# Subjectivity and forms of resistance

## The construction of resistance through discourse and embodied discursive practices in hip hop

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**Contents:**

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**Abstract:**

This study analyzed the process of subject formation in South African underground hip hoppers. The main focus of the study was to explore how resistance is constructed and achieved through embodied discursive practices and discourse in underground Hip Hop music. The study analyzed how the terms, 'Representing', 'Keeping it real' and 'Hustling', were used by hip hoppers in their construction of a hip hop subject. These terms were used by the hip hoppers as the standard against which all hip hoppers are compared if they are to be considered authentic hip hoppers.

It was found that resistance was framed in the form of a heroic narrative that made use of these vernacular terms. The word 'Hustling' was used to denote the difficulties that face the hero in a heroic narrative. This heroic narrative was a strategy in which the hip hoppers repositioned themselves as heroes fighting in a hard world, one full of inopportunity against people like themselves. Overcoming this space was important to the hip hoppers but retaining connections to it was also seen as equally important. Because of the history of opposition surrounding the emergence of hip hop, claiming and retaining marginalization remain important to hip hoppers in accounts of themselves.

## Introduction

The study traces how the process of subject formation occurs through the medium of discourse. It looks at the discursive repertoires (Wetherell, Gill, Edwards & Potter, 1990) that make up these discourses, and how these are constantly drawn upon to produce believable and verifiable accounts and versions of reality (Wetherell, 1999). Durrheim, Mtose and Brown (2011) state that discourses are the well known meaning systems that are used to produce versions of reality. The claims that subjects make about themselves in talk are not unquestionable reflections of reality, but are accounts that need to be constantly justified, verified and often defended. These discourses are put to work in ways that produce comprehensible and therefore believable accounts or claims of reality. The study drew from Butler's (1993; 1994; 2005) conception of how subject formation occurs through performative speech acts which put conditions for how the subject that they name must live and in effect produce that subject. The vernacular terms analyzed in this study were therefore the performative speech acts that prescribed how the subject must act if they are to be accepted as a true hip hop head.

It is argued in the study that acceptance in underground hip hop culture is a process that is dependent on the claim of authenticity, and that authenticity is a claim that needs to be constantly proved and defended. Marginalization is something that needs to be constantly brandished by hip hoppers in their talk in order to show that they are authentic members of the culture. Hip hoppers claims to portray reality are not claims that stand unchallenged, as is often the case in literature. Rap music is not a true reflection of reality. Rap music becomes a performance that involves certain claims that are often made and need to be accounted for and defended even by hip hoppers themselves. Marginalization, in its various forms, plays a very large role towards making this claim, is a very important component of the process of subject formation, and it is used in the creation and development of a heroic narrative to create the resistant subject. The heroic narrative is used by hip hoppers to reposition themselves as fighters, to construct themselves as some form of redemptive figure. Connection to the marginal space that hip hoppers claim to occupy remains important at all stages of their lives, even when they are seen to be successful and this is known as 'Keeping it real'.

These discourses and discursive resources are widely held units of meaning in the hip hop community that are tied to how hip hoppers go about doing hip hop and living their lives; it looked at

how these discourses are put to work in the production of a resistant subject and explored how these discourses achieve their effect to qualify hip hoppers as resistant subjects within the hip hop community and broader society. As a matter of course then, the study drew from the theories of Judith Butler (1993, 1994, 2005) on the process of subject formation. The study found that to be a hip hopper is to play a part in a highly regulated system of meaning, one which involves negotiation and acceptance, and in which claims to authenticity are the governing principles of action and acceptance into the culture.

The study has implications for discourse analysis as it looks at the interaction between the real and immaterial in the production of experience. It looks at how discourses play a part in the production of things in the 'real' world, and how the things produced in discourse come to be perceived as real. It shows how discourses do not reflect/mirror subjectivity, but rather construct, and are used in specific ways to construct subjects.

*Chapter outline*

The first chapter starts off by looking at the role of music in society. It tries to argue that music has been largely tied to social reality, in the form of political movements and social protests, that writing about music has come to assume an unquestioning stance about the reality presented by musicians in their music. In the literature, music is written about as if it is an unquestionable reflection of reality and society. The literature review deals with why this may be the case, arguing that this may have to do with the special role that music has played in the expression of resistance in social or political movements. Resistance or protest is often tied to real and actual lived social experiences. Music is therefore used to express wide scale social upheaval or discontent that is based on real lived experiences, often giving birth to genres of music such as rock, reggae, pop or hip hop.

The chapter then proceeds to give an outline of Black music as an expression of reality and resistance. It outlines the social conditions and realities under which each of the Black musical genres were born, revealing the special role of resistance in each of them. The chapter then goes on to look at hip hop as an extension of this historical tradition of Black music and resistance. The literature review then continues to look at some of the writing that has been done in relation to hip hop, arguing that there is often the assumption that hip hop music portrays the reality expressed by hip hoppers. Because literature about music has continued to be largely within anthropology (Fernandez, 2003), social work, sociology, cultural studies (Rose, 1990) and political studies, it has often been interpreted as the measure of truth about individual's experiences. So the perceptions that result from this then are that whatever we find in the content of musicians is truth.

Writing that problematises these approaches is then presented. The argument centers on the performative and constructed nature of identities and performances in hip hop music, going briefly into the discursive resources that are utilized in such constructions. These discursive resources are used to construct and shape subjectivity in comprehensible and understandable ways, but are not necessarily 'true' about the subjective states of the hip hoppers.

# 1. Literature review

This chapter looks at the production of subjects through discourse. My argument is based on Parker's (1992) writing about the debates that confront discourse and discourse analysts. Parker (1992, p. 23) poses the question "is discourse 'real?'". I argue that discourses in texts have mediated representations in such a way that they have been perceived of as real reflections of that reality. I use music to show how discourses have influenced representation of social reality. I take a look at Black music in particular, from soul music to rap. Black music, rap in particular, has challenged or reproduced dominant discourses about reality.

The debates are sparked by the mind-world dichotomy, realist and constructionist accounts of the world. In realist accounts, things in people's minds are the direct sensory perceptions of things in the outside world. They are the correlates of behavior and explain behavioural patterns. Actions in realist accounts of music are the direct expressions of psychological states.

*Music and social conditions*

The relationship between music, reality and social protest is one that has been observed by writers and thinkers for a long time (Deutsch, 1984). Writing about music and reality has developed from an extreme realist position. This position could be found in the Pythagorean belief that "the ultimate explanation of musical phenomena lies in physics" (Deutch, 1984). The Pythegorean view postulated that music served as the reflection of the sound made by heavenly bodies in motion called the Divine Harmony. The empirical basis for this theory was the fact "that bodies of far less astronomical size in earth made sounds in their speed and movement and that therefore bodies of far greater astronomical size in the universe also made sounds in their speed and movement" (Aristotle, 1930, p. 290, cited in Deutsch, 1984, p. 2). The Pythagorean view of the universe was one in which the relative distances between the heavenly bodies formed musical intervals, called the theory of The Harmony of the Spheres. So for example according to this theory, "the distance between the Earth and the Moon formed a whole tone" (Deutsch, 1984, p. 3). This was one of the earliest and most extremely rationalist views of music and social reality, in which the sensorial experience of music correlated directly with observable, measurable and definitive features of the physical world.

The direct correlation of music and the objective social world came to be studied in relation to people's relationship with their social worlds. Plato wrote that "the modes of music are never disturbed without unsettling of the most fundamental political and social conventions" (Republic, Book IV:424; in Brown, 2008, p. 1). This view influenced studies of music and culture significantly in that thereafter, music was often seen as directly woven into the very fabric of society. According

to Brown (2008), music has always been a signifier of social transformation, a conveyor of political messages. Most musical genres in history have been born in some political context, from American country music with its very patriotic overtones, to rock in Soviet Russia. Cerulo (1984, cited in Brown, 2008, p. 1) for example has demonstrated how music creation responds to events in society and that music reflects the realities in a society, a position that has its roots in the Platonic view of music.

*Black music and resistance*

There is general agreement amongst musical critics that Black music has been a portrayal of Black social experience. Pinn (1999, p. 10) writes: *"For African Americans, the presentation of life as a multi leveled reality has often taken form through musical expression. Music chronicles and critiques developments regarding the complexities of life within the Black community, with spirituals responding to the hardships of slavery"*. Because of the Black oppression, Black music has been written of as a reflection of pain and resistance (Martinez, 1997). In the 1960s was the Civil Rights Struggle in the United States, a time of intense political upheaval against oppressive racial laws against African Americans. In 1967 Aretha Franklin, the queen of soul, released R-E-S-P-E-C-T, a song that became the symbol for the celebration of racial pride, and in 1968, the grandfather of soul, James Brown released 'Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud' (Verney, 2003, p. 72).

However, if there was a voice in music calling for pride and hope, there was also a more urgently militant voice, one 'representing' expressed dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the present conditions in American society, represented by the release of Soul group Sly and The Family Stone's, 'There's A Riot Going On' released in 1971, which was an attack on American values (Verney, 2003). Gil Scott-Heron warned society with a bleak vision of the future of America with 'The Revolution Will Not Be Televised' and 'Winter In America'.

*Black music and resistance in South Africa*

In South Africa too, the development of music took place against the backdrop of an oppressive racial political climate. South African music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century cannot be studied without any recourse to the country's political history. Much of the South African music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century developed in the 'townships' and therefore the township is pivotal to any study of music and the social experiences that it represented then and thereafter (Andersson, 1981). The South African government had always held political ideas based on racial segregation and the inferiority of the indigenous peoples. The 1913 Land Act had dispossessed the indigenous people of their land,

reserving a major and better portion of  land for White people (Andersson, 1981). The indigenous peoples were sidelined to rural areas which were undeveloped, forced to survive mainly on subsistence farming (Ellapen, 2007). They were thus forced to move to the cities (mainly to the mines in Johannesburg as migrant labourers) in order to find work to support their families. In 1950, two years after the nationalist government came into power, The Group Areas Act was enforced based on the "*strict separation of the South African population into separate residential areas based on skin colour*", different residential zones *"in which racial groups enjoyed different privileges and amenities"* (Ellapen, 2007, p. 115). The townships were basically lower class living areas on the fringes of White cities, created to ensure a supply of cheap labour to the cities, and were heavily regulated.Townships were marginalized spaces and the people in the townships were marginalized people. Andersson (1981, p. 23) writes, "*isolated on the outskirts of the city, without their families around them, the workers experienced a great deal of loneliness and suffered from the lack of recreational facilities*".

It was against such a backdrop that musical genres such as marabi emerged. Marabi emerged in the shebeens, illegal pubs, *"and was made from whatever instruments were available, by anyone who could play or make music"* (Andersson, 1981, p. 23). It was noisy music that provided the people solace. In this context, other musical genres (influenced obviously by American music and trends) such as Afro-Jazz were to emerge. Afro-Jazz songs such as Hugh Masekela's 'Stimela', described a train moving 'through all the hinterlands of Southern Africa', collecting migrant labors on the way to the mines in Johannesburg. In the 1940s, Kwela music was popular and is said to have derived its name from '*Khwela-Khwela'*, police vans that patrolled the streets on the lookout for illegal street gambling. During such incidents, the people would hide the evidence of the game and someone would play the pennywhistle until the police van had passed by (Andersson, 1981, p. 28). Freedom songs were greatly sung in the 1950s in the wake of the Pass laws and the 'forced removals' (part of procedure of resettlement for the indigenous people). Some of these songs include "*Mayibuye iAfrika*" (which was a call to return Africa and the land of Africans to its people) during the passive resistance campaign of the 1950s, "*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*" (which is now the South African national anthem) sung by women during their protest march at the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 in opposition to the pass laws (Andersson, 1981). Songs such as "*Mayibuye iAfrika*" became a major part of the ideology of political groups such as the Pan African Nationalist Congress.

 Music such as Kwela and Gumboot dance (which was made by migrant workers who made rhythmic beats on the surface of their work boots) were born in such contexts) (Muller, 2004; Muller, 2008). Gumboot dance is a form of dance and music that emerges specifically within the context of the Gold

mines in Johannesburg, created by migrant workers. Maskanda music became popular at *"a time when guitarists, collectively called maskanda, walked the street singing songs of migrant experience in a style that reminded them of their rural homes"* (Muller, 2008, p. 113). In this sense it is true that music reflected the experiences of people at a certain time and place and that these experiences have been tied to the resistance of oppressive social realities in which Blacks have found themselves in.

**Hip hop music and resistance: a brief introduction to hip hop music**

The most recent youth musical culture to emerge as a reflection of social life in the Black community is rap. Pinn (1999, p. 10) states that *"rap music provides a discussion of contemporary Black life which actively engages issues directly relevant to the civil rights struggle and its socio political as well as economic aftermath"*. Hip hop emerged in the late 1970s to early 1980s in the Bronx, New York (Rose, 1994, Verney, 2003). Hip hop is represented by its four cultural elements, Break dancing (or b-boying), rapping (also known as emceeing), graffiti art and deejaying (Rose, 1994). I deal with hip hop music, rap, in particular here. Hip hop culture consists of four element: dance (breaking), art (graffiti), DJing (turntablism) and music (rapping) (Alim & Pennycook, 2007, p. 89-90). The musical element, rap, is the most prominent in hip hop culture. I will use hip hop music and rap music interchangeably in this thesis.

*Rap music*

Rap music is an oral art form that "involves rhymed story telling" over beats (Rose, 1994, p. 2). Rap music has been described as composed broadly of two types, underground rap and commercial rap. This distinction can further be divided into party rap, conscious rap (sometimes called progressive rap; Newman, 2007), underground rap, gangsta rap and hardcore rap (Cummings & Roy, 2002). Conscious rap tends to be associated with underground rap. Hardcore rap and gangsta rap tend to be associated with commercial rap. This of course is quite an arbitrary distinction because rappers who are conscious can also be commercial rappers, such as rappers Common, Talib Kweli and Mos Def, meaning that it may not always be easy to draw distinctions between the two broad genres (Rose, 2008).

Conscious rap music tends to be critical of society. Commercial rap on the other hand tends to be less critical of the oppressive conditions, working with and within the system in order to get the best benefits and portray the best picture about life and therefore its content tends to be less critical or directly questioning. Commercial rap can be defined as 'commercial' because it tends to promote capitalist principles, stressing individualism and competition for surviving in the 'industry'. What is

of most importance in commercial rap is to produce music that sells to the largest amount of people (where success is rated according to number of units sold and ratings on the music charts) and this is usually to preadolescents and adolescents (Stephens & Few, 2007).

In the 1980s, messages in rappers' lyrics were highly political, seen in the release of records by Public Enemy such as '*Fight The Power*' in their album '*It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Stop Us'* in 1987.  Such releases were a stance against corrupt government policies that were felt to be to the disadvantage of the urban minorities in the United States. The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the emergence of gangsta rap, a genre of rap that was fraught with  controversial lyrical content (Ogbar, 1999). Gangsta rap incorporated images of violence and guns, and was deeply rooted in the street gang culture of the Crips and Bloods gangs in Los Angeles (Verney, 2003). These musicians distrusted any forms of authority, such as Law Enforcement and the Bush Administration in general, depicting them as oppressive, with songs such as 'Fuck Tha Police' by the group N.W.A. (Niggaz Wit Attitude) in 1987.

In 1992, Ice-T released the song 'Cop Killer' which was publicly denounced as 'sick' by President Bush. In response to allegations of indecency, these artists responded by saying that it was American Society and Law Enforcement in particular that was indecent through their discriminatory practices towards Blacks. These artists proclaimed that they were 'representing real issues' that afflicted them daily in their neighborhoods at the hands of White American Society. It is also significant that 1992, the year of the release of 'Cop Killer' was also the year of the L.A. Riots, after the Rodney King incident, in which Black motorist Rodney King was beaten to death by two White police officers who were subsequently acquitted of all charges.

*Rap music in South Africa*

Rap music in South Africa, like most of the music preceding it finds its origin in the townships (The Cape Flats) in Cape Town in the wake of the forced removals that resulted from The Group Areas Act. Estranged, in a context of poverty, displacement, crime and drugs, the youth sought alternative ways to express themselves and took up rap music from the USA which at the time expressed similar politics of rage against oppression as in South Africa. Groups such as Black Noize, Prophets of  Da City (POC) and Brasse Vanne Kaap are credited as the pioneers of South African hip hop culture (Maduna, 2009). According to Maduna (2009) rap groups such as POC did not enjoy any mainstream appeal in South Africa and were in fact banned because of their politically charged lyrical content. This banning of protest music was not new to POC, in fact earlier popular resistance music icons such as Miriam Makeba had been banned in the past. They (POC) challenged the racial ideology of

the nationalist government and challenged racial thinking, commented on squalid living conditions in the ghetto even after 'freedom' (they were very critical of this 'freedom') had been achieved (Haupt, 2003). In 'Black Thing' they show the influences of Black Consciousness, and the hip hop principle of knowledge of self embodied in conscious rap music, which largely influenced their music. 'Black thing' "interrogates assumptions about racial identity" by posing the term 'Coloured' as one that is not value free (Haupt, 2003, p. 6). POC can therefore be said to have expressed some of the discontent and anger related to the social conditions that are said to have afflicted the 'problem youth' of the early 1990s (Seekings, 1996).

POC, Black Noize, Brasse Vanne Kaap and Cape Town all female rap group Godessa have all remained true to the activist spirit of conscious hip hop that is embodied elsewhere in the world by people such as KRS-One of the Temple of Hip Hop and Afrika Bambattaa of the Universal Zulu Nation (who were amongst the founding members of the culture of hip hop) in the United States. Their organizations include Heal the Hood, headlined by Black Noize member Emile XY? which aims to educate youth from the townships against the dangers of gangsterism and drug abuse, social ills that have afflicted the Cape Flats for a long time (Haupt, 2003). Not all of South African rap music seems to be in the vein that rap music in Cape Town is. Pritchard (2010) states that commercial rap music is now very common in Cape Town. The other major city of rap music is Johannesburg with seems to enjoy producing music with a more commercial appeal although there are underground segments of rap music that are very alive. There are different linguistic names for different ethnic rap styles, for example Mafikeng is famous for a rap linguistic style called *Motswako* (Tswana rap) represented b rappers such as Tuks Singana and HHP, *Spaza* (Xhosa rap) which hails from Cape Town and the Eastern Cape represented by groups such as Driemanskap from Gugulethu and Rattex from Khayelitsha, *Gaamtaal* which is Afrikaans rap from the Cape Flats and *vernac* which is isiZulu rap. Rap music is therefore expressed and enjoyed in a variety of ways and languages in South Africa.

*The Afrocentric roots of rap music*

Cummings and Roy (2002) have conceptualized resistance in hip hop music from a discursive point of view, showing in their argument that hip hop makes use of Afrocentric discourses through its use of the characteristic of *nommo*, the power of the spoken word. In Africa the spoken word is used to empower, to reflect and to create awareness or alter consciousness through the use of metaphor, idioms and proverbs in the same way that rappers use rap to express their own immediate concerns, and in this sense they are seen as village griots. Hip hop's focus on black historical perspectives and

artforms as sources of inspiration, and cultural rootedness and originality all emphasise Afrocentric dimensions of being (Rose, 1994). This Afrocentric rhetoric is seen in the concept of 'stylin'. For example names like Afrika Bambaata and The Universal Zulu Nation, Queen Latifah and the X-Clan all allude to royalty, cultural rootedness and clanhood. South African rappers can also be said to be partaking in this spirit of Afrocenticity if we can believe that a celebration and pride of one's 'mother tongue' or indigenous language represents a pride in one's African heritage, a need to reach out to one's people. So all the different rap languages across the different locales (what Pennycook (2007) refers to as glocal languages) of South Africa represent this pride and need to communicate in a way that is representative of one's language.

*The marginalization of rap in South Africa*

Rap music in South Africa has enjoyed its fair share of discrimination and marginalization. Besides rap groups such as POC being banned in its early years (late 80s and early 90s) rap music was overshadowed by musical genres such as "Kwaito music and the Pantsula culture" (Maduna, 2009, p.4). Local artists could not get recording deals so they were forced to open "rudimentary recording studios in their backyards" (Maduna, 2009, p. 4) and share beats that they created on software (Pieterse, 2010). Rappers were criticized and are still criticized for imitating American culture. Popular derogatory terms leveled at rappers include 'ama-nigger', 'oo my-man' and 'amakoporoshe' (stated by kwaito star Mzekezeke in the song 'amakoporoshe' which was a 'diss' (insult) to South African hip hop culture). Commercial music in South Africa is represented by people such as Eltido, Teargas and AKA (Hype Magazine, November 2011). However, even though commercial music has been criticized as apolitical and non resistant (Pritchard, 2010) rappers such as Eltido have positioned themselves as 'Hustlers' as appeared in the November issue of South African hip hop magazine, Hype Magazine, titled "Eltido, the fierce hustler out to get it ALL". So South African rappers such as Eltido are staking a claim in the post Apartheid South African context of opportunity and freedom.

*Rap music and reality*

Hip hop culture has always privileged what is deemed real and genuine. Social realities and experiences amongst hip hoppers have been most valuable when they are real. This is seen commonly in calls for rappers and fans to 'keep it real' and 'represent'. According to Smith (1997, p. 347), "[t]o 'represent' in hip hop terminology remains true to just about any dictionary's definition. Essentially it means to become a walking signifier, the self embodiment of one's value system concerning power, success and individual or communal acclaim. To 'represent' is to provide up to the moment answers to the following question: what do you stand for, where do you come from?

With whom do you choose to associate? How pleasurable is the life that you are living? In the performative sense, to 'represent' is to literally become that which one names as oneself against all the odds".

To 'keep it real' means to be true to oneself and one's surrounding, to be uncompromising in the extent that one goes to express themselves truthfully. Basu (1998, p. 347) writes that "'keeping it real' is seen to include 'being true to yourself' not losing your identity and integrity" and that 'keeping it real' means "not faking it, talking about what you know and within the realm of your experience, not living vicariously through people's experiences". To 'keep it real' implies being genuine in whatever one does. These terms can be a source of trouble when one considers the contentious nature of representation that has followed hip hop. These terms imply truth claims about reality.

'Beefs' or conflicts in hip hop culture have revolved largely around this issue of 'keeping it real' and 'representing'. In the United States these were reflected in the violent deaths of Tupac Shakur in 1996 and The Notorious BIG in 1997, rappers from Brooklyn and California in what was called the "Eastcoast Westcoast split' (Rosenthal, 2006, p. 673). The violence that these incidents resulted in was caused mainly by the accusations of who was 'real' or 'fake' between the two rappers but it escalated into a trans-coastal war that had very serious repercussions. In South Africa, the call to 'keep it real' and 'represent' has come from both outside and within the hip hop culture. As stated before, rappers were initially criticized for imitating Americans, not being South African (with the exception of those who started to rap in either *Motswako*, *Vernac*, *Gaamtaal* or *Spaza*). Contentions over what is real or not within the hip hop culture have been between underground rappers and commercial rappers.

