

CRITICAL HIP-HOP ILL-LITERACIES:
RE-MIXING CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND
THE POLITICS OF BOUNDARIES IN EDUCATION

AWAD IBRAHIM

University of Ottawa

In order for music to free itself, it will have to pass over to the other side — there where territories tremble, where the structures collapse, where the ethos gets mixed up, where a powerful song of the earth is unleashed, the great ritornelles that transmutes all the airs it carries away and makes return.

– Gilles Deleuze (1993, p. 104)

[Ill-literacy] draws on the ubiquitous Hip Hop practice of semantic inversion..., whereby “standard” negative meanings attached to words are inverted to produce positive ones, to highlight the irony of youth described by educational institutions as “semi-literate” ... or “illiterate” ... The ill in ill-literacies refers not to a “lack of literacy” but to the presence of skilled literacies.

– Samy Alim (2011, p. 121)

To be invited is to be at the mercy of the host, who in this case is most generous. The invitation is especially beautiful when the topic involves music. I address you graciously invited by Molly Quinn, Jim Jupp and Peter Appelbaum, whose invitation came with no strings attached other than, “talk about and present something you are currently working on, writing and thinking about.” Keeping the theme of the conference in mind, and having been to a few of AAACS gatherings, I want to ask: where are the youth, especially the marginalized in our thinking as curriculum theorists? After Ferguson, New York, Los Angeles, South Carolina, and Maryland where Black people are murdered without any consideration to their humanity, where are the dispossessed, particularly young people in our current

conceptualization of curriculum theory? I know we care, but do we know what is happening with the cartography of their identities? And for my interest in this talk, do we know what 'language' (in a broad sense) young people are speaking and making use of, especially in the face of death? Do we know how they communicate with each other? Are they doing what we are doing right now in this conference: forcing everyone to speak in English? Or are they speaking their own languages (in the plural)? In a time of hyper-modernity, hyper-communication, hyper-consumption, and super-migration (of people and ideas), where all is available at the click of a mouse (of course, if you can afford a computer, a mouse and Internet), where are the boundaries of education? Are there boundaries any more or are we in a moment of *éducation sans frontières* or education without borders (Ibrahim, 2007)? Throughout my presentation, I am raising more questions than I am offering answers, but I hope we can think collectively about these questions over the days of the conference. I have to forewarn my gentle reader (as W. E. Du Bois would have called you) that this text came out of an oral presentation where I was using prezi, visual aids and lots of youtube video clips. As well, I beg your forgiveness if some parts of the text require prior knowledge and some parts may read as fragmentary. These were explained orally, but because of time constrain, I decided to cite them even if sometimes they may disrupt the flow of the text.

I am using Hip-Hop as my area of research and interest and as a starting point to think about the link between educational literacy, youth and the boundaries of education. Before I begin, however, I want to make a substantial claim: that young people are not waiting for us to decide whether this link exists or how it might look. They doin' their own ding: making sense of their local realities and using Hip-Hop, among other things, as a space and a language of critique as much as a language of hope. Youth are becoming our cultural (if not curriculum) theorists (a notion I explained thoroughly elsewhere, see Ibrahim, 2016). I want to put it provocatively here: increasingly we-curriculum theorists are playing catch up (if not becoming irrelevant?). I am asking us to become relevant again for the sake of our kids. To do so, I am strategically essentializing Hip-Hop as my point of departure into curriculum theory as it thinks about youth identities, literacy and the boundaries of education. Using four Hip-Hop examples from across the globe to 'think through' (Derrida, 2000) how young people are translating the global locally, and how they are making use of Hip-Hop to express their local realities, I want to make four arguments. 1) That the Arab Spring Revolution was ignited by a Hip-Hop song, *Head of the State*, by the Tunisian Hip-hopper Hamada Ben Amor, aka El Général.¹ 2) That, in Brazil, Hip-Hop single handedly brought the question of race and

racialization (not to say racial inequality and racism) at the center of public discourse.² 3) That the Japanese language had no rhymes; however, Hip-Hop was so influential in Japan that it introduced rhymes into the Japanese language.⁴ 4) That, similar to Brazil where race was a taboo to talk about, in Hong Kong the Cantonese language was also a taboo to speak. But, thanks to Hip-Hop, Cantonese, which used to be allied specifically with working class and poor, is now a mainstream language and accepted by most people in Hong Kong. These four examples will then be used as a backdrop to illustrate the power of Hip-Hop(pers); Hip-Hoppers creativity in localizing and indigenizing the global; and Hip-Hoppers ongoing deterritorialization of the State and replacing it with a creative and radically hopeful Global Hip-Hop Nation. I will also use these four examples, in conclusion, to introduce what Alim (2011) calls 'Critical Hip-Hop Ill-Literacies.'

