they

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 197

\* *Gangsta rap* is a genre of rap music, and thus hip-hop culture, and often employs lyrical subjects based on violence that is inherent in the gangster life of the ghettos.

<sup>37</sup> Ayhan Kaya, "Aesthetics of Diaspora: Contemporary Minstrels in Turkish Berlin", in *Journal of Ethnic and Migrant Studies* 28, no. 1 (2002): p. 50



employed, became one of the representatives of popular Turkish nationalism. Further, they incorporated local, or “authentic”, Turkish sounds at the background of their music, and rapped in Turkish, which as a consequence proved to Turkish youngsters that rap could be made in their mother tongue. Thus, in 1995 their album sold more than 300,000 copies in Turkey, which even displaced Michael Jackson from his top position in the album charts, and sold more than 20,000 copies in Germany. Their album *-Cartel-* also alerted the German public of the existence of a “Turkish-language rap.”

Cartel, in both their music and message, were revealing such aspects like what it feels and means to be the ones who are thought of as *German-like* (Almancı) in their homeland, Turkey, and to be rejected as *foreigners* (yabancı) in their adopted country, Germany. Now Cartel was bringing all these back home, to Turkey (from Berlin), in the summer of 1995, where they came to their “homeland” after the launch of their album and the great success that accompanied it in Europe. In an interview they gave in the same year, to the weekly Istanbul newspaper called *Express*, the group members expressed the difficult experience they faced being a German-Turk. They told the disadvantages and how difficult it was for them to be between two cultures, as well as the possibilities in their social position. Also, to cope with the stress and pain of their experience, they told of the ‘techniques of living’ they had developed: that is *resistance* to the assaults of racism, and the everyday xenophobia in public space and culture.<sup>38</sup> Karakan’s song ‘Almancı / Yabancı’ (German-like / Foreigner), in their album *Al Sana Karakan* (Neşe, 1997), reflects perfectly this state of being in between two cultures (as I highlighted above, Karakan is one of the groups that compose the Cartel project):

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<sup>38</sup> Kevin Robins and David Morley, “Almancı, Yabancı”, in *Cultural Studies* 10, no. 2 (1996): pp. 248-249

## **Alamancı / Yabancı**

We came here years ago  
Whatever you say we were never good enough for the Germans  
all these efforts and all these sufferings, all useless  
I'm asking once again why did we come here  
The reason why we came is certainly clear  
After working for a couple of years, we were to go back  
But lives exhausted new ones added  
If one has gone five have come back  
Those who came as foreigners turned into those who "settled"  
The lives of those who didn't obey the rules also extinguished  
Ruthless society, cold as ice  
We were going to keep in step with, but unfortunately drowned  
Bewildered and bewildered we believed and were mistaken  
For intending to gain five coins, we were used for cheap  
You either go away or you go against  
Or be a German and live without grief

In homeland German-like, here foreigner  
German-like, foreigner, believe me to go through all these is very painful  
Are you a foreigner German-like?  
In homeland German-like, here foreigner  
Who denies this is a liar  
In our homeland German-like, here foreigner!

In our homeland German-like, here foreigner  
Believe me to go through all these is very painful  
On the passport I'm holding there is a moon and a star  
They call me a second-class person  
Even if there was a German flag in the passport I'm holding, I can't be a German  
Because I have black hair, Alper Ağa from Karakan  
All those that I saw in this age of 27, if I told you, you would probably never believe me  
In fact what they want is for us to forget  
If we forget we will be wasted, we shouldn't forget  
Neither right nor left, Karakan is a new way  
We are moving forward; you come as well, no matter who you are  
Those who are excluded and oppressed, come  
Those who don't have any place to go, come  
Our door is open to anyone -  
anyone who has respect for life and human beings!

