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Reading rebellion: Hip Hop graffiti art as a public literacy text : The case of mak1one, Cape Town, South Africa

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RESISTANCE AND CONTROL THROUGH IMAGES

The literature review is organised into three main sections. It begins by defining graffiti and reflecting on the historical rationale behind its creation. The literature pays special attention to understanding how and why graffiti is employed as a tool of organised visual dissent.

Developing this argument the study turns attention to the role that sub-cultures can play in unsettling and disrupting hegemony. Hip Hop culture is then contextualised as a contemporary sub-culture that is motivated by an ideology of Black Consciousness and Black Power thinking. This is followed by a short critique of the inconsistencies within the culture. Following on from this, Hip Hop graffiti art is analysed as a cultural product of this sub-culture. Attention is paid to the specificity of Hip Hop graffiti art in a discussion that outlines its basic forms and signature aesthetic and practical elements.

The research then focuses on building an understanding of the control environment in which the empirical object under review is produced. The 2010 Graffiti By-law is analysed in the context of the concept of moral panic and the aesthetics of control. It is also globally located within an international debate about control of urban spaces.

This gives way to a conversation about the historical context of Cape Town that illuminates the processes that contributed to a dominant, hegemonic aesthetic construction of Cape Town. The construction of the image of Cape Town is shown to support a colonial imagination of the city as an elite European holiday playground. This ideological position has had material implications which have left the city divided along intersecting spatial, racial, economic, social and political lines. Black youth who live in the city are shown to be physically and socially alienated from the dominant narrative of Cape Town. The literature review ends by showing the ways in which Hip Hop and Hip Hop graffiti art responds to this exclusion and engenders an audacious agency among these same youth.

THE WALLS AS THE PAPER OF THE PEOPLE

The word ‘graffiti’ derives from the descriptive Italian *sgrafiarre* which means ‘to scratch’ and the Greek *graphein*, which means ‘to write’. Thus, at the most descriptive level, graffiti refers to any marks or writing made on public walls. Technical definitions of graffiti have however given way to legal ones and the Dictionary of Art, defines graffiti as a – “Term applied to an arrangement of institutional illicit marks. This illegal expression constitutes vandalism to the larger society” (Phillips 1999 in Ouzman; 2010: 191). Following on from this legal definition of graffiti, Anthropologist and Archaeologist Sven Ouzman (2010) asserts that both illegality and risk are foundational elements of graffiti. He asserts that for the artefact to be correctly termed “graffiti” it needs to embody “an iconoclasm, radicality and – above all – resistance that marks it as ‘graffiti’ rather than ‘rock art’, vandalism’, or ‘slogan’ (Ouzman; 2010: 197).

RESISTANCE TO DOMINATION

Employing this definition, it becomes clear that the use of walls and wall paintings form part of a long tradition of resistance to domination in Africa and throughout the world (Benavides-Vanegas, 2005). In fact, by this definition, one of earliest incidences of graffiti in South Africa is found in the Swartuggens Mountain Range that forms part of the Cape Fold Belt, north east of Cape Town. This area is the location of the highest concentration of contact period rock art, a distinctive set of rock art imagery that has explicit colonial content (Hall & Mazel, 2005). Unlike other engravings and fine line painting rock art that has a history that spans tens of thousands of years, academics argue the contact period rock art at this site could only have been produced between 1870 and 1885 (Hall & Mazel, 2005). As a result of its isolation, the Swartruggens Mountains provided short-lived sanctuary for marooned slaves who had escaped the controls of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the Cape. The European discovery of diamonds in Kimberley and gold in the Witwatersrand served as a catalyst for large-scale European migration from the Cape into the interior. These discoveries preceded the construction of a railway line and the route through the Swartruggens mountain range was the first road constructed for this voyage. The contact period rock art that accompanies this historical moment explicitly depicts the coloniser and the obliteration of this place of sanctuary through the use of violence. The rock art also parodies the colonial character using the

global convention of representing them with their hands on their hips. Similar indigenous art representations of European colonisers have been found in the Americas and in Australia. (Hall & Mazel, 2005). Onto these images of domination the spiritual guide of the San and Khoe is represented in these drawings in an interceding trance. The trance-state is identifiable by the trails of blood pouring from the shaman's nose (Lewis-Williams, 2011).

These paintings, it has been argued acted as 'hidden transcripts' – political arts of resistance that the subordinated create away from the gaze of power to undermine and subvert the powerful (Hall & Mazel, 2005). Hidden transcripts become powerful references points from which those who lack power in society can imagine a different world view and entrench a self-discourse that empowers them to act against what the dominant hegemony expects of them (Scott, 1990). It can be argued that these depictions of the violence and lack of stature of the colonisers, coupled with the superimposition of the San and Khoe cosmology in the form of the shaman in the rock art, provided ideological support for the cattle raids and violent retaliation that the indigenous unleashed on the colonisers from these mountain ranges (Hall & Mazel, 2005).

A PhD candidate at the Department of Legal Studies at the University of Massachusetts at the time, Farid Samir Benavides-Vanegas begins his analysis of urban protest graffiti created by students at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia by referring to pre-colonial rock art created in Mexico that resisted the powers of the *conquistadores* (2005). Analysing the student graffiti, he argues that by evoking the images of revolutionaries, graffiti acts as a means of resistance to imperialism. With reference to the case of Nicaragua's resistance to American Imperialism, he argues, "Nicaraguans engaged in a revolution of the walls...the mere act of wall painting was conceived as part of the strategies of resistance to an oppressive regime" (Benavides-Vanegas, 2005: 53). Benavides-Vanegas asserts that graffiti can be viewed as a form of subaltern writing that challenges the authoritative character of the written text. He constructs the written text as part of the narrative of domination in Colombia and correlates the use of the written word with the establishment of the law (Benavides-Vanegas, 2005).

Contemporary media scholar Anna Feigenbaum analyses local instances of resistance through graffiti to make a global argument about resistance to globalisation (2010). Feigenbaum draws our attention to the fact that walls, or fences as she terms them, “stand as a mark of the injustices of globalisation” (2010, 119). Walls form the basis of land enclosure and serve to control access and exclude those deemed undesirable. She analyses four sites of ‘globalised fences’ namely the Israel/Palestine separation, the U.S./Mexico border, the walls that enclose immigration detention centers, and the walls that are erected to demarcate temporary sites of “global superpower gatherings” (2010, 119). She argues that citizens appropriate these walls originally conceived of to contain the flow of people and ideas and instead employ them as communicative devices. She asserts, “on this fence-as-canvas one find accusations, calls for compassion, images of suffering and visions of a world that might otherwise be” (Feigenbaum; 2010: 125).

During apartheid, South African liberation fighters followed this international archetype and took to the walls to express their anger and desires (Minty, 2010). Greatly restrained by the untiring censorship of the authoritarian state, writing on walls, while dangerous, presented an opportunity for silenced dissident views to be expressed. Two of the most memorable walls in the South African liberation narrative are the ‘We Won’t Move’ wall created to articulate the defiance of Sophiatown residents in Johannesburg. The second is the ‘Free Mandela’ graffiti written in thick black paint on a vibacrete wall alongside Main Road in Observatory, Cape Town. Surprisingly this wall survived the apartheid regime only to be painted over in the democratic dispensation by the City of Cape Town in accordance with the 2010 Graffiti By-Law.

And so it is that where there are walls, there is resistance. This research, while located in the field of graffiti in general, is specifically committed to the analysis of one form of popular wall writing namely Hip Hop graffiti art. The task of this research is to explore the meaning and motivation in the production and consumption of this text in order to locate the text in the long history of writing on walls. To do so, it is necessary to understand the history and context of the empirical object under review namely Hip Hop culture and the cultural product of Hip Hop graffiti art.

LIBERATION REMAINS A FORBIDDEN SUBJECT[5]

Drawing on literature and theory from Hall and Jefferson (1976), Hebdgie (1979), Scott (1990) and Freirè (1987), this research approached Hip Hop and Hip Hop graffiti art as a sub culture. I begin by clearing the ground by defining sub cultures and outlining their key characteristics.

THEORISING SUB-CULTURES

The maintenance of situations of domination relies on subjugated people to believe in the right of those in power to rule. The consent by the majority of the elite's right to rule is termed hegemony (Hall & Jefferson, 1976). Hegemony is at various moments of history accepted, contested and rejected. One of the organised, collective social units that contest cultural hegemony are called sub-cultures (Hall & Jefferson, 1976). Sub-cultures offer their members an alternative reference point or value system from which to make sense of the oppression they experience. This alternative value system is termed 'noise' as it enables members of the sub culture to create meaning of their situation of oppression that disrupts and contests dominant hegemonic representations (Hebdgie, 1979). Sub cultures also catalyse alternative resource networks that capacitate people to live autonomously in the world (Pieterse, 2009). When discontent, organisation and autonomy heighten and are energised by a shared value system, hegemony is rejected. This action is called rebellion. Rebellion constitutes a direct challenge to the material interests of the powerful (Freirè, 1987).

Mindful of the latent dangers of counter-hegemonic ideas, Algerian born, French philosopher Luis Althusser, a structural Marxist, argued that the dominant class seeks to assure its hegemony through the use of Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) (Miliband; 1977). These ISAs include educational, religious and commercial media institutions. Through the ISAs the ruling elite employ suggestion, persuasion, deceit and eventually violence to maintain privilege (Miliband; 1977). Violence or coercion is always used as a last resort

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[5] This is an extract from the track 'Uhuru' created by Mo'lemi a Hip Hop artist from the North West. The full line taken from the song is , "But my liberation remains a forbidden subject. The history of a people swept under a reconciliatory carpet.

as it represents a crisis in hegemony and as a result a weak state that lacks ideological consensus on its right to rule (Hall & Jefferson, 1976). To conceptually tie-down this notion of a 'ruling elite', this research will utlise the concept of 'Empire' as theorised by Hardt and Negri (2000) in Haupt (2008). Empire is defined as "a descriptive term for a mode of cooperation between former colonial powers; it works on the basis of cultural and economic hegemony without *necessarily* having to rely on the exercise of military force or the coercive mechanisms employed by colonial powers" (Haupt, 2008: xv, original emphasis).

Sub-cultures that gain critical mass are undermined in this way by ISAs (Hall & Jefferson, 1976). Employing suggestive and persuasive tactics, the first line of attack at sub-cultures is co-option. Ideas that are at the core of the movement are compromised for economic incentives. Collective aims are forfeited for personal wealth and privilege (Hall & Jefferson, 1976). The media industry is the key ISA for this line of attack. When a sub-culture resists co-option and continues to openly defy hegemony, violence is employed to quash the movement (Hall & Jefferson, 1976). Violence is legitimised through campaigns geared at eliciting moral panic around the cultural products of the sub-culture. Moral panic is the process whereby political and economic concerns of the elites are recast via ISAs as social problems that affect society as a whole (Hall & Jefferson, 1976). Moral panic provides the ideological justification to label behaviour deviant. Deviancy, essentially an ideological construct, is formalised through the justice system which has the power to criminalise deviant behaviour (Hall & Jefferson, 1976). Criminalisation empowers the state, via the police, to enact violence on deviant bodies.

Currently criminalised by the 2010 Graffiti By-Law, this research observes that the Hip Hop generally and Hip Hop graffiti art, one of its cultural products, can be viewed as a sub-culture enduring an attack of cooption and violence. The 2010 Graffiti By-law outlaws graffiti in it entirety. Only mural art, a term that does not reflect the cultural genealogy of Hip Hop graffiti art is permitted on the condition that permission is requested and granted from the City of Cape Town authorities (City of Cape Town, 2010). Some reflection on this cultural and artistic genealogy will provide further foundation for this analysis.

HIP DEFIANT CULTURAL & ECONOMIC RESISTANCE

This research has designated “Hip Hop graffiti art” as its specific empirical object. To understand what defines and differentiates this form of graffiti from others, it is necessary to first define and historicise its qualifier, Hip Hop. Hip Hop refers to a cultural movement that emerged from black neighbourhoods in New York in the early and mid 1970s (Ferrell; 1995). Hip Hop is defined as a street-based, alternative expression and is typically defined as having five key elements. These elements include DJing which includes perfecting the art of scratching and mixing with vinyl records, emceeing or rapping over the beats played by the DJ, break-dancing, and graffiti art. The fifth element is described as ‘Knowledge of Self’, and “refers to critical consciousness about black history and the roots of racial oppression and exclusion” (Pieterse, 2009: 433). This critical consciousness underlies Hip Hop culture and informs the drive to hone and perfect a self-learnt craft within and in response to the dominant economic and political context (Kitwana, 2004).

During 1970s and 1980s, New York was experiencing an art boom, a period described by art historians as the Pluralist Era (Robins 1985 in Austin; 2010). The period was so described because it is argued that it was characterised by the absence of consensus and authority on issues of aesthetics or practice. Perhaps at the root of this disunity was the economic and social crisis that manifested itself as racial warfare within the United States (Ferrell, 1996). The dominant cultural narrative that characterised the New York art boom was one of art world chic and hedonism exemplified by the “unofficial godfather of neo-expressionist pop art” Andy Warhol who rose to fame during this period (Almiron; 2013:10). Robins records that, assumingly in response to the exclusion and lack of resonance of the dominant account, a number of alternative art movements that were birthed during this period had connections to civil rights and social identity movements (1985 in Austin; 2010). Hip Hop was itself stimulated by the political and cultural agendas of Black Power and the Black Art movement (Almiron; 2013). The culture which was incubated in the black neighbourhoods of New York during the late 1970s and 1980s served then as a grassroots, street expression that named and made meaning out of the economic, social and political deprivation experienced by that community. As a result Hip Hop is a culture imbued with Black Consciousness thinking - “a politics and aesthetics of rage and militant critique of the thinly veiled double standards of mainstream society” (Pieterse;

2010: 441).

It is thus legitimate to argue that Hip Hop culture and the graffiti art that forms a crucial element of the culture, manifested itself at a moment of radical social change and crisis. Because of the interconnectedness of the world, this crisis was globally evident and the culture and the art form spread from the United States to Europe and eventually the world (Pieterse, 2009).

A case can be made for the historical and political similarities between the Bronx in the 1970s and the teargas-filled, petrol-bombed streets of South Africa in the 1980s. Hip-hop culture tracked its way back along the Atlantic Ocean from America to Africa. It arrived in South African in 1982 via movies such as Colors for which Ice T compiled the soundtrack and other media that made its way into the country via clandestine networks (mak1one, 2013). The conscious messages of Black American emcees advocating revolutionary social change connected with a South African generation frustrated by a life of surveillance and limited opportunity (mak1one; 2013). Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town is widely credited as being the birthplace of Hip Hop in South Africa. In the earliest years Hip Hoppers would claim public space in Mitchell's Plain town centre, throw cardboard on the street, play music from a portable radio known as a 'boombox' and breakdance for donations (mak1one; 2013). During this stage of the culture, everyone who participated attempted all elements and it was only later that specialisation into distinct fields of interest would occur. During the 1990s, The Base, a club on Shortmarket Street in the Cape Town's central business district, is fondly remembered for the Saturday afternoon matinees which were central in "constituting a creative community away from the watchful eye of the apartheid state" (Haupt; 2004: 87). The daytime sessions created a reason for black youth from the Cape Flats to enter the white city centre, shifting the visual landscape by their presence and in doing so, reclaiming the space.

Individuals who were talented in drawing and part of the culture began experimenting with Hip Hop graffiti art. During this period Hip Hop graffiti art was almost always created in hidden spaces away from the public eye. This was in part a response to the authoritarian nature of the apartheid government and for fear of being seen as a rival gang member claiming territory. Notably, Hip Hop graffiti artist Falko produced an illegal wall before the 1994 election

encouraging Western Cape voters to vote for the African National Congress (ANC) (mak1one; 2013).