*Representations and contestations of rap music in discourse*

Public concern over the lyrical content of rap was reflected in the 'culture wars' of the 1990s. The culture wars involved debates over appropriate cultural standards of music in the public discourse. Central to the debate was rap  and complaints that it was  "violent and misogynistic" (Ogbar, 1999, p. 165). Rappers had always maintained that their lyrics depicted a true reflection of their social worlds. The drugs, the poverty, misogyny and crime that were prevalent in their lyrics were all present in the ghettoes. They argued that what they were stating in their lyrics true. The rappers claimed that they were the social representatives and voices of the Black community. The rappers were the dominant voices in their societies. But this time it was members of the Black community itself that contested

the representations of their communities in rap music, attacking rappers for gross misrepresentation, negligence and irresponsibility (Ogbar, 1999).

Representations of rap music and culture in the media and literature were initially permeated by very pathologising discourses. The early politically charged lyrical content of rap music was the most pressing concern to members of mainstream society. Rap was perceived of as dangerous music. Rose (1990) looked at the sociologically based crime discourses that framed rap in the media in the United States. According to the author media representations of rap concerts described rap concerts as highly volatile spaces, subject to random and violent outbursts of violence. These discourses created real fears in show promoters, to such an extent that rappers were refused access to performance venues, or when rap concerts did occur, they were highly invigilated social spaces. Rose (1990) argues that these discourses reveal age old fears of Black people as dangerous others.

The representations fueled by discourse surrounding rap music have continued to influence real fears about the propriety of rap culture. A study by Knobloch-Westerwick, Musto and Shaw (2008) in the *Journal of Media Psychology* studied rebellion in rap/Hip Hop and rock music from 1993 to 2003 "for rebellious messages about impulsive and hostile behaviours" (p. 15). The authors explain that rap and rock "are also the two genres that are usually associated with rebellion, defiant messages and even threats to the proper socialization of adolescents" (p. 15). A content and thematic analysis was done on lyrics in rap music and indeed it was found that "the majority of top songs contain rebellion" (Knobloch-Westerwick, Musto & Shaw, 2008, p. 15). Lyrics were said to contain content about impulsive behaviours more than hostile behaviour. The study shows how lyrics have the potential to improperly socialize adolescents who take them seriously. It is assumed that adolescents will identify with their favorite rappers as real figures and therefore emulate them.

Often a content analysis will be done where a rapper's lyric's contain will be taken to be truth. So for example, Pinn (1999, p. 11) presents lyrics by Snoop Dogg, (It aint no fun [if the homies cant have none]) taken off his Doggystyle album: *"I know the (expletive) mine, so I'ma hit a couple mo' times, then I'm through wit it, there's nothing else to do with it, pass it to the homie now you hit it, cause she aint nothing but a (expletive) to me, and you all know (expletive) aint nothing but a (expletive) to me"*. It is argued that the lyrics mask a fear of women as a threat to men in a space of limited resources. In other words they show that men hate women because they are 'gold diggers' who are out to get a man's money. This song then, contains a truth claim about the creator of the lyrics and the subjects of the lyrics.

*Problematising 'reality'*

Rose (2008) like the older generation of rap critics during the culture wars criticizes rappers who claim to 'keep it real' or 'represent' negative images of African Americans. She argues that the over-glorification of, drugs, prostitution, misogyny and homophobia are not as representative of living conditions to the extent that we think they are. It is a construction that is fueled by a need to sell records to consumers. She states that instead of resisting the social ills of the ghettoes that they claim to be resisting they are in fact reproducing them through this over-glorification. Rose's (2008) final request is to ask fans of hip hop to be very critical of the representations and reflections of reality that rappers claim to be giving, to recognize that the identities that most rappers claim in their lyrics are sometimes merely performances. She enjoins the reader and hip hop fan to be very critical of what they accept as real in hip hop.

Tricia Rose (1990, p. 276) has argued that " confining the definition of the cultural politics of rap to lyrical content addresses only the most obvious and explicit facet of the politics of Black cultural expression". In other words it has the tendency to be only a superficial account or engagement with the subject matter. It tells us what we all know about the ghetto and Black living conditions. Rose (1990, p. 277) goes on to say that "cultural politics is not simply poetic politics. It is the struggle over context, meaning and public space" . This statement reveals the contested nature of representation and meaning. Even within hip hop culture itself, there were conflicting representations surrounding marginalization in the Black community, seen for instances in the different representations of  being Black between conscious rappers and gangsta rappers in the United States (Rose, 2008).

**The formation of the resistant subject through discourse: subjectivity, recitation and stylization**.

*Self stylization*

All aspects of our lives are governed and shaped by the moral stances that we take as particular subjects. It is the relationship between these moral stances, beliefs, hopes and desires and the social world or realities we are in that form the basis for how we respond to the social world. In her book *Giving an Account of Oneself*, Judith Butler (2005) deals with how groups develop in relation to the norms that they seek to contest. She argues that subject positioning occurs in relation to an embodied 'other', what she calls 'the constitutive other' (Butler 2005). The argument is that the subject defines itself according to what it is not, defines itself against the norms and morals that it seeks to contest. According to Butler's (2005) reading of Foucault, the subject comes to form and create itself through a recognition of the position that it takes relative to an embodied 'constitutive other' and this involves defining oneself though certain actions that one engages in to spell out one's position in relation to, for example a moral stance that one assumes. Foucault writes:

> All moral action involves a relationship with the reality in which it is carried out, and a relationship with the self. The latter is not simply "self awareness" but self formation as an "ethical subject", a process in which the individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goal. And this requires him to act on himself, to monitor, test, improve and transform himself. There is no specific moral action that does not refer to a unified moral conduct, no moral conduct that does not call for the forming of oneself as an ethical subject; no forming of the ethical subject without "modes of subjectivation" and an "ascetics" or "practices of the self" that support them. Moral action is indissociable from these forms of self activity (Foucault, 1985, p. 28; cited in Butler, 2005, p. 18).

Moral action is deeply tied to the context in which it is carried out. Growing up in the ghettoes provides particular sets of options, particular sets of alternatives for people living there, alternatives and options that shape the type of people they become. People style themselves according to some precepts that they will follow. These precepts are embodiments of who they are to the world or to

themselves. This relationship in that particular context then sets the stage for the actions by which the subjects will relate to each other. The same is true for people living in the suburbs or anywhere else. Butler then goes on to say that  morality is inventive and requires inventiveness (Butler, 2005, p. 18). People's dreams, beliefs hopes and desires may occasionally change the manner in which they are expressed or approached, the specific conducts that describe relationships between people are always being challenged or maintained in new and interesting ways. This requires that the subject be inventive in how their moral stances are redeployed and expressed. This is where hip hoppers have crafted themselves as subjects of resistance, through such discursive tools as graffiti and rap, through the critical moral stances assumed by conscious rappers and the explicitly confrontational and controversial moral stances assumed by gangsta rappers. Of course gangsta rappers are also constructed as problematic by wider society and hence the letters from the FBI with groups such as N.W.A.

This self stylization, this auto crafting of oneself as a resistant subject is achieved or made possible through the use of discourses. Discourses provide us with ways of speaking about the world in meaningful ways (Brown, Durrheim and Mtose, 2011). They therefore construct the world for us in a way that we understand. For example, much of the conscious rap of the early era of U.S. and South African rap reflected a discourse of militancy, social consciousness raising and mobilization, seen in album titles such as *It Takes a Nation of Millions To Hold Us Back* by Public Enemy in the U.S., and *Universal Souljaz* and *Age of Truth* by Prophets of  Da City in South Africa (Brown, 2003). Such rap albums articulated a discourse of militancy influenced by Pan Africanism, Afrocentricity (Cummings & Roy, 2002), and in South Africa, principles of the Black Consciousness Movement. In this view, the rappers were constructing themselves as 'freedom fighters', and the fans who listened to them constructed themselves as soldiers who were part of 'the struggle', or people who were being conscientised about 'the struggle'. In this way, fans could participate in this discourse, since the discourse called for a united front and collective action in the spirit of collective resistance. In this process they were using already existing practices in new contexts and in new ways, in the creation of new forms of subjectivity that were meant to influence practices. The discourse here is therefore 'anti-establishment' and 'freedom fighters'.

*Performance*

There is an important relationship between discourse and performance. Performance involves stylization, citation and recitation. The self stylization, this self crafting, the auto creation of the subject and its mode of being require discursive resources for their formation, to bring their meaning

into being. These discursive resources therefore have a performative function. According to Butler (1993) performativity occurs through citation and recitation, and recitation occurs every time discourses are put into use. Citation and recitation is the reiteration of norms when challenging or maintaining of existing norms. Whenever these norms are repeated in everyday use, they are cited or recited and therefore they are performed (Goffman, 1956). According to Goffman (1956) there is a great amount of rehearsal in the presentations that we give of ourselves to others. Therefore how well the impressions we give of ourselves to others depends on how well rehearsed and believable the sense of self we want to present is. We need to give a seamless, well presented, apparently real and non contradictory sense of the self we want to provide our audience.

People have a whole host of resources that go into a construction of the sense of self they want to achieve. In one sense, rap has its roots in the Black oral tradition of the West African praise poet, the griot, and the Caribbean and West Indies tradition of toasting and signifying . But it also has its roots in The Bronx, New York. Therefore from a pan Africanist perspective African Americans want to keep their African identities so they use African traditions to accomplish this sense of sense that connects them to their African roots. This recitation and self stylization makes use of already existing discursive resources, and uses them as tools for inversion, for inventing or creating new states of subjectivity. Metaphor and rhetoric for example, in the tradition of oral (African praise poetry for rappers) or written poetry is a linguistic resource that is used by rappers and hip hoppers to affect the minds of listeners. So for conscious rappers as well as for gangsta rappers, the social order is inverted to result in counter-hegemonic practices.

For example, in rap, the English language is inverted through Ebonics, a way of talking among hip hoppers based largely on African American Vernacular English and street slang. African American Vernacular English is English spoken by Black Americans with an emphasis on post-vocalic R-lessness (dropping the R sound when speaking, for example 'sto'' instead of 'store' and 'mo' instead of 'more', 'fo' sho' instead of 'for sure') and the use of copula deletion (deleting the copula in speech, for example saying 'where you at?' instead of 'where *are* you?' and 'we at the sto' instead of 'we *are* at the store') (Cutler, 1999). Much of the street slang that artists use in their lyrics has many features of AAVE, and is often taken up by fans, so that both fans and artists co-construct this meaning system by continuously using it, in whatever new form it may emerge in.

Cutler (1999) explores how this linguistic feature of hip hop has been adopted by White middle and upper class youth as a form of rebellion against White upper and middle class values of proper English use and propriety, and as a form of identification with hip hop. What has been discursively

recited in hip hop Ebonics is AAVE and it has been used as a marker and celebration of identity, a self stylization. So we can see here how language, Ebonics, in particular, becomes a discursive resource, becomes co-opted into people's way of talking, to such an extent that it becomes a way of doing things, part of being a person. White middle class children have taken these features of black speech and incorporated it into their speech and social interactions to create a self and social identity. This has been referred to as 'Styling the Other' (Sweetland, 2002, p. 515). These speech features are derived from listening to hip hop music and or from having friends that are Black.

*Identity creation and performance*

Identities in hip hop are constructions and selves are performances. Many youth from across the globe can partake in the cultural identity of hip hop in varying ways. Mitchell (2001) has described hip hop as "a vehicle for global youth affiliations and a tool for reworking local identity all over the world" ( in Pennycook, 2007, p. 102). So for instance Fraley (2009) has looked at how the rapper Eminem deals with the problem of authenticity as a white rapper in an industry dominated by blacks. Hip hop music revolves around authenticity and 'keeping it real', reflecting one's experiences in a way that is considered real. Most hip hop music is done by black people, a majority of whom come from lower socio economic conditions although this is changing very fast. Eminem draws from these aspects of the Black cultural experience, the ghetto, poverty, a single parent (absent father) house hold and problems with drugs, as well as the fact that he has Black friends (he has a crew called D12) as childhood friends. Eminem draws from these aspect of the public discourse and is able to successfully gain acceptance as both a white rapper and black rapper.

*Critique*

The more recent perspectives about hip hop mean trouble for those who still hold on to somewhat realist accounts of hip hop subjectivity. A realist depiction of social reality has tended to permeate hip hop discourse. This depiction stemmed from the realist treatment with which Black music has been attended to in general. Hip hoppers themselves have argued that their portrayals of life and of themselves in their music are accurate depictions of reality. This meant that discourse in hip hop came to be objectified in ways that were real. However, there have been alternative, more progressive voices that have disputed the content of this reality within and outside the hip hop community.

Recent studies have looked at the multiple ways in which subversive reality is constructed. Hip hop is subversive in contradictory ways. Hip hoppers draw on discourses that are in the world to

construct believable performances of self. Performances have cultural norms, they contain very well rehearsed, well practiced cultural scripts because they are part of people's daily routines (Goffman, 1956). This is what makes people's accounts of who they claim to be believable or not. Therefore the practice of these performances by a subject is really a practice of the self so that being a hip hopper is actually not something that is as natural and true as it seems, but something that is well practiced and rehearsed because it is recited in every performance in which a person is called to appear as a hip hopper.

The question becomes: now that rappers say that they reflect reality, how do they achieve this, how do they pull of the claim that what they are representing is reality? The answer lies in the performances that they do, in the discursive resources that they make use of during these performances. The focus of this research is not whether these performances and constructions are true or not, whether they reflect reality or not, but rather how they are made to come across as true, as believable and as credible by the people who perform them. We need to move beyond realist accounts of subjectivity and look at how the self  is performed and accounted for in social interaction.

The problem however, with most of the literature on hip hop is that it still has the tendency to treat hip hop and resistance as if they were reflections of absolute truth, as if the content of what hip hoppers say about themselves were an accurate reflection about themselves and the realities and contexts they are often proclaimed to be in. So the impression that we get is that all those who are hip hoppers are naturally and unquestionably reflecting their true experiences from whatever backgrounds they come from, presented in these studies as an act of resistance. What the hip hoppers say and do are taken as true and innocent expressions of who they are and where they come from. These studies show how hip hoppers (especially in the United States of America) come from marginalized backgrounds and are therefore marginalized people who in the context of their actions as hip hoppers are resisting marginalization. These are terms that are used to stake claims of being an authentic or real hip hopper (Basu, 1998).

Also, studies do not really show what goes into the construction of the people who are claimed to be true reflections of social experience and conditions. They give a picture of a complete subject, one that is true because the researchers have shown how the subject is from that or this context and therefore truly reflecting the social conditions of that context and therefore they are a true hip hopper. There tends therefore to be this unquestionable correlation between hip hop, space and place and authenticity (see for example Forman, 2000). So when accounts of hip hop subjectivity and identity

are presented in the form of lyrics, they are already constructed by the analyst as containing some accurate measure of truth.

However, I wanted to argue that in these studies we do not get a full sense of the subject that is being referred to. We get a complete picture of the subject without really fully knowing how it got to be formed. Therefore, the lyrics omit a crucial part of the action component that is often a part of or present in talk and contextual interaction, that part that actually makes the process of subject formation visible, in that they present us with what appears to be a fully formed subject. What meaning systems did the subject make use of in order to present themselves as a credible representation of the things being referred to in lyrics. What would be more interesting would be to look at how this subject comes to be. What are the discursive tools that hip hoppers draw on to craft themselves as subjects and how are they put to work in social interaction.

What this study wanted to show is how hip hop is a site for identity construction, and not necessarily an absolutely true reflection of social experiences and conditions. The statement by Mitchell (2001; in Pennycook, 2007) that hip hop is a site for global youth affiliations is true but it requires a deeper engagement with here. Affiliation involves identification. What are the discursive mechanisms by which that affiliation and identification are granted and achieved in the process of subject formation? Are affiliation and identification in hip hop guaranteed just because one proclaims to be a hip hopper and talks the language of hip hop? Therefore the question then becomes, by what means do affiliation and subject identification become possible in hip hop? And since resistance is so important in hip hop culture, how is it articulated through what subjects have to say about themselves, bearing in mind the critical question of 'truth' in subject's accounts of themselves?

## Conclusion

The literature covered in this section has shown how music has been depicted as a reflection and expression of the social realities that affect people in their daily living. This comes from old realist traditions in the literature about music.

Hip hop music throughout its history has embodied a spirit of opposition and resistance in its engagement with society. Because of realist traditions, this has meant that the lyrics of rappers or hip hoppers have been given the privileged status of 'truth' in studies about hip hop.

Criticism leveled at hip hop music has made use of realist discourses. Discourse has been used to construct hip hop as a culture that threatens morality and represents an amoral category of people from a certain context, using statements embedded in a sociological crime and pathology discourse.

Criticisms have been that hip hop is violent and misogynistic because the people making the music really are violent and misogynistic (Rose, 1990, 2008).

Alternative, emancipatory discourses have defended these criticism against hip hop. These discourses frame or set the stage for particular types of actions that function as practices of resistance for hip hoppers. However we need to have an account of resistance that also tells us how the discourses of resistance come to have their particular effects. We need to find out about the discursive repertoires that hip hoppers have available to put the doing of resistance to work.

Most literature looks at rap as an articulation of resistance through discourse and practices but does not really look at what makes the practice of resistance achievable, successful or doable as a hip hopper. Hip hop is seen as a culture that provides meaning for youth and produces group identities through shared experiences (Cohen, 2008).

Hip hop music provides the discursive devices, the speech acts, through which subjects are crafted as subjects of resistance, and the means through which resistance can be embodied through such things as street language and other sign vehicles (Goffman, 1956) and units of meaning.

Hip hop provides youth across the world with universally recognizable sign vehicles that are used to reflect and express individual and social realities across a wide variety of contexts. Resistance may come to take on a specific set of practices, the performance of which is aimed at accomplishing or serving a specific psychological and sociopolitical outcomes.

The discursive devices are used, cited and recited in performances that hip hoppers put on in order to establish themselves as real and credible hip hop subjects of resistance.

Some attempts are made to figure out what makes the experiences and practices meaningful to hip hoppers but they never go beyond accounts based on reflection, representation and shared experience. This research aims to move beyond such accounts and ask the question: how and when is resistance accepted as resistance and how is this achieved; what discursive resources are put to use towards this end?

Few studies in hip hop have been conducted that look at how the social action of resistance is achieved or accomplished by hip hoppers in the construction of resistance. For example, in Alim and Pennycook (2007) 'flippin the script' is one of the ways in which resistance is achieved. It entails inverting the logic of a particular object, idea or action. This shows how rap puts discourse and rhetoric to work to achieve the practice of resistance in a real way. 'Flippin the script' therefore

becomes a real discursive practice that articulates and achieves its effect by communicating something totally opposite to what is commonly expected about something. The question therefore becomes what are some of the ways in which discourse is used to effectively achieve resistance, and what makes discourses effective in the practice of resistance. How is the notion of resistance achieved? This question involves looking at the particular features of discourse and the discursive mechanisms or tools (such as 'flippin the script') by which it renders resistance meaningful in how subjects are constructed. What sustains these discourses and translates them into acts, how are these discourses put to work in the everyday lives of participants?

## 2. Aim and rationale

The aim of the study was to analyze the process of subject formation as it happens in hip hop music. As illustrated in the literature even though realist accounts have been problematic they are still somewhat pervasive. Hip hop culture itself privileges 'the real' even though reality tends to be a contentious issue even to itself. A better approach is to consider how the real is a function of the discourse that it draws from and how discourse is put to use to produce a seemingly real subject. This subject has to give believable, comprehensible and consistent accounts of their self in order to become recognized as a particular subject. The aim of this study was to show how discourses are productive of subjects, namely resistant hip hop subjects.

Davies and Harre (1990, p. 40) state that subjects "come to be produced by socially and culturally available discourses" and that subjects position themselves within these available discourses. In the study I aimed to show that resistance is constructed through discourse that makes use of a language of marginalization. Marginalization has been a dominant discourse in the hip hop cultural discourse since the conception of hip hop. I aimed to show how hip hoppers draw on this discourse to craft themselves as real hip hop subjects. I argue that these discourses are put to work in such a way that they provide verifiable, credible performances of what subjects perceive to be a real hip hopper.

In South Africa there is very little writing about hip hop and resistance. Since hip hop culture has always been perceived of as an oppositional culture, I wanted to see how this is embodied in a South African context. Pennycook (2007) states that the global spread of hip hop culture has meant that it has been taken up in interesting and differing ways across the world. South Africa itself provides an interesting context of study because of the role that marginalization and resistance have played in shaping the sociopolitical landscape in the past. Marginalization in South Africa has given form to particular subjects (Haupt, 2003; Seekings, 1996). Where do hip hoppers fall within this ambit of resistance bearing in mind the history of particular subjects in South Africa. How do they produce themselves as subjects of resistance in contemporary South African society. What is the role that hip hop plays, how does it provide young South Africans with the tools and resources to craft themselves as subjects of resistance?  In other words, the aim was to show how is resistance performed by South African hip hoppers, and to show how South African hip hoppers become recognizable subjects of resistance.

This study shows that a significant amount of the work in subject formation rests on the hands of the subject, but makes use of what others know about the world (Edwards, 2004). There are no ready-made subjects. To be perceived as what they claim to be, subjects must give their audience the impression to their audience that they are a true representation of who or what they claim to be (Goffman, 1956). They must give a generalized and stylized performance of who they claim to be so that they become recognizable embodiments of what they claim to be. Subjects will do their best to produce these versions of themselves in interaction. In this process they make use of contextual knowledge, in the sense that subjectivity is a matter of the performance of the moral codes of conduct that are held to be reflective of that subjective state, it is more about impression management (Goffman, 1956)  in the performance of a subject identity than it is about truth. Therefore the study aimed to show what are the available resources that the subject has in order to give credible performances of who they claim to be. In the literature we are often denied these resources and asked to believe that what the subject is saying of themselves is true. In the literature we are often asked to take what the hip hoppers say about themselves as true.

Talk has the power to produce subjects through performative speech acts (Butler, 1994). The cultural terms that were analyzed in this study were the performative speech acts that Butler (1994) says have the ability to produce that which they name. However, the performative speech acts that are made use of must weave believable accounts of reality if they are to achieve their effect. In order to be effective and construct meaningful and believable versions of reality, the subjects who use the terms to construct their identities must make constant references to things that are out there in the world. Not only must they make reference to the things that are out there in the world, they must also be seen to be genuinely acting in ways that are consistent with the subject identities that they claim to 'represent'. These actions are representative of who the subject claims to be in the process of their forming an identity. They constitute the subject identity. These subject identities that are being claimed therefore have moral codes of conduct that that they must make use of in the process of their expressing who they are (Butler, 2005).