They call us foreigner, we are everywhere  
Our name is German-like, we always draw attention  
No matter where we are, we never fit in  
Is it Turkey? Is it Germany? Which one is our homeland?  
It starts from the time we enter the customs door  
All those stones that come in abundantly on our heads, just because we're German-like

They propelled and didn't take notice of us  
When it was too late they did become aware  
We saw in ourselves; when we didn't see, we heard  
We died a thousand times and were reborn again  
How or out of what, just understand me  
I'm distressed, I worry a great deal  
As if all these constraints on us are not enough  
You're also making pressure on us  
But in the end we are all humans  
To live like human is our right too.\*

Despite the feeling of frustration resulting from being in between two cultures, that is, of the "host" and the "mother" country, there is still a message of "fighting back" and never getting subdued and intimidated by the hardships one comes across in Germany – especially those hardships which the children of Gastarbeiter families face. Also, very

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\* **Almanca / Yabancı**

Yıllar önce geldik buralara  
Ağa  
Sen ne dersen de yaranamadık Almanlara  
inanmazsın galiba  
Bu kadar çaba bunca acı hepsi boşuna  
Bir kere daha soruyorum niye geldik buralara  
Gelmemizin nedeni elbette belli  
Birkaç sene çalışıp dönecektik geri  
Ama ömürler tükendi yenisi eklendi  
Biri gittiye Beş tanesi geldi  
Yabancı gelenler yerliye döndü  
Kurallara uymayanın hayatı da söndü  
Acımasız toplum buz gibi soğuk  
Ayak uyduracaktık ama ne yazık ki boğulduk  
Şaşırdık şaşırdık inandık ve yanıldık  
Beş kuruş için Beş kuruş gibi harcandık  
Ya çekip gidersin yada karşı çıkarsın  
vatanımız?  
Yada Alman gibi olup dertsiz yaşarsın  
  
Vatanda almanca burada yabancı  
Almanca yabancı bunları yaşamak inan ki çok acı  
Yabancı mısın yoksa almanca?  
Vatanda almanca burada yabancı  
Bunu inkar eden yabancı  
Vatanımızda almanca burada yabancı!  
  
Vatanımızda almanca burada yabancı  
Bunları yaşamak inan ki çok acı  
Elimdeki pasaportta ay yıldız var  
Ya ikinci sınıf insan diyorlar bana  
Elimdeki pasaportta Alman bayrağı olsa Alman olamam

Çünkü saçlarım kara Karakan'dan Alper  
27 yaşında neler gördüm anlatsam  
Zaten istedikleri bizim unutmamız  
Unutursak harcanırız hatırlamalıyız  
Ne sağ ne sol Karakan yeni bir yol  
İlerliyoruz sende gel kim olursan ol  
Dışlananlar ezilenler gelsin  
Gidecek başka yeri olmayanlar gelsin  
Kapımız herkese açıktır yeter ki yaşama  
Ve insana saygı göstereyim!  
  
Yabancı derler bize her yerde varız  
Almanca adımdır hep göze batırız  
Nerde olursak olalım bir yere sığmayız  
Türkiye mi? Almanya mı? Neresidir  
  
Gümrük kapısından girerken başlar  
Almanca diye başımıza yağar taşlar  
İtip kaktılar bizi hiçe saydılar  
İş işten geçince farkına vardılar  
Kendimizde gördük görmesek de duyduk  
Bin kere ölüp yeniden doğduk  
Ne yapıp etmeli anlayın halimi  
Bunalımlardayım yiyor içim içimi  
Bunca baskı yetmezmiş gibi  
Üstüne geliyor birde sizlerinki  
Ama sonuçta hepimiz insanız  
İnsan gibi yaşamak da bizim hakkımız.

similar to ADF and Fun<sup>Da</sup>Mental (where they came from a working-class area, that is, from London's East End), the group members of Cartel too are originally from working-class families. In this respect, there is also an implicit message of uniting against the elite, or the bourgeoisie, in the country they reside, which embodies the group of higher class Turks as well. As Robins and Morley note, the members of Cartel are highly critical of those Turks who are 'devoid of consciousness', and those who are in the unproductive state of being 'stuck in emptiness' as a result of being between two cultures. Cartel members uphold that, in the kind of condition they are in, what is necessary is protecting one's own identity and never giving up one's own culture. Hence, they want to 'educate' those kinds of people, and their plan is to arrange a cultural association to work with Germany's immigrant populations, and, apart from this, they offer their group as a focus for identification and belonging.<sup>39</sup> As it is evident from the words of Karakan's song 'Almancı / Yabancı', where they write, "You either go away or you go against. Or be a German and live without grief", there is a two-way opposition and resistance, I believe: one is an opposition towards the "white" German society, and the other, towards the Turks who have assimilated into the German society, and thus have become "Germans", to such an extent that they have even forgotten their 'Turkish identity'. Cartel have expressed their opinion on such issues accordingly:

There are families that do not speak Turkish at home with their children; there are kids of 6-7 years old who don't know any Turkish. These are parents who want to escape their Turkishness and to be integrated and accepted in German society. And the younger ones may become what are called 'zontas', youths who are oblivious to what is going on around them and do not care about anything. Their only aim is to own a nice car, to find beautiful women, and to have fun.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Kevin Robins and David Morley, "Almancı, Yabancı", in *Cultural Studies* 10, no. 2 (1996): p. 249

<sup>40</sup> Quoted from Ibid.

One of the ironical situations, nevertheless, was that although Cartel in their songs tried to give the message to young people to fight and unite against racism, xenophobia and exclusion, Cartel's hip-hop nationalism in Turkey was received in a very different manner: that is, they were considerably greeted by youth who were part of the right-wing nationalist party. One of the reasons for this was that Cartel was seen as role models who were returning to their homeland with a message of diasporic national pride. Also, their rap salute resembled the salute of the Grey Wolves of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) in Turkey. However, Da Crime Posse (the member group of Cartel), for example, who were vaguely leftist, were especially shocked to see their political appropriation (that was composed of a mixture of Black/Turkish power image via hip-hop) to support for a paranoid nationalism with significant political power in Turkey. Accordingly, it is worth quoting Robins and Morley as they emphasize:

What the ultra-nationalist youths in Turkey were seeing and identifying with was the tough and angry mood of rap culture. These were young people who were insecure, often in a paranoid way and consequently aggressive, in the expression of their Turkish identity. These were the ones who were prepared to come to Cartel, drawn by its talk of bonding and belonging.<sup>41</sup>

It is therefore important at this point, I believe, to underline the fact that hip-hop nationalism, as a variant of minority nationalism, should be studied in relation to the majority nationalism. In this respect, the use of ethnic symbols that represent the Turkish flag (for example, in the front cover of Cartel's album there is a white crescent on a red background) should not be directly interpreted as regressive, racist or exclusionist. Consequently, such a straightforward judgment would result in the misinterpretation of the nationalist discourse of Cartel, and also to disregard the

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 252

presence of German nationalism. Hence, in some cases, music might act as a social force that aims to transform the existing social system, where rap in this sense (and accordingly hip-hop culture) is very instructive.<sup>42</sup>

Accordingly, I find it also necessary to paraphrase here Stuart Hall as he suggests that the concept of identity is not an essentialist, but a strategic and positional one. He states that on the contrary to the debates about identity as a ‘settled’ character of many populations and cultures, which seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they correspond, identities are actually questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as ‘what we might become’, ‘how we have been represented’ and ‘how that bears on how we might represent ourselves’. Thus, Hall insists that identities are constituted within and not outside representation.<sup>43</sup> Hence, I would strongly argue that the ‘identity’ formation via hip-hop culture, in respect to minority youths, is a manifestation of what Hall argues. Thus, in this case of Turkish hip-hop youths in Germany, the ‘Turkish identity’ that they employ is definitely not an essentialist one (although they of course use the resources of history, language and culture), but rather a strategic and positional one, as they use their identity to -as Kaya emphasizes- challenge the majority nationalism and racism. Consequently, the ‘Turkish identity’ that they articulate in their music-making is not actually a “settled” character of their Turkish community, but rather a resource to help their way out through the difficulties they face; or in other words, such an identity functions, we might say, as a

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<sup>42</sup> Ayhan Kaya, “Aesthetics of Diaspora: Contemporary Minstrels in Turkish Berlin”, in *Journal of Ethnic and Migrant Studies* 28, no. 1 (2002): p. 48

<sup>43</sup> Stuart Hall, “Introduction: Who Needs ‘Identity’?”, in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, eds. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 3-4

stabilizing (and strategizing) source in their process of becoming. Now, let us again briefly analyze the lyrics of one of Cartel's songs in order to exemplify our previous discussions on hip-hop's nationalistic character, and to illustrate how these Turkish youth in Germany via hip-hop culture and rap music also brought forward a collective identity based on 'Turkishness', or a sense of Turkish pride:

### **Bloodbrothers**

Oh my God, not again  
Bloodbrother is everything  
It is to die for your brother  
It is to sacrifice  
Always tell me what you want  
We said, 'piss off skinhead!'  
When we said we were Turks,  
We were labeled as fascist.  
I am always with you boy.  
Screaming at you means screaming at me  
Don't dare to fool me,  
You will be the loser.  
If we get together, no one can beat us  
C'mon guys!  
*Karakan* is coming.  
C'mon guys,  
Nothing can scare us.

