

Nothin' but a "G" Thing: Gender, Race, and German Hip Hop:
The Politics of Performance and Authenticity

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: Nothin' but a "G" Thing: Gender, Race, and German Hip Hop: The Politics of Performance and Authenticity

My dissertation is concerned with looking at the ways hip hop reimagines German identity. Artists use performance to expose the experience of being racialized in a "multicultural" Germany. Through performance, artists use embodiment to challenge the everyday performativity required of minorities with regard to "Germanness." The tension between performance and performativity is developed throughout the chapters as artists address *Leitkultur*, *Heimat*, and cultural aspects favored by far-right monoculturalists. German identity is questioned and renegotiated by hip hop artists as they use hip hop performance to open conversations about race, gender, class, and sexuality. In the chapters that follow, minorities use performance to resist *how* these intersections are imposed onto their bodies and what that means for minority's everyday experiences. Black and Brown bodies are constructed as "nonnormative" subjects in European spaces. Racialized minorities are hypervisible due to race, yet invisible as Europeans. Hip hop disrupts this as it brings multi-ethnic European identities to the forefront of "multicultural Germany".

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DEDICATION

For Peggy and Kent Mueller

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Thesis

This dissertation is concerned with looking at the ways hip hop reimagines German identity. Artists use performance to talk about the experience of being racialized in a “multicultural” Germany. Through performance, artists embody their own stories and use embodiment to challenge the performativity that is required in embodying “Germanness.” The tension between performance and performativity will be developed throughout the chapters that follow as artists address *Leitkultur*, *Heimat*, and cultural aspects favored by far-right monoculturalists. The concept of *Leitkultur* considers identity and culture to be closely tied to European ethnicity. Western values are positioned as “guiding values” for perceived foreigners. *Heimat* or “homeland/home” in the context of my dissertation is related to the feeling of belonging to a place. The term is also used to propel nationalistic right-wing politics as it clarifies definitions of insiders and outsiders and assumes a common identity.¹ *Leitkultur* and *Heimat* can be used to define the nation in terms of a shared identity.

In German hip hop, German identity is questioned and renegotiated by artists as they use hip hop performance to open conversations about race, gender, class, and sexuality. Resistance has long been an aspect of the hip hop genre.² In the chapters that follow, minorities use performance to resist how these intersections are imposed onto their bodies and what that means for minority’s everyday experiences. Black and Brown bodies are constructed as “nonnormative”

¹ For a larger discussion on the concept of “*Heimat*” to leverage right-wing politics see Boris Blahak’s “*Daham Statt Islam*”. This article points to the use of language and dialect as ways that “*Heimat*” is constructed and how these three aspects are used in political campaigns.

² For a larger discussion on German protest music see David Robb’s “*Protest Song in East and West Germany Since the 1960s*”. Robb discusses the importance of the 1920s *Liedermacher* genre and German folk music as important developments of political resistance and counterculture. Additionally, Robb shows contemporary techno as a genre that challenges ideas about conventional culture. Indeed, protest music is nothing new to Germany. My focus on hip hop adds to Robb’s discussion about music and resistance.

subjects in European spaces. They are hypervisible due to race, yet invisible as Europeans. Hip hop disrupts this as it brings multi-ethnic European identities to the forefront of “multicultural Germany”. Letting minorities speak about the experience of being racialized is the starting point for a truly multicultural Germany.

In my dissertation, hip hop performers work to question conventional perceptions of German identity and belonging through their visual art and embodied performance. I recognize the ways “performativity” is involved in claiming German identity. Performance and performativity are related to the ways identity is coded in hip hop and in German society. “Authentic Germanness” has been defined by whiteness/ethnicity. The chapters that follow show that the position of the racialized subject in Germany is precarious as it is excluded from full participation in Germanness. In hip hop, artists can find a voice and presence for negotiating and claiming their own German identity in a way that has not previously been seen. Due to this, hip hop can be understood as a form of cultural information. Hip hop creates a change to *who* belongs in Germany. The particular tension between stage performance and the performativity of everyday life troubles notions of culture and authenticity. This creates slippage in identity that leaves space for change. While Germany promotes “multiculturalism”, the artist’s performances about racialization show how German culture is still slow to change. Throughout the following chapters, I show how hip hop artists challenge national symbols of the German nation and remake beliefs about *who* qualifies as German. Hip hop performances engage questions of race, gender, class, and sexuality and offer nuanced ways of thinking through how race is coded in Germany.

Why Hip Hop? & Contribution to Scholarship

Hip hop, a distinctly Black art form, originating from the Bronx is now being used by minorities globally as a means of creating presence for marginalized voices. My scholarship adds to the conversation about how minorities carve out space in Germany. I expand on ideas about “Heimat” and what is considered within “literature of migration”. Through close readings of lyrics and video performances, I show how hip hop speaks about racialization in a way that is accessible to a broader audience.

The following chapters show how hip hop is a space where performance and authenticity are always unstable. Precisely the unreliability between what is performed and what is “authentic” within hip hop opens up discussions about German identity on a larger scale. I see hip hop as a tool for understanding the way marginalization occurs in Germany. On the one hand, hip hop mirrors internalized dominant ideologies about race, class, gender, and sexuality. On the other hand, “hip hop articulates new positions for minorities that are not defined by ethnic difference but allowed to name it” (El-Tayeb 484). Artists use performances to challenge the ways ethnicity is read along with Germanness. Performances break with codes that define insiders and outsiders. In doing so performances reconsider ethnic definitions of German identity. As artists express processes of racialization, they expose possibilities for a multi-ethnic German identity.

Hip hop performance consciously challenges dominant narratives about outsiders which may persist within “literature of migration”. Artists embody different ways of being German through short video performances. Unlike a film or novel, we are given a glimpse for only a few minutes of how artists experience racialization. The immediacy and instantaneousness of this offers not only a wider viewership potential but also a more accessible form to discuss racism and racialization, compared to “literature of migration”, which assumes a certain level of

education. Hip hop artists expand on the place of the “between” to be something empowering. They refute respectability politics set by the majority society as a qualifier for partaking in the “between”. Artists set up the “between” as a space where they determine the parameters of how they embody German identity.

Hip hop is a lyrical music form that can be understood as cultural information, which reconfigures German values as it disrupts and dismantles them. As cultural information, hip hop creates new rhythms and ways to move. Bodies become a terrain where authenticity and performance are policed and negotiated. Hip hop is a separate space for people to enact and create new understandings of German identity. Through performance, hip hop challenges existing assumptions about Germanness and creates different new cultures, thereby creating alternative German futures that incorporate a multiplicity of identities.

There is a dearth of scholarship surrounding the Afro-German movement in the early 1980s. However, the conjunction of the inherently Black feminist movement that came with *Farbe Bekennen* and the rise of minority presence in German hip hop has yet to be considered together within a deeper discussion of the politics of authenticity and performance. The Black feminist movement and *Farbe Bekennen* enabled the political and cultural foundation needed to leverage Blackness. Racialized minorities became a political category and *Farbe Bekennen* helped start discussions about gender and how race is coded. Thus, the political and cultural foundations had been laid out for minority resistance movements prior to the popularization of hip hop in the late 80s. This unique art form has allowed some German minorities to express experiences of racialization that build off the work done through *Farbe Bekennen*. The hip hop genre further integrates and foregrounds gender, sexuality, and class in how race is coded.

Methodology

According to Su'Ad Abdul Khabeer's influential book *Muslim Cool*, Hip hop has been studied among scholars using three different methodologies. These include: lyric analysis (what does the music say?), critical examinations of representation (what sorts of images are produced and reproduced in hip hop? And finally, examining hip hop as a discourse linked to narratives of race, class, gender, and sexuality under material conditions of inequality (Khabeer 8). Khabeer's *Muslim Cool* additionally considers what hip hop looks like outside of studios, stages, and street corner cyphers, highlighting the necessity of examining the private sphere as vital sites of inquiry for hip hop analysis. While I recognize the importance of the extension of Khabeer's methodology within the private sphere, my own research is grounded in lyrical and music video analysis that examines representations of "the other" within global hip hop culture. I understand German memory culture, *Leitkultur*, and multiculturalism as starting points for interrogating monolithic German identity and the construction of otherness/outsiderness within Germany. I ask how hip hop performance functions as a third space where identities are performed that expose the intersections of performativity with regard to race, class, and gender in German society. I use a queer of color analysis to examine how race, class, gender, and sexuality are represented in hip hop under the conditions of advanced capitalism and how these representations reenforce commercialized versions of authentic identity that asserts a colonialist gaze. A queer of color approach to media studies offers nuanced ways of looking at how culture is produced through the consumption and commodification of bodies. This is reflected through the consumption of hip hop, as minority bodies must perform in certain ways so that the consumer understands they are "consuming" a hip hop product. The body is a site of economy and transaction. The ways that bodies are commodified within the performance space has broader implications for what is and is not viewed as "German" culture outside of the performance space. A queer of color approach to

media studies allows one to account for the relationship between consumerism and cultural production. One must consider both the producer and consumer's role in cultural production.

I employ an intersectional lens which considers how race, gender, sexuality, and class intersect with performativity and "Germanness", heeding attention to respectability politics. I am interested in how minorities use hip hop to highlight normative and non-normative categories surrounding national identity and how this is related to class. For example, the artist Lady Bitch Ray in chapter two is both professor and a rapper, Turkish and German. Her conflicting identities raise questions about class and respectability politics that become crucial in *how* her performance challenges performativity. Additionally, I analyze how some artists depict the urban space in their lyrics and video performances and how this space is the physical location of the "between" which many minorities are finding themselves in socially.

I have prioritized queer and female artists: Lady Bitch Ray, Breezy, Nura, and Leila Akinyi. I also attend to hip hop and masculinity by analyzing the work of Samy Deluxe and Haftbefehl. Seeing these artists' performances juxtaposed against each other shows how gender, race, sexuality, and class work within hip hop as a commercial product. It shows how racism and heteropatriarchy are both transmitted and simultaneously refuted within visual culture. The intersections that the different artists present offer nuanced ways of thinking through the relationship between performance and authenticity within hip hop and regarding German identity. My research remains grounded in Black feminist thought, which I understand as integral to the formation of minority presence within Germany. Audre Lorde played a significant role in cultivating a Black German presence in the 1980s. Lorde defined the Black community in Germany as "Afro-Deutsch" and the term signified the efforts of engaging Black communities worldwide.

The interactive relations between Black communities worldwide are reflected in the profound influence that African decolonization struggles and the U.S. Black liberation movement had on the development of an Afro- German sense of identity. “Audre Lorde coined the term ‘Afro- German’ after meeting Black German women when teaching in Berlin in 1984” (El-Tayeb 462). Hip hop has today become an interactive global space where marginalized communities reflect on their unique and distinct experiences of racialized oppression.

Theoretical Considerations

Authenticity

Authenticity is strictly policed in hip hop and regarding German identity. In hip hop Black heterosexual masculinity has been understood as “authentic” or “real”. Realness is an important component within hip hop as it affirms one’s status and belonging in the genre. Regarding German identity, “authentic Germanness” has been defined through whiteness (skin color), the upholding of middle-class values/respectability (behavior) and speaking proper German (language). Hip hop artists show how these three aspects contribute to the experience of racialization.

Like gender, race too is a social construct and societal norms from the dominant [read:white] German society are that which determine a hip hop performance or one’s performativity to be read as “authentic”. Essentially, authenticity is read and contextualized within society. One’s Germanness is, in many cases, always already determined by the outside and the dominant understandings of what Germanness looks, acts, and sounds like: the social norms governing Germanness. The “self” is determined by an outside, as society always determines what *is* and *is not* acceptable for different bodies. Race intersects with how the “self” is conceptualized alongside nationality or “Germanness”.

I further situate my research and understanding of performativity within the scholarship of Nikki Lane's *The Queer Work of Ratchet*. Lane's work raises questions about the relationship between class politics, racialized sexuality, and gender. "Ratchet" is a term that stems from U.S. hip hop from the 2000s. It involves "taking back power, reappropriating language and words, and the boundaries of respectability" (Lane 5). The hip hop artists in my dissertation push boundaries of respectability to break open monolithic ideas of Germanness. I am not concerned with claiming Germany or Germans are racist, rather I am interested in letting minority voices speak to their experiences of racialization. The particular tensions that arise in their performances show the fictionality of what is determined as "authentic". One cannot know what is real and what is performed in hip hop. Due to this, authenticity is unstable and left to be defined and remade. In other words, authenticity is up for grabs because it is not fixed.

Considering German identity alongside Hip Hop offers two strict sites of authenticity that this dissertation breaks open. By examining performance, that is the hip hop performance space, one can see how minorities challenge the ways their bodies are coded in society and allowed to claim Germanness (or not). Additionally, in hip hop, Women of Color and LGBTQ artists challenge *how* hip hop is to be performed to be marked as "real" or authentic. In both cases, one can see how the "self", whether in the performance space or the everyday, is always determined by what society allows. In this way authenticity is perceived as nonnegotiable. My dissertation shows minorities attempts to disentangle discourse about authenticity as determined from the dominant society. The "self" becomes a vital component of breaking boundaries of authenticity.

Performance vs. Performativity

Central to my dissertation is the distinction between performance and performativity. In hip hop, performance is that which takes place on stage or in a video. It is the act of performing. In

contrast to performance, performativity is more subtle. It is behaviors that certain bodies undertake on a day-to-day basis within society. Such behaviors are contextualized within society based on the intersections of one's race, gender, sexuality, and nationality.

What Influences Performance?

Production is a central component within hip hop performance. Namely, the question of who controls the production of performances and what goes on backstage. Is it a record label? Or is it an independent artist? The audience is also involved in performance as it knowingly partakes in spectatorship for entertainment. It has been largely forgotten that hip hop is in fact a performance, not necessarily real. "When you write a song you tell a story and you take on a persona, an attitude. It could be you, it could be based on you, or it could be not you at all. But you take it on, that's part of the process" (RZA, The Wu -Tang Clan Manual). In Germany, hip hop artists use performance to tell stories that may be based on their own outsider experiences, other times artists use performance to unveil stories that, while fictional, challenge a particular power dynamic that speaks to racialization. For example, artists may embody behaviors that raise questions about German respectability and sexuality. The persona and attitude which the artist adopts highlights and challenges ways of "acting right" for German minorities. For example, Dr. Rayhan Sahin a.k.a. Lady Bitch Ray (LBR), is a distinguished scholar whose work on semiotics has been widely published. At the same time LBR is a hip hop artist whose music has largely come under scrutiny for its overtly sexual content. LBR embodies behaviors which challenge beliefs about Turkish women in Germany, the academy, and in hip hop. She performs and embraces the stereotype of the exotified and often sexualized Turkish woman. This is an act of reappropriating signifiers which designate Turkish womanhood improper.

Performance and Authenticity

The role capitalism and commercial production plays in the hypersexualization and criminalization of Black and Brown bodies in the mainstream contributes to the particular scrutiny that falls on hip hop. Authenticity is an essential element of the hip hop genre leading to a blurring of categories and a conflation of artists' performances and their real life.

When the crucial performance aspect of hip hop is forgotten, it becomes criminalized, and it is assumed that lyrics and video performance are the artist's real life. Erik Nielson and Andrea L. Dennis's *Rap on Trial* has shown this to have severe consequences, where some hip hop lyrics have been used in court proceedings against artists.¹² Nielson and Dennis's scholarship highlights the importance of rendering the performative aspect of hip hop visible again. It also shows how hip hop performance is a crucial medium for questioning German identity and showing the performativity involved in this.

Nielson and Dennis show how hip hop is blurry: on the one hand it is an entertaining performance, on the other hand this performance is embedded within power structures that racialize, scrutinize, and interpret. Much of how we read and understand hip hop performance is tied to beliefs about "authentic Blackness" within a U.S. context because of how the genre operates within commercial capitalism. In Germany, some hip hop artists reappropriate and perform Blackness as is depicted in U.S. hip hop to speak out against white supremacist culture.

The performance paradigm illuminates the mirroring that occurs in culture, the tension between stabilizing cultural forces (tradition), and the shifting, everevolving, aspects of culture that provide sites for social reflection, transformation, and critique (Johnson 7).

Through my analysis of German hip hop videos, I aim to render the performance aspect of hip hop visible to show how authenticity is also performed and to elucidate the role of racism in German hip hop.

In sum, performance has long been entangled with ideas about authenticity in hip hop. Understandings of hip hop performance have largely been controlled by how the white gaze categorizes, codes, and understands non-whiteness. “To assume that categories conform to reality is to think with, instead of against hegemony” (Stüttgen 87). Performance is something that an audience knowingly partakes in as they view/watch/observe. The performers deliberately undergo a performance, embodying an identity that they may not be allowed within other social contexts offstage because of the ways race already encodes bodies with meaning. Performance allows one to attempt to escape racialization because artists are allowed to embody new ways of being. At the same much of performance is based on audience reception, which shows the inescapability of racialization. The artists throughout the following chapters embody new identities in an act of disidentificatory resistance from the audience. This shows how the specificity of German culture is bendable.

The Importance of Performativity

Performance happens on a stage, in a video, or within the story told by song lyrics. Artists deliberately use performance to challenge beliefs about ethnic German identity. In contrast, performativity is subtle, it can occur in many different situations: at the grocery store, on the bus, in school. Performativity is policed by the dominant culture according to race, gender, sexuality, class, and religion. It is the ways behaviors or ways of speaking that mark one as German. Performativity also shows how, despite undertaking proper behaviors or speaking correct German, racial minorities are still coded as “other” or “outsider”. It is the more subtle ways that “colorblindness” occurs as Germanness is policed. For example, someone who wears a headscarf in Germany is coded Muslim, not German – even if they speak correct German and

behave according to German customs. Performativity relates to how the self is understood regarding behaviors policed by the public.

These behaviors are read along with respectability, or adhering to white, middle- class values. To further guide my research, my understanding of performativity is informed by and expands on Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity. Butler's work has asserted, "one does not "do" one's gender alone, one is always "doing" with or for another. The terms that make up one's own gender are outside oneself" (Butler 1). According to Butler, the gendered subject comes to being through sets of constructed norms. Performativity requires an outside, a public that validates and codes behavior.

One only determines "one's own" sense of gender to the extent that social norms exist that support and enable that act of claiming gender for oneself. One is dependent on this "outside" to lay claim to what is one's own. The self must, in this way, be dispossessed in sociality to take possession of itself (Butler 7).

Adhering to the white norms for racialized bodies is a central aspect of performativity. At times, artists within the following chapters deliberately *perform* behaviors that fall outside the white norms for racialized German minority's performativity. At other times, artists *perform* the stereotypes that white Germans have about minorities. In short, they deliberately make the norms visible, using performance to highlight everyday performativity. Hip hop is specifically situated to mirror the ways the white gaze codes race. Performativity is related to norms about behavior that are contextualized within society, rendering identities as permissible, inappropriate, exotic, dangerous, or outsider. The freedom artists have in performance highlights the constraints of performativity.

Despite being dispossessed within and surrounded by these culturally coded understandings of Germanness, hip hop artists take possession of new and diverse ways of being German. As artists perform on stage or in videos, they show Germanness itself to be comprised

of performativity. Through disidentificatory performance, artists highlight the social norms that decide how Germanness is read as authentic or not.

An Example of Performance vs. Performativity: Ellen Wiedenroth

The publication of *Farbe Bekennen (Showing our Colors)* in 1986 represents a crucial turning point for the Afro-Deutsche community, as it was the first documented account of Black women's experiences in Germany. *Farbe Bekennen* emerged as the first text which asserted a distinctive Afro- German identity that had always been a part of Germany. "This was the first publication to express a collective Afro- German identity and point out a long history of a Black presence within the nation" (El- Tayeb 463). The text considers what it means to exist as a German with Black or brown skin. It questions who is recognized as a German and this is shown to be linked to skin color. "Wer wird als deutsch anerkannt" (Oguntoye, Opitz, and Schultz 111) ["Who is recognized as German"]? *Farbe Bekennen* sought to show representation of the experiences of Black German woman. "Es ist das erste gemeinsame Versuch afro-deutscher Frauen, ihre Lebensrealität mit weißen Deutschen und anderen zu teilen. Sie gehen voran, im Interesse einer gemeinsamen Zukunft" (Lorde 15) [It is the first joint attempt by Afro-German women to share the reality of their lives with white Germans and others. They move forward in the interest of a common future]. The wish to carve out new German futures that welcome diverse identities is something minorities navigate within *Farbe Bekennen* and today, within hip hop.

An interview with May Opitz and Ellen Wiedenroth in *Farbe Bekennen (Showing Our Colors)* provides context for the ways Germanness is encoded in societal norms and tied to performativity. This further reiterates the need for an intersectional approach throughout the

dissertation as I show how below how gender and class are essential aspects of how race is read in performativity.

At the time of Wiedenroth's interview she was thirty years old and reflected on her time growing up in Germany and attending the German school system where she was often perceived as an outsider. She discusses her experience living as 'non-white' and how this category is policed. "Die deutsche Sprache hat für braune Haut nur Bezeichnungen, die dem Bereich des Essens und Trinkens entliehen sind, wie schokoladenbraun oder kaffeebraun" (Wiedenroth qtd. in Ogunttoy, Opitz, and Schultz 165) ["The German language has descriptions for brown skin that are borrowed from the area of food and drinks such as chocolate brown or coffee brown"]. Wiedenroth shows how despite speaking perfect German and living in Germany her entire life, her "Germanness" is always determined by the outside, a spectating, white German society that reads her body and determines belonging. "Du wirst gebrandmarkt (ach nein, gekennzeichnet) Nicht- weiß. Und die vielen schattierungen sind letztlich gar nicht wichtig mehr wichtig. Nichtweiß ist in erster Linie schwarz" (Wiedenroth qtd. in Ogunttoy, Opitz, and Schultz 164) ["You will be branded (oh no, labeled) non-white. And the many shades are ultimately no longer important. Non-white is primarily black"]. Wiedenroth's passages claim a distinctly Black German identity from a place of empowerment. "Ich bin schwarz- und nicht dunkel, hell, oder sonstwie- braun." (I am Black and not dark, light, or anything else brown.") Wiedenroth's narrative provides nuance to the ways "non-white" is read in Germany – as not German. Wiedenroth refutes this as she claims space for minorities. She asks why she has never been considered German, expressing how she always felt German and had a German upbringing.

Ich bin Deutsche, und ich bin dunkel. So dunkel nun auch wieder nicht. Oft habe ich in den Spiegel geschaut und mich gefragt, was mich nun eigentlich unterscheidet, was mich so anders macht in den Augen der anderen. Innerlich bin ich deutsch durch meine deutsche Umgebung, die Schule, mein Zuhause- deutsche eben. Und trotzdem wurde mir

immer wieder nahegelegt, dass ich genau das nicht wäre. Aber warum? Es hängt eben alles an Äußerlichkeiten. (Oguntoye, Opitz, and Schultz 164)

I'm German and I'm dark. Not that dark. I've often looked in the mirror and asked myself what actually makes me different, what makes me so different in the eyes of others. Inwardly I am German because of my German surroundings, the school, my German practice at home. And yet I was repeatedly told that I wasn't exactly that. But why? It all depends on the externals. (Wiedenroth in Oguntoye, Opitz, and Schultz 164)

Wiedenroth feels at home in Germany, but her race causes her to be perceived as an outsider.

She feels German but she is never read this way. Wiedenroth highlights the ways that home can be psychological, a feeling of belonging to a place because it is familiar. She also shows how despite feeling German and living in Germany her whole life, external factors play a significant role in how one is perceived as insider or outsider. Wiedenroth's *Auf der Suche nach meinem Vater* shows how ways of behaving have been classed and gendered, leading to her own distinct experience of racialization. She once again refers to how race is (labeled/gekennzeichnet) and how this is related to performativity/ behavior.

Mein Verhalten hatte mich als Europäerin gekennzeichnet. Da im Klischee die Europäer weiß sind, so war ich eben in diesem Moment zu einer „Weißen“ geworden. Weiß war in diesem Fall eine soziale Kategorie, nicht anders wie es sich mit der Zuordnung für Schwarz verhält. (Oguntoye, Opitz, and Schultz, 170)

My behavior/comportment had identified me as a European. Since Europeans are white in the cliché, I had become a 'white woman' at that very moment. 'White' in this case was a social category, not unlike the attribution for 'Black'. (Oguntoye, Opitz, and Schultz 170)

How Wiedenroth acted is what made people read her as European. She embodied the performative aspects of Europeanness/Germanness by displaying the behaviors of a "white woman". Gender norms become central to how Wiedenroth's behavior is classed. By adhering to standards for proper femininity, Wiedenroth is read as white. Behavior is policed and therefore gender is constructed along with class, which designates different experiences of racialization. By "acting right" Wiedenroth can adopt the social category of European. In another passage,

Wiedenroth shows how, in other interactions, her Black skin creates slippage in the performative aspects of German identity.

Bei einem Spaziergang am Strand beobachtete ich Kinder, die auf gehäuften Müll offensichtlich nach etwas Verwertbarem suchten. Sie riefen mich nach: Weiße, Weiße, und ich war wieder abgestempelt und fühlte mich gebrandmarkt. Ich hatte geglaubt, mir eine schwarze, eine afrikanische Identität aneignen zu können, und dieses Mal wurde mir hinterhergerufen, ich sei weiß (Oguntoye, Opitz, and Schultz 170)

On a walk on the beach, I observed children who were obviously looking for something recyclable in the piled up garbage. They called me white, white, and I was labeled again and felt branded. I had thought I could adopt a black, an African identity, and this time I was called out for being white (Oguntoye, Opitz, and Schultz 170)

Above, Wiedenroth is read as a white woman despite having Black skin. When Wiedenroth is spotted by children digging through garbage her class becomes the focal point and she is read as white. Once again, her embodiment of certain behaviors is classed. The physical location of Wiedenroth at the beach shows how spaces are conceptualized along with which bodies are expected to occupy them. Children assume Wiedenroth is white because that is who they expect occupy the space. The juxtaposition of Wiedenroth's quotes refutes the idea that there is a stable and fixed German identity, rather it is conceptualized through performativity. At times Wiedenroth is understood as non-white and therefore not German. The imposition of racial categories on German identity shows the importance of reading how performativity is coded within different social contexts. For example, growing up in the German school system, Wiedenroth was always asked "Wo kommst du wirklich her" ["Where are you really from"]? Within that context her race caused her to be perceived as not German. Performativity is about behaviors that are read within social contexts. The juxtaposition of the different passages show how class and gender become central to Wiedenroth's racialization.

Wiedenroth highlights the space of the in-between, "the perpetual foreigner" that persists for many minorities in Germany today. Germanness has been rooted in ethnic ancestral

narratives. People that do not relate to this narrative may understand themselves as not German. However, these folks also do not identify with a fictional African or Turkish/ “Oriental” homeland. Therefore, they remain stuck in the in-between, on the outside. Hip hop can serve as a medium that reconfigures the space of the “in-between” to be something empowering for racial minorities, from which new identities emerge. Hip hop shows the intersections of identity that are involved in performativity, which allows new possibilities for embodiment.

It was assumed that Wiedenroth’s home country must be somewhere other than Germany due to her skin color. Wiedenroth understands “Heimat” (home/origin) to be a feeling within oneself and that is what makes one German. In the 1980s, during the time of Wiedenroth’s interview, hip hop was just making its way to Germany from the United States. It was not yet known how the genre would be a lifeline for some minorities, a vehicle to process experiences like Wiedenroth’s. In hip hop “knowledge of self” has been a crucial component of the genre.³ Wiedenroth exemplified this aspect as she says she always “felt” German, distinguishing how identity and belonging can also be a feeling within oneself, self-knowledge.

Hip hop’s turntable origins at 1520 Sedgwick Ave. in the South Bronx inspired an art of sampling and (re)-mixing what has already been, while creating something innovative and new. By showing their experiences of racialization, German hip hop artists are remixing dominant understandings about race, gender, sexuality, and class to create new ways of embodying Germanness. Artists use performance to “sample” the dominant society’s understanding of minority identity. This sample serves to critique German expectations for minorities. Performances deliberately break with the idea that Germany is monocultural. In hip hop, sampling is when “artists take snippets from existing music and incorporate it into new

³ See Su’ad Abdul Khabeer’s “Muslim Cool”.

compositions.” Hip hop performances “sample” the codes/ signifiers about minorities to challenge everyday performativity. Through hip hop performance, artists can take aspects such as German language and reappropriate meanings or create different ways of speaking German that represent a minority presence within Germany that has a desire to re-create rather than assimilate.

Disidentification

Central to my research is the scholarship and theory of Jose Muñoz and his work on disidentification. According to Muñoz, disidentification is rooted in performance practices and is a means of world-making for folks that have been marginalized within society. “Through performance – both theatrical and quotidian- human beings fundamentally make culture, affect power, and reinvent their ways of being in the world, especially for those with limited or no access to state power and privilege” (Muñoz 5). Disidentification relies on performance to create new cultures and identities and reshape existing cultural practices. A disidentificatory performance disrupts the unquestioned norms that already exist. Some people may feel uncomfortable as it calls into question hegemonic power structures that racialize and marginalize. Often, such power structures have been normalized into culture and can no longer be seen.

Disidentification is about recycling and rethinking encoded meaning. The process of disidentification scrambles and reconstructs the encoded message of a cultural text in a fashion that exposes the encoded message’s universalizing and exclusionary machinations and recircuits its workings to account for, include, and empower minority identities and identifications. (Muñoz 25)

Disidentification understands encoded meaning to be formed by the dominant culture. Race in Germany is coded as “Black” “Muslim”, “Turkish”, “foreigner”, etc. and read against whiteness. These “codes” make Germans of color hyper-visible in their perceived “foreignness” and invisible as they are never viewed as German. “[Minorities] use the “code” of the dominant culture /majority as raw material for representing disempowered politics and/or positionality that has been rendered unthinkable by the dominant culture” (Muñoz 25). Hip-hop performance by minority artists is that which exposes and destabilizes Germanness, while making codes about racial authenticity perpetuated by conservative ideas about *Leitkultur* and *Heimat*. Performance is used to highlight the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class visible on a transnational level.

Hip hop carries racism because of the importance of authenticity and realness both within and outside of the genre. “Black authenticity and hip hop authenticity present unique problems for Black people and Black artists negotiating “non-authentic” Black subjectivities” (Smalls 131). Due to this, hip hop is an ideal medium to challenge racism on a transnational scale. When German artists perform aspects of hip hop authenticity/realness associated with U.S. hip hop they not only highlight the experience of being racialized within Germany. They also show how race is coded along lines of authenticity on a global scale. The codes which have come to signify “realness” within hip hop also point to beliefs the dominant society has about racialized subjects. Hip hop performance can challenge disempowered politics as it reconfigures possibilities for how race is coded. This is down as some minorities within the hip hop genre use performance to shed light on the experience of racialization.

When hip hop artists expose mainstream understandings of race, gender, and sexuality within their performance they disidentify with dominant definitions by troubling ideas about respectability. “Disidentification can be understood as a way of shuffling back and forth between reception and production” (Muñoz 25). Employing a politics of “anti-respectability” refutes the norms the dominant society sets up for minorities. This allows artists to produce new meanings while at the same time exposing the dominant society’s reception of race that contributes to racialization.

Transnationalism

Global hip hop performance highlights the racially inscribed meanings about Black and Brown masculine bodies.⁴ “The black man is an object of a meaning that is inscribed on his body and projected onto his representation” (Fanon 31). Different bodies perform aspects of U.S. hip hop such as street life, sexuality, consumption, and at times gang/clique affiliation. This invites particular conversations about how we conceptualize race in a transnational context. Hip hop shows the ways race defines belonging according to markers such as behavior, sexuality, and at times physical space. In U.S. hip hop these three components are policed in performances of Black artists and come to stand in for racial authenticity. For example, “the ghetto” emerges as one aspect of the performance of Black authenticity in the United States. When other bodies perform similar components within a German context it raises questions about how race is coded globally. Turkish/Muslim artists articulate subject positions that bend ideas about Black authenticity within the U.S.⁵ As Turkish/Muslim artists take on familiar performance tropes they

⁴ For a larger discussion on this see E. Patrick Johnson’s “Appropriating Blackness”. Johnson asserts that in racially and politically charged environments in which one’s allegiance to “race” is critical, one’s performance of the appropriate “essential” signifiers of one’s race is crucial. In hip hop race is critical, as it has been seen as a marker of authenticity. Artists perform the signifiers that have come to stand in for Black masculinity.

⁵ I’m not collapsing these identities together, but I am pointing to what happens when familiar tropes get performed by different bodies (in this case Turkish- German minorities). I am trying to show how this calls

create new ways of being German, they also challenge ideas about racial authenticity within the hip hop genre. This creates slippage in how Blackness is coded within and outside of the U.S. By using U.S. hip hop aesthetics to speak to an experience of being racialized in Germany, racial inscriptions are made visible within a transnational context, showing how unstable authenticity is.

Hip hop as transnational cultural information asserts a multiplicity of identities. It is a crucial medium for discussions about race and national identity from marginalized groups that assert presence where race is believed to be nonexistent. For example, within German hip hop, Arab/Muslim identities represent the intersection of Germany with Islam. Germany has one of the largest Muslim populations in the European Union. Despite this, Muslim Germans are not viewed as “authentic German”. Indeed, German minorities do not have the luxury of existing in a space where race is “non-existent” because their Black/Brown skin signifies an outsider status.

Historical Context

The Whiteness of German Identity

My dissertation argues that “authentic Germanness” has been defined through whiteness/ethnicity (skin color), the upholding of middle-class values/respectability (behavior) and speaking proper German (language). My understanding of these three aspects of Germanness is grounded in discussions about German culture, Holocaust memory culture, and *Leitkultur*.