Many Hip Hop graffiti artists at the time "held sympathies for assertive community-based (re)-definitions of identity, centered around notions of 'pride', 'liberation', 'people power' and countercultural movements" (Austin; 2010: 36). The drive for authentic, community-validated notions of self and the struggle to make these visible are considered to be the impetus at the heart of Hip Hop graffiti art (Austin; 2010).

In explaining why Hip Hop resonated so deeply with Cape Town as opposed to other urban centres in the country, some refer to the hybrid nature of the perpetually evolving coloured identity. Hip Hop is said to have offered a productive form of expression to those with few options,

> "Hip-hop gave you a different route if you wanted to be something other than a gangster. The conscious music that came out of hip-hop in the early days was my education. We didn't have any culture to be proud of. You're part of this bastard race and hip-hop comes along and you can be part of it, you can empower yourself to do it and the more you grow, the more the culture grows" (mak1one; 2013).

Black youth in Cape Town, empowered by the post-apartheid relaxation of freedom of movement laws began to test the boundaries of the freedoms that democracy promised. At the same time, they remained critically conscious of the hypocrisies and inconsistencies of the 'New South Africa'. Hip Hop graffiti art saturated the streets of Cape Town's Central Business District (CBD) and townships. So extensive was the spread of Hip Hop graffiti art in the city that Cape Town was the only African city included in the global Hip Hop graffiti art documentary 'Bomb It' (2007). In this film mak1one is interviewed and recognised as a founder of the practice in the city and an artist of world-class stature. Hip Hop graffiti art stood as the visual residue of a generation of youth who irreverently asserted their entitlement to live fully in the city of their birth.

WE WRITE HOW WE LIKE[6]

Hip Hop graffiti art has a number of distinguishing characteristics some of which speak to the practice and others to its look. Hip Hop graffiti art is typically created on public surfaces. These surfaces are defined as public either because they are state owned or walls which are publicly visible (Ferrell; 1996). Graffiti artists rename themselves and in so doing create the space for a creative identity which distinguishes them from their legal self. The letters that constitute these pseudonyms or AKAs are the basis of Hip Hop graffiti art as much of the art form evolves around the perfecting of the stylised lettering of these AKAs. These AKAs often reference personal history and affirm identity traits (Ferrell; 1996).

There are at least four forms that Hip Hop graffiti art assumes. At the base level of the practice, the artist's AKAs are represented as calligraphic signatures known as "tags". As the writer gains skill, experience, and the ability to access walls, these tags transform into 'throw-ups'. These are much larger, stylised, two-dimensional letters. As the name 'throw-up' alludes, these are done quickly (Ferrell; 1996).

The third level of elevation for the graffiti artist is known as 'masterpieces' or more commonly by their abbreviation, 'pieces'. A piece is a highly stylised letterform which is also termed 'Wildstyle'. Pieces are a showcase of all of the elements of Hip Hop graffiti art that the artist has perfected. These elements are the 'outline', the 'fill-in' or decoration, the 'drop shadow', the 'outerline', and the 'highlights'. Graffiti is ultimately about each artist using the same tools and trying to perfect and stylise these to the point that their own unique signature is immediately recognisable. It is also about constantly striving to innovate and re-interpret the basic form (Ferrell; 1996).

The paper will briefly turn to elaborating on each of these elements. The purpose of the outline is to shape the letters while considering balance, placement and size. These letters are then filled-in or decorated. The fill-in allows each artist to express his or her distinctive style or artistic development. Hip Hop graffiti artists all draw from the same pool of decorative

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[6] This heading alludes to the seminal text of Steve Bantu Biko, 'I write what I like'.

visual tropes namely: the star, the bubble, the slice (the dissecting of a letter into a number of ‘slices’) and the arrow. These decorative elements reference the initial era of graffiti and are still used today across the world even though they have evolved and been indigenised. The individual style of a graffiti artist is expressed in how they put this universal pool to work. The next element, the drop shadow, gives dimension and depth to the piece. A well-executed drop shadow raises the piece from the surface and animates it, giving the impression of a floating movement. The outerlines functions to clean and consolidate the piece in the same way that a frame would do for canvas art. It creates a distinction between the wall and the piece itself. It should be noted that the outerline has evolved to the point that it need not necessarily be a “line” but can be a visual motif that creates overall visual harmony. Highlights support the drop shadow and emphasise depth and give the piece a vivid finish. These elements are employed to create two-dimensional or three-dimensional pieces (Ferrell; 1996).

Murals, the fourth and final form, refer to large works of art that contain both lettering and characters. Very often the imagery contained in murals are comments and reflections on the artist themselves, their surroundings, and the message they intend to express through the mural. As the emcees spread messages through their songs, Hip Hop graffiti art as part of a critically conscious culture, also has the responsibility of social commentary and spreading knowledge. The mural incorporates all of these elements with the purpose of allowing the audience to look at the piece and have a certain connection to it. For this purpose, Hip Hop graffiti artists will strive to present characters that their imagined audience can connect to. As with the piece, characters have style and every artist’s character is distinctive. Character references are often taken from a source and characters can give notable insight into the message of the artist. Hip Hop graffiti art is greatly influenced by the other artistic influences that the artist is exposed to. Thus Hip Hop graffiti art today draws influences from the full range of artistic and visual cultures that include graphic design, fine art, printmaking and animation. Murals by their nature require more time, paint, planning and skill. While most Hip Hop graffiti art is a collaborative project, this is even more the case with murals (Ferrell; 1996).

Hip Hop graffiti art is created freehand predominantly using an aerosol spray can. Indeed Hip Hop graffiti art is merited on the level of control and prowess

that the artist is able to yield using this can. Hip Hop graffiti art is therefore judged by the precision of its lines. Straight, smooth lines represent the writer's ability to control nozzle pressure and the spray can and are therefore endorsed. Drips represent inexperience and are viewed as blights on the artwork. As with life however, all rules, once perfected can be set aside. Experienced Hip Hop graffiti artists' employ drips to emphasise the nature of the art form that does not subscribe to notions of perfection as espoused by fine art or design. Viewed in tandem with its emplacement on public walls often in neglected and run-down spaces, Hip Hop graffiti art is concerned with bringing beauty to places that are intentionally deprived, exploited and under resourced. The spray can is emblematic of the art form as it alludes to a culture that while rich in audacity and creativity was poor in technical resources and thus artists' marshaled the implements readily available to make their contribution to society (Ferrell; 1996).

CASH RUINED EVERYTHING AROUND ME (C.R.E.A.M)[7]

Hip Hop culture is not unanimously viewed and expressed from the political paradigm outlined. Following Hall and Jefferson's (1976) model of sub-cultures, when the working class expression of Hip Hop reached critical mass in the 1990s, the ISAs that maintain dominant hegemony struck back and embarked on a campaign to commercialise the cultural expression. During this period 'rap' was extracted from Hip Hop culture as its musical form was simplest to commodify (Kitwana, 2004). Black youth in America were given "unprecedented national and international visibility, at a historical time when images via the 21st century's public square of television, film and the internet are more critical to identity than ever" (Kitwana, 2004: 116). Rap music became associated with crass commercialisation, misogyny and homophobia (Pieterse, 2009).

[7] C.R.E.A.M (Cash Rules Everything Around Me) is a track produced by underground Hip Hop artists Wu Tang Clan in the 1990s. The track was a scathing political-economic critique of the confluence of drugs, violence and the struggle for survival in New York. To quote the track it aimed to "kick the truth to the young black youth". Ironically (or predictably) the sign C.R.E.A.M was later appropriated absent of its political and economic critique in the song by many commercial Hip Pop artists as an endorsement of individual wealth and consumerism. Even more recently in response to this, Joey Bada$$, a new underground and critical emcee, has answered back to this appropriation of critical culture and released the track with the line "Cash Ruined Everything Around Me".

Arguing for Hip Hop's continued political significance, theorist draw the distinction between co-opted commercial Hip Hop, which some term 'Hip Pop' and authentic underground Hip Hop which continues to disrupt and antagonise hegemony (Haupt, 2004, Pieterse, 2009, Kitwana, 2004). Hip Hop graffiti art remains one of the elements of this culture that is most able to maintain is aura of subversion and rebellion (Da Silva-Iddings etal, 2011).

At the same time, Hip Hop graffiti art falls prey to the more general critique that is leveled at sub-cultures which is that they subvert commodities only at the point of consumption and as a result do not destabilise the productive mode (Hall and Jefferson, 1980). Put differently, Haupt makes the point that Hip Hop graffiti art "speaks through commodities" in that the spray can and the nozzles used to create the art are products of capitalist production (2008, 228). This is the case for most counter-hegemonic behaviour within the current context of all encompassing Empire (Haupt, 2008). It is for this reason that Haupt (2008) asserts that actions that attempt to destabalise power within the present monolithic construct will have to do so from within the Empire. From this point of view, Hip Hop graffiti artists can be considered to be 'hacking' the spray cans and nozzles as the subvert them for uses not originally imagined (Haupt, 2008).

Furthermore, it is argued that Hip Hop has become a form of cultural imperialism in itself (Pritchard, 2009). Disseminating from America across the globe, concern is expressed for the way in which hegemonic American culture is viewed as eating away at authentic, indigenous cultures. Studies of Hip Hop in Cape Town show that while American Hip Hop provided the impetus for the birth of the culture in this context, the local expression of the culture is distinctive (Pritchard, 2009). Arguments in favour of viewing Hip Hop as a form of cultural imperialism do not give adequate consideration for individual agency and cultural hybridity as have been expressed in the specific inflection that South African Hip Hoppas have given to the global culture (Pritchard, 2009).

Much more attention can be given to the critiques of Hip Hop culture. An in-depth consideration of these arguments is beyond the scope of this study. This study opts to analyse the cultural products under scrutiny from the political paradigm discussed above.

THE CITY WORKS FOR A FEW[8]

Applying Hall and Jefferson's theory of moral panic (1976) on to the case of Hip Hop graffiti art, Ferrell argues "moral entrepreneurs" extract both political and economic benefits from constructing crimes and then solving them in the minds of the public (1996). With reference to graffiti, a moral panic campaign unfolds in three beats. Firstly the notion of a moral majority that is completely outraged by graffiti is established. This fact is not based on sound research but is rather ideologically constructed. Secondly, the idea that this upsetting behaviour is spreading is introduced. Thirdly, a "folk devil" (Cohen; 2011: 240) is created through the deployment of derogatory images and catch phrases by local politicians and the media (Ferrell, 1996: 136).

These three steps are evident when the Cape Town situation is analysed. Firstly, the 2010 Graffiti By-law is premised on the fact that everyone who visits, lives and works in Cape Town is offended by graffiti as a visual nuisance (City of Cape Town, 2010). Secondly, the City propagates information via the commercial media about the extent of the graffiti problem in Cape Town. Recently the City was celebrated for removing "a million square meters of graffiti" (Williams, 2014). The 'folk devil' in the case of Cape Town is widely constructed as a "gangster marking his territory" or a "vandal" (Williams, 2014).

Furthermore 'zero tolerance policies' and the 'war against graffiti', both part of the discourse in the Cape Town graffiti landscape, are part of a global strategy to respond to graffiti (Iverson; 2010, Austin 2001). This strategy, it is argued, feeds into a growing military urbanism and has involved a "diffusion of military technologies and operational techniques into the realm of urban policy and policing" (Iverson; 2010: 116). Like other wars, the war on graffiti, it is argued, is economically lucrative for those who wage it. This line of argument reinforces the notion of moral entrepreneurs proposed by Hall and Jefferson (1976) and applied to graffiti by Ferrell (1996).

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[8] This is a statement contained in one of the stencils of the clandestine *tokolose* movement that uses politically provocative graffiti applied in highly visible locations to "remind South Africans, young and old that freedom and justice remain elusive unless we are willing to fight for it". This statement subverts the City of Cape Towns slogan, "They City Works for You" to draw attention to the inequity within the City. See: www.tokolosstencils.com

A number of scholars have identified the fact that the zero tolerance criminalisation of graffiti illuminates what has been called an 'aesthetic of authority' or a 'conservative aesthetic' that feeds into a visual hegemony of the urban city (Ferrell; 1996, Iveson; 2010, Austin; 2010). Ferrell postulates "graffiti threatens not only the economic value of private property, and the political control of property and space, but the sense of ordered style, the aesthetic of authority, that is intertwined with them" (1996: 179). He argues that control not only has an economic and political insistences and structures, but that it as a specific look, feel, texture: an aesthetic. Economic and political authorities and some citizens who consent to and/ or benefit from the dominant culture share a general view, which is thought of as 'common sense' for how, a city should look. This appreciation for cleanliness and order is however not common nor shared by all. It is ideological:

> "The appreciation of buildings stripped of unsanctioned notices and posters, of well-landscaped yards cleared of weeds and clutter, of streets swept free of litter (and 'bums') – of cities free of graffiti- is in fact an aesthetic of authority. It embodies an affection for authority, a pleasure in the way property looks when it is under the firm control of its individual, corporate, and governmental owners" (Ferrell, 1996: 180).

Austin grows this argument to assert that social order is held together by cultural agreements about aesthetic issues. He contends that the "hegemonic common sense of public order has, in part, a founding justification in conservative aesthetics – traditions should be maintained or new functional rituals should be institutionalised" (Austin; 2010: 43).

In recent times there has been a shift in how meaning is made about graffiti art. This has seen the introduction of the now ubiquitous use of the term 'street art'. While Hip Hop graffiti art has already been defined, "street art" is considered a public art form that is derived from graffiti (McAuliffe; 2012, Austin; 2010). Street art is said to address the theoretical concern regarding egotistic appropriation of public space. While Hip Hop graffiti art is often not immediately intelligible, street art is said to present a more accessible art form that is not as encoded with conventions associated with graffiti (McAuliffe; 2012). This distinction is often however ungrounded as both street art and Hip

Hop graffiti art are often created illegally and by those who self identify as graffiti artists. McAuliffe (2012) argues that the distinction between the two is a trick of discourse that is politically useful as pressure is placed on postindustrial economies to spurn 'creative cities'. Very often 'street art' is the dominant discourse used by municipal authorities and mass media that "has allowed an embrace and even valorization of the power of 'street art' to activate space, at a time of increasing criminalisation of 'graffiti'" (McAuliffe; 2012: 190). The often-arbitrary distinction between the two has less to do with the content or form of the artwork and more to do with endorsing a regulatory environment at the expense of unregulated, spontaneous creative practices.

The 2010 Graffiti By-Law defines graffiti as a visual nuisance and has outlawed the practice in its entirety (City of Cape Town, 2010). The City began work on the by-law in 2000 and was only able to pass it into law ten years later.[9] At the same time, Cape Town has been defined as a Creative City and in 2014 was celebrated as the World Design Capital (Boysens, 2012). In August 2014, a million square meters of graffiti were removed by the City in favour of "positive art" (Smith in Williams, 2014). JP Smith, mayoral committee member for safety and security explained to the daily print publication, The Times, that the "only criterion for public art in Cape Town was that it be displayed with consent" (in Williams, 2014). The stern regulation of graffiti in Cape Town hints at a political environment that is deeply concerned with its aesthetic reputation. To understand this concern, I will conduct a historical review of how the aesthetic reputation of Cape Town came to be.

[9] This information is based on an interview with the mayoral committee member for safety and security, JP Smith, conducted on 14 June 2013 as part of the Writing Invisibility project commissioned by the African Centre for Migration Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand and the Mail and Guardian. Transcripts and audio recordings of the interviews are available.

THE MOTHER CITY OF A WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN NATION

This paper turns now to a more detailed analysis of the political and social context of the research site, Cape Town. Having presented some of the key historical beacons to the issues facing the city, the paper will propose ways in which Hip Hop graffiti art in general and the work of mak1one specifically responds to these issues.