The moral codes of conduct are those aspects of identity that are cited and recited, performed and re-performed in the process of social action and identity formation. They are the social actions that one must live by in order to rightfully claim an identity.  In the context of hip hop, talk forms a social action, consisting of performative speech acts that regulate how one is to conduct themselves if they are to be seen as authentic members of the social group or the identity they are claiming. All these things are readily identifiable in the terms used in the hip hop vernacular and in the way that they are used by hip hoppers. 'Hustling' for example in the hip hop vernacular means to work hard in order to

overcome adversity. 'Representing' means being readily recognizable as a hip hopper and 'keeping it real' means acting in ways that are consistent with who one purports themselves to be. Therefore 'hustling', 'keeping it real' and 'representing' all relate to forms of moral conduct that are played out in the process of being. These are the aspects of identity that subjects present before others as readily readable signs that they are who they claim to be. All these things draw heavily on language and discourse. This is because discourses are "a constitutive part of social practices situated in specific contexts" (Potter, Wetherell, Gill & Edwards, 1990, p. 209). Social action in the world is accomplished through language and the social norms that often accompany the use of language.

Most writing seems to focus broadly on the meaning of being a hip hopper (for example, Cohen, 2008) but not on how this meaning is put together and made to achieve its effect in the process of crafting a subject identity. An identity has to be pulled off, it has to be made believable. That is, most writers will usually apply a realist interpretation of resistance amongst hip hoppers, injecting truth claims into the social actions of hip hoppers. Such studies will usually make use of the background of disadvantage and disenfranchisement that is suffered by hip hoppers, often starting with a historical account of the social conditions surrounding the development of hip hop. Therefore what hip hoppers say about themselves often has the danger of being readily taken as truth, something to be believed, something reflective of how conditions really are personally for the hip hopper. What is done in these studies is that a content analysis of artists' lyrics is presented and analyzed and taken as a truth that is reflective of the hip hoppers and their experiences, constructed as something that is true about the hip hoppers (see for example Martinez, 1997). The realist gloss applied by writers looks at resistance in hip hop as a social truth and not as a social action that needs to be worked on, crafted by hip hoppers in order to achieve its effect. The construction of who and what is real or not, often seen in contestations over claims of authenticity within and among hip hoppers themselves, is often taken for granted or overlooked.

This research therefore aimed to scrutinize how the way hip hoppers talk about themselves is crafted in such a way as to achieve and construct believable, but not necessarily always true, versions of reality (Potter, Wetherell, Gill & Edwards, 1990). Since resistance seems to dominate writing about hip hoppers in the hip hop literature, it was very tempting therefore to see what role this resistance played in the lives of the hip hoppers, how is it used to construct a sense of self, what is even the importance of resistance. Most importantly, it aimed to find out how this notion of resistance is articulated and expressed by hip hoppers in their talk. Since resistance in the literature on hip hop tends to be written with a somewhat defensive overtone *for* hip hoppers, assuming or maintaining that hip hoppers lament the negative ways that they are represented in society and the media, do the

hip hoppers then view themselves in these negative terms, ie, is this confirmed in the accounts of the hip hoppers about themselves? The question therefore how are these three cultural terms implicated in the formation of the hip hop subject and how are these terms made to function through discourse and how are they used in the articulation of resistance by the hip hoppers?

# 3. Methodology and methods

The methodology that was used in this study was a discourse analysis. Parker (1992) states that there are three ways in which discourses can help us to understand how things in the world are given an object status. Object status here means how they come to our awareness, or within the realm of our experience. There is the realm in which things are given an ontological status, an epistemological status and a moral/political object status. The ontological object status refers to the material conditions for the production of thought. There are physical objects out there in the world with which we interact. The epistemological realm refers to how we give meaning to the things that are out there in the world. The moral object status refers to the practical and moral uses to which meaning about things in the world is put to use Parker (1992, p. 30). Parker argues that these object statuses interact in such a way that they are productive of experience and modes of being in the world. These are the powers that discourses have. All these things of course are given meaning through language.

Language is not neutral, language is productive of things and affects our relationships to things. This approach is parallel to that of performative speech act theory (Butler, 1994) in which words have the capability to produce that which they name. Language can be put to use in varying ways to produce varying accounts of reality. The interaction between the three realms in which things are given object status shows us the power of language and discourse in the production of experience. The realm in which things are given a moral or political status means that knowledge about things is put to use in a specific way. It is productive of moral and political codes of social action or conduct. Discourse therefore is a social action (Potter, Wetherell, Gill and Edward's 1990).

The reason that a discourse analysis was chosen for this study is because of the way that discourse analysis has a concern for the functional orientation of language and the way that discourse analysis focuses on the constructive processes that are part of the functional orientation of language (Potter, Wetherell, Gill & Edwards, 1990). Both these points mean that language is used by people to weave particular accounts of reality about themselves and the world. These accounts need not necessarily be true, but they should at least be made believable by the people who are called to account for them. Therefore the accounts that people construct of themselves should be based on credible representations of who they are, and the resources for these credible account may be found in language and the way that language is put to use in discourse.

Being a resistant hip hopper is a situated action, one that is achieved through talk in how hip hoppers talk about themselves and how action is implicated in talk. Claims of subjectivity are verified

through talk and through the action that accompanies and forms part of the talk (Burr, 1995), and subjects must be seen to live up to their talk in order to be qualified as hip hoppers. This approach has influences of speech act theory in that language is conceived of as performing and bringing about a social action. This approach is suited to illustrating how hip hop subjectivity is something that hip hoppers work towards, something that needs to be negotiated and achieved in social interaction.

### Theoretical formulation

The theoretical framework used in this study was the theory of subject formation which drew on the work of Butler (1993, 1994, 2005), Goffman (1956) and Foucault (1982). Goffman (1956) deals with how identities are presented through the careful management of the impressions and expressions that we give of ourselves. This means that there must be a coherence between what we say about ourselves and how we act in public.

Butler (1993) deals with how bodies and subjectivities emerge through discourse and discursive acts that put in place the conditions of their being through their use. The words that people use and their cultural descriptions prescribe certain ways in which people should act. Butler (1993) states how citation and recitation of particular discourses is important for the inscription and re-inscription of cultural values, whether it is in the interests of identity affirmation or subversion. These are the cultural values that are then commonly held by the subjects of a particular discourse, and according to which actions are carried out. This notion was applied to how hip hoppers construct themselves as subjects of resistance by reciting and subverting existing discourses in the creation of new or alternative states of subjectivity.

Hip hop is an interesting subject of study and a culture in itself, tied to a history of resistance and subversion. It is a culture that has come to form its own particular vernacular, evident most explicitly, for example, in the use of language features that are subverted to convey a certain message. Such cultural practices are commonly understood and valued by members of the hip hop community, and they therefore provide the framework for moral actions amongst hip hoppers. Through its various texts, hip hop has revealed subtexts that express resistance through various discourses and these discourses have been taken up by its members in actual cultural practices which are manifested in social interactions and actions. The moral actions take the form of stylized performances in each setting (Butler, 1993). What this stylization actually does is to make salient participants' subjectivity.

As has been mentioned, discourse plays an important role in constructing and achieving these stylized performances that are symbols of resistance. According to Parker (1992), discourses are

coherent meaning systems and they are historically located and occasioned (Butler, 1993). This means that these discourses are tied to particular historical events and therefore they come to have a particular meaning for subjects. Each time they are called into being through cultural practices they are recited. They have an internally coherent, a vernacular system of meaning because they are commonly understood. How they achieve their effect therefore is through the discursive mechanisms, the cultural tools that are used in successfully constructing oneself as a hip hop subject of resistance.

## Method
*A qualitative research paradigm*

The study was conducted from within the qualitative research paradigm. The main reason for this choice is because of my focus on people and the processes through which they are crafted as subjects of resistance. I want to understand the everyday lived experiences (Silverman, 2008) that inform the subjectivities and practices of my research participants, hip hoppers, and I also want to find out how these experiences and practices are performed and embodied in specific settings. According to Erving Goffman (1956), life is constituted by social actors and social actions in which settings, routines, and cultural tools and scripts form real life contexts. The social actors in this research are hip hoppers (Pieterse, 2010), the category of performers that I am studying; and their social actions are the performances that I am exploring.

The discursive resources that the research participants have available for communicating meaning and for the crafting of a subject identity, for example the cultural elements of hip hop, are the cultural tools and scripts that bring about the possibility for the emergence of a resistant subject.Qualitative research is often known as naturalistic inquiry, as it sets out to uncover the real life lived experiences of particular people and cultures as experienced in real, 'natural' contexts' (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The aim of this body of research therefore is to understand and describe these contexts, routines and cultural tools that make social life and the accomplishment of social action, for example resistance, possible.In going about this it was necessary to look to Parker (1992) for the dynamics of discourse. Parker (1992) lists seven features that make discourses relevant, meaningful and effective.

 (1) Discourses are realized in text, texts being "any unit of meaning that can be given an interpretive gloss" (Parker, 1992, p. 5). Hip hop culture is a very textual and inter-textual culture. Texts in hip hop take the form of rapping, in the form of written and freestyle verses; the slang that is spoken, graffiti art; and even the different genres of rap take on certain interpretive glosses. The texts construct or make up discourse or in other words, they operate at the level of discourse. This means that these texts are not entirely intelligible or effective without understanding the discourse that they

allude to, the discourses that they use to make themselves intelligible. Discourse therefore emerges through the constant use and repetition of these texts at the level of talk, art and music and through how subjects live their lives as hip hoppers.

(2) Discourses are about objects. Parker (1992) talks about how it is that phenomena can be given an object status. Discourses can make something real. Discourses label and give meaning to the objects that they name or refer to. The objects that they name can be hated, loved, appreciated or disregarded because of the labels that are attached to them through discourse. The discourses presuppose the ways that particular actors should or do act. Therefore in hip hop culture, certain discourses are used towards certain ends in constructing meaning. In a way they are saying something about the people that are presumed to be going through or victims of these states. They will also presuppose a way in which the subjects or objects of these discourses should respond to the world.

(3) Discourses are about subjects. As has been mentioned briefly, discourses also label, construct and give meaning to subjects, in this case people. They categorize and organize the world in meaningful ways (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011). Particular subjects can be cultural icons, people who come to represent a specific type of person or people. Discourses are used to construct people as particular types of people and they ascribe certain ways of acting to these people. These cultural icons come to be associated with the actions of particular people and particular people come to be associated with these icons because of their actions or the things that they say. So for example, hip hop has its own cultural icons such as Tupac Shakur, or The Notorious B.I.G. It is these people's actions that will be emulated in practice by hip hoppers. As hip hoppers, subjects have certain things that they do or say that other people do not, there are certain discursive repertoires that are put to use in interaction that are not available to or not made use of by other people.

(4) Discourses are coherent systems of meaning that are commonly understood and meaningful. Their meaning may not be commonly agreed upon but its implications are commonly understood. As a member of the social actor of the category hip hopper, one needs to understand the cultural scripts, the cultural practices and the discourses that they draw on in order for the discourses to be effective, to successfully do the act of constructing resistance. Discourses are illuminated within the discursive repertoires and the cultural meaning systems with hip hop cultures. Discourses also make clear why certain cultural scripts, narratives and practices are put into use. For instance, an Afro-centric discourse is evident in conscious and progressive rap which uses traditionally African rhetorical devices such as *nommo*, the power of the spoken word, to illustrate the struggles of Black people in

the Diaspora as well as to challenge the current struggles that they perceive themselves to be facing (Cummings & Roy, 2009).

(5) Discourses refer to other discourses that may be used to contradict, subvert or confirm meaning or reality to disrupt or confirm the meaning system entailed by a certain discourse. Rose (1991) has studied how a black youth discourse of irresponsibility and violence in hip hop by the media has often relied on the use of a black sociological and pathological crime discourse to achieve its effect of the construction of hip hoppers as outlaw youth. The youth discourse is used in lieu with black crime and sociological discourse and therefore hip hop is seen to be an outlaw culture. Hip hop culture has various discourses that it draws on to construct and achieve the state or notion of resistance amongst its practitioners.

(6) They reflect on their own way of speaking in that speakers are sometimes conscious of the intentions behind particular forms of talk that they partake in. So for example the practice of semantic inversion or ''flippin the script'' (Alim & Pennycook, 2007) in hip hop language is a way of talking that reflects on its own form of talk, intentionally and purposefully inverting the known meanings behind the use of words to describe things totally contrary to those described by the normal use of such words, in an effort to portray oneself as extraordinary,

 and (7) they are located in history. It is the historical significance of these discourses and how they are enacted in practice that gives them their meaning and significance. Hip had its roots in the Bronx, New York, its emergence influenced by particular events connected to acts of resistance and protest. These acts have lived on in hip hop, despite the particular problems that accompany such acts. The particular acts, such as graffiti and rapping began to be ascribed cultural sets of meaning by participants although they were initially purely political acts or statements. Soeffner (1997) writes how particular aspects of action may become emphasized as a form heightening and emphasizing identity to such an extent that they become ritualized and routine ways of acting, and ultimately result in a collectively understood and shared way of acting; a culture. There may be sanctions paid for not acting in accordance with the culture in the form of rules and regulations. They are kept alive by the discourses that they have historically, and currently continue to draw on. Such discourses may result in different practices across different contexts, but they are still a central feature of hip hop practices across the world because of their particular historical significance to the hip hop culture.

These features of discourse therefore contribute towards the process of subject formation. Discourse is what subject formation draws on to construct subjectivity (Parker, 1991), while Butler's (1993, 1994) theory of subject formation is the actual process of subject formation. Cultures are in effect

discourses in performance, or performed discourses (or more precisely, discourses in effect), dependent on citations and recitations and self and other stylizations, accompanied by moral codes of conduct which regulate behavior and interaction with others, and in which particular settings and occasions become performance sites (Goffman, 1956). Discourses consist of a set of norms (Butler, 1993) that are played out in real life contexts that prescribe morality in the form of actions, behavior and conduct. Discourses are made up of a set of recognizable terms, images, texts and so on (Durrheim, Mtose, & Brown, 2011). Hip hop is a youth culture that is global and universally understood and related to (Pennycook, 2007). It is a culture based on a discourse of resistance and oppositionality and its cultural practices seem to be a manifestation of this discourse. It has cultural icons and representations on which practices are drawn and from whom actions are roughly emulated. In order for the hip hopper to be successfully constructed as an acceptable member of the hip hop culture, they have to be recognized as fulfilling the moral codes of conduct prescribed by the discourses in hip hop, they have to be accepted as a legitimate representation of the hip hopper who is engaged in the act of resistance.

*Sampling*

The study used a purposive sampling strategy. Purposive sampling is undertaken when there is a specific population that the researcher feels will answer the questions that are being posed or addressed (Given, 2008). This means that the population of interest is tied specifically to the objectives of the study (Given, 2008). I used this sampling method because the category of social actors that I was studying would best answer my questions pertaining to the practices of resistance among South African youth (Silverman, 2008). The purposive sampling approach is therefore best suited for cases where the researcher is interested in a certain cultural phenomenon or behaviour, and will therefore use knowledgeable people from within that culture or phenomenon, as informants.

*Participants*

8 participants were interviewed for this study. Extracts based on interviews with seven participants are presented. The participants names are Sekza; Story; Sliceman; Fiddy and Graffy; Kid Murray and Phaze and Blaze. These participants are all underground, unsigned rappers. They ranged from high school students to University students and people who were out of school. These underground artists are artists who are active in the underground scene in Pietermaritzburg and around the very few areas in which hip hop shows are sometimes hosted. Underground artists are artists that have not been signed to any commercial record labels, therefore they do not get any financial support for the material that they produce. They have to distribute their own music without the help of distribution

companies, and they make their music by sharing resources, such as beat productions, and recording studios, amongst themselves (Pritchard, 2010).

The age group was primarily youth of 15 to about 30 to 35 years of age, although some of the youth who came to these venues were as young as 10 years old, and most of these youth were unemployed. Most of the participants were unemployed, and many who did have some employment had irregular employment or very low paying manual employment. In some cases, accessing the sample was only possible if there were events happening in a particular place, for example, poetry or hip hop shows, celebrations for special occasions, for example, celebrations on Youth Day, and so forth. According to Soeffner (1997) cultural practices, routines and rituals tend to be more emphasized during special events or occasions in a certain culture, than they are on normal days.

### Data collection
*Interviews*

My field data collection involved interviews with participants for explanations of their respective practices. The primary data collection technique was the use of semi-structured interviews conducted with participants at the respective settings. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) this method of data collection is the most frequently used in interpretive qualitative research. The conversation between the data collector and the respondent is an open conversation that allows the respondent to speak for himself or herself without imposing any strict structure to the sequence or content of the questions (Babbie& Mouton, 2001). Participants were approached and asked if they could be interviewed about what was happening and what they were doing on the setting. Babbie and Mouton (2001) see this method as building naturally from the process of acquiring information, through interaction which happens in normal everyday life.

The questions that were asked were asked in the form of an unstructured interview that revolved around four questions (see Appendix 1):

1) Can you tell me about yourself and why you are here (the second part of the question refers to when I had met participants at a hip hop show)

2) What does hip hop or rap music mean to you and why do you do it?

3) What are some of the things that hip hoppers do?

4) What has your experience of being a hip hopper in Pietermaritzburg been like?

The researcher did not keep strictly to these questions. These broad questions were meant to be points of discussion that would lead to other questions not necessarily anticipated by the researcher. Such questions would then further shed light on the nature of being a young South African and a hip hopper at the same time. The unstructured interview allows for flexibility during the interview, acknowledging and accepting that conversation is not linear, does not occur in a 'planned and rigid fashion', that the flow of conversation may shift, or bring up specific instances that impact on the flow of conversation (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Participants were asked to speak about hip hop and their experiences in hip hop culture. Interviews, in the form of group and individual interviews, ranged from 10 minutes to about thirty minutes each. Participants were informed in brief about what the study was about and then asked if they would like to be interviewed. Some of the hip hoppers were interviewed in more quieter settings like their studios or at home.

### Data analysis
*Discourse analysis*

I looked at how hip hop cultural terms were being used by participants to express ideas about reality and to construct versions of reality about their identities, and the objects and subjects around them, basically their interactions with the world. I looked at speech features that were tied to or described acts of resistance and the meaning that lay behind these speech features. In this way, I understood speech or talk as carried out by speakers to accomplish social action (Edwards, 2004). The terms that make up the hip hop discourse categorize and ascribe certain characteristics to the world and the people that inhabit it. With this, the cultural terms implicitly prescribe certain actions towards those particular people that inhabit it. I looked at identity construction going on in participant's talk and how it was used to categorize the world in meaningful and understandable ways for hip hoppers. Hip hop musical culture provides hip hoppers with shared knowledge and this shared knowledge is a category of performance in its own right since it prescribes modes of moral conduct that are intersubjective within the culture (Edwards, 2004). Acting within the boundaries of the actions defined by the cultural terms that I came to uncover therefore became a major part of describing subjects as hip hop subjects of resistance or not for participants and helped in my analysis of the construction and achievement of resistance amongst hip hoppers.

I then looked at how these terms made up the discourse of resistance and how it is that they are able to achieve their effect, using Parkers (1992) seven features that make up discourse. I looked at how the texts, the cultural terms and discourse compelled a certain kind of action amongst hip hoppers in the definition of resistance. Using Butler's (1993) conception of subject formation I looked at the

discourses, the iconic figures of hip hop culture and the events that were cited and recited in the construction of a real hip hopper.  I analyzed historicity of the events described by hip hoppers. I argued that the historicity reflected in these cultural terms served to regulate social action and categorize membership and group identity through inclusion and exclusion. The heroic narrative that is developed by the hip hoppers is not part of Parker's (1992) steps for doing discourse analysis but an interpretation of the results that the researcher found.

## 4. Results

In this section I want to present the discourses that are present in hip hop music amongst hip hoppers in Pietermaritzburg. These discourses are used by the hip hoppers to create heroic and resistant versions of themselves. Discourses are made up of particular terms that have a particular resonance within the context in which the activity of the discourse takes place. Collectively, the cultural terms construct a particular and recognizable subject (Parker, 1992). I want to show 1) how the discourses and the cultural terms that make up the discourses work to construct the hip hop subject of resistance and 2) how they are made to achieve their effect. I want to present the cultural terms that are used in the construction of resistance and show how these cultural terms and the discourses that they draw on work together to construct the resistant subject. Firstly I want to deal with the discourse of resistance and how it is presented and constructed by participants through their talk of ''hustling'', talk that portrays an image of difficulty, yet success in the face of such hardship and difficulty.

 Cultural terms are used in the physical world to construct objects in discourse. These cultural terms therefore mediate action in that their use has an 'action orientation' (Hepburn, 2004). I aim to show how subjects are constructed through talk of 'representation' or ''representing'' and 'keeping it real', and how these words compel into being particular types of actions. In that regard I will explain how these two particular notions, 'representing' and 'keeping it real', are made to work through references to the masses and the people as the group of people that are being represented. In this way, particular social groups and individual people serve as 'cultural models' (Kiesling, 2005) in the construction of subject identities. 'Representing' and 'keeping it real' are transformed into particular actions through talk or the way that they are used in talk, talk that entails or prescribes how particular people should or must act. They are constructed and thus produced as a particular type of people.

 I will then move on to 'keeping it real' as a cultural term that informs cultural practices, a term used to frame authenticity. 'Representing' and 'keeping it real' are in actual fact cultural practices as much as they are cultural terms. They are cultural terms that are used by subjects to mediate social action. I will show how these cultural practices emerge from or make use of historical, known discourses (Parker, 1992, Butler, 1993) to achieve their effect. These cultural practices work together with the notion of 'representing' that constructs the discourse of authenticity. 'Representing' entails acting according to an identity that is in accordance with one's personal or social circumstances, and it

means always presenting and 'representing' this aspect of one's identity. The phrase is used in the construction of a sense of identity, when people are expressing who they are and where they come from (Basu, 1998). I will then show how these three terms 'representing' and 'keeping it real' and 'hustling' are dialectical terms that work on each other, that work together to construct a particular type of person, the hero. I will argue that the biographical narratives of hip hoppers are constructed in the form of a heroic narrative.

*The heroic narrative*

The most detailed account of the heroic narrative comes from Joseph Campbell (1956). Campbell (1956) keeps his discussion of the epic hero largely to the realm of myth, dreams and religion and religious texts. According to Campbell (1956) the heroic narrative (known as a monomyth) is the universal narrative pattern that is found in most cultural myths in different cultures around the world. The author writes that "*throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, the myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind"* (Campbell, 1956, p. 3). The myths and the heroic narratives that they have contained writes the author, have been a source of inspiration for people in societies all over the world. Although Campbell (1956) kept his study and analysis of the heroic narrative largely within the realm of myth and religion, I will shift my analysis to a study and discussion of people's everyday accounts of their lived realities, their motivations and inspirations, showing how it comes up in how people interpret events in their lives.