Blood blood bloodbrothers  
They can't beat us  
Blood blood bloodbrothers  
This is Cartel

Five letters 'blood', seven more letters 'brother'  
What is this, a little word  
But with a strong meaning  
We walked through many troubles  
Sometimes lost, sometimes won  
We never left alone our bloodbrother  
Forever together  
Your friends come by and leave  
Your bloodbrothers will love you  
They will hang around with you to death  
This is Cartel, if you don't know someone can tell you

Go and find out, our business is rap  
Cos pop is no use for us  
It isn't for us  
Words can kill like a bullet

You'll ask who I am: my name is Kerim  
I am known as nightmare  
Next to me Alper with black bones  
He hates sexy 'kanake'  
Not only him, all of us  
One for all, all for one  
Turk, Kurd, Laz and Circassian  
We will lose if we disunite  
Lots of traitors behind  
Don't dream  
What you think of is not friendship  
It is something further, stronger  
All together we will break up the chains  
In a way that suits the bloodbrothers  
If you're ready, it's your turn now.\*

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\* **Kankardeşler**

Allahım yine mi?  
Kankardeş cankardeş demek  
Gerekirse kardeş için ölmek  
Canını kanını vermek  
Gözünü kırpmadan her zaman işte  
Defol dazlak dedik  
Biz Türküz deyince faşist bilindik  
Yanımdayım koçum sonuna kadar senin  
söylerler  
Sana edilen laf aynı anda bize  
Oynamaya bakma damarına basma  
Söylüyorum sana kaybedersin sonunda  
Meseleyi fazla uzatmaya gelmez  
Hep beraber olursak bizi kimse yenemez  
Hadi gülüm yandan yandan  
Karakan geliyor çekilin yoldan  
Hadi gülüm yandan yandan  
Biz korkmayız ondan bundan

Kan kan kankardeşler  
Hep beraber bizi yenemezler  
Kan kan kankardeşler

Hep beraber işte sana Cartel

Üç tane harf kan, altı tane harf daha kardeş  
Bu ne demek acaba, küçük bir sözcük  
Ama anlamı büyük  
Ne ateşlere biz körükle yürüdük

Bazen kaybettik bazen kazandık  
Kankardeşimizi yalnız bırakmadık  
Anca beraber kanca beraber  
Arkadaşın çok olur gelirler giderler  
Kankardeşim seni hayatınca severler  
En kötü gününde bile yanında gezerler  
Karşında Cartel, bilmiyorsan eğer sana

Çocuk öğren de gel, uğraşımız rap  
Çünkü pop bize yaramaz  
Sarmaz bize yakışmaz bizi açmaz  
Kurşun gibi sözler deler geçer

Soracaksın kim diye, ben Kerim  
Kabus ilk adım bunu böyle bilin  
Kara kemiklerle bizim Alper  
Seksi 'Kanake'den nefret eder  
Sadece o değil bizim hepimiz  
Birimiz hepimiz, hepimiz birimiz  
Türk, Kürt, Laz ve Çerkez  
Ayrımcılık yaparsak kaybedeceğiz

Uyanmak çok kapısında kahpeler  
Toz pembe bakmasın geleceğe  
Zannettiğin arkadaşlık bu değil  
Daha da öte daha da ileri  
Hep beraber olup kıracağız zincirleri  
Kankardeşlere yakışır bir şekilde  
Eğer hazırsanız şimdi sıra sizde.