This paper turns to Zayd Minty's (2006) succinct summary of Cape Town's history to locate the discussion on the political and social context of Cape Town in South Africa:

> "Cape Town is a divided city, where the mark of 342 years of dispossession is as stark on the landscape in 2005 as it was when the country had its first democratic elections in 1994. The struggle over the geography has its earliest roots in the dispossession of the land from the first inhabitants (Khoi and San), first by the Dutch and later the British. Slavery (slaves were brought from Malagassy, Indonesia, Bengal, Angola and Madagascar amongst other places); clashes with Xhosa tribes and attempts to keep them out of the city; the arrival of migrants (as settlers, prospectors, refugees, cheap labour and entrepreneurs); apartheid, forced removals and the liberation struggle are key markers on this creolized city's landscape" (422).

To unpack this history and understand its specific implications for representing and ideologically constructing Cape Town, the paper will use Minty's key historical beacons and moments of social change. These are pre-colonisation, colonisation and slavery, apartheid and post-apartheid. To this I will add the emergence of the "creative city" (Booysens; 2012).

Pre-colonial Cape Town was known as Camissa, the place of sweet water (Young-Jahangeer; 2013). Camissa refers to the systems of rivers and natural springs that run from the foot of Hoerikwagga, the indigenous name for Table Mountain (Bickford-Smith, 2006), to the ocean at the Table Bay harbour (Young-Jahangeer; 2013). This water was one of the major reasons that people settled in and around what is now known as modern Cape Town. During the 16th century the indigenous people of the Cape, the San hunter-

gatherers and the Khoe pastoralists would barter with crews of ships passing between Europe and the East Indies (Bickford-Smith, 2006).

This situation changed dramatically when the VOC, through the use of violence and disingenuousness were able to overcome the indigenous and set-up a refreshment station at the Cape in 1652 (Bickford-Smith, 2006). During this period the Cape became a centre of global trade as well as the administrative capital and military headquarters of the Dutch in Africa. Cape Town also became a strategic key point on the slave route from East Africa to the Americas (Baderoon; 2004). As the Dutch shifted their intentions from using the Cape settlement as part of a commercial empire to one geared towards colonial expansion, violent confrontations with the indigenous people flared (Baderoon; 2004). In 1795 the British seized the Cape from the Dutch. For a number of reasons, not least of which being the sustained rebellion of the slaves and the antagonism between slavery and the industrial capitalist system to which Britain subscribed during the 1800s, slavery was abolished in the Cape in 1830 (Bickford-Smith, 2006). The experience of slavery has had a marked impact on social identities in Cape Town which are quite distinct from the rest of the country. Erasmus & Pieterse (1999) assert, “we know that practice and social relations during slavery engrave themselves deeply into the fabric and tissue of enslaved and non-enslaved communities in various ways, with complex aftermaths” (181).

Two national events would have a large impact on the history of Cape Town. These were the European discovery of diamonds in Kimberley (1870) and of gold on the Witwatersrand (1886). This resulted in the building of railways inland connecting the Cape with the rest of the country. This process was notably accompanied by the systematic, state sanctioned hunting and enslaving of the San and Khoe – an act termed genocide by the 1948 United Nations convention (de Prada-Samper; 2012). The period also saw an increased number of larger and faster mail ships between Britain and the Cape in which passengers would also travel. Following the defeat of the Boer Republics by the British in the South African War fought between 1899 and 1902 over control of gold in the country, the Union of South Africa was formed in 1910. The republics were incorporated into the British colonies of the Cape and Natal and Cape Town was established as the legislative capital (Bickford-Smith, 2006).

It is important to note that infrastructural developments were aided by ideological propositions. From the outset, Cape Town was presented as a luxury international playground for the rich offering them both physical and spiritual rejuvenation (Bickford-Smith, 2009). The development of railway and steamship capacity gave rise to a significant European tourist market. European settlers living in Kimberley and Johannesburg by the 1890s were transported by rail on holiday to Muizenberg and the False Bay coastline (Bickford-Smith; 2009). Indeed Cape Town became a crucial part of the European tourist imagination as luxury hotels like 'The Grand', built in 1894, and the 'Mount Nelson', built in 1899, offered 'suitable' accommodation for British guests lured to it by descriptions of a pristine, spectacular natural environment in a setting that greatly resembled Europe (Bickford-Smith; 2009).

It was in fact during this time that Cape Town would be christened with its most enduring nickname, 'the mother city', a shortening of the full title bestowed on it in 1908 by the Cape Peninsula Publicity Association (CPPA), "the 'mother city' of a White South African Nation" (Bickford-Smith, 2009, 1769). The enduring icon of the city, the view of Table Mountain/ Hoerikwagga from across the Table Bay pre-dates this era slightly. Captured in painted landscape artworks created during the 'Romantic movement' - it represents Cape Town as first seen by European visitors on ships coming into harbour (Bickford-Smith, 2009). Thus Cape Town "became intimately associated in the minds of wealthy (predominantly British) Europeans...with leisurely first-class travel" (Bickford-Smith, 2009: 1768). Black people for the most part were excluded from this narrative and when they were included they were presented as exotic caricatures, either in the form of smiling flower-sellers or enticing 'Malays' (Bickford-Smith, 2009).

Landscape art was further used to reinforce the colonial land-appropriation strategies (Baderoon, 2004 & van Eeden, 2010). Jacob Hendrik Pierneef (1886 -1957) a South African painter of Dutch origin was commissioned to produce 30 large landscape panels for Park Station in Johannesburg which he completed in 1930. These works of art depicted the land along which the railway lines traveled as beautiful, untainted, and most importantly empty of black people (van Eeden, 2010). These paintings were later duplicated as prints and published in a commemorative book. Following this and responding to the changes in print technology, during the 1940s and 1970s the South

African Railways Publicity and Travel Department produced postcards for marketing purposes that depicted white people gazing across South African landscapes emptied of black people (van Eeden; 2010).

During this period “a three-tier economic and social hierarchy” was introduced into the Cape (Bickford-Smith, 2006). These categories were European or White, who included Dutch/ Afrikaans and English speakers, Coloured, people of San and Khoe descent or ‘mixed-race’ descent, and a small group of Natives, predominantly Xhosa-speaking black African labourers from the eastern Cape (Bickford-Smith, 2006). Apartheid legislature which was enacted after 1948 fortified this already distinct social strata. Belinda Bozzoli contends that apartheid through utlising a number of heavily policed national and internal borders sought to control “the movement of people, ideas, and things” (2004; 328). Through national enactments such as the Population Registration Act of 1949 and the Group Areas Act of 1950, racial categories became legislated and access and egress through these borders were determinant on legislated racial categorisation. In addition to the strict control of the physical movement of people, flows of ideas and information were also strictly controlled. The Publications Control Board was responsible for banning books, plays, posters and even t-shirts. Television was banned until 1978 and radio broadcast heavily censored (Bozzoli, 2004).

The transition from colonial rule to the establishment of an apartheid state in 1948 initially had very little impact on how Cape Town was marketed to its internal and global white audiences. Descriptions of Cape Town during this era are described as “apolitical antiquarianism” (Bickford-Smith, 2009: 1772). Cape Town continued to be celebrated as a European enclave of civilisation in Africa and the political history of slavery and current experience of legislated segregation was conveniently omitted (Bickford-Smith, 2009). This skewed writing of history by Anglophone white middle-class Capetonians was reinforced by the propaganda of separate development that the apartheid state disseminated widely in order to appease global unease about the situation in South African (Jolly, 1995).

As state repression intensified however, so did the resistance to the apartheid state. With time, the narrative of a peaceful South Africa and a serene Cape Town began to fray at the edges. Improvements in air travel did not result in

the development of mass tourism as had been expected. Instead, a number of travel writers began disseminating stories specifically about Cape Town during the early 1970s that revealed that “antagonisms seem to be sliding towards catastrophe” (Morris, 2003 in Bickford-Smith, 2009: 1773). This imminent disaster reached boiling point after the June 16 1976 Soweto student uprising spread across the country. Press and television images of youth burning state and commercial property and police firing and killing teenagers were incredibly damaging to the brand collateral that had built Cape Town into a European holiday paradise (Bickford-Smith, 2009).

The level of increased militancy inside South African communities coupled with the international economic pressure that the state was experiencing due to its status as international pariah, resulted in the South African government entering into secret negotiations with the African National Congress via Nelson Mandela (Erasmus & Pieterse, 1999). These talks resulted in a negotiated settlement that did not radically transform the nature of power and the distribution of resources in South Africa (Erasmus & Pieterse, 1999). Instead, a somewhat peaceful and negotiated transition resulted in what was termed South Africa’s first free and fair democratic elections on 27 April 1994 which saw Nelson Mandela under the African National Congress (ANC) elected as the country’s first black president.

Erasmus and Pieterse (1999) argue that it is important to track both the continuities and the changes that mark this historical moment. The big change in post-apartheid era was that there “is no longer a single white supremacist enemy against which to unite in struggle” (Erasmus and Pieterse, 1999: 171). As part of the continuities it is argued that the negotiated transition forfeited the possibility of any meaningful redistribution of power and resources. Furthermore, the new consensus provided legal and constitutional protection for those who had benefited from apartheid and empowered them to extract huge resources either via pensions or other compensations. These resources were, as a result, unavailable for redress and development purposes. In essence the transition it is argued served “to further protect the institutionalised and embedded nature of racialised class power” (Erasmus & Pieterse, 1999: 173).

Coinciding with the political transition, tourism which had struggled to a near

halt in the face of South Africa's poor human rights image during apartheid was re-instated to its colonial stature by images of a free and forgiving Nelson Mandela in 1990, a peaceful election in 1994, and the successful hosting and winning of the Rugby World Cup in 1995. Nelson Mandela donning the Springbok rugby jersey which had during the liberation struggle become an almost universal symbol of all that was despised about South Africa, sent an international message that South Africa was at peace with itself and open for business (Bickford-Smith; 2009). Today, other than an inclusion of tours into townships, the marketing of Cape Town and thus the ideological production of salient images of Cape Town remain very consistent with its colonial identity. Table Mountain as viewed from Table Bay and the 'Mother City' icon and description persist masking vast inequality and the continued privatisation of public property using fear of crime as justification (Bickford-Smith; 2009).

The relaxation of the control of information and censorship laws that accompanied this period (and supported the neo-liberal capitalist agenda) meant that South Africans gained much greater exposure to international cultures. Hip Hop gained far greater support during the early 1990s (Haupt, 2004). Freedom of movement laws had a significant impact and this became the first generation of black South Africans who were not living under legislated segregation. These youth began to make incursions into white enclaves like the Cape Town CBD, sometimes leaving behind graffiti scrawls of their presence (Haupt; 2004).

More recently, Cape Town has begun promoting itself as a 'creative city' (Booysens; 2012). This culminated in Cape Town being declared the World Design Capital in 2014. This locates the City as globally relevant in the latest wave of desirable ideological representations hailing from the Global North (Booysens; 2014). Practically the 'creative city' is meant to respond to the decline in the manufacturing sector in the Cape by placing increased emphasis on knowledge-based industries as the drivers for poverty alleviation, infrastructure development, and strategies for social cohesion and cultural heritage promotion (Booysens, 2012). Despite the rhetoric of inclusivity, the literature suggests that creative urban renewal, like that which is being affected in areas such as Woodstock, Cape Town, do not deliver on their social development promises and can further alienate poor people who lack the skills set and access to formal training to benefit significantly from creative industries in their neighbourhood (Booysens, 2012).

At around the same moment, the City of Cape Town enacted the 2010 Graffiti By-law that outlaws graffiti in its entirety in the City. Only mural art produced with the explicit permission of the City is permitted. It is notable that the City of Cape Town has based its criminalisation of graffiti solely on the assertion that:

> "graffiti affects the quality of life of all residents and visitors, and constitutes a public *nuisance* which damages the image of the City known worldwide for its beauty and makes it a less desirable places to *visit*, live and work in" (City of Cape Town, 2010, emphasis added).

The criminalisation of graffiti is thus based on the fact that it is seen to disrupt a way of seeing Cape Town that the literature argues has been painfully constructed since 1652. The antonym for 'nuisance' is 'pleasure'. As has been shown, Cape Town has visually been constructed as a site of British, European and elite leisure and play. In the 2010 Graffiti By-law, emphasis is placed on the damage done to the reputation of Cape Town in the eyes of the global visitor who is, in the text, placed before those who 'live and work'. Thus while the city is 'creative' it can't be seen to be chaotic or open to unauthorized re-interpretation. Any such acts that threaten the aesthetic of European conquest and control are declared nuisances and criminalised.

This long history of segregation that finds its current expression in the neo-liberal creative city informs a reality where black people are systematically excluded from economic and cultural capital in Cape Town. Hip Hop graffiti art presents a form of response and resistance to this one-sided depiction of an African city.

REMEMBERING & MAKING HISTORY

Hip Hop graffiti art specifically responds to the reality of social and economic exclusion in Cape Town in two interrelated ways. The first is it constructs a "parallel discursive universe" (Haupt; 2004: 87) through the "symbolic registers" (Pieterse; 2010: 441) of graffiti art, rap, break-dancing and DJing. Place specific interventions are the second powerful way in which Hip Hop

graffiti art responds to the challenges presented by the social and political context of Cape Town. When lived and expressed, Hip Hop and all of its elements, insist on access to public space by those who, in the South African context, are structurally excluded by the regulatory mechanisms of Empire (Haupt; 2004). The way in which Hip Hop graffiti art commandeers public surfaces for its expression is the clearest evidence of this insistence. This direct action, unsanctioned and criminalised in the case of Cape Town, transforms the subcultures 'noise' into a tangible process and a tool for transformation (Pieterse; 2010).

Hip Hop graffiti art as an element of the overall Hip Hop culture cultivates a productive rage among those who feel socially, culturally, economically and politically excluded from the hegemonic narrative of neoliberal capitalism. This rage is described as 'productive' because Hip Hoppers are encouraged and indeed expected to identify a craft and work to perfect that craft as they deepen their consciousness. Hip Hop rebels against racial and class injustice by encouraging a culture of critical thinking and historical study that informs an artistic practice that is collaborative and participatory.

It is important to bear in mind that if Hip Hop is to truly contribute to an alternative value system and way of life then in all likelihood it will only be able to do so as part of a "constituent counterpower" (Hardt and Negri in Haupt, xxiii, 2008). That is to say that the power of the subculture lies in its capacity to work cooperatively with various interest groups working towards a similar vision "without compromising their specific needs or concerns" (Haupt, 2008: xxiii).

LARNEY JOU POES (AND PIEL)![10]

The theoretical framework merges two concepts, public literacy and arts of resistance. This is guided by the assertion that situations of oppression create docile people whose rebellious impulse have been eroded by the repeated disappointment of having attempted to evoke change and having failed (Freirè, 1987). Rebellion therefore has to be taught. The theory of the arts of rebellion argues that individuals within oppressed communities are themselves responsible for animating this life-long learning process (Scott, 1990). The pedagogy of rebellion can therefore be found in the arts of resistance that people spontaneously create away from the gaze of power.