Some Afro-Deutsche and Turkish-German minorities have turned to hip hop to shed light on the ways racism impacts their daily lives. Fatima El- Tayeb’s scholarship has

into question what we believe to be “authentic” if different bodies can perform similar tropes. These tropes will be read differently according to the body which is performing.

highlighted the lack of conversation surrounding race within Europe which has contributed to colorblindness that fails to acknowledge or notice difference. “All parts of Europe are invested in “whiteness” as the norm against which ethnicization is read as a tool of differentiation between insiders and outsiders” (El Tayeb XIV). Colorblindness assumes that whiteness signifies European. As the hip hop artists presented show, this contributes to racialization, or the not seeing of other European subjectivities. The importance of whiteness itself as a marker for European belonging shows how colorblindness establishes a hierarchy, where all bodies and races are visible for the purpose of coding belonging. Both within Germany and internationally, Germany’s selfrepresentation has always been as a white nation. Within Germany, ideas about the nation have come to exist against the backdrop of discourses that center the importance of Holocaust memory culture.

The Racialization of Holocaust Memory Culture

Germany’s relationship with its Nazi past has been carefully considered in German memory culture. Race and ethnicity have persisted in post-Holocaust memory culture, which have reaffirmed understandings of Germanness. Despite its commitment to antinationalism and antiracism, German memory culture failed to include members of society who are not ethnically German” (Özyürek 41). Racial minorities have been excluded from partaking in memory culture because it has focused on Germans who have ancestral ties to the Holocaust.

Colorblindness in Germany, and the lack of incorporation of non-ethnic Germans into Holocaust memory culture is directly related to German colonialism. Racist undertones existed before the Holocaust but were never reflected on. Germans perpetrated a genocide against the Herero people in Namibia where concentration camps were established. The unique role that Holocaust remembrance plays in German culture and

national identity overshadows discussions about race because many identities remain left out of memory culture. The Holocaust should be understood in connection to Germany's colonialist past to emphasize the ways all subjects in Germany are connected to the Holocaust.⁶

Post-WWII German discourses about race have largely focused on the national slogan “never again”, solidifying Holocaust memory culture as a central part of German identity. Because racialized minorities are often seen as potential perpetrators of Antisemitism, they are excluded from Germanness. “Turkish/ Arab background Germans have been central to the Holocaust narrative but as obstacles to German national reconciliation with its Nazi past” (Özyürek 1). On the other hand, “White Christian- background Germans have been depicted as having reached their destination of redemption and democratization” (Özyürek 3). In Germany's efforts to “remember” it has excluded based on an ethnonationalist memory culture of superiority.

Germans are assumed to have already shouldered responsibility for Germany's Nazi past, matured personally and politically during this process, and learned to empathize with their victims. This understanding positions non-Germans in Germany and around the world at much earlier stages along this path. (Özyürek 3)

This sets up a power imbalance between white Germans and racial minorities, which allows for concepts such as “Leitkultur” to remain a topic today.

Leitkultur

Memory culture that perceives Germans as having a deeper understanding of the Holocaust has created such concepts as ‘Leitkultur’ (leading culture). Leitkultur, is itself marginalized. It is touted as promoting “assimilation” and inhibiting multiculturalism. It

⁶ See the *Kaiser's Holocaust* and *New Approaches to German Colonialism* for a larger discussion on this.

“attempts to capture some distinctive essence of Germany: a symbol of national unity in a nation not only fragmented by East and West Germany but by the larger geopolitical question of how the “West” must deal with migrants and refugees” (Cattien 182).

Leitkultur is problematic in the way that it establishes a clearly defined German *Volk*, narrowly defined through race. “*Leitkultur* articulates a catalog of “universal” liberal values against the backdrop of an illiberal “other” who must be instructed or “guided” in these values” (Cattien 182). A connection between memory culture and Leitkultur is shown in the way ethnic white Germans are positioned as an educator/ leader of the perceived threat of the illiberal, racialized other: Arab/ Turkish minorities and Black minorities. Leitkultur is a politically conservative value and not promoted by many Germans. It remains controversial in Germany today.

Leitkultur exists to “educate” and “lead” minorities toward obtaining German values. Embracing these values is seen as a pathway to enlightenment and bolsters civilizational discourse. In 2005, German Parliamentary President Norbert Lammert attempted to redefine *Leitkultur* not in a German national context, but rather as an explicitly European idea. Lammert called for a discussion about a “guiding European idea” that draws on “common cultural roots, common history, and common traditions” (Deutsche Welle). Blood, religion, and ancestral ties to Germany remain a component of belonging for political conservatives in Germany today. In 2024, opposition leader Friedrich Merz used the term again, saying Christmas trees are part of Germany’s “guiding culture.” This loaded term pervades German migration debates — whether it refers to required learning or action is often unclear. Nevertheless “education” of the “other” becomes important in discussions about Leitkultur. It is now enshrined in the CDU’s new basic policy program” (Deutsche Welle). The politically controversial concept of Leitkultur will be

further explored in Chapter 1 through a close reading of Samy Deluxe's "Weck Mich Auf" lyrics and video.

Colonialist Forgetting

Despite the lack of awareness of Black Germans prior to the 1980s, the presence of a Black German population has always been there and dates to Germany's colonial past in East Africa, Cameroon, and Südwest Afrika. "Of particular importance is the fact that within Southwest Africa, German nationality was for the first time legally linked to race" (El- Tayeb 466). With Germany's interest in the colonial movement, one began to see the ways nationality became linked to race. White settlers in relationships with Black women were considered race traitors and their offspring were viewed as the products of deviance. "From the beginning of the 20th century to post WWII, Black Germans symbolized sexual and racial transgressions committed by "real" Germans" (El-Tayeb 469). In 1913, Germany introduced a new nationality law, which deepened the linkage between blood and nationality. The law eliminated *Jus Soli*. This meant that birthright was not a guarantor of citizenship. Contrarily, German citizenship and "Germanness" became tied to ethnicity and race. "The law's focus on descent reaffirmed the existing notion that persons of "foreign blood" could not be proper Germans" (El- Tayeb 466). Germany's mainstream Holocaust memory culture has largely excluded discussions about the relationship between German colonialism and the Holocaust. Olusoga and Erichson's *The Kaiser's Holocaust* has shown the connection between Nazism and Colonialism.

This is the great post-war myth: the comforting fantasy that the Nazis were a new order of monsters and that their crimes were without precursor or precedent... it was, in part, the final homecoming of theories and practices that Europeans had developed and perfected in far flung parts of the world during the last phase of imperial conquest. (Olusoga and Erichson 3)

Today, decolonizing Holocaust memory culture remains central to discussions about race and ethnicity in Germany.

In the 1920s Weimar Republic the existence of Black Germans was viewed as a threat to destroying the purity and blood of the German nation. Propaganda against African troops in the Rhineland emerged, which displayed the image of the “syphilitic mullato” (El Tayeb 467). This term of racial classification was used to refer to people of mixed African and European ancestry. It is important to note how the term “mullato” was used in the United States. Through commercial entertainment ideas about race and white superiority were transmitted on a global scale. In the 19th century “Minstrelsy was merely the first in a wave of American shows and fads focused on Blackness to cross the Atlantic” (Ciarlo 222). David Ciarlo’s *Advertising Empire Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany* has shown the parallels between visual cultures of the United States and Germany. Within my dissertation I show how racialized imagery today is still transmitted across the Atlantic. Ideas about authentic Blackness within hip hop are challenged as minorities such as Turkish-Germans use hip hop to refute the position of minority marginalization in a white supremacist society. At the same time, images of Black authenticity within global commercial culture still affirm a colonial gaze which perpetuates racist imagery. In Germany propaganda such as the “syphilitic mullato” would become further problematic in the Nazi era, as it would link Black Germans to the destruction of the ‘German race’, which was proclaimed Aryan.

A national list of Black Germans emerged in the Weimar period which was later used by the Third Reich to commit forced sterilizations of much of the Black German population. “The ‘Blackening’ of the white German nation now became one of the Third

Reich's racial problems. The forced and secret sterilization of Afro-Germans registered on the Weimar-era list began in 1937" (El-Tayeb 467). Discussions about the Holocaust have overlooked the impacts it had on racialized minorities' lives. Officially, Black Germans were never recognized as victims of Nazi persecution. "After the second world war ended, all memory of their treatment during National socialism vanished from public memory as did Germany's colonial past" (El-Tayeb 468). This lack of remembering the existence of Black Germans is today related to the problem of ethnically defined German identity. Furthermore, it highlights a colorblindness that persists.

Minorities Creating Presence

In the mid 1980s hip hop was gaining popularity in Germany. This moment coincided with an emerging movement that claimed the identity of Black and German, which allowed space for non-white German identities to emerge. Much of this movement was led by U.S. Black feminist scholar, Audre Lorde in 1984. The 80s proved to be a crucial transition phase in the recognition of a Black German population. The influence of Audre Lorde and the U.S. Black Feminist movement had a large impact on carving out an Afro-Deutsch community.

Before the dawning of the Afro-German movement in Germany in the 1980s, many AfroGerman women lived in isolation from other Afro-Germans and struggled with their racial and cultural identities in Germany—a country that repressed its colonial past and largely disregarded its Black population (Bowen, Black Central Europe).

Lorde's presence in Germany defined a Black feminist space, which began to consider different German identities outside of the white German identity. Moreover, the Black feminist movement that coincided with the publication of *Farbe Bekennen* was an attempt to make Black German identity visible to the German public. My dissertation shows that, still today, the public is a vital component that polices authentic German

identity. Today *Farbe Bekennen* remains an influential text as it created a discourse around Black German identity at the intersections of gender and queerness.

The lived experiences of the women in *Farbe Bekennen* highlight how “Heimat” [home] is a psychological aspect of identity. Society imposes regulations on bodies, which assert whose body is viewed as German and who is understood as-an outsider. Both Black German and Turkish German communities have sought alternative communities that are not attached to ethnic notions of Germanness. Since the publication of *Farbe Bekennen*, creating space for German minorities has been an ongoing project. The artists in my dissertation identify with the tension in the particularity of a “national German identity”. They raise questions about locating identity as a noun. Through performances they show how racialization is a verb which designates meaning or experience to bodies. By performing, artists can sidestep this on stage whilst manifesting new identities with which one identifies outside of “national German identity”.

Expressing Black identity and the long presence of Black folk within Germany led to the creation of national organizations such as the Initiative Schwarze Deutsche (ISD) and the women’s association ‘Afro- Deutsche Frauen’ (ADEFRA). “The ADEFRA brought an explicitly feminist agenda and strong lesbian presence into Afro-German activism” (El- Tayeb 473). Prior to the 1980s it was hard for Black Germans to find a community within Germany. These organizations not only created recognition of the diversity in the “white nation”. ADEFRA and ISD fostered community between minorities, not only within Germany but also globally within the African diaspora, especially with Black Americans.

The 80s proved to be a crucial transition phase in the recognition of a Black German population. The influence of Audre Lorde and the U.S. Black Feminist movement had a large impact on carving out an Afro-Deutsch community that centered the intersections of gender, sexuality, and queerness. Lorde's time in Berlin shows a link between the Black feminist movements in the United States and the emerging community for Afro-Germans. "Lorde acknowledges Black women as part of an African diaspora, which facilitated the new process of collectively exploring their similarities rather than being defined by their 'otherness' in a white society" (El-Tayeb 470). Understanding the conjunction of Black feminist movements in the United States and Germany offers a model for thinking about how minorities in hip hop may explore similarities that move beyond the identity of "other".

Hip Hop in Germany

To understand the ways minorities have used hip hop as a space for disputing dominant understandings of Germanness it is important to understand the way hip hop has historically functioned in Germany. The following section provides a historical account of the development of German hip hop.

The emergence of an Afro-German community coincided with the rise of hip hop's popularity in Germany, starting in the mid 1980s. When hip hop "arrived" in Germany, young German minorities strongly identified with the art form as a means of expressing and laying claim to minority identities. "In Europe, minority and migrant teenagers were the first to pick up this culture [hip hop], as they easily identified with hip hop's message" (El Tayeb 474). German hip hop was largely influenced by U.S. hip hop and the films *Wild Style* (1982) and *Beat Street* (1984). These films originated in the United States and imparted "the culture" into Germany. Indeed, U.S. hip hop had a significant influence on

German hip hop. Issues particular to German minorities such as neo-Nazism, assimilation, and immigration became topics specific to German hip hop.

Hip hop has always been about repurposing space. Sometimes space had to be carved out and remade with new rhythms and sounds. This “remaking and repurposing” that is inherent in hip hop offers a way of thinking through disidentificatory performance. Hip hop artists take the dominant cultures ideas about minority identity and remake it. Through innovative performance, definitions are exposed and recrafted, which shifts who belongs in German spaces. Fatima El-Tayeb’s scholarship has cited the profound impact of hip hop on promoting minority identity in Germany. Hip hop’s influence “promotes dialogue among minorities, which is necessary in combatting racism and xenophobia. The German public discourse can no longer cast minorities as mute objects [through hip hop] they now have a voice” (El-Tayeb 480). Creating new rhythms and sounds requires change which is meant to disrupt. The artists in this dissertation disturb the bounds of German identity that has historically been conceptualized through race and in doing so expose experiences of racialization.

German Hip Hop as a Space for Minorities

Farbe Bekennen and the Afro-Deutsche communities made a small dent in questions surrounding Germanness but there is still work to be done. Hip Hop artists have used their lyrics and performance to refute claims about authentic Germanness and Germanness as a fixed identity. Through performance, artists tell stories that reflect on German identity. They explicitly cross strict boundaries which define Germanness. Their performances question exclusion across multiple intersections: race, gender, class, and sexuality. It is important to note the development of German hip hop beginning in the 1980s in conjunction with *Farbe Bekennen*. The development of both signified a transnational space to refute white

supremacist culture. Perhaps these movements have more in common than has previously been considered.

The popularization of hip hop, in conjunction with the publication of *Farbe Bekennen* allowed a space for other minorities to begin defining their presence within Germany. The hip hop space “fostered interactions between minorities in similar situations” (El Tayeb 477). Today many 2nd and 3rd generation Turkish German minorities find themselves in a Germany that still does not regard them as German, despite having lived there their entire lives. “The situation of the 2nd and 3rd generation is profoundly different: employment opportunities are slim, traditional forms of organizing do not respond to their situation, and their parent’s country of origin is largely foreign to them” (El Tayeb 424). When hip hop became a popularized genre within Germany it allowed Turkish German minorities not only expression but a form of organizing across diaspora.

Ayhan Kaya’s *Sicher in Kreuzberg: Constructing Diasporas: Turkish Hip-Hop Youth in Berlin* discusses the importance of hip hop as a means of storytelling that crafts identity outside of the mainstream. “Music- making and other forms of popular culture serve as a specific site for the creation of collective identity as well as shaping and reflecting dominant and subordinate social and cultural relations” (Kaya 186). In Germany, the 1950s and 1960s brought a wave of Turkish immigrants to Germany in its guest-worker program. This program signaled economic growth and mass migration. Turkish minorities remain marginalized within Germany; specifically, regarding class. As the guest-worker program defined Turkish workers as temporary workers meant to eventually return to their country-of-origin, the program automatically classed Turkish nationals as outside the bounds of the German middle class. Still today, 2nd and 3rd generation Turkish

Germans are labeled as outsiders solely based on the ways their Turkish identity is historically understood within the context of the guest worker program.

Rappers attempt to disassociate themselves from this image as they work across diaspora to traverse codes of belonging. Kaya describes Turkish-German rappers as “intellectual storytellers”. “Members of the hip- hop nation, who form an “imagined community” that is based less on its realization through state formation than on a collective challenge to the consensual logic in Germany and to the majority German nationalism” (Kaya 186). Turkish Germans and Black Germans create alternative communities that refute the exclusiveness of national German identity.

Hip Hop, Gender, and the Double-Bind of Authenticity

Hip hop has served on the one hand as a historical account of political and social change or lack thereof. On the other hand, it has served to reinforce and perpetuate stereotypes surrounding masculinity, violence, misogyny, and street life. Like Germanness, hip hop too has been tethered to authenticity, commonly referred to as “realness”. The genre has served as a voice for marginalized people within societies. However, hip hop has also marginalized certain voices within the genre itself, due to the importance of upholding realness and authenticity. “This authenticity is rooted in a masculine paradigm, and the assumed heteronormativity of hip-hop” (Smalls 124). Like U.S. hip hop, German hip hop has been rooted in heteronormative masculinity due to the ways a commercial authentic of U.S. Black masculinity has come to represent the experience of marginalization globally. “The current hip-hop moment is filled with strict sites of categorization of the authentic, the real, and the hood as metonyms for a particular kind of Black popular-masculine affect. This presents a normative conundrum for a queer or queered project” (Smalls 127). Women and LGBTQ hip hop artists challenge Black masculinity

as a product of commodified authenticity. Performances by queer women of color intersectionally challenge norms that get reproduced in hip hop and within German society. In both areas women of color are racialized, othered, and sexualized. These performances raise questions about authenticity and belonging in both spheres.

Artists like Samy Deluxe or Haftbefehl in Chapter 1 may feel a connection to the image of Black masculinity seen within U.S. hip hop. However, I question how women and queer artists who do not feel a direct connection to this image of oppression navigate the narrowly defined hip hop space while challenging conservative, monocultural, ideas about German identity. “Blackness has been a historical position that has traditionally been opposed to Europeanness” (Partridge 10). Understanding the ways women and queer artists adopt resistance strategies in both Germany and the hip hop space sheds light on the ways the politics of claiming Blackness are often reserved for males/ masculine folks. Partridge’s work on “claiming Blackness as a way to articulate noncitizen politics” (Partridge, xi). One must also consider how a particular kind of Blackness has come to stand in globally to represent marginalized groups. Hip hop is situated as an ideal space for demonstrating the ways this works. We should question which bodies *get* to perform familiar hip hop tropes, narratives, or aesthetics because it shows the nuanced ways sexuality and gender is coded along with race. For example, if a male hip hop artist wears “women’s” clothing, this troubles Black masculinity as heterosexual. If a female hip hop artist tells a story about drug trafficking and uses violence in her video, this troubles ideas about masculinity and aggression.

German hip hop remains largely reliant on U.S. Black masculinity as the means of representing and expressing minority experiences. El- Tayeb asks: How do Black Germans appropriate U.S. hip hop models and make them applicable to their living conditions and use

them for intervention into discourses regarding German national identity?” This question requires further consideration of the ways U.S. Black masculinity is commodified and sold by major record labels as a product. My dissertation amplifies the voices of women and LGBTQ artists within hip hop and shows their attempts to disrupt the masculinized hip hop space.

Hip hop culture has left women and queer artists of color to navigate a double bind of authenticity regarding Germanness and hip hop. If traditional tropes such as heteronormativity and street life are disrupted it becomes uncomfortable for both consumers of hip hop music and the white majority because it does not fit into the commodified version of Blackness and masculinity that has come to represent “the minority experience” in German hip hop. “When an example of hip-hop aesthetics disrupts the presumed heteronormativity of blackness, we are often left without frame or words of explanation for how this fits into ideas of hip-hop and blackness” (Smalls 127).

In chapter one, masculinity within hip hop sets up a framework for understanding the ways masculinity and heteropatriarchy become central to discussions about racialization and German identity. Samy Deluxe and Haftbefehl work through “outsiderness” in ways that artists such as Lady Bitch Ray (Ch.2) and Breezy (Ch.3) do not have access to. For example, Haftbefehl’s depiction of gang culture and conspicuous consumption as a means for overcoming outsiderness is something queer and female artists are rarely afforded. For LBR, a TurkishGerman minority, sexuality becomes a central component which she uses to navigate questions of outsiderness and the exoticization of Turkish women. If she were to use gang culture within her performance, it would be seen as “inauthentic” within hip hop, making it harder for her to use the medium to challenge her position as an outsider in Germany. The exoticization of Turkish women in Germany is what requires LBR to navigate her own outsiderness by using the

“exotic” within her performance. Artists must use the markers of “outsiderness” that the dominant society has already designated to racialize these artists. In this way artists show their experiences of racialization. In LBR’s case she must perform as “exotic Turkish woman”, even in her attempt to make feminist music.

Chapters 2 and 3 consider how women and LGBTQ minorities attempt to reframe hip hop as they traverse codes about *who* partakes in the genre. Through their performances they further show the danger of dividing hip hop into a binary framework of conscious/gangster, both of which have traditionally excluded women/ LGBTQ folk. These artists articulate new discourses within hip hop that express the experience of being “othered” by mainstream German society. For example, in chapter 2, rapper Nura presents new positions for women’s bodies. This begins with her discussion of women’s menstruation- a topic that has been largely tabu within the male dominated hip hop space. Through menstruation imagery, Nura attempts to subvert the ways the female body is sexualized within the hip hop space. She shows menstruation is one aspect of sexuality for *some* women. By making menstruation a topic in hip hop, Nura sets up a discussion about women’s bodies in Islam and Germany. Women and LGBTQ artists show how the in-between space can be a place of empowerment. This third space, the “between/ inbetween” is shown to be the body itself. The artist’s bodies become a site used to traverse codes about gender, sexuality, and race. Artists embody new positions, and disregard permissibility. Nura’s body is covered in menstrual blood and through this she shows how her body is the terrain she uses to navigate what is permissible for women in Islam and in Germany.

The following chapters show how hip hop performances make visible the ways sexualization, racialization, and outsiderness are contended with by minority artists and by the German mainstream. This challenges the performativity required of “outsiders” who do not

“appear” German. Artist’s show how authenticity and belonging in Germany and in hip hop are in constant transition.

CHAPTER II: HIP HOP AND THE PRODUCTION OF AUTHENTIC MASCULINITY

Introduction

Performance can make power structures visible. It is important to study performance as a means of renegotiating power. “To consider performance is to study how we represent ourselves and repeat those representations within everyday life, working on the assumption that culture is unthinkable without performance” (Striff 1). Performance scholars have shown the relationship between culture and performance to be imperative to consider when thinking about society. Codes about gender, race, and sexuality are challenged and upheld through performance. In this chapter, I demonstrate how masculinity is one component of performing outsidership in the hip hop genre. The sub-genres of gangster and conscious rap become crucial to understanding how masculinity is performed and policed and what this says about outsiders.

The “gangster rap” sub-genre is often demonized as “bad rap,” by the media and mainstream society due to its focus on material wealth, street crime, and misogyny. It has also been called “reality rap” and is said to convey the culture and daily happenings of street gangs and “hustlers.” My research refutes claims about good vs. bad hip hop as conscious vs. gangster, asserting that “value and insight can be found in unexpected places” (Rollefson 2). The “good” vs. “bad” rap binary is problematic as it “valorizes the former [conscious] for its political consciousness and dismisses the latter [gangster] for its materialism and violation of politically correct orthodoxies” (Rollefson 2). This chapter looks at the performance of “outsidership” in

the sub-genres of “gangster rap” and “conscious rap”. A closer look at the two sub-genres offers nuanced ways of understanding how race, class, and gender intersect with attempts at resistance.⁷

Hip hop culture was originally imported from the United States to Germany in the 80s during the process of German reunification. “Hip hop was often heard around U.S. military bases where a large population of Black Germans lived” (El Tayeb 475). It remains important to consider U.S. hip hop’s influence on German hip hop and minority identity today⁸. The conditions minorities in Germany face are distinct from what minorities in the U.S. face, yet the image of Black masculinity inherent in U.S. hip hop has come to stand in for an oppressed other in hip hop throughout the globe. Below, Hip Hop artist Samy Deluxe discusses the connection he felt to U.S. hip hop.

Das erste Mal, dass ich einen emotionalen Bezug zu einer Kunstform fühlte, war bei den “Angry Black Men” im HipHop sowie bei der Band Public Enemy. Das waren Typen, die sagten, was ihnen auf den Sack geht in der Gesellschaft. Ich befand mich in Deutschland zwar in einer ganz anderen Situation, trotzdem waren die Emotionen sehr ähnlich, und deshalb habe ich mich mit dieser Kultur identifiziert und bin auch Rapper geworden. Ich glaube, deshalb fühlen sich in Deutschland viele Schwarze, aber auch Türken, Kurden oder Marokkaner zum Rap hingezogen. Minderheiten suchen nach Vorbildern, mit denen sie sich identifizieren können. (Samy Deluxe, Der Spiegel)

The first time I felt an emotional connection to an art form was with hip-hop’s “Angry Black Men” and the band Public Enemy. These were guys who said what bothered them in society. I was in a completely different situation in Germany, but the emotions were very similar, and that’s why I identified with this culture and also became a rapper. I think that’s why so many black people in Germany, but also Turks, Kurds and Moroccans, are drawn to rap. Minorities are looking for role models with whom they can identify. (Samy Deluxe, Der Spiegel)

Above, Deluxe discusses how some German minorities look for role-models, or people they may be able to identify with. The commodified version of Black masculinity

⁷ “It [hip hop] represents a mode of resistance; one perfectly suited to combating the radical right in Germany, perfectly suited to recognizing and strengthening the growth of a multicultural [multiethnic] German society” (Brown 142)

⁸ “Hip hop fostered interactions between minorities in similar situations” (El Tayeb 477).

inherent in U.S. hip hop becomes a figure with which some minorities across ethnicities identify with in hip hop. Masculinity and the urban space are crucial to embodying the figure of U.S. Black masculinity on a global scale. Both artists in this chapter use the urban space as the backdrop for exploring their outsidership. While one can adopt a persona, depict one's own experience, or render multiple experiences visible, it becomes hard for German minorities to challenge an overarching image of "outsidership" that persists in hip hop. The image of "outsidership" is represented through a commodified version of Black masculinity in U.S. hip hop that comes to stand in for oppression on a global scale. Both Samy Deluxe and Haftbefehl must therefore show aspects of masculinity that will allow consumers and artists to affirm their authenticity as hip hop artists. Both artists are unable to break out of the urban space to navigate their own outsidership because this is what is continually reproduced in hip hop. The artists subsequent sub-genre's show different ways of portraying the urban space to navigate outsidership and maintain masculinity.

Samy Deluxe's career has centered him in the sub-genre of "conscious rap." This subgenre of hip hop is often marketed and valorized by the hip hop industry as "good rap", or positive rap because it is said to promote awareness about socio-political, economic, and cultural issues. It is designated as politically aware and therefore "conscious" about social issues. Before Deluxe's solo career he was a well-known member of the political rap group Brothers Keepers. The group was revered as a trans-national anti-racism project that specifically addressed issues related to *Afro-Deutsche* identity.

This chapter also focuses on Haftbefehl, a Turkish-German rapper who has achieved much success, though unlike Deluxe, his lyrics and performances have been located within the "gangster rap" sub-genre. Gangster rap began to develop in L.A. in the

late 80s and early 90s with groups such as N.W.A. creating music that ran counter to the more “conscious”, politically minded Pan-Africanism of groups such as Public Enemy or Brand Nubian from the East Coast.⁹ “The new millennium brought a harder and more aggressive style of *Deutschrapp*, a German interpretation of American gangster rap, pioneered by the artist Azad, an Iranian-born rapper raised in Frankfurt” (Quigly and Langoda 3). As hip hop groups Public Enemy and N.W.A gained global recognition in the late 80s to early 90s, the German gangster rap scene followed in the millennium thereafter as a way for marginalized communities to voice their presence.

Contrasting Deluxe and Haftbefehl shows the importance of remaining respectable. This is shown through the ways Deluxe and Haftbefehl perform different types of masculinity. In this chapter I show how Deluxe and Haftbefehl offer particular representations of nationality, race, and masculinity, through different portrayals of their outsider experiences. Both artists present different ways of being German, which is connected to how they navigate their own “outsiderness”. Deluxe presents as a relatable artist who is just “looking out” for the common good: German society. Deluxe attempts to build community and become a part of Germany as it already exists. He is an outsider who wants to belong. In contrast, Haftbefehl does not want to be a part of Germany, he takes pride in his criminalized “bad boy” outsiderness. Haftbefehl presents as criminal and violent; a “menace to society”. He refutes assimilating to proper behavior and instead displays his street life endeavors proudly. He proclaims his Kurdish- German identity and achievement of status through criminal behavior.

⁹ N.W.A.’s song “Fuck Tha Police” was simultaneously gangster yet political at the same time. It’s message focused on police brutality and over policing in Black neighborhoods. MC Ren, one of the group’s members explains “In the ghetto, or in the Black community, you get harassed for what you wear, they stereotype you as a gang member” (Qtd in Hall 2). N.W.A.’s music was controversial, and the FBI claimed that it promoted violence against the police, when really it was the group’s attempt at creating “a pressure-release valve for residents of over-patrolled Black neighborhoods” (Qtd in Hall 2).

Samy Deluxe

Authenticity within hip hop has been understood as heterosexual Black masculinity, which has been viewed as necessitating misogyny to “keep it real.” “When Blackness becomes a metonym for authenticity [in hip hop] or an essential, authentic Blackness, it is linked to masculinity in its most patriarchal forms” (Smalls 131). Within hip hop authentic Blackness has been expressed as heterosexual male desire. Authenticity within the genre has been tethered to this, making it harder for any new possibilities for the intersections of masculinity, gender identity, and Blackness to emerge. The narrowly and strictly defined parameters of masculinity promote and perpetuate misogyny. An essentialized version of commercialized Black masculinity emerges, which reinforces the bounds of normative Germanness.

In music artists create rhythms and have the power to manipulate historical and cultural contexts of how performances are contextualized. Off stage, artists are not granted this luxury socially. “We must consider how Blackness is appropriated and performed in an international context” (Johnson 14). The commercialization of minority identity through global hip hop consumption has had an impact on what is permissible for minorities to undertake within the genre, showing how performance art and social life are directly related. Permissibility is directly related to the ways Blackness is contextualized outside of the performance space. Essentially, what is Blackness allowed to claim and how does this relate to gender and sexuality? If heterosexuality remains tethered to Black masculinity and a necessary marker of the performance, then misogyny will continue to remain a necessary component of the hip hop genre. Artists can manipulate performance but only insofar as the performance variations authenticate what is already permissible.

Deluxe could adopt a conscious style of hip hop or a gangster persona- his masculinity allows him this, as it coincides with images perpetuated about non-white masculinity within society. So long as he does not disrupt the heterosexual component of how masculinity appears in hip hop, he remains reliable for the audience. Misogyny is used to affirm one's heterosexuality.

While Deluxe's music has on the one hand been viewed as "conscious," it has been critiqued for perpetuating misogyny. This offers Deluxe appeal and likeability from the German hip hop mainstream because it shows his ability to "keep it real"¹⁰. His misogyny bolsters his masculinity which is a vital component to hip hop authenticity. In *The Lived Experience of the Black Man*, Fanon highlights how Blackness is overdetermined by the outside (white gaze). In Fanon's words Blackness is "slave to appearance" (Fanon 6). Within hip hop, Black masculinity is always already overdetermined as heteronormative due to the ways the white gaze understands Blackness as hypersexual and/or heterosexual. Misogyny is one aspect of how racialized masculinity is affirmed as heterosexual.

The African diaspora in Europe has been influenced by a politics of respectability that stems from white middle class values linked to colonialism. "In Africa debates over respectability peaked during the colonial period as a way to impose European middle-class values and norms on the African population" (Pasura and Christau 521). This is directly related to the ways middle class values have shaped ideas about masculinity in the mainstream today. A hypersexualized nonwhite masculine "other" appears to reaffirm the boundaries of European respectability. Today "respectability is framed through conformity to the standards and expectations of a neoliberal society by being a provider for one's family, working hard, and

¹⁰ See a discussion of realness and authenticity within hip hop in the introduction.

acquiring material possessions, such as a home, education, and some level of economic independence” (Pasura and Christau 521). German respectability values necessitate the heteronormative sexuality of the other so that misogyny can be read on the body of the racialized other, making white masculinity appear respectable within the patriarchal system.

Misogyny upholds white German society’s ideas about Black masculinity needing to strive for respectable values or be viewed as the threatening outsider. In Deluxe’s case he strives for respectable values so that he is not seen as a threatening outsider. Within hip hop, misogyny reaffirms a particular sexualized masculinity that confirms one’s heterosexuality, and therefore authenticity. “[Within hip hop] the construction of patriarchal masculinity is read as black authenticity” (Rollefson 131). The necessity of patriarchal masculinity in hip hop reflects the ways colonialism has shaped an image of Black authenticity through the white gaze. Misogyny upholds patriarchy. Deluxe’s music shows a grey area exists where one may be conscious though misogynistic. Patriarchy and misogyny are two components of respectability. Misogyny is read on the body of the racialized masculine “other”, whereas patriarchy is meant to affirm the status of the white male. Deluxe’s performance of masculinity reads as relatable and non-threatening to middle-class Germanness. He never presents as aggressive in his songs, and he often references multi-culturalism and community building. In other words, he strives for respectability; he is the outsider who can learn.

Samy Deluxe and the White German Conscious: An Outsider Who Wants to Belong

Samy Deluxe’s music achieved mainstream success in the early 2000s in the “conscious rap” sub-genre. He is one of the most commercially successful rappers in Germany with over a million records sold. Since the beginning of his career his music has

been critical of xenophobia and right-wing conservatism. This was also seen during his time with the highly politicized rap group Brothers Keepers, which propelled his solo career. Deluxe's self-titled album "Samy Deluxe" became popular in 2001, over 20 years ago. Many of the themes discussed in his songs remain relevant today. His autobiographical book *Dis Wo Ich Herkomm* states "Ich wurde am 19. Dezember 1977 als Außenseiter geboren: Ein halb Schwarzer Junge in Hamburg. Dieses beklemmende Gefühl nicht dazuzugehören, unerwünscht zu sein war da" (Deluxe 22) ["I was born as an outsider on December 19th 1977: A half black kid in Hamburg]. Many of his songs discuss his self-proclaimed outsider status. His father is from Sudan and left Germany when Deluxe was two years old. Deluxe's music contains themes about origin, homeland, and outsidership.