As it is apparent from these lyrics of ‘Bloodbrothers’, Cartel tries to unify the German-Turks across the Turkish diaspora in Germany (or rather Europe in general) that is made up of various ethnic groups such as Turk, Kurd, Laz and Circassian. Thus, very similar to the examples of ADF and Fun^Da^Mental in Britain, who also sought to achieve unification through a collective defense against racist prejudices and attacks, this song written by MC Kerim (Cartel) also invites his Turkish “bloodbrothers” to fight against racist attacks and arson. At this point we can also recall the concept of ‘double consciousness’ that Paul Gilroy uses, a term which he incorporates from W.E.B. Du Bois –who is one of the important pioneers of Pan-Africanism. Accordingly, this ‘double consciousness’ emerges from being neither totally assimilated to the new culture, nor being able to preserve the old folkways.<sup>44</sup> In this sense, as was emphasized previously, hip-hop groups like Cartel also reflect this aspect of not being totally absorbed within none of either two cultures, as they are *Auslander* (foreigner) in Germany and *Almanci* (German-like) in Turkey. As a consequence, one can also “feel” the anger that is inherent in the lyrics, which is an anger, one might say, directed towards racism and discrimination in the host country, and the other in terms of identity politics, that is, an anger towards not being totally assimilated in both cultures. Nevertheless, this situation of not being assimilated in both cultures should not be seen as standing in the midst of ‘emptiness’, or being ‘devoid of consciousness’, because just the opposite, as I again mentioned before, this is a position that they are strongly against. Accordingly, as Fernando Jr. denotes, “rap is essentially rebel music, made by people who have been

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<sup>44</sup> Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Culture* (London & New York: Serpent’s Tail, 1993), p. 121

cast as an outsider.”<sup>45</sup> Now again to complement my argumentation, let me briefly analyze another Turkish hip-hop group in Germany, that is, *Islamic Force*.

Formed in 1986, Islamic Force is composed of members from mixed descent: *MC Boe-B* (male, Turkish), who writes the lyrics and rap; *Killa Hakan* (male, Turkish) who does the vocals; *DJ Derezon* (male, German mother, Spanish father) who is the technical expert; and *Nelie* (female, German mother, Albanian father) who also does the vocals. They chose the name *Islamic Force* to provoke the German stereotypical image of Islam (a situation very similar to that of the group *Fun^Da^Mental* in the British context). In reality though, the group has nothing to do with radical Islam. However, in order to release their work in Turkey, and to avoid the name *Islamic Force* to be misunderstood by the Turkish audience (as they were aware of how Cartel’s discourse was misinterpreted in their homeland), they later on changed their name to *Kan-Ak*. The reason why they chose this name for their group is a very interesting point, I think, because the word ‘kanake’ is rather an offensive word that is used by the right-wing Germans to identify the “blacks”. Just like how the word ‘nigger’ was changed into ‘nigga’, and was appropriated by the Blacks in the USA accordingly, the same also applies for these Turkish hip-hop youths as well. They converted the negative connotation of the word ‘kanake’ into ‘kan-ak’, which in Turkish also refers to “running blood” (akan kan). For Islamic Force, the transformation of the word ‘kanake’ was also very instructive in the sense that they felt themselves as being “white-niggers” within the German society.\* Moreover, they combine traditional Afro-American drum rhythms

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<sup>45</sup> S.H. Fernando Jr., *The New Beats: Exploring the Music, Culture, and Attitudes of Hip-Hop* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), p. xix

\* As I have mentioned in the fourth chapter, such an appropriation of a pejorative term was also seen in the music genre of ‘Jungle’, for example (which can be exemplified as a blend of techno, dub, ragga and hip-

with Turkish pop and arabesk music, which are fused into the more general sound scheme of hip-hop and rap. This is why their music is also conceived as *oriental rap*. Furthermore, as Kaya very well states, they use *arabesk* as a musical and cultural form to reveal their nostalgia towards “home” and “being there”, as well as they fuse this into hip-hop as they consider it to be a musical and cultural form to represent their attachment to the “undiscovered country of the future.” Or in other words, both *arabesk* and hip-hop portrays the symbolic expression of the dialogue, which the diasporic youth have between “past” and “future”, and between “there” and “here.”<sup>46</sup> This can also be witnessed by observing the lyrics of their song ‘Selamınaleyküm’:

### **Selamınaleyküm**

They arrived in Istanbul from their villages  
And got searched in the German customs  
It is as if they got purchased  
Germans thought that they’d use and kick them off  
But they failed to  
Our people ruined their plans  
Those peasants turned out to be clever  
They worked hard  
Opened a bakery or a doner kebab on each corner  
But they paid a lot for this success  
We are losing life, losing blood  
Homes are on fire, we get mad  
I was chosen to explain these things  
Everybody screams ‘Tell us Boe-B’  
And I am telling our story as hip-hop in Kadıköy

Selamınaleyküm aleyküm selam  
Selamınaleyküm aleyküm selam  
Let’s go on rapping

We tell our experiences

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hop). This term had originated from the words ‘jungle bunny’ and ‘jungle bunny music’, which were used by the “white” racist bouncers on the club scene to describe the “black” DJs, the music they played and the crowd who followed them.