TEACHING REBELLION

Radical, Brazilian educationist Paulo Freirè (1987) asserted that literacy entailed the dual capacity to read both "the world and the word". For Freirè, literacy was not a mere series of skills to be taught but rather a social condition that empowers individuals to respond powerfully to the context of oppression and act to change it. Under these circumstances, becoming literate not only implies learning how to read and write but also involves a deep understanding of one's own history within the world. In this paradigm, students became literate when they have a firm understanding of their own histories and the culture of their immediate environment and, when they are "proficient in the dominant culture's literacies so that they can be heard as legitimate voices in institutions of power" (Aguilar, 2000: 5). Freirè asserts that the objective of learning is to trigger the learner's curiosity with regards to true causality within their own lives (Freirè, 1987). Through this awakening

[10] This startling title for the studies' theoretical framework refers to the most heated controversy in the South African Hip Hop public sphere in 2014 and possibly even to date. Larney Jou Poes! is a song released by Dookom, a Hip Hop crew lead by Isaac Mutant, a Hip Hoppa of significant stature who originally hails from Mitchell's Plain. The song and its accompanying video is a ferocious, uncensored critique of the living and working conditions of farm labourers in the Western Cape. Referencing colonial conquest and land theft, in the video Isaac Mutant and actual farm labourers are eventually viewed burning a farm to the ground. The video sparked controversy and AfriForum threatened court action on the grounds that the song and its video constituted incitement to commit violence. Adam Haupt wrote a critical column in the City Press (19 October 2014) that did not undermine the general sentiment of the track but called for continued gender reflexivity within Hip Hop and society, hence the inclusion of '(and Piel)'. On most days, online censorship permitting, the video can be viewed here: http://www.thejournalist.org.za/art/dookoom-stir-larney-jou-poes

learners look with new eyes upon a world that had previously been taken for granted and begin to see as curious that which was previously accepted as normal or natural (Freirè, 1987). Freirè's approach to learning is known in South Africa, Latin America and the Philippines as 'Popular Education' and is guided by the following five principles (Hope & Timmel, 1995).

The aim of education is radical transformation. We live in a state of oppression and inequality. This state is neither natural nor inevitable and therefore can be changed. Change, however, must be based on a vision for a new, more just society. Radical refers to change that tackles the root of the problem. The cause of oppression lies in the values that influence modern western industrial civilisation. This civilisation and its dominant values of greed, radical individualism and profit maximisation, have become globalised. Transformation requires a new value system and learning should involve itself with building this new consensus. The process includes both action and reflection. It is not an individualist academic experience but a collective, participatory process (Hope & Timmel; 1995).

Engage relevant, generative themes. Emotions play a crucial role in transformation as there is a generative link between emotion and motivation to act. Human beings are rendered apathetic and impotent by systematic experiences of attempting to improve their lives and being met with repression and violence. The role of an animator would be to surface and engage with topics that the community feels strongly about. These are termed generative themes as they have the capacity to overcome apathy and tap into the natural, emotive energy present in people (Hope & Timmel; 1995).

We learn through dialogue. Dialogue and discussion are the method of participatory learning that results in transformation. Education is not about a 'person who knows' (or teacher) transferring knowledge to those 'who don't know' (the pupils). People come to learning environments with a wealth of knowledge. Dialogue allows for the learning process to draw in the insights of all who are concerned as a search for solutions is embarked on. True dialogue requires patience, humility, a real belief that something can be learnt from another, openness to new information, a willingness to be challenged, and a deep belief that change is possible (Hope & Timmel; 1995).

Codes pose problems and aid the search for solutions. A code refers to a concrete way of presenting a familiar experience of a core problem. A good code empowers discussion as those who come into contact with it feel as though they have something to say and can make a contribution to solving the problem being faced. Codes take the form of posters, plays, photographs, movies, songs, games and murals. Codes often link feelings to facts and highlight contrasts. The code should serve as a tool to help people locate, as deeply as possible, the root causes of the problem they are facing, challenge them to find solutions, and offer alternatives (Hope & Timmel; 1995). .

Learning is a continual process of reflection and action, or *praxis*. Learning is a lifelong process that should be imagined as a cycle of reflection and action. Once reflection has resulted in action, the experience of having achieved goals allows people to become more ambitious as they develop energy and purpose. Radical change occurs when a community takes the time to reflect on their discontent and contemplate the root causes to their dissatisfaction. The animator creates a situation in which people can stop their daily routine and critically reflect on what they are doing. A code can accelerate this process dramatically. This process of action and evaluative, critical reflection engages people in the process of becoming more fully human. Freirè was deeply interested in *praxis,* the Marxist concept that refers to this union of thought and action (Da Silva-Iddings; 2005). For him the goal of literacy is to provide the understanding, inclination, and expertise for the redistribution of power and income among the oppressed masses.

Education is never neutral. This is a note to both animators and participants. People are conditioned by their life experiences. It is crucial that a person look critically at how their values and judgments have been moulded by their social conditioning. Learning can either be a domesticating process or a liberating on. Domesticating learning trains individuals to obediently fit into the roles required by the dominant culture. Liberating education is critical, creative, free, active and responsible. Facts and information about the world gain true meaning when they are seen as part of a total global reality (Freirè; 1987). He explained: “a true dialectician is always striving to relate one aspect of the world to another, and is always seeking to more deeply explain the object of study by contrasting it with that which it is not” (Freirè in Da Silva-Iddings; 2005, 7).

Having considered how rebellion is learnt, the paper will now analyse how the substance of that rebellion is constituted. Specifically, attention will now be turned to the theory for why arts play an important role in mobilising discontent for social change.

THE ARTS OF RESISTANCE

Inequality creates relationships of domination. As part of a survival strategy to withstand the lived experience of oppression, those who are subordinate publically conduct themselves in line with the hegemonic status quo. James Scott (1990) argues however that the social relations that accompany inequality and privilege result in at least two representations of society.

The lived experience of domination results in the (1) public transcript and the (2) hidden transcript. The public transcript refers to the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate. Scott (1990) argues that it is often in both parties interest to maintain the status quo and as a result, this representation is unlikely to disclose the full nature of the power relations and tensions. The hidden transcript refers to the alternative texts that capture the uncensored interpretation of the subordinate, “those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript” (Scott in Hall & Mazel; 2005: 126). These texts are termed “hidden” as they are created and consumed away from the gaze of power. From this location the dominated are able to parody and ridicule the excesses and mannerisms of the dominant. Through the act of mocking and the depictions of their beliefs, the oppressed reclaim their sense of humour, their humanity and their power (Scott, 1990).

Scott outlines the process by which particular social sites and particular actors come to represent the location and creation of the Hidden Transcript. This he asserts is significant because the elite will continuously attempt to destroy these sites as the oppressed defend and protect them. He puts forward Reactance Theory, a concept that outlines the consequences of forcing social actors to comply with the hegemonic position that results in their oppression. The theory asserts that humans innately desire freedom and autonomy. When this is threatened by the use of force, this leads to a reaction of opposition.

The level of surveillance that allows the powerful to detect dissidents, and the degree to which they are able to act to punish deviance determines the nature of this reaction. The theory contends that in the context of increased surveillance and punishment, the overt agreement will appear to be in tact. At the same time, the level of covert reactance will also be greater (Scott, 1990).

While traditional Marxists are predominantly concerned with the appropriation of surplus as the social site of resistance, the approach Scott puts forward puts greater emphasis on the social experience of indignity, control, humiliation, forced deference and punishment (1990). Scott affirms that the process of dispossession requires structured relations that impose shame on the oppressed (1990). These indignities "become the seedbed of the anger, indignation, frustration and swallowed bile that nurture the Hidden Transcript" (Scott; 1990: 118).

As the oppression continues unabated the process of negation unfurls, through which the oppressed set aside the dominant world view that maintains the status quo and begin to articulate a representation that includes their lived experience (Scott, 1990). Scott (1990) contends that this negation requires an offstage subculture in which it can be clearly articulated. He therefore puts forward that resistance to ideological domination requires a counter-ideology. The hidden transcript, sustained by the humiliation of oppression, begins to then take the form of a self-discourse and begins to express a more lucid and critically conscious rage. With time, this contributes to a process of creating a discourse of dignity, negation and justice.

Scott argues that the Hidden Transcript finds expression in folk tales, dress, language, art and song. He also argues that like folk culture, the Hidden Transcript only exists to the degree that it is practiced, articulated, enacted and disseminated. Importantly Scott makes the point that the transcripts need not be physically hidden if cryptic linguistic codes, dialects and gestures are deployed.

Dick Hebdgie (in Hall and Jefferson, 1987) made a similar point about the evolution of the creole language and its relationship to the mechanics of slavery in Jamaica during 16th Century. In this context, communication among slaves was systematically blocked to sever cultural links to Africa. In fact

during this period, it was illegal to teach slaves English. Slaves as a result had to secretly and illegally evolve a way of communicating. This language was deeply encoded, cryptic, intuitive and oral. The encoding ensured that should the presence of the language become visible, the meaning would remain unintelligible and therefore protected.

When the Hidden Transcript does bleed into the official narrative and competes with the hegemonic purpose, it begins to pose a direct threat to the powerful. Traditionally, the response by the powerful to this it to eradicate the physical sites and erase traces of it from oral history. This is done by rupturing the amoebic channels through which the self-discourse flows. Scott argues the constant displacement and forced removal of people and communities remains a powerful tool for this (1990).

READING REBELLION

The research paper takes a qualitative exploratory approach. The method that is utilised is Critical Discourse Analysis, with the sub-method used to analyse the content of the Hip Hop graffiti art visuals being semiotic analysis.

APPROACH: QUALITATIVE EXPLORATORY APPROACH

The reason for this research adopting a qualitative exploratory approach was motivated by the fact that no prior research can be found in the literature with a similar research aim. The research aim of this project is novel and therefore still requires in-depth analysis of the phenomenon at hand, namely the messages contained in Hip-Hop graffiti art in African cities to understand if these can be viewed as a tool for informal education. As highlighted in Ghauri and Grønhaug, qualitative research is necessary when the issue at hand is still unstructured and needs in-depth analysis to understand the situation or phenomena taking place (2005). Qualitative research is also appropriate when the aim is to understand a certain human action or behaviour.

METHOD: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The method of research to be employed is ‘Critical Discourse Analysis’ (CDA) This is so because my research is guided above all by the assumption that visual texts cannot be interpreted without identifying the historical, cultural and political context and processes within which they were produced and received. Fairclough’s model of CDA (1989, 1995) has been chosen because it has three interdependent analytical tools at the heart of which is the physical text. Thus Fairclough’s model is favoured because of the dual emphasis that it places on textual analysis and socio-historical context (1995).

Utilising Fairclough’s method first requires a review of his understanding of discourse. Fairclough defined discourse as a form of social practice (1995). Social practice is itself defined as “a stabalised form of social activity...activities, subjects and their social relations, instruments, objects,

time and place, forms of consciousness and values" (Britten, 2005: 76). Furthermore while Fairclough's model was initially developed for the analysis of written text (1989) it was revised (1995) to include all forms of visual, verbal and written texts.

Fairclough's model has been visually expressed as three boxes that rest inside one another. The outer box aims to uncover the *conditions of production and reception*. At this level of analysis the viewer works to illuminate the social context in which the text was produced. The aim of this level of analysis is to locate the text within its socio-cultural, historical, political and ideological context. This has been defined as the level of explanation. The middle box is concerned with the *processes of production and reception.* Referred to as the level of interpretation, the aim of this level is to firstly understand the work that had to be done in order to create the text. Secondly, it attempts to understand the work that must be done to draw connotative meaning out of the text. At the center of the analysis is the text itself in the innermost box. This is the level of description or denotation. At this level, the reader aims to name the literal things they see and is aided by drawing on the language of formal visual elements (Schroeder & Borgerson, 2011).

Scholarly research as contained in the sections 'Hip Defiant Cultural and Economic Autonomy', 'Kaap van Storms', and 'Larney Jou Poes (and Piel)!' will form the basis of the socio historical analytical explanation. In order to corroborate and defend the deductions made at the level of interpretation and description, this paper draws on the tool or sub-method of semiotics. The semiotic analysis will be further enriched by the section of the research entitled, 'We Write How We Like'.

SUB-METHOD: SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS

This project elects to employ the model of semiotics introduced by Roland Barthes and based on Ferdinand de Saussure because this system offers a clear and direct way to understand the relationship between visual representations and meanings (Struken & Cartwright, 2009). Useful interpretative concepts developed by Charles Saunders Peirce are introduced

and drawn upon. A founder of semiotics, de Saussure (1966) argued that language was rooted in the process of using signs to stand in the place of or represent things (Struken & Cartwright, 2009). The allocation of signs to things in language is an arbitrary process, a reality that is proved by the fact that there are at least as many 'signs' or words for one thing as there are languages. This proves that there is no one-to-one, intrinsic connection between a thing and the sign that it is allocated to it. Rather people learn a code to interpret meaning from signs from their lived existence (Berger, 2012).

Barthes' method asserts that a 'sign' is comprised of a 'signifier' and that relates to something that is 'signified'. In Barthes' model, the 'signifier' refers to the image, sound or word and the 'signified' refers to what is possibly meant by this signifier. Together the signifier and the signified become a sign. Barthes introduced the useful concepts of connotation and denotation. Denotations refer to the direct and literal meaning of an object under observation. Connotations on the other hand involve the "symbolic, historic and emotional matters connected to it" (Berger, 2012: 18-19). Barthes was deeply concerned with the codes that people used to make meaning out of their visual environment.

He asserted that in our daily lives, people decoded images by interpreting clues that directed viewers to intended, unintended and even merely suggested meanings. Furthermore this process of interpretation does not happen explicitly and systematically but is instead taken for granted and normalised. Barthes contended that the process of systematically decoding a text unveiled the connotations that this process relied on and in so doing exposed the ideological foundations upon which this decoding process relies (Struken & Cartwright, 2009). Later Stuart Hall analysed this process of coding and decoding within the context of advanced capitalism. In the seminal text, 'Encoding/ Decoding' (Hall, 1980), he presents a theoretical framework through which to analyse mass communications research. He argues for defining media as the processes associated with the production and dissemination of ideologies. These ideologies, he contends, are produced reproduced and circulated in the context of oppression and domination. This means that messages which are disseminated about events or phenomena in the word are encoded through complex hierarchical social processes where the formal rules of discourse and language are in dominance (Hall; 1980). In other words, media messages come to their audience projected through the

power of capital. He then sets out a framework for how viewers might interpret or decode what they see. Three potential positions are presented: the dominant hegemonic, the negotiated or, the oppositional reading (Hall; 1980).

Explicitly and systematically decoding these clues that we read relies on the interpretation of formal elements and socio-historical contexts. Formal elements refer to features such as colour, shades of black and white, tone, contrast, composition and depth. To aid the analysis of formal elements, this research refers to Figure 1 as developed by Schroeder & Borgerson, (2011).

Engaging with the socio-historical context means giving adequate consideration to how identities and forms of expression have been either supported or stifled within a specific historical context. It also relates to the history of the particular text under analysis. As humans are socialised we are trained to read for cultural codes such as aspects of the image that signify gendered, racial, or class specific-meanings (Struken & Cartwright, 2009). Further connotations are revealed through gaining knowledge about the artists and references that they employ in their art.

Tool	*Issue*	*Examples*
Formal Analysis	Form	Size, texture, technique
	Subject Matter	Portrait, still-life, landscape, abstract
	Genre	Nude, impressionism, classical
	Medium	Paper, canvas, drawing
	Color	Black and white, bright, subdued
	Light	Darkness, intensity, shadow
	Line	Solid, sweeping, curving, think
Photographic Analysis	Art Historical Referents	Painterly, classic technique, resemblance to famous works
	Production qualities	Paper, equipment, finish
	Vantage point and angle of focus	Frame, subject appearance
	Focus	Sharp, blurry, fuzzy, hazy
	Depth of field	Short, deep, long, flattened
Interpretive Analysis	Context	Culture, purpose, presentation
	Comparisons	Photographs, photographers, artists visual artifacts, writers
	Internal sources of information	Within photograph; formal analysis
	External sources of information	About artist, context, purpose, reception, value, subject
	Connotations	Symbolic associations
Social Psychological Factors	Face-ism	Prominence of head and face
	Licensed Withdrawal	Psychological removal from scene
	The Feminine Touch	Hands used for aesthetic purposes vs. utilitarian (grasping or holding)
	Head and body cant	Signifies submission
	Eye contact	Signifies dominance
	Bodily dominance	Size, height, space
	Male gaze	Acknowledges sexual dualism
	Objectification	Male pleasure

FIGURE 1: TOOLS FOR VISUAL ANALYSIS, SCHROEDER & BORGERSON, 2011: 167

A valuable contribution to interpretation was made by Peirce for whom the ‘sign’ is equivalent to Barthes’ signifier (Struken & Cartwright, 2009). Peirce explored the relationships between signifiers (to use Barthes’ terms) and reality. He outlined three distinct kinds or signifiers namely iconic, indexical, and symbolic. Iconic signs visually resemble the object they represent. Indexical signs refer to signifiers that at some point existed in the same physical space as the sign. Symbolic signifiers relate to the signified only through connotation and their interpretation rests on the viewer having learnt the interpretive code (Struken & Cartwright, 2009).