A heroic narrative contains a subject who is the hero or main character in the narrative, a protagonist if you like. Usually, the hero in the epic narrative is presented as someone who is unimportant, a marginalized figure of some sort. According to Campbell (1956, p. 37-38) "The composite hero of the monomyth is a personage of exceptional gifts. Frequently he is honoured by his society, frequently unrecognized or disdained. He and/or the world in which he finds himself suffers from a symbolic deficiency". The journey in the heroic narrative begins when the hero responds to a calling to bring about a change to himself or his society (Taylor, 1964). The  hero then sets out to make this change in order to better himself. Campbell (1956) divided the heroic narrative into 3 chapters (Departure, Initiation and Return) with 14 stages or phases. Only a few of these stages are relevant for the purposes of this study.

*The call to adventure*: is what incites the hero to action, how the hero's journey begins (Campbell, 1956, p. 51). The hero is called into a world in which they must try to master themselves in order to reach some goal. The world is usually a dangerous, unknown place.

*The crossing of the first threshold*: the hero goes out into this unknown world with formidable forces in which the events of their journey will take place. The hero will usually encounter 'threshold guardians', the forces that control certain points of access or entry during the journey at each stage of transition (Kelley, 2008).

*The road of trials*: these are all the obstacles that the hero has to overcome in order to be victorious or successful. Campbell (1956, p. 97) states that *"this is a favourite phase [stage] of the myth adventure. It has produced a world literature of tests and ordeals"*. Each trial that the hero confronts tests the hero.

*The ultimate boon* is the gift that the hero gets at the end of their journey, or what they are working towards in order to be victorious. According to Kelley (2008, p. 31) *"it often comes in the form of a physical item or a greater awareness that will improve the world upon his or her return"*.

*The crossing of the return threshold*: is when the hero returns back to his world and is accepted into it. The hero has been victorious or successful.

Most of the storyline in a heroic narrative is about how the hero or protagonist faces difficult trials in order to overcome some form of adversity (*The road of trials*). The hero has to face difficult obstacles, danger,  risk and even the possibility of death as part of the course of events that are necessary in order for him or her to overcome this form of adversity or defeat his or her adversary. The special characteristic of the hero is that he is special in some way, but he or she needs to realize that he or she has special powers and use these powers to overcome the trials that he or she is facing (Campbell, 1956). The narrative that hip hop subjects develop of themselves takes on a similar structure.

Hip hoppers present themselves as  marginalized people, people who are faced with difficulties and adversity. They come to a realization that they must change their society or their personal circumstances. They then talk about their trials as hip hoppers, the difficulties that they face trying to bring about a change to themselves or their societies. This is what they refer to as the hustle. Hip hoppers talk about struggle, poverty, exclusion and hardship in their talk about the hustle thereby drawing on a discourse of marginalization in order to construct this picture of the difficult trials that they encounter in the course of their being. Difficulty, social exclusion and being misunderstood all become resources that are used by the hip hoppers to paint a picture, a discourse of marginalization for themselves.

Extract 1 (lines 7-15) shows how and why participants got involved in hip hop music. Talk focuses on the intention to reflect the social conditions that the participants found themselves in. However, in their talk, we can also recognize that they are constructing their calling, the departure stage of the heroic narrative:

Extract 1

1  Researcher: ja you know my questions are around rap you know, a few questions, well actually many
2  questions revolving around that. What is rap and hip hop, who is a hip hopper, things like that you know

3  Phase: yo Blaze you think you can handle that especially you being from the township with all these different
4  types of people

5  Researcher: for real, ja for real

6  Phase: a-a-and all those different types of people dog you can touch on that

7  Blaze: yeah so, uh basically what I would say is that uh hip hop firstly, hip hop is a form of spoken word and
8  all of that you know, where people can communicate uhm through each other through music and all that. So
9  uh, we as Bad Mood are a group of three individuals you know and these three individuals they had a dream
10  you know to uhm show what's happening around everywhere you know basically in terms of positivity
11  spreading it around to kids in the hood you know for the disadvantaged the peeps and all of that you know. So
12  uh we started this in 2009 basically huh?

13  Phase: ja

14  Blaze: to do this thing and uh, ever since then it's all about positivity you know because most people they
15  think that hip hop is all about making money and all of that so we as Bad Mood we came together with uhm,
16  Lucky, you know he's like the manager of Purified Water you know and we like okay you know a lot of
17  people on hip hop through this generation have forgotten so much. It happens through life its not only about
18  cash and glamour you know so we came together you know and he took us to the informal settlements and all
19  of that the rural areas you know and we broadcast what's happening you know cos people tend to forget about
20  the real world you know reality you know

21  Researcher: ja

What the participants say about how they got involved in hip hop is framed in the form of a calling as in the heroic narrative. Blaze talks about how hip hop is a form of communication and they have been called as communicators of what is happening around them (Extract 1, Lines 9-12). Notice the reference to "*a dream*" (Extract 1, Line 9). According to Campbell (1956) the calling that the hero responds to, the job that they are called to do may come in the form of a dream or a realization that

there is a personal or social symbolic deficiency in their lives. According to Blaze, this deficiency is 'positivity', and it exists in the 'hood' (Extract 1, lines 9-10). This is the background against which the participants' involvement in hip hop culture is constructed. The hip hoppers then came to a realization that they must try and do something about the condition of their society, the 'hood' (Extract 1, Lines 10-11).

*The underdog*

The following three extracts show the different resources that hip hoppers draw on to create the image of a subject who is marginalized. In doing so, they must first construct a picture of a subject who is facing difficulties, of a person who is being dealt with harshly by life, by society. The hip hoppers here do that by focussing their talk on struggle, difficulty and the obstacles that they encounter in the course of their being. They therefore present an image of adversity, disadvantage, exclusion and misfortune first. This construction brings into being the underdog, the disadvantaged hero who is faced with all this adversity. Marginalization becomes an important resource in the construction of this figure, a discursive tool that is used to represent an image of this figure to the researcher. The underdog figure is present most explicitly in extracts one and three. In Extract 3 the word underdog is mentioned explicitly. I want to show how the two participants use talk about difficulty and struggle and in doing so construct a marginalized subject: the underdog. The two participants in these three extracts were at a hip hop show on the 16th of June in 2011. The researcher has just asked Sliceman in Extract 1 to say a bit about himself and hip hop.

Extract 2

1   Researcher: oh ok ok ok so can you just tell us what hip hop is what it represents to you and

2   why you are doing it,

3   Sliceman: ja me my broer I'm rapping because I like rap you see, hip hop has inspired me too

4   much, even contemporary hip hop but most especially the old school though for me some

5   commercial cats I don't feel but ay I'm feeling the underground the most like Iron Solomon,

6   but ja and Papoose you see, ja I love the game even the one here from Maritzburg even

7   though its difficult you see we are trying to push it

8   Researcher: by saying that its difficult what do you mean could you go into detail

9   Sliceman: the fact that grinding man, you see the hustle, the hustle is hard its not easy to blow

10   up you see ja even you can see right you gotta promote yourself bra each and every way you

11    get and people here in Maritzburg don't understand the hip hop that we do so but its growing

12    bit by bit its gonna end up good

13    Researcher: ja so I see you've just addressed some of your difficulties of emcees just a bit,

14    uhm what are some of the other difficulties that you face yes as hip hop

15    Sliceman: as hip hop? Ja some of the problems that I face is that recording studios are

16    sometimes not there or they are very expensive the ones that are there and beats ja its very

17    hard to get your hands on beats so that one of the things that can make it very hard for you to

18    express your talent, the thing that can hold you back from you showing other people your

19    talent in what we do

In Extract 3 the researcher has asked Story, another hip hop head to speak about hip hop in Pietermaritzburg.

Extract 3

1    Story: okay, sure, sure. Uh, uh, I'll put it like this jo, unlike other cities jo, you find that in

2    Durban there's iBat Centre, there's uMgodini, there's  lots of places. There's a lot of places

3    where you can like go present, you know what I mean. Or down here ePMB, at City Hall for

4    an emcee, for, for  music, it's tough  and all  a bigger, a bigger genre, as it is you know

5    (unclear). Off course you know hip hop heads down here are not exposed as down in Durban,

6    you know what I mean. KZN you know, we are like the underdogs, but you find that, we like

7    more silent down here, you know how it is (unclear) the underdog, and shit like that my dog.

8    And nje, generally, the movement is hooking up, as you can see nje shows are being hooked

9    up, you know what I mean. But uh the difficulty is, we don't  really get,  uh  venues that

10    much, this the only place where

11    Researcher: sure sure

12    Story: where the underdogs can really get up

13    Researcher: sure, sure

14    Story: (or at least to get a sponsor). And its just one of those things my dog, you know what I

15    mean, fortunately we try'na hustle, independently, and these are our T-shirts (showing T-

16    shirt), you know what I mean, try'na get a little bit of our here and there so we can push the

17    movement further


Participants talk about how hard it is to get access to resources. For example, Sliceman in Extract 2 talks about how the absence of recording studios in Pietermaritzburg poses a great difficulty for artists, and also about how the production of music, which involves getting access to the beats, is expensive and therefore not easy to access (lines 15-17). This makes it very hard for the hip hoppers to express themselves and their talent to other people (lines 17-19). When Sliceman refers to 'grinding' in Line 9 (Extract 2 ), it is an indication that being a hip hopper is not easy or smooth, it is a grind, fraught with challenges and difficulties. In line 7 he talks about how it is 'difficult' and how they 'are trying to push it', talk that goes towards the construction of difficulty and challenge that they are trying to convey to the researcher. The talk is orientated towards setting up a space for the construction of an underdog, the subject upon whom all this difficulty that they are talking about is directed towards. The difficulties that they list come in various forms. They are financial difficulties, having to do with the ability of financing oneself, and also infrastructural difficulties that have to do with the absence of production facilities that are important to the hip hoppers. In Extract 3 it also appears that the difficulty is also one of locational disadvantage.

More specifically participants' talk refers to need, 'lack of money for buying beats' (Extract 2, line 17) and absence or limited access to infrastructure such as 'recording studios' (Extract 2, line 15-17). This is a lack of financial resources, an example of economic marginalization. This lack of resources  also extends to performance spaces that make it possible for emcees to be heard. Story, in Extract 3 talks about how 'other cities' like 'Durban' have the 'Bat Center', 'uMgodini' and 'lots of places' (line 2) where they can perform and express their talent whereas Pietermaritzburg hip hoppers have difficulties accessing venues (Extract 3, Lines 9-10). His talk carefully addresses relative deprivation in that he constructs hip hoppers in Pietermaritzburg as disadvantaged compared to hip hoppers in other places who have 'lots of places' (Extract 3, line 2). In illustrating his point, Story makes use of the known fact that bigger cities often have more resources than smaller cities (the underdogs) and in this act thus constructs what seems to be a credible and valid or verifiable reflection of reality to the researcher, while at the same time quite visibly and effectively constructing himself as an underdog. In terms of normative expectations, we are quite familiar or used  the fact that

smaller towns are often be less advantaged or less resourced than bigger cities and therefore the participant makes use of this knowledge to illustrate what he is saying to the researcher. He makes use of a 'small town' discourse. He therefore uses geographical location as part of the work of showing how disadvantaged hip hoppers are. He does not state this explicitly but relies on the fact that it is known that cities like Durban are more resourced than cities like Pietermaritzburg.

When Sliceman says that "I love the game *even the one here from Maritzburg even though its difficult* you see we are trying to push it" (Extract 2, lines 6-7), and further on when he says that "*people here in Maritzburg don't understand* the hip hop that we do" (lines 11-12) there is an indication that it is particularly Pietermaritzburg emcees and hip hoppers that face these difficulties with limited or lack of access to venues, and recording studios. Pietermaritzburg comes across as a small town that is somewhat backwards and struggling in its practice of the culture. there is not really much support for hip hop in Pietermaritzburg. There is also an indication in the participant's talk that the participants are struggling to receive support from some members of the Pietermaritzburg community in these lines (Extract 2, lines 6-7).

 The word 'push' that Sliceman talks about in Extract 2, line 7 reflects the hip hoppers' efforts to try and get people in Pietermaritzburg to understand and support the hip hop movement/culture in Pietermaritzburg.  Portraying being a hip hop head in Pietermaritzburg as characterized by societal misunderstanding plays the function of hip hop being associated with struggle, a movement or culture that is underscored by  disadvantage in particular urban contexts.  Pieterse (2010, p. 428-429) states that hip hoppers "occupy a  marginal location in relation to the state, but one uniquely relevant to the marginalized existence of most poor black youth in cities of the global South".  Both the participants in extracts 2 and 3 convey this position that hip hoppers occupy through their talk of difficulty, poverty and so forth. This statement points to the invisibility and the lack of opportunities that youth coming from impoverished urban contexts such as the townships sometimes experience  because of where they come from.

1

The hip hoppers have given a picture of marginalization and exclusion in the form of economic marginalization, social marginalization and geographical marginalization. But this marginalization does not just exist as an abstraction, hovering emptily in midair. It has its subjects. It has people who suffer under its effects: the underdogs. And this is what the hip

hoppers want to show the researcher. Portraying an image of a setting that contains disadvantage and marginalization has the accompanying effect of constructing a subject who is the subject of this marginalization in the process. They can then start to talk of these disadvantages as having subjects, people who are subjected to them and people who therefore define themselves as disadvantaged. The hip hoppers talk is constructed in such a way that it portrays that the hip hoppers are "the underdogs" (Extract 3, Line 12), or at least are trying to portray themselves as so. Webster's Dictionary (2001, p. 776) lists the word underdog as "a victim of injustice". The underdog image that participants are trying to achieve throughout their talk and throughout these extracts is most apparent in Extract 3 when Story explicitly mentions the underdog. In Extract 3 , Story talks about how hip hoppers in Pietermaritzburg "*are the underdogs*" and that they are "*like more silent down here*" ( lines 6-7). This talk works towards trying to present a picture of the public's perception of hip hop as unimportant.

The statement "*We like  more silent down here"* (Extract 3, Line 6), is stated as an expression that is meant to show how  hip hoppers in Pietermaritzburg have very little voice as a body of hip hoppers. It is an admission that it is true that they are silent in Pietermaritzburg, but with that admission there is also the implicit expression that it is not right for them to be silent. There are no recording studios and facilities for emcees to make their music, so they are silenced in quite a literal sense, although occasionally there are shows that are 'hooked up'. He makes use of this discourse of locational disadvantage, in which inhabitants of a particular location suffer from "truncated economic and social opportunities because of the type of social or geographic spaces that they are located in" (Basu, 1998, p. 373).

Pietermaritzburg offers very few resources that are important for  the practice of hip hop, and the participants of hip hop in Pietermaritzburg have little financial resources to participate fully in the culture. Therefore creating the underdog figure in their narrative is an accomplishment for the hip hoppers, an accomplishment that hinges on their ability to convey a picture of marginalization and exclusion. Once this is done, they can then present the researcher with an alternative version of events depicting how the underdog rises to overcome the adversity that they are facing.

The three extracts just presented show how marginalization is central to the creation of the hip hop subject. Marginalization is important because it is what creates and produces the underdog, the hero in the narrative. Marginalization is therefore what defines the subject, but

at the same time it is this same marginalization that the subject must overcome in order to succeed to become the hero that they need to be. They talk about economic marginalization through the fact that they are unable to record their music or acquire beats to make the music because they cannot afford to. They talk about social marginalization through the fact that they believe themselves not to be understood by society at large. They are geographically marginalized because Pietermaritzburg as a city does not have the same infrastructure or resources to support them as hip hoppers that other cities do. Through the use of these discursive tools, they are therefore able to show how their lives are surrounded by disadvantage, lack of opportunities and obstacles.

*The underdog rises: 'hustling' as resilience and response to difficulty*

In much of the participants' talk, the word 'hustling' or grinding seems to come up quite frequently. In Extract 2, line 9, Sliceman talks about how "the hustle is hard", about how "it's not easy to blow up". 'Hustling' is often used very closely in talk that involves creating opportunities for oneself. Because of its origins in the marginalised and poverty stricken ghettoes in the inner cities of America, rap in particular, and hip hop culture in general have always been characterised by and expressed talk about 'hustling' (Skold & Rehn, 2007), from American rapper, Jay-Z's Cant Knock the Hustle (*Reasonable Doubt*, 1996) to South African rapper's El-Tido's status as a "fierce 'hustler' out to get it ALL" (Hype Magazine, November 2012). 'Hustling' describes the process that one goes through, and the things that one does in order to be successful in some aspect, sometimes referred to as 'makin it' (Skold & Rehn, 2007). 'Hustling' has traditionally been described as a survival strategy for marginalised or disadvantaged groups of people and it has been used in the descriptions of activities and lifestyles of thieves, prostitutes, gangsters and pimps (Quinn, 2004). However, in the case of hip hop it is more than a survival strategy, it is a special ability that requires certain actions. Although 'hustling' is constructed as very hard it is also constructed as very necessary to the success of the hip hopper, and most of hip hop culture always refers to making it. The following two extracts are an illustration of this notion of 'hustling' and how it relates to and frames notions of success. Both participants believe that it is because they do not hustle hard enough:

Extract 4

1    Fiddy: but but but the problem is I think although we can blame the corporates and blame the

2    record labels and things like that the but the problem again goes back to the artists as an

3   individual its  your material you you you working through it for quite some time now and

4   you've worked so hard so that people can recognize you who you are and you've been

5   through some crazy ish for you to get there  for example for Shon G to be recognized by the

6   masses

7    Graffy: he hustled

8    Fiddy: he hustled the problem is when you get the record deal where you just chill cos you

9   got it you just chill cos you think everything is just gonna happen for you I mean I mean like

10   the American cats you get a guy whos writing stuff for other people hes producing stuff his

11   own stuff hes pushing himself hes a brand. Once South African artists can start thinking of

12   taking themselves as a brand then they'll succeed you know, if you a brand you have to push

13   yourself you have to push the units yourself


Extract 5

1    Story: (or at least to get a sponsor). And its just one of those things my dog, you know what I

2   mean, fortunately we try'na hustle, independently, and these are our T-shirts (showing T-

3   shirt), you know what I mean, try'na get a little bit out here and there so we can push the

4   movement further, you know. Yeah man, cats are working on tapes, we dropping, you know,

5   the Bluetooth mixtape, for  free to the people and fans nje, yeah its out there. Yeah, even via

6   facebook, we makin it, we tryin'a network our stuff, how it is, how we break it down and

7   orchestrate. Generally, nje

8   Researcher: okay, so so what is your, what  what is, what do you think is the problem, you

9   spoke about the venues being a problem, uuhh, could you speak about

10    Story: okay, sure, sure. Uh, uh, I'll put it like this jo, unlike other cities jo, you find that in

11   Durban

12   there's iBat Centre, there's uMgodini, there's  lots of places (some interruption)

13   Other guy: I wanna tell my story ((shouting from a distance))

14   Story: whats up my dog (to the other guy). There's a lot of places where you can like go

15   present, you know what I mean. Or down here ePMB, at City Hall for an emcee, for, for

16  music, it's tough  and all of that echoes, so you can't really perform there, YMCA has an

17  echo, so here is the only proper place, you know what I mean, and its hard to get this place

18  Researcher:                    mmhh

19  Story: so ja, what we tryin'a do, what we tryin, you know wh'a mean, reach out there for the

20  spar10z to try and help us, because you know wha' mean, its not like we on ground zero,

21  we've got something, we've got a foundation. Its just that we can't implement out certain

22  things, you know wha'mean, because of the budget, the shit (unclear) if you kn'wha'mean

23  Researcher:        ja, ja

24  Story: ja, so those are one of the difficulties in terms of, you know wha'mean, hosting events

25  and things like that, but hey, you know, we pushing my dog, its a hustle, its a hustle.

Extracts 4 and 5 show how responses to the difficulties expressed by the participants are captured through the hip hop cultural term called 'hustling'. Hustling involves working hard and relentlessly in the quest for success. In terms of a heroic narrative, hustling involves overcoming the trials that the hero encounters in their journey. 'Hustling' is presented as a special ability, a skill almost. In Extract 5 we are presented with a picture of 'hustling' as hard work, patience, and perseverance, with statements such as "we try'na [trying to] get a little bit out here and there", line 3) and strategy ("how we break it down and orchestrate", line 5-6). These are all references to tact, planning and foresight as well as hard work and perseverance.

A person who does not hustle hard enough becomes a questionable hustler and resistant hip hopper. In extract 4, line 8-10, the tendency for hip hoppers to 'chill' (to chill means to relax) after they get a record deal is presented as a problem by both participants, in contrast to people who continue to work hard and push themselves as a brand for mass appeal (Extract 4, Lines 11-13). This is a problem because as Fiddy tries to show, it becomes the emcees downfall. The hip hoppers make a contrast between working hard, 'hustling' (Extract 5, Lines 4-8), and relaxing or being lazy, 'chilling' (Extract 5, Lines 8-9). Shon-G is presented to the researcher as an example of a hard worker, a 'hustler' because 'he hustled' (Extract 4, Lines 7 & 8). He did what the artists from the United States did by branding himself in order to push himself. Fiddy goes on to say that once South African artists can start taking themselves as a

brand then they'll succeed (Lines 11-12). This illustrates how part of 'hustling' is constructed by the hip hoppers as something that requires the special abilities of tact, strategy and foresight. Fiddy does not believe though that many South African artists possess that level of skill in their hustle. A person who does the 'hustling' is constructed as a special person, a person with admirable qualities, and a person who does not hustle is constructed as a person who has undesirable qualities like laziness.

Extract 5 paints a picture of these special characteristics that are possessed by the hip hoppers. Participant starts to speak about the activities that they are putting together ("fortunately *we try'na hustle*, independently", Line 2) despite the very little opportunities that they are able to get in Pietermaritzburg. The hustle could  be argued to 'represent' a work ethic or the spirit of working very hard in order to accomplish one's desires. It is an organized but quite informal economy. Fiddy (Extract 4) talks about the strategies that people employ to promote and market themselves to reach a wider audience ("the masses"). For the participants in Pietermaritzburg, as illustrated by Story in Extract 5, it involves employing particular sets of strategies. It involves making connections with people, exploring alternative avenues for promotion and taking opportunities everywhere. It requires you to be inventive.  For example, we have references to 'try'na get a little bit out here and there' (line 3) as an indication of the ability to multi-task, to keep your mind on many goals, to 'cats [are] working on tapes' (line 4) as a description of 'work' and 'we makin' it' (line 5) and social networking "via facebook" (lines 5-6). All these things represent the hustle and 'hustling'. Story talks about the mix tapes that they are producing in order to reach out to the people (lines 6-7), the use of social networking sites, such as Facebook, as a strategy to gain a following outside of the performance spaces that they are unable to access.