In 2001, Deluxe's song "Weck Mich Auf" (Wake Me Up) from his self-titled album achieved widespread popularity. In Deluxe's interview with the *Kölner Stadt Zeitung* he discusses how the impact of this song remains relevant today. Deluxe:

Wenn man über soziale Missstände, über Trennung von Gesellschaftsschichten, Klassen oder Rassen redet, sind das einfach Dinge, die im Menschen tief verankert sind. Wenn ich heute einen Song darüber schreiben würde, wäre der in 17 Jahren auch noch aktuell.

Wenn man eine ultimative Wahrheit ausspricht, wie „es gibt Rassismus,“ dann hat man eben immer Recht. Wobei es auch Leute gibt, die wahrscheinlich politisch korrekte, nette Menschen sind, mir dann aber sagen, dass sie es so traurig finden, weil sie dachten, der Rassismus wäre weg gewesen. Aber die sind eben alle weiß und nicht jeden Tag schwarz.

Da weiß man teilweise nicht, dass es Rassismus gibt. Dieser Illusion geben sich die Minderheiten aber gar nicht hin (Samy Deluxe).

If you talk about social grievances, about the separation of social classes, classes or races, these are simply things that are deeply rooted in people. If I were to write a song about it today, it would still be relevant in 17 years.

When you state an ultimate truth, like "racism exists," you're always right. Although there are also people who are probably politically correct, nice people, but then tell me that they find it so sad because they thought the racism was gone. But they are all white and not black every day. Sometimes you don't even know that racism exists. But the minorities are not giving in to this illusion (Samy Deluxe).

Deluxe highlights the privileged position of having a white body in Germany, where one does not have to consider if racism exists. Deluxe's interview shows how categories of race designate certain experiences for different bodies. Where white bodies can completely overlook racism, Black and brown bodies do not have this choice.¹¹ Whiteness occupies the space of racelessness which is tied to social status. If one lives in a white body then one's status goes unquestioned. In contrast, race is inscribed onto Black and Brown bodies. This inscription confines people within the "outsider" category. Black and brown bodies therefore occupy the space of "racialized other". Racelessness cannot be possible without the racialized other.

Hip hop serves as a form of cultural information that makes the connection between race and class visible. Deluxe highlights the importance of class to the hip hop genre. "Das Gute am Hip-Hop ist unter anderem, dass es eigentlich Musik der Unterschicht ist" (*Deluxe Kölner Zeitung* Interview) ["The good thing about hip hop is that it is music for the "underdog/underclass"]. Deluxe points out, hip hop is often associated with economically marginalized artists, the "lower class." Deluxe's music portrays outsiders that should always want to fit into the mainstream so that Germany can be a more multicultural society. One way that outsiders can belong is by appearing respectable. Outsiders must adhere to the values the white middle class sets up. In this way class becomes an essential aspect of how we understand "good" vs. "bad" outsiders. Deluxe puts the responsibility on the outsiders of overlooking racism as they strive to adhere to German values while maintaining respectability.

¹¹ Tsitsi Dangaremba's *Black and Female* discusses the imposition of "categories" on one's lived experience and offers an expansion on the ways race is a category that imposes experience. "Blackness is a condition imposed on me, rather than being an experienced identity. To this day, I do not identify with the word 'Black' with respect to color but with respect to experiences I have endured because of the imposed category" (Dangaremba 41).

Black Masculinity, Misogyny, Heterosexuality: Samy Deluxe Affirming Authenticity in the Hip Hop Space

Authenticity within hip hop has been understood as heterosexual Black masculinity, which has been viewed as necessitating misogyny to “keep it real.” “When Blackness becomes a metonym for authenticity [in hip hop] or an essential, authentic Blackness, it is linked to masculinity in its most patriarchal forms” (Smalls 131). Within hip hop authentic Blackness has been expressed as heterosexual male desire. Authenticity within the genre has been tethered to this, making it harder for any new possibilities for the intersections of masculinity, gender identity, and Blackness to emerge. The narrowly and strictly defined parameters of masculinity promote and perpetuate misogyny. An essentialized version of commercialized Black masculinity emerges, which reinforces the bounds of normative Germanness.

In music artists create rhythms and have the power to manipulate historical and cultural contexts of how performances are contextualized. Off stage, artists are not granted this luxury socially. “We must consider how Blackness is appropriated and performed in an international context” (Johnson 14). The commercialization of minority identity through global hip hop consumption has had an impact on what is permissible for minorities to undertake within the genre, showing how performance art and social life are directly related. Permissibility is directly related to the ways Blackness is contextualized outside of the performance space. Essentially, what is Blackness allowed to claim and how does this relate to gender and sexuality? If heterosexuality remains tethered to Black masculinity and a necessary marker of the performance, then misogyny will continue to remain a necessary component of the hip hop genre. Artists can manipulate performance but only

insofar as the performance variations authenticate what is already permissible. Misogyny is a tool used to affirm one's heterosexuality.

Deluxe could adopt a conscious style of hip hop or a gangster persona- his masculinity allows him this, as it coincides with images perpetuated about non-white masculinity within society. Commercial hip hop has set up strict rules about how masculinity is sold, which is why Deluxe's masculinity establishes him as "authentic" across various sub-genres. Hip hop is where society allows him to "have a voice". Hip hop, as a product, must ensure that masculinity is commodified to fit the ways it is sold as a product for consumers. This ensures limited presentations for *how* masculinity can be embodied. So long as Deluxe does not disrupt the heterosexual component of how masculinity appears in hip hop, he remains reliable for the audience and therefore has a voice.

While Deluxe's music has on the one hand been viewed as "conscious," it has been critiqued for perpetuating misogyny. This offers Deluxe appeal and likeability from the German hip hop mainstream because it shows his ability to "keep it real". His misogyny bolsters his masculinity which is a vital component to hip hop authenticity. In *The Lived Experience of the Black Man*, Fanon highlights how Blackness is overdetermined by the outside (white gaze). In Fanon's words Blackness is "slave to appearance" (Fanon 6). Within hip hop, Black masculinity is always already overdetermined as heteronormative due to the ways the white gaze understands Blackness as hypersexual and/or heterosexual. Misogyny is one aspect of how racialized masculinity is affirmed as heterosexual.

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respectability peaked during the colonial period as a way to impose European middle-class values and norms on the African population” (Pasura and Christau 521). This is directly related to the ways middle class values have shaped ideas about masculinity in the mainstream today. A hypersexualized nonwhite masculine “other” appears to reaffirm the boundaries of European respectability. Today “Respectability is framed through conformity to the standards and expectations of a neoliberal society by being a provider for one’s family, working hard, and acquiring material possessions, such as a home, education, and some level of economic independence” (Pasura and Christau 521). German respectability values necessitate the heteronormative sexuality of the other so that misogyny can be read on the body of the racialized other, making white masculinity appear respectable within the patriarchal system.

Misogyny upholds white German society’s ideas about Black masculinity needing to strive for respectable values or be viewed as the threatening outsider. In Deluxe’s case he strives for respectable values so that he is not seen as a threatening outsider. Within hip hop, misogyny reaffirms a particular sexualized masculinity that confirms one’s heterosexuality, and therefore authenticity. “[Within hip hop] the construction of patriarchal masculinity is read as black authenticity” (Rollefson 131). The necessity of patriarchal masculinity in hip hop reflects the ways colonialism has shaped an image of Black authenticity through the white gaze. Misogyny upholds patriarchy. Deluxe’s music shows a grey area exists where one may be conscious though misogynistic. Patriarchy and misogyny are two components of respectability. Misogyny is read on the body of the racialized masculine “other”, whereas patriarchy is meant to affirm the status of the white male. Deluxe’s performance of masculinity reads as relatable and non-threatening to

middle-class Germanness. He never presents as aggressive in his songs, and he often references multiculturalism and community building. In other words, he strives for respectability; he is the outsider who can learn how to be an “acceptable German”. Deluxe shows that he plans to continue to practice tolerance and strive for education to overcome his experience as an outsider. These aspects of Deluxe’s performance show he is invested in Germany’s future and seeks belonging by adopting values that show that.

Leitkultur: Tolerating the Other through Assimilation, Integration, and Multiculturalism

Deluxe shows ways he diverges from ethnic notions of Germanness, yet he reaffirms Germanness as it exists through the language of multiculturalism and tolerance. Hip hop as cultural information situates Germany in a particular historical moment where minorities are looking beyond German memory culture and finding new ways to think through racism in Germany. Hip hop as a space shows how Germany’s reconciliation with its past must begin to consider a multi-racial German future where minorities and non-Germans alike are incorporated into memory culture not as potential perpetrators of antisemitism, but as proof of Germany’s ability to move beyond ethnicity. This does not dispute the importance of Holocaust memory but rather allows space for ethnic minorities in the German conscious, reimagining authentic Germanness. Concepts such as *Leitkultur* fragment the ways minorities are viewed in relation to white Germans. “*Leitkultur* attempts to capture some distinctive essence of Germany: a symbol of national unity in a nation not only fragmented by East and West Germany but by the larger geopolitical question of how the “West” must deal with migrants and refugees” (Cattien 182). *Leitkultur* is problematic in the way that it establishes a clearly defined German *Volk*, narrowly defined through race. “*Leitkultur* articulates a catalog of “universal” liberal values against the backdrop of an illiberal “other” who must be instructed or “guided” in these values” (Cattien

182). This has been within German memory culture, that depicts a fear of an antisemitic Muslim who inhibits Germany from its national agenda of Holocaust remembrance. The image of a perceived “other” can change over time and as Cattien shows, *Leitkultur* is/was concerned with producing “certain kinds of subjects and identities” (Cattien 183). With enlightenment values in mind, it was important for all people living in Germany to adhere to Germany’s core values such as education, democracy, and Christianity to properly integrate into society.

The concept of *Leitkultur* corresponds to political conservative’s desire for the greater population to embody the Enlightenment values of (western) education and culture. Enlightenment thought signaled the invention of scientific racism, which created an “us” vs. “them” system of hierarchy that is seen today with *Leitkultur*’s insistence on German education and culture as guiding principles for minorities. Freedom is related to one’s origin and race. In other words, minorities due not get to choose, they must assimilate. “*Leitkultur* is often deployed by white German politicians to underline their “integration” demands pertaining to an unassimilated other” (Cattien 184). The German “other” has had differing identities over time.¹²

Similarly, definitions of *Leitkultur* have changed since the concept originally emerged in the 80s. “As the other assumes different shapes across time, *Leitkultur* discourse has proved itself extremely robust- even though there is no meaningful consensus over what the content of this German “guiding culture” actually is” (Cattien 182). German *Leitkultur* reflects Germany’s ongoing attempt at reconciliation with or freedom from its Nazi past, through the process of liberalization. I have shown a central German value to be memory culture. Whiteness is embedded in memory culture’s ethnonationalist framework. *Leitkultur* reflects Germany’s

¹² See El- Tayeb’s *Undeutsch*

ongoing memory culture “as the site for the production of a normative German subject that is configured in terms of its European Enlightenment heritage” (Cattien 183).

Leitkultur is related to Germany’s “coming to terms” with its Nazi past.

Enlightenment values are the “liberal and progressive successor to the racist, eugenicist, and anti-Semitic ideologies of Nazi Germany: the ethical and political achievement that signals Germany’s (liberal) freedom from an (illiberal) past” (Cattien 188). Germany is positioned to “overcome” its fascist past through embracing Enlightenment values, in doing so it fails to remember its colonial legacy. Leitkultur assumes the German subject to be the tolerant individual who will lead the other into a path of integration but *only* after assimilation. “Tolerance functions as a marker of identity reaffirming what is truly German and what is not” (Cattien 180). Therefore, “tolerance” is one aspect of Germanness necessary to lead the “outsider”. Tolerance is a key component of Leitkultur discourse, which creates “asymmetrical power relations between the one who tolerates and the tolerated” (Cattien 175). Under Leitkultur assimilation is a crucial aspect of this asymmetrical power relationship. The European Commission defines assimilation as “the gradual process by which a minority group adopts the patterns of a majority group or host society and is eventually absorbed by the majority group/ host society” (European Commission). Turkish and/or Muslim minorities are tolerated but expected to assimilate to a German way of life. In other words, they are tolerated insofar as they adhere to the values of German society.

Integration is another important concept which coincides with debates around German identity and the non-German other. The European Commission defines integration as “a dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents

of EU member states” (European Commission). Integration is an attempt to incorporate different cultures and beliefs into the German nation, recognizing that German identity is not homogenous. The concepts of integration and assimilation become the discourse used to talk about the non-German other.

Multiculturalism has promoted diversity so long as minorities do not disrupt Germany’s national identity as a Christian nation founded on “equality” and democracy. The concept of multiculturalism implies that multiple cultures co-exist simultaneously. Different cultures and ethnicities exist alongside each other yet never blend into or affect one another. A closer consideration of assimilation, integration, and multiculturalism shows how the preservation of “Germanness” has been prioritized above incorporating minorities with German’s national identity. The following section will provide a close reading of the lyrics and music video of Deluxe’s “Weck Mich Auf” to show how tolerance, integration, “appearing to assimilate”, and multiculturalism are foundational within minorities. Attempts at resistance must appear as respectable.

Weck Mich Auf (Wake Me Up)

Conscious rap may be politically troubling to Germans situated within the upper echelons of society because it discusses issues of race and class that challenge current power structures. During the time of Deluxe’s hit song “Weck mich auf”, Leitkultur, German leading culture was promoted by German conservatives as an assimilation strategy for non-ethnic Germans. Conscious rap is unsettling for politically conservative Germans who remain attached to ethnicity as a marker of German identity. Deluxe’s video depicts aggressive and racist white Germans. Conscious rap, while politically troubling, upholds a status quo that already exists, as opposed to creating and reshaping culture. For example,

Deluxe questions the politicians who uphold German *Leitkultur*, but he still depicts how he wants to be included in Germany, not seen as an outsider. He wants to fit in, which is precisely the idea behind assimilation. Deluxe's performance distinguishes between attempting to fit in or assimilate by changing one's life versus attempt to blend in and appear "authentic" in different cultural situations. In Deluxe's case he seeks to appear "authentic" by adopting respectability standards. One might question what rappers are "conscious" of. Deluxe's "Weck mich Auf" video and lyrics prove white middleclass respectability to be the status-quo some "conscious rap" is maintaining.

Deluxe navigates his own outsidership throughout the video as he seeks to be a part of Germanness as it already exists. Part of this rests on the video's reliance on neo-Nazi undertones, which Deluxe uses as a device to relate to white Germans and come across as non-threatening. He uses images of aggressive skinheads that react at seeing Deluxe's body. Throughout the entirety of the black and white video, images of only white Germans are presented. Deluxe's misogyny is permissible because he presents himself as a non-threatening outsider who is a victim of racism. His misogyny *is* necessary because it upholds white respectability ideas about racialized masculinity.

Deluxe's 2001 "Weck mich auf" (Wake me up) topped Germany's billboard charts at number four. The lyrics portray the growing number of minorities within Germany and the problems they face. The song presents the racist structures that persist in Germany in 2001 and how this racism affects German society, especially German youth, who Deluxe perceives as lacking direction. He sees German youth as depressed because of the bleak outlook of Germany in the early 2000s. The popularization of this song coincides with a reemergence of the politically conservative concept of "Deutsche *Leitkultur*" (German

leading culture) in 2001. The term had fully taken off amongst political conservatives and was often featured in political debates about German national identity, and immigration.

Deluxe's "Weck mich Auf" calls into question the state of Germany at the time and where Deutsche "Leitkultur" might be leading youth and minorities. Deluxe's song ultimately shows his concern for depressed German youth and Germany as a whole, as he sees German youth suffering from alcohol and drug abuse with no real direction.

Wer will schon alt werden?
In diesem Land, in dem mehr Schranken stehen als es Wege gibt
Mehr Mauern als Brücken, die Stimmung ist negativ
Für die Alten darum rauchen wir täglich Weed
Und deshalb sind ich und meine ganze

Generation so depressive Who wants to grow old?
In this country where there are more barriers than paths
More walls than bridges, the mood is negative
To the elderly, that's why we smoke weed every day
And that's why me and my whole generation are so depressed
Above, Deluxe describes an overly negative outlook for Germany. He shows how minorities and youth experience a lack of opportunities due to the challenges they face. Deluxe addresses generational differences in Germany. He shows a lack of understanding between older and younger generations. Older Germans do not understand why German youth "smoke weed every day". Deluxe depicts German youth who need guidance. Deluxe depicts youth who refute the German future as it currently stands.

The video for the song is presented in black and white, looking somewhat archaic. This highlights the ways racism persists in a strict divide between Black/Brown and white people. Additionally, the generations of people are divided and exist in two different worlds. Deluxe himself has discussed the experience of existing in two different worlds as a biracial minority with a Sudanese father and a German mother. The black and white video stands for a division between two worlds.

The video begins as Deluxe is shown “waking up” and stepping out of his body (Figure 1). When he wakes up, he disassociates from himself and from Germany. Multiple shots throughout the video reiterate Deluxe’s disassociation as he always looks and perceives his hands as not a part of his body (Figure 2, 3). Disassociation is a disconnect from thoughts, feelings, memories, and one’s sense of identity. The video depicts Deluxe’s attempt at disconnecting from his own identity, which is represented through his connection with his body.

By stepping out of his body he disconnects from the identity imposed on him.



Figure 1 Deluxe stands up



Figure 2 Deluxe's hands palms down



Figure 3 Deluxe's hands palms up

After waking up he begins walking through a forest. He is then seen walking through Germany, depicted as a nightmare for youth and racialized minorities. The songs states “weck mich bitte auf aus diesem Alptraum” (“please wake me up from this nightmare”). When we see Deluxe, he has awoken from the nightmare but finds himself walking through the streets of Hamburg observing the racial tensions around him and the state of German youth (Figure D). Below, Figure D shows Deluxe baffled by the state of Germany around him. Germany seems desolate and in decay. He walks across a Basketball

court, and no one is in sight. We can no longer discern the Alptraum/nightmare he raps about from the reality he exists in.



Figure 4 Deluxe in the city

Deluxe's "disassociation" from Germany is seen as multiple shots show him observing what is going on around him. Different generations of men aggressively react to seeing Deluxe. Deluxe is concerned about the racism and troubled youth around him, but he passively watches what is happen. As we see him walk the streets of Germany, we witness the gaze that white Germans cast on his body (Figure 5,6,7). Figure 5 shows a man who finds Deluxe's body repulsive. Figure 6 shows a young boy pointing a fake gun at Deluxe. Figure 7 shows a younger man screaming at Deluxe and later unleashing his dog on Deluxe. The contrast of these three images further reiterates Germanness is connected to one's race and ethnicity. All the men are white. They are perpetrators of racism in different extremes. Seeing these images contrasted next to each other allows the viewer a glimpse at the colonial gaze on the racialized other. It shows how this is something deeply engrained over multiple generations.



Figure 5 Older German man



Figure 6 Young boy pointing gun



Figure 7 Aggressive man screaming

Sometimes Deluxe goes completely unnoticed by the people in the video and has little reaction to the racist aggressions cast at him. This highlights how Deluxe has disconnected from his perceived outsider identity and from how white Germans read his body. Deluxe cannot be “contained” as an outsider because of his own disassociation from the category. He is there as a passive observer and this is his survival strategy, or disidentification attempt from the outsider category. Despite his attempt to disassociate from Germany and from himself, he is always seen and always rendered visible as an outsider due to his skin color. He defies containment for himself but cannot escape the experience of living in a non-white body. This means that the dominant culture will always read Deluxe’s performance as a racialized outsider. While Deluxe himself can defy his own containment, the public remains a large component in his ability to escape. This is due to the importance of appearance. Even as he tries to appear as the “good outsider” by adopting values that many Germans would agree with, he cannot overcome his appearance. He is always marked as “other”. The effects of appearance and its reception are highlighted as one cannot help but notice that Deluxe is the only Black person in the video. The white

gaze racializes Deluxe as he attempts to defy this. This highlights the inescapability of racialization and containment.

Deluxe also performs the experience of “invisibility” in his video as his Blackness never allows him to fit in with the white Germans in the video. Deluxe presents foreigners/minorities as more perceptive and empathetic than the white Germans in the video. Deluxe portrays the “eternal foreigner” throughout the video as he never arrives anywhere, he doesn’t seem to be seeking a destination, just endlessly walking. A shot of his feet moving but never going anywhere further reiterates his inability to “arrive” as a part of Germany (Figure 8). He therefore remains as an “eternal foreigner”.



Figure 8 Deluxe walking

Deluxe tries to adhere to and promote respectable values such as middle-class status, education, and tolerance through his concern with troubled youth, yet he is still perceived as an outsider in the video. He shows German youth in need of guidance, or education. Through this, they will learn to respect multiculturalism. Below, (Figure 9) shows “giant Deluxe” walking through the city at the end of the video. Deluxe never reaches a

destination in his video. No one has even noticed his giant size. This highlights an invisibility status many racialized minorities find themselves in, despite having lived in Germany their whole lives. One can read Deluxe's new giant size as being ethically superior to the white German majority. In the world that Deluxe depicts in his video it is best to not fit in. The fact that no one takes notice of giant Deluxe further reiterates the impossibility of ever becoming a part of Germanness as it already exists. An "other" is always needed to affirm what Germanness is not. "*Leitkultur* discourse encourages more aggressively nationalist articulations of German identity...it requires an "other" who signifies contra *Leitkultur*" (Cattien 191). In the video Deluxe shows, he would rather be the "other" who is ethically superior to those promoting *Leitkultur* values. For Deluxe, it is better to not fit into such a world.



Figure 9 Giant Deluxe

While Deluxe visually shows himself to be ethically superior to white Germans, his lyrics are collective and appeal to white middle-class respectability standards, suggesting that he actually *does* want to fit in and feels he shares similar "German" values. There is at times a disconnect between the visual and textual components of his song. He brings himself into the conversation of a German collective and attempts to reestablish a

respectable society, finding faults that everyone could agree on. The lyrics' use of "wir" (us) and "Ich und du und er und sie" (Me and you and he and she) suggests a community that Deluxe wants to be a part of. As he mentions the racism that persists throughout Germany, he also questions why his generation is depressed. Throughout the video, images of German youth provide counter examples of Germans Deluxe may be able to find common ground with. He feels a responsibility to get German youth headed down the "righteous" path. Throughout the video shots of misguided white German youth appear. Deluxe hopes to educate the next generation/ his own generation of Germans so that they may be more accepting of minorities. Indeed, the youth is where Deluxe sees his chance at common ground. He understands the youth as his only chance of being a part of German society. The lyrics below depict all of the obstacles that stand in the way and deter youth from the "righteous path," making it harder for Deluxe to ever fit in. Some of the barriers youth face are: racism/neo-nazis, corrupt cops, rules, and regulations.

Wir leben in einem Land, in dem mehr Schranken stehen, als es Wege gibt
Mehr Mauern als Brücken, die Stimmung ist negativ
Und die Alten fragen warum rauch ich täglich Weed
Und warum sind ich und meine ganze Generation so depressiv?
Wir sind jeden Tag umgeben von lebenden Toten
Umgeben von Schildern, die uns sagen, Betreten Verboten!
Umgeben von Skinheads, die Türken und Afrikanern das Leben nehmen
Während Bullen daneben stehen, um Problemen aus dem Weg zu gehen (Deluxe)

We live in a country where there are more barriers than paths
More walls than bridges, the mood is negative
And the old people ask why I smoke weed every day
And why am I and my whole generation so depressed?
We are surrounded by the living dead every day Surrounded by signs telling us No
Trespassing!
Surrounded by skinheads who take the lives of Turks and Africans
While cops stand by to avoid trouble (Deluxe)

Deluxe's imagery of problematic youth appeals to middle-class respectability, which is another attempt he makes at fitting into Germanness as it already exists. He presents images of youth culture that many people could find fault with. This includes shots of youth doing drugs or being overly sexual. Below, figure 10 highlights Deluxe's appeal to white middle-class values. The young girl skipping rope is portrayed as innocent and in need of protection. Otherwise, she risks becoming like the troubled youth who turn to drugs and sexual behavior in (Figure 11). This is Deluxe's attempt at fitting in and being a part of Germany. He depicts himself as the "good outsider," because he too can identify the problems that come from German youth straying from the path of respectability. One might question why Deluxe opted for white youth in his video, instead of diverse groups of youth that would represent the diversity and multiculturalism he strives for.



Figure 10 Young German youth with jump rope



Figure 11 Misguided youth

Ultimately, the “giant Deluxe” also shows how Deluxe has grown from all that he has endured, a symbol of passive perseverance in the face of injustice, reiterating the idea that outsiders should “grow from” their outsider experience, all while working towards the establishment of a multi-cultural German community. Deluxe is presented as the “guide” for wayward German youth. Through interactions with Deluxe, youth may become more tolerant and adhere to a respectable drug-free and educated life. However, if they continue their ways then they risk becoming like the older aggressive white Germans in Deluxe’s video. The youth are the opportunity for changing the ugly Germanness to “open” Germanness.

The promotion of tolerance is an undertone throughout the video that reaffirms Germany’s Enlightenment values. “Tolerance borrows, circulates, deploys, and reifies racial historicist distinctions whereby the anchoring of these subject formations takes place. An enlightened, civilized, tolerant, racially superior subject emerges in contraposition to its racially inferior other” (Derrida 2003). Deluxe himself promotes

tolerance as he tries to overlook the aggressions of white Germans. Deluxe finds problems with Leitkultur but promotes tolerance and multiculturalism as a maneuver to circumvent his own outsidership and become a part of German society. In this way he assimilates to what already exists, just as Leitkultur envisions. Deluxe's presentation is safe and does not disturb the respectable Germanness that already exists, rather he seeks to be a part of it. It is essential for him to present a non-reactive, non-aggressive masculinity that navigates outsidership while carefully minding the status quo.

Haftbefehl

The depiction of material wealth in hip hop is a necessary strategy for renegotiating boundaries around the ways Germanness is racialized and classed. Gangster rappers, such as Haftbefehl use the depiction of material wealth to assert and take back power. Extreme excess is necessary because it makes class visible. Haftbefehl's material wealth is questioned because as a Kurdish- German minority his identity is automatically associated with the working-class. Therefore, his wealth and class status are not believable. Only with excess does class become a topic of concern. Haftbefehl and other gangster rappers intentionally break with purported German values by depicting street crime to traverse German values. As they gain material wealth, they attempt to surpass the ways race and class are coded. Consumption is exaggerated to show this.

Haftbefehl's performance of masculinity has been understood as threatening, violent, and like Deluxe, misogynistic. His gangster rap music has received much attention and popularity in the mainstream over the last ten years, especially amongst minorities in Germany who feel they can identify with the experiences Haftbefehl raps about.

Haftbefehl wurde im Zuge seines Erfolgs für viele Migranten und Migrantinnen zu einer essenziellen Identifikationsfigur. Weil er unsere Sprache spricht. Weil er sich in seiner

Kunst zu vielem positioniert, was uns beschäftigt, darunter Rassismus und das in der Rap-Welt oft tabuisierte Thema Depression (Der Standard).

As a result of his success, Arrest Warrant became an essential identification figure for many migrants. Because he speaks our language. Because in his art he takes a position on many things that concern us, including racism and the topic of depression, which is often taboo in the rap world (Der Standard).

His music has been critiqued for its imagery and lyrics referencing violence, drug trafficking, theft, and gang culture as viable options for class mobility. Haftbefehl's performance of masculinity is situated in financial gain and class mobility, as a means of traversing social codes about minorities. His Kurdish identity is an essential aspect of his performance, and it intersects with how he embodies his masculinity and how his music is received by the broader public. His "gangster outlaw" persona presents a different way of navigating being German and an outsider. His songs "Wieder am Block" and "CopKKKilla" among others depict power imbalances that persist for some racialized minorities. Haftbefehl shows violence and street codes for minority behavior to be ways to take back power.

Unlike Deluxe, Haftbefehl does not wish to fit in to white German society. This presents new options for minorities. "Das Bürgertum feierte ihn ab, aber von ihm kommt keine Regung, keine Anpassung, nix. Während ich mich noch um Assimilierung bemühte, schien ihm das alles total egal zu sein" (Der Standard) ["The middle class celebrated him, but he showed no reaction, no adaptation, nothing. While I was still trying to assimilate, he seemed to not care at all"]. Miriam Davoudvandi, a German music journalist who moved from Bucharest to Germany at the age of 6 with an Iranian father and a Romanian mother contrasts her experience of immigrating to Germany worrying about assimilating to a German way of life with Haftbefehl who is not concerned with adopting a "German

lifestyle”. Her article shows how minorities are regarded as “fit for Germany” only once they assimilate to German customs. Haftbefehl uses his performance to challenge assimilation. He does not change his music based on the German majority, rather he deliberately makes his music uncomfortable for the dominant, middle-class.

On the surface his music may seem solely about financial gain and material wealth, but there is a political dimension to his music, despite not being labeled “conscious” rap. His performance displays the multifaceted lives of those labeled as “criminal”. Furthermore, he shows how the label often stems from systemic inequity and racism, forcing some minorities into an unwanted life of crime.

Haftbefehl, ein Sohn kurdischer Gastarbeitereltern, der sich von “unten” nach “oben” gekämpft hat, benennt in seinen Texten immer wieder soziale Ungerechtigkeiten und die Multidimensionalität von Kriminalität, die nicht nur aus der einfachen Formel “illegal = unmoralisch” besteht. Er ist, wenn auch wider Willen, politisch höchst relevant (*Der Standard*).

Arrest Warrant, a son of Kurdish guest worker parents who fought his way from “bottom” to “top”, repeatedly mentions social injustices and the multidimensionality of crime in his texts, which does not only consist of the simple formula “illegal = immoral”. He is, even if unwillingly, extremely politically relevant (*Der Standard*).

Haftbefehl navigates outsidership on the one hand by carving out space for the “outlaws” within German society. He shows the multidimensionality of “outlaws” themselves, which raises questions about associating criminal/illegal behavior with immorality. For example, in his song Haftbefehl grapples with his life of crime and his Islamic faith. He feels he has no other choice than crime as a route to social and financial mobility “Die Schule abgebrochen, keiner gibt mir ein Job” (Dropped out of school, nobody gives me a job”. Haftbefehl depicts how a life of crime may feel like the only option to make money for minorities. He shows the life of crime to be glamorous, a route to fast money but not an easy choice due to his religious beliefs. He asks: “Oh lieber Gott?

Liebst du mich noch” [“Dear God, do you still love me]? This shows how Haftbefehl attempts to separate illegal behavior from his own morals.

Minorities attending German schooling may feel barred from fitting in and therefore find alternative routes to status in Germany. Miriam Davoudvandi feels Haftbefehl’s performance gives presence to minorities, which she searched for while in Gymnasium (high school). She writes: “Ich bin eine junge migrantische Frau und verbringe meine Jugend in der badenwürttembergischen Ödnis. Andere Schwarzköpfe auf dem Gymnasium? Kaum. In unserem Ort? Sowieso kaum Menschen. Anstatt zu lernen träume ich von meinem Umzug” [“I am a young migrant woman and spend my youth in the wasteland of Baden-Württemberg. Other people wearing headscarves in high school? Barely. In our town? Hardly any people anyway. Instead of studying, I dream about moving]. Reading Davoudvandi’s statement shows the importance of visibility for minority youth. Davoudvandi never saw representation of people like her while attending Gymnasium, let alone in her German village. Haftbefehl makes his presence known, it cannot be overlooked and therefore future generations see different representations of Germanness.

At the end of Haftbefehl’s “Wieder am Block” video, he walks past an advertisement for post-secondary school in Germany (2:19), reiterating how he “made it” without school. Haftbefehl shows how easily crime may be the only option left but it is a way for minorities to achieve social mobility. Although Haftbefehl’s music is multidimensional it is important to recognize how his music also further perpetuates damaging stereotypes about non-white masculinity as always threatening, which comes

with its own limitations. It makes it harder for the white German majority to perceive racialized minorities in other rolls.

While Deluxe's lyrics and performance move minority voices into the forefronts of society through an attempt at community building, Haftbefehl locates minority voices within the geosocial constructs of the "ghetto" or "hood". This is an important component for Haftbefehl's masculinity and gives him the "realness"/authenticity factor within hip hop.¹³ "The real is an illdefined expression referring to combined aspects of racial essentialism, spatial location, and a basic adherence to the principles and practices of hip-hop culture" (Forman XVIII). This component is policed within hip hop by fellow rappers, the commercial industry, and listeners.

Rappers must fit into dominant understandings of racialized masculinity. Performing aspects of "realness" is important and lets the listener know they have purchased an "authentic" hip hop product. Images of Black masculinity in U.S. hip hop have been confined to the ghetto/urban life. When male rappers in Germany use hip hop to refute white supremacist culture, essentializing images get translated. Through the depiction of housing projects/ low-income housing, listeners recognize Haftbefehl's music as hip hop and not metal, jazz, or country.

Haftbefehl depicts German housing projects as the only place where minorities can build community. He shows low-income housing to be the site of social transgressions. People in his videos live out of bounds of society's rules. Haftbefehl and his clique disregard the laws and acquire status by any means necessary. He portrays this space as a place where alternative rules reign supreme, and one must not abide by the laws set out for

¹³ Hip hop "realness" has been constructed as embodying street culture, often proclaiming and/or representing a specific area with which one identifies. "Sometimes, rappers' lyrics really do offer gripping tales of loss, sorrow, exploitation, rage, confinement, hopelessness, and despair about conditions that are denied in the larger society." (Rose 135) Additionally, realness can be performed through the depiction of monetary value in possessions such as cars and clothes, and the consumption of women as commodity. However, realness generally speaking "refers to talking openly about undesirable or hard to hear truths about urban street life" (Rose 134).

“ordinary citizens”. He shows lowincome housing areas to be a site of multiethnic community. Throughout his “Wieder am Block” video different ethnicities and cultures mix to form Haftbefehl’s crew. The city remains home to outsiders.¹⁴ It is there that Haftbefehl creates his own community. Once again racial minorities are unable to move out of the spatial location of “the ghetto”.