The Hip-Hop that Ignited the Arab Revolution

Josh Asen (2011) titled his article on the same topic: *The Rap that Sparked A Revolution: El Général (Tunisia)*, whose title inspired the title for this section. I am using 'ignite' and 'spark' purposefully. Hip-Hop is not a political movement or party, it is an artistic expression. In this sense, it revolutionizes and makes people think and hence 'ignite' and 'spark' their desire for change. The Hip-Hopper in question, El Général, did exactly that. In December 2010, then a relatively unknown Hip-Hopper whose songs were strictly underground, quietly released a track, *Rais lebled* or *Mr. President*, along with a simple video, on his Facebook site. No bling, no special production but a raw and angry track/video addressed directly to then President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali. Within days, it had gone viral and was on the lips of so many as people defiantly went on the streets in the face of death (Asen, 2011). It was one man, one mic and a revolutionary message: "Mr President ... people have become like animals ... We are living like dogs." It was a bold move on El Général's part, one that landed him in jail and detention for three days and was not released until he was forced to sign a statement to no longer make any political songs. As with all dictators, they bring it on themselves. In imprisoning El Général, not only did he become well known to all in Tunisia and internationally, but *Rais Lebled* became the anthem of the 'Jasmine Revolution,' as it was known in Tunisia (Wright, 2011). El Général was only 21 years old.

So, when Mohammed Bouaziz, the Tunisian street vendor who set himself on fire on December 17, 2010 after police confiscated his vegetable cart, it was *Rais Lebled* that was on people's lips.

*Mr. President, today I am speaking in name of myself and of all the people
who are suffering in 2011, there are still people dying of hunger
who want to work to survive, but their voice was not heard
get off into the street and see, people have become like animals ...
You know these are words that make your eyes weep
as a father does not want to hurt his children
then this is a message from one of your children
who is telling of his suffering
we are living like dogs
half of the people living in filth
and drank from a cup of suffering⁵*

The desperation that Bouazizzi had expressed through his act of self-immolation caught on, literally, and spread across the country, into Algeria, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, and now Syria. So, when Egypt revolution erupted in Tahrir Square a month later after Tunisia in January 25, 2011, what one could hear was not the normal: Koran recitation, national anthem, “regular” poetry and so on but El Général’s Rais Leblad. It was the image of Bouazizzi’s self-immolation that was burned in people’s imagination and it was El Général Hip-Hop song Rais Leblad that was on people’s tongues first in Egypt, then Yemen, then Bahrain, then Libya and now in Syria (Wright, 2011). Bobby Ghosh (2011)⁶ of Time Magazine tells us about how Rais Leblad was taken up in Bahrain. Picture this:

At 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 15 [2011], as thousands of people gathered to protest against their ruler at a busy intersection in Manama, the capital of the small island nation of Bahrain, you could just about hear over the general hubbub the anthem of the young people who have shaken regimes from North Africa to the Arabian Gulf... A reedy female voice shouted out, several times, the first line of "Rais Lebled," a song written by the Tunisian rapper known as El Général. "Mr. President, your people are dying," the woman sang. Then others joined in. "Mr. President, your people are dying/ People are eating rubbish/ Look at what is happening/ Miseries everywhere, Mr. President/ I talk with no fear/ Although I know I will get only trouble/ I see injustice everywhere (n.p.).