<sup>46</sup> Ayhan Kaya, “Aesthetics of Diaspora: Contemporary Minstrels in Turkish Berlin”, in *Journal of Ethnic and Migrant Studies* 28, no. 1 (2002): p. 52

We present you the news  
We connect our neighborhood and Kadıköy  
We are doing real hip-hop  
And we tell it to you  
You drive with high decibels in the streets in either Benz, or BMW, or Golf, or Audi, or  
whatsoever.  
The police is behind you  
You haven't realized  
You haven't yet looked behind  
...  
And I am telling this story in a far land, Kadıköy.\*

As it can be observed from this song, just like Cartel, on behalf of the working-class  
second and third generation Turkish immigrant youths, there is too a rebellion against  
the elite, which also comprises the Turkish bourgeoisie who have assimilated into the  
German society and culture. Accordingly, this situation is manifested in such words:  
“You drive with high decibels in the streets in either Benz, or BMW, or Golf, or Audi, or  
whatsoever”. What's more, Islamic Force attempts to make a connection between the  
“host” and the “mother” countries, and such an aspect is especially visible, I think, in  
words like: “I am telling our story as hip-hop in Kadıköy” and “We connect our

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**\* Selamnaleyküm**

Köyden İstanbul'a vardılar  
Alman gümrüğünde kontrol altında kaldılar  
Sanki satın alındılar  
kuruyoruz  
Bunları kullanıp kovarız sandılar  
Ama aldandılar  
Bizimkiler onların hesaplarını bozdular  
Köylü dedikleri kafaları kullandılar  
Çalışıp edip koşturdular  
Her köşeye bir fırın ya imbiss kurdular  
Ama bu kadar iyi haberin acısı da var  
Kaybediyoruz can kaybediyoruz kan  
Evler yanıyor bazen deliriyor insan  
Ben bunları anlatmak için seçildim  
Hepsi bağılıyor “Boe-B söyle”  
Ben de hip-hop şeklinde sunuyorum Kadıköy'e  
Selamnaleyküm aleykümselam  
duyuruyor  
Selamnaleyküm aleykümselam  
Müziğimize devam

Burada onları size anlatıyoruz  
Haberlerimizi size evet sunuyoruz  
Bizim semtten Kadıköy'e bir bağlantı  
Harbi hip-hop duyuyoruz  
Buradan size yolluyoruz  
Turlarsın artık sesle mahallelerde  
Altında bir Benz ya da bir BMV, ya da  
Golf, ya da Audi, ya da herhangi  
Ne bileyim, ne bileceksin, polis arkanda  
Takip ediyorlar seni  
Ama sen farkına varmadın daha  
Bakmadın daha  
...  
Ve bunu Boe-B size Kadıköy'e kadar

neighborhood and Kadıköy”. Again, just like Cartel, ADF and Fun^Da^Mental, there is a feeling of outrage towards the “white” Europeans who mistreated their community’s people in the past (and who still do!). Hence, one can again come across the ‘double consciousness’ that is inherent in these Turkish immigrant youths. However a consciousness that is well aware of its roots and, which, by means of hip-hop culture and rap music, tries to create transnational social spaces of existence that is devoid of racism and prejudices (prejudices that is also strengthened by the media). At this point I find it worth quoting from Kaya these words of Erci-E (a member of the Cartel project), as they perfectly, I think, represent the notion of self-defense, and also reflect the question of identity as not being an essentialist, as Hall has suggested, but a strategic and positional one. However, apart from these, such words of Erci-E manifest how the media can also act as a powerful tool in the process of identity formation:

We have always been misrepresented here in the German media. For instance, Turkey represents poverty and Islamic fundamentalism for the German televisions. Turkish children grow up with these images and with a kind of reactionary feeling, which explodes in adolescence. What we can do is to protect ourselves against them... We must change the image of Turkey. *Cartel* was a good example.<sup>47</sup>

So who can still claim that these immigrant youths in Europe, be it the Asians in Britain or Turks in Germany, do not yet have a voice that is opposing and resistive enough? As was stated previously, even though the (cultural) works of these youths may be considered a part of the ‘culture industry’, this does not any more suggest that they lack a site of resistance, contrary to how Adorno would assume in the past. Through their appropriation of a global youth culture and musical sound like hip-hop and rap they tend to disrupt the boundaries of the dominant discourses of the imperial West and its nation-

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<sup>47</sup> Ayhan Kaya, “Aesthetics of Diaspora: Contemporary Minstrels in Turkish Berlin”, in *Journal of Ethnic and Migrant Studies* 28, no. 1 (2002): p. 55

states. That is, by means of the so-called “globalizing” music media and industry they assert their “differences”, which is even so loud as to make the viewers turn off their TV screen!

## CONCLUSION

The rapid technological innovations that took place in the twentieth century have also brought forth profound enhancements in the communication systems, such as fiber optics, which enabled a faster transmission of messages. Besides, this allowed the dissemination and penetration of the transnational flows of media images, which paved the way for an increased awareness of remote and distinct cultures. With the further development of media industries and transnational corporations, the “far-away” cultures were represented to the whole world as “ethnic” or “exotic” and their products as purchasable objects. On the other hand, Western modes of lifestyles, ideas, goods, etc. were all portrayed through the media as innovative and progressive. Although this surely indicates the presence of a cultural hegemony which is intensified by means of global media, this study is yet highly critical of the idea that there is a one-way flow of information and cultural influence, that is, from ‘West-to-the-rest’.

In the “global” arena, cultures, just like economies, come into intense and immediate contact with each other, that is, with each ‘Other’, where the ‘Other’ is not merely ‘out there’, but also within. In this respect, the ‘local’, and localism, in the area of culture, too, has come to occupy a significant role, as in today’s world the ‘struggle for place’ has become one of the main concerns of humanity as a result of urban

regeneration and built environment.<sup>1</sup> This especially holds true for the diasporic identities which have faced oppression, directly or indirectly, by the dominant, discriminatory and imperialist ideologies of the West. Accordingly, in their attempt to cope with exclusionist approaches of the society they dwell, diasporic identities come up with their own peculiar means of struggle and resistance. Music, being one of the most powerful tools for resistance and struggle, thus becomes the diasporic peoples' voice for existence.

Globalization is not only homogenization but it is also a process of proliferation of new spaces, localities, identities, images, etc. which subsist on their continuous intermixture with other particularities. They can however be subversive, as they can be obedient. No more can the 'local' and the 'global' be easily separated, and no more can the local be simply asserted as the domain of 'the silent' in the age of glocalism. The notions of global and local thus become more blurred, and globalization an area of study that is contested. Correspondingly, in terms of music, globalization procreates sounds that are hybrid in character, and these sounds in turn make possible for the emergence of divergent identities. Hip-hop is a manifestation exactly of this situation. Although it was born in the ghettos of Bronx area in the U.S., hip-hop is not a specific African-American product, but a result of the fusion with Caribbean cultures. However, what makes hip-hop culture and music to have both global and local characteristics is its appropriation by various minority youths in other parts of the world, where they adopt and localize hip-hop according to the socio-political situations specific to their places of residence.

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<sup>1</sup> David Morley and Kevin Robins, *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 115-116



Movements like Pan-Africanism have influenced the Black diaspora's sense of self-belonging, and made the Blacks more conscious of their social position. This is also reflected in their music and culture, and it makes them even more resistive, more rebellious. This feature of the Black diaspora is strongly revealed in hip-hop which makes this global youth culture highly attractive for the immigrant youths worldwide for expressing their frustration against racism, discrimination and degradation they face in their host, adopted countries. The Turkish youth in Germany and the South Asian minorities in Britain position themselves against racist acts, racism that is either individually based or institutionalized, via the hip-hop culture and rap music that they incorporate in their musical works. They further articulate their 'differences' by integrating authentic sounds that are characteristic of their own cultures. They cry out their anger and protest against the injustice they encounter in their host countries by employing lyrics that express their oppositional stances. I, therefore, believe that these lyrics can be regarded as narratives that designate perfectly the second and third generation immigrant youths as interlocutors of resistance and defiance.