In addition, these activities that Story and his group are involved in are geared towards 'pushing the (hip hop) movement further' (line 4). They are trying to get wider support and acceptance. Story tries to convey how hard they are working, through such words as 'pushing' (line 4) and "cats working on tapes" (line 4). All these actions together form the action of 'hustling', a discourse that expresses resilience, agency and independence, working very hard to be successful. These are actions that illustrate the meaning of 'makin it' (line 5). The phrase 'makin' it' is an indication of a sense of achievement and success in the face of difficulty (Skold & Rehn, 2007). It is  related  or closely tied to 'hustling' since the aim of 'hustling' is to overcome adversity and make it to better position. With respect to the narrative that the hip hoppers are putting together for the researcher, it becomes clear that the

'hustler', the hip hopper is being constructed as someone who is meant to be applauded because of their 'special feats', their abilities to strategically overcome adversity and disadvantage.

The independence seems to be about working outside of 'the system' of oppression. The hip hoppers, in keeping with the plot of a heroic narrative needs to speak of the hip hopper as someone who is taking control of the reigns of his or her fate and taking their destiny into their own hands. The two participants in Extract 6 speak of the hip hopper as someone who needs to rebel against the forces of oppression that keep him or her in bondage, that keep him or her under the reigns of adversity. The forces of oppression seem to be 'the system'. The following extract puts this notion more explicitly.

Extract 6

1   Researcher: all of them they very interesting because you know I hip hop you know its
2   always I mean for me the way I see it its always been about resistance and its always been
3   about resisting I mean like you say uTuks you know he resisted this idea yokuthi now you
4   know you have to wear these baggy jeans and what not you now he wore the suit you know
5   where initially you know people have resisted the idea yokuthi wear the suit you know wear
6   the baggy jeans. You know its always been about shifting yabona izinto ezithile images and
7   identities

8   Graffy: oh ja sorry but since we are on this tip about resistance I was gonna add that as hip
9   hoppers  we have added one more thing that we are resisting which is the companies cos now
10  artists are doing it for themselves right they going indie

11  Researcher: mmh ja ja straight

12  Fiddy: ja ja I was gonna add to that one I was gonna add like uh Eltido

13  Researcher: ja mmmh

14  Fiddy: Eltido got like two music videos out with no recording label whatsoever  Eltido
15  became big without the support of the record label which shows that if you educate yourself
16  and know about the industry you can succeed you know you don't need to rely on a white
17  dude who's got cash that he's inherited from his father and he doesn't know what to do with
18  it ]

19    Researcher: mmh

20    Fiddy: to tell you what to do you know get educated and you will get to where you want to

21    Researcher: for real mmh ja word I mean ja thats cool man thats it ja, uhm you know uhm

22    Graffy: but I still say that some cats don't want to bite the hand that feeds them

23    Fiddy: that cats just not educated man, they just follow orders I mean whats the point of you
24    being in this movement if you still gonna take orders from ubaas, like

25    Graffy: ja man they not educated  they still slaves no no  no

According to Graffy, resistance is tied to working outside of the help of the system. Hip hoppers are "going indie" (line 10), meaning that they are going independent ('indie' is not a hip hop term, it is more of a rock term that is used in the same sense in which 'underground' is used in hip hop). They are no longer dependent on the help of record labels and talent scouts to make their music and get and their message across. For example, Eltido, a local rapper is quoted as having produced "two videos without the support of the record labels" (Extract 6, lines 14-15). Fiddy states that people 'need to educate themselves and know about the industry so that they do not rely on a white dude that has money that he has inherited from his father' (lines 15-18). Record label owners are the people who have the money to produce hip hoppers who want to reach "the masses". They own the recording studios and the production companies that make music. The 'white dude' could be argued to be a representation of the white people who own the record companies that sign emerging, mostly Black hip hoppers. He is thus constructed as a representative of the system. This also draws on the tradition of white people being in powerful positions and having the power to make things happen for Blacks who in turn were powerless to do anything without the help of White people. For instance, this is captured in the phrase "taking orders from ubaas" (in line 24). 'Baas' is an Afrikaans word that was used by Black people in reference to White people. This word symbolized the unequal power relations that existed between Blacks and Whites in the work context.

The participants' talk therefore shifts the balance of power by stating that participants no longer need to take orders from authorities and people in powerful positions. There are many things that keep the hip hopper in bondage according to Graffy and Fiddy. One of these is powerful record label owners and another one is lack of education. From what Fiddy is

saying in Extract 6 it seems as if there is a connection between being exploited by the system and lack of education. Hip hoppers therefore need to educate themselves by knowing how the system works, and also how to find alternatives outside of the system so that they are  no longer dependent on it. Educating yourself according to Fiddy would be to know the music industry and things such as how social networking sites like Facebook, as mentioned by Story in Extract 5, could be utilized to promote oneself and get oneself a following and thus popularity.

Part of the work done by Sliceman and Story's talk in Extract 2 and Extract 3 was to construct Durban and other cities as having more resources accessible to more people. This talk constructed Pietermaritzburg as relatively deprived of cultural resources and tools "in comparison to other cities " (Extract 3, line 1). This worked towards saying that hip hop in Pietermaritzburg was unpopular. The talk in these extracts is consistent with the events in an epic narrative in which the hero or the underdog tries to shift their status or position through the actions that he or she takes in response to adversity and disadvantage. According to Graffy and Fiddy in Extract 6, the hip hopper, or underdog, does this by becoming independent from those who exercise power and exercising his or her own power in the form of 'hustling' and 'educating himself or herself' (Extract 6, Line 20) so that they are not at the mercy of those in power. In doing so, they are taking power into their own hands.

The hip hoppers are therefore constructing themselves as people who should be applauded because of all that they are doing to uplift themselves. Phase in Extract 1 talks about the positivity that they are trying to spread in their community. In the spirit of the heroic narrative, they are overcoming adversity, taking their fates into their own hands and deciding for themselves how to get recognition and acceptance from the world. They are trying to get their art to as many people as possible, using alternative strategies of gaining recognition. They are overcoming marginalization through internet socializing sites such as Facebook where they can hopefully gain acceptance and recognition from many other people. They are forming networks with each other, for example how Story says that they are reaching out to the Spar10z to help them out in Extract 5, Line 19-20. The Spar10z are a Pietermaritzburg 'Krump' crew that is very popular.

The issue of recognition, which I move to next is very important in the hip hop heroic narrative. Recognition goes hand in hand with "keeping it real" and "representing" in the sense that in order to gain recognition, the hip hop subject needs to be perceived to be

'keeping it real' or 'representing', and 'representing' and 'keeping it real' are ways of gaining recognition and acceptance. Just as the underdog is recognized as the hero that they ultimately are through the actions that they perform as a response to adversity or struggle, so does the hip hopper need to be accepted as a real hip hopper. That real hip hopper is constructed as a subject that has gone through adversity, who has suffered and is trying to overcome adversity. Adversity and marginality needs to be recognized on the part of the hip hop subject in order for the hip hopper to be characterized as real or authentic by others and this therefore explains why the hip hoppers have been putting so much emphasis on adversity, in the form of marginalization and exclusion, in earlier extracts in their talk.

**The importance of recognition to hip hop subjectivity**

The applause that the hip hoppers are seeking indicates recognition. What the hip hoppers are doing is constructing themselves as deserving of recognition, as doing things that are admirable and things that should be applauded. Here I want to show that the way recognition takes place is a function of how well people make use of discourse. A discourse is a collection of recognizable terms that are used to describe objects. Subjects draw on known and shared meaning systems in order to show the position that they occupy in life, that is, in the process of their becoming subjects (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011).

*Recognition as a symbol of solidarity, acceptance and support*

The hip hoppers talk illustrates how they are responding to marginalization and disadvantage. They set up a picture of the disadvantaged and marginalized figure who is marginalized in various ways in the world. This figure is the underdog, the hip hopper. The importance of recognition is that recognition always comes with the possibility of acceptance. That is, once something has been brought out into conscious awareness, people can accept or reject it as a reality. Recognition is thus a motive that is embedded in the identity of the underdog in the same way that recognition is in the identity of the hip hopper. That is, adversity and overcoming adversity seem to be what come to define the underdog or the hip hopper.

It is recognition that someone has suffered adversity and marginalization that really construct the hip hopper as a hip hopper and as worthy of acceptance. It is therefore once recognition has taken place that acceptance has a very real possibility. This acceptance means being accepted and understood by people, being recognized as a geographical area deserving of infrastructure and resources to enable hip hoppers to have a voice. Recognition therefore

creates solidarity and solidarity is based on acceptance, empathy and understanding. In the following analysis I want to explore recognition and how it informs solidarity through the hip hop cultural terms 'representing' and 'keeping it real'. Recognition precedes the applause that is received by the underdog as an indication of acceptance. I want to show how solidarity is created through recognition and how recognition is dependent on 'representing' and 'keeping it real', and how these become the ingredients necessary for acceptance to take place.

Most of the hip hoppers in these extracts are 'hustling' in order to gain recognition and acceptance. When Fiddy says that "you've worked so hard so that people can recognize you who you are and you've been through some crazy ish" (Extract 4, Lines 4-5) it is a further illustration of how important recognition is to the hip hopper. Hip hoppers will work very hard and go to exceptional lengths ("some crazy ish", Extract 4, Lines 4-5) to achieve recognition. In Extract 4, Fiddy talks about how artists should brand themselves (line 11). For Fiddy, the hustle and 'hustling' refer to employing economic strategies in order to be successful, such as branding and marketing yourself as an artist. The act of doing this is a representation of 'the hustle' or 'hustling'. As an illustration of what he is talking about, as an example of a 'hustler', Fiddy refers to Shon G ( Extract 4, Line 5) who is an emcee from Durban and shows how Shon G had to hustle in order to be successful as a recording hip hop artist and to gain recognition and support and be followed by large numbers of people ("the masses", Extract 4, Line 5-6). Shon-G is therefore recognized by Fiddy as a 'hustler'. He is 'representing' what real 'hustlers' should do and is therefore 'keeping it real'. The fact that Shon-G has been recognized by Fiddy and Graffy as a 'hustler', and as a person who "hustled" (Extract 4, Line 7 & 8) is very important here because it endows Shon-G with importance. He is therefore portrayed by Fiddy as 'representing' what hip hoppers should be and what they should be doing, for example in Extract 4, Lines 11-14 when he says that once South African artists can start pushing themselves as brands, and when he says that hip hoppers should not just relax and think that everything is going to happen for them (Extract 4).

 Constructing himself as a marketable brand has been a strategy that has been employed by Shon G to get a record deal with a recording company. The challenges involved in his success are captured by Graffy in line 7 when he states that Shon G hustled. We can see how the way Shon-G has hustled in order to get to where he is now reflects admirable qualities to Fiddy and Graffy.  Shon-G comes across in this talk as a person whose actions are worthy of recognition and admiration. These admirable qualities are the way that he was able to work

hard to become successful and recognized by the masses. There is an indication that he worked very hard, he mobilised himself in order to bring about change to his personal and career related circumstances. In this extract, Shon G is accepted and recognized by the masses as the underdog who possess very admirable qualities that he uses to overcome adversity.

The participants have been talking about 'hustling', however, they need to frame 'hustling' in recognizable terms. They need to point to recognizable objects or practices that they can make reference to in their talk in order for them to be able to construct believable accounts of what they are talking about. Notice how in Extract 5, Line 2 the participant shows the researcher a printed T-shirt as evidence of his hustle. The T-shirt is tied to his hustle because he uses it to show the researcher how he has been 'hustling'. The T-shirt is what he uses in order to be believed and accepted by the researcher as a person who has been working hard 'hustling'. The T-shirt is a product of his hustle. By showing the researcher the T-shirts that he is 'pushing' (Extract 5) he is constructing himself as a 'hustler' and the T-shirt does that for him. He is giving the Researcher something to recognize his hustle by. The T-shirt is his evidence that he is a 'hustler'. The participant's T-shirt, which he has designed and is promoting for himself and his group at the show is a physical and material testament of his hustle. We can see this because he ties the T-shirt in to his talk about 'hustling' and hardship so that it becomes part of the repertoire of talking about and illustrating struggle and agency. The T-shirt therefore becomes a recognizable illustration of 'hustling' in a way that makes sense because of the participant's talk about 'hustling', creating opportunities as a way of becoming independent (Extract 5 , Lines 1-3). The T-shirt forms part of the discourse of independence and agency and self empowerment when the participant talks about how they have created it on their own and are pushing it on their own, because we come to recognize it as that: as something that was created by the participants as a way of gaining independence. It becomes a symbol of agency and independence so to speak and when the participant shows it to the researcher we can already see where it fits in in the participant's talk, in who he is, and the role that it has played in his being an independent hip hopper.

The T-shirt that Story shows the researcher also has the propensity to function as a symbol of solidarity. Hip hoppers' buying the T-shirt is their way of contributing to the movement since the T-shirt creates an awareness of the movement and the proceeds can be used to further the objectives of the movement financially. It becomes a way of contributing to and supporting the struggle for the people that are buying the T-shirt. This act will of course be

influenced by an identification with the hip hoppers. This is partially because of recognition and acceptance. Buying the T-shirt means that one recognizes the hip hoppers struggle, especially in the setting. Describing hip hop as a movement, and hip hoppers buying the T-shirts is not 'just buying a T-shirt' but a meaningful act, a contribution to a movement that is struggling to grow, and therefore emcees as well as listeners participate in resisting the downplaying of hip hop, they participate in "pushing the movement further" (Extract 5, Lines 3-4). Here the participants have been working to find some way through which they could have access to the means of production such as beats and recording studios, as stated by Sliceman in Extract 2 and Story in Extract 5. They have used the T-shirt they have created to try and help them to achieve this goal of trying to hustle and go independent (Extract 5, Line 2). So what this shows is how an object can be part of a discourse, how it can be a meaningful way of talking about something. This is evident in how Story shows the researcher a T-shirt as an illustration of his hustle, as part of his struggle to "push the movement further" (Extract 6, Lines 3-4).

The T-shirt becomes a way of talking about his hustle, and when he talks about it, and shows it to us we can recognize him as a 'hustler'. However in order for the discourse to fully achieve its effect he has to use terms that actually make the discourse of 'hustling' relevant and recognizable, such as "independent", "try'na get a little bit out here and there" (Extract 5, Line 3), he has to talk about how "cats are working on tapes" (Extract 5, Line 4). These are actions that represent pushing the movement further, presented in the hip hoppers talk as 'hustling'. So what I have tried to show here is how discourse is used in the creation of meaningful objects that function as meaningful symbols in the process of recognition, the different type of symbols that recognition comes in. The T-shirt becomes a symbol of 'hustling' in that Story, uses it as a symbol of all the hard work that they have been doing. It is also a symbol of recognition in the sense that it represents affiliation, in the sense that those people who choose to buy it can be taken as in a way affiliating, associating and appreciating the work of the hip hoppers, thereby showing that they recognize and accept the work that they are doing.

In the next section I want to show how 'representing' and 'keeping it real' make use of symbols of recognition. These symbols or texts are things that are out there in the world (Parker, 1992). As recognizable symbols, these symbols or representations need to be believable or believed in order to be accepted. Subjects make use of known discourses in order to construct believable narratives of the types of people that they proclaim to be. The

representations used in the construction of these narratives need to be recognized by hip hop subjects in order for the person to be accepted. The subject needs to be recognized and accepted in order to fully become who they proclaim themselves to be. To do this I will look at how the hip hop cultural terms 'representing' and 'keeping it real' are expressions that are used in the construction of believable accounts or narratives of reality and how these constructions depend on the use of discourse. I will show that once these representations or symbols. The acceptance of the people represented in the discourses forms the subject, they fully become who they affiliate with because they have been accepted by those people that they claim to represent.

**Representing, 'keeping it real' and authenticity**

This next section explores the issue of recognition in more detail. How is the underdog, the hip hop subject recognized? How is solidarity achieved by hip hoppers, how do hip hoppers recognize and accept each other? What do they draw on in order to be recognized as hip hoppers? This section will attempt to show how acceptance is dependent on being able to draw on marginalization and disadvantage. It will show that the subject needs to be a representation of marginalization, social exclusion and disadvantage. As a person who is 'keeping it real' you need to be 'representing' somebody or yourself. According to the hip hop heroic narrative you need to be someone who has suffered disadvantage. Recognition and acceptance is likely to occur once this discursive construction has been achieved by the hip hopper. The hip hopper needs to live up to the norms of the underdog hip hopper through their behaviour if they are to be recognized and accepted. Their qualities need not necessarily be admirable however they do need to reflect having suffered some form of disadvantage. They will be able to achieve this through 'representing' and 'keeping it real'.

Extract 7


1    Researcher: ja so can you guys tell me who you are and what you are doing here

2    Sekza: yes me I represent Blacktribe

3    Researcher: can you tell me who Blacktribe is and what they do, what does the name Blacktribe
4    mean?

5    Sekza: Blacktribe my brother represents the township (mentality) man, the life of thugs, thieves,

6    the truth (reality), you must stand for truth and do whatever you do

7    A Guy in The Crowd: because we don't take shit us ja, ja  ja (rest inaudible due to loud applause and

8    cheering from onlookers)

1

Sekza talks about how his group Blacktribe represents being from the township and the township mentality (Line 5). The "township mentality" in Line 5 particularly points to the psychological markers of his identity. This psychological marker is constructed in Line 6 as the ability to stand for truth and 'not taking shit' (Line 7). The psychological markers of identity are of course so closely tied to the more physical markers which are translated into particular actions. Sekza talks about how he is a representation of the life of thugs from the townships (Line 6). According to Sekza, being from the township means that you must stand for truth and do whatever you do (Line 6). As a side confirmation or testimony to what Sekza is saying, A Guy In The Crowd jumps into the conversation stating how this means that you do not take shit when you are from the township (lines 7-8). He is applauded by the cheering from the crowd of onlookers, a symbol of acceptance, meaning that they accept his representations of the township and the township mentality.

Part of the work that goes into identity construction is that we must weave believable webs of reality, we must be perceived as authentic members of the group of people that we claim to be part of.  We need to make credible performances that represent who we want others to believe we are (Goffman, 1956). Our performances need to be accepted by others as credible performances, representations or indicators of who we say we are. The applause and the loud cheering from the crowd (Line 7) while Sekza is speaking show that they agree with what he is saying. Sekza has therefore managed to construct himself as a credible representative of the people that he is talking about, and the cheering from the crowd is a response of agreement from the people whom he claims that he and his group Blacktribe are 'representing' that he is indeed 'representing' them and that he is who he says he is. By saying what he is saying and in the manner that he says it in, Sekza is 'keeping it real', he is 'representing'. Sekza's performance is powerful because it is able to produce and convey a psychological reality to what he is saying about himself.

But what does what Sekza say have to do with identity? In other words, how are 'keeping it real' and identity performed in language? It has to do with "the general tendency for people

to extrapolate personality from conversational style" (Tannen, 2005). We know that certain groups of people have certain conversational styles, so for instance African Americans speak in an African American Vernacular English (Cutler, 1999). Tsotsitaal is a subcultural language that emerged and is used in the townships mostly by youth. Tsotsitaal is slang that represents youth who are involved in somewhat criminal activities, otsotsi (thugs), people who use this language have been associated with illegitimate activities. That is Sekza's conversational style contains Butler's (1994) conception of speech acts and performative speech acts. Butler (1994, p. 33) writes about the notion of "performativity and performative speech acts in particular-understood as those speech acts that bring into being that which they name". Performativity according to Butler (1994) is understood as resignification. It is those features that we can perform and re-perform each time we are called or call on ourselves to act as particular subjects. Therefore by talking in the way that he does  Sekza brings into being those people that he is talking about as a testament of who he himself is. Butler (1994, p. 33) goes on to write that "performativity is the discursive mode by which ontological effects are installed".

What this shows is how talk can be an action. Through the use of social action norms we reference and represent social groups. Language use is social action, and certain language use features  are norms that are found within specific social groups. When we make use of these norms we are performing a social action. We are referencing a social group. It performs a certain action, it is used to achieve something (Hepburn, 2004). 'keeping it real' is a performative strategy (Smith, 1997). In order to be accepted as credible members of the community that they are 'representing', people like Sekza need to engage in believable performances that reference who they want people to believe they are. His actions are resignifications in that they are sign vehicles by which he and other members of his proclaimed group are recognizable by, re-presented to his audience in interaction (Goffman, 1956). To show that he and his group Blacktribe are ''representing'' the township and the township mentality and thugs (Extract 7 translation, Line 7-8), he must engage in 'stylized performances' (Smith, 1997) of the township mentality.

The people that Sekza uses to construct himself as a representation or symbol of are subjects that are recognizable in discourse through the particular references that Sekza makes. So for example, his use of isiTsotsi may tell us that he is a youth. The fact that he is from the township and that he has a township mentality may tell us that he sees himself as somewhat of an outlaw. The township in South Africa is often a symbol of adversity, marginalization

and disadvantage. We do not have to believe what he is saying to be the truth but all of what he makes reference to are things that are recognizable in the wider world, or at least are widely known and shared in the urban South African context. Or, put another way, we can say that Sekza makes use of what we may already know; of our expectations. How do we expect or know people from townships to act? This action partially does the work of construction for him, it makes us see a sensible connection between what he is saying, how he is acting and the type of people that he is talking about and himself. This confirms what Rowlands (2006, p. 71) states, that "representations work on or through our expectations". He is the underdog 'representing' those who are marginalized like himself. As his audience we recognize what our hero is meant to look like, what he is meant to behave like what he is meant to talk like and so forth. He finds solidarity and acceptance from his audience, those who recognize the hero and their applause is a symbol of acceptance. We have some idea of who he is making reference to in his talk because of some vague knowledge of the types features that he cites in reference to who he is talking about. He is talking about the marginalized figure, the underdog who suffers adversity as a result of geographical and financial marginalization of being from the township. But this is a figure that will not be put down by adversity people like him "do not take shit" (Extract 7, Line 7). His talk therefore draws from a known discourse of the marginalized figure to construct his identity and gain acceptance from his audience.

Sekza's talk must re-cite from cultural models in the process of expressing who he is to his audience. That is what is meant by 'representing'. He must resignify meaning within context of his audience each time he calls upon himself, or each time he is called upon to express who he is. His resignifications must be believable, drawing upon widely known and accepted cultural meaning systems or discourses. Kid Murray in the next extract also makes use of the same discourses of acceptance and rejection in the process of subjectification.