LIMITATIONS OF METHOD

While semiotics as a method is valued because it aims to make explicit ideological interpretations which would otherwise be invisible, it has also been criticised. The main critique rests on the fact that interpretation to a large extent depends on the socio-historical positioning of the researcher. Put differently, a researcher is inclined to see the sign not for what it is but rather for what the researcher is. In defense of semiotics however, this is a criticism that is leveled at qualitative research in general. In all qualitative research meaning is derived from the researchers analytical prism. This challenge can be mitigated if the researcher commits to avoiding extremism and makes explicit how the signified meaning is connected to the signifier (Berger, 2012).

This research project is an exercise in textual analysis specifically aimed at contributing to the development of a more nuanced set of criteria for discerning the aesthetic and political significance of different kids of graffiti and street art. Due to the dearth of research with this focus in this context, this research project limits itself to exclude from the analysis community reception of the artworks. At this point, all references to community interpretation and input in this research report are purely anecdotal and serve to increase reader access to the encounters and experiences involved in the research process. Future research into how members of the community receive and interface with the works in these different sites would be valuable especially as a point of reference to test the validity of the assertions made in this paper.

SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION



FIGURE 2: MAP INDICATING RESEARCH SITES

I selected data sources based on the following criteria (1) they are artifacts that are intended for a public audience; (2) they were created by mak1one, either independently or in collaboration with other artists; (3) they were produced without the consent or approval of the state (which is not to say without the approval of the building owner); and (4) due to my findings in the field, I incorporated paintings that the artist made me aware of and suggested be included for analysis. In total I identified five paintings for analysis. To begin with, I accessed the artworks from Internet searches. I then moved to locate these artworks and take photographs of them *in situ*.

Two things occurred during the fieldwork that I did not anticipate. Firstly, some of the graffiti pieces were located deep inside communities to which access had to be negotiated. This was so in the case of 'We are Hip Hop' which was located in Magnolia in Paarl Valley. In this context and outsider arriving to take photographs would have been viewed with suspicion. I had to arrange with a member of that community to make time to accompany me on the excursion.

The second unexpected occurrence was that people living around or visiting the sites where the graffiti was based inquired as to what I was doing and volunteered information about their relationship with the graffiti piece. This happened at every site but was most significant at Princess Vlei where I met up with the community members who had requested that the piece be done. They gave me insight into the context of the creation of the piece and aided in the interpretation of the piece.

FINDINGS

The findings in this section are organised as follows. Firstly each image is individually described. This is followed by an individual interpretation and explanation of each image. A summary of the overall findings follows. In this section overall themes in the artworks are extrapolated and presented.

RESTORED LANDSCAPE



FIGURE 3: RESTORED LANDSCAPE, HANOVER STREET, DISTRICT 6

DESCRIPTION

The piece was created in 2004 by mak1one and Kosi. The piece stretches for 32 meters along Hanover Street and climbs to about 8 meters high. The piece has been created using aerosol cans. It is a large landscape with the full-length portrait of an African woman dressed in traditional dress standing tall and regal in the foreground. The subject has a serene expression on her face with both her mouth and eyes closed. The background consists of a pale blue sky with large clouds trailing off into the distance. The landscape is a semi-arid environment and short sparse shrubs pepper the otherwise empty

expanse. The figure in the foreground is positioned towards the left in the first third of the image and is five meters tall.

The woman wears a headband made of blue ribbons that billow in the breeze curling across nearly half of the mural. Gold necklaces are stacked around her neck, a tradition common among the Masai of Kenya and the Ndebele of southern Africa. An ice-coloured thick band below these necklaces is followed by a rippling red wrap, which covers the rest of the woman's body. The wrap has orange detail on it and from one of the creases, a piece of green cloth peeks out.

The piece looks out onto an open lot on which only pillars from a demolished building remain. A homeless community has turned this lot, once part of District 6, into their home. Well-trodden walking paths criss-cross the lot and about four hovels, fashioned from bricks, other building rubble and old blankets are found in shallow ditches, just below street level and surprisingly therefore only visible from up-close. The surrounding area smells strongly of human faeces and urine. Beyond this empty lot is one of the parking lots of Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and still further beyond is Hoerikwagga (Table Mountain).

INTERPRETATION & EXPLANATION

The piece can be viewed as an inverted form of landscape art. Contemporary landscape theory argues that landscape art played a crucial role in how Africa and Africans were represented during the period of colonial conquest (Baderoon, 2004). Landscape art through a number of visual tropes namely: emptying the land of black people, presenting the land as beautiful and untouched, and, later, representing Europeans with their backs to the viewer gazing over the land in what has been termed the commanding gaze, "reproduced a way of seeing the landscape that embedded discriminatory practices related to the enjoyment of landscape" (van Eeden, 2010: 610).

This art seems to break all the conventions of traditional landscape art while at the same time maintaining the form. Firstly it is a graffiti piece, created on a wall and offered for free public consumption. Moreover, instead of the land being empty of people, the full-length portrait of an African woman clad in

traditional dress, is the subject of the art. Interestingly, in keeping with traditional landscape, the environment portrayed is pristine and beautiful. Significantly instead of employing the commanding European gaze where the subject looks over the land, the portrait of the woman faces out with her back towards to the landscape in the image. Additionally, the subject's eyes are closed. With body turned full frontal towards its location, the piece seems to guide the viewer to turn around and take cognizance of the surroundings in which the piece is located.

The land in front of the artwork remains vacant because it was once part of a suburb called District Six and I assert that much of the artwork's meaning rests on an understanding of the history of this area. The enforcement of the Group Areas Act of 1950 resulted, in Cape Town, in the forcible removal of 42 communities from areas where they had settled to what became known as the Cape Flats (Minty, 2006). The Group Areas Act served to carve the Cape into neat racially defined areas through the use of "a system of buffer zones, roads and rail lines" (Pieterse, 2010: 444). The Cape Flats refers to far-flung townships on the plains 20 to 40 kilometers northeast of the city centre. Of all the areas affected, the inner-city suburb of District Six became emblematic for all of the individual pains and sufferings. For most South Africans the name District Six conjures images of an interracial, diverse and explosive cultural mélange: an oasis of love and possibility in a country torn to shreds by institutionalised hate and violence. Between the course of 1966 and 1982, 60 000 people were forced out of this area and their houses demolished (Minty, 2006). District Six has maintained its prominence on the redress agenda because successful resistance and advocacy from community groups made it politically impossible for the apartheid government to redevelop the area. They did however manage to build The Cape Technikon (today known as CPUT), a contentious White's-only tertiary institution on some of the grounds (Minty; 2006). The fact that CPUT recently broke ground on its new student residence on the contested site of District Six which sparked contention on 11 February 2015 when former residents came to mark their 49th year of dispossession by laying rocks on a commemorative cairn, is perhaps a fitting place to begin an interpretation about the meaning of the image in its location (SABC, 2015).



FIGURE 4: RESTORED LANDSCAPE, HANOVER STREET, EMPLACEMENT

The woman in traditional African dress coupled with the natural landscape empty of buildings and, the calmness of the subject allows for an interpretation that the image is set in pre-colonial Africa. In this image, the subject is composed and in harmony with her natural surroundings. If colonial landscape art served to alienate Africans from their land, then it can be argued that the prominent position of the African woman in this landscape seems to offer the land back to ordinary Africans thus inverting the ideological proposition that nature is a privileged leisure experience (van Eeden, 2012). Land in this image seems also to be in abundance and the woman seems at ease without the anxiety of having to justify her presence. It is significant that the eyes of the subject are closed. Perhaps this is an indication of the awareness of the power of the gaze. Closed eyes together with the 'head and body' representation, according to the interpretative table compiled by Schroeder and Borgerson (2011) contained in this document as Table 1, could be an indication of submission or the resignation to defeat. I put forward that the closed eyes could also represent unwillingness or inability to look at that which a subject considers unpleasant to look upon.



FIGURE 5: RESTORED LANDSCAPE, HANOVER STREET, CLOSE-UP OF CHARACTER

I assert that this image can be seen to be offering an alternative reading of colonial history. The pre-colonial experience of subject is being juxtaposed with the post-colonial experience of the viewer. In this image, rather than being seen as a process that ushered in the benefits of modernity, colonisation is being critiqued. Given the visual analysis, I contend that the substance of the critique is that colonisation destabilised African, indigenous life and has resulted in a present day Africa which is so undesirable as to be unimaginable to the pre-colonial African. The subject therefore closes her eyes to avoid the trauma of visually experiencing modern day Cape Town. Furthermore, colonisation and the various systems of domination that followed on from it have resulted in Africans living anxiously and without security. Nothing validates this point more than the site of this artwork and the insecurity expressed by former resident Mareldia Johnson on the day of commemoration referred to above,

> "Why must we all suffer today? We come from District Six. District Six was our place. I am sure we have to go back, even our children, today most of the people died already, I am 80 years old, so when am I going to get a house, you tell me" (SABC, 2014).

The image seems to hold the tertiary educational institution upon which it gazes to account. The indigenous knowledge, which the subject encapsulates and that allows for the subject to live in harmony alongside her environment, is juxtaposed against the European knowledge system. Formal tertiary

education in this country, in the form of CPUT, is assessed and found to be morally compromised. The only way in which CPUT can justify its present disregard for the demands for redress from those who have been deeply aggrieved by the system of apartheid which has been globally rebuked, is if they question the validity of these demands in the current political and economic context. In essence this image makes visible the "thinly-veiled double standards" which are prevalent in our society (Pieterse, 2010: 441). In this case, the double standards are the verbal admonishment of apartheid and the actual continued dispossession of land that black South Africans are entitled to.

ARCHETYPES OF HUMANITY



FIGURE 6: ARCHETYPES OF HUMANITY, HANOVER STREET, DISTRICT 6, FULL IMAGE

DESCRIPTION

The artwork is located on Hanover Street and stretches for a total of 57 meters and is approximately 8 meters high. The artwork wraps around the building and so has three connecting panels. A very large artwork, it is a kaleidoscope of content and detail. The piece is three-dimensional and there is much interplay between the background, the middle ground and the foreground. I will try here to highlight most of this content.

The artwork is set against a background of subdued tones – shades of brown merge into yellows and then creams and ends on the side furthest to the right in blue. The background, which has been primed with a roller and PVA paint, is textured with fine outlines of spray paint in ochre and white hues. These fine lines create a distant natural landscape, in some instances they are the outline of a rocky mountain and in others they become a desert landscape with the silhouette of a horse-mounted warrior with spear in hand.

In the middle ground circular motifs punctuate the piece. While each circle has its own distinctive look there are notable similarities. Each of the circular

designs are comprised of concentric ripples and makes use of geometric shapes.

Now to the foreground, from left to right. On the furthest side to the right is a 6-meter tall bull painted autonomously in a turquoise blue. The colour is being described as 'autonomous', the use of colour for its own sake, because it seems that the choice of colour was informed by the need to create symmetrical balance (Schroeder and Borgerson, 2011). This is facilitated by the fact that the portion of the piece on the furthest side to the right is again this same turquoise blue, the only departure from the subdued background as described. The bull avoids direct eye contact gazing with a turned head, slightly to the right. An indirect gaze is traditionally interpreted as an offer, rather than a demand, for the viewer to look at any of the elements of the image (Schroeder and Borgerson, 2011). The horns of the bull frame the first set of concentric circles in the image. The circles appear to look like a woven African basket. The ripples of this basket grow wider and as the gaps become bigger the detail decreases. The final three ripples are large geometric patterns of triangles and diamonds guided by two lines. These look similar to the type of patterns used by Ndebele people to decorate their homes. The detailed nature of the woven basket gives way to three much more loosely concentrated concentric circle patterns created only with fine white lines. Three circles emanate from the centre and four independent objects are positioned around these circles.



FIGURE 7: ARCHETYPES OF HUMANITY, HANOVER STREET, DISTRICT 6, PANEL 1, CLOSE-UP

Alongside this image, is the grey sketch with black outlines of a woman of Eastern descent, sitting cross-legged. The character is identified as being of Eastern-descent because she is dressed in traditional garb and holds her right hand in "Gyan Mudra", a yoga hand position in which you place the tips of the index finger and the thumb together. This pose, one of the most commonly

used Mudras (or yoga hand positions), represents knowledge and expansion (Unknown 1; 2014). In her left hand she holds a daisy. Movement is suggested, as the petals seem to be caught in the moment of blowing in the wind. As the petals blow away they are transformed into tongues of fire. This visually leads the eye towards a fire pit, which rests on the shell of a tortoise. The tortoise is the same turquoise colour of the bull and looks more like a doll than an animal. Its legs are plaited straw, tied together with turquoise beads. The silhouette of a dancing figure around the fire is visible. Above this scene, is a large 3D halo, maroon in colour from the outside and a shade of white on the inside. This is also patterned with geometric shapes and juts out like a cog.

Four panels are positioned behind the tortoise in the middle ground. They curve around the piece and grow in size from very small to very large. Inside these frames are four scenes taken from nature, the first is shades of blue and is an illustration of a baobab tree, the second is a brown mountain with a blue sky, the third is a green jungle image with vines hanging from tall trees, the fourth is a river running down a red earth mountain side with ferns on the water bank. The sky is blue.

Alongside these panels, against the background ocean shades of blue, green and white foam crash as waves are formed around a 17th century brown wooden ship. The ship is dwarfed by the sea and the crashing waves but seems to be making progress with its two white sails billowing in the wind. From the ocean, a blue ribbon leaps into the distance, again suggesting movement and guides the eye towards three-dimensional pieces of the artist's graffiti AKAs, namely mak1one, Falko and Faith47.



FIGURE 8: ARCHETYPES OF HUMANITY, HANOVER STREET, DISTRICT 6, PANEL 2, CLOSE-UP

Above this the Ten Commandments of Native American people has been written and a dedication follows. The writing reads as follows:

> “Remain close to the great spirit
>
> Show great respect for your fellow beings
>
> Give assistance and kindness wherever needed
>
> Be truthful and honest at all times
>
> Do what you know to be right
>
> Look after the wellbeing of mind and body
>
> Treat the earth and all that dwell there on with respect
>
> Take responsibility for your actions
>
> Dedicate a share of your efforts to the greater good
>
> Work together for the benefit of all mankind
>
> Dedicated to... Kim. Keya. Zoe



FIGURE 9: ARCHETYPES OF HUMANITY, HANOVER STREET, DISTRICT 6, PANEL 3, CLOSE-UP

The pieces give way to a sunset background and in the foreground a swath of colour in the form of a cylindrical beam with feathers positioned at regular intervals stretches from the ground to the ceiling. The beam is filled with green and maroon swirls and a similar and smaller such beam is created further to the right. A solitary brown tree rests on this hill-like beam. Directly above the tree is another, blue tree inside a circle. Between these two beams a woman in a black dress and detailed maroon jewelry on her neck, ears and arms takes the foreground. While she is clearly an African woman her skin has been arbitrarily coloured in grey, the same as with the woman of eastern descent. From her head, in lieu of hair, branches reach out across the wall. The branches meet with a brown octagon from which eight tentacles stretch out.

The final scene is divided from the brown background by the smaller cylindrical beam and a patterned orange divider. The background is saturated with turquoise, which becomes patterned with Henna styled decorations. On the far right a small brown cliff juts out into the blue abyss.