This study is also critical of conceiving culture and identity as essentialized concepts. As Stuart Hall rightly suggests, identity is a concept that is positional and strategic and not essentialist. It is a question of applying the resources of history, language and culture in the process of 'becoming' rather than being.<sup>2</sup> Culture therefore is the 'practice' of using these resources. In accordance with the fact, these Turkish and South Asian immigrant youths make use of their 'identity' as a strategizing tool against racism and discrimination, and those media images that depict them in

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<sup>2</sup> Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?", in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, eds. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 3-4

negative terms. They moreover work out their identity by utilizing “black” identity that they appropriate through their engagement with hip-hop. By envisioning themselves to be in a similar situation with that of the marginalized Blacks, that is, as second class citizens, as people who are neglected or excluded, and as those who are “colored”, these minority youths exert their identity through their music by employing the notion of blackness, implicitly or explicitly. They construct a ‘collective memory’ that serves as an efficient tool in bringing forth their discrete identities, which can also be clearly seen in the lyrics of their musical works. Thus, as a global youth culture, hip-hop, by means of its music, gives voice to the aggrieved populations as it acts as a powerful means of communication that also stabilizes their identities, and enables them to confront the exclusionist practices of “fortress” Europe with peerless strength and vigor.

The music media and industry, being a part of the ‘culture industry’, operate under the capitalist system and therefore function according to the rules of capitalism. Hence, they too inherently aim to feed their endless, insatiable desire for profit by creating cultural goods for consumption as well as markets where these are attributed a price. Accordingly, MTV, culture industry *par excellence*, produces lifestyles for consumption through its continuous display of images and sounds, hence forwarding at the same time the economic role of merchandizing as it also benefits the music industry by promoting the sales of records, posters, concert tickets, and so forth. To recall Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, they maintained that the culture industry bared the same stamp on every cultural good that was produced, making them all the more similar, where the use value was altogether replaced by the exchange value. For them, this also resulted in the emergence of a mass culture that

was devoid of critical thought as it was completely made homogenous, just like cultural products, by the culture industry. In this respect, they claimed that everything, even culture, was turned into a commodity. Adorno further argued that the last remnants of resistance in part of the cultural products were demolished again by the culture industry in its strive for achieving sameness. In terms of Adorno and Horkheimer, this process of homogenization, although concealed, has been a key feature of the culture industry as the latter is a mechanism of integration in the liberal democratic societies that is also an alternative to that integration attained politically under fascist regimes.

Although some assumptions put forward by such a theory of the culture industry is agreeable in my point of view, this study is yet critical of an ‘all-encompassing’ homogenization. As Andreas Huyssen correctly points out the idea that the function and use of cultural products are entirely determined by corporate intentions, and that the use value is completely replaced by exchange value is unthinkable. This is because if they were commodities through and through and had only exchange value, as Adorno claims it to be, they would not be able to fulfill their function in the processes of ideological reproduction. The moment when the culture industry attempts to incorporate those that deviate from its ideology, or homogenize even social contradictions, can itself become an area of struggle and opposition.<sup>3</sup> Despite the fact that there is homogenization and reification to a certain extent, in this thesis I suggest that the culture industry cannot subdue every indicative of opposition, resistance and subversion that may be inherent in the cultural works of “disruptive” diasporic peoples. The musical works of Turkish and South Asian immigrant youths

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<sup>3</sup> Andreas Huyssen, “Adorno in Reverse: From Hollywood to Richard Wagner”, in *New German Critique*, no. 29 (1983): p. 15

represent precisely this point of struggle and subversion of the culture industry that Adorno ignores. Being so forceful in its lyrics and so persevering in revealing the inequalities that they face in their host countries make the music of these minority youths a representative of resistance. Through their appropriation of a global youth culture and musical sound like hip-hop and rap they demand justness and agitate for a unity among the aggrieved diasporic peoples. By means of the so-called “globalizing” music media and industry they expose their identities, their ‘differences’, which thus makes their voice louder as it enables them to be heard on a larger scale, that is, worldwide.

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