Extract 8

1    Researcher: ja, uuhh, okay. So whats uhh (.)

2    Kid Murray: yeah uhh, I'm Kid Murray

3    Researcher:        ja

4    Kid Murray: Representing ya'll

5  Researcher: for real

6  Kid Murray: I go to the YMCA, to krump, it uhh, helps me to focus, and to express my anger,

7  cos back then, when I had nothing to express my anger with, I used to be violent, I used to be

8  violent, so, so my friend over here told me that they uh, they go to the Y, to krump, learn how

9  to krump,  keep it real now

Again the self presentation that occurs here takes the form of an epic narrative. Kid Murray presents a picture of an outcast figure. As a person who used to be violent he might not have been an acceptable member of society, he might have suffered rejection, marginalization and exclusion. Anger and violence are not things that are acceptable in society. however, he indicates that he has found acceptance with the krumpers that he meets at the YMCA. His anger is the trial that he has to overcome. He states that he is now a more focused person (Extract 8, Line5), that he is now able to manage and gain control over his anger (Extract 8, Line 5), indicating that he is now a person that society can accept because he has been accepted by the krumpers who have helped him to find focus in his life. Hip hop is therefore a site where people can construct acceptable and heroic versions of themselves. It is a site where they can try to find acceptance and recognition from each other and from the world. It is a site where they can create narratives that construct them as valuable people, people deserving of applause because of the adversity they have suffered but have managed to overcome.

Hip hop therefore is an avenue of resistance, of resignification, a site for change and reconstruction of the self. The interaction between the researcher and Sekza shows how language forms part of actions that references particular subjects. Things such as the speech norms, swearing for example (Extract 8, Line 7) that Sekza engages in may indicate positionality. However, as a hip hopper, it makes sense that he would seek to occupy this position and set himself up as the representative of people from the townships. Voices from the townships, especially here in South Africa are often voices that exist on the margins of society. In Extracts 8, 9 and 10 the participants all make reference to marginality, and this is repeated again in Extract 9 when Fiddy says that hip hoppers are called derogatory names by people such as "inigger" and that most people who do so do so because " they don't understand the culture itself" (Lines 24-25). So the hip hopper is an outcast because they are called names and because they are misunderstood and it seems that even within the townships themselves hip hoppers are sometimes outcasts. Townships are also forms of locational

disadvantage that has already been alluded to somewhere in this analysis. Hip hop therefore provides him with the opportunity and the language to spell out the position of people from the townships. It gives him the chance to show how he is rebelling against adversity. It gives him the opportunity to represent and 'keep it real', to pose himself as an authentic member of the social group hip hopper and person from the township.

'Keeping it real' is very important to the hip hopper. It is very closely tied to 'representing' and it means being who you are no matter what. It means solidly affirming and confirming your sense of identity through your actions and behaviour. In the following extract (Extract 9), which is a conversation between the Researcher, Graffy and Fiddy, three things are apparent about 'keeping it real': 1) *'keeping it real' is not being fake*, 2) *'keeping it real' means being true to yourself* and 3) *'keeping it real' is tied to gaining recognition and acceptance.*

Extract 9

1   Researcher: for real for real expression. So I, I know with expression there there's so it's
2   never really only about expression, so theres expression and then as well and then theres the
3   acting you know so you have to live up the expression with the action so what is the action
4   component of the hip hop head?

5   Fiddy:        but you know when it comes to living up, to living up as expected by the
6   masses. The thing is that some people live it the moment they wake up in the morning they in
7   that spiritual, they in they own world this hip hop world that they've created that they part of
8   but some people they tend to jet in and out of it today you see him he's like a hip hop head
9   tomorrow you see him he's like a normal dude he's wearing a suit and he's like, he's more

10  Researcher: ja (laughter) there's like that dual

11  Fiddy: ja ja, its like stepping into a new world, you know when you a kid let's say you are
12  used to a certain way of things certain customs and stuff and now you step into a new world
13  where you can't really remove your own self but then you taken by the glit and glam from
14  something else from the new world and  stuff then you try and align with that and be one with
15  that because your peers are living in that world in that new world and stuff. So with heads,
16  being a head and stuff its' more like it not in a way of act you being a part of this

17  Graffy: if you act it catches up with you eventually

18    Fiddy: ja

19    Graffy: it catches up to you and you will crack you and will burn out totally then you will go

20    back to you r old tendencies and then you will look like a fool people saying weren't you a

21    nigger people so they try to call you most of the time cos they don't call you as a hip hop

22    head these days like uhm, uzama ukuzenza inigga (trying to make himself a nigger)

23    Researcher: mmh, mh uza ja

24    Fiddy: its but most of the time those people who say uzama ukuzenza innigga they don't

25    understand the culture itself cos some of them they think this is like an import from America

26    you know its something that doesn't exist in South Africa it wasn't here but  it you know

27    poetry where I learned poetry

28    Graffy:  but it started right here its right here, its right here

29    Fiddy: even Afrika Bambata when he chose the name Afrika Bambata he knew about the

30    history of Africa what's even amazing is that people in America know more about our history

31    here in Africa than we know about our history in Africa, so its

32    Researcher: ja ja

33    Graffy: its kinda embarrassing in a way

34    Fiddy: ja it is embarrassing it is embarrassing for real

35    Researcher: mh mh ja okay, uuhm so now ja ja so would you say that hip hop is resistant then

36    like um like um so, first of all we were saying that if you act it it catches up with you right  in

37    what sense so theres they always talk about keep it real or or authenticity you know things

38    like that

39    Fiddy: ja ja just to add to that to what he was saying that it catches up to you know when you

40    act theres a time for you to stop acting and be yourself you know and and you now when you

41    into hip hop and stuff maybe you just doing it cos g loc is doing it you know but theres a time

42    where you gonna be called to be yourself, be you

43    Researcher: mmh

44    Fiddy: you know I mean from youngest age at home they know me the type of music I listen

45    to how  I dress and how I do things I'm different

46     Researcher:  mmh

47     Fiddy: from everyone else in my hood you know they like pantsula tip you yabo  nje igoni

48     epaketheni you know uzhlalel emakhoneni uzshayel ispansula nani nani naninani yabo when

49     it comes to spitting and everything they like no its American and stuff but they don't really

50     find the joy that I find in it

51     Fiddy: and stuff, yabo its more like I'm living it now you know cos without even saying

52     anything they

53     Researcher: Mhhm

54     Fiddy: when I'm walking they like oh  yeah you a head, like how did you know, no the way

55     you do things man you different from other people you know what I mean

56     Researcher: mhmm,   ja

57     Fiddy: so if you are into it it becomes you and you become one, but if you acting we can see

58     that you acting and you find people who overdo things like in America you know how they

59     dress its sometimes its just because of the weather there and they will dress in this big jacket

60     cos its hot its cold there

61      Graffy: ja ja ja ja ((laughing))

62     Fiddy:its cold there  they will wear like the big jacket and you will come here to South Africa

63     where the temperature is like different

64     Graffy: I found that out yesterday

65     Fiddy: and you will found a dude who's wearing a hot hot jacket  hey in a hot hot day

66     Graffy: jackets were meant for the snow

67     Fiddy: you see so ja there's kinda like confusion there if you living it or you just acting it

68     Graffy ja ja ja cos something that happened to me a few weeks ago, I'm walking, I'm like I'm

69     just walking in the street and then this  guy just stops me and he's like do you spit and I'm

70     like ja word hes like ya he also spit and then he drops me something and its

71     Researcher:                                                                                                  mhhm

72  Graffy: real and you can see its real this guy lives it he doesn't he wasn't wearing a baggy

73  pants or anything he was just a regular guy that just knew what he was about

74  Researcher: mhhm, so its just about knowing what you about

75  Graffy:                                                                                         yes see what you put on is just

76  a cover

77  Fiddy: ja it even even pro-proverb said it its not about the baggy jeans and the big t-shirts its

78  about what you have in mind how you living it. Look pro pro is the host of this, the idols -

79  Graffy: the idols

80  Fiddy: have you seen pro wearing the baggy jean there and baggy T-shirts NO! Hes just pro

81  with his shirt and his trouser and stuff you know

82  Researcher:  phofu is that proverb or is that prokid

83  Graffy: no its pro proverb

84  Fiddy: proverb proverb  ja ja. He still is proverb and stuff. Hes got his cap, you know proverb

85  and his cap hes keeping it real

86  Researcher: ja, ja

87  Fiddy: you know, there was a time when he dropped free rhymes there and stuff over there

88  and  we were like watching everybody was loving and enjoying it its he doesn't overdo it

89  he's just living it

90  Researcher: ja, mhm, mhm

91   Graffy: and for example prokid too this guy you know hes raw hes from the ghetto but

92  randomly

93  Researcher:  mhm  ja  mhm mhm

94  Graffy: he will rock up in a suit and you will recognize no hes a head

95  Researcher: ja ja mhm

96  Fiddy:    mmh mh mh

97  Fiddy: then you will find those people who are acting where they be like dressing up for the
98  sake for the sake

99  Researcher: ja mmh

100 Graffy: Speedies ((laughs))

101 Fiddy: of you recognizing them to be the head and stuff but then next time you see him
102 dressing like wearing a suit you find that nigger is more comfortable than when he was
103 wearing ja whatever he was yabo wearing back there

104 Graffy: ja

105 Fiddy: and then when he's wearing the suit he's totally different he's someone else he he ja
106 different in a way that that if you talk about spitting hell be like ja this is not the time or the
107 place for him to do that you know give him time and he will come back to you and stuff

108 Researcher: ja

109 Fiddy: but then if you see pro wearing a suit he will spit there wearing that suit and it didnt
110 change his identity hes still pro you know so hip hop is not just about identity you wearing
111 clothes that make you who you are its internally identity its inside you its you into hip hop
112 you living it and stuff

'Keeping it real' is tied to being authentic by Graffy and Fiddy. They speak of it in terms of being "real" (Extract 9, Line 72), "not acting" or "dressing up" for the sake of being recognized (Lines-99-103). They construct being not real as having serious repercussions in that someone who is not being real will be called upon to stop acting and that they will crack and burn when that happens (Lines 17-19). The hip hoppers say that being a hip hopper means that you inhabit a certain world and that those who are fake tend to jet in and out of that world

'Keeping it real' is also spoken of in terms of integrity about one's identity, having pride in possessing a (South) African identity to be more specific. They speak about how being a hip hopper is "not about wearing baggy jeans and T-shirts" (Lines 77-78). The hip hoppers make an example of Proverb who never ever wears baggy jeans and large T-shirts, a trademark of American rappers and rappers who emulate the American style. 'Keeping it real' is

constructed as being who you are even though you are famous and Prokid is used as an example because even though he is famous "he is raw, he is from the ghetto" and that even though he may occasionally ("randomly") wear a suit he still shows that he is real (Lines 88-96). Fiddy speaks about 'keeping it real' as being an "internal identity" that you become true to, an identity that reflects how you live your life and your experiences (Lines 111-114). They speak of being real as being true to the experiences of being South African and not trying to emulate the Americans "with big jackets" because experiences across contexts are different (Lines 57-67). They speak of 'keeping it real' in terms of being proud about being South African, stating that it is embarrassing that Americans know more about Africa than Africans themselves. This is an indication that there is no pride amongst locals, that they would rather be American when they should be 'keeping it real' and being themselves, expressing their personal identities.

'Keeping it real' is also tied to recognition. The way Graffy and Fiddy construct it, to be recognized as a hip hopper is something special that some people will be dressed up just so that they can be perceived as hip hop heads. Fiddy and Graffy talk about how "you will find these people who are acting and dressing up just so that they can be recognized and accepted as hip hop heads" . Being a hip hopper appears to be regulated by 'keeping it real'.  In Line 57, notice how Fiddy  says "but if you acting we can see that you acting" implying that a person is always under scrutiny. So this means that authenticity is something that is guarded and regulated in hip hop. It is the means through which a person gets recognition and acceptance. Notice also how it is implied by Graffy  in lines 68-73  that people who are 'keeping it real' tend to recognize each other. The story that Graffy narrates of an incidence goes like this: he was walking on the street, some random guy who had apparently recognized him as a hip hop head (a hip hopper) came up to him and asked him if he is a hip hop head ("do you spit?"),  Graffy replied to the affirmative ( "ja word") and the guy replied that he is also a hip hop head ("that he also spit") and that to prove himself that he was a real hip hopper the guy rapped something (dropped me something) that Graffy recognized was real and therefore accepted the guy as a real hip hopper.

 Graffy constructs himself as a "real" hip hopper, recognized by other hip hoppers. In fact, Graffy's ability to recognize that the other guy is "real" constructs him as somewhat of a guardian who is a person with knowledge over what is real or not. So 'keeping it real' appears to be something that is highly regulated and watched. In all their self performances people must be seen as 'keeping it real' in order to be accepted as authentic members of the

culture. The participants talk about how not 'keeping it real' catches up with you, again implying the scrutiny surrounding authenticity, who is a hip hopper and who is not. This is in confirmation with the performance that Sekza puts on in front of his audience in Extract 7 in order to give the impression that he is "real" and that his audience can accept him, which they do.

The identity of the hero is very much aligned to adversity and marginalization in order for it to be accepted and applauded. Showing that one has suffered adversity, and has somehow overcome it gains him or her applause and recognition. Adversity and marginality are therefore a big ingredient in the process of recognition. However, the hero exists always in a precarious balance between adversity, overcoming adversity and being too successful.

By being too successful he may undo himself, remove himself from marginalization and therefore construct himself as no longer a representative of the disenfranchised. It puts a question over his 'keeping it real'. For example, Sliceman in Extract 2 talks about how he does not feel commercial cats (Line 5). Commercial cats in hip hop are those people who have been signed by record labels and have found success and wealth as a result of working for these corporate record labels. There is the belief amongst hip hoppers that things are easy for those who have found record labels because the record labels find marketing and distributing companies for these artists. Fiddy in Extract 5 talks about how hip hop 'artists get the record label and then just chill' (Lines 8-9). He puts more emphasis in doing things for yourself, like independently "pushing your own stuff" (Lines 10-13) in the same way that Story and his group are "try'na hustle independently" (Extract 4, Line 12) to receive support and gain recognition. As a result of having found a record label, the commercial hip hoppers are constructed as no longer deserving of the label 'strugglers' and therefore what they say in their lyrics is no longer perceived as 'real'. Eltido in Extract 6 is quoted as having found success without the support of the record labels.

The white 'baas' (Extract 6, Line 24) that Fiddy refers about cannot possibly fit the criteria of an underdog according to the narrative developed by these hip hoppers. What disqualifies him is that he has not suffered adversity, marginalization and disadvantage that is so important to the narrative of the hip hoppers conceptions about themselves. He is spoken of as a "white dude who's got cash that he's inherited from his father" (Extract 6, Lines 16-17), a statement that constructs him as someone undeserving of recognition. He is lacking the things that make and define the underdog, which are disadvantage and the resistance to

disadvantage.  Without these, he would not be an authentic representation of the people like the hip hoppers say that they are, and as such he is not accepted by Fiddy and Graffy. As a "white dude who's got cash" (Extract 6, Line 17) he has what the hip hoppers do not have, and as "ubaas" he is constructed as a member of the system. The white baas does not have the symbolic markers of identity that need to be called upon in order to be accepted as an authentic representation of the subject identities that are the characteristics of the hip hoppers.

What this does is that it takes away the notion of authenticity by taking away struggle, 'hustling', difficulty and marginalization. Story must show that he is still 'hustling', that he is still struggling to get his name out there in the world. He must show that his struggle is still connected to the people, "the people and the fans" (Extract 5, Line 5) a symbol of connectedness mutual understanding. In fact, he is dropping "the Bluetooth mixtape for free" (Extract 5, Lines 4-5). So although he is showing how he is 'hustling' and trying to gain recognition, he never really extrapolates himself from the sense of grass root connection that he shares with marginalized people.

A characteristic of the underdog, the hero in a heroic narrative is that although he or she finds success, they are still seen and see themselves as ordinary human beings, still connected with the ordinary people at grassroots level. In fact that is why they are celebrated and applauded, because in spite of all their achievements, they still 'represent' the ordinary citizens. That identity of struggle, marginalization and adversity is never totally escaped.. They still represent and associate with people at the ground level. That is to say that the spirit of the ordinary citizen exists side by side with the extraordinary in the heart of the underdog.  Sekza in Extract 7 also represents himself as an ordinary member of the township, characterised by marginality in what he is saying about himself. He takes care to speak in a way that is representative of people from the townships. As a result he is applauded by the people that are around him who are also from the townships.

**Conclusion**

The construction of subjectivity that the hip hoppers engage in is developed in the form of an epic or heroic narrative. In the narratives that they develop, they are the main actors, the heroes, they construct themselves as underdogs, surrounded by disadvantage and marginalization. The narrative is then developed and moves to show how they are responding to the adversities and disadvantages that they are facing. This is presented in the form of the hip hop cultural term known as 'hustling'. Through 'hustling', they construct themselves as

reflective of the spirit of the underdog, as representatives of the disenfranchised, taking power into their own hands. 'Hustling' is constructed as working outside of the system, with an emphasis on independence, but still retaining a connection with the people or the masses in order to gain recognition.

Recognition is what the hip hoppers work towards and it is attained through 'representing' 'hustling', and 'keeping it real', and it results in acceptance. Acceptance occurs when a subject has been recognized and accepted as an authentic representation of the in group. Those people who recognize the hero accept the hero as the person who is representative of their desires and aspirations. Throughout the hip hopper's constructions of a subject identity, developed as it is in the form of a heroic narrative, the hip hoppers draw primarily and extensively on a discourse of disadvantage. They define themselves in relation to disadvantage, namely how they are constrained by it and how they are trying to overcome it. Their response to difficulty is also presented as needing special tactics but also as difficult as well.

 Representation also makes use of a discourse of marginalization in the form of financial disadvantage, geographical marginalization and social marginalization. Hustling then is their forte of resistance, the space within which they try to overcome this difficulty that they are talking about. Speakers must always keep disadvantage within the frame of their talk because if they do not show it then they are not accepted as representatives. People who do not hustle are discredited as representatives of real hip hoppers. Disadvantage then in this sense, becomes a performative social tool in the process of identity formation. By talking about it, by sense fully contextualising it, they are able to convey the sense of resistance that they claim to be engaged in.

## 5. Discussion

What we come to believe is true about people is accomplished in their talk and does not come from some immutably objective nature about them (Parker, 1992). People are produced through rationalized accounts about themselves and the world. These accounts draw on discourses for their effect. Discourses contain the norms which produce rationalized accounts of self and the world. These discourses and the subjects that they produce become real in particular ways. However they are not real in any absolute or strict sense. The accounts that people give of themselves can always be challenged, meaning that there are always claims of reality and truth at stake in the accounts that people give of themselves. Accounts therefore need to be verifiable, understandable and consistent so that they are believable as things that are out there in the world. Subjects and objects produced in discourse are not in and of themselves 'real'.

Discourse plays a large role in the accomplishment of what we may come to believe is true of the hip hoppers. They draw extensively from marginalization to construct a picture of themselves and the role that they play in the world. They talk about being from the townships, from the ghettoes, they talk about inopportunity and inaccessibility, things that we can all easily recognize in a South African context. They are young, Black teenagers from the townships. We can recognize the types of places that they are talking about and we can locate them within these places. What they talk about therefore has a resonance within us that somehow partially accomplishes their act of portraying to us who they are and what they do.

### How do South African hip hoppers construct resistance?

This study shows how discourses attend to both the material and psychological conditions of the production of reality. Discourses make use of things that are in the world but also endow them with meaning that produces social experiences purported to be real. Today South Africa still faces many socioeconomic problems and issues with redress. A majority of youth in South Africa come from working class families in the townships and the ghettoes. Ghettoes and Townships are real contexts. There is large scale unemployment, leading to a number of social ills and hopelessness amongst the youth. It is in these contexts that 'hustling' becomes a prominent activity for young people. Peterson (2003, p. 208) writes that 'hustling' is "the institution of a defensive space where defensive strategies can be adopted by the wretched of the earth" defensive strategies that are employed by youth from the townships. Popular culture has also made the ghetto a symbol of ostracism and dejection (Peterson, 2003).This discourse is still prevalent in South Africa even today. Marginalization is therefore something

that can be pointed to both symbolically and physically in constructions and accounts of the self. The hip hoppers make reference to normative practices and modes of being in the world to rationalize accounts about themselves (Giddens, 1979).

Resistance in the accounts that hip hoppers give becomes meaningful and real in two ways that are consistent with how discourses frame realities. It is firstly the resistance that they do physically, as in the act of hustling and securing performance spaces, the independent entrepreneurial enterprises that they engage in like selling T-shirts, all of which are responses to trying to gain acceptance and recognition in communities where they feel like they are outcasts. The networking that they talk about is an attempt to spread their social spheres through collaborations with other independent hip hoppers like themselves. They talk about locational disadvantage, where certain places are disadvantaged because of their location in relation to resources. Places such as Pietermaritzburg are perceived as less resourced than bigger cities. Part of what comes through in some of the talk of the participants is a small town discourse, where small towns are often overlooked and under resourced. These are responses against being overlooked and not taken as important.

The other type of resistance that occurs is equally explicit as the first but in a way, less physical. When the hip hoppers talk about representing and keeping it real, in a way they are embracing their identities and the identities of the places that they come from, the townships. In their talk, the township becomes a symbol of pride and they themselves become symbols of pride as representatives of the township. But the participants are also reconstructing themselves as heroes in the process. The participants talk about how they are trying to bring positive change to the townships, thereby making the township a place of possible redemption, while some of them talk about representing those explicitly bad elements of the township such as the life of thugs. These are things that are brought to the attention of the listener, problematised as in the case of the latter and subverted as in the case of the former. By trying to bring change in the former, an attempt is made to re-inscribe the township with positivity.

Ironically, even though hip hop is said to be a modern music, the two above points show that it can be located within the context of old struggles in South Africa. For example the difficulty of getting record deals and performance spaces and recording opportunities is not something new to South African artists. The fear of exploitation that Fiddy talks about when he presses artists to educate themselves results from the exploitation of uneducated Black

musicians who were exploited by record labels for royalties (Andersson, 1981). However, education is also something that has been a pressing concern in the public discourse of South Africa. Education has been associated with freedom, knowledge and for Fiddy hip hop is an added impulse toward the motivation to 'educate yourself'. To educate yourself, for Fiddy means not just to educate yourself in school but on how to survive. It is something that is usually captured in phrases like "Education is Power" .

We get a different picture of Black youth in this study. We get rap groups such as Bad Mood who are dedicated to 'spreading positivity' to the townships and trying to change social conditions. The concerns with lack of resources show that there are still important segments of society that are under resourced even in cities such as Pietermaritzburg (ironically, Pietermaritzburg is the administrative capital of KZN). There is no longer that angry, dispassionate and irresponsible youth that seemed to permeate discourse on youth in the townships in the early 1990s (Seekings, 1996). There are decent, caring and responsible young people in the township communities of South Africa who are like any decent adults in South Africa. This is consistent with Seeking's (1996, p. 119) finding that typical young people in the townships are not over-politicised or hyper-radicalised, amoral or antisocial". We have youth who say they are concerned about the things that they see in their communities in the same way that early hip hop groups such as POC were concerned about what they saw in their communities.