INTERPRETATION & EXPLANATION

The key features that recur and theme the artwork are: the concentric circles, representation of indigenous people in their traditional attire, and the representation of the natural environment. The anomalies in the image are the 17th century sailing ship and seemingly the large graffiti pieces of each artist's AKA. The artwork is also located in District Six.

In this image the concentric circle has been used as a visual motif. Concentric circles are a symbolic sign that has been termed a 'mandala' (Krippner, 1997). The mandala is considered an 'archetype', a term that refers to universally recurrent themes among communities of people who are physically isolated from each other. Mandalas have been identified in the artistic expression of the Navajo, the Tibetans and various African tribes (Krippner, 1997). Archetypes in humans have been compared to the impulse in birds for example, to build nests. In southern Africa the mandala is most often found in the work of weavers who create baskets from grass and more recently re-purposed telephone wire (Krippner, 1997). Among the Navajo of North America, the mandala forms the basic structure of coloured sandpainting that shamans construct as part of a healing ritual. In Tibetan spiritual practice the mandala is created in sand, rice or clay. It is also painted on cloth and carved on wood, metal or represented in jewelry (Krippner, 1997). The mandala is said to represent "integration, harmony, and transformation" (Krippner, 1997) and it can be argued that this is a key message of the artwork. This interpretation is re-enforced by the fact that the artwork was the result of collaboration among three graffiti artists. The message of transformation is amplified by the artwork's location. The need to redress the past injustices acted upon the community of District Six and transform the situation of displacement are messages raised through the artwork.



FIGURE 10: ARCHETYPES OF HUMANITY, HANOVER STREET, DISTRICT 6, EMPLACEMENT

Additional symbolic meaning can be inferred from both the mandala and the presence of women in traditional African and eastern dress. Emerging across the globe from various indigenous people who are physically isolated from each other the symbol of the mandala can be read as validating the types of knowledge that are intrinsic as opposed to formally learnt. In addition to the mandala, the represented cultures also share the fact that they were all colonised and have been idealised as morally superior to the West. Together with this fact, the symbol of the mandala seems to argue for the importance of indigenous knowledge systems that are universal among people. The artwork also seems to be advocating for the importance of those things that are handmade as opposed to technologically reproduced, much like graffiti.

Furthermore the natural environment is prominently represented in this artwork. In this artwork the natural environment is being showcased and celebrated. The text in the artwork, the ten commandments of the Native American people, supports a reading that engenders great respect for the natural environment (Unknown 2; 2014).

All of these elements support a Black Consciousness message. In summary, the cultural agenda of Black Consciousness was driven by a “deliberate decision aimed at re-instilling a sense of African pride and African consciousness in the colonised world by recuperating the suppressed culture

of Africans" (Oliphant in Mngxitama et al [eds], 2008: 228). Intellectual and political leader of the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa, the late Steve Bantu Biko argued that at the heart of colonisation was the need to alienate Africans from their land and culture. In the face of a colonial and dominant depiction of Africans as depraved and culturally inferior, Black Consciousness thought aimed to recast elements of African culture that had been denigrated as something to be proud of (Oliphant in Mngxitama et al [eds], 2008: 228).

In this image, I argue that the ship on stormy waters represents colonial conquest. The image of the ship on rough seas set against the rest of the image, which is peaceful and void of technological development, renders it out of place. This image can be interpreted to connote that the European impulse for conquest is out of synch with the natural harmony as symbolised by the recurrent mandalas in the image. Given the size and scale of this artwork, the ship is also very small in relation to the rest of the content. Dwarfing the colonial project in this way serves to represent it visually as a tiny blimp in the history of the world. If the artwork on this wall represents all of history, then the 400 to 600 years of colonisation are represented in scale with a history of global civilisations that spans at least tens of thousands of years. In this way, the artwork contains a message of black pride encouraging viewers to take courage in the fact that Africa was once free and that the historical moment of domination is in fact fairly short.

This message of reverence for traditional, indigenous knowledge is complicated by the prominence of the Hip Hop graffiti pieces which are at the centre of the mural. I argue that the piece, like the Black Consciousness theory of Steve Biko, does not assert a pride in Africa that purely sentimentally harkens for a pre-colonial past (Oliphant in Mngxitama et al [eds], 2008). The prominence of the pieces, a very modern practice, allows for an interpretation of African culture that endorses and celebrates hybridity. The artwork thus operates at two levels - it acknowledges, celebrates and learns from the past as the basis for constructing a way of *being* in the present that is powerful. Freirè asserts that this is at the heart of what is popular educational 'codes' or learning aids should do. To quote:

> "Problem-posing education is prophetic...It affirms people as beings who transcend themselves, who move forward and look ahead...for

> whom looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are, so that they can more wisely build the future" (Friere, 1987, 57).

In summary the artwork contains messages of unity and pride in indigenous knowledge systems. The artwork also serves as a critique of colonisation representing it as only a momentary storm in the history of the world. Furthermore, through the prominence of the graffiti pieces, it speaks to young Africans and encourages them to learn a craft that will allow them to make a meaningful contribution to the collective consciousness of this moment of history.

THINGS GAINED IN THE FIRE



FIGURE 11: THINGS GAINED IN THE FIRE, HANOVER STREET AND EMPLACEMENT

DESCRIPTION

The graffiti piece is positioned on a cream-coloured outside wall of a building located on the corner of Mount Road and Hanover Street in the centre of Cape Town. The wall stretches for 29 meters and at its highest point is 18 meters high. Four segments make up the image. Each of these segments is made up of two large block numbers namely: 90; 80; 70; and 60. Graphic images are encapsulated within each of these segments or numbers. The piece was created in 2004.

Each number has a thick, black outline and is in immediate contact with the number alongside it. There are no ruptures within the outline. The main subject matter inside the filled-in numbers and the outline have been created with aerosol paint while the background within the numbers seems to be filled in with a roller using a PVA paint. The roller has been applied in an

unmethodical manner creating texture and depth in the background.

The background of the ‘90’ is nearly completely filled with the New South African Flag, the flag which was accepted by the Interim Government on the 15 March 1994. It replaced the old, orange, white and blue South African flag which represented the Apartheid regime. This flag on the converse came to represent democracy and non-racialism (Britten, 2005). Remaining with the background, a portion of the lower blue segment juts off, breaking with the authentic layout of the flag and with the aid of white aerosol paint, forms buildings which look like they are part of a CBD.

Former president, the late Nelson Mandela is the central image within the ‘90’. The image of Mandela seems to be emerging from a dark black shadow that fills the bottom portion of the ‘90’. This shadow is the only departure from what otherwise is a very cheerful and colourful image. He is represented in a purple colour smiling and waving the Green South African ID book. Behind him are less prominent, outlines of almost ghost-like figures. These are aerosol sketches of (from left to right) Cissy Gool, Oliver Tambo, Robert Sobukwe and Steve Biko. At the time of the creation of this piece of graffiti, Mandela would have been the only person in the image who was alive.

The mood in the ‘80’ is quite different. The background is filled with a light blue and earth tone. Two burning tyres are in the foreground of the ‘8’ and the outline of two shadowy figures in various stages of throwing projectiles stretch across the ‘0’ and the ‘8’. Smoke billows from the tyres and also wafts from the ‘7’ of the ‘70’ which stands alongside it.

The ‘70’ is saturated in flames the colour of butcher’s pink and seems to resemble a sort of macabre sunset. In the centre of the background are purple shaded shacks that are on fire. In the foreground are the shadows of the back of three policeman – so identifiable by their hats and rank insignia on their shoulders – overseeing the burning.

The ‘60’ is filled with a sepia colour and mood. A mass of angry, in some cases screaming and crying, black people make up most of the subject matter. To the left of them are rows of coffins. In the foreground are two hands, belonging to an authority that is inspecting an Identity Document.

Clearly legible from the image are the words:

> Additional particulars
> under regulation
> 17 (1) (v) Chapter II
> Bantu labour Regulations.

From this information it is clear that the authority is in fact inspecting what was popularly termed the, “Dompas” – a document that black people had to possess and furnish on request to legitimate their presence in what was termed “White South Africa”.

INTERPRETATION AND EXPLANATION

Positioned alongside each other in the way that they are, the numbers in this artwork are interpreted as decades. The artwork can be viewed as a visual timeline that represents snapshots into the history of South Africa over four decades. Because of the English convention of reading from left to right, the reader tends to read the image from ‘90’ through to ‘60’. Thus, instead of being a conventional timeline that reads from the past to the future, this artwork seems to be positioned in the present and reading back to the past. If we are to read the image as a visual timeline, I propose that the artwork brings the following historical beacons to the fore:

> 90: The first non-racial elections held on 27 April 1994;
> 80: The period where the country was rendered ungovernable by mass protest and street uprisings in response to the state sanctioned violence of June 16, 1976;
> 70: The killing of unarmed Sowetan students by the police on 16 June 1976; and
> 60: The Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 where the police opened fired on people boycotting against the Dompas.

Created ten years after the first democratic elections, the artwork marks the 1990s as a turning point in the history of South Africa. The artwork can be

viewed as one individual's assessment of the national significance of this historical moment. This interpretation of this image is complicated by the fact that its political message seems ambivalent. In this image 1994 is represented as per the dominant hegemonic narrative. It is seen as a celebratory moment where a once divided country was united under one flag. Thus the image seems to buy into the dominant Rainbow Nation discourse (Erasmus & Pieterse, 1999).

For the purpose of clarity, the Rainbow Nation discourse refers to the dominant post-apartheid narrative that emerged following the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990. It has been argued that in place of radical redistribution of resources to address the systematic looting of colonisation and apartheid, South Africa was offered a discursive balm in the form of the Rainbow Nation discourse (Erasmus & Pieterse, 1999). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was appointed to publically investigate apartheid crimes and injustices. It unfurled its processes with a guided focus on forgiveness and the construction of a national South African identity that overarched racial, ethnic and class divisions (Gibson, 2009, 595). This became known as the Rainbow Nation discourse which quickly dominated all others. As such, it served the primary purpose of legitimising the concessions made as part of the negotiated settlement and the unmitigated acceptance by the ANC of neoliberal market economics (Bickford-Smith; 2009). Politically it established the right to rule and authority for the ANC and the circle of elites due to the fact that it was established as a definitive *value* of the new South Africa. Socially and economically by circumventing issues of power it allays racially based inequalities that are the result of colonialism and apartheid. Finally, culturally, it is a silencing discourse that ostracises those who express their lived experience of inequality in the face of an all encompassing narrative of equality. In the Rainbow Nation, issues that engender conflict are to be avoided to ensure peaceful co-existence. The discourse completely "ignores the fact that such co-existence is premised on highly unequal power relations systematically shaped over centuries" (Erasmus & Pieterse, 1999: 172).

Thus in the artwork, the colourful New South African flag in the background is a reference to the message of a united South African national identity. The prominence of Nelson Mandela as the primary recognisable person in the artwork also supports this dominant reading as underlying the Rainbow Nation discourse was the 'Madiba Magic myth' (Britten, 2005). The Madiba Magic

myth developed a view of history that attributed all of South Africans political gains to the work of Nelson Mandela and shifted attention away from the contributions made by ordinary South Africans and other political leadership (Britten, 2005). It is thus notable that all of the subjects represented in the segments preceding ‘90’, are nameless and in the case of ‘70’ and ‘80’ – faceless. The ‘90’ is characterised by recognisable faces and prominent politicians. The artists could be suggesting that while the periods leading up to the 1994 turning point where orchestrated by ordinary individuals at grassroots level, the ‘90s’ saw the rise of the era of the leader where prominent politicians took the lead in terms of the recognition and prestige (Britten, 2005). Even within the ‘90’ the deceased leaders within the liberation movement are represented as sketchy and less visually distinct than Nelson Mandela. The simplest interpretation of the artwork is thus that ‘Madiba Magic’ saved the country from civil war and that we are all united as the rainbow nation.

At the same time, the image resists this dominant reading. One of the crucial elements of the Rainbow Nation discourse is that it served to severe the historical moment of 1994, which was predominantly described as a peaceful transition, from the past decades of state violence and civilian violent retaliation (Britten, 2005). Indeed the dominant narrative in South Africa revolved around the fact that the country was freed and drew attention away from the fact that the people fought. ‘Things Gained in the Fire’, while seemingly endorsing the dominant hegemonic take on the South African transition also acts to problemitise this narrative. It is notable that the ‘60’, ‘70’ and ‘80’ all represent violence: first the violence of the state in Sharpville and Soweto and then, the retaliation of the people using the weapons at their disposal, namely stones and burning tyres. While none of this carries over to the 90s, which seems like a complete rupture from the historical progression, Nelson Mandela who is dominantly portrayed as a peaceful statesman is in this image directly connected to the violent acts of the state and freedom fighters. Thus the piece works to connect the jubilation of 1994 specifically, to a painful history that tracks at least four (4) decades. While 1994 is often represented as an exceptional turning point lead by one great man, namely Nelson Mandela, the artwork seems to aim to create more context around this one event as it portrays a message that Mandela was made great by the violent contributions of ordinary nameless and unknown South Africans.

The location of the piece in front of a vacant lot in District 6, a land restitution

site that remains fundamentally unresolved, might offer a potential third message. Representing the South African liberation struggle as ending in 1990 in the context of continued dispossession and a lack of fundamental redress, as is represented by the fraught issue of District 6, the piece may be calling on the viewer to imagine how the next decade could be represented. In light of the unfinished matter of District Six the piece contains a message that the struggle continues in the present. Noting that the cultural function of the Rainbow Nation discourse was to silence all versions of South Africa's political story that disputed the assertion of equality, it makes sense that a political critique in such a prominent location created while the Western Cape was still under ANC control would be oblique.

The numerous potential readings of this artwork, only three of which have been outlined, support a reading of the work as a code that aids processes of public literacy. Freirè asserts that a code is never meant to provide answers but instead initiate a process through which the group can search for answers for themselves.

WE ARE HIP HOP



FIGURE 12: WE ARE HIP HOP, MAGNOLIA, PAARL

DESCRIPTION

The piece stretches across the side of a three-story council block of flats in the working class neighbourhood of Magnolia in Paarl Valley. Paarl Valley is a highly impoverished neighbourhood that is located adjacent to the Nederburg wine estate. The majority of the residents of this area are seasonal workers on this and other near-by wine farms. High levels of drug use, violence and teenage pregnancy are prevalent in a community in which there are very few options and people have to make tough decisions every day to survive. To the right of the block of flats is the picturesque Hottentots Holland Mountain range that divides Paarl from the Tous River district. In front of the flat is an empty lot on which a communal washing line is located. Piles of rubble punctuate the open space. To the left of the flat is a communal toilet area that services the informal houses that have cropped up alongside the flats and adjacent to the

empty lot. Behind these is the famous Paarl Rock which signifies the white town centre, an area from which the residents of this area were forcibly removed. On the day that the graffiti art was created, local youth had organised a park jam on the lot directly in front of the piece.

The image has three fields of depth, the foreground, the middle ground and the background. Upfront in three-dimensional letters with black outlines is the phrase ‘We are Hip Hop You are Magnolia’. In the case of the ‘We are’ and ‘You are’ the letters have been completely filled-in in black. The words Hip Hop are filled-in in yellow making them blend in with the background. ‘Hip Hop’ is set in thick, deep and fully defined shadows in shades of red. ‘Hop’ has been sliced in a number of places and the bottom segment of the ‘o’ resembles an accent placed at the bottom of the letter. The word ‘Magnolia’ is a model example of mak1one’s signature style. Each letter has been deconstructed and reconstituted and then represented three-dimensionally. The grey ‘g’ contains his signature Nguni influences as does the right side of the ‘a’ in which yellow zigzags are contained. Between the first and second syllable, is the image of a character, an emcee with a microphone in his hand wearing signature Hip Hop dress: a cap turned to the side covering an afro that peaks out at the side, sunglasses and a fist gripping the microphone. The character is not necessarily aesthetically pleasing and is in fact aggressive looking. The blue arm of the character forms the ‘l’ and the graffiti can forms the ‘i’ with the spraying nozzle standing in place of the dot of the ‘i’. Most of the traditional Hip Hop graffiti art decorative elements are present in the piece namely slices, arrows and bubbles.