Ghosh goes on, “Bahrain, as it happens, doesn't have a President; it's ruled by a King, Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa. No matter. The protesters in Bahrain knew that

"Rais Lebled" was the battle hymn of the Jasmine Revolution that brought down Tunisia's dictator, Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, and that it was then adopted by the demonstrators in Cairo's Tahrir Square who toppled Hosni Mubarak. Now it had come to Bahrain, as rage against poverty and oppression swept the Arab world from west to east. It isn't just songs that are being copied," Ghosh explains, "in a nod to the Egyptians, organizers in several countries have dubbed their demonstrations Days of Rage, and the popular Tunisian chant, "The people want the regime to fall," has been taken up by protesters from Algeria to Yemen" (n.p.). A Hip-Hop song, it seems, can spark and ignite a revolution and El Général's Rais Leblad is a case in point. A Hip-Hop song, it seems, can be a perfect illustration of how the global is localized and indigenized. In doing so, it does away with boundaries; the question of the nation and its boundaries in a time of hyper-media and hyper-communication is no longer relevant. Boundaries are certainly relevant for politicians, but not for Hip-Hoppers whose poetic intervention is making Hip-Hop belong as to the Tunisian Jasmine Revolution, Cairo's Tahrir Square and the current Syrian struggle for human dignity as it does to African Americans and other marginalized communities in North America. Hip-Hop therefore moves the Nation into Global Nation, thus creating what Alim, Ibrahim and Pennycook (2009) and Ibrahim (2012) call Global Hip-Hop Nation (GHHN). This is a semiotic, boundary-less, and arts-based Nation that has its own 'language' and ways of speaking, including the spoken word, the body, the dance, the gesture, the music, graffiti, and all forms of linguistic and extra-linguistic expressions. These complex semiological languages allow the French to speak to the Americans, Venezuelans to Finnish, and Japanese to Brazilians in ways that we are yet to fully understand; hence this talk/article.

Conversational Sampling and the Gueto in Brazil

Recently, Jennifer Roth-Gordon (2009) provided strong explanation for how, on the one hand, Hip-Hop was localized and made Brazilian and, on the other, how in the process it has become the voice of the favelas (shantytowns in the outskirts of big cities). For Roth-Gordon, the first membership or entrance of Brazil into the GHHN began with the incredible success of the Sao Paulo based group Racionais MC's, especially their album *Sobrevivendo no Inferno* (Surviving in Hell) in the late 1990s. That was, for her, the ignition for the booming of Hip-Hop culture in the favela, namely, as she explained them: the large murals and graffiti depicting album covers and song lyrics; US sports teams and reference to especially New York, and fans taking on nicknames of popular rappers. "Though most Brazilian rappers and rap fans have limited access to English," Roth-Gordon shows, "this infusion of Hip Hop

culture relied heavily on ideas and images of the United States (i.e., familiarity with the 'code' of the GHHN). Taking inspiration from groups such as Public Enemy and KRS-One, politically conscious Brazilian rap focuses on the daily realities of Brazil's social and geographic periphery, highlighting the transnational similarities between situations of social inequality, crime, drug use, police brutality, and racism. They perform," she continues, "the aggressive and confrontational style of conscious rap and attract attention in particular for embracing U.S. ideas of structural violence (including institutional racism) and a Black-White racial dichotomy, as these themes directly contradict Brazilian ideals of racial democracy" (pp. 63-64).

Roth-Gordon (2009) made use of Halifu Osumare's (2007) notion of 'connective marginalities,' one where Hip Hop becomes a Global Hip-Hop Nation by resonating with young people across the globe in four main fields: culture, social class, historical oppression, and youth rebellion. Rapping about these four issues and fields, Roth-Gordon concludes, youth thus actively and consciously create connections between Brazil and the United States, especially the African American experience of marginalization and social exclusion and that of the fevala. In doing so, the Brazilian Hip-Hoppers 'traffic' (i.e., metaphorically, artistically and linguistically borrow or talk about) nationally opposed racial ideologies. Race is not a comfortable issue to discuss in Brazil; it is actually a taboo. The imaginary of the nation is a racial democracy; one where all races in Brazil intermingle and mix in ways that do away with racism. However, Hip-Hop groups like Racionais MC's brought the issue of existing racial disparity, discrimination, poverty and White supremacy to the forefront. They did that by naming what they saw as the racial similarities between themselves and the United States. In this sense, for the Brazilian Hip-Hoppers, South Bronx becomes a racialized urban symbolic site of power and social, political and racial inspiration. One may conclude thus: Brazilian Hip-Hoppers localized the global and in the process localized racial politics.