Also, contrary to earlier beliefs that hip hoppers were American imitations who were not proud of their South African identities, here we have people who are trying to change situations in their communities. We have networks of people who recognize each other and their position in society and are trying to do something about it by helping each other. By representing, it means that the hip hoppers biographical narratives, their personal biographies do not become theirs alone. By referencing the township and marginalization, 'others' like them are implicated in the their personal narratives even though they not be hip hoppers. this is what is meant by representing. The struggle, the marginalization becomes a collective struggle and experience of marginalization. For example, Andersson (2010, p. 172) found that "identity and support in the city" was amongst the "top ten issues for South African youth in cities". By talking the way that they do they position themselves as youth that are in charge of their destinies, using their trials, tribulations and ordeal as verification, and emerge as heroes in the narrative. As listeners, as audiences, we can realize what they are talking about and affirm/agree that they are indeed heroes.

The nature of the struggle therefore seems to be reflected in how the hip hoppers are symbolically repositioning themselves in discourse. According to Parker (1992) and Durrheim, Mtose and Brown (2011) discourses endow one with positionality. Their story is a journey in which they move from being marginalized subjects from marginalized contexts to heroes. They speak about financial difficulties, social exclusion, locational disadvantage and being misunderstood by members of society. Townships become stages, or set the stage for redemption. They talk about representing the masses and the townships. However, listening carefully to their talk reveals how the hip hoppers are highlighting marginalization and disadvantage only to show how they are overcoming it or responding to it. But through special characteristics and strategic manoeuvres that they possess as 'hustlers' and representatives of the townships, for example thugs, they emphasize how they are empowering themselves. The hip hoppers reposition themselves as people who persevere and are dedicated to what they are doing.

### a. Heroic narrative

Feldman (1989, 1990; in Nicolopoulou, 1997, p. 191) states that different narratives can be differentiated into different "narrative genres, each with its own distinctive inner logic, that people employ in diverse contexts for making sense of the world. What these genres provide above all are constitutive mental models for ordering and interpreting human experience, both one's own and that of others". The symbolic importance of the discourse used by the hip hoppers is that it constructs a heroic narrative about them. Their *call to adventure* (Kelly, 2008) occurs when they feel a need to become hip hoppers. Different people accept the call in different ways and for different reasons. For Blaze (Extract 1), the call is because they want to spread positivity in their community.

The hip hoppers then *cross the first threshold* (Kelly, 2008) and enter into a world where they are denied access to things that are important for their journey, such as performance spaces and recording studios. In this world they encounter 'threshold guardians', people against whom the hip hoppers have to fight in order to achieve what they want to do (Kelly, 2008, p. 30). The hip hoppers speak of hustling and the hard work they put into trying to get recognition and acceptance. This is their *road of trials* (Kelly, 2008). For the hip hoppers, the *ultimate boons* are different but we can accept that they generally relate to recognition and acceptance or independence.

Once this is accomplished, they have to *cross the return threshold* and this usually involves a choice of whether they will return to their society or not. This is where keeping it real becomes important. By keeping it real they need to still maintain a connection with their society even though they are now heroes. They must represent their identities and the identities of their society.

### b. *Identities and identification*

There seems to be an agreement in this statement that 'hustlers' are the underdogs, the outcasts however what makes the 'hustler' special in the case of the hip hoppers is that the 'hustler' has the power and capacity to redeem himself in spite of that dejection. They are heroes in their own eyes and the eyes of others who recognize them. They emphasize the dejection in order to show how they crush it in the process of their being, yet it remains definitive of who they are, it in itself becomes a way of regulating and ostracizing others from participating in the culture through the issue of authenticity. Hip hop therefore gives these hip hoppers a site to spell out and articulate this position through a language of disadvantage. Disadvantage therefore becomes a point of identification for the hip hoppers in articulating who they are as hip hoppers will orientate their subjectivity towards one form or another of disadvantage and marginalization.

In the extracts that were presented in the results and analysis section we can see the process of identity formation in effect through the subjects talk and the actions that are presented by them to reflect their identities. They make use of terms that are reflective and descriptive of the norms of being an underground hip hopper in South Africa which involve extreme difficulties with getting heard by the masses. These terms and actions are recited and reiterated, appearing repetitively in the way they speak . As has been said before they make constant reference to disadvantage and marginality, presenting themselves as people who have suffered from such discrimination and dislocation. These become the condition for becoming a hip hopper for them. In effect, what this does is that it produces a stylized subject and recognizable figure who need not necessarily be confined to hip hop. The stylized subject or figure culminates in the formation of a hero through a heroic narrative.

The identities that are created in hip hop culture are identities that constantly need to be defended and accounted for. This is done through the notion of 'keeping it real' and 'representing' and showing that one is a 'hustler', a real underdog. Hip hop culture therefore becomes a site of identity construction as well as contestation, affirmation and confirmation

(Pennycook, 2007). What this study shows however is how there are issues at stake in what people say and how they act when they say that they are hip hoppers. The issues that are at stake are issues of authenticity. Identity confirmation and affirmation do not happen automatically by virtue of one's statement that they are a hip hopper or that they listen to hip hop music. Identities are not just simply stated, they need to be defended and accounted for, and this is done discursively through creating and conveying a sense of marginalization and some form of disadvantage in who one says they are.

**Performing the 'real' in hip hop**

The study shows that reality in hip hop culture is contestable. What hip hoppers say about themselves and their surroundings are not reflections of truth but constructions and performances. This is evident in the fact that keeping it real and representing are held to be so important to the culture. The authenticity of people is always put into question in hip hop, whether they are real or not. People therefore need to give credible and believable accounts and performances of who they are. Like Graffy said, you cannot be a head today and then tomorrow you something else otherwise your whole identity as a real hip hopper is put into question. Keeping it real, hustling and representing therefore perform a regulatory role because whoever is perceived to be not doing these things is discredited as a hip hopper.

*'Keeping it real' and 'representing'*

The hip hopper needs to be 'keeping it real' to the norms of being a hip hopper, 'representing' what hip hoppers do. Part of the subject identity of a hip hopper is a personal identity, but part of it is also a social identity, that is why we have the hip hop cultural term 'representing': a person can become the symbol of a host of disenfranchised people. Adversity and overcoming adversity is something that is personal to the hip hopper but it is also something that is social in that other people suffer adversity and disadvantage. However, the hip hopper uses hip hop to overcome this adversity. Hip hoppers, when they are 'representing', claim that they are 'representing' a particular group of people that they recognize and affiliate with. Their actions are geared towards gaining recognition from wider audiences, people like themselves as well as people in wider society, seen for example in how Story sells his T-shirts to hip hoppers, a select group of people supporting his hip hop at a show. This means that people also need to feel that they are being represented by the hip hopper in order for them to recognize the hip hopper

There is an abundance of literature in this field especially in reference to social identity (Abrams, 1990; Abrams and Hogg, 1990; Hogg, 1992; Levine & Moreland, 1995; Tice, 1992). As has been mentioned before, recognition fosters solidarity, understanding and acceptance. The behaviour that the hip hop publicly displays must be representative of the underdog, the hip hopper. These behaviours are what characterize and categorize the hip hopper as an underdog, an uncelebrated hero. Hogg (2004, p. 211) for instance has written about how categorization and accentuation play a part in group behaviour that forms group identity: "research suggests that publicly performed behaviour can lead to more enduring and self presentational change. People may also want to communicate their group membership to fellow members by publicly exhibiting behaviour that communicates group member-there is a communicative or self representational function to the behaviour". In identity formation, certain people serve as category prototypes of a certain group, they serve as the cultural models (Kiesling, 2005), a rough approximation of how members of that particular group typically behave like.

According to the social psychological literature certain states of being in the world have prototypical features about them that are expressions of their subjects. I want to draw on Erving Goffman's (1956) writing on how people present themselves to others, how they perform being themselves through salient markers of identity in connection to who they claim they to be. The recitation of these salient features serves as physical or psychological markers of who or what the person is supposed or claims to be. Physical markers that make up identity in groups of people represented in these extracts can be understood to be poverty, marginalization and disadvantage, the directly observable aspects of personal or social identity. Psychological features are closely related to physical features although expressed more indirectly, such as attitudes. Physical identity markers are connected to psychological markers of identity and these give rise to a group identity, most vividly expressed through the group prototype. So for example, Hogg (2004, p. 207) writes about how group prototypes make the group have a psychological essence that is reflected in their behaviour. The psychological essence of the groups represented in these extracts can be understood as the unwillingness to suffer adversity, the need to take control of one's situation, inversion of and resistance to adversity.

We can always claim to infer some psychological connection between one person in a category with another person of that same category if they show similar norms of behaving, talking or thinking. The recitation or referencing of the salient physical and psychological

markers of identity are captured in the hip hop cultural term, in the hip hop vernacular as "representing", a form of representation. The term does this in two ways, by holding certain people or the self as an example of how particular people from particular contexts are or should be. Therefore 'representing' presents to us what the life of a person from a particular context is like. 'representing' is also used for the self. It is an identity construction, identity confirmation and affirmation. 'Representing' is tied very closely to 'keeping it real' and the two terms are always used in connection to each other. Group solidarity-recognition, is therefore built around and achieved through and 'keeping it real'. The life of thugs that Sekza says that he is representing is an example of what he calls the township mentality. According to Pinn (1999, p. 12), Sekza would therefore be styling himself in the image of the 'badman', the "real life ghetto hustler", who is a problem to society. The applause that he receives from his onlookers could be argued to be an agreement from his onlookers of the presence of the people that Sekza is speaking about as well as an acceptance of his performance as a representative of such a mentality.

*Authenticity and reality*

It is the perceived psychological and physical essence of experience that produce what come to be authentic accounts of the world for the hip hoppers. Marginalization is tied to how hip hoppers produce themselves as real subjects. So for example, Fraley (2009, p. 37) looks at how Eminem draws on "essentialized notions of Blackness" in order to reproduce and make use of the experience of marginalization that comes with being Black in America. Through this strategy he is able to do what most other White rappers have been unable to do and that is to gain recognition and acceptance with Black hip hoppers and the whole hip hop movement as a whole. Authenticity and marginality therefore becomes central in defining who one is in terms of hip hop. Marginality and adversity are constructed as producing the authentic hip hop experience in the case of Eminem through his association with the ghetto and being around Black people although he is White. This means that that shared experience of marginalization creates a shared sense of identity. Tricia Rose (1994, p. 12; in Pennycook, 2009, p. 43) writes how Vanilla Ice's (a white rapper) desire "to be Black in order to validate his status as a rapper hints strongly at the degree to which ghetto Blackness is critical to rap music" and the importance of a ghetto upbringing to rappers. This is the same strategy that is used by Sekza when he talks about the township mentality and thugs as a symbol of marginality.

This study shows how marginality is embraced by the hip hoppers as a necessary part in their development of a heroic narrative that they use to construct who they say they are. This study reveals how in their verbal and discursive performances hip hoppers such as Sekza draw from and depend on these marginal aspects of personality and society to construct and prove their identities and to prove themselves as real representations of these identities that they claim to represent, an action that also confirms what an important part the hood or township plays in hip hop subjectivity as a symbol of authenticity (Rosenthal, 2006). Participants use such as township mentality and thugs, symbols of marginalization to construct their identities. The study shows that in fact marginalization and adversity are strategically employed by the hip hoppers as a way of garnering acceptance from amongst each other and society. These symbols of marginalization are therefore important and necessary to the type of identity that they are trying to achieve because they make the subjects recognizable subjects. acceptance will happen if they portray themselves as heroes in a heroic narrative.

The type of identity that the hip hoppers construct is developed in the form of a heroic narrative. In this narrative, marginalization and adversity are vital components, crucial to the whole story line. All the hip hoppers emphasize this aspect of marginalization. They construct themselves as the underdogs, down and out and rejected by society. A response to this position is effected through the cultural term called 'hustling'. They then construct themselves as the heroes who are trying to overcome their adversity but not the underdog status through this term called 'hustling'. Throughout their narrative they must keep this underdog status, this aspect of the marginalized and rejected in order to retain their sense of authenticity. In doing this they are considered to be 'keeping it real'. Losing this status of marginality and adversity means that you have lost that aspect of authenticity that you have worked hard for. So in terms of the hip hop epic narrative, the hip hopper although he may have found success and made it (Skold & Rehn, 2007) must still maintain an attachment to their roots, must still visibly represent that they are from the marginalized sections of society otherwise they risk losing the status of 'keeping it real' and therefore not being recognized or accepted.

**Semantic dimensions as discursive resources in subject formation**

What the interviews reveal is how rap is a site for identity construction (Pennycook, 2007) but also a site in which identity is highly regulated and kept under surveillance. The real hip hopper becomes something that is highly scrutinised, and credible identities become at stake,

dependent on credible performances in interaction. The hip hop terminology reveals dimensions of meaning that regulate what is accepted as credible performances or not for a hip hopper. These dimensions are called semantic dimensions (McLeod, 1999). A semantic dimension is defined as "a two valued set that is used to conceive of and evaluate aspects of language use" (Seitel, 1974, p. 51, in McLeod, 1999, p. 137. We can tell therefore how something is conceptualized by looking at the different meaning and values attached to those meanings. Distinctions between what is real and not real ('fake') become important in the invocation and proving of authenticity, where members of groups will argue over what is real or not real with respect to hybrid cultures.

There are six semantic dimensions in hip hop that McLeod studies, dimensions (discourses if you will, see McLeod, 1999, p. 137) that exist as a set of values of binary oppositions in the form of *real* and *fake*, and they are 1) a social psychological dimension (*staying true to yourself* is seen as real and *following mass trends* is seen as fake), 2) a racial semantic dimension (where *being Black* is seen as being real and *being White* is seen as fake), 3) a political-economic dimension (where *underground hip hop* is seen as real and *commercial hip hop* is seen as fake), gender sexual (*being hard* is being real and *being soft* is fake), 4) social locational (*being from the street* is real and *being from the suburb* is fake) and cultural (*listening to old school hip hop* is real and *mainstream hip hop is fake*). These semantic dimensions have something of the ring of discourse to them. The binary oppositions within these semantic dimensions are what is of most crucial importance to authenticity and cultural legitimacy for hip hoppers within the hip hop discourse.

The hip hoppers's talk in the study reveals two dimensions or conditions on which a credible hip hop subject is accepted or not. This is whether they are perceived to be real or fake, whether they are representing or not. It is not surprising though that authenticity should assume such a preeminent role in hip hop subjectivity, as shown first of all by what the cultural terms used by the participants in this study imply, and secondly as shown by the binary opposition of the semantic dimensions (McLeod, 1999) prevalent in hip hop discourse. Butler (1993) writes how discursive constructions operate by exclusionary means through foreclosure and abjection. Discursive constructions play a somewhat regulatory function since they are so closely tied to action (Butler, 1993). They produce that which they name.

By defining and stating boldly that which they are, they are also at the same time defining that which they are not. This is what Butler (2005) refers to as the constitutive other, the

tendency for subjects to define themselves in opposition to that which they seek to contest. Therefore we can see this when the hip hoppers for example say that White people who are from the suburbs with 'lots of money' should not be placed in the same category as Blacks. The discursive constructions employed by the participants are accompanied by moral precepts in the form of attitudes, beliefs and actions, according to which their subjects are expected to live by.  In fact, authenticity is always under surveillance and scrutiny, guarded against 'acting' as Fiddy puts it. 'Acting' in this sense is the binary opposition of being authentic, it refers to being superficial. Therefore there are limitations and discursive boundaries in relation to who can be considered a real hip hopper. We can also see how being from the township and 'representing' thugs and criminals in the strong and apparently proud manner that the participants do they are putting discursive boundaries around what can be described as authentic and inauthentic.

However what is most interesting within the binary oppositions of these semantic dimensions is how those things that are considered to be real are so closely tied to marginalization. So for instance, *being Black* is considered real, *being hard*, *being from the underground* and *from the street* are considered being a real and authentic hip hoppers. These six real dimensions are all related and surprisingly or unsurprising they appear in the talk of the participants that were interview as part of this research. So for example, underground hip hop tends to be a marginalized form of hip hop than its counterpart commercial hip hop. Underground hip hoppers like the ones interviewed in this research often do not have money to keep up to the demands of hip hoppers and their content often has a more socially conscious aspect than commercial hip hoppers who value materialism (Pritchard, 2010). For example, Sliceman in Extract 2 says how he does not "feel commercial cats" (Line 5). Sliceman also says that he does not feel contemporary hip hop, a binary opposition of the *old school* under the six semantic dimensions. We are also presented with the binary opposition of *the street* versus *the suburb* in which the street is perceived as being real by hip hoppers. *Being hard* for instance is a reflection of the ability not to 'take shit' that Sekza tells the researcher of.

Here we are reminded of how Sekza emphasizes the township as a symbol of who he is and where he comes from, and how this is meant to construct him as a real hip hopper, a representative of hip hoppers. The township according to Swartz (2003) is also a representative, an icon of street culture amongst the youth which is reflected in their music and it tends to be associated with marginalization. The binary oppositions of these mentioned dimensions such as being commercial and mainstream and being from the suburbs  are the

discursive means by which hip hoppers would be disqualified as unreal, like the White baas who has money that he has inherited from his father but does not know what to do with it that Fiddy speaks about. It seems therefore, according to this study, that marginalization to hip hoppers is very important because it is the context in which the all important claims of authenticity are invoked.

McCleod (1999) also looks at the resources upon which White hip hop subjects draw on to construct authenticity. Since they may not have the same resources available to them as their Black counterparts to construct being real, such as being from the ghetto, they have to make use of alternative strategies to construct authenticity. One of these strategies is *listening to old school hip hop* and *knowledge of underground rap*, which means listening to the early pioneering rappers. *Knowledge of underground rap* and *listening to the old school* are also the conditions upon which authenticity is conferred by Black hip hop subjects to White hip hop subjects. Adam Haupt (*Mail & Guardian*, 5 October, 2012, p. 8) looks at how Ninja, a white rapper from the rap group Die Antwoord, uses  gang slang from the Cape Flats in order to give himself street credibility. The rapper uses such terms as *raak wys* ("be streetwise"), terms that are used in the townships, and has tattoos that allude to the Numbers Gang in Cape Town. Haupt (in *Mail & Guardian*, October 5, 2012, p. 8) writes "In essence, superficial references to Cape gang culture are made to establish the street credibility of Jones's persona, Ninja" and that "Jones "goes native" by adopting the Cape Flats dialect of Afrikaans, by acquiring tattoos that reference Cape township gang subcultures and by employing Afrikaans expletives that are typically associated with Cape coloured gangsters" . So we can see how referencing the township, the Gangs and the languages that exist in the township would work towards constructing Ninja as a particular subject of rap, one that is real, marginalized according to the requirements of what the hip hoppers in this study consider is being real. Of course the fact that Ninja is White is a huge problem for his critics, but his use of these discursive strategies can be argued to an act of resistance against his skin colour for example. Whether or not he is accepted may depend on how well he impersonates the persona that he tries to construct.

*Contribution of study to the field*

My study contributes to the field of qualitative research where the intention is to study the processes rather than the content of meaning in texts. Realist accounts of texts deal with how texts contain truth statements and thus focus on content analyses (Silverman, 2005). In rap

music, lyrical content has often been viewed as reflective of reality even though that reality has been a contested reality in many cases (Ogbar, 1999). My study deals with the process of the formation of reality and how that reality is made to be reality through social norms (Giddens, 1979).

The study also makes a contribution to the Discursive Psychology literature. Discursive psychology-according to Harre and Gillet (1994), there are two main aims of discursive psychology: (1) "To find out what resources people have to accomplish their plans, projects and intentions, what repertoire of concepts and practices do they have available as usable sign systems? (2)*How are these resources put to work in coordinated actions of the episodes of everyday life"* (p. 98)? The study shows how discourses are the interpretive repertoires that people draw on to construct themselves as 'real' subjects (Potter et al, 1990).

The study provides an alternative way of looking at the hip hop music culture, especially hip hop calls to authenticity or keeping it real (Basu, 1998, Skold & Rehn, 2007) . Keeping it real (authenticity) is often at stake in hip hop and whole identities are built around this concept (Rose, 1990, Fraley, 2009). The study takes a look at how these identities are made achievable, it looks at how they are made to be believable and authentic presentations of the self. It therefore provides a starting point in debate and analysis that tries to deal with representation and claims to authenticity in hip hop culture itself, and in the hip hop literature.

My study shows that identities in hip hop music culture are carefully managed so that they come across as believable accounts of who people claim to be. Rather than rap representing and reflecting real subjects and subjective states, it shows a regulated system of meaning in which participants participate in carefully managed and expressed subjective states. This system of meaning operates through foreclosure (Butler, 2005) and binary opposition (McCleod , 1999) that stipulate conditions for what is considered real. In hip hop music culture, gaining subject status depends on 'keeping it real', 'representing' and 'hustling', and in the particular context of the study, these three cultural terms are underpinned by marginalization.

The study shows how discourses operate within systems of meaning (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 2006). Discourses are used within contexts that contain cultural values. According to Forman (2000), the spatial geographies of Hip Hop are inscribed by cultural values and  are localized sites of significance. These spatial geographies are linked to

marginalization in various ways. These include poverty, crime, lack of education and other socioeconomic forms of disadvantage. In other words, these sites are often sites of struggle and contestation. In this study, it appears that marginalization, as a discourse, is very important for the hip hoppers. It sets the background for the development of a heroic narrative, and it has the effect of producing the hip hoppers as particular kinds of subjects. It is employed in a setting where it is already in the public discourse, in a setting where it is one of the ways of understanding the South African experience. It becomes one of the resources that people can draw on in order to express who they are.

My study is a contribution to hip hop culture. It enters into the debate concerning the 'real' in hip hop music. Debates over what and who is real in hip hop culture are as old as the culture itself. Disputes ('beefs' in hip hop terminology) fuelled by debate over what is real or not take us for instance, to the deaths of Christopher "The Notorious B.I.G" Wallace and Tupac Shakur. Today, with the global spread of hip hop, there is a bigger call for authenticity amongst members of the culture. Issues of authenticity and identity "in addition to the culturally and racially hybrid nature of hip hop become more demanding and complex" (Pennycook, 2007). Moore (2007, p. 7) writes "in hip hop culture, authenticity is everything…the question "is this really hip hop?" has become the litmus test for cultural worth, screening inauthentic voices from the culture's representative space. However, the determinants of authenticity are not obvious".