Discourse, Language, and the Urban Space

Discourse

Murray Forman’s *The Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Hip Hop* distinguishes between space and place. “The active process of making spatial sites significant – or the active transformation of space into place- involves the investment of subjective value and the attribution of meanings to components of the socially constructed environments” (Forman 28). Space is more general, whereas place is more defined and encrypted with meaning based on the daily happenings within that location. Language is a component of how space is conceptualized. Ways of speaking designate relationship to a place. In hip hop, the urban space becomes the site of social, political, public, and private spheres. Language makes these sites visible, which transforms urban space into a place where community comes to exist. Haftbefehl claims the derogatory term “Kanak” that is associated with the “lower class”. He changes the meaning of the term to encompass a wide range of multiethnic identities in Mainpark. He raps:

An alle Kurdis, Jugos und Shqiptars
Algerie, Marokk, Tunsî, Ägypter
Palestine, Syrian und Libanese

Türken, Deutsche, an alle Brüder

¹⁴ See a discussion about the urban space/ city for outsiders under George Mosse’s scholarship in 19th and 20th century Germany.

To all the Kurs, Algerians, Tunisians, Egyptians
Palestinians, Syrians, Turks, and Germans, To all the brothers.
A term that was once used to refer to a specifically “lower class” group is now used to refer to people who understand the struggles Haftbefehl raps about. In this way hip hop adds new meaning to old categories.

Hip hop is both global and local. Artists use the global experience of marginalization to transmit meaning within a hyper localized place, which references the distinct experiences of different communities. Specific words or references are used to designate belonging within the localized community. Haftbefehl’s song “Wieder am Block” depicts tales of the daily lives amongst him and his crew in the housing area of Mainpark. Haftbefehl raps: “Hier werden kilos gekocht” [Kilos are cooked here]. This line references the drug-dealing business that him and his crew take part in to solidify their financial status. The song presents the multiple sides of being labeled criminal as Haftbefehl raps about the psychological effects of selling drugs, something he sees as one of the few options for financial security. Selling drugs, has become a familiar narrative within hip hop throughout the globe. Haftbefehl positions himself within a global conversation that exposes power imbalances that create less options for minorities for financial wealth. In this way he is global, while still maintaining his relationship with the hyper localized Mainpark.

Haftbefehl’s “Wieder am Block” highlights the depression some minorities face when feeling they have no other options than selling drugs. The lyrics are an example of how discourse about the urban space constructs and re-defines the bounds of the social, political, public, and private spheres by showing the intersectional lives of the people that inhabit the urban space.

Ich bin wieder am Block, denk nicht ich liebe den Job

Umso größer die Sünden, desto tiefer das Loch
Suizid, keine Hoffnung, ich bin im siebten Stock
Die Schule abgebrochen, keiner gibt mir einen Job
Außer Heroin aus Laos oder Schiefer am Block (“Wieder am Block”)

I’m back on the block, don’t think I love the job
The greater the sins, the deeper the hole
Suicide, no hope, I’m on the seventh floor
Dropped out of school, no one gives me a job
Except heroin from Laos or roofer on the block (“Wieder am Block”)

As seen prior, in Deluxe’s “Weck mich Auf” he talks similarly about the future. He finds the future to have a bleak outlook for younger generations. Both Deluxe and Haftbefehl construct an Urban Space where opportunities emerge. Deluxe bridges the depression the youth feel (the private) with an opportunity to build community outside of the urban space (social/ and public). In contrast, Haftbefehl exposes his vulnerability by showing he too is depressed because of the limited options available for minorities in Mainpark. Below, Figure 12 shows Haftbefehl praying to Allah as he raps:

Oh lieber Gott, liebst du mich noch?
Ich verliere mich noch, vergibst mir zu oft Ich bin wieder am Block, hab Krisen im Kopf

Oh dear God, do you still love me?
I’m losing myself, you forgive me too often
I’m on the block again and have crises in my head



Figure 12 Haftbefehl praying

Haftbefehl seen praying to Allah is a political statement. It says Muslims are Germans too. This troubles Germanness as Haftbefehl embraces a German identity that incorporates Islam. The above image and lyrics bridge the private sphere with the political as Haftbefehl brings his relationship with Islam into mainstream Germany. In these ways both Deluxe and Haftbefehl use discourse to bridge multiple dimensions that exist within and outside of the urban spaces they occupy.

Haftbefehl's song shows gangster rap to contain vital political elements that often go overlooked because of the way gangster rap does not fit into the respectability politics of the status quo. Precisely this disregard for the status quo is what makes gangster rap political. Discourses about urban space differ between "conscious rap" and "gangster rap" with "conscious rap" attempting to build solidarity through the recognition of shared experiences and conditions of racialized oppression. Essentially, the *Gegend* (area), *Bezirk* (district), and block, become the sites where community building with the dominant society occurs. "The hood is the site where revolution occurs" (Forman 200). Though there is no German equivalent for "the hood," and differing systems of oppression in the U.S.

and Germany have produced distinct meanings around this term, *Gegend*, *Bezirk*, and block operate similarly within German hip hop to construct meaning about the urban space.

In short, discourse in hip hop used to talk about life within the urban space gives it localized meaning and carves out a literal place where minorities can find community. Discourse renders the social, political, public, and private spheres visible in *how* daily happenings are talked about, infusing the space with meaning not only from within, but also outside as fictional ideas are placed upon it.

Language

Language is about taking back power or re-negotiating power. It can carry many qualities that define insiders and outsiders. Within hip hop language about outsidership is reappropriated to fit the inhabitants of the local community in a way that distinguishes belonging and empowers identities within the local community.

Haftbefehl's reappropriation of the derogatory term "Kanack" to "Kanackiș" represents exactly how a racial slur to designate outsiders was shifted to take on new meaning within different localities.¹⁵ In their work, Judith Butler describes the effects of injurious speech, highlighting how words designate a subject. Words can be derogatory and create a power imbalance. At the same time injurious speech may enable the subject to renegotiate and take back power. "The injurious address may appear to fix and paralyze the one it hails, but it may also produce an unexpected and enabling response" (Butler 2). In Haftbefehl's case, he took the derogatory term "Kanak" and made it something

¹⁵ This connects with Judith Butler's ideas about excitable/injurious speech and the ways that language practices constitute and form the subject and may therefore be a way for subjects to take back power.

empowering, referring to belonging within a more localized community. The term “Kanak” references a specific minority group of people and in this way brings a particular group/subject into existence by the practice of naming it and self-referencing. Butler claims that language is what gives the body a social definition. Language practices are related to power and as we see below. “Kanak” became something cool, representing a particular status that is opposed to the white German mainstream’s classed definition. This reiterates Butler’s ideas about speech/language as a way to “talk back”

Aus der Beschimpfung “Kanake”, die sich hauptsächlich gegen sogenannte Gastarbeiter richtete, wurde eine stolze Selbstzuschreibung. Sein erstes Album war “Azzlack Stereotyp”, Azzlack steht im Slang für “asozialer Kanake”. Haftbefehl stilisierte diese Worte zu etwas Coolem. Auf einmal wollte jeder ein Azzlack sein. “Babo” wurde sogar zum Jugendwort des Jahres gekürt (Der Standard).

The insult “Kanake,” which was mainly aimed at so-called guest workers, became a proud self-attribution. His first album was “Azzlack Stereotype,” Azzlack is slang for “anti-social kanake.” Haftbefehl stylized these words into something cool. Suddenly everyone wanted to be an Azzlack. “Babo” was even named youth word of the year. (Der Standard)

Linguistic practices such as slang and self-referencing can be used as a local “code.” If one understands the “code,” then one belongs. Moreover, if one can converse in the code this signifies shared understanding about rules and principles within the local community. In this way, Kanak became a way to distinguish belonging that is opposed to the principles of the white German status quo.

The way people talk, and the slang people use is linked to class, race, ethnicity, and nationality. Language is tied to identity and self-representation. “The mother tongue (native language) is the language in which one signifies and becomes “I” (Yildiz 204). At the same time, it can be alienating, or as we see for German minorities, the idea of a

mother tongue becomes a way of distinguishing who is and is not German. Yildiz's scholarship highlights the importance of multilingual practices, and how "additional languages can project new locations onto a map" (Yildiz 204). One may use Turkish words while speaking German to convey and locate a distinctly Turkish-German identity within Germany. Using words from multiple languages conveys belonging both between and across cultures.

How one speaks not only conveys linguistic meaning but also social, cultural, and political understanding of personhood. One may use a dialect to represent belonging to a localized area, while signifying one's national identity. Slang may be used to signify group belonging/ status. Using standard, grammatically correct German creates assumptions about one's class status, education, and overall "Germanness." If someone speaks with an accent, uses slang, or makes grammar mistakes in their speech patterns this may spark assumptions about where someone is "really" from, or their socioeconomic status. "The notion of the mother tongue has been a vital element in the imagination and production of the homogenous nation-state" (Yildiz 7). Historically, language has been used to create boundaries about who belongs. "The fact that one must still pass a language test to legally reside in Germany shows how language remains tied to nationhood" (El Tayeb 2003, 2011). Language proficiency persists as a gatekeeper, dividing between insiders and outsiders. "The uniqueness and organic nature of language imagined as a 'mother tongue' lends its authority to an aesthetics of originality and authenticity" (Yildiz 9). "Authenticity" about *how* language ought to be spoken highlights the importance of language in performance as a strategy for challenging language as a performative act for racialized minorities.

Deluxe and Haftbefehl use language differently as they perform outsidership. Samy Deluxe's music is rapped in standard, grammatically correct German. People have complained Haftbehl's accent is hardly understandable because his music incorporates words and dialect from different languages. Haftbefehl's language is one element of his self-representation. "Knallharte Punchlines, eine extreme wiedererkennbare Stimme und vor allem eine nicht zu übersehende Präsenz lassen diesen Künstler aus der deutschen Rap-Szene herausstechen" (Web Archive: Echte Musik) ["Tough punchlines, an extremely recognizable voice and above all a presence that cannot be overlooked make this artist stand out from the German rap scene"]. He is not meant to be understood by all, nor does he want to be, further reiterating the ways language or "the code" implies a local, place-based sense of belonging and understanding.

Aber vielleicht sollte ihn auch nicht jeder verstehen. Man bekam das Gefühl, sein "Kanackiș" sei nur für diejenigen bestimmt, die diese Worte auch kannten, ohne sie im Internet nachzuschlagen: Die, die wissen, wissen. Das löste ein Zugehörigkeitsgefühl aus. (Der Standard)

But maybe not everyone should understand him. People got the feeling that Haftbefehl's word "Kanackiș" was only intended for those who knew such words without looking them up on the Internet: those who know, know. This sparked a sense of belonging. (Der Standard)

Haftbefehl's use of "Babo" (Boss), "Chab/ Chabo" (Boy), and "Chaya" (Girl), have roots in language practices of Sinti and Roma. Such words are not uncommon in rap repertoire and are representative of multilingual practices in the urban space, creating and defining a literal place for minorities through remaking and re-defining language and linguistic practices. Deluxe and Haftbefehl show how language, place, and space are all related. Language gives value to a place and is one representation of how multiple cultures and ethnicities have remade physical spaces to incorporate a range of identities.

Discourse and language about urban space provide nuances for understanding the outsider figure. Deluxe and Haftbefehl both depict the urban space as central for creating a

place for minorities, though they navigate this from vastly different angles. Deluxe views and depicts the urban space as the site of community building and multi-culturalism, and Haftbefehl utilizes it as the site for class mobility and acquirement of material wealth through street crime. Both ways the artists represent the urban space and the activities that take place therein shed light on how their performance of being outsiders is bridged with class and respectability politics.

Deluxe's performance is non-threatening because he attempts to look out for German youth. In contrast, Haftbefehl performs as the "gangster outlaw." His lyrics and video highlight the happenings within Mainpark, an area known to be "lower class." His video links socioeconomic status with respectability. Haftbefehl's portrayal of Mainpark depicts an area where inhabitants struggle to make ends meet if they do not engage in selling drugs or other street crime. This automatically situates the inhabitants of Mainpark as "outsiders." People who reside there are viewed and depicted as unable to maintain respectability because they are not "safe." Haftbefehl's performance shows how if one is of lower socio-economic status but becomes wealthy like Haftbefehl, one can traverse respectability codes altogether.

"Wieder am Block"

Haftbefehl's gang/crew/clique is an intentional "disidentification" with the German mainstream. Haftbefehl relies on street credibility to bolster his masculinity in hip hop. His street credibility presents as aggressive to German society as it has no regard for middle-class values. Haftbefehl's street credibility is seen in the ways his clique/crew partakes in drug dealing and a life of crime in his video. The video is at times violent, depicting "macho", aggressive gangsters who achieve success and live above the law. The video's constant depiction of such things shows an overall lack of concern for mainstream, law-

abiding Germans. In this way Haftbefehl disregards middle-class values such as behaving properly- he does not even abide by the law.

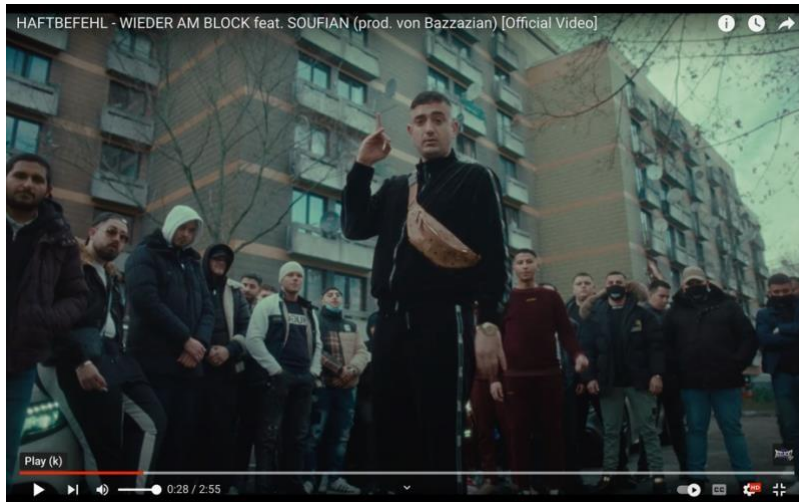


Figure 13 Deluxe and his clique

Above, Figure 13 shows Haftbefehl with a group of men, “his boys”. This depicts how Haftbefehl has his own clique and fits in there. The men in the video are all non- white and depicted as aggressive and criminal.

Engaging in criminal activity has allowed Haftbefehl and his clique to achieve financial and material wealth, which allows them to carve out space for themselves in Germany. They refute German mores and respectability by partaking in a life of crime. Below, Figure 14 shows Haftbefehl on top of the housing projects in a fur coat and sunglasses, showing how he has “made it to the top”. This represents status in his local community, amongst his clique. Additionally, it shows how he has defied social ranks in Germany, through financial prosperity. He now looks at down on Germany from his position above. The video equates social status with class. If one has enough money, their social position or status in society as an outsider becomes irrelevant.



Figure 14 Haftbefehl on top of skyscraper

Unlike Deluxe, Haftbefehl's masculinity is threatening because of his disregard for the law. The use of masks reaffirms and perpetuates non-white masculinity as something dangerous and exotic (Figure 15).



Figure 15 Masked man

Throughout the video faces are at times masked or completely covered. The masks reiterate how these men have never been fully seen or acknowledged in Germany and how these men are criminals. Due to their "invisibility status", they have turned to a life of street crime. The

viewer is blocked from viewing the men's faces and can only perceive them as mischievous criminals. This reflects the ways non-white masculinity is read within Germany. Additionally, a tension between the exotification of the foreign and a fascination with the unknown "life of crime" emerges. Street crime is depicted as the only means of achieving status for outsiders in Germany, a way to finally be seen in Germany. The men in the masks are noticed only once they are rendered mischievous criminals due to their masks.

Haftbefehl's "gangster outlaw/ hustler" persona creates a counter space for minorities who may feel they have no other options or opportunities than street crime as survival. Although his performance renders a limited definition of non-white masculinity as criminal it does not demonize and limit these minorities within German society. In contrast to Deluxe, Haftbefehl's form of masculinity is presented as aggressive. He shows that he is willing to break the law and traverse social codes. He shows little regard for fitting in. Due to this, he is perceived as a threat because he is not concerned with tolerance, assimilation, or integration. Haftbefehl says street life, with its lack of "proper German morality" can still be German. Haftbefehl's performance states, "I'm German this way" and he references his street credibility as a component of Germanness for him and others like him.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown a grey area to exist between conscious and gangster rap, where Haftbefehl's music exists simultaneously as both political and "gangster." Within the gangster rap sub-genre performances have been deemed inappropriate, aggressive, or hardcore. Due to this, gangster rap has been viewed as unpolitical. However, this chapter has highlighted how insight can be discovered in unexpected places. Gangster rap presents the hyper localized urban

space as not only a political site but also a site of memory for some German minorities who feel they may not relate to white German histories. The urban space is a political site where minorities enact culture through language practices and discourse about the space itself; this functions to question the embedded meanings attached to Germanness as a fixed identity, thereby destabilizing “authentic Germanness” as always white and always ethnic.

The urban space destabilizes authenticity attached to Germanness, while allowing artists to appear authentic within hip hop, which is essential for the portrayal of the outsider figure. “Rap performers often name themselves after the streets, neighborhoods or area codes where they grew up” (White 38). By locating their outsiderhood within Hamburg and Mainpark, Deluxe and Haftbefehl open up conversations about nationality, race, and masculinity as their outsider status is navigated within a space outside of the dominant culture. In such spaces new culture is learned, enacted, and transmitted in the form of language and behavior different from the dominant culture. At times this may challenge Germanness, and at other times it upholds existing ideas about Germanness through the language of multiculturalism and community building.

Artists in the conscious rap sub-genre, like Deluxe, shed light on existing problems within Germany but I have shown how his lyrics and performance maintain a status quo that is already in place. Deluxe presents a non-threatening masculinity. He presents a “playful misogyny,” that goes overlooked because he strives to be the “good outsider.” He never discusses street crime and lacks assertiveness, coming across as more passive in reaction to the racism around him. Deluxe highlights how race and masculinity are two aspects that are monitored when it comes to fitting into Germanness as it already exists. Deluxe’s Blackness is displayed as shocking to the white Germans within his video. Deluxe must therefore attempt to keep his masculinity in check, carefully playing the role

of the concerned outsider, observing the troubled white German youth, and maintaining the status quo of respectability. In this way he presents as non-threatening, despite having Black skin. Deluxe's ability to perform non-white masculinity in a non-threatening manner is essential as he navigates outsidership. Deluxe's performance highlights how respectable behavior must be upheld at all costs for one to be a part of the conversation surrounding multi-culturalism and community. Non-white masculinity poses a threat to the historically white masculine image of the German nation.

Historically, masculinity was a sign of progress, health, and vitality of the nation. "The ideal of manliness was basic both to self-definition of bourgeois society and to national ideology" (Mosse 23). Essentially, the embodiment of masculinity in 19th-century Germany was what held the nation together. "Manliness reinforced the division of labor which was a requisite to bourgeois society in economics, social, and sexual life" (Mosse 24). Masculinity helped define and police everyone's place in society, including outsiders. Furthermore, "masculinity was expected to stand both for unchanging values in a changing age and for the dynamic but orderly process of change itself, guided by an appropriate purpose" (Mosse 31). Deluxe keeps his masculinity palatable as he demonstrates his concern for upholding conventional German values in a time where German culture and the nation felt and still feel threatened by an increase of migration and non-ethnic Germans. This is similar to what Mosse shows above because Deluxe's masculinity and outsidership display no intent to change the Germanness that already exists. He depicts the process of multiculturalism and community building through assimilation and "Leitkultur" in Germany, an orderly process of change within Germany and the urban space, making it feel "safe for everyone."

In contrast, Haftbefehl does not seek to adapt to the status quo or become a part of it. Rather, he creates an identity that is completely new. Central to crafting new ways of being German is the role of Mainpark. Haftbefehl creates meaning within the space itself, forming his own localized community based on shared language practices and the daily happenings. Consumers of his music are unaware of what is performance and what is authentic for Aykut Anhan/ Haftbefehl, which allows him to come across as authentic within hip hop. Many rappers cultivate an image of “realness” through language, style of dress, and references in their lyrics to the daily challenges of urban ghetto life (real or imagined).

For listeners, there is no distinction between the rapper’s performance and the rapper him or herself. Hip hop audiences understand the characters in the rap song and the rapper themselves to be the exact same figure; this the performance of the lyrics becomes another opportunity for the rapper to “keep it real” (Hunter and Margaret 31).

As I have shown, hip hop artists are often not seen as authentic Germans and one way to navigate their outsidership is by being authentic within hip hop. As demonstrated throughout the chapter, Deluxe and Haftbefehl do this quite differently. Deluxe uses misogyny to bolster his masculinity within hip hop, making him appear authentic. Haftbefehl relies on his street credibility. Being perceived as outsiders is okay so long as they can uphold their “realness”/ authenticity within hip hop, the medium which allows them to navigate outsidership with regard to Germanness.

Haftbefehl’s street credibility is shown as loyalty to his stomping grounds and neighborhood. This loyalty to his community also physically locates him as a part of Germany, despite not adhering to proper Germanness. Additionally, his distinctly Turkish German accent heard throughout his songs calls into question the ways language and speaking proper German are classed and racialized. Folks with accents are often perceived as foreign but Haftbefehl shows that he too is German despite his performance of “street

activity” and “gangster culture.” Haftbefehl’s performance reiterates the ways in which the urban space has traditionally been viewed as a space for non-normative people/outsiders who diverge from the mainstream. “The city was home to outsiders – Jews, criminals, the insane, homosexuals, while the countryside was the home of the native on his soil” (Mosse 31). Beyond the 19th century, the 20th century also showed the city to be linked to Turkish guest workers. German ghettos have been largely attached to “guest-workers,” who held temporary work in Germany but were meant to go back to their native country. One area that has historically been classed and racialized is Kreuzberg, Berlin. This space has also been known as “Little Turkey.” A New York Times article from 1977 depicts Kreuzberg as a racialized site of “urban decay.”

WEST BERLIN—Block by block, the crumbling Kreuzberg neighborhood is becoming a ghetto of Turkish migrant workers and their families, a slum spreading along the concrete wall that slashes through Berlin like a scar,

In a debris-ridden playground on Waldemarstrasse these winter afternoons, dark-skinned women wearing kerchiefs against the cold load baby carriages with firewood that their sons and husbands have cut from the trees in the park. They use it to heat their crowded tenement apartments.

In the bars and pinball parlors of the neighborhood, teenage youths idle away the time in a futile cycle of unemployment and isolation.

The poverty and illiteracy of Anatolia have been transported into the urban decay of West Berlin’s oldest neighborhood (Whitney, NYT, March 4, 1977).

Above, the city/ urban space is equated with contagion transmitted by “unwanted others” who occupy Berlin. Outsiders are perceived as a threat to the respectability of law-abiding German citizens. Morality is invoked to distinguish between unwanted outsiders and German citizens. The scrutiny that Haftbefehl’s music has faced from the white German mainstream is exemplary of a similar pattern. His music disturbs respectability and therefore this creates a fear that his promotion of street life may “infect” Germany.

Though his lyrics and performance depict racialized masculinity as “always extreme” due to the portrayal of a life of crime and violence in his songs, Haftbefehl shows that for some communities this may be the only option. His performance imagines new identities for racialized minorities, showing how class status for some is linked to survival. Haftbefehl’s music does not demonize minorities for street crime involvement, which ultimately further ostracizes non-ethnic Germans. Rather, his music creates a counter-space for those who have felt ostracized within German society. Urban spaces like Kreuzberg above and Haftbefehl’s Mainpark have been sites of cultural transformation and reimagining new ways of being German, that comprise multiple cultures, ethnicities, and language practices.

Hip hop is a commercialized form of resistance due to the constraints many artists face from the music industry controlling and producing artist images. One might consider how minorities in German hip hop are employing a Blackness traditionally associated with U.S. hip hop. Scholars have asserted how this Blackness may operate to refute white-supremacist culture, asking how German minorities “appropriate [U.S.] hip hop models and make them applicable to their living conditions and use them for intervention into German discourses regarding national identity” (El Tayeb 466).

However, questions of cultural appropriation become central to this discussion as well. “Hip hop culture outside the U.S. has centered on Black gangster and thug motifs” (White 130). Deluxe does not employ a “gangster motif” nor does he depict the urban space as “ghetto,” which is a move that further opens possibilities within hip hop by detaching Black subjectivity from authenticity related to “ghetto culture,” or the performance of street credibility as seen with Haftbefehl.

For Deluxe, Hamburg is the location with which he identifies. His autobiography reiterates the importance of the urban space to hip hop. “Im Hip Hop ist eine Form von Lokalpatriotismus weit verbreitet, die fast schon an Städterassismus grenzt. Leute definieren sich darüber, woher sie kommen, und jeder behauptet, sein Heimatort wäre der beste” (Deluxe 76) [“A form of local patriotism that borders on city racism is widespread in hip hop. People define themselves by where they come from, and everyone claims their hometown is the best”]. Deluxe further asserts Hamburg is a vital component to his own identity.

Ich liebe keine Stadt so wie Hamburg. Warscheinlich habe ich eine derart Beziehung zu ihr, weil sie für mich immer der richtige Ort zur richtigen Zeit war. Ich habe hier einfach alles erlebt, was mich geprägt, was mich zu dem gemacht hat, der ich bin (Deluxe 69).

I love no city like Hamburg. I probably have such a relationship with her because she has always been the right place at the right time for me. I experienced everything here that shaped me, that made me who I am (Deluxe 69).

For minorities that do not feel an attachment to ethnic notions of Germanness, cities and local neighborhoods are a place where race, class, and Germanness become blurred. How one “ought” to act and behave is no longer carved out by white middle-class Germanness. For Deluxe and Haftbefehl, the urban space and hip hop are what allow them to navigate outsidersness. Their heterosexual masculinity allows them to fit within hip hop. However, some minority artists are not granted this same outlet, as queer and female hip hop artists have traditionally been excluded from the genre itself. This leaves one to question the double bind of authenticity that some minority artists are forced to navigate regarding Germanness and in hip hop.

CHAPTER III: HIP HOP AS A FEMINIST SPACE: SEXUALITY CALLS AUTHENTICITY INTO QUESTION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the double bind of authenticity that female performers find themselves in. The previous chapter showed how male rappers use hip hop as a medium to navigate outsiderhood within German society and expand definitions of Germanness. While male artists may go about this in different ways, their status within the hip hop community is not questioned. They always belong within the hip hop space because of the ways hip hop praises heterosexual masculinity. “Whereas Black men in hip hop can make a career based in sexual exploits/and or exploitation of women, women who make hip hop music are limited to a handful of archetypes such as the “ride or die bitch”, conscious queen, and the female or feminine thug” (Smalls 20). Minority female artists have a more difficult time using hip hop as a medium to carve out space for themselves within Germany because of the ways they are silenced within the genre. This limits their ability to use the genre to express their own racialization.

In hip hop, women’s bodies are categorized and often still defined through a male gaze. As Smalls shows, there are different tropes that women’s performances fit into, which are still narrowly defined. In Germany, the hip hop space is considered hyper masculine, creating an unwelcoming atmosphere for female artists. “Es ist problematisch zu denken: Sexismus und Rassismus gibt es nur in der Deutsch rap-szene. Es sind gesamt gesellschaftliche Probleme” (Şahin 53) [“It’s problematic to think that sexism and racism only exist in the German rap scene. These are problems in the whole society”]. Female subjectivity has been narrowly defined within hip hop, which is directly related to the ways Germanness and femininity have been constructed

according to gendered images of the German nation. In this chapter I consider the symbolic meaning created by female hip hop performers and how it contrasts with and challenges existing national symbols.

The Artists

This chapter introduces Leila Akinyi and Lady Bitch Ray (LBR), two German rappers whose bodies threaten a national identity that has been concentrated on preserving middle-class morality. Akinyi and LBR use their performances to disrupt Germanness rooted within white middle-class morality. The upholding of white respectability is what contributes to the sexualized exotification of Akinyi and LBR's performances. LBR, a self-described "Bitch", reappropriates this term and shows her sexuality to be something positive, a disregard for white supremacist, patriarchal structures that ultimately render her body pornographic. LBR centers her own pleasure, and this feels inappropriate or "trashy" for the white German majority. "Über Sex reden ist keinen Tabu unter Türkischen Frauen. Das funktioniert anders in der weiß deutschen Mehrheit" ("Germania", ZDF, 2018) ["Talking about Sex isn't a tabu amongst Turkish women. LBR mentions she believes this functions differently in the white German majority"]. LBR distinguishes between the white majority and Turkish women but ultimately shows how the white majority's rules set up boundaries for how Turkish women ought to behave.

Akinyi's "Nobody Nennt Mich Bitch" shows Akinyi bringing female pleasure into the spotlight as a form of embodied resistance that troubles racialized sexuality. Below, Image 16 and 17 show Akinyi displaying her body as she proclaims "Mein Body ist Königlich. Hab Respekt. Nur weil ich eine Frau bin, bin ich ständig unterschätzt. (Have respect my body is royal. Just because I'm a woman I'm always underestimated) While

doing this she asserts that being sexual does not make her a Bitch (a common reference to describe women within hip hop).

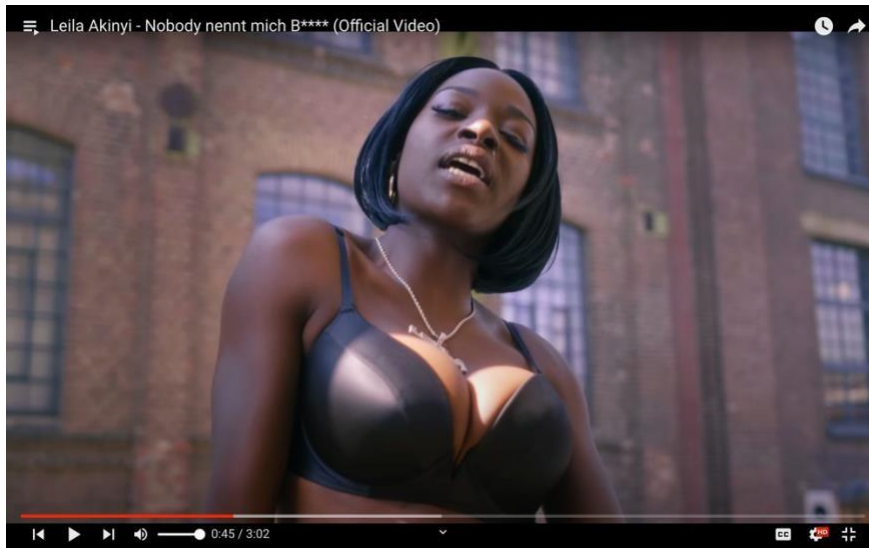


Figure 16 Akinyi in bra

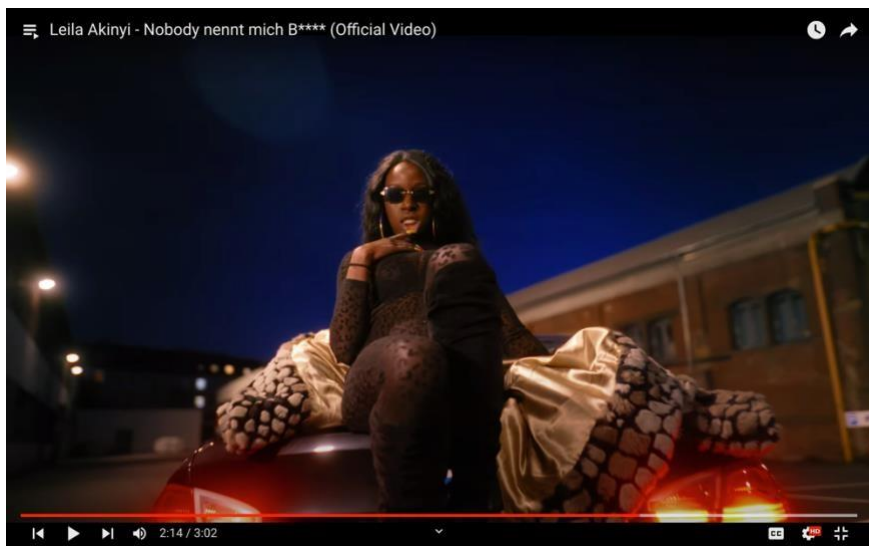


Figure 17 Akinyi on car

Germanness still rests on gendered understandings of nationality, and this intersects with sexualized racism today. Through the artists' depictions of their own sexualization and racialization, conclusions can be drawn about how the nation is construed through gender and sexuality. Akinyi has stated how it remains important for her to demonstrate

how minorities experience other things outside of racism. Akinyi shows pleasure to be a form of liberation. Her performance threatens German morality because it troubles respectability that has been upheld through national symbols.

Female artists are enacting cultural labor as they work to reimagine German identity through hip hop performance. “Problematic tropes that persist within hip hop (pimp, gangsta, vixen etc.) are conservative and restricted modalities of non-white/ Black possibility codified into popular imagery” (Smalls 134). I am interested in the ways female artists are navigating the double- bind of authenticity they exist in. This unique position offers female artists a particular opening for breaking codes about respectable femininity. Lady Bitch Ray and Leila Akinyi have found ways that this “double bind of authenticity” works to their advantage. Their unique positions help them navigate Germanness through disidentificatory performance in hip hop and regarding the white German status quo. They both highlight the ways “otherness” appears within Germany. As Munoz’s scholarship asserts, performance can be used for world making, ultimately reconfiguring restrictive identities for minorities, and opening new possibilities.

Akinyi and LBR use the dominant norms to reconstruct how we should read women’s sexuality. Through performance, they expose the norms about deviousness regarding women’s bodies. Both artists redefine how their bodies ought to be read, as they make the rules outside of patriarchy. LBR uses a phallus in her music video to reposition the power of the symbol. In this way she creates new definitions for the phallus outside of the dominant norms that attach this symbol to masculinity while limiting female sexuality.