FIGURE 13: WE ARE HIP HOP, MAGNOLIA, PAARL, ELEMENT'S OF HIP HOP GRAFFITI & MAK1ONE'S SIGNITURE STYLE

The middle ground is sparsely decorated with black detail in the form of decorative swirls and extensions of letters, dots that radiate from two central locations and lightning like strikes.

In the background from left to right, in pastel shades of yellow, blue, green and pink are the images of figurines dancing and with their hands in the air, in some cases making hand symbols. Some of the characters have dreadlocks with woolen hats on their heads and another is holding a 'boombox'. The characters are dancing in front of a block of flats and parked cars - a scene that mimics the environment of the park jam. To support this, alongside the word 'Hip Hop' are four speakers stacked on top of each other. The dancing characters follow a visual sequence that unfolds above the word 'Hip Hop' and culminates above the 'g' and 'n'. They transform from dancing, to holding the boombox, into characters caught in mid-stride, and then in turn into four-legged creatures one that may be a dog and another that could be a buck. A flat palm of a hand follows these. Following the palm are non-distinct shapes which look like tongues of fire. From these flames a bird with widespread wings soars across above a semi-circle of cross-legged figurines holding their hands, palm to palm in the air.

INTERPRETATION AND EXPLANATION

To interpret the artwork I would like to draw analytical attention to the content of the statement that is central to the piece, namely ‘We are Hip Hop. You are Magnolia’. As part of the analysis of this statement I will reflect on the use of elements of Hip Hop graffiti art and the elements of Hip Hop culture. I will then move towards analysing the significance of the representation of the ‘angry’ emcee in the artwork. The interpretation will end by looking at the significance of the ‘piece’ created in this artwork comparing it to an earlier ‘piece’ created by mak1one in the ‘Archetypes of Humanity’ artwork already analysed.

To explain the meaning behind the central statement, ‘We are Hip Hop. You are Magnolia’, I begin by briefly returning to the theory of subcultures and the process of creating the artwork. Subcultures are particularly powerful when they are able to present socially marginalised people with a narrative and story that restores their pride, dignity, hope and a sense of belonging. When this narrative is wholly accepted the people begin to collectively live differently in their skin and in a place (Pieterse; 2010). The mural was created on a day when youth from this community had organised a park jam. In support of the park jam organised on the day that the mural was painted, Hip Hop acts were drawn predominantly from the Paarl Valley community. These were supported by Hip Hop artists from Athlone, Mitchell’s Plain and Gugulethu. mak1one participated after being invited to paint and did so at his own expense. The event was free to the public and attended by an estimate of 300 people. Graffiti painting formed the background to a day of self-organised expression and communion and as mentioned, this was captured in the artwork.

The phrase ‘We are Hip Hop’ refers to a school of thought within Hip Hop proposed by American emcee, KRS One (1997). In this phrase, the emphasis is on the present verb ‘are’ as it conceives of Hip Hop as a social movement that you don’t ‘do’ but that you embody (Pieterse, 2009). In this conception, rather than being a set of artistic practices, Hip Hop refers to a way of living that proposes to youth from economically and culturally marginal communities, such as Magnolia, that if they choose this culture and choose to embark on a journey of uncovering who they are as powerful historical actors and apply that energy to a craft that they can perfect, they can have victory over the circumstances into which they were born. Alongside the phrase, ‘You are Magnolia’, the two phrases take on similar meaning to the new social

movements slogan, ‘think local, act global’. In essence the phrase serves as a collective affirmation that at once acknowledges the specificity of the geographic and historical location of being from Magnolia and locates that in a larger, global struggle for dignity and justice of black folk.

As mentioned, the mural contains figurines that reflect the activity of the day. Interpreted together with the central phrase, the figurines carry a message of encouragement and motivation to the youth who organised the event and the community of Magnolia who attended.

Represented in the artwork the actions of the youth in their community can be viewed as what James Scott terms “everyday forms of resistance”, tacit, informal, small scale and deliberately hidden actions that people make in their daily lives (1989: 33-34). In moments when open defiance is impossible or has violent consequences these forms of resistance become the first resort as they offer a means to deny or weaken claims made by a party with greater formal power (Scott 1989). Actively participating in Hip Hop practice results in the formation of organic channels of economic exchange which are autonomous from the formal economy (Pieterse; 2010). Hip Hop has the capacity to thus present excluded black youth with a critical, creative access point to the economy and mak1one is therefore, through the artwork validating the work and actions of the people of Magnolia and asserting that they are significant and powerful.



FIGURE 14: WE ARE HIP HOP, MAGNOLIA, PAARL, EMPLACEMENT & PARK JAM

While containing a general message of the importance of collective, creative action, the artwork is also specifically asserting that Hip Hop initiatives that draw on the lexicon of Black Consciousness and historically grounded societal critique, is specifically a powerful tool for transformation in society. I argue that through including nearly all of the visual elements of Hip Hop graffiti art into the artwork, elements which reference the earliest days of Hip Hop in New York, mak1one is promoting a message that Hip Hop, despite the tumultuous and complex history of cooption and commodification, remains a relevant culture of resistance and empowerment. In this piece the spray can is located along side the emcee and the stacked speakers. As already put forward, these rudimentary cultural implements are symbolic signs that celebrate a culture that works with what it has using the tools available to it to transform its surroundings.



FIGURE 15: WE ARE HIP HOP, MAGNOLIA, PAARL, CLOSE-UP ON HIP HOP CULTURE

To understand the aggressive, aesthetically uncomfortable representation of the character, Hip Hop's appropriation of derogatory terms and images needs to be theoretically understood. Adam Haupt (2004) argues that early Cape Town-based Hip Hop emcees during the late 1980s and 1990s intervened directly in the discursive realm of race and coloured identity. Critically acclaimed Hip Hop rap artists Prophets of the City (POC) created "noise in the dominant discourse about aesthetics as well as the standard dialect of Afrikaans" by expressing themselves in the Cape Flats dialect of Afrikaans that they described as 'gamtaal' (Haupt, 2004: 79). 'Gam' is a derogatory term that has come to mean working class coloured and represents all that is undesirable and uncouth in coloured society (Haupt, 2004). By appropriating and self-identifying as 'gam' POC contributed to the formation of a discursive

realm in which what was previously interpreted as shameful can be recast as culturally specific and worthy of celebration. A similar process had been undertaken by African American youth in America and the use of the word ‘nigger’. This assertion becomes more layered and complex when situated alongside Black Noise’s post-1994 self expression as black in line with Black Consciousness thinking (Haupt; 2004). Black Noise is another founding, Cape Town Hip Hop rap crew that emerged during the 1990s. Hip Hop thus allows its ‘members’ to be both ‘gam’ and ‘Black’. The work of Hip Hoppas thus responds to the “depoliticizing discourse of rainbow nationalism...[that] does not provide a vocabulary with which to renegotiate and process the racial terrain of South African culture and politics in the interest of transformation (Erasmus in Haupt, 2008: 187). These emcees draw on a lexicon that acknowledges creolization and hybridity as historical processes that made black Africans.

What the emcees in the Cape do with words, Hip Hop graffiti artists do with visuals. Using their own lived experience as their reference, Hip Hop graffiti artists create characters and settings that mimic and reflect the environment in which they are located. Furthermore, to make sense of this resistance to drawing aesthetically pleasing characters I refer to the theory of ‘shine-ism’ as theorised by Perry (2005) and referred to by Pieterse (2009). As already asserted, Hip Hop is a culture that resists and subverts the dominant hegemonic representation of black people. An element of the strategy of subversion is the outward expression of an ungovernable, irreverent identity. These have been termed the “ ‘bad niggas’, whose role since slavery days, ‘characterises the black person who refuses to submit to the rules of society, who is fearless and unruly, and who laughs at rules of appropriateness and social regulation’ ” (Perry 2004 in Pieterse, 2009: 438). I argue that this expression of an angry, black man who is unapologetically representing himself, mak1one is validating the wretched of Cape Town’s earth in the same way that POC did by embracing of gamtaal. mak1one is asserting a black identity that is proud and organised enough to interact with dominant society only on their own terms (Pieterse, 2009).

The final element to be analysed is the ‘piece’ created in the artwork. Figure 16 shows two pieces created by mak1one. The piece taken from ‘Archetypes of Humanity’ was created in 2004. The piece from ‘We are Hip Hop’ was created in 2014. mak1one’s artistic style has already been outlined. In summary, his artistic progress can be judged by the extent to which he is able

to deconstruct his letters and render them three-dimensional. To do so he employs all of the elements of Hip Hop graffiti art including colour. By these criteria it is evident from the comparison of the two pieces that he has significantly increased his capacity to render the letters three-dimensional. To draw specific attention to the slice in the ‘o’ of ‘Hop’, even this slice itself, separate from the rest of the letter, is three-dimensional. He continues to use the foundational elements of Hip Hop graffiti art. Furthermore, he employs visuals that refer to Hip Hop culture, such as the stacked speakers, the emcee on the microphone and, of course, the spray can, in the 2014 piece. These are knitted together by the phrase ‘We are Hip Hop, You are Magnolia’ which connotes an existential connection to the lived practice of Hip Hop as was discussed.



FIGURE 16: ARCHETYPES OF HUMANITY, DISTRICT SIX & WE ARE HIP HOP, MAGNOLIA, PIECE DEVELOPMENT

The significant development in mak1one’s style by his own criteria is indicative of the fact that he has invested many working hours into his practice. This practice focuses on deconstructing the letters of the alphabet to reassemble them and represent them in a way that is completely unique, which in his case means, three-dimensional. This significant investment of time and labour has been made into the element of Hip Hop graffiti art that has the least intellectual support as the theorising about the centrality of these AKAs in Hip Hop graffiti art is split into two camps. On the one hand theorists argue that the prominence of the artist’s name in cryptic scribe illuminates a narcissistic and childish culture which appropriates public space for a form of

private communication between graffiti writers (McAuliffe, 2012). On the other hand, theorists argue that urban areas are saturated in names. The majority of names in the urban visual landscape belong to corporate companies in the form of brands. Graffiti they argue is “a stylish counterpunch to the belly” of corporate hegemony over the visual experience of the urban dweller (Ferrell; 1996: 197). While these tags and pieces do represent the self-bestowed name of an actual artist, they also symbolically stand in the place of ordinary individuals, not attached to profit-making entities, spontaneously expressing the politics of their existence (Iverson; 2010).

This complexity of typography that is largely illegible to the general public, unlike the depiction of attractive recognisable characters and signage, is thus also not a commercially useful skill. Despite this, mak1one ceaselessly innovates and commits intellectual and physical labour to the task of making these letters more cryptic and less decipherable – a process that seems counter-productive as it alienates him from dominant meaning making systems. This research argues that in doing so, mak1one is advocating a message of autonomy that is drawn from the origins of the Hip Hop movement (Pieterse, 1999). He is investing in a knowledge making system that is virtually unrecongnised let alone respected within dominant society. And so it is that he is speaking to the small group of predominantly Hip Hop graffiti artists (and also coincidently academics) who care enough to look closely at the work and derive meaning from it (Ferrell, 1995). Furthermore this image is located in the obscure and marginalised community of Magnolia, Paarl Valley. The image is far removed from a main road and will only be seen by those who live or visit people who live in this community. Thus both the encoded content of the artwork and its emplacement allow for its interpretation as a ‘hidden transcript’ a symbolic resource that oppressed people can draw meaning and inspiration from away from the gaze of power. The meaning contained in this piece is one of autonomy.

Ferrell (1995) argues that this interpretation unveils an understanding of how graffiti writers “resist structures of authority, but at the same time create elaborate urban alternatives” (39). He asserts that paying close attention to this practice of committed and purposefully cryptic writing allows us to understand how,

> “graffiti writers invent out of their own activities alternative systems of

> aesthetics, representation, identity, and meaning. In a world of dead-end jobs and declining career opportunities, they construct new channels for achieving status and earning money" (Ferrell, 1995: 39)

Interpreted in this way, the artwork encourages those who view it to act powerfully within their own lives and in their own community and do so uncompromisingly on their own terms.

DRESSING THE PRINCESS



FIGURE 17: DRESSING THE PRINCESS, PRINCESS VLEI, ROAD-FACING SIDE

DESCRIPTION

The next graffiti artwork is located on the Cape Flats about 30 kilometers south east of the City towards Muizenberg. Along side the Prince George Drive is a wide expanse of open land that encircles a natural vlei. The Wetland is called Princess Vlei. As you enter the parking lot of the Wetland there is a small building in front of a fish market. The building is the public bathroom for the Princess Vlei Fish Market. Far from being an ordinary ablution block, the building has been wrapped from side to side and top to bottom in graffiti art. The dimensions of the building are 4 meters by 7 meters and it is 5 meters high.



FIGURE 18: DRESSING THE PRINCESS, PRINCESS VLEI, EMPLACEMENT

The graffiti piece has two visual elements. These are divided into the wall facing Prince George Drive and the three walls that face inward towards the vlei and the parking lot that serves as a recreational facility. The background that wraps around the entire building, creates visual consistency between the two elements. On the Thursday that I visited the vlei, about six cars were parked around the vlei and music was playing from the vehicles and people were socialising. Here, like at Magnolia flats, the background has been

painted to reflect this environment in which it is located. Shades of green reflect the wetland around and in front of it. Behind these blue, turquoise and white clouds with blue outlines rise to nearly the ceiling of the building.

The central character of the piece is the bust of a black woman staring directly at the viewer with her head tilted slightly to the side. Her brows are furrowed and she has a fierce expression on her face. Her black hair is shortly cropped framing her face, which is filled in shades of gold, brown and yellow. Behind the central image, the word “Princess” has been written in mak1one’s personal hip-hop graffiti style. This piece stretches across most of the building. Departing from traditional graffiti style however, the letters are filled in with the background. The letters seem transparent and are primarily defined by their strong black outline. Inside the letters are filled in by the background of the water of the vlei, the clouds, and accents of pink and gold. Together these colours look like that of a sunrise or sunset. Towards the bottom of the image, the piece is filled in with darker greens and blues and ripples to suggest water. The bust of the central character seems to be emerging from this water as there are ripples around her neck. Breaking from the convention of hip-hop graffiti, there are no drop-shadows and highlights on the letters. This results in the Hip-hop graffiti element of the piece receding in dominance.



FIGURE 19: DRESSING THE PRINCESS, PRINCESS VLEI, VLEI-FACING SIDE

Floating in the water alongside the character are two different varieties of ducks, their reflections seen in the water. A seagull stands on the shore with its bill pressed against its body. To the left of this, four other seagulls fly off

into the distance. Below them an adult cycles along the plain with a child sitting on a child seat at the back of the bike. On the far right of the image, the silhouette of a hunter-gatherer is seen alongside bulrushes. The image has been caught mid-pose with an arrow about to be launched from a bow at a buck that is also on the move. Above this scene is the silhouette of a stork with its wings in mid-stride. Above this image the words “IMAGINE Princess Vlei” have been sprayed in purple with pink highlights. This is followed by “for NATURE & COMMUNITY NATURE & HERITAGE PARK” which has been sprayed in Brown with gold highlights.

On the sides of the building that face inward, three cars; one green, another yellow and a third pink car, are parked alongside the vlei. There are *braai* areas on the field and the silhouette of a person, painted in black is in the foreground with *braai*-tongs in hand about to flip a fish that is cooking on red coals. To the far right, on the sidewall, two parents push a baby in a pram. On the sidewall to the left, two children are playing with a ball caught in mid air and a dog wanders towards the front of the image. Alongside them another child is riding a bike and being playfully chased by another young child. In light of the scene that I saw when I arrived at Princess Vlei, the image represented on the wall facing inward seems to be a reflection of the activities taking place on the vlei at present.