Rhyming the Japanese Language

Natsuko Tsujimura and Stuart Davis (2009) have shown that Japan has one of the most active and diverse Hip-Hop scenes on the planet with widespread popularity among young people. The authors cite Manabe (2006) who noted that 15% of all singles classified as gold or above in the first half of 2005, for example, were rap-oriented and that rap is an integral part of the Japanese music scene. They also cite Condry (2006), whose book, *Hip-Hop Japan*, is still considered one of the main references genealogizing and tracing the beginning of Hip-Hop in Japan. For Condry

(2006), Hip-Hop in Japan(ese) can be traced back to 1980s, especially with the release of the films *Wild Style* and *Breakdance*. The latter film was of particular importance in igniting and launching a good number of breakdance groups. The first produced million-selling rap hits in Japan, Condry (2006) argues, appeared in 1994 and 1995 and the term J-rap was coined to represent this new genre (p. 233).

Against this historical backdrop of Hip-Hop in Japan, Tsujimura and Davis (2009) studied the adaptation of the notion of rhyme in Japanese Hip Hop. Rhyme, rhythm, and word play are defining aspects of Hip-Hop and many studies have shown that Hip-Hoppers use complex and creative multiple rhyme strategies in their lyrics (e.g., Alim, 2003; Lin, 2009). Traditional Japanese poetry, however, Tsujimura and Davis show, has no notion of rhyme. Yet, over the past two decades, since the arrival of Hip-Hop in Japan, they conclude, a 'borrowed' notion of rhyme has become incorporated in many of the lyrics of Japanese Hip-Hop. Studying the Japanese Hip-Hop group, *Dragon Ash*, Tsujimura and Davis (2009) focus on what they call the "poetic of the Japanese language," thus clearly showing the impact of Hip-Hop in introducing rhymes in the Japanese language. At a micro level, the authors illustrate how a foreign notion of rhyme is given a 'local' interpretation within the mechanism of the Japanese language. In doing so, Japanese Hip-Hoppers metamorphosed Hip-Hop in Japan into Japanese Hip-Hop, thus localizing the global and positioning themselves squarely within the GHHN.

Cantonese Hip-Hop in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is one of most vibrant places on earth economically, culturally and, for this chapter, artistically. Despite Hong Kong's cosmopolitan appearance, over 90% of its people are ethnic Chinese, and Cantonese is the mother tongue of the majority (Lin, 2009). However, Lin explains, because of colonialism (Britain ruled Hong Kong till 1997) and the economy (English as the language of global business), English is the privileged language medium of instruction and Cantonese is both perceived and treated as a second rate medium of instruction and allied with the working class population. On the other hand, Angel Lin (2009) shows, the music scene in Hong Kong has been dominated by Cantopop (these are Cantonese pop songs with easy-listening melody and simple lyrics about ordinary working-class people's plight). However, since the 1990s, Cantopop has become monopolized by a few mega music companies in Hong Kong that focus on idol-making. As Chu (2007) contends, this made Cantopop lose its early versatility that had existed in the themes of Cantopop lyrics: about working-class life, about friendship and family relationships, about life

philosophy, etc. It was against this backdrop that Hip-Hop as a music genre became visible in the mainstream music scene in Hong Kong in the mid-1990s, when the local underground band LMF (LazyMuthaFuckaz) suddenly emerged above ground and enjoyed a popular reception for some years with their angry lyrics about the everyday reality of working-class youths in their debut song, “Uk-chyun-jai” (Housing Projects Boys) (Lin, 2009).

Building on LMF success, the two-emcee group, Fama, was able to normalize the Cantonese chou-hau (vulgar speech) by the strong, working class, angry, resistant and defiant stance. For Angel Lin (2009), this was mostly masculine and expressed with a lot of rage. Nonetheless, since the early 1990s, generally speaking, Hip-Hop has not only been able to establish itself as a prominent genre of music in Hong Kong, but has been single handedly responsible for the normalization of the Cantonese chou-hau. This was directly related to the power of Hip-Hop and its creative marginality. One can see, in conclusion, how the global was localized and how Hong Kong was able to take a prominent seat within the GHHN.