The artist’s performances highlight the ways “otherness” is essentialized to uphold the status quo. German identity requires an “other” to determine the bounds of what is

considered authentic German. Performance is that which reflects the status quo but also reshapes it. “The performance paradigm illuminates the mirroring that occurs in culture, the tension between stabilizing cultural forces (tradition), and the shifting, ever-evolving, aspects of culture that provide sites for social reflection, transformation, and critique” (Johnson 7). LBR and Akinyi open particular conversations surrounding sexualized racism, feminism, and national identity. In this chapter I show how their performances render visible the traditions that make their work appear problematic, disempowered, and obscene.

Hip Hop as a Space for Social Change

Fatima El-Tayeb’s scholarship maintains that in present-day Germany, traditional forms of organizing, such as grassroots feminist activism (as once seen with the publication of *Farbe Bekennen/ Showing Our Colors*) and unionizing, are no longer working for minorities. Hip hop is now the space where organizing and political activism occurs for ethnic minorities. Due to the mass consumption and popularization of the genre within Germany, some minority voices are amplified within Germany and may feel united as they represent their specific city/ community/ neighborhood. Still other minorities are left out of this “united hip hop front”, as their identity does not appear within hip hop as authentic. Lady Bitch Ray and Leila Akinyi open up hip hop as a feminist space, extending the work once done by Lorde, Ayim, Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz in *Farbe Bekennen* in 1986. “Within the language of hip hop lie not only the expression of the Black experience but also the seeds of action and activism, which developed during the 1980s into the subgenre of political hip hop” (Merritt 378). Hip hop feminist scholar Joan Morgan

reiterates the ways hip hop releases feminism from the academy and serves as a healing medium for minorities to articulate lived experience.

If feminism intends to have any relevance in the lives of the majority of black women, if it intends to move past theory and become functional it has to rescue itself from the ivory towers of academia. A functional game plan for us, one that is going to be as helpful to Shequanna on 142nd as it is to Samantha at Sarah Lawrence, has to recognize hip-hop's ability to articulate the pain our community is in and use that knowledge to create a redemptive, healing space (Morgan 76).

El Tayeb and Merritt have both highlighted the ways hip-hop might be exactly such a transformative space for Germans of color, where they can find expression for their struggles within German society. "Hip hop tracks create space for MCs to describe not only their own understanding of their identities but also the presence of racism and xenophobia" (Merritt 378). LBR represents exactly what Joan Morgan was advocating for 25 years ago in her seminal *When the Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: A Hip Hop Feminist Breaks it Down*. LBR is a rap artist, but Reyhan Sahin is the Turkish-German woman/ scholar behind the persona of LBR. Together LBR and Sahin disrupt the location of feminism, moving it from the academy to the streets of Germany. "Migrant hip hop is a cover term for narratives of migration and ethnicity, including the migration experience, testimonies of discrimination, exclusion, and racist aggression in Germany" (Terkourafi 22). As much as hip hop is a voice for the "outsider", it has its own requirements for who can use the medium.

Embodiment

Ratchetness and Embodied Resistance

Both artists invite conversations surrounding sexualized racism, feminism, and national identity. Nicki Lane's work *The Black Queer Work of Ratchet: Race, Gender, and the (Anti) Politics of Respectability* offers a lens for looking at the ways sexualized racism is linked with class and

respectability. Lane's work considers the connection between class politics, racialized sexuality, and gender, which becomes essential for looking at the ways LBR and Akinyi carve out space for themselves. Lane's work raises questions about how behavior of non-white people is carefully policed with regards to a white status quo and shows the concept of "ratchetness" to be an intentional disregard for upholding and adhering to (always essentializing) white standards for racialized subjects. By performing aspects of their own racialization and sexualization, the artists expose the mainstream standards for women of color in Germany, there are persisting beliefs about *how* LBR and Akinyi should act as racialized women in Germany. Their performances and lyrics are a deliberate political move to highlight the ways Germanness codes non-white womanhood. Through explicit sexual imagery, LBR disregards adhering to German properness, showing how due to her non-whiteness she will always also be sexualized in a disempowering way. For example, LBR shows how her attempt at making feminist protest music was understood as something pornographic and not taken seriously.

Ich selbst kann von slutshaming und gesellschaftlicher Diffamierung ein Lied singen: Als ich ab 2007 durch meine Musik ein breiteren Mass in Deutschland bekannt wurde, wurde ich zunächst auf das pornografische reduziert. Mein feministischer Protest wurde obendrein von vielen ins Lächliche gezogen (LBR Instagram).

I myself can sing a song about slut-shaming and social defamation but when I became known to a wider audience in Germany through my music in 2007, I was initially reduced to pornography. On top of that, my feminist protest was ridiculed by many (LBR Instagram).

She uses the same sexualized language male rappers do. However, she is perceived as inappropriate and "slutty". Though Lane's work on "ratchetness" stems from a U.S. context, the questions it raises about sexualized racism are applicable in the German context.¹⁶

¹⁶ It is imperative to see German hip hop as developing alongside U.S. hip hop and therefore Lane's work posing questions about racialized sexuality that may go overlooked if one fails to see the connection between U.S. and German/ global hip hop. LBR has referenced the major influence of artist's like Lil'Kim on her own performance. In the interview *Riot Grrrls, Bitchsm, and Pussy Power* with both Dr. Reyhan Sahin and her alter ego LBR, Sahin cites the importance of U.S. hip hop to her performances. "Way back my biggest influences

People were unable to see anything beyond LBR's overtly sexual performance, though she was trying to make feminist music. Above, we see "authenticity" at play. LBR's body is essentialized and read as hyper-sexual. This limits possibilities for how her performance can be read. She is contained by sexualization, and this becomes an inescapable aspect even as she tries to escape it and make feminist music. By showing the inescapability of sexualization, she simultaneously exposes the way class and sexuality are configured. One performs but cannot escape the ways performance is understood politically, socially, and culturally. "Racial performativity informs the process by which we invest bodies with social meaning" (Johnson 9).

As a Turkish-German minority LBR's performance is understood in terms of signifiers which the German majority understands as "authentic" for her body. Thus, her performance was read as pornographic and not as an empowered feminist. She uses irony to show how even if she claims she is a feminist, her body will always be sexualized and read as deviant. In the case above, LBR shows how the German majority was incapable of seeing her as anything but "sexualized, exotic, Turkish woman". Her body and appearance were the focus, rather than her actions. This means that if she wears revealing clothing yet raps against the patriarchy, the focus will be put on *how* her body looks.

According to Lane, ratchetness is political, a purposeful disregard of assimilating to a particular way of life. "To be Black and to be ratchet, on purpose, means that you ascribe no value to assimilation into the American 'way of life'. "Ratchetness functions to take back power, reappropriate language and words, and it challenges the boundaries of

were Lil'Kim , Missy Elliot, MC Lyte, and Salt N' Pepa. I wanna say American hip hop had a big influence on me" (LBR 123) .

respectability” (Lane 5). LBR highlights the ways she has reclaimed Bitch to be something positive.

Für mich ist eine deutsche türkische Frau die sich patriarchalischen Strukturen nicht unterordnen will, das ist für mich ‘ne Bitch im positive Sinne. Also ich bin so was (LBR Germania ZDF Interview).

For me, a German Turkish woman who doesn’t want to submit to patriarchal structures is a bitch in a positive sense. So I’m something like that. (LBR Germania ZDF Interview)

LBR’s reappropriation of the term “Bitch” is a power move that exposes meaning. She claims the term “Bitch” for herself and redefines it as someone who deliberately goes against patriarchal structures. Lane’s ratchetness is directly connected to disidentification, as ratchetness is a deliberate disregard for assimilating to dominant understandings for minority behavior. Like disidentification, ratchetness exposes beliefs about performativity and how minorities should behave. Performance becomes a strategy which is used to expose the status quo’s reception of minorities, while simultaneously producing new meanings.

The term “ratchet” stems from U.S. hip hop in the 2000s in reference to a specific subgenre of hip hop known as ‘trap’. “It was simply a subgenre of primarily southern hip-hop that often referenced drug dealing, stripping, explicit sexual acts, public drunkenness and behavior deemed outside the notions of respectability” (Lane 3). It is a way of pushing against ideas surrounding properness and how one “ought” to behave. “The term ratchet associated Blackness with badness, which went against the established (read: white) norms for Black folk” (Lane 2). Though ratchetness has its roots within American discourses surrounding race, one might consider the ways white norms are used to read both LBR and Akinyi’s performances and how this is directly related to authenticity. Their racialized bodies intersect with their sexuality, which determines how their feminist music is perceived by the German majority.

The concept of authenticity is problematic as it essentializes bodies based on markers that are contextualized within sociality. “Authenticity” relies on signifiers which the dominant society uses to distinguish between insiders and outsiders. National symbols, such as the figure of Germania, uphold beliefs about racial authenticity. Akinyi and LBR “disidentify” with the signifiers that expose them as outsiders. In doing so, they reappropriate signifiers and reconfigure how their body should be read.

In performance, the role of the audience or viewer is an integral aspect. “Performance becomes a vehicle through which the other is seen and not seen. The voyeur’s “zoom lens” is predicated on his or her own power and privilege” (Johnson 7). Johnson’s scholarship raises questions about the relationship between authenticity, racialization, and the power to look or observe. What we come to understand as authentic is due to the ways privilege works to allow an observer and an object to look at. Signifiers such as race, clothing, and language work in combination, allowing the observer to distinguish an authentic and imposter. Signifiers which come to stand in for “authenticity” are directly related to embodiment. The artists in this chapter provide nuanced understandings of embodied nationalism when performances are read against national symbols.

Germania and Embodied Resistance

The image of Germania has served to construct ideas about German womanhood while policing the boundaries of national identity. The figure embodied the German nation and a link between race and sexuality began to emerge. The symbol has been changed for nationalistic purposes as Germania has embodied different values of the nation such as morality and intelligence. “In the 19th century anatomy and physiology were linked with intelligence and morality” (Herminghouse and Mueller 7). This served to affirm the racial

superiority of white bodies. Thus, it was important to depict Germania as emotionally and physically strong. She has also personified the ways women “ought” to behave. Below, figure 18 shows a robust, blonde- reddish haired, woman wearing armor with a stoic, emotionless expression.



Figure 18 Germania

Patricia Herminghouse and Magda Mueller’s *Gender and Germanness* provide a historical account of the development of this national symbol.

The allegorical Germania of art, music, and poetry has Latin roots in Tacitus’s Germania (A.D. 98). The reception of his account of the tribes living on the other side of the Limes, “the wall” or Roman times that marked the border along the Rhine of Tacitus’s Germania, led to a long tradition of art and literature depicting Germania and Arminius. Later, Germania as mother of Germany was represented as one of twelve daughters of Europe (Herminghouse and Mueller 2).

Germania has been tied to geographical space and the defining of borders. Her race, gender, and sexuality were the components that helped define the physical and intellectual parameters of the emerging German nation in 1871. “In the absence of a political nation, the idea of a cultural nation took on increasing importance in the 19th century” (Herminghouse and Mueller 3). Below, the Niederwald monument of Germania (Figure 19) by Johannes Schilling, has become one of the more famous representations of Germania during the time of national unification in 1971. Germania is depicted holding a sword and crown, her body positioned to uphold and protect the emerging German nation.

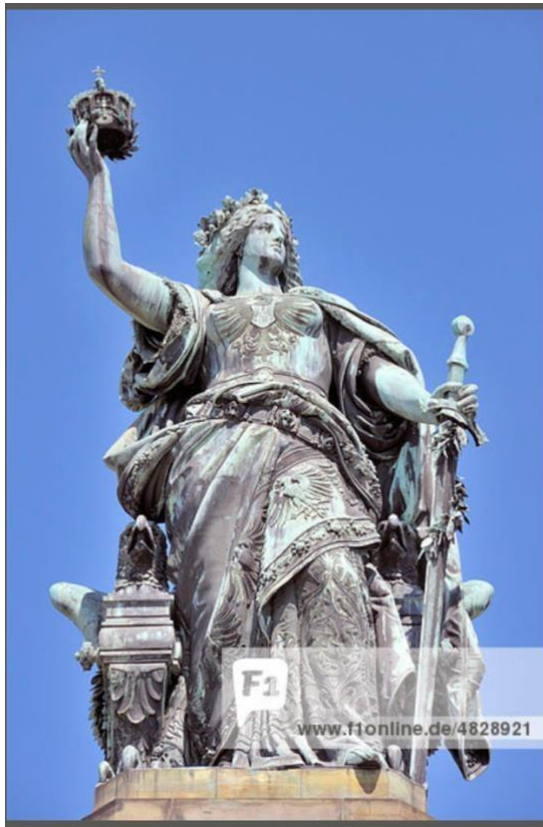


Figure 19 Germania statue

In the 20th century National Socialism again re-invented Germania as the mother of the German nation. Germania as the guarantor of the German nation through the production of offspring in the 19th and 20th centuries raises questions about racialized sexuality that proliferates

in visual culture today. Germania's whiteness symbolized the self-representation of the German nation and therefore a necessary component of her sexuality. This meant that white German women who produced children had the power to literally define the nation through the creation of children. The biological capacity to guarantee a white German nation was power but this rested on a necessary sexuality. This contrasted with motherhood, which represented the upholding of norms and morality. White German women were the protectors of the German nation as they could ensure its future. Women had two "powers" which were directly related: motherhood and sexuality. Motherhood kept women's sexuality in check, which ensured that women's other power (sexuality) did not get out of control and threaten the morality of the nation.

National symbols of the nation remained gendered in the 19th and 20th century. "Within the discourse of unification, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was often caricatured with female images, characterized by naiveté, dependency, and weakness, whereas the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was depicted as strong, male, and aggressive" (Herminghouse and Mueller 2). Gendered understandings of the nation have been important within Germany and point to the ways nationalism is an embodied experience. "Women's bodies have long been portrayed as mothers of the emerging nation, which points to the ways embodied nationalism can be broken up by minorities in an act of embodied resistance" (Bobel and Kwan 81). Women in hip hop use visual culture to renegotiate the power in sexuality detached from motherhood. In this chapter women's pleasure is seen as freedom and liberation and this is embodied through sexualized imagery. Through performance, the artists attempt to reposition perceptions of their

sexuality against the dominant culture's understanding of "exotic women". However, the artists also show how difficult it is to be viewed as anything else but sexual.

The ways gender has been connected to the emerging German nation and strictly policed according to morality continues to inform a modern respectability politics imposed on minorities today. George Mosse's work *Nationalism and Sexuality* analyzes the history of sexuality regarding respectability politics and nationalism in Germany. Mosse shows how Germanness has been rooted in strict gendered definitions of whiteness and sexuality. "Concepts of sexuality haunted bourgeois society and nationalism, deflected from the physical onto an ideal stereotype of male and female beauty" (Mosse 4). Mosse considers how sexuality functions in society and the role of nationalism in maintaining bourgeois respectability. This was defined by having a "proper" attitude towards sexuality, recognizing that its purpose was connected to developing the nation. Moreover, it was important that those adhering to bourgeois respectability accepted the norms. This meant adhering to strict gender roles for men and women.

Manliness was important and masculinity was upheld to reinforce the idea of a strong German nation. This required that women recognized their role in the production process of the nation. Bourgeois respectability was reflected in manners, morals, and sexual attitudes. In Germany, it was important to protect middle-class morality. This meant that the family unit was to be upheld and reflect the image of the nation. Heterosexuality was reflected as the norm of the nation. "The national spirit was embodied in the family" (Mosse 21). Middle-class morality was protected through kinship, which ensured a racialized understanding of sexuality that distinguished between insiders and outsiders. "The ideal of classical beauty was co-opted by nationalism" (Mosse 16). One can see how

national symbols served to establish middle class morality through race, gender, and sexuality. The body became a site of enacting nationalism, through respecting the norms. Racialized bodies disrupted the idea of the German nation that symbols such as Germania upheld. These people were therefore understood as immoral outsiders that posed a threat to the nation.

The importance of morality in German society dates to the French Revolution. “In Germany, the national consciousness sparked by the wars of liberation against Napoleon were linked to an improvement of morals” (Mosse 8). Additionally, “romanticism, through medieval imagery, reinforced the onslaught of respectability” (Mosse 9). In the 19th century one begins to see respectability linked to nationalism. “The distinction between normality and abnormality was basic to modern respectability. It provided the mechanism that enforced control and ensured security” (Mosse 11). If someone could uphold German respectability they were considered “normal”. This relied on whiteness (race), heterosexuality (sexuality), and middle class (class). The visual representation of the nation was important and rooted in Greek, classical beauty for men and women. “Masculinity provided the norm for society” (Mosse 17).

Masculinity and whiteness were both constructed as normal as the nation attempted to frame its national identity within the politics of respectability. Health and vitality were equated with manliness. “Masculinity was expected to stand both for unchanging values in a changing age and for the dynamic but orderly process of change itself, guided by an appropriate purpose” (Mosse 31). Just as important was the upholding of respectable femininity. “Women were seen as sedate rather than dynamic. They stood for immutability rather than progress, providing the backdrop against which men determined the fate of nations” (Mosse 23). This meant that women

were viewed as “respectable” so long as they remained in their role as wives and mothers. By understanding their role in the patriarchal family unit, women showed that they supported the nation. “Nationalism and respectability assigned everyone his place in life, man and woman, normal and abnormal, native and foreigner. Any confusion between categories threatened chaos and loss of control” (Mosse, 17). Therefore, racialized bodies that did not match the image of Germanness posed a threat to the German nation. Racialized bodies challenge a German identity constructed based on sexualized racism.

Akinyi and LBR confront how racialized female minorities are exotified in a way that makes sexuality inseparable from race. The artists show this to be a problem because it occurs automatically. Akinyi and LBR are automatically sexualized through patriarchal power structures that make their bodies hypervisible when read against white femininity. In their performances they choose sexuality as a strategy to push back against the patriarchal structures that police their bodies. This deliberate choice renegotiates the ways they are “automatically” sexualized, by making this process visible. Like the national symbol of Germania, their bodies are deviant when they are sexual. However, in contrast to Germania, Akinyi and LBR’s bodies are not idealized through motherhood. They threaten the ethnic identity of the German nation.

My dissertation has shown how an ethnic understanding of the German nation persists today. This means that, racialized female minority’s bodies are automatically sexualized because they are not viewed within the parameters of German motherhood; a component of ethnicization. While the image of Germania is not an image that many white German women feel connected to today, Germania shows how sexualized racism still maintains an ethnicized German nation.

Germany’s public broadcast network ZDF offers a short YouTube series “Germania”, which asks minority Germans who identify with multiple cultures, “Was ist

deutsche Identität” [“What is German identity”]? In Sahin’s/LBR’s interview she claimed, “Ich bin hundert prozent Türkisch und hundert Prozent Deutsch” [“I am a hundred percent Turkish and a hundred percent German”) Below, Figure 20 shows LBR/Sahin as the new face of Germania, representing how racialized “others” challenge ideas about Germanness. The image calls into question Germany’s self-representation as a white nation.



Figure 20 Lady Bitch Ray

LBR, a self-identified “Bitch” challenges notions of “ideal womanhood” located within and between Turkish and German culture. She highlights how Germanness today looks much different than the images of Germania. Figure E shows the fusion of identities that Sahin embodies. She is an academic/ doctor/ theorist, working within the academy, while at the same time a rapper within the German hip hop scene. She feels both Turkish and German and through her performance, actualizes this multi-faceted identity so that minorities can identify as 100% of everything they *feel* they are. These mixed identities show the fluidity of identity itself, a feeling that may be uncomfortable for a German nation whose self-representation is still rooted in whiteness. LBR shows identity to be a

feeling within oneself, which is what allows her to be 100% Turkish and German, academic and rapper. By embodying numerous, often conflicting identities LBR highlights a freedom within these tensions that refute dominant identity categories. She says “Meine Eltern sind Kanaken, genau so wie ich” (ZDF Germania Interview). By claiming such terms as “Bitch” or “Kanak” she redefines these offensive words. She imbibes them with new meaning that is attached to the identities she feels rather than how she is labeled.

Leila Akinyi too shifts the picture of Germania and who qualifies as German. Akinyi proclaims “Nobody nennt mich Bitch/ Nobody calls me a Bitch”. Akinyi not only voices the importance of her own pleasure, but she also challenges *who* decides what is deemed inappropriate. In the last scene of Akinyi’s video “Nobody Nennt Mich Bitch” a man is shown wearing a brown bag over his head labeled “Bitch”. This is the only time a man or a white person appears in the video (Figure 21). Akinyi uses this image as a critique of the white patriarchal norms that label her inappropriate, a direct reappropriation of the term “Bitch” to the audience that may refer to her in this way. Unlike LBR, she refutes this word as a descriptor for women. In doing so she depicts racialized minorities as not only subjects who experience racism but also joy and hope. Furthermore, she detaches her sexuality from the term “Bitch”, depicting pleasure as liberation as she frees herself from the term.



Figure 21 Man with bag over head

Strategies for Navigating the Double-Bind of Authenticity

Dr. Reyhan Sahin and Lady Bitch Ray: The Unreliability of Signifiers

Reyhan Sahin, who I have also introduced above as Lady Bitch Ray and Doctor Bitch Ray occupies many identities; also, a linguist, and scholar. Sahin was born in Bremen, West Germany and is the daughter of Turkish immigrants. Before she was born, her parents immigrated to Germany as part of the guest worker generation. “Meine Eltern gehören zu den Gastarbeiter Generation. Sie waren also ländlich geprägt und mehr patriarchalisch.” (My parents belong to the guestworker generation. They were more rural and more patriarchal) (Germania Interview)

Turkishness still remains tied to class in Germany due to the 1960s Gastarbeiter program (guest worker program). Turkish workers were recruited to work in German factories to do work considered “lower class”. The minimal wages that Turkish workers received ensured little chance of class mobility in Germany. Moreover, it was assumed that Turkish workers would eventually return to Turkey.

On the 30 October 1961, a treaty called Recruitment and Procurement of Foreign Workers was signed between the Turkish Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. Semi-skilled Turkish laborers were recruited by German state institutions to work in German factories. These workers were referred to as Gastarbeiter, thereby emphasizing their temporariness in the new country. (Herbert 1990 quoted in Yurdakul)

Sahin grew up in the working-class neighborhood of Gröpelingen. She completed her PhD in German literature and linguistics, with a focus on semiotics. Her book, *Die Beduetung des Muslimischen Kopftuchs* is a semiotic study of the Hijab in Germany.

Sahin's work offers a complex intervention into racist and sexist discourses in Germany. It is precisely the fact that she is both activist/performer and an academic/ theorist that garners attention but also creates the most confusion and tension in her reception (Riot Gurrlls Interview 118).

The tension in her presentation as both scholar and rapper is what LBR uses to navigate the double-bind of authenticity she faces. Moreover, LBR/ Sahin uses performance to offer a lens of viewing how class operates in the spaces she is in: hip hop and the academy. Her identities present as conflicting and puzzling, highlighting the very instability and fluidity of fixed identity itself. "Her insistence that the academic and the performative, theory and praxis, are entangled rather than mutually exclusive offers new ways to think about feminist theory and praxis, and feminist and anti-racist politics in the 21st century." (Riot Gurl Interview 118) Sahin's position as rapper and scholar intersect and allow her to reclaim female subjectivity and feminism within hip hop, while also re-defining ideas about which bodies and which classes get to perform empowered sexuality. She mixes German and Turkish traditions to do this.

LBR's performance is read along with her class, which makes her performance "trashy" for some. Her body is automatically sexualized and her race influences how this happens. If she had white skin, she may be understood as an empowered feminist. However, her Turkish appearance is racialized and therefore her feminist protest attempt

seems inappropriate because it does not fit German norms for how Turkish women ought to behave. Additionally, religion plays a role in perceptions of LBR's performance. Turkish-Germans are automatically read as Muslim, and as LBR discusses in her interview, she had a traditional "conservative Islamic upbringing". The association with Turkish and Islam means that the dominant German society reads Muslim women as oppressed rather than as feminist. However, LBR's performance refutes this as she proclaims herself to be a "Bitch" and uses overtly sexualized content to refute the heteropatriarchy. This falls out of bounds for German's perceptions of Muslim women.

LBR's "Bitchanel" and "Die Aufklärung" videos obscure authenticity as they poke fun at the hip hop genre and the culturally encoded signifiers the audience relies on to read a performance as "authentic". In doing so LBR shows how authenticity is about reading the performative act. She uses performance to show a mix of signifiers that confuse authenticity and performativity, making it hard for the viewer to place her identity. LBR's intersecting identities consist of many oppositions that create slippage in how to categorize her.

In LBR's video for her song "Die Aufklärung" (The Enlightenment) she provides an explanation of pleasurable sex. It is important to note the double meaning of "Die Aufklärung": on the one hand this refers to European Enlightenment, on the other hand German dictionaries define "Aufklärung" as sex education. This clever wordplay is the entry point into LBR's performance. It represents LBR taking back the power to "enlighten" the patriarchy about women's sexual pleasure as power.

The title of the song “Die Aufklärung” is reminiscent of 18th-century philosopher Immanuel Kant’s influential text “Was ist Aufklärung?”, also known as “Die Aufklärung”, which influenced the German Enlightenment movement stating:

Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit. Unmündigkeit ist das Unvermögen, sich seines Verstandes ohne Leitung eines anderen zu bedienen. Selbstverschuldet ist diese Unmündigkeit... Habe Mut, die deines eigenen Verstandes zu bedienen! (Kant, Was ist Aufklärung?)

Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-inflicted immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one’s understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is self-inflicted... Have the courage to use your own mind! (Kant, What is Enlightenment?)

In LBR’s video she puts pleasure at the forefront, showing sexuality to be about freedom. As a scholar Sahin has discussed how female artists who use sexuality in their performances are automatically labeled deviant. LBR sees an opening within her performances to position pleasure as a form of freedom from misogyny that restricts women’s bodies. She re-defines how we should read female sexuality. Her performance positions women’s true liberation as freedom in pleasure.

Within LBR’s “Die Aufklärung” there is one masculine presenting body present in the entirety of the video, but the face of this person is omitted to reiterate the detachment of the phallus from masculine subjects. The rest of the video shows LBR simulating pleasurable sex with another woman and dancing for an audience. She raps about her sexual desires and in doing so moves herself into the conversation about women’s bodies and sexuality, subverting the “macho culture” within hip hop, which objectifies women’s bodies. On the surface the video appears to be solely about LBR’s views on pleasurable sex. LBR performs with phallic objects (Figure 22), defining what she understands as pleasurable sex. The use of the phallus throughout the video is essential to LBR’s performance because she objectifies this symbol while detaching it from masculinity and

the male body. LBR turns the phallus into an object for pleasure and nothing more. She herself performs with the phallic object attached to her own body. The object allows LBR to occupy the familiar position that men in hip hop maintain as they objectify women and the parts of their bodies. In this performance LBR uses the phallus as signifier for patriarchy. However, when viewed on LBR's body, patriarchal masculinity is called into question. A woman's body now claims the phallus as object and reappropriates the ways the phallus is necessary for the embodiment of patriarchal masculinity. With the phallus attached to her body, LBR opens possibilities for how we read masculinity and the symbols that determine *who* has the power to objectify.

As LBR has attempted to make feminist music, her own body has often been objectified and due to this, been viewed as "pornographic". By making the phallus into an object of her pleasure she tries to expose the process of objectification. LBR maintains that she and Bitches like her oversee their own pleasure. She states "Ficken will gelernt sein" (Fucking needs practice/ needs to be learned). Her performance provides "enlightenment" about pleasurable sex.



Figure 22 LBR with sex toy

Throughout the song she uses sexualized language about women's bodies. She reappropriates the same language male rappers use in hip hop to talk about women. She uses this language to describe how she would like to have sex. She raps "Leute wollen wissen wie man eine Bitch fickt huh?" (People want to know how to fuck a Bitch huh?). LBR reappropriates Bitch to be something positive for her and literally wears this identity throughout the video. Below (Figure 23) shows LBR with the emblem "I'm a Bitch" sewn onto her outfit. She uses her self-proclaimed Bitch status to subvert the ways hip hop lays claims to women's bodies through language. Additionally, throughout her videos she inserts "vagina imagery", in the way the phallus and masculinity are privileged within patriarchy. Figures 22, 23, and 24 demonstrate this with "Vagina Institute" and "Al-Vagina" (written in English and Arabic), additionally her record label is "Vagina Style Records".



Figure 23 LBR and masked woman



Figure 24 Vagina Style Records

In her 2023 Interview at Fotomuseum Winterthur, Sahin discussed two important aspects of her art, which help to contextualize what the goal of LBR's performance is. Sahin stated how her art seeks to exaggerate visual content; it is what she terms "sexplicit". Through language and body she seeks to provoke, stating that "Es ist schwierig für Frauen

gesellschaftlich als Künstlerin anerkannt zu sein.” (It’s hard as a woman to be recognized as an artist in society) Sahin sees this especially within the German rap scene but also within German society and she attributes this to how class and power are related to what is considered art. She distinguishes between the elite art scene in museums or galleries versus what she calls street art (where hip hop is categorized). In both spheres Sahin shows how it is hard for women to talk about sexuality. Through her performance she shows that when women do express sexuality they are automatically categorized as “whore”. “Sexualisierte Kunst machen als Frau bist du automatisch die Hure, auch wenn es nur Kunst ist. Alle glauben, dass du verfügbar bist.” (Fotomuseum Winterthur, YouTube, 2023) (Making sexualized art as a woman, you are automatically labeled a whore, even if it is art. Everybody thinks you’re available) Sahin’s interview reiterates how class becomes essential to how we read LBR and Sahin.

In 2006, when LBR was gaining popularity in the German rap scene she was often asked “Wie kann so eine Sexrapperin ihre Doktorarbeit schreiben? (Fotomuseum Winterthur, YouTube, 2023) (How can such a sexrapper write a dissertation?) Sahin mentions how she was never asked this question in reverse (how an academic can be a rapper). This underlines the ways the German majority reads Sahin and LBR according to class. Turkishness is associated with class and hip hop is viewed as “street art”; something outside of the elitist art scene. These two components were policed along with LBR’s sexuality so that the dominant society understood her as a non-credible academic. Essentially, she was not permitted to occupy these two conflicting spaces simultaneously and was rendered to only her sexuality.

Because LBR’s content is hyper-sexualized, she remains contained by the ways her sexuality, gender, and race automatically render her as only pornographic, whereas male

rappers use similar language and remain “authentic”. The difference is that in one form the language objectifies, and in the other, as LBR refers to herself, she moves herself into the subject position. “Die Aufklärung” is LBR’s attempt to highlight the double standard that exists for women and take back power over her own image. Her art is unable to be viewed outside of her sexuality, the two are grouped together and therefore LBR’s deviance overshadows the provocative power of her art.

LBR is difficult to read because her identities occupy many spaces all at once. In her interview she claims a large part of society demonizes female artists who use sexuality as a part of their art. At times this sexuality seems to reflect patriarchal ideas about women’s bodies because sexuality, especially within hip hop, cannot be seen outside of heterosexuality. LBR attempts to break free from this and present sexuality as something that stands outside of this. However, this proves difficult because of how race and class intersect with beliefs about her sexuality.

In LBR’s “Bitchanel” video, the opening scene shows LBR sitting on a camel, as middle eastern style music plays in the background. (Figure 25)



Figure 25 LBR on Camel

LBR creates a visual performance that represents her existence as 100% German and Turkish. LBR's performance uses irony and sarcasm to poke at and question the stability of "authenticity". "Das mehrheits Gesellschaft skandalisiert und defamiert eine Woman of Color" (Fotomuseum Winterthur, Youtube, 2023) ["The majority culture scandalized and degrades a Woman of Color]. Throughout the video it is unclear if she is in Turkey or Germany. She uses signifiers of the middle east and presents exotifying stereotypes of women from the middle east.

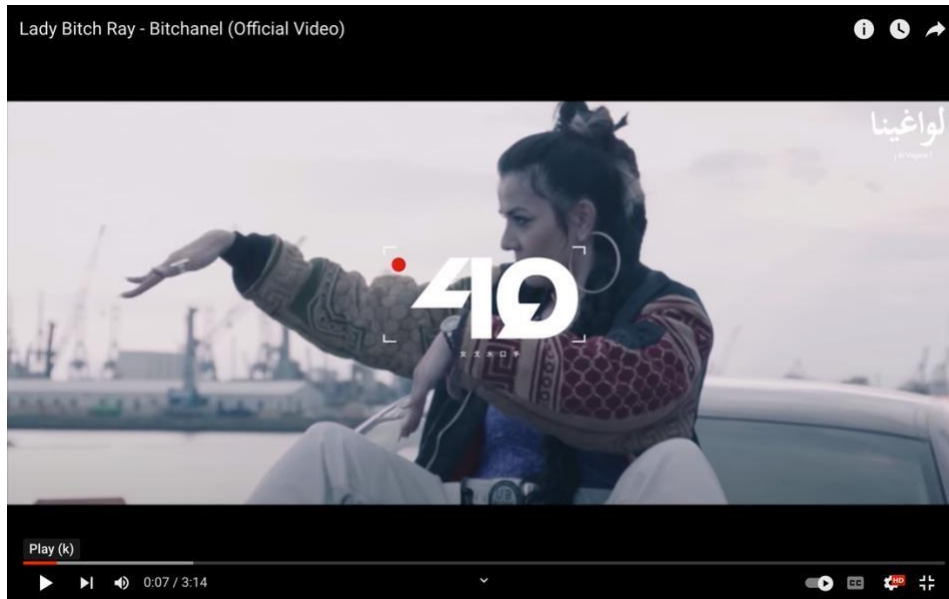


Figure 26 LBR on car



Figure 27 LBR with a goat

Above, Figures 26 and 27 leave the viewer in the position of projecting the exotifying gaze onto LBR. She moves her hands to the middle eastern music that plays in the background and in the next scene she is shown with a goat, wearing a combination of a traditional Turkish dress with heeled boots and a sporty jacket. This clash of various styles is used to highlight

markers of foreignness that then leaves the viewer in question about LBR's identity. By putting together things that do not seem to fit together, such as the goat and LBR's unknown, seemingly industrial location, LBR represents foreignness or markers of otherness that appear in German society.