In this study, I argue that the resources that shape the construction of authenticity are there to be seen. They are everyday things in the worlds we occupy. They are part of the public discourse, and they are put to use in specific ways in order to produce true accounts of the subject and the world. In the study I reveal what some of the determinants of authenticity are. For hip hop music, a claim to marginalization, and claims of an attempt to overcome this marginalization grant one the status of authenticity. Authenticity is framed in terms of its connection to resistance and spaces of resistance. Hip hop has been about resistance, and hip hoppers knowingly draw on this knowledge, working it in specific ways to fit their contexts and they types of subjects they want to construct. In South Africa, it takes on a particular meaning, uses particular resources to achieve the effect of reality. These are resources that are not foreign to the hip hop culture as a whole, and so there seems to be some continuity between the origins of hip hop culture and the claims that the hip hoppers make about themselves and their surroundings.

**Validity and reliability**

My claim for the validity of my assertions puts me in an awkward position. According to Silverman (2005, p. 175) "validity is another word for truth". This study deals not with truth itself per se but with how versions of self are presented as reflective of truth. It deals primarily with the process of truth claims and not the content. The model that I develop for studying reality is therefore "not compatible with true fixes on reality" (Silverman, 2005, p. 177). Perhaps an alternative way of approaching validity in this study would be to look to the subjects themselves and analyze the degree to which their constructions of themselves draw from believable, knowable and acceptable versions of the world. This approach involves asking questions such as how well their accounts of themselves achieve a reasonable sketch of the selves they are describing. It involves questions such as to what extent can we make sense of the selves and the systems of meaning in which those selves are developed.

The validity of my conclusions applies only to theoretical and contextual accounts of validity, in so far as we can rightfully theorise subjectivity, or account for social action as things that are occasioned by particular contexts (Foucault, 1982). The narratives that the hip hoppers develop of themselves are coherent narratives that make use of public discourses. These are discourses that operate in well known and understood meaning systems. Poverty, marginalization and lack of resources are well known features in South Africa. These are discourses that are contextually valid in terms of the contexts in which they are put to use. The discourse analyzed in this study relates to other discourses, and are reflective of their own way of talking (Parker, 1992) in the sense that exclusion, financial exclusion, can be used to capture one aspect of marginalization. Financial exclusion becomes one way of creating marginalization.

Theoretically it has to do with how certain kinds of action are both enabled and limited by discourse (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 2006, p. 335). To be marginalized means to be a particular kind of person, and marginalization opens up spaces for particular kinds of actions. Performatively, it is guided by a particular set of norms and practices that are part of broader systems of meaning. As subjects who feel that they are marginalized, but are resisting, it would make sense that they would develop the heroic narratives that they do. These narratives would be one way of creating control over their sense of self (Kennedy, 1999).The discourses, and the particular way in which they are deployed in these narratives

opens up a space for a particular kind of reading of the marginalized hip hop subject. It is a reading that is guided by what we already know about the world.

The values uncovered in this study are similar to those described by McLeod's (1999) semantic dimensions of authenticity. It shows the working of the outer and the inner, the individual versus the masses, acceptance versus rejection. Those who recognize the epic hero accept and celebrate him. A person who is not recognized is  not accepted. The three cultural terms that have been presented in this study are the discursive boundaries by which acceptance into the category real or authentic hip hopper is regulated.

These discursive constructions whose achievement legitimates authenticity can be captured using the same terms that were used by the hip hoppers in this study. Staying true to yourself is unquestionably an act of 'keeping it real', being from the underground and from the street definitely calls for 'representing' and being from the street also means that you are 'hustling' in the highly organized but informal economy of the streets (Peterson, 2003). So there does seem to be some wide resonance of these cultural terms within the broader hip hop community and they do seem to reflect or call into being somewhat similar types of actions across contexts. In the context of my study they seem to draw their effect from being able to construct marginality.

*Relevance*

 All of the participants interviewed in the study were Black participants. It is interesting that marginalization forms such a significant backdrop to their biographical narratives. The events in the study could lend a Black Consciousness reading to the construction of resistance developed by the hip hoppers. Resistance according to the politics of Black Consciousness involves changing the relationships between the self and the material resources that structure and condition the development of the self, the psyche. For Biko (1978), the material systems that were in place during Apartheid had a direct bearing on the psychological wellbeing of Black people. They had negative effects on how Black perceived themselves.

For the hip hoppers resistance means getting access to physical resources that they are not able to get. In the process of doing this they reposition themselves as agentive subjects. By getting access to these resources they change their subject positions and construct themselves as marginalized heroes in the act of resistance. Resistance for the hip hoppers then means reinventing themselves in relation to the material conditions of their existence.

In terms of the literature on performativity (Butler, 1994, 2005; Goffman, 1956), we can see how hip hop music provides an avenue for particular types of performances. According to the literature on performativity, social action and understandings of the world involve making use of meaningful cultural scripts and narratives. Hip hop provides one way of looking into the developmental process of meaning and states of being in the world. For example, Stephens and Few (2007) looked at how sexual scripts in the hip hop music culture (the bitch, the dyke, the baby mama) provide scripted understandings of sexual risk for adolescent African Americans. These scripted understandings provide a framework for decision making in sexual encounters.

This study reveals how the construction of resistance is a scripted performance that involves the 'hustler' as a cultural script. The hustler is a marginalized figure, a hero who through special abilities and innovation is able to have an influence on his own subject position (Pinn, 1999). Hustling is constructed as a heroic journey that starts with the need to fill some personal or social void and involves a road of trials and tribulations that the hustler must overcome. The hustler is an actor in a world full of difficulty, and therefore constructs a scripted understanding of a hero.

Marginalization in hip hop is very important and it has been found to be tied to all areas of social action by hip hoppers. Skold and Rehn (2007) found that even commercially successful rappers stake claims to authenticity by incorporating marginalization into their lyrics. Calhoun (2005) and Fraley (2009) found that White rappers like Eminem also claim authenticity in hip hop music and culture by positioning themselves as marginalized subjects in order to get acceptance into the hip hop community. For example, Eminem's emphasis of his trailor park origins is similar to claims made by Black hip hoppers about being from the ghettoes and townships as symbols of authenticity. It therefore positions him as hardcore and real (McLeod, 1999).

## *6. Implications of the study*

This study provides an account of the coordinated nature of social action. Subjects have a reality both inside and outside texts (Parker, 1992). These are related realities that interact with each other because they are given an ontological, epistemological status and moral status (Parker, 1992). Subjective states and their accounts are put together in discourses which stipulate the relations between these three object statuses. These types of meaning we attribute to these three object statuses provide a framework for cultural practices.

A major component of any culture is how discourse comes to construct a psychological reality, in accordance to which subjects act. According to Goffman (1956) the 'reality' of one's character depends on the impressions that one gives of themselves. A person has a whole host resources from which to draw when giving off an impression, and that impression depends on a seamless connection between a person's accounts and how they appear before others. The action components of cultures are based on what the actors believe reality to be. The meaningful aspects of social interaction come to assume a psychological reality that is made real every time it is cited or recited through use. Meaningful interaction is dialogical, influenced by what has gone on before, tradition or history (Durrheim, Brown & Mtose, 2011). Although discourses emerge out of events and objects in the physical world (Parker, 1992), they are socially constructed units of meaning constructed by members of society and come to form a psychological reality.

The units of meaning present in these social constructions are collectively understood and appreciated, and everyone participates in making them relevant through collective use, whether they are refuted or accepted by those who have the occasion to use them. Therefore even though it can be argued that such things as realness or being hood do not exist as physical things that we can touch, they do exist as expressions of psychological markers such as attitudes and beliefs and opinions, and are therefore endowed with a psychological realness (Parker, 1992).

Part of what works towards achieving this psychological reality is the fact that hip hoppers continue to draw on history to portray who they are, what they do and why. The discourse in hip hop music among hip hoppers emphasizes and reiterates a history of struggle and resistance in the face of society and social practices (Rose, 1991; Rose 1994; Verney, 2003). Current day hip hoppers still emphasize this aspect in their accounts of hip hop music, by speaking of the rough neighbourhoods that they come, portraying themselves as 'the underdogs', their experiences of toughness that is required in 'the street', and the never ending trials of trying to 'make it'. Importantly enough, hip hop culture had its beginnings in these types of settings. There is concern amongst hip hoppers with the hassles of daily living the hustle, and for many hip hop aspiring artists, hip hop music provides a means for reversing their marginalized positions (Rose, 2008).

The study highlights an interesting facet of resistance. Resistance, marginalization and success in hip hop music exist in a state of tension. Skold and Rehn (2007, p. 50) state how

"keeping it real and success exist as a dialectic between the mundane and the special in rap, between success and loyalty to your community or culture". Being an underdog becomes both a symbol of disadvantage as well as a symbol of redemption. If the hip hoppers succeed, they must not totally distance themselves from the types of people that they claim to be or 'represent', or from the abjection they sought to escape. They must still 'keep it real' in order to retain recognition as people who are 'representing' those people who claim them as heroes (Skold & Rehn, 2007). So having rejected abjection, they must still not be seen as having escaped it too much and thereby risk having distanced themselves from what qualified them as genuine, authentic and 'real' in the first place.

Through this type of analysis, we begin to see how important disadvantage, exclusion and marginality are to the process of subject formation for some hip hoppers in a small town in South Africa. Rather than these things 'representing' something unacceptable and deplorable for the hip hoppers they were accepted as very crucial and necessary parts of their subject identities. The hip hoppers accounts of marginality, social exclusion and disadvantage was spun and weaved (constructed) in such a way that it represented a "declaration of heroic abjection" (Smith, 1997, p. 348) by the hip hoppers. By heroic abjection it is meant that it was specifically this aspect of having faced disadvantage and marginalization that made the hip hoppers see themselves as heroes.

The accounts that people give of their experiences and identities are biographical life accounts (Kennedy, 1999). Writers such as Bruner (1992, p. 233; in Nicolopoulou, 1997, p. 191) have argued for "a need in [cultural] psychology to grasp the crucial role of narrative as a form not only of representing but of constituting reality". This statement highlights something crucial in relation to people's biographies and accounts of their lives. The narratives that they use to talk about their lives are not true reflections of reality but are constructions, constituted in their narratives, and this is of equal importance to the study of music. We look not only at the content of their stories but at the symbolic importance of their construction of what they are saying.

The construction of a heroic narrative means that hip hoppers create the impression that they are in control. Although some of their narratives have open ended narrative closures (they give no evidence to suggest that the hip hoppers interviewed have been ultimately victorious in what they are 'hustling' for), we as their audience can have the hope that they will succeed in the course of their journey. It gives us and them the impression that their situation can be

brought under their control, just like all heroes hope to eventually do. As long as they construct themselves in these ways they can always hope to succeed at what they are trying to do.

The study reveals the importance of discourse to the constructions and versions that we create of the world. Discourses do things, they accomplish things for us in the world of meaning construction. Durrheim, Mtose and Brown (2011) have stated how discourses are those well known units or systems of meaning that help us to create and make sense of the world. Discourses give us positionality in the world. The authors state that discourses operate at a public level, they operate through the things we do, the things we say, where we choose to eat and so on. They are the general meaning systems that we make use of everyday in order to make sense of the world, or to make the world senseful.

The narratives that the hip hoppers created of themselves were put together in/through discourse in that they used knowledge we are familiar with in the construction of a heroic version of the participants. In their versions of themselves, the participants were heroes trying to shift their subject positions. They were hip hoppers from the townships, marginalized places, hustling in a world where there is lack of access to resources. Therefore hip hop was no longer just about music. Parker (1992) states that discourses are used in the construction of subjects. It is important therefore to see the types of hip hop subjects that these discourses construct. In this study they constructed themselves as abjected heroes who go out and make things change for themselves or their communities.

Studies on hip hop music should not be limited to an analysis of music or musical content only. It has shown that hip hop identities are constructions that make use of 'reality' as a discursive devise to achieve this sense of reality. The achievement of a subject position that is considered to be real is dependent on credible, coherent and believable constructions and performances of self. These versions draw from things that are public, that are well known in the world. This is contrary to the way hip hop music is sometimes presented as a true reflection of subjects and personalities. In these studies, written text is given a privileged status as a true reflection of reality. This is often done through the content analysis of artists' lyrics. So for example, Smitherman's (1997, pp. 4-5; in Cummings & Roy, 2002, p.61) emphasis that "rappers are the cultural historians" and that they "decry for all the world to hear the deplorable conditions of the hood" seems to imply that rappers tell the absolute truth in their lyrics, that their messages truthfully reflect the conditions in which they live. It does

not seem to question the contestable terrain in which claims of truth, reality and authenticity seem to rest in hip hop culture. It does not show that the deplorable conditions that are sometimes invoked by rappers in their lyrics are sometimes discursive constructions that rappers use to say something about themselves and not really about the social conditions that they seem to be talking about. We have seen in this study how the invocation of the ghetto and the township as symbols of marginalization works towards articulating and trying to confirm a subject position for oneself . Such studies therefore overlook the fact that there are often question marks over what hip hoppers say and who they say they are.

The study shows that hip hop subjectivity is something that has to be achieved and negotiated and that this happens discursively. As subjects, no matter how different we are from each other or how different the contexts from which we come from are, we are always in interaction with each other and our surroundings. We all bring some background knowledge into social interactions and to accounts given by people, we all bring into the interactions knowledge of discourse or discursive knowledge. In South Africa, we are all aware to some limited extent that for example townships seem to be associated with poverty and abjection. We can then form our opinions of the accounts given by the hip hoppers based on this knowledge and choose whether we believe them or not. In order to achieve some verifiable and believable version of reality, the hip hoppers make use of this publicly available knowledge. Therefore the ghetto, the township and poverty all become meaningful signifiers, carriers of meaning and convenors of subject position.

*Limitations*

I have only studied the category of rappers/hip hoppers known as underground hip hoppers. Underground hip hoppers have always felt themselves to be more real because they closely keep to the more subversive experiences of hip hop and its emergence (the cultural elements of hip hop) (Pritchard, 2010). Marginalization is something that they closely affiliate themselves with, and claim to represent more than the commercial rappers. As a result my analysis has not gone into the social action of rappers called commercial rappers. This is a very important limitation since most of the debates about what is real and not real in hip hop are between these two genres of rap music. Thus making it somewhat of a one sided analysis. It would have been very interesting to compare how both genres construct reality and resistance. A question that is left unanswered then in the study is what are the resources that

commercial hip hoppers have for constructing themselves as real hip hop subjects of resistance?

Perhaps one way of the resources available to them can be found in the hustler script. Skold and Rehn (2007) though have found that even commercial rappers make reference to marginalization and lack of resources in their lyrics in order to be perceived as still keeping it real. Skold and Rehn (2007) looked at how the rapper Jay-Z, a successful commercial rapper is able to negotiate claims to authenticity, by locating himself in both ends of two extremes, being successful and being marginalized. The authors state the difficulty that often presents itself for rappers who have become successful, who are often accused of "selling out" meaning that they are no longer keeping it real or representing (Skold & Rehn, 2007, p. 50). The hustle and the hustler, according to Wacquant (1999, p. 150-151; cited in Skold & Rehn, 2007, p. 69) "occupies a central position in the symbolic space of the black American ghetto". To claim the status of a hustler is to claim a very special position in hip hop culture. The authors close off their argument by stating how Jay-Z has made an album with Linkin Park, a white middle class rock band, and therefore has sold out by hip hop standards because he has moved out of the Black cultural space. However they see it differently. To hustle has meant to try and make it against all odds, and this has been one of the foundational aspects of hip hop culture. Gaining exposure and a wider audience has always been one of the hip hop hustles. So both commercial and underground hip hoppers have the hustler, a hip hop cultural script,  available to them through which they frame and enact resistance.

So although Jay-Z is no longer living in the ghetto, he is still perceived as keeping it real because he makes the ghetto and marginalization an audible presence in his music. He still ties himself to the cultural values of the social context out of which he claims to have emerged.

Another limitation in my study is that my analysis is based on interviews with Black youth only (not all of them from the townships though). It would have been very interesting to find out what discourses for example, White hip hoppers draw on to construct themselves as resistant subjects in South Africa. Since Whites cannot reasonably claim to occupy a marginalized position what resources do they draw on to construct themselves as resistant subjects in hip hop? Eminem has also drawn on marginalization to construct himself as an authentic hip hop subject of resistance (Fraley, 2009). Eminem has drawn on things such as drug dependence, weapons charges, affiliations to Dr Dre, a pioneer of the gangsta rap genre

that emerged out of the ghettoes of West coast America (Calhoun, 2005). These have served as resources to give him credibility and acceptance as an authentic subject in the Black hip hop community, and in the hip hop community as a whole.

## 7. Conclusion

*The constructed nature of social action in hip hop subjectivity*

The main aim of the study was to outline the process of subject formation in the group of social actors called hip hoppers. It aimed to show the constructed and performed nature of social action in the form of resistance in hip hop culture.  According to Burr (1999, p. 141) "Discourses provide us with conceptual repertoires with which we can represent ourselves and others". We represent ourselves as recognizable people by acting in recognizable ways and from constructing meaning from recognizable meaning systems.  We fit ourselves into these already existing meaning systems in order to produce ourselves as real and recognizable subjects. When we appear before others we appear already as potentially recognizable subjects. We then have to produce credible accounts of ourselves

*Hip hop music and the real*

 Rappers produce accounts that need to be defended and taken as credible performances in the form of keeping it real. They must therefore produce seamless accounts of who they say they are and what they are representing. There must be no seams between the accounts produced, the discourses from which they are constructed and the performances through which they are embodied. A lot of discursive work goes into this. Successfully portraying oneself as an authentic subject depends on making  reference to publicly available meaning systems and acting in a way that is considered to be consistent with the claim being made. The system in which the construction of subjectivity for hip hoppers operates is a regulated system of meaning. The vernacular terms are used to construct a hip hop version or interpretation of the world.

The accounts that rappers develop of themselves and their realities appear to be real because they draw from things that are already out there, things that we perceive to be real. They draw their effect from public discourse, things that we all recognize to be real, to be out there. In a way this gives the content of what they say the appearance of reality. They then have to fit themselves within this talk, making reference to representations of what they are talking about and locating themselves within the frames of those references. What they say then is

something that is sensible, credible, coherent and understandable. The resources that hip hoppers draw from have a reality both inside and outside texts, are both material and immaterial. Physical structures and events in the world are endowed with meaning, to form mentalities, and these in turn regulate how subjects go about living their lives and the accounts they give of the world.

These accounts are then taken and incorporated into the accounts and stories that the hip hoppers develop in a way that is understandable, senseful and thus credible (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011) so that it appears real. The success of their talk depends on talking about things that are out there, like poverty and the townships and convincing us that they are the representatives of these things. The fact that authenticity becomes such a contested terrain, becomes something that is so important to subjectivity means that what people say as hip hoppers can no longer be taken at face value any more.

*Hip hop music and resistance*

The system of meaning in which subjectivity is constructed by hip hoppers is a contextually situated system of meaning, situated in a discourse of marginality and disadvantage. Subjects draw from this discourse to construct subject identities that are tied to notions of marginalization and disadvantage, using such symbols of disadvantage and marginality as townships, thugs, lack of money and social exclusion. This discourse of marginality is the necessary and crucial precondition for the formulation of the hero through the heroic narrative that the hip hoppers present to the researcher and ultimately to themselves and the outside world.

The discourse of marginalization achieves its effect, draws its sense from the long tradition of marginalization that has been suffered by people in the ghettoes, a significant element of hip hop history. Therefore when the hip hoppers speak about the conditions that they face, it is a recitation of suffering that they invoke and use upon themselves in order to make sense of what they are saying, both to themselves and to others.

The hip hop heroic narrative celebrates the dejected, abjected and marginalized figure, emphasizing that although he is ordinary, he has special and unique powers in his character, powers that enable him to survive and escape abjection. These special powers are prevalent in the form of 'hustling' and the ability to hustle which involves making strategic decisions about how to escape dejection and gain acceptance. The ultimate culmination of the hip

hopper is recognition and acceptance and this is achieved through 'keeping it real' and 'representing', all of which are tied to the crucial aspect of disadvantage. Gaining recognition means that you are 'keeping it real' and 'representing'.

However in spite of all this, even when the hero becomes successful, he does not lose connections to himself and the masses, he must still remain true to himself, he must still represent himself and the ordinary citizens. If he becomes too successful he may forfeit a crucial aspect of his initial subject position, an aspect that played such a crucial role in who he claims to be, and that is marginalization. Therefore, 'representing' and 'keeping it real' are crucial at all stages of subjectivity for the hip hopper.

Marginalization becomes a source of cultural capital in that it is used to grant someone the status of authenticity and credibility. However, more than being a source of cultural capital in the hip hoppers' talk, marginalization becomes symbolic. It becomes symbolic of struggle and adversity. It represents an entry point into the hero's journey of resistance. Marginalization sets the stage for a particular type of social action, that of resistance. It represents the hero's, in this case the hip hopper's, defensive and resistive space, the grounds on which the battle with an un-accepting society is fought. To the hip hoppers, marginalization means being overlooked and excluded and the struggle of the hero hip hopper is aimed at getting this recognition and acceptance. In the heroic narrative, although it is not developed to its final stage in the hip hoppers' talk, they try to create a sense of space and belonging in society and thus acceptance and recognition.

'Representing' and 'keeping it real' speak to issues of recognition. These are the discursive tools through which recognition is granted by the community from which the hip hopper comes from. The hip hoppers are therefore called to represent and keep it real in order for them to get recognition. 'Representing' and 'keeping it real' are embodied in a specific way. They mean not compromising who you claim to be, they involve not 'selling out' or 'working for 'the system'. Representing and keeping it real really represent how well a person is able to stay who they are despite pressures to conform or 'sell out'. These two cultural terms therefore often denote acts of resistance, a refusal to become that which one is not, or refusal to become something that is superficial.

A study such as this one is important because it shows us what is at stake for young people growing up in South Africa. It shows us what is available for them to construct identities out of and it shows us what they are trying to achieve and the types of struggles and barriers that

they encounter in their daily living. The participants locate themselves in a particular material setting, the ghetto and the township. Symbolically and materialistically, the township in South Africa has always been a place of disadvantage and marginalization. It has also been a place that people who live there take pride in (Peterson, 2004). It has been a place from which to overcome marginalization and therefore the hip hoppers use of it in their talk is part of a senseful production of reality. It shows us the types of people that they are trying to craft themselves into. It shows us that there is a group of young people that are trying to weave positive identities out of what they see around them, people that are trying to change their social and personal situations. It shows us that their perceptions or accounts of what they are doing are constructed and interpreted as heroic accounts. They are resisting both symbolically and physically

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Appendix 1 Interview schedule: Dumisa Sofika

1. Can you tell me about yourself and why you are here? (if the participant is at a hip hop event)
2. What does hip hop music and rap mean to you, why do you do hip hop?
3. What are some of the things that hip hoppers do?
4. What has your experience of being a hip hopper in PMB been like?