Our New Cultural Theorists: Youth and their Critical Ill-Literacies

The nomads invented a war machine in opposition to the State apparatus.

– Deleuze & Guattari (1987, p. 24)

Indeed, the nomads – the new flâneurs as I called them elsewhere (Ibrahim, 2008), Hip-Hoppers continue to deterritorialize the boundaries and the apparatus of the State. From Brazil to Japan and from Hong Kong to Tunisia, the new flâneurs dared to imagine a different world, thus creating a Global Hip-Hop Nation; and my argument has been: we need to pay closer attention to it, particularly from a curriculum, pedagogy and literacy perspective.

So, what do the examples above mean as far as education and literacy are concerned? This means our work is cut out for us as educators and students of curriculum studies. First, we need to be mindful that this mixing, not boundaries and territories, is the norm (not the exception). Second, because this mixing is happening creatively, meticulously and over a long period of time, it is creating its own rules and regulations: what Alim (2011) calls, ‘grammaticalizing.’ The use of the present tense in this last sentence is purposeful. The phenomenon under investigation is a work-in-progress, it is happening right now before our own eyes, and the latest #hiphopishiphop video testifies to this. (Check it out for yourself:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppR7s19c1RY>.) It is significant to note, part of grammaticalizing is the process of what is known in linguistic anthropology as ‘semantic inversion,’ whereby ‘ill’ and ‘sick’ are inverted from their negative sense to mean ‘amazing’ and ‘brilliant.’ “That cat is ill” means “That poet is incredibly skilled or skillful” (Alim, 2011, p. 120). Samy Alim, whose work inspired my own, points out that, while the vast majority of public commentators, including some academics (especially those who see nothing else in education but testing), are quick to point to Hip-Hop culture’s “illiteracy,” Hip-Hop youth are even quicker to point to Hip-Hop’s ill-literacy. They are quick to point to what the Hip-Hop emcee and deejay Jubwa calls the “limited” nature of ‘standard English’ in contrast to the “limitless” Hip-Hop language, especially the creative nature of African American Vernacular English (see also Smitherman, 2000). In schools, the focus can oftentimes be almost exclusively on grammar as opposed to creative, artistic and semiotic production (Alim, 2011).

We need to flip this issshhh⁷ folks! Let us remind ourselves that Hip-Hop makes schools illiterate. Schools misread and most often label some kids as ‘semi-literate’ or even ‘illiterate’ – meaning they lack literacy. Fully discussed in Alim (2011), Critical Hip-Hop Ill-Literacy is introduced precisely to talk back to this notion of ‘lack.’ As a form of critical pedagogy, Critical Hip-Hop Ill-Literacy begins with the premise that literacy is already always in the plural, so it should be: Critical Hip-Hop Ill-Literacies. For Alim (2011), Critical Hip-Hop Ill-Literacies are deployed to dismantle the idea that being literate can only be defined in relation to certain dominant forms of literacy (reading and writing of dominant forms). Critical Hip-Hop Ill-Literacies, Alim explains, point to the fact that schools misread cultural gaps as achievement gaps. In the U.S., for example, the so-called school achievement gap between majoritarian and minoritarian students is not about achievement gap, it is about cultural gap. In most cases, schools are not able to take into account students’ lived experiences and identities in an era of culturally and linguistically complex classrooms.

Very significant to note: I may be wordplaying here with ill-literacy, which is a common feature in Hip-Hop. But, I am also asking us to think about youth and how they negotiate their ever-changing, unstable and fluid identities and realities (as we saw in the four examples above). In this sense, ILL is presented not just as meaning “skilled” or “talented,” but as referring to the three major components of literacy put forth with ill-literacy studies: Literacy must be Intimate, Lived, and Liberatory (Alim, 2011, p. 123). As a liberatory practice, Critical Hip-Hop Ill-Literacies seek to

name the world (as is the case with El-Général). For far too long, we have asked our students to 'read' the world; and to make sure they read the world, we test them. It is high time we ask them to name the world. Only in naming the world, using ill-literacies, are we able to say we are living, especially that we are living in the world. If we follow or live in the world as named by others, we are just that: followers. In following others' path, we become dispossessed (in all senses of the word). In introducing Critical Hip-Hop Ill-Literacies here, my hope is that students would be able to recognize themselves in an educational context; to name their own world; and when they do, they would no longer be just followers or consumers of knowledge, but producers and possessors of knowledge.