Hip hop is not typically a space for irony/sarcasm as "realness" is of great importance within the genre. Sahin says herself "Ich glaube an Authentizität und wenn die real vibes nicht da sind, dann wird auch was anderes verbreitet, was ganz gefährliches" [I believe in authenticity and if the real vibes aren't there then something else is being spread-something very dangerous]. (Fotomuseum Winterthur, YouTube, 2023) What Sahin is referring to is commercialized feminism as a product and nothing more. It does not undermine patriarchy but rather serves solely for commercial profit. Even for an artist like LBR who attempts to bend rules about authenticity, she touts the importance of upholding it.

LBR claims the rapper status and she uses the genre to question signifiers which shape how identities are perceived. The hip hop space is important because it allows her to bring in her sexuality. Hip hop provides a space for sexualized content that other genres do not. Moreover, hip hop is the necessary performance space because it is "genre der Unterschicht" [The genre of the lower class] (Fotomuseum Winterthur, Youtube, 2023). LBR uses the fact that hip hop is sexualized to her advantage. She tries to expand that discourse. LBR presents something that cannot be read, undermining fixed identity and the signifiers the audience relies on to render an identity "authentic". She uses her performance to highlight how we are only ever reading signifiers to conjure what we believe to be identity. This is a form of disidentification that creates a rupture with the

signifiers used by the dominant society to determine “authentic”, often essentializing traits of minority identities.

The relationship between performance and authenticity makes signifiers visible because they are used to read a performance in a video or on stage. These very signifiers appear as “performativity” outside of a specific performance space. LBR’s artwork provokes viewers with the goal of making them aware of racist signifiers. She is dismissed due to sexuality. Her body is a vital component in disrupting authenticity as she literally occupies differently classed spaces: the academy, the hip hop scene. Sahin as academic and Lady Bitch Ray as rapper show how racialized sexuality is a component of how we interpret outsidership. LBR shows racialized sexuality to be embedded in how we read female bodies across time and place. Whether in the academy or in hip hop Sahin/LBR is unable to be read as anything beyond her sexuality. Moreover, her conflicting identities leave the viewer wondering what is beyond that. By embracing the racialized sexuality that persists in German society and claiming it for herself to “repurpose”, LBR obscures the audience’s relationship to authenticity. LBR disidentifies with the signifiers the audience relies on to read her performance and creates her own only to show that she is still only perceived in terms of her sexuality.

LBR’s unreliability allows for a discussion about signifiers and who has the power to invest symbols with meaning. Through her deconstruction of the phallus and the detachment of the symbol from masculinity, she remakes how signifiers are read. She shows the unknowability of authenticity and in doing so the audience is left with the task of rearranging signifiers about race, class, sexuality, and gender. Is LBR *really* a rapper or is Sahin a *real* academic? LBR exposes the ways new meaning might be found in the

spaces that create slippage in identity. Unreliability becomes a form of reclaiming power that opens new ways to think about women's bodies in a patriarchal society.

Leila Akinyi: Back to the Future and Afrofuturism

Leila Akinyi is another artist in the German hip hop scene, whose work questions the double standards women within hip hop face. Akinyi's music addresses "racial injustice, transcultural solidarity, and post-identarian empowerment" (Leila Akinyi .com). As a Black German minority, Akinyi's lyrics and performances question if "authentic" German identity exists. She questions shared history or "origin stories" as a necessary component to Germanness. Her music depicts different histories, not just that of the white German majority. In doing so she opens up questions about alternative futures. Akinyi focuses on building a shared future across the African diaspora. For Akinyi, hip hop allows her to connect to a global African diaspora while at the same time redefining Germanness as it exists. "From the New York neighborhood of the Bronx to the streets of Europe, hip hop has become the soundtrack of many Black diasporic communities and provides a stage upon which Black voices can discuss the realities of living in diaspora" (Merritt, 321). Akinyi's music employs Afrofuturistic performance to question authenticity that is attached to a past and present.

The intersection of Afrofuturism and hip hop has been explored by artists such as Janelle Monae, Parliament Funkadelic, Outkast and Sun Ra. The artists bend rhythm and sound as they traverse strict codes about genre. "From Afrika Bambaataa's "Planet Rock" in the 80s to OutKast's ATLiens at the turn of the century, to Moor Mothers's *Analog Fluids of Sonic Black Holes* at the dawn of 2020- hip hop articulates alienness, otherworldliness, aspiration, community, and the metaphysics of nonlinear time"

(Womack, 2). Afrofuturistic performance allows artists to push boundaries about citizenry and belonging.³ As artists perform, they can adopt personas or signifiers and remake them. The relationship between citizenry and belonging is shifted when otherness is detached from the current time and place. Akinyi does this as she goes online. She connects with her ancestors and creates new futures. The internet becomes a vital component for developing this connection to the past and allows her to navigate otherness in the past, present, and future.” All of hip hop poetics is in a philosophical tug and pull with otherness projected and identities presented” (Womack 18). Leila Akinyi’s exploration of otherness reimagines German space to include Black and Brown bodies connected through shared history. Akinyi reimagines German space to include Black and Brown bodies. Her music focuses on Black joy and is concerned with freeing Black subjectivity as only ever experiencing racism. Black joy becomes a means of resistance, subverting white supremacist culture. As the trauma of slavery and colonialism continues to inform our contemporary world, it is imperative to continue to reimagine futures and the histories that shape them.

To establish in the historical character of Black culture, to bring Africa and it’s subjects into history denied by Hegel et al... It has been necessary to assemble counter memories that contest the colonial archive, thereby situating the collective trauma of slavery as the founding moment of modernity (Eshun, 256).

Akinyi shows the many experiences of Black Germans and actively reimagines Black history as a crucial aspect of German history. Through the internet, Akinyi seeks to form what Eshun refers to as counter memories that contest the colonial archive. Akinyi acknowledges the lack of space Black Germans have had in German history and uses this to build a future and speculate about a missing history that can inform new German futures. She speculates about a missing future that has been erased and creates new memories that reposition racialized bodies outside of trauma.

Afrofuturism asks how “a community whose past has been deliberately rubbed out, and whose energies have been consumed by the search of legible traces of its history imagine possible futures” (Dery 180). Black Germans have been largely excluded or omitted from Germany’s history and self-representation as a nation. Akinyi’s employment of Afrofuturistic performance allows her to create representation where it does not exist, and through performance create a future that she wants to be a part of. Technology is used to connect Akinyi to a past and recreate a future that incorporates more expansive German identities. She relies on the internet as the place to remake and work through shared identities. The internet allows Akinyi to reframe the ways Black Germans have been positioned as not belonging.

Akinyi’s “Positive Energy” redefines the “othering” gaze of the white German majority. Below, figures 28 and 29 show a multi-racial Germany where skin color is not a marker of Germanness. “Performance is about putting culture on display for critique. It becomes a vehicle through which the other is seen and not seen” (Johnson 8). Akinyi deliberately makes white bodies less visible in her video. This is noticeable as it does not fall in line with how Germany is typically imagined and presented. Akinyi shows how Black bodies that are typically seen and not seen now inhabit space the same ways that white bodies typically do, as “normalized” occupants. In the video, white bodies render the process of othering visible as the viewer can’t help but notice them yet also overlooks them due to their minimal presence. Akinyi uses her performance to critique outdated ideas about who belongs. The internet provides a fantasy realm where Akinyi imagines what it would be like connecting with her ancestors. The internet establishes a connection to the past that allows Akinyi to speculate about how Germany could look if Black Germans and other minorities were incorporated.



Figure 28 Multiracial Germany



Figure 29 Man dancing

Throughout Akinyi’s “Positive Energy” she is concerned with building community with Black Germans and making this presence known within Germany. She raps “Positive die Energie. Nichts was uns runterzieht. Wir halten zusammen.” [“Positive the energy. Nothing that brings us down. We stay together”] Akinyi’s use of “we” not only represents her efforts to build solidarity amongst Black Germans but also her attempt to rethink how “we” is defined in Germany. She visually represents the solidarity amongst Black Germans by remaking the look of

who inhabits German space. She establishes Germany as multi-racial. She raps “Wir schreiben history” [“We’re writing history”]. This component of her song further highlights the possibility Akinyi sees for Black German futures. Akinyi’s reliance on technology via the internet allows her to merge German history with new German futures that attempt to move past categories of race. Afrofuturism holds that “speculative movements are undertakings that consider new formations and new possibilities that go beyond what is currently available or practicable” (Anderson 59). Akinyi’s “Positive Energy” is a call for revision of German history in the present moment by including more Black Germans in German spaces. The internet becomes a means of repositioning and incorporating German minorities as normalized bodies in German spaces. Akinyi’s music shows the importance of questioning the necessity of a shared common past as a qualifier for Germanness. The internet allows Akinyi to connect with a common past in the present moment, showing that Black Germans have been largely overlooked, along with Germany’s colonialist endeavors, which remains largely overshadowed within German history.

My dissertation has shown how German Holocaust memory culture has served to further perpetuate ethnonationalist ideas about belonging in Germany. German colonialism has ideological roots that are linked to Nazism. Akinyi’s performance refutes ethnic German memory culture. By going online, she seeks to reestablish a community in Germany that has largely been forgotten- Black Germans. In doing so Akinyi attempts to break open narratives about Holocaust memory culture that leave out a critical ideological link between colonialism and the Holocaust. She brings Black Germans into the conversation about Holocaust memory by showing how Black Germans have been robbed of their history and community in Germany, which is connected to the ways the Holocaust history is separated from colonial history.

Akinyi's music shows how German minorities that do not share a narrative of a common past reimagine new possibilities for German identity. The internet is a space where Akinyi finds hope for shared identity. Her song "Online" references Germany's colonial past as one aspect of shared history that is often forgotten by the white majority. Throughout the song Akinyi grapples with Germany's horrific colonial past while reconnecting with her ancestors and with a global African diaspora. The internet is a place where Akinyi finds community. Throughout the song the line "Ich bin Online" ["I am online"] is repeated as images of Akinyi appear in a bathtub with a gun, letting water run over her in the shower, and finally observing herself in the mirror (Figures 30,31,32)



Figure 30 Akinyi with gun

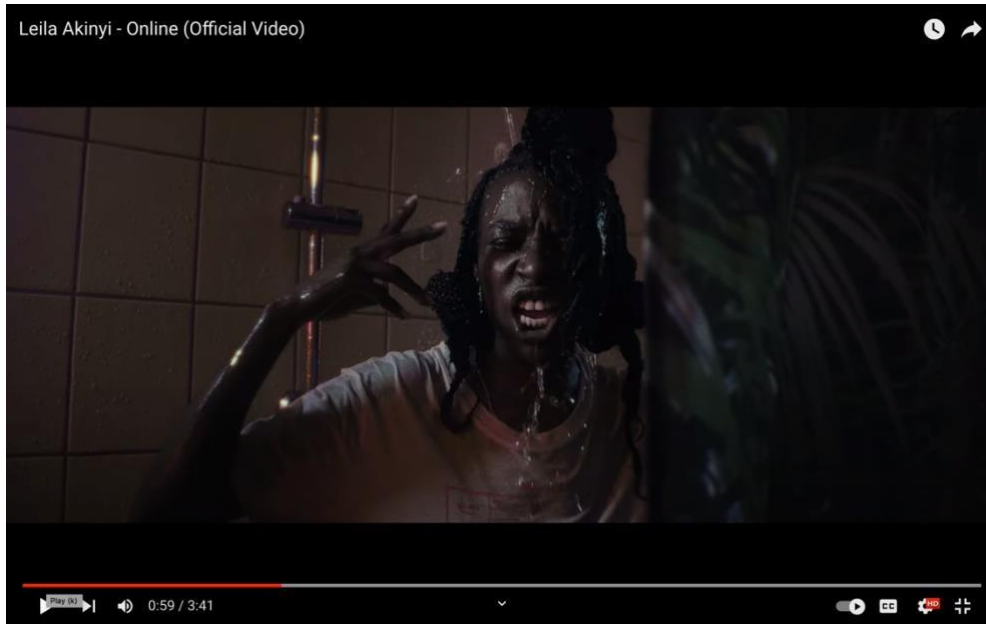


Figure 31 Akinyi in shower

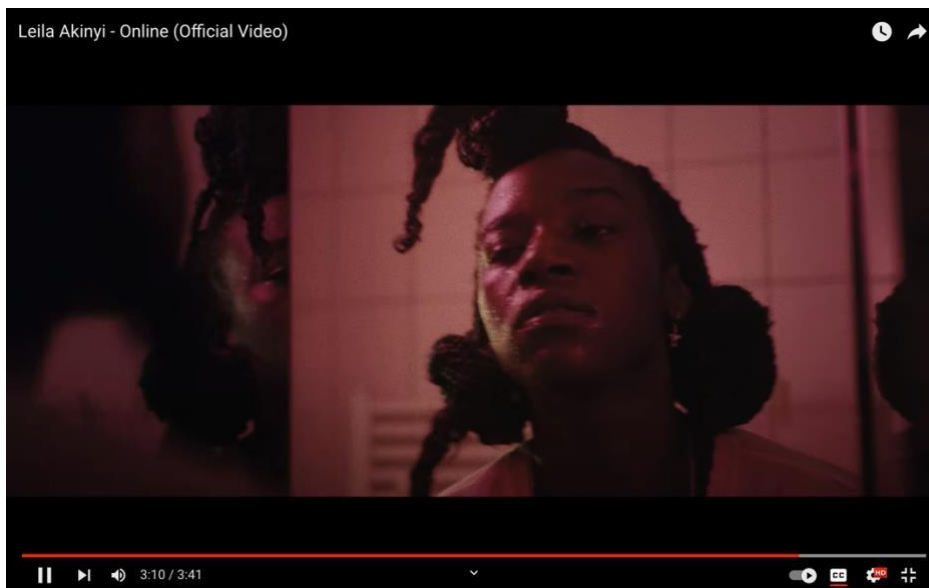


Figure 32 Akinyi in mirror

As the viewer sees these contrasting images it becomes clear that Akinyi is trying to make sense of the trauma that has been done to Black bodies. She holds a gun, depicting herself as unstable, stating “Ich habe nicht mehr alle Tassen im Schrank ich wurde ausgeraubt” [“I lost my marbles; I was robbed of them”]. Akinyi raps that she has been robbed. The German

“ausgeraubt” implies a being robbed of something. The above imagery shows how Akinyi is robbed of knowing her identity. In the shower, after she mentions this, the water runs over her body signaling a washing away of her identity. In scenes thereafter Akinyi looks at herself in the mirror, different sides of her are reflected in the mirror. Akinyi seems to be looking for herself in a future that she finds connection with by exploring her history online. In solitude, as we see above, Akinyi struggles to find her identity. The internet serves as a tool for not only connection but community creation.

Throughout the video Akinyi is always grappling with her identity in isolation. This represents the isolation racialized minorities face in Germany. She goes online to feel connection, the internet is where she finds her history. The video blends past, present, and future and speaks to the ways technology acts to reframe “authenticity” as always dependent on interpretation. She raps “Jede Wahrheit kommt ans Licht. Und jede Lüge bricht” (Every Truth comes to light. And every lie breaks.) As she states this, the viewer is confronted with images of Black royalty and that is contrasted with images of enslaved people (Figures 33 and 34).



Figure 33 Black royalty



Figure 34 Enslaved people

As Akinyi raps about truth and lies, figures 33 and 34 show how slavery and colonization overshadowed Black royalty. Akinyi 's "Online" calls for a reframing of Black history amongst the African diaspora where royalty is centered, she states "Positive die Energie", a reminder to focus on Black greatness and not only trauma. As we see in the

video though, Akinyi herself struggles with this, feeling alone in a Germany defined by whiteness. She shows her mixed emotions as she grapples with how to create a future out of a past influenced by colonization. “Glücklich ich, lustig ich, traurig ich, wütend ich, kritisch ich, ich traue dir nicht, hinterfrage dich” [“I’m happy, I’m funny, I’m sad, I’m mad, I’m critical, I don’t trust you, I question you”]. Akinyi shows how alone she feels with all of the mixed emotions. She is alone in the bathroom throughout the video, while at the same time connecting online to not feel ostracized.

Though Germany did not partake in trading enslaved people, it profited from colonization. German colonization has in large part been left out of German history, but Akinyi shows in her video that she is in fact a part of German history. Online is where Akinyi may connect with her past due to the sheer access to information. She shows in the age of the internet “every truth comes to light” and that destabilizes an ethnocentric idea of German authenticity. Being online allows her to reimagine Black futures not defined solely within the context of Black trauma. Once again she raps “Vom Jungle in die Stadt. Ich habe nicht mehr alle Tassen im Schrank. Ich wurde ausgeraubt. (From the jungle to the city. I don’t have all marbles in the drawer I was robbed.) Below, in figure 35, it is unclear if Akinyi is in a future time and place, this could be Germany remimagined as she states, “Vom Jungle in die Stadt” (From jungle to the city.) Akinyi’s image evokes parallels to Black nationalism, but it is reframed in a feminist context, with Akinyi as a leader set on redefining Germany.



Figure 35 Akinyi with guns

Afrofuturism is known as a “cultural aesthetic that combines elements of science fiction, fantasy, horror, history and magical realism to examine and revise both the past and present experiences among the African diaspora” (Wright 271). Akinyi’s music is a crucial examination of the current situation many Black German minorities face today. Akinyi’s “Afro Spartana” is a performance of the othering stereotypes Black Germans face. Akinyi raps:

Ich bin schwarz. Ich kann mich gut zu Musik bewegen und jeder der mich entgegen
kommt guckt weil ich bin schwarz. Und weil ich schwarz bin, bin ich die schnellste
läuferin.

I’m Black. I can move well to music and everyone who comes near me looks because I’m
Black. And because I’m Black I’m the fastest runner.

Above Akinyi presents the stereotypes that exist for people with Black or Brown skin.

Throughout the video Akinyi deliberately puts these stereotypes on display and embodies them as she repeats “Ich bin Schwarz” (I’m Black). As she does this, she renders the essentializing components of authenticity visible. Figures 36 and 37 show Akinyi

performing the ways Black people are exoticized. Figure 36 shows Akinyi in a gorilla costume eating a banana, this can be seen frequently throughout the music video. Figure 37 depicts Akinyi as “Afro Spartana”, the title of the song. The juxtaposition of these two scenes after each other points to the ways Black Germans are othered. In an interview with Akinyi she states:

Die idee dahinter war, ein Statement zu setzen und zu sagen “Ich liebe mich so, wie ich bin. Ich weiß was abgeht, ja, ich erlebe Rassismus, aber ich gehe so oder so damit um. (Akinyi, Music Express interview)

The idea behind [Afro Spartana] was to make a statement and say I know what’s going on, I experience racism, and this is how I deal with it.



Figure 36 Akinyi in monkey costume



Figure 37 Akinyi performs the exotic

Akinyi uses performance to render the process of racialization visible. Her performances are concerned with creating a future where Black and Brown minorities are not defined solely as subjects who experience racism. Akinyi seeks to show possibilities for minorities other a one-dimensional identity as someone who experiences racism.

Ich bin mehr als ‘nur’ eine schwarze Frau. Ich bin ein Mensch, ich bin eine Frau, ich bin eine Person, die Dinge erlebt im Leben außer Rassismus. Ich bin sehr vielseitig wie meine Musik.” (Akinyi, Music Express Interview)

I’m more than “just” a Black woman. I am a person, I am a woman, I am also a person that experiences things besides racism. I am very versatile just like my music.

Akinyi’s music has been known for depicting Black joy and hip hop is the medium that allows her to spread this message throughout the Black Diaspora in solidarity. “Rap becomes a necessary mode of expression and communication for Akinyi to contemplate her role and perceived presence in society as a member of the Black diaspora and the potential to merge Germanness with Blackness” (Merritt 377). As Merritt shows, hip hop is one way that Akinyi makes sense of her experience as a racialized subject.

Afrofuturism considers the intersection of “the African diaspora through technoculture and speculative fiction, encompassing a range of media and artists with a shared interest in envisioning Black futures that stem from the Afro-diasporic experience” (Yaszek 1). In Akinyi’s performance she reimagines Germany to be a home for people across the African diaspora. She reclaims literal space as she depicts diverse bodies within them. At the same time, songs like “Online” depict a bridging of alternate histories with a Germany Akinyi hopes to see in the future.

For Akinyi, who was born in Mombasa, Kenya and moved to Cologne, Germany at the age of six, her history exists between German and Kenyan cultures. Her lyrics locate home as a feeling within oneself, rather than a fixed place. Both LBR and Akinyi locate their German identity as mixed with other cultures and both claim home as a feeling within oneself. “Heimat is für mich da wo man(n?)sich oder wo Frau sich heimisch fühlt.” LBR states “wo man” but then changes this to “wo Frau”, it is unclear if she is deliberately trying to subvert the German grammatical “man” as referring to everyone but sounding like “mann” referring to men, she then states, “wo Frau” to place an emphasis on women.”Das ist ein Schwanz Kultur, der ich mich weder in der Wissenschaft oder im Hip Hop unterordnen will” [“That is dick culture that I don’t want to submit to in science or hip hop”] (LBR) She places an emphasis on women’s pleasure and empowered sexuality to subvert patriarchal structures that exoticify, and make women feel unwelcome. By placing an emphasis on her sexuality, she questions Germanness and respectability as upholding the standards white Germans place on racialized bodies.

Both artists depict the exoticification of the racialized other; Akinyi does this using jungle motifs and questioning and subverting dominant beauty standards. LBR uses belly

dancing, traditional Turkish clothes, and language. Akinyi also focuses on building transnational solidarity amongst the African diaspora. Her images are not as sexualized as LBR's. She locates home as a feeling connected to the ability to reshape a future based on one's connection with ancestors and other cultures.

When asked in an interview with *The Message Magazine* about the role her skin color has played in her life since she moved to Germany at age six Akinyi responded "Als Kind habe ich das gar nicht verstanden. Dass ich bin da rausgewachsen und starker geworden bin und weiß, wie ich mich dagegen wehren kann. Sonst hat sich da nicht viel geändert" ["As a child I didn't understand. I've grown out of this and become stronger I know how to protect myself. Nothing much has really changed"]. Akinyi shows how as a child in Germany she did not recognize the ways race impacted her lived experience but as an adult she feels not much has changed but now she knows how to protect herself. Through her performance, Akinyi aims to create community amongst the African diaspora within Germany. She demonstrates how she has created a feeling of home within herself, and this stretches across time and space. This is demonstrated throughout her *Slumdog* EPs I, II, and III.

The question of "Heimat" (home) emerges throughout *Farbe Bekennen* as the text investigates "Heimat als ein innerer Bezugspunkt" (home as an internal point of reference). Throughout Akinyi's career her music has shown origin to have nothing to do with one's feeling of belonging within a place. Akinyi's song "Slumdog" states "Du weißt nicht von wo ich herkomm. Ich rede nicht von Herkunft. Ich kämpfe für die Zukunft." (You don't know where I come from. I'm not talking about origin. I fight for the future) Indeed, Akinyi questions the importance of origin stories in upholding authenticity. The concept of

authenticity is broken open by Akinyi as she depicts minorities as more than people who experience racism. In this way, Akinyi breaks with ongoing narratives of “authenticity” regarding Black subjectivity. As stated previously, she is looking towards a future where Germanness and Blackness exist as one possibility of authenticity.

Instead of endlessly repeating narratives of tradition, Black suffering, and the authenticity of the street and the ghettos – including interpreting everything with regard to the biography of the artists Afrofuturism and similar phenomena clearly defamiliarize the notion of any authentic location (Stüttgen 137).

As Stüttgen further highlights, authenticity is troubling when it becomes essentializing, as narratives of Black suffering are continually repeated. Akinyi has been touted for creating music that embraces Black joy and creates alternative narratives for Black Germans that are not defined through white German’s perspectives.

Through hip hop, Akinyi finds an outlet to confront harmful stereotypes and assumptions about Black people, but also to celebrate Blackness with (Black) joy. That complex mixture of joy, love, frustration, and loss are part of living in the Black German diaspora (Merritt 377).

Akinyi questions authentic Germanness by reappropriating national symbols that have been attached to Germanness in an act of embodied resistance. Akinyi uses her body to question norms attached to Germanness. It is important to recognize the ways norms work to construct national identity and ideas about culture. “Norms are complex and varied. Norms are contingent on time and place. Norms exert tremendous power to conform” (Bobel and Kwan 1). Akinyi highlights the ways Eurocentric beauty standards police the boundaries of belonging. “Individuals challenge cultural embodiment norms and attempt to reconfigure norm practices and processes, fighting to redefine narrow scripts” (Bobel and Kwan 2). Acts of embodied resistance challenge ideas about German national

identity, as they reshape which bodies are included within the “norms”. This challenge is meant to highlight which bodies wear certain types of clothes or partake in activities.

Akinyi’s “Slumdog” uses this resistance strategy to challenge ideas about German identity that remain attached within Eurocentric beauty standards. Akinyi is shown wearing a white mask (Figure 38), and blonde wigs (Images 39, 40), an example of the ways Akinyi’s body is the very act of resistance. As the images appear, Akinyi raps “Gibt es ein Problem huh? Ich passe nicht in dein System rein.” (Is there a problem? I don’t fit into your system.) Akinyi puts on the blonde wigs to show that even if she is blonde, she will still never be read as authentic German. “We use “blonde” to signal that someone is white without using a racialized term like white” (Cottom, NYT). Her performance highlights how blonde is a racial signifier for whiteness; only certain people are described as blonde, and this works to police the bounds of white femininity.

As Akinyi looks in the camera (Image 39), she states “Ich wollte nie deinen Look, wollte nie sein wie du” (I never wanted your look, never wanted to be like you). The statements seem ironic considering her appearance throughout the video. However, this is Akinyi’s attempt at displaying and questioning blondness as attached to whiteness. When Akinyi is shown with different blonde hairstyles she is not “being like” white Germans, she is highlighting how she too can be blonde, detaching bloneness from whiteness. At the same time, one must question why Blondness remains as one of the dominant Eurocentric beauty standards.

Historically, bloneness has been an important component to German identity. It dates to the 19th century with a fascination of the Nordic race and a pursuit of ideal physical beauty, which was then used as a nationalist symbol to create boundaries of

belonging. “The image of the tall, blonde, blue-eyed, clean-limbed Nordic is a familiar one in fantasies of physical perfection. The image is associated with the fascist cult of the body in the European tradition” (Hutton 101). Still today, the lack of discourse surrounding racialized minorities in Germany points to the fact that the German nation remains rooted in symbols that construct whiteness as the norm. The features of the Nordic race, such as bloneness and blue eyes were, as Hutton shows, “idealized in an attempt to define or create a racially purified German Volk” (Hutton 102). Aryanism and Nordicism are often linked together but it remains important to consider Aryanism within linguistic identity, whereas Nordicism is concerned with racial identity. “An Aryan world-view could be inferred from study of the Aryan languages. Nordicism was concerned with the body as aesthetic sign (or “icon”): the body was primarily seen as an indicator of human identity” (Hutton 106). Nordicism shows the use of the body as idealized symbol for national belonging. When Akinyi puts on a white mask and various blonde wigs she is disrupting a central image that remains tethered to markers of Europeaness. While Akinyi does disrupt this, and make racial signifiers visible, she does not question how to move past these outdated ideals of Eurocentric beauty.



Figure 38 Akinyi in white mask



Figure 39 Akinyi with blonde wig



Figure 40 Akinyi with long blonde wig

At another point in the video Akinyi is seen with an accomplice stealing a car and then eventually vandalizing it, writing “Slumdog” on the hood of the car (Images 41,42). The car reconfigures how we might read symbols of Germanness as something able to be reconstructed and redefined.



Figure 41 Slumdog graffiti



Figure 42 Akinyi sits on spray painted car

She deliberately chooses a Volkswagen, a German automobile. The Volkswagen car company was a part of Hitler's plan to make cars affordable to the German people.¹⁷ During Germany's national socialist period Volkswagen sought out labor from concentration camps.¹⁸

"Volkswagen" translates to "the [German] people's car". The car acts as an accessory of how we should read Akinyi's embodied resistance. It helps Akinyi reconfigure how we read symbols of Germanness. As she paints slumdog across the hood of the Volkswagen she shows Germanness, and the symbols attached to it as always in transition. Because of this, "authenticity" is always

¹⁷ On May 26, 1938, Nazi dignitaries gathered near Fallersleben in northern Germany to lay the foundation stone for the Volkswagen Works. The Führer himself was present, predicting that this *Volkswagen*, initially known as the *Kraft-durch-FreudeWagen*, or *KdF-Wagen*, would be "a symbol of the National Socialist people's community." The Volkswagen plant eventually became a massive complex known as the "City of the Kdf-Car" [*Stadt der Kdf-Wagen*] and was expected to produce at least 1.5 million cars annually. In reality, the plant had only just started small-scale production of what would become the Volkswagen Beetle when the company halted civilian production with the onset of World War II. In the end, the vast majority of Germans who completed their savings books never received their long-awaited People's Cars, as Volkswagen went into military production (Holocaust Encyclopedia).

¹⁸ The company actively sought out forced labor from the concentration camp system. One VW plant engineer traveled to Auschwitz and selected 300 skilled metalworkers from the massive transports of Hungarian Jews in 1944. In addition, 650 Jewish women were transferred to assemble military munitions. The relationship between the Nazi concentration camps and Volkswagen was cemented when the Fallersleben facility officially became a subcamp of the Neuengamme concentration camp. The Volkswagen plant contained four concentration camps and eight forced-labor camps (Holocaust Encyclopedia).

read according to a specific time and place. During national socialism “outsiders”, those thought to be non-German, were the ones who made the Volkswagen for the German people. Now Akinyi sits atop the car with the word “Slumdog” written across the hood, signifying how Germanness today is comprised of a multitude of symbols and identities that are constantly called into question and remade.

Conclusion: Racialized Sexuality and the German Nation

LBR and Leila Akinyi highlight the ways in which racialized sexuality polices the bounds of proper femininity. Their performances are read along with their race in a way that is always already sexualized and therefore “inappropriate” when read against white German femininity. Both artists are in a unique position regarding claims of authenticity. As the image of the German nation has been defined historically with figures such as Germania, and the importance of the Nordic race to the creation of a unified German Volk, this has made it difficult for minorities such as LBR and Akinyi to be read as “authentic German”. Moreover, the male dominated hip hop industry has also policed authenticity throughout the years, often categorizing female artists in familiar and constricting tropes. LBR and Akinyi use their performances as a means of critiquing and rethinking authenticity within hip hop and regarding Germanness. As female artists they are in a unique position to reimagine the hip hop space while also recrafting what it means to be German. As they do this, we are shown the ways that racialized sexuality works to code their performances, making their attempts at questioning “authenticity” appear as only ever pornographic or deemed inappropriate by the German mainstream.

Both artists go about questioning authenticity in different ways. LBR blurs the lines of ethnicity, claiming to be “100% Turkish and German”. Blurring ethnicity is what makes her performance seem inauthentic because of the ways culture is strictly defined with ethnicity.

People question how Turkishness and Germanness could exist together as one identity, believing that everything “culturally” Turkish could not possibly be German and vice versa. However, LBR uses performance to render signifiers visible and shows that we are only ever reading signifiers that we believe to be an “authentic” representation of an identity. This makes identity itself seem unreliable and this is exactly what LBR aims to create with her performance.

The identities of Reyhan Sahin the academic and LBR the rapper confuse viewers and create slippage in her performance. As an academic, a “Dr.” and a rapper who also goes by the name “Doctor Bitch Ray” the lines between class and respectability/ behavior are blurred. This creates slippage not only in her performance. It seems unreliable; is she an academic or should we understand her as a serious rapper? Audiences question what she is “actually” doing and who she “really” is. But that is what LBR wants. As scholars such as Tressie Mcmillan Cottom have shown, it is important to grapple with the ways norms are produced within a specific time and place and this includes the norms that produce acceptable femininity.

You cannot separate what it means to be a “woman”, often used to mean a performance of acceptable femininity, from the conditions that decide what is and is not acceptable across time and space. We all do this kind of performance of ourselves, be it our gender or race or social class or national identity or culture. As we are doing it, we are always negotiating with powerful ideas about what constitutes a woman (Cottom 62).

Looking back at the image of Germania, white femininity was produced as the norm. Here too, racialized sexuality had an impact on how the image of Germania shaped and policed the boundaries of respectable womanhood. Her sexuality a threat to the German nation, she was desexualized through the role of motherhood which would birth the white German nation. Thus, white femininity became read as respectable and “acceptable” femininity. Women’s sexuality has always been read along with race, but LBR shows how minorities experience this differently. One cannot help but notice the

exotification and sexualization of women's bodies within her videos. LBR occupies the identities of academic, rapper, and Turkish-German woman. As she attempts to be respectable with her professional background she is only ever perceived as deviant and not taken seriously. This is because of the ways sexualized racism polices her multiple identities as they do not fit in with what the German majority affirms as being "authentic" identity categories for LBR. She may be a rapper but how can she also be an academic? How can she be 100% Turkish and German? This slippage feels uncomfortable for the German majority and therefore LBR's feminist music is only ever understood as pornographic. Racialized sexuality is one factor that must be accounted for as we grapple to understand the ways acceptable womanhood is produced alongside national identity across time and space.

Akinyi's performances focus on using elements of Afrofuturism to blur the lines between past and present. She is focused on reimagining German futures, and she does this by recrafting which bodies occupy German spaces. Her music videos feature primarily Black bodies with little presence of white bodies, which she does to depict the hyper-visible/ invisibility experience many German minorities face. As Akinyi focuses on building new German futures she spreads images and lyrics of Black joy across her art as a form of resistance. For Akinyi, she is concerned with showing that racialized minorities experience many other things aside from racism. While LBR is focused on using her sexuality to speak about racism, Akinyi shows alternative pasts and futures that move beyond racialized subjectivity.