INTERPRETATION AND EXPLANATION

This interpretation of the artwork is greatly aided by the fact that while I was on site taking photographs, two members of the Princess Vlei Forum arrived to take photographs of the mural. They are Matilda Smith and Bridget Pitt. They explained the socio-historical context of the mural and also interpreted some of the content. They also directed me to their website where the information they disclosed is publically available, namely www.princessvlei.org.

By way of background, the Princess Vlei Forum (the Forum) was formed in 2012 when the surrounding communities of Grassy Park, Retreat and CAFDA (to name but a few) became aware that the City of Cape Town had sold the land surrounding the vlei to a developer for the purpose of building a mall. The community, lead by a range of associations, rallied together in protest against this development. They held a community session on June 16, 2012 at the

vlei and mak1one, who spent his formative years in CAFDA, attended. As part of the community session, mak1one painted the public bathrooms with a protest message stating, “Save Princess Vlei”. The next day the City of Cape authorities dispatched the Graffiti Enforcement Unit to paint over or “buff” the graffiti piece (Pitt; 2014).

When, after years of community organisation and nuanced protest action the community won the battle against the City and the mall development was halted, the Princess Vlei Forum approached mak1one and requested that he again paint the ablution block as a visual representation of the fact that the community has gained control and authority over the land (Pitt; 2014). mak1one began painting the mural on 24 September 2014, Heritage Day, and continues to add small details to the piece.

The Forum has launched the “Imagine Princess Vlei” project. Through this project, which in a dramatic change of heart, the City of Cape Town has supported through the 2014 Design Capital escapade, the Forum works inside schools, religious institutions and other community structures, to plan collectively for a strategy for both protecting and utilising the vlei in a way that is ecologically responsible (Pitt; 2014). The wording on the right hand side of the street facing portion of the piece is thus the name of this community venture.

The graffiti piece by its existence is a form of defiance art and the act of defiance is not only an individual act but also one that is wholly endorsed by a community in resistance – evidenced by the fact that it was painted on the community’s request. I return to the definition of graffiti presented in the literature review to illuminate the significance of the City of Cape Town painting over the piece and the re-painting of the piece by mak1one, at the behest of the community. In his analyses, Sven Ouzman disregards self-proclaimed sites of graffiti such as the Graffiti Wall at the University of Pretoria because the wall is “not available for spontaneous comment” and as a result is instead, “a sanitised space to contain and control dissident student opinion” (Ouzman; 2010: 197). Maintaining his qualification that both illegality and risk are required for an artefact to be defined as graffiti, Ouzman makes the point that the applicability of the term is “contingent on both the conditions under which the artefact was produced and the conditions under which it is received” (2010; 197).

In the case of Princess Vlei the state acted definitively against the creation of the artwork that created visual noise and interfered with their capitalist development agenda. The artwork, together with the community action against this development and the media exposure that it garnered, became a sight of embarrassment for the City of Cape Town. Their intentions to violate nature, the will of the people, and spontaneous artistic expression, were publically exposed at a historical moment when the City of Cape Town was celebrating itself as a 'World Design Capital'. A creative city after all is predominantly a city that finds creative and not authoritarian solutions for the problems that it faces.

This profound ambivalence between the criminalisation of informal creative practices and the celebration of the potential economic value of creativity is not specific to Cape Town. In fact it represents a global tension in that strategic investment which is required to establish creative hubs, quarters, clusters and precincts often insists on impacting on cultural plans and public art policies (McAuliffe, 2012). As with Cape Town, creative cities need to compete within a global network of creative cities. Planning and policies tend to benefit strategic economic interests. In a 'creative city' more emphasis is therefore placed on artistic *consumption* rather than artistic *production* (McAuliffe, 2012). It is near impossible to extract economic value from unauthorised, spontaneous graffiti art that makes critical social comment. In fact, one of the characteristics of the 'creative city' is an increase in street art around these creative hubs which is accompanied by an increased criminalisation of graffiti art. As already outlined, the distinction between these two genres is largely arbitrary and tends to rely on submission or resistance to bureaucratic planning approval (Iveson, 2010, McAuliffe, 2012). The existence of the artwork as a result of the communities' insistence brings to the fore the double standards and moral insolvency of the City of Cape Town. The artwork exposes the insincerity of the creative discourse in the city in the context of a rampant capitalist development agenda.

The artwork also carries a message of the power of everyday forms of resistance. As mentioned, this scene captured in the artwork is very similar to the one I experienced when I visited the site to conduct the research. Through representing these ordinary windows into black life, mak1one can be seen to be reaffirming the ordinary ways in which people connect to a place and feel as though they belong. This type of place-making - for no other reason than

expressing your right to act spontaneously for the purpose of deriving joy - is an incredibly powerful and political act in a country in which black people continue to be socially excluded by racist and classist legislature and policy (Pieterse, 2009). Given the context though, mak1one is calling of the viewers of the artwork and the users of Princess Vlei to recognise that their continued utilisation of the space is under threat and relies on them *doing* work. This is represented by the verb phrase, '*Imagine* Princess Vlei'. The artwork therefore serves as an advocacy tool that, I argue, creates interest among viewers about the work that is happening at this place of community recreation and draws the viewer in, offering them the opportunity of being a productive part of a creative process. Creativity and design is articulated as an action that ordinary people can be part of and not an elite luxury.

The artwork contains a Hip Hop graffiti art piece of the word 'princess'. As described the piece uses very few of the elements of Hip Hop graffiti art and as a result this form resides in dominance. I would argue that the reduced emphasis on the stylistic conventions of Hip Hop graffiti art can be interpreted as an expression of the way in which Hip Hop graffiti art is able to cooperate with broader social movements as part of a constituent counterpower (Haupt, 2008). The presence of the piece in the artwork expresses the way in which mak1one is able to maintain the integrity of his personal cultural contribution while at the same time acknowledging and responding to the specific needs of a community in resistance. As discussed, pieces represent the theoretical weak spot of graffiti and allow criticisms to be leveled at the childish, acquisition of public space (McAuliffe; 2012). I would assert that this artwork in fact represents great artistic and social maturity. The artists is at once able to maintain their personal principles while responding to the needs of those with a different - but not oppositional - set of political imperatives.

Finally, analytical attention is turned to the mysterious character rising from the waters and staring defiantly. This image represents the 'princess' after whom the vlei is named (Pitt, 2014). Historically, the San and the Khoe, occupied this area. The "princess" refers to a popular myth of rape and inhumane colonial conquest that has been passed down for generations on the Cape Flats (Lashbrooke; 2014). While there are several versions of the story the generally agreed version dates back to 1510. It states that before the Cape was a colony, when the Portuguese sailing traders first dropped anchor in the Cape they abducted a lone San woman who was bathing in the vlei. She was abducted and taken to the Constantiaberg Mountains in the distance

known by locals as the Prinseskasteel. Here, in a cave today called Elephant's Eye because of its resemblance to a sleeping elephant, she was raped and killed. The legend states that the princess's spirit cried inconsolably and thus Little Princess Vlei, from which all the vleis on the Cape Flats derive their source, was formed. She also vowed to take vengeance and claim the life of between one and three men by drowning in the vlei (Lashbrooke; 2014). Because social hierarchy and monarchy is alien from the cosmology of the San and Khoe, the princess is said to stand as a symbol of,

> "the dignity of a people, that which is sacred within all of us. And that was defiled. Over the centuries Europeans invaded Khoi territory, helped themselves to Khoi water supplies and cattle, and attempted to enslave both the Khoi and the San. As time went on these First People and their descendants were marginalised by modern and post-modern society. This history of conflict between invaders and indigenous people, documented since 1488, has lent this legendary woman status. She is without doubt a 'princess'; this is a legend symbolic of degradation, disempowerment and injustice visited on the essence of a people who lived in tune with their environment" (Lashbrooke; 2014).

This image of the 'princess' together with the abundant representation of natural wildlife "brings into full consciousness the extent of colonial ravages" (Oliphant in Mngxitama etal, 2008: 229) and in so doing evokes anger in the viewer about their history. Historically the princess was not a pacifist. She demands retribution, in the form of male life, for the physical and psychological shame inflicted on her as a result of the actions European conquest. Viewing the content of the piece together with its location, the artwork insists on redress for the ravages of colonisation. The fact that the artwork was commissioned by a black community that insisted on protecting the environment from commodification into a mall is a crucial component of interpreting the piece. The artwork, its location, and the actions of this community, make visible a value system that actively resists the dominant values of capitalism. The artwork contains messages of commonness, of the sacredness of nature and, the importance of active, political struggle in support of these values.



FIGURE 20: DRESSING THE PRINCESS, PRINCESS VLEI, ELEMENTS OF NATURE

The artwork can be considered a public literacy code or text because firstly it was created in dialogue with a community. Rather than imposing a particular view of the world onto the situation, this piece is a collective reflection of the messages and values of the Princess Vlei Forum. Importantly, the artwork powerfully links feelings to facts and highlights contrasts. The anger that overcomes the viewer when they are made fully aware of the content of the artwork stems from the facts of South African history. These facts are generally either omitted or distorted and by making them publically visible, mak1one urges the viewer to reflect. Furthermore the nature of reflection is dialectical in that the representation of the 'princess' myth makes the viewer consider the current threat of land dispossession in the form of the mall development relative to the dispossession of the San and the Khoe.

THEMATIC SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The recurring themes that emerge from the artworks are a validation of African, indigenous humanity. This includes recurring messages to care for nature and the earth. This validation is juxtaposed against a strong visual critique of colonisation. The critique extends from the past and teases out the continuities and legacies of colonisation and how these affect black communities in Cape Town. These representations instill a sense of Black Consciousness pride and Black Power thought. Importantly the notion of African culture is not static and tied to a romantic notion of pre-colonial times. Rather a hybrid African identity that empowers people with the tools to live powerfully in the world is advocated for.

The artworks also deal with the political struggle against the Apartheid regime. The images create dialogue about the nature of the South African transition to democracy. Particularly the locations of the artwork encourage critical thought among the viewers to decide personally what the changes and the continuities between apartheid and the New South Africa are. mak1one's art supports a reading that there has not been sufficient change in the lived experience of black South Africans. Furthermore, the artworks implore the viewers to decide for themselves what action needs to be taken to transform the current reality.

The artworks encourage the viewer to act powerfully in their lives. Hip Hop is presented as a culture that engenders agency among black youth from marginalised communities. In addition, the everyday actions of ordinary people expressing themselves freely are consistently endorsed in the artworks. Thirdly, actors for social change are encouraged to work alongside diverse groups who may be working for the same change in different ways. The artworks' reviewed contain a strong message of autonomy, of self-reliance and self-sufficiency and situating these capacities within collective work comes through in the artworks.

The artworks work to facilitate dialogue and pose problems instead of presenting solutions. The artworks address topics that are of immediate relevance to the communities in which they are located and connect generative emotions to facts about history. Furthermore the artworks evoke curiosity within viewers and stimulate an interest in the nature of true causality

by connecting a current issue to a historical one. Finally the artworks urge the viewers to become actively involved in transforming their society based on the information that they are presented.

mak1one seems to be communicating with Africans asserting that their beliefs are valid and should be discovered and engaged with. He is asserting that people need to act to break from the colonial weight and the weight of the post-colonial contradictions. Finally his message asserts that there are alternatives to the dominant portrayal of life and young black people can live a life that matters, that it is possible to do what you believe in - if you are prepared to accept the consequences of this decision.

CONCLUSIONS

We are all learning everyday. Most of this learning happens informally and takes place outside of a classroom. We live in a world that is increasingly infused with images and so much of what we learn is through pictures. Given the context of domination and oppression, the most pervasive form of learning domesticates the subservient to obediently conform to the roles required by the dominant culture. This is because the system of domination that results in the dispossession of the majority for the benefit of a few, at its most base level relies on the consent of the majority for the elite's right to rule. This granting of consent is termed hegemony. Hegemony requires structural relations that not only deprive the oppressed of material benefits but also strips them of their dignity. This mandatory shame that oppression requires is reinforced by the dominant value system of the ruling class. In this current milieu, these values include individualisation, commodification and profit maximisation.

But, people long to be free. Away from the gaze of power they believe themselves to be entitled to freedom and grow 'hidden transcripts', representations that cast them as such. As oppression grows, so too does discontent. Symbolic narratives of freedom coalesce into counter-ideologies that express the rage and dissatisfaction more clearly. Arts of resistance act as problem-posing codes that facilitate dialogue, stimulate intrigue and reflection, and importantly tap into the energy base of people's emotions of discontent. These narratives re-enforce people's sense of entitlement and results in them living and acting differently in the world. These actions threaten hegemony. The powerful, via ISAs attempt to co-opt and obliterate these sites and networks of resistance to maintain the status quo.

Nineteen-ninety-four (1994) marked the beginning of a period of acute ambivalence within South Africa. In order to recover its international stature and reputation and to respond to the internal violence that was sure to culminate in civil war, the apartheid state had to re-adjust its authoritarian, segregationist position or risk loosing total control. And so formal apartheid was set aside and neo-liberal democracy ushered in. The state unfurled a monolithic, silencing marketing campaign which would become known as the Rainbow Nation discourse. Former president the late Nelson Mandela and his willingness to forgive and *forget* past atrocities became the icon of the campaign and the relatively peaceful transition was widely attributed to his

‘Madiba Magic’. The campaign largely rested on the assertion that South Africans, despite race and class were united and one - an assertion that magically sidestepped issues of economic and social redress.

What did happen though is that black, and particularly young South Africans began living as though they *were* equal. Drawing inspiration and influence from local and global networks of Black Consciousness and Black Power thinking, those who were formally excluded began *taking* space they felt themselves entitled to. One of the visible residues of their presence was Hip Hop graffiti art. Cape Town became a Mecca for this form of expression. Walls across the City we re-appropriated for this purpose by the formerly excluded youth who were unsatisfied with the level of transformation. Instead of a European dream holiday resort, Cape Town began to visually resemble the Bronx, Beirut and Gaza. Youth would either appropriate walls or moveable surfaces without permission or gain the support of the equally dissatisfied in their communities to make their emotions and visions for the future public.

Empire struck back. The City of Cape Town took ten years to pass its controversial 2010 Graffiti By-Law. This means that the legal process surrounding the by-law began in 2000 at the height of Cape Town’s underground Hip Hop movement. The by-law outlaws both the practice of graffiti and through its regulatory insistence on state permission, outlaws the amoebic channels through which the self-discourse travels. Creating graffiti engenders a type of politics that excludes the state. People connect to each other and through these connections make agreements to which they hold each other to account. The regulatory framework of the by-law, by disallowing private property owners the right to create graffiti on their own walls without the permission of the state also outlaws this way of doing politics.

Benavides-Vanegas argues that the wall is in fact the “paper of the masses” and that the in the prohibition of graffiti exists a fear of allowing people to express their desires outside the closed framework of the written word (2005: 59). Interest is therefore piqued into what it is that the City of Cape Town is so afraid of. Referring to the messages identified in this research it would seem that the City of Cape Town is afraid of publically acknowledging that some of its residents believe that the struggle for liberation is not over; that appropriate retribution for the past crimes of colonisation, slavery and apartheid have not been meted out; that there are moments in the struggle for liberation which justifiably require violence against the state and commercial elite interest; that Cape Town is a black African, warrior city with a long history and present of

righteous struggle; and, ultimately that an unassuming constituent of globally connected and multi-literate youth are so lucid in their rage that they are not seeking solutions from within the dominant framework. Instead they are autonomously making their own language and establishing their own values. In ordinary, seemingly insignificant ways they are writing and reading rebellion.

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