Most teachers, unfortunately, are fearful of touching Hip-Hop and its Critical Ill-Literacies because, "Oh well, I don't know much about Hip-Hop!" and "I don't teach Hip-Hop because I don't know it." Did you not hear that before? It is true that we cannot teach what we do not know, but for Alim (2011), this is "remain[ing] wholly, even happily, ignorant of their students' capabilities" (p. 134). This ambivalence, indifference and ignorance cannot continue without serious detriments to our kids, especially the marginalized: those who are desperately needing us as teacher to make use of ill-literacies. We need to remember the intent here is to go beyond the gimmick approach to using Hip-Hop Culture in the schools, and to genuinely teach Hip-Hop in its own right. Put otherwise, if we want to change the world, it seems, we should change its metaphors, and working with literacies that are intimate, lived and liberatory is definitely a good start. I am not suggesting talking about students' culture. The intent is to flip that and talk about students' lives (and identities). Only then does life become worth living. Only then do the dispossessed own their own voice, their own lives, and themselves. Only then does the politics of recognition become possible. In this youtube video (below), the sixteen year old Obasi Davis sums up all my arguments for why I am calling (along with Alim) for Critical Hip-Hop Ill-Literacies, why we need to pay closer attention to Hip-Hop and its global impact on youth identities and politics, and why I am calling Hip-Hoppers our new cultural and curriculum theorists. Yep, it's high time we move from literacy to ill-literacies: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myhuAaVwzZ8>. WORD!

My message is to ask people to reflect, to use their brains to think and their hearts to feel.

- Hong Kong Hip-Hopper, MC Yan (cited in Lin, 2009, p. 137).

References

- Alim, S. (2003). On some serious next millennium rap ish: Pharoah monch, hip hop poetics and the internal rhymes of internal affairs. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 31, 60-84
- Alim, S. (2011). Global ill-literacies Hip Hop cultures, youth identities, and the politics of literacy. *Review of Research in Education* 35(11): 120-146.
- Alim, S., Ibrahim, A. and Pennycook, A. (2009). *Global linguistic flows: Hip-Hop cultures, youth identities, and the politics of language*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Anthems for a new generation: <http://newanthems.blogspot.ca/2011/01/rayes-lebled-hamada-ben-amor-el-general.html>.
- Asen, J. (2011). The rap that sparked a revolution: El General (Tunisia). In <http://hiphopdiplomacy.org/2011/01/31/the-rap-that-sparked-a-revolution-el-general-tunisia/>. Retrieved July 20, 2013.
- Chu, Y. (2007). Before and after the fall: Mapping Hong Kong Cantopop in the global era. Paper presented at the Internal Conference on Inter-Asia Culture: Desire, Dialogue and Democracy. Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong.
- Condry, I. (2006). *Hip-Hop Japan: Rap and the paths of cultural globalization*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Deleuz, G. (1993). *Essays critical and clinical*. London: Verso.
- Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1987). *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London: Continuum.
- Derrida, J. (2000) *Of Hospitality*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- Ghosh, B. (2011). Rage, rap and revolution: Inside the Arab youth quake. In <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2050022,00.html#ixzz2ZuRiI599>. Retrieved July 10, 2013.
- Ibrahim, A. (2007) Linking Marxism, globalization and citizenship education: Toward a comparative and critical pedagogy post-9/11. *Educational Theory*, 57(1), 89-103.
- Ibrahim, A. (2008). The new flâneur: Subaltern cultural studies, African youth in Canada, and the semiology of in-betweenness. *Cultural Studies* 22(2), 234-253.
- Ibrahim, A. (2012). Global Hip-Hop Nation Language: A (Semiotic) Review of Languages of Global Hip Hop. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 16(4), 547-552.
- Ibrahim, A. (2016). Youth: Our New Cultural Theorists. *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures* 7: 5-9.