Afrofuturism considers "Black emancipation through technology and becoming the agents of the means of production" (Stüttgen 139). Akinyi's music aims to break open the

idea of German authenticity and she does this through her use of Afrofuturistic performance that focuses on a future time and place, while presenting alternative German histories that improve the current moment for Black German minorities. Afrofuturist subjectivity is embodied, “collapsing past and future onto the white supremacist present, Afrofuturists assert their new subjecthood and they dissent from existing order” (Rollefson 203). Akinyi uses technology as a means of projecting alternative German futures that have been crafted from an unexplored past. In “Online” she shows how the internet is one way she has found solidarity and shared identity across the African diaspora both globally and within Germany.

Akinyi’s relationship to authenticity differs from LBR’s as her performances are not concerned as much with rendering existing racialized signifiers visible and blurring the lines within performance. Rather, Akinyi’s use of Afrofuturistic performance aspects speculates about signifiers that operate in a distant future. She questions the reliability of identity in the present moment, showing how “authenticity” is always performed and related to power, who has the power to deem an identity “authentic”. In Akinyi’s “Afro Spartana” she raps about and performs the racist stereotypes that persist for people with Black bodies. Akinyi’s use of embodied performance marks the ways female rappers work against the damaging tropes that exist for women in hip hop.

Akinyi presents stereotypes and performs them, and the very performance of these stereotypes is what allows Akinyi to create new German futures as she shows identity is always constructed and performed. Akinyi’s embodied performances work to complicate ideas about race and beauty. For example, she shows a particular politics of desirability when it comes to bloneness in her “Slumdog” video. When Akinyi puts on various blonde

wigs she shows how bloneness has traditionally been tied to whiteness. However, she deconstructs this as she questions the status attached to bloneness, showing that she too can embody Eurocentric beauty standards with Black skin. Akinyi's use of her body is political and she wants viewers to consider the ways desirability works to render Akinyi not German despite wearing the blonde wigs. Essentially, her performance shows even if she wears the blonde wigs she will be seen as authentic German. Where LBR renders signifiers visible and plays with the reliability of authenticity, Akinyi uses embodiment to show the ways racialized minorities are always already deemed incapable of Germanness.

Finally, both LBR and Akinyi approach making space for themselves within hip hop differently. One way this is shown is through their differing relationships to the word "Bitch". LBR reappropriates the word Bitch to be something positive, self-identifying as a Bitch and defining it according to her own terms. In this way she remakes the terms of power regarding the word. As a self-identified Bitch, she aims to take back power over a controversial term used to refer to women within the hip hop space. She states that for her a Turkish- German woman who does not submit to patriarchal structures is a Bitch in a positive way and that is who she feels she is. Further, she mentions how not only in hip hop but also the white German society, patriarchy reigns supreme. Identifying as a Bitch is LBR's way of taking back power over claims to her identity and reappropriating a word that is used to objectify women. LBR claims it as her own and in this way brings female subjectivity into the hip hop space.

Akinyi's "Nobody Nennt Mich Bitch" is a different approach to redefining female subjectivity. She shows that she does not want to be referred to as a Bitch. In her video she states, "Mein body ist königlich" (My body is queenly), establishing the ways Akinyi aims

to move past a discourse that objectifies women and labels women deviant for expressing their sexual desires. Within the video there are only women present until the very end when an unidentified white man with a bag over his head is labeled “Bitch”. Akinyi is seen walking away smiling, perhaps a message signaling that she has refuted this identity and turned it back onto the patriarchal structures that view her body as deviant.

LBR and Leila Akinyi’s performances and lyrics may be read as empowering, expanding definitions of German femininity for some folks. Still others may understand their performances to be disempowered, and upholding narratives about class, race, and sexuality. The ways that these two artists appear as empowered or disempowered relies on the viewers assumptions about race and racialized performance and the ability to distinguish between the two. If LBR attempts to make empowered feminist protest music but is continually deemed obscene or pornographic this shows how the audience views her Turkish- German womanhood and non-white skin as something inseparable from sexuality. LBR and Akinyi both highlight the exotification of racialized women in their videos, showing how exotification is that which contains women’s bodies by making racialized sexuality inescapable. This ensures narrow readings of their performances when viewed by the majority German culture. Contrasting LBR and Akinyi’s performances shows how feminism is performative, and this is directly related to power. LBR and Akinyi attempt to reposition themselves within hip hop but face the inescapability of how hip hop, as a commercial genre, requires women’s sexuality as product for consumption. Racialized sexuality is simultaneously produced within hip hop. As artists attempt to mirror the exotification of minority women that occurs in German society, they inadvertently produce the image of the female body as capitol through their reliance on

sexuality. Which bodies are allowed to claim the term “empowered feminist”? This chapter shows how the power to decide this unfortunately rests on the viewer’s assumptions because they, as the consumer, have the power to purchase a rendition of gender and feminism that fits their beliefs.

CHAPTER IV: DISRUPTING THE HETEROPATRIARCHY: SOMEWHERE BETWEEN AUTHENTICITY AND PERFORMANCE

The Depiction of Diversity and Feminism in Visual Culture

Within Germany the image of the racialized other has been sexualized and gendered in ways that connect to heteropatriarchy. Like many countries within Europe, Germany has seen an influx in migration, which has caused a perceived threat to German identity. The promotion of vaguely defined “European values” by the radical right, has attempted to promote a culture of assimilation for racialized minorities and foreigners wishing to live in German society. Images of the racialized “other” have emerged throughout German history and can be seen within Germany’s performance art traditions, social satire, and polemics. The question of German identity and class has also been a topic in German musical traditions. In the second half of the 20th century, the “Liedermacher” genre emerged with the popularization of artists like Wolf Biermann. The artists in this genre of music were classified as singer-poets and the music depicted lived experiences of the artists, as well as left leaning social commentary.¹⁹

Germany’s EMMA Magazine, a feminist magazine first published in January 1977 that is still published today has been understood as an antipatriarchal, feminist magazine. “Some of the hotter topics of the 1970s have cooled down, such as women’s rights and women’s status in the catholic church. Today, these issues are replaced by issues such as eating disorders, genital mutilation, and Islam’s treatment of women” (Deutsche Welle). A distinctly German identity emerged through both visual and pop culture in the 20th century as Germany began to rebuild and

¹⁹ “In den 1960-er – Jahren, auf dem Festival auf der Burg Waldeck, sprach man eher von “Sängerpoeten”. Der von Wolf Biermann geprägte Begriff “Liedermacher”, der die erste sozialromantische Identifikation mit dem arbeitenden Volk betonte, wurde erst in der Folge der Ideologisierung nach 1968 üblich” (Morgenstern 279)

distance itself from its Nazi past. Emma magazine, while promoting an antipatriarchal, feminist activism space, still failed to incorporate minority representation in its early years. The magazine's origin can be seen as an extension of second wave feminism that began in 1960s post-war Germany.²⁰ Emma magazine considered issues largely affecting white German women. Moreover, it's position on women in Islam understood these women as always disempowered, and in need of guidance from white German women. Emma magazine and the Liedermacher genre, show attempts within Germany to consider the intersections of gender, class, and sexuality. However, race remained largely left out of these two aspects of German visual culture and social satire. Today, hip hop has begun to fill this gap. This chapter centers LGBTQ artists in Germany's hip hop scene as they attempt to make visible the ways heteropatriarchy codes their bodies.

The topic of belonging has long been depicted in Germany's theatre traditions. However, German performance has made the distinction between "migration" and/or "other" as something that occurs off stage. "In discussions concerning the theatre, migration is not usually dealt with as an issue within theatre structures but as a societal-social phenomenon which happens outside in society" (Sharifi 324). Indeed, the stage has had a tradition of seeing performance as something separate from society. However, my scholarship shows how performance on stage or in a video is directly related to everyday performativity for racialized German minorities. Sharifi points out, "the emphasis on diversity [in theatre] is placed on the side of the audience and not the artists in the institutions" (Sharifi 324). This means that racialized minorities are welcome to come to the theatre but if they partake in theatre themselves, they are repeatedly cast for the same

²⁰ During the 1960s several feminist groups were founded, which characterized the second wave. University students began questioning their elders who were seen as former Nazi collaborators (Tagesspiegel).

types of one-dimensional roles: “the migrant other”. The audience is set up as the place that should grapple with diversity. Stage performances have helped solidify a perpetual German “other” that stands in for the “migrant” or eternal foreigner. Additionally, Representations of the other have been performed “by artists without any migration experience who try to grasp and comprehend the phenomenon without their own involvement” (Sharifi 324). Traditionally, performance art and visual culture has failed to see the expansiveness of minority experience. Germany’s post-migration, post-colonial theatre tradition in Hamburg, “Mut! Theatre Hamburg” has attempted to change this by moving minorities, migrants, and refugees into new performance roles that redefine who occupies German spaces.²¹ Mut! Theatre Hamburg gives minorities a place to use performance strategies to question and reimagine everyday identity while creating more expansive roles for minorities within performance art. Similarly, hip hop today can be understood as a renegotiation of how minorities are depicted in visual culture and German spaces.

To further establish an understanding of performance vs. performativity, this chapter relies on the tension in three intersecting terms: “borders”, “between”, and “other”. The two artists in this chapter find themselves redefining and expanding borders of identity. They exist “between” spaces and attempt to move beyond strict binaries reinforced by the heteropatriarchy. The artist Nura finds herself between Islamic and German/western cultures, while Breezy, a nonbinary, biracial artist finds themselves in different types of “between”. Both artists depict the “between” to be a place of empowerment, a place to remix and remake strict rules about belonging that have been

²¹ One of the projects “These are the people in your neighborhood- Das sind die Leute in deiner Nachbarschaft” uses theatre and dance pedagogy to introduce young people 18-24 to arts and cultural education to reimagine what Germany looks like by incorporating diverse perspectives.

attached to the heteropatriarchy. The concept of “other” becomes a post-national, imaginative possibility that moves beyond claims to citizenship.

By deliberately crossing borders related to gender, race, and sexuality, the artists in this chapter display expansiveness that other performance genres, such as German theatre, have been more restrictive on. Hip hop shows the relationship between performance and performativity, highlighting how what occurs on, and off stage is directly related.

“Authentically” produced “others” emerge as everyday performativity comes to shape how minorities are expected to perform on stage or in a video. This relationship is why German minorities are repeatedly cast for theatre performances that require someone who *looks* non-German to play “the outsider” or migrant.

In hip hop, women and LGBTQ artists find themselves in narrowly defined roles. When their performances challenge the culture of masculinity inherent within mainstream hip hop, they highlight the performativity involved in cultivating hip hop as a Black masculine space. As I have shown, performance and performativity, when considered together, open conversations about what is “authentic” identity. This chapter shows how “authenticity” is related to the heteropatriarchy and how LGBTQ performers are attempting to move beyond this.

Heteropatriarchy: Disrupting the Binary from the “Between”

Heteropatriarchy is a critical concept to engage when thinking through the ways masculinity reaffirms authentic Germanness within a binary framework to uphold and maintain power structures. The importance of masculinity regarding hip hop and German identity is further established in this chapter. The two artists featured in this final chapter attempt to break from heteropatriarchy by using performance to question binaries that establish them as inferior.

The concept of heteropatriarchy considers the ways whiteness and cisgender masculinity operate to form power structures against marginalized groups such as BIPOC and LGBTQ folk. In a heteropatriarchal society cisgender, white males typically hold the highest positions of power. “As a social system, heteropatriarchy perceives heterosexuality and patriarchy as normal, while other configurations are considered abnormal” (Loveless et al. 2017). The emphasis on nationalism and race is articulated through the promotion of heteronormativity within heteropatriarchy. This relies on the belief in the heterosexual family unit as the producer of the racial nation.

Within hip hop, “authenticity” offers a reflection of the way heteropatriarchy persists in German society. Hip hop exposes experiences of racialization but still upholds restrictive ideas about gender and sexuality that are connected to heteropatriarchy. Racialized minorities make authentic claims to the genre, which they cannot make in the majority white German society. This reveals how racial norms are treated differently than gender and sexuality in hip hop. Whiteness is not a requirement for hip hop authenticity, but heteronormativity is. Thus, artists of color “appear”/ are read as hypersexual because this is a requirement of the heteropatriarchy and serves to uphold the protection of the respectable, white middle class from the dangerous or exotic other. Indeed, the reliance on heteronormativity within hip hop shows the overarching hold of heteropatriarchy in society. As Frank B. Wilderson’s *Afropessimism* reminds us “Geopolitical agendas of the White nation cannot be disentangled from the sex life of White femininity (and White masculinity)” (Wilderson 208). It becomes important to question how power is related to cisgendered white heterosexuality. Hip hop mediates the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality norms and in doing so shows how sexuality is a means of creating a “dangerous other”. When LGBTQ artists use the space of the “between” to break with binaries that

uphold restrictive gender and sexuality norms, they open possibilities outside of the heteropatriarchy. Sexuality and gender no longer exist as viable frameworks for creating a “dangerous other”.²²

The artists within this chapter challenge the ways they are racialized by heteropatriarchy, a concept integral to maintaining both white supremacist culture and the western nation state.

In order to colonize people whose societies are not based on social hierarchy; colonizers must first naturalize hierarchy through instituting patriarchy. The colonial world order depends on heteronormativity. Any liberation struggle that does not challenge heteronormativity cannot substantially challenge colonialism or white supremacy (Smith 72).

LGBTQ hip hop artists attempt to unhinge and expand binaries to challenge white supremacy and heteronormativity, a foundation of heteropatriarchy. Above, Smith shows how colonial norms are embedded within the western world order. Artists, Nura and Breezy challenge the heteronormativity in hip hop while questioning norms about masculinity by performing *from* the

²² In 2016, sexualized violence occurred at Cologne’s train station, which triggered a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment, citing a need to protect Germany from the non-western, perceived Islamic threat.

In the weeks following the New Years Eve sexualized violence, two images appeared in German press that pointedly demonstrate the ways violence played into racialized fears of the Muslim “Other”. In the most widely circulated image, published by Focus magazine, a cover image with Black handprints was depicted on the naked body of a blonde woman with light skin (Weber 1).

While the events in Cologne were disturbing and inexcusable, the definition of a masculine, hypersexual “other” set up an idea about white Germany being threatened by the aggressively perceived non-western males who were perceived as hypersexual and a threat to German women. Such imaginations of sexual threat have striking affinities with powerful imagery that depicted white women as threatened by African men during the French occupation of the Rhineland, and similar imagery that imagined Germanness as under threat via relationships between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans leading up to and during the Holocaust. Discourses of shame and violation of the white European woman highlight the dangerous masculinity of the Other (Weber 1).

Imagery and discourse about “dangerous masculinity” proliferates within hip hop. Chapter 1 shows how male artists themselves sometimes rely on “violence and street culture” to reaffirm their belonging in hip hop. I have also shown how misogyny becomes a tool for establishing one’s heterosexuality and therefore “realness” in the hip hop genre. Authenticity within hip hop is fragile and must be upheld. Due to this, beliefs about “dangerous masculinity” spill out of the hip hop. Hip hop comes to be known as a genre for “non-white men” who remain unable to break free from “dangerous masculinity”.

“between” space. This offers nuanced ways of thinking through how heteropatriarchal norms are pushed within commercial hip hop. The between space challenges heteronormativity as it refutes strict binaries. By performing the between, binarism is made visible. The between space emerges as counter to white supremacy because it gives subjects power without having to identify as “this or that”, rather they remain “between”.

Smith’s *Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy* raises questions about how to create a politics of solidarity amongst communities of color that goes beyond multiculturalism. Hip Hop can build solidarity across cultures and ethnicities. It moves past multiculturalism as a concept and actively incorporates marginalized voices. Smith’s work maintains that the three pillars of white supremacy are:

Slavery/ Capitalism – Under the logic of white supremacy Blackness becomes associated with slaveability.

Genocide/ Colonialism – Indigenous peoples must always be disappearing to allow nonindigenous people’s claim over the land.

Orientalism/ War – The logic of Orientalism marks certain peoples or nations as inferior and as posing a constant threat to the well-being of the nation (Smith 67).

These pillars are important to keep in mind throughout the chapter. It becomes essential to consider the ways the heteropatriarchy may be broken open. Above, Smith details strict binaries that are in place to uphold whiteness as the norm against the perceived threat of the dangerous outsider. LGBTQ hip hop artists provide nuanced ways of reimagining German identity beyond the heteropatriarchy.

In this final chapter, I consider how queerness operates in German hip hop and how LGBTQ artists challenge a central problem in hip hop, “the normative logic of heterosexual dynamics in Black hip-hop cultural production” (Smalls 123). One must consider how claims to authenticity are produced under advanced capitalism, and how hip

hop as a global industry, has also served to reproduce strict racialized and gendered divisions that spill out of the genre. The heteropatriarchy ebbs and flows between hip hop performance and everyday society. This chapter is concerned with moving past this.

Underground vs. Mainstream Hip Hop: Different Ways of Maneuvering the Heteropatriarchy

One distinction that is important to consider is who controls the mode of production of each artist. The rapper Breezy controls their own performance, they produce their own sound and image. In other words, their art is not “owned” by a major record label – they are “underground”. In contrast, Nura is not self-produced – her music, sound, and image is owned by Vertigo Berlin – she is “mainstream”. When looking at performance one must question who holds the power to control performance and therefore further perpetuate images of the other, even in acts of resistance.²³ The distinction between the underground, unsigned Breezy and the mainstream label artist Nura shows how race and heteronormativity are components of hip hop as a commercial genre that necessitate resistance to reaffirm an exotified and racialized “other”.

LGBTQ artists seek to disrupt the presumed heteronormativity of the hip hop genre as they navigate Germanness as racialized citizens. On stage the artist is granted more freedoms than citizens in daily life. At times what is seen on stage creates slippage in “real life” off stage. For instance, “when an example of hip-hop aesthetics disrupts the presumed heteronormativity of blackness, we are often left without frame or words of explanation for how this fits into ideas of hip-hop and blackness” (Smalls 127). Stage performance is distinct from the daily undertakings

²³ See the introduction about how the Black masculinity inherent in U.S. hip hop has come to stand in for an “oppressed other” within global hip hop. This proliferates and comes to stand in for a “commercial authentic”, a body that represents both resistance and oppression. This comes to be viewed as authentic within the commercial genre of hip hop, leaving limited possibilities of expression for Queer and Female performers.

of life off stage but as Smalls shows, the two are related. This raises questions about the relationship between artist and citizen. Citizenship becomes a critical aspect of stage performance for the artists in this chapter. When Nura uses sexualized images of menstrual blood in her album cover, she disrupts ideas about Muslim womanhood. Her imagery does not fit into German society's beliefs about how Muslim women should behave. Therefore, Nura's imagery comes under scrutiny within Germany because it disrupts identity off stage. Nura's Islamic background is policed under the heteropatriarchy and therefore her citizenship is directly related to her artistry. Resistance attempts that try to break from the ways the heteropatriarchy enforces authenticity appear differently in each artist's subsequent branches of hip hop: mainstream and underground. The underground allows more freedom to create, whereas the mainstream can only create what the consumer already comes to expect.

Nura's use of menstrual blood and sexuality in her performance challenges norms about purity and women's bodies. Her performance on the one hand displays exactly the sexualized imagery one might expect to see in hip hop. On the other hand, the use of menstrual blood with this imagery is Nura renegotiating norms about body politics, making it clear that a tabu topic such as menstruation exists alongside sexuality. Consumers have come to expect sexuality in hip hop and for this reason Nura's provocative use of menstrual blood still relies on this.

Nura redefines women's body politics. In Austrian and German visual culture women have long challenged body politics.²⁴ In a time where women must fight to protect rights to

²⁴ Valie Export, an Austrian avant-garde artist has been known for her provocative public performances and cinema. In her 1968 performance "Aktionshose - Genitalpanik" (Action pants- Genital panic) Export walked around a cinema in Munich wearing crotchless pants. She exposed her genitalia to the audience in the cinema. This was seen as extremely provocative but was Export's attempt to disrupt the heteropatriarchal status quo that deems women's sexuality as something scary. Nura's performances make this more provocative because she not only addresses German gender ideology but also Islamic Gender ideology.

reproductive care, Nura claims her sexuality while performing a biological component, directly related to reproduction. Careful consideration is required to attend to the ways this performance is read under German and Islamic gender ideologies. What is the relationship between menstruation and sexuality that Nura's performance tries to convey in both realms? In 2024, one could argue that Nura's understanding of womanhood, at least in this performance, is biological. By displaying different aspects of *some* women's bodies (such as menstruation) she tries to distance herself from the "authentic" images of Western women and Islamic women that already exist. She attempts to create something new in mainstream hip hop.

The poetic economy of protest within hip hop reveals how bodies consume material objects: cars/cash/clothes. Bodies in mainstream hip hop are also consumed as product. This is directly related to ideas about authenticity; what the dominant society believes to signal Turkishness, or Blackness, or empowered vs. disempowered is mediated through what the mainstream hip hop industry makes visible. In this way bodies are consumed as finished products. Understanding hip hop outside of heteropatriarchy would provide more expansive ways of creating hip hop that does not rely on the current markers of authenticity. Breezy whether by choice or circumstance remains unsigned. One must consider if this is because Breezy challenges the model of heteronormativity that mainstream hip hop produces.

Decentering the Colonial Gaze Between Berlin and Los Angeles

Berlin and Los Angeles are both urban spaces with different histories of how race is treated. This distinction is related to the way colonization has only recently become a growing topic in Germany's national identity. This has caused much discomfort in a largely defined narrative of Germanness that centered ethnic ties to the Holocaust. It has often gone overlooked how the

Holocaust can be seen as an extension of Germany's colonial roots.²⁵ Berlin based human rights activist Joshua Kwesi Aikins states "We could say that Namibia in certain ways, foreshadowed what was to come in Auschwitz." (Al- Jazeera 2017) Germany has just recently started to consider the relationship between its colonial past and the Holocaust, which has highlighted the ways a Black presence has always existed within Germany, especially in Berlin.²⁶

Within Berlin Black and Turkish German communities have always been present. Berlin's Wedding district is known as the African quarter as many of the streets are named as a remembrance of Germany's "conquests" in the 19th century: Afrikanische Straße, Petersallee, Müllerstraße. To Black Germans such street names represent the violence and oppression done in Germany's colonial era. Within Berlin, Black Germans and Turkish Germans have distinct ways they experience racism. However, it is important to notice the ways these two communities engage in mutual struggle within Berlin. As a Black American, Breezy has a different understanding of racism within Germany, as an outsider looking in yet still marked by the experience of being racialized.

Compared to Berlin, Los Angeles sees different groups of minorities.²⁷ Within Berlin and Los Angeles "Blackness" remains commodified, a product that reifies the exploitation of Black

²⁵ "Since its inception in 1961, Holocaust studies as a field has undergone several shifts. The field began with a focus on the victims, particularly Jewish victims, the expanded to include study of the perpetrators. By the late 1980s, scholars began to incorporate gender differences. The field then widened again to Genocide studies which incorporated concepts and vocabulary of postcolonial studies" (Baer 3). The broadening of Holocaust studies has begun to open discussions about colonialism and Nazism. For further discussion see Elizabeth Baer's "The Genocidal Gaze".

²⁶ The concept of Lebensraum was first used as a colonial concept and remains so today. "The aim of building a "New Germany" in Africa, of providing "Lebensraum", of maintaining the purity of the German race, of utilizing land that is perceived to have lain fallow "justifies" the move from viewing the Hararo and Nama people as subhuman to viewing them as expendable" (Baer 7).

²⁷ Since the 1990s, Black and Brown communities in Los Angeles have undergone a tremendous amount of change. Immigration, opportunities for upward mobility, and poverty have impacted these groups in both positive and detrimental ways. Immigration and political activism have changed the meaning of "Brown" for Latinos in "Black and Brown working-class people in Los- Angeles are at once more differently situated and more related than ever before" (Johnson 218).

labor for white profit. Turkish- German hip hop artists in Berlin reproduce similar hip hop aesthetics that began in Los Angeles. The forms and rhythms from artists in L.A. traverse the globe and appear in the style and beats of local Turkish-German artists in Berlin. “In commercial culture, Blackness is strangely popular. The circulation and commodification of “Blackness - Black images, style politics, vernacular, and popular music- continue to generate billions of dollars for (mainly white) corporate owners” (Johnson 218). Unsigned artists like Breezy attempt to reposition themselves regarding the commercialization of Blackness. Songs like “Decolonize and Moisturize” reach across the United States and Germany and present the necessity of decolonizing spaces in the current moment.

Elizabeth Baer introduces the idea of the “genocidal gaze” which she uses to show the development of Nazi ideology out of German colonialism by referencing the ways German imperialists looked down on indigenous peoples.²⁸ “Today, hip hop is a space that can help identify the ways a colonial gaze still subjects certain bodies to inferiority. When viewed in a transnational context such as Berlin and Los Angeles, hip hop offers insight into how race is coded and how this relates to a colonial gaze today. As I have shown throughout my dissertation, strict definitions of Blackness are policed regarding hip hop authenticity. The commodification of the hip hop genre further enforces these strict definitions and, in this way, exploits Black and Brown bodies to do the labor of upholding Blackness in commercial hip hop. This relates to how viewers code Blackness and what viewers come to expect from the genre.”²⁹Breezy’s

²⁸ “The genocidal gaze serves as a metaphor for the repellent imperial ideology, founded on a racist/racial hierarchy, that Germans developed. Their perception of the Herero and Nama was conflated with a racial hierarchy, privileging German imperialists and dehumanizing indigenous people.” (Baer 7)

²⁹ Chapters 1 and 2 have shown how masculinity is policed through heterosexuality and street life. Chapter 2 shows how female artists must rely on sexuality even in attempts at resistance within hip hop because of the way sexuality has been a necessary component of female MCs. All of these aspects mark specific ways Blackness must be performed within hip hop so that viewers recognize it is as hip hop.

performances disrupt Blackness at a transnational level because they do not fit into how Blackness is coded and performed in U.S. or German hip hop. As a queer artist, Breezy undermines a colonial gaze that designates one type of Blackness.³⁰ As an underground artist they are free to bend rules that break with representations of Blackness in commercial hip hop. Breezy breaks with the transnational rules that code Blackness as other, which subverts the colonial gaze.

The Artists

Nura, born Nura Habibi Omer, was born in Kuwait and moved to Germany at the age of three as a refugee from Eritrea. For Nura music is a way to process and work through living as a racialized minority. “Ist halt schwer, wenn man ein dritte- klasse Mensch ist- das Musikhören hilft mir dabei.” (It’s hard when you’re perceived as a third-class person. Music helps me with this.) (ZDF Germania Interview) In 2020 she released her autobiography “Weißt Du Was Ich Meine” [Do you know what I mean]? Her book discusses growing up as a refugee in asylum housing in Wuppertal. During her childhood she says she never realized she was an outsider until she attended school in Germany. Nura connects her feeling of outsidership to an Islamic upbringing while living in a western culture. She says “Wenn Kinder sich integrieren sollen, dann müssen sie ein westliches Leben führen dürfen” [“If kids integrate, then they must be *allowed* to live a western lifestyle”]. This was an area of contention between Nura and her mother as she grew up. “In der Arabischen Welt Frauen sollen ruhig und bescheiden sein”³¹ [In the Arabic/ Islamic world women should be quiet and well behaved]. Her art considers the intersection of western culture with her Muslim upbringing. In an interview with ZDF’s

³⁰ See discussion in introduction about how Black, heterosexual masculinity comes to stand in for resistance in hip hop on a global scale.

³¹ Translates to: In the Arabic world women should be calm and well behaved.

Germania she discussed how she was raised differently than her brother, stating “Mädchen dürfen nichts, und Männer dürfen alles” [Girls can do nothing, and men can do everything”]. Nura sees this working similarly within hip hop where “Männer können über Koks und andere Sachen rappin und ich nicht [“Men can rap about cocaine and other things, and I can’t”]. In her interview she adds that male rappers talk about and participate in drug use and degrading women yet are still viewed as “good Muslims” at the end of the day. However, this works differently for LGBTQ artists who already fall out of the bounds of normativity within hip hop and Islam.

These artists face a double standard which Nura tries to make visible. In her 2020 interview with Deutschlandfunk’s Sigrid Fischer, she says she uses her platform to talk about sexism and make this a topic for young people. She highlights how women in hip hop come under scrutiny when they use the same language or behaviors that males exhibit. She understands this double standard in hip hop as a reflection of the sexism that occurs in society. In interviews Nura has commented on her sarcastic social criticism of German rap, male chauvinism, commercialism, homophobia, and her status as an influencer. Nura’s song “Spielplatz” [Playground] from her 2023 album *Periodt* is exemplary of how Nura sees the German hip hop scene as a space for renegotiation. In the song she raps about her disgust with German rap:

Li-Li-Lipgloss, Crop-Tops, so stürm ich jede Bühne
Scheiß auf Lovesongs, zeige nur im Moshpit meine Gefühle
Deutsche Rapper suchen Beef, ihre Hairline eine Lüge
Meine fünf Prozent sind eure hundert, geb mir keine Mühe
Full-Playback, eure Shows ‘ne Blamage
Fettes Auto in ‘nem Video, doch keins in der Garage
Deutschrapp hat was zu reden, wenn ich wieder nix trage (sheesh)
Während du Pisser dich ärgerst, zähl ich meine Gage

Li-Li lip gloss, crop tops, that’s how I storm every stage
Fuck love songs, only show my feelings in the mosh pit
German rappers are looking for beef, their hairline is a lie
My five percent is your hundred, don’t give me any trouble
Full playback, your shows are a disgrace
Big car in a video, but not one in the garage

German rap has something to talk about when I'm not wearing anything again (sheesh)
While you pissed off, I'll count my fee
Above, Nura shows how she believes German hip hop to be fake. The depiction of material wealth such as cars in music videos has come to be more important than talent. She questions the "authenticity"/ realness component of hip hop, while also subverting ideas about the necessity of consumption to the genre as she highlights consumption as a crucial aspect of hip hop performance. She portrays the German rap scene as a masculine space where women's bodies are commodity. Her consecutive albums, *Habibi* (2019), *Auf der Suche* (2021), and *Periodt* (2023) have included lyrics and performances that have sought to renegotiate who participates in hip hop, while making sexism in society a topic. Her albums have displayed the sexism that persists in hip hop to be a larger consequence of sexism that occurs in a heteropatriarchal society. "Es ist zeit, dass wir den Männern vor der Nation einen Spiegel vors Gesicht halten." (Its time that we hold a mirror up to men in front of the nation.) In other words, Nura believes her job as a hip hop artist is to make visible the ways men are complicit in the proliferation of sexism and double standards for women. Nura proclaims, "Deutscher Rap wie ein Spielplatz- Bitch I came to play" (German rap like a playground, Bitch I came to play). She intends to play with German rap and she does this by making fun of it at times.

Nura embracing what is typically tabu to talk about: menstruation, directly relates to Nura's embodied resistance. "The mandates of menstruation, that is, the relegation of menstruation to the domain of the personal and the private, are consistent with the detachment from the body commonly practiced in contemporary Western societies" (Bobel and Kwan 31). Nura's performance and album cover attempt to reposition her body within Islam and Germany, by challenging the rules governing proper womanhood. This chapter will contextualize Nura's menstruation imagery with Nura's song "Eine gute Frau" to highlight the ways Nura uses

embodied resistance as a means of rewriting dominant discourses about womanhood and heterosexuality within hip hop while also breaking open ideas about Womanhood within Islam and Germanness.

The other artist that this chapter focuses on is Breezy, an American hip hop artist who splits their time between L.A. and Berlin, highlighting the ways both urban spaces play a significant role in their performance. Breezy was raised in Lincoln, Rhode Island and moved to Los Angeles at 19. “I had never considered becoming a rapper, but once I lived in and was exposed to the poorest neighborhoods and was exposed to the way they were systematically oppressed in LA, I began to understand what these rappers were up against” (Breezy, Berlin- Los Angeles Interview). Much of Breezy’s music speaks to witnessing and experiencing racial oppression in both L.A. and Berlin.

They rap about their experience growing up biracial. “Growing up as a biracial kid in a white world, music was their way of connecting with their African American roots.” (Berlin- Los Angeles) Crucial to Breezy’s art is the impact of splitting their time between L.A. and Berlin, the urban spaces serve as a backdrop to the ways they grew up feeling split between two races. Breezy’s art offers ways to think about binarism more expansively. Their website states “If Audre Lorde were a rapper, Breezy would be the embodiment because their hip hop takes on topics like racial identity, gender politics, and queerness. Breezy represents the fluidity in the gray area between “man” and “woman” or “Black” and “white.” In “Breezy Schläft Noch” they rap “No gender I’m unbound”. Precisely this idea of being “unbound” is what proceeds throughout Breezy’s art and allows them to traverse codes about authenticity. Breezy’s work can

be understood as an extension of Lorde's Black feminist thought.³² As Breezy considers their biracial identity from Los Angeles to Berlin, they find themselves in a transnational space. Breezy is not attached to a specific urban space: they create between Berlin and Los Angeles. Breezy's self-produced project "Tragic Mulatto EP" "examines the experience of growing up as a Black person in America with both black and white heritage" (Berlin- Los Angeles Interview). They state:

My Tragic Mulatto EP is an ode to the complexities of having one black parent and one white parent in a country divided by race. Historically, the "tragic mulatto" is a 19th century trope with one parent who is a slave and one who owned them. The plight of the mulatto was to have an understanding of the worlds of both the owner and the slave while never fully fitting into either one (Breezy Berlin- Los Angeles Interview).