- Kimball, S. (2014). Rapping the Arab Spring. In <http://hiphopdiplomacy.org/2014/01/14/rapping-the-arab-spring/>. Retrieved January 23, 2016.
- Lin, A. (2009). "Respect for da chopstick Hip-Hop": The politics, poetics, and pedagogy of Cantonese verbal art in Hong Kong. In Alim, S., Ibrahim, A. and Pennycook, A. (Eds.) *Global linguistic flows: Hip-Hop cultures, youth identities, and the politics of language* (pp. 159-178). London & New York: Routledge.
- Manabe, N. (2006). *Globalization and Japanese creativity: Adaptations of Japanese language to rap*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Osumare, H. (2007). *The africanist aesthetic in global Hip-Hop: Power moves*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Roth-Gordon, J. (2009). Conversational sampling, race trafficking, and the invocation of the Gueto in Brazilian hip hop. In Alim, S., Ibrahim, A. and Pennycook, A. (Eds.) *Global linguistic flows: Hip-Hop cultures, youth identities, and the politics of language* (pp. 41-55). London & New York: Routledge.
- Smitherman G. (2000). *Talkin that talk: Language, culture, and education in African America*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Tsujimura, N. & Davis, S. (2009). Rhyme and the reinterpretation of hip hop in Japan. In Alim, S., Ibrahim, A. and Pennycook, A. (Eds.) *Global linguistic flows: Hip-Hop cultures, youth identities, and the politics of language* (pp. 157-171). London & New York: Routledge.
- Wright, R. (2011). *Rock the Casbah: Rage and rebellion across the Islamic world*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Notes

¹ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IeGIJ7OouR0&feature=related>.

² See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjRhU5owRV0&feature=related>.

³ See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKggyX_BehA&feature=related.

⁴ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrYlBjQ48BY&feature=related>.

⁵ This is a hybrid English lyric translation drawn from different sources including Youtube, Time Magazine, Newanthem blog, and Kimball (2014) in Hiphopdiplomacy blog (see reference section).

⁶ <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2050022,00.html#ixzz2ZuRiI599>.

⁷ This is a creative and wordplay that Hip-Hoppers do when using what is socially perceived as vulgar language. 'issshhh' (pronounced as ish, with stress and prolongation on the 'sh') means 'shit'.

A Modest List of Hip-Hop Resources for Teachers

- Alim, S. (2010). *Rock the mic right: The language of Hip-Hop culture*. New York: Routledge. (A brilliant analysis of what Alim calls Global Hip-Hop Nation Language; talking about Hip-Hop, its language(s) and how Hip-Hop is used locally and linguistically indigenized in different parts of the world).
- Chang, J. (2005). *Can't stop, won't stop: A history of hip-hop*. New York: St. Martin's Press. (This is a thorough and a key reference to the history of Hip-Hop from its inception up to 2005. See also, MTV's documentary by a similar title, *And you don't stop: 30 years of Hip-Hop*: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0426645/>)
- Edwards, P. (2015). *The Concise Guide to Hip-Hop Music: A Fresh Look at the Art of Hip-Hop, from Old-School Beats to Freestyle Rap*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin (An excellent look into both history and contemporary artistic expressions of Hip-Hop).
- Forman, F. & Neal, M. (2004). *That's the joint! The hip-hop studies reader*. New York: Routledge. (A comprehensive reader for Hip-Hop studies).
- http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/what-is-hip-hop.shtml (This is a concrete idea for a grade 6-12 lesson plan).
- http://www.ithaca.edu/wise/hip_hop/ (This is by far, one of the most comprehensive and useful websites that addresses historical, pedagogical and musical resources that teachers will find useful).
- Nelson, G. (2005). *Hip-Hop America* (2nd ed.). St. Louis, Missouri: Penguin Books. (A simplified and accessible analysis of the politics of Hip-Hop).
- Perry, I. (2004). *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop*, Duke University Press. (A simplified and accessible analysis of the poetics of Hip-Hop).

For the uninitiated, the following **keywords** will be useful in their search: Hip-Hop, Hip-Hop Culture, Hip-Hop Language, Hip-Hop Pedagogy, Hip-Hop Dance/B-Boying and B-Girling, Graffiti, Hip-Hop Music/DJ-ing, Hip-Hop Fashion/Style, Rapping, Spoken Word.