The trope of the "tragic mulatto" is distinctly American, but similar parallels exist in the German language as well. In the 16th and 17th century the word "mullate" was taken from Spanish and Portuguese.³³ The term "mullate" was associated with "Maultier" (mule), which served to distinguish the separation of Europe as the center of culture, and Africa as nature. "In Kontrast zu dieser Konstruktion von Afrika als "Natur" und Schwarzen als Bindeglied zwischen Mensch und Tier wird Europa als "Kultur" konstruiert" (Arndt 1) ["In contrast to this construction of Africa as 'nature' and blacks as a link between humans and animals, Europe is constructed as 'culture'"]. The "mixing" of races in both Germany and the United States was understood as

³² The extension of Lorde's Black feminist thought, as my dissertation as shown, traversed between the United States and Germany in the 80s, helping define presence for Black German women, while also asserting transnational solidarity amongst the African diaspora.

³³ "Mulatte" etwa geht auf Portugiesisch "mulo" (= "Maulesel, Maultier") zurück. Dieses Tier wird zu den "Bastarden" gezählt. In der Tier- und Pflanzenwelt gelten diese als nicht fortpflanzungsfähig. Eben dies wurde auch Kindern aus Beziehungen von Schwarzen und Weißen unterstellt. (Arndt 1) "Mulatto," for example, comes from the Portuguese "mulo" (= "mule"). This animal is counted among the "bastards." In the animal and plant world, these are considered incapable of reproduction. This is also what was assumed of children from relationships between blacks and whites. For a further discussion see: Susan Arndt: [*Kolonialismus, Rassismus und Sprache. Kritische Betrachtungen der deutschen Afrikaterminologie*](#). Aufsatz, September 2004, S. 4 (von der [Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung](#) veröffentlicht)

problematic. From an underground hip hop space Breezy grapples with their own racialization and offers possibilities that move past binary thinking reinforced by the heteropatriarchy.

Nura and Periodt

In an interview with Nura, she mentions she receives the most hate from far-right groups and Muslim men and women. This is an important connection as typically far-right conservatives and Muslims in Germany are thought of in different categories. However, the resistance that Nura receives from both groups regarding her lyrics and performances shows how heteropatriarchy is the link between these two groups, which causes Nura to be labeled a “bad Muslim”. She does not fit in within Germany because she is non-white and Muslim. The possibilities for what she can and cannot do in her performance remain restricted within the parameters of acceptable womanhood in multiple spheres: Germany, Islam and within the highly commercialized hip hop industry.

Nura borrows the term Periodt from African American Vernacular English (AAVE). This slang term has been used specifically by gay Black men. “As Black X and Black TikTok influenced mainstream culture, we’ve seen the proliferation of a more distinctly Black version; “periodt.” In AAVE, “periodt” emphasizes an idea at the end of a conversation – times TEN. This phrase can also mean something is non-negotiable. Periodt originates in Black gay slang and is commonly used in the full expression, “and thats on periodt” (Writers Room). Nura’s borrowing of American Black vernacular can be understood as an act of transnational solidarity with the LGTBQ community. The album title is Nura reiterating her presence in hip hop, it evokes the German “etwas auf dem Punkt Bringen” (to hit the nail on the head/ to speak the truth).

Nura’s “Periodt” album art (Figure 43) is the point of entry into her work.



Figure 43 Nura sitting in menstrual blood

The above image shows Nura nude in what seems to be menstrual blood. The AAVE emphasis: women are here periodt. “Die Rapperin kniet nackt und bis zum Hals besudelt in einer riesigen Lache aus tiefdunklem Blut. Periodenblut” (Lifeonstage.de). [“The rapper kneels naked covered up to her neck in a giant pool of blood. Period blood”]. This image is meant to be provocative to begin to normalize new ways of talking about women’s bodies, normalizing menstruation as one component of sexuality. In the German rap scene and in the larger German society women’s bodies are always a topic of conversation: women should look and act a certain way, be sexy, caring, emotional, not moody. In the discussion about norms for women, one thing is often completely disregarded: periods.

Nura’s menstruation imagery is her break from the heteropatriarchy that tries to lay claim to women’s bodies. “Die Kombination aus Artwork und Albumtitel ist die vermutlich

größtmögliche Provokation für die nach wie vor männerdominierte Deutschrap- Szene und für alle Männer mit der minderbemittelten Meinung, dass monatliches Menstruieren Frauensache ist” (Lifeonstage.de)[“The combination of artwork and album title is the biggest possible provocation for the male dominated German rap scene and for all the manly men who are of the opinion that menstrual cycles are a woman’s thing”]. Nura’s album cover uses provocative performance to attempt to enact new rules about women’s bodies. By putting the topic of menstruation on display, it becomes a public spectacle that is not relegated to the private sphere of “women only”. For Nura, this is a move to decenter the ways men lay claims to the hip hop genre through discourse about women’s bodies for male pleasure. Nura tries to use performance to reclaim discourses about women in hip hop by making menstruation a public topic.

Menstruation is a private matter while women’s sexuality is consumed as a product in hip hop. „Allein das Cover ist eine Ansage an all jene männlichen Geschöpfe, die falsche Rollenbilder im Kopfe haben und sich Frauen am liebsten hinter den Herd wünschen” (Robin Schmidt, Taggesspiegel.de). (“The cover alone is an announcement to all those male creatures who have false ideas in their heads and would prefer women to be behind the stove.”) In hip hop, men are the ones who are controlling women’s images to bolster their own masculinity. Nura’s use of menstrual blood in her album cover speaks back to how she is racialized and sexualized at the expense of men in hip hop.

Women’s sexuality has always been perceived as dangerous and something to contain when left unchecked. Nura attempts to provoke viewers to reconsider what is “appropriate” to talk about. Her performance represents how respectability politics have always reenforced sexuality along lines of “proper womanhood”.

The demarcation of the dangerous, problematic female body is evident perhaps most eminently at the time of menarche, the first menstrual period. In contemporary western societies, girls face a paradox surrounding menstruation: They are often congratulated for entering womanhood, and they are instructed to keep their new status secret.” (Bobel 31)

Above, Bobel further shows the way menstruation relegates women’s bodies to the private sphere because it signifies sexuality. Women are expected to adapt to society’s performative expectations for women’s sexuality or risk being “dangerous”. In her interview with WDF Nura discusses the impact of menstruation regarding perceptions of women in Islam. “Wenn du deine Tagen bekommst, dann bist du eine Frau in Islam, vorher warst du ein Mädchen, eine Prinzessin. Wenn du deine Tagen bekommst, dann kannst du plötzlich nichts mehr machen, weil du eine Frau bist” (Nura WDF Interview). [“When you get your period in Islam you are officially a woman. Before that you were a girl, a princess. When you get your period then suddenly you aren’t allowed to do anything anymore”]. This further reiterates the ways both Western and Islamic beliefs have conceptualized womanhood alongside menstruation. Problematizing menstruation and relegating it to a “women’s matter” is a strategy to keep sexuality in check.

Women of color, already socially constructed in white supremacist culture as “animalistic” and “out of control” can approximate legitimacy only if they deny their embodiment.” (Bobel 31) Bobel’s work points to the ways menstruation is an act of embodied resistance that is especially threatening when employed by women of color. Nura’s use of menstruation imagery is her attempt at refuting respectability politics for women in Germany and within Islam. She is reclaiming an act of embodied resistance that oversteps “racialized standards of sexual respectability (Bobel 31).

Nura’s portrayal of her own menstrual blood is a way for Nura to make something powerful instead of disgusting or something to be ashamed of. She shows how in 2024 it is not just something women have to deal with. Nura defines who makes the rules about her body, showing that she is in full control. She inserts herself into the male dominated space, unhinging the norms and standards for women. As she does this, she calls for reframing authenticity within the genre, thereby overhauling the heteropatriarchy that exists for the larger German society.

Nura's album cover articulates new possibilities for Muslim women in Germany, who Nura believes face a double standard compared to Muslim men. Nura's performances put existing images of racialization on display in her videos. These images are what Patricia Hill Collins has defined as "controlling images". Collins's seminal *Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images* draws attention to the people who wield the power to control and define images of "the other" or more specifically, Black women, as Collins states.

As part of a generalized ideology of domination, these controlling images of Black womanhood take on special meaning because the authority to define the symbols is a major instrument of power. In order to exercise power elite white men and their representatives must be in a position to manipulate appropriate symbols concerning Black women (Collins 68).

Collins shows, images that persist about "the other" within society are always manifestations of power. This offers nuanced ways of thinking about the relationship between hip hop and heteropatriarchy. Though Collins' work has focused on controlling images of Black American women, it raises important questions regarding authenticity. Controlling images begin to be read as "authentic" representations of racialized bodies. These defined images of "the other" work to reaffirm a whiteness as the norm.

Nura's performances speak back to the "controlling images" about women's bodies within the hip hop space and the "Doppelmoral" that exists for Muslim women. Some of the controlling images that Nura attempts to challenge are patriarchy that relegates women to the domestic/private sphere. In her song "Eine gute Frau", Nura over performs the "controlling images" to make them hypervisible. When the video is read against Nura's provocative menstruation imagery it becomes clear that this provocation is meant to trouble the heteropatriarchy's strict hold on gender and sexuality. She speaks to a double standard that exists for women by explicitly using sexuality in her performance. She shows men can rap about

women's bodies however they choose. When Nura decides how to speak about her body, she faces backlash from German conservatives and Muslim men. This highlights a double standard.

Nura's "Eine Gute Frau" song text and video performance shows Nura embodying the images of womanhood that I have shown to be tied to patriarchal structures. She is sexual yet also respectable as she performs in revealing outfits while preparing meals in the kitchen. She sexualizes different food objects while fulfilling her domestic role. Nura's video highlights that this is not just about Men in Islam, but also the white German majority, as images of a white male flash throughout the video. She raps "Eine gute Frau hört auf ihren Mann. Sie kann so viel lernen, weil er alles kann" [A good woman listens to her man. She can learn so much because he can do everything]. Right away Nura invokes a clever word play, highlighting how a "good" woman/wife listens to her husband because he can do everything. Nura's line points to the "Doppel moral/ double standard" that persists for men in Islam and in Germany. In the video, a white man is shown sitting on the couch drinking beer throughout the video (Figures 44 and 45). These scenes represent the stark contrast that exist for men and women. The beer can is a symbol of masculinity and leisure, contrasted with Nura doing unpaid kitchen labor.



Figure 44 Man on couch

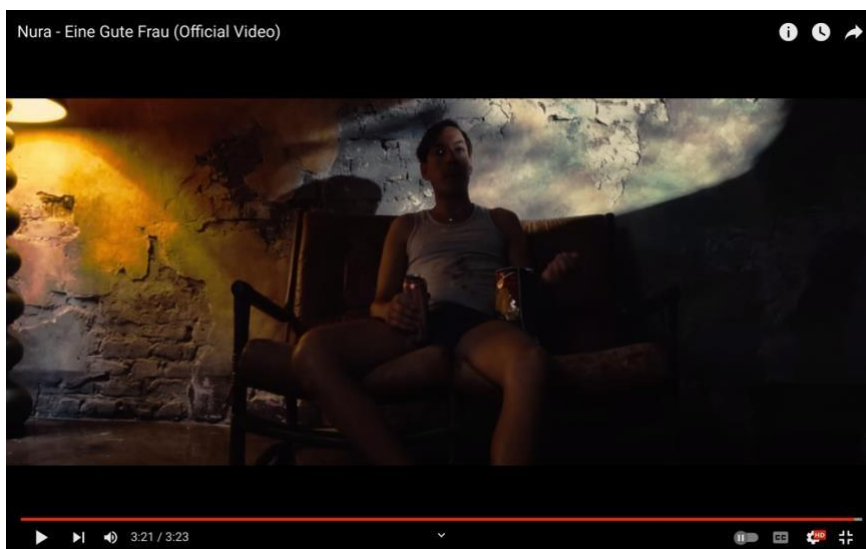


Figure 45 Man on couch with beer

Nura is seen in the kitchen preparing meals with phallic objects and phallic shaped foods, which she ends up chopping up for her amusement (Figures 46 and 47). This reveals Nura's frustration with the situation. She never leaves the kitchen and is confined there by the roles she must fulfill. Unable, to break away from the stark contrast of masculinity and femininity that appears in the video, Nura begins to destroy phallic foods. The foods represent the upholding of

patriarchal masculinity through gendered labor. The domestic sphere becomes the domain that Nura must use to break from the heteropatriarchy.

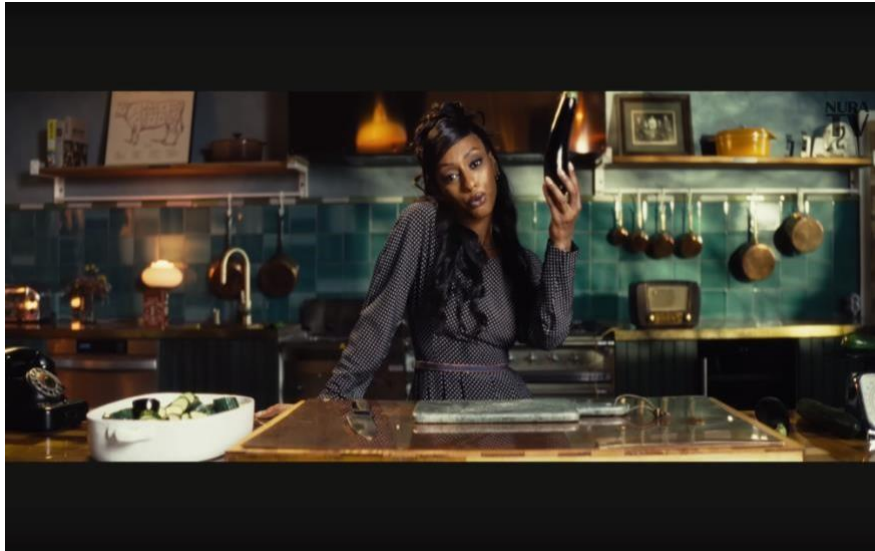


Figure 46 Nura in the kitchen

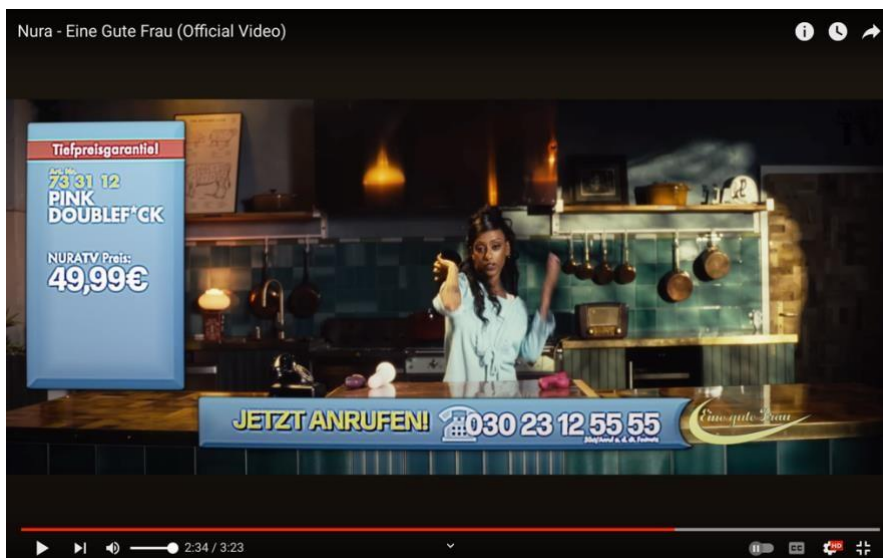


Figure 47 Nura's fake advertisement

Nura's "Eine Gute Frau" juxtaposes domesticity with hypersexuality. As mentioned prior, she is unable to move away from the kitchen in the video. The phallic foods represent a sexuality that must be kept in check through domesticity. Essentially, Nura must prepare the food

and remain respectable, doing this ensures she does not risk becoming “dangerously hypersexual”. She raps “Privatsphäre oder Rechte habe ich keine” (Privacy or rights I have none). When read with Nura’s menstruation imagery, Nura shows she has no privacy anyways, and therefore she brings menstruation into the conversation.

Nura shows women’s bodies as being under constant surveillance and control. “Was für feiern gehen? So benehmen sich nur Schlampen”. (What do you mean go party? Only Sluts behave that way?) Du kannst nicht mehr auf der Straße alles voll mit Asylanten. Kein Kontakt zu anderen Typen außer zu meinem Verwandten. (You can’t be in the streets anymore, they’re full of asylum seekers. No more contact with other guys, only to my relatives). The above lines show how women’s bodies are policed and surveilled for dressing and acting “inappropriately”. The “dangerous” outsider figure is invoked to establish an idea that women’s bodies need to be protected. This is problematized through Nura’s performance as she shows that women have rights to protect their own body. Policing, as she shows, is done by men. By highlighting these strict rules that some women face, Nura aims to break open persisting norms that restrict her body.

Nura raps “Du blutest wie ein Schwein” (You’re bleeding like a pig). This is an interesting comparison given that eating pork in Islam is considered haram because it is unclean. “I do not find in what has been revealed to me anything forbidden for anyone who wants to eat unless it is carrion, outpoured blood and the flesh of swine, all of which is unclean” (Qur’an Al An’am 6:145) Nura’s line connects women’s menstruation to something disgusting or grotesque, like the consumption of pork in Islam. Her song text and menstruation imagery position Nura as an empowered subject as she uses embodied resistance to change discourses about women’s bodies.

Below, Figure 48 shows Nura taking back power over her body as she creates a new image: the combination of menstruation and sexuality that works towards *gleichberechtigung*/equality. This imagery is a stark contrast to “normative” issues around menstrual bleeding in Islam. “And they ask you about menstruation. Say, “it is haram, so keep away from wives during menstruation. And do not approach them until they are pure” (Qur’an 2:222). The Qur’an prohibits intercourse with women who are going through menses. Women who are menstruating are considered “impure” and their sexuality is dismissed due to menstrual bleeding. For Nura, menstruation imagery becomes an act of embodied resistance and a means to reclaim her sexuality within Islam.

In Germany, the discourse on menstruation has been changing from the private to the public.³⁴ Both in Islam and within the West, women’s menstruation has been tied to discourses surrounding purity/impurity, ultimately leaving women’s sexuality out of the discussion. Menstruation imagery creates slippage in understandings of authentic womanhood across Islam and the West.

³⁴ The appearance of the exhibit “Flow: The Exhibition on Menstruation” at Berlin’s museum of European Cultures in January 2024 shows an attempt within German society to normalize menstruation. “In the past 10 years, the topic has increasingly entered the public space, notably through social media posts using hash tags such as #periodpositivity and #menstruationmatters (Deutsche Welle, January 2024). Cultural scientist Jana Wittenzeller states how the topic of menstruation has been tabu in Germany the past 30 years but the presence of this exhibit shows how opinions are changing, and older Germans have appreciated being able to share their experiences through the exhibition.



Figure 48 Nura in provocative pose

Nura uses her performance to challenge restrictive and one-dimensional ideas about Muslim women. Her body is a site of emancipation from respectable womanhood. She knows that she will be sexualized in the hip hop space and by the heteropatriarchy. However, she determines the parameters of her own sexualization. Muslim women have been understood within German discourse about Islam as disempowered due to the presence of headscarves³⁵. Nura mentions how she has often faced an identity crisis growing up in Germany. The splitting of Islamic and German/ western beliefs about race, gender, and sexuality are in tension in her lyrics, videos, and interviews. Nura uses this tension to highlight the ways women occupy a different position than men, regardless of which culture they feel at home in.

In her interview she mentioned how she rebelled against her mother's strict Islamic upbringing by moving from Wuppertal to Berlin, which she claims was a way for her to be

³⁵ For a further discussion see "Die Bedeutung des Muslimischen Kopftuchs in der deutschen Gesellschaft".

free. It was in Berlin that Nura felt she could fully engage with western culture. She mentions the identity crisis that has been an ongoing struggle in her life. She asks: bin ich Deutsch? Ich bin auch nicht ganz Arabisch... auch nicht ganz schwarz. (Am I German? I'm also not totally Arabic.... Also, not totally Black). These conflicting components of Nura's identity highlight the ways identity is tied to strict sites of authenticity. This is related to the controlling images that objectify a necessary "other" within heteropatriarchy. The "other" defines the lines of authentic identity and those that fall between multiple identities are perceived by dominant cultures as the "eternal foreigner". Nura shows how she herself feels this way as she grapples with the multiple identities that have shaped who she is. Her imagery challenges the inferior position women are faced with in the west and in Islam due to the heteropatriarchy. This inferiority is what Nura attempts to break with as she explores the way her identities conflict and contrast.

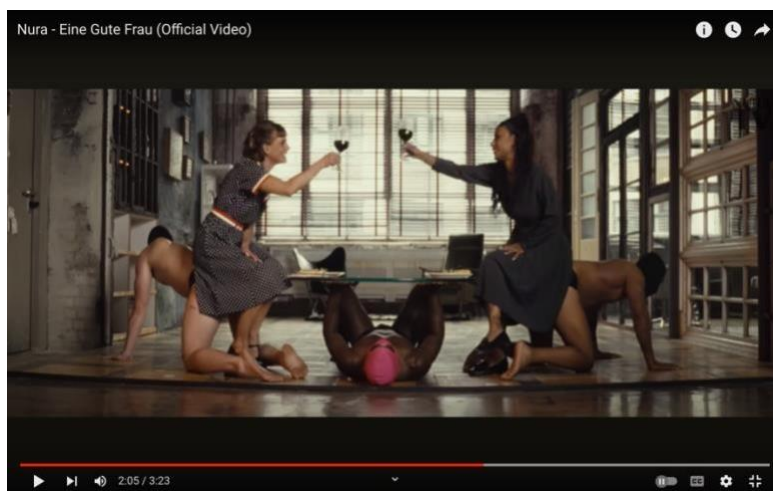


Figure 49 Women use men as tables

Above, figure 49 shows Nura and another woman sharing wine as they sit on different men used as objects, one man serves as a table. This references the objectification of women's bodies

within both the western world and Islam. The women reclaim a position of superiority and control as they sit atop the now objectified men in the video. This makes the process of objectification of women visible. The objectification of men as tables and chairs in the video serves to reposition Nura within the heteropatriarchy and by extension the masculine hip hop space. Within Islam, drinking alcohol is considered Haram. The consumption of wine is Nura determining for herself what she considers impure or bad.

In a performance with Machiavelli Sessions, Nura expands her reach as she bridges hip hop with classical music. She performed her song “Fair” with a live orchestra. In an interview with Kosmos/Machiavelli Sessions she discussed how in school she often attended classical music concerts in Germany and was usually the only Black person. Nura states part of her performance with a live orchestra involved bridging two worlds: the often Black/minority centered hip hop, with classical music, which she refers to as “whiter”. Once Again, Nura’s art oscillates between two worlds. In this case: Black/ White Hip Hop/ Classical. Her presence in commercial hip hop allows her the platform to engage different spaces such as mainstream hip hop and classical music in a way that unsigned/ underground artists cannot afford. In this way commercial hip hop mediates images of how resistance takes place.

In “Fair” Nura raps about an experience she had while on vacation with her mother at the beach. Her mom wore a burkini and Nura a bikini. “Ob du zu viel an hast oder zu wenig es reicht den Leuten nicht.” (Whether you have too much or too little on it doesn’t suit people) (Kosmos Interview). In “Fair” she raps “Warum stört dich das Kopftuch meiner Mama? Warum starst du weil ich wenig an hab?” Nura’s lyrics demonstrate that women’s bodies are always a topic of discussion. The lyrics show how visibility is always attached to power within heteropatriarchy. The ability to look is an act of power that racializes and sexualizes bodies. When Nura’s mother

wore a burkini, she appeared hyper visible because she did not fit into western ideals of womanhood. Her appearance was understood as disempowered because she “had” to wear a burkini. This deemed her as the mysterious non-western other that, despite living in Europe could not “become empowered” because of her choice to cover her body. In contrast, Nura’s choice of Bikini did not fit into western ideas of respectable womanhood and therefore she was critiqued because her appearance fit into images of the exotic, sexualized other. These examples show how both women’s bodies remain hyper visible within the heteropatriarchy no matter what they wear. The heteropatriarchy determines what is permissible for women’s bodies. The examples show that women are policed under both western and Islamic ideals.

In her interview with WDF, Nura says “Ich möchte für einen Tag ein weißer Mann sein. Ich würde mehr verdienen. Ich hätte mehr zu sagen.” (I would like to be a white man for a day. I would earn more. I would have more to say.) Nura’s interview sheds light on the ways different bodies have a completely different experience of occupying spaces. When she says she would like to be a white man for a day she shows how different values are attached to gender and race. Her performances and lyrics show that white male privilege goes unquestioned. In contrast, as a woman of color, Nura must take up the unpaid labor of not only domestic duties but also resistance. Still the value attributed to how her body is racialized and gendered does not give her the same financial status or voice of white men in the heteropatriarchy.

For Nura, hip hop has been an outlet for addressing the inconsistencies that exist for German minorities. She moved to Germany from Eritrea at the age of three after her family had to flee the Gulf war. Nura says she still does not have citizenship and fears the process of going to immigration services to extend her asylum stay, even as a commercial celebrity. Additionally, she mentions that, as a Black person in Germany, she feels under surveillance due to the ways

whiteness remains as a marker of authentic Germanness that contributes to how her body is racialized. In her song “Niemals Stress mit den Bullen” (Never stress with the police) she raps “Ich bin doch kein Rassist, ich habe einen schwarzen Freund. Sag mal würdest du dich auch so benehmen, wärt ihr da bei euch? Dafür sprichst du aber wirklich gutes Deutsch.” (I’m not a racist I have a Black friend. Tell me would you act like this? You speak good German (for being Black) Nura’s song text elaborates on the ways racism can at times be implicit, yet for Nura who says she feels under surveillance as a Black person in Germany, the experience of racism feels overbearing. In an act of solidarity across the Black diaspora she references the murder of George Floyd, “letzten Wörter I Can’t Breathe – rest in peace” For Nura, her music goes beyond Germany and attempts to show how both institutional and physical violence are being done to BIPOC people. She views herself as part of a larger project of dismantling gendered and racialized oppression and global, state sanctioned anti-blackness. When Nura references the murder of George Floyd in German hip hop she is also trying to raise awareness about anti-Blackness in Germany. She calls for a restructuring of “fairness” and who gets to decide what is fair. As she performs with a live orchestra and raps the above line, she attempts to bridge a gap. She shows that violence against BIPOC people is something all communities should be concerned with. For this reason, she performs at the intersection of two vastly different musical genres and across multiple communities.

Nura highlights how objectification of women’s bodies is something that needs to be disrupted. She uses performance to provoke change. I have shown how Nura’s album artwork speaks back to the ways women are restricted in both German and Islam cultures. By placing a tabu topic, such as women’s menstruation at the center of her album she attempts to break from the objectifying and entangled categories of race, gender, and sexuality that restrict her. She sets

new parameters for women, ultimately aiming for own ability to define what is considered “equality”. Nura’s “Eine gute Frau” (A good woman) has also displayed how Collin’s “controlling images” uphold the heteropatriarchy as such images proliferate and define insiders and outsiders.

In Nura’s video she uncovers the controlling images that persist for women in Germany and Islam. In doing so she attempts to break open scripts about authenticity regarding womanhood in Germany and Islam.

Breezy

Breezy’s non-binary gender of neither man nor woman is a form of embodied resistance that remakes discourse about the racialized and gendered body. Breezy presents an in-between which they are in full control of, defining the parameters of their own subjectivity. Breezy is selfproduced, their image and performance is all their own creation. This demonstrates a link between performance in Breezy’s art and the performative aspects of their biracial American-German identity. Johnson’s Quare theory understands performance as “theory in the flesh” with the performative or discursive practices being historically situated to bring the subject into being. “Theories in the flesh also conjoin theory and practice through embodied politics of resistance.” (Johnson 4) Johnson stresses caution towards “authenticating blackness or the black experience”, which is precisely what Breezy shies away from. Rather, they speak about their own experiences, at times intimately within their lyrics (“Low Power Mode”). They produce new subjectivities and possibilities of identity for themselves, thereby unhinging historically situated discourses about normativity. Breezy’s body and hair become sites that allow them to navigate the performativity required of outsiders.

Breezy's performance draws attention back to the urban space as a place of cultural remaking within hip hop³⁶. In Germany, the urban space/ city has been the site of cultural transgressions, where a mixing of ethnicities, cultures, religions, and languages occurs and at times challenges the idea of a stable notion of authentic Germanness.³⁷ Breezy's self-produced and engineered sound and image are unique, offering a different listening and viewing experience than more mainstream hip hop such as Nura. Because Breezy's music is not attached to a major record label this allows them a freedom of expression that more mainstream artists may not have. Often underground or unsigned artists within the hip hop genre are understood as more authentic because they own their own image and sound. On the one hand Breezy is authentic as they are underground and unsigned. On the other hand, one could understand Breezy's reliance on self-production as a sign of a larger problem in hip hop, where women and queer artists are not viewed as "authentic" and therefore are forced to find their own routes to music production and artistry. Breezy as a queer, non-binary artist challenges the heteronormative nature of the hip hop genre.

Breezy's crafting of clever lyricism over unique beats and soundscapes provides the listener an immersive experience that oscillates between the worlds Breezy occupies. From LA to Berlin, Breezy understands themselves as a Black feminist artist, whose music follows in the path of Audre Lorde, a major influence on Breezy. Lorde's influence on the Black German feminist movement, specifically during her time in Berlin points to the ways Breezy's music attempts to revive and build from Lorde's work in articulating minority identity across the

³⁶ See introduction and ch.1 for a larger discussion about the role of the urban space in hip hop. As my dissertation has shown, the urban space serves as a site of authenticity in hip hop. For minorities who are othered against the white German status quo the urban space is the place where cultures and ethnicities collide to create new possibilities for embodying German identity.

³⁷ See George Mosse discussion in introduction.

Atlantic between the U.S. and Germany. Breezy's music can be understood as an artistic extension of the seminal *Farbe Bekennen* in the way that their music creates dialogue amongst racialized minorities in the U.S. and Germany. Their music shows how identity reaches across borders, and past claims to citizenship. It is by articulating new identity, creating space that was not previously granted, that artists like Breezy challenge the ways heteropatriarchy attempts to maintain what has always been.

Blackness has been understood within Germany as non-citizenry. It is important to note the distinction of Black identity during WWI (*Rheinlandsbastarde*), a derogatory term which signified eugenics and racial purity of the white German Volk. Post WWII one begins to see a shift in the understanding of Black German identity, which was directly linked with the presence of American GIs. "Since the end of the second world war, it has been through the term *Besatzungskinder* (Occupation children), that many Afro-Germans have come to be known. The term invokes the presence of Black American bodies even if this is not the sociological reality" (Partridge 56). Breezy's performances rely on both Berlin and Los Angeles as necessary spaces for re-articulating Black identity across the Atlantic. Post-national futures move beyond claims to citizenship and heritage as markers of belonging.

In hip hop, claims to Blackness operate as a means of resistance to a politics that centers citizenship and nationality as components of belonging. "Blackness has become a means to express the particularity of suffering in various contexts, to respond to the predicament of the problematic of being or having become a noncitizen, or one who has been systematically removed from social and legal claims of inclusion and supposed social and legal claims" (Partridge 21). As I have shown throughout this dissertation, Turkish and Kurdish artists may also invoke Black power symbolism as a means of resistance, critiquing German identity and

belonging. This locates new ways of being German that stray away from questions of ethnicity, heritage, and citizenship. Moreover, it reimagines possibilities for Blackness. “Blackness has been a historical position that has traditionally been opposed to Europeanness” (Partridge 11). Claims to Blackness are about taking back power. However, when these claims essentialize and authenticate one experience they become problematic.

In Breezy’s “About Me” video the viewer witnesses the ways Breezy disidentifies with the white norms that attempt to define their identity. In the video, Breezy’s racial identity is obtrusively changed as doctors attempt to paint them white, make their eyes blue, and cut off their dreadlocks (Figure 50, 51).



Figure 50 Doctors paint Breezy



Figure 51 Doctors cut Breezy's hair

Throughout the video, Breezy struggles to break free from the doctors. They resist the efforts to be painted white. This shows how whiteness is privileged. In the video whiteness is violently forced on Breezy, leaving them powerless as they are strapped down while doctors perform “medical procedures” to whiten Breezy. Breezy draws on the ways the body can be a site of resistance. The viewer witnesses the ways Breezy attempts to resist the doctors whitening of their body. Eventually, white paint is poured on Breezy (Figure 52). The images are disturbing and point to the obtrusive ways whiteness designates racial norms.



Figure 52 Breezy is forced to drink white substance

Breezy raps: “How far can I go when I stand in my truth? Seems like the right thing to do... I’m out here losin’ my mind.” The lyrics portray the struggle Breezy faces when confronted with being biracial. In the video, they are forced into whiteness. “I was raised as a white kid and now that I’m Black, ain’t no goin’ back”, Breezy states. The lyrics contrast with what is going on around Breezy, as doctors attempt to make them appear white, using racialized medical procedures. This video represents forced assimilation to the dominant (read: white) culture. This shows how Breezy experiences their racialization as white norms are imposed on them. Breezy attempts to reframe Black positionality by reimagining Black subjectivity within the in-between as they resist’ the doctors attempt at re-making how their body appears.

In Breezy’s “Low Power Mode” they rap “I been in low low low power mode all year think its time to switch it up to high gear”. A melodic, lo-fi drum beat sounds in the background as we view Breezy attempting to move past what they are experiencing. However, they remain trapped within their own thoughts, seemingly melancholic. Breezy’s video depicts this as an isolating experience for them. Below, figured 53, 54, 55 are exemplary of the ways Breezy’s

video show how white supremacist culture and racism isolate. Throughout the video Breezy is alone, attempting to grapple with the ways being an outsider makes them feel unmotivated (figure 53). At other times in the video Breezy is seen in crowded German spaces, pointing to the ways that they never feel seen and blend into the surroundings. At times, as they look in the mirror, they can no longer see themselves. This shows a tension between being seen and being able to view one's own identity.



Figure 53 Breezy in the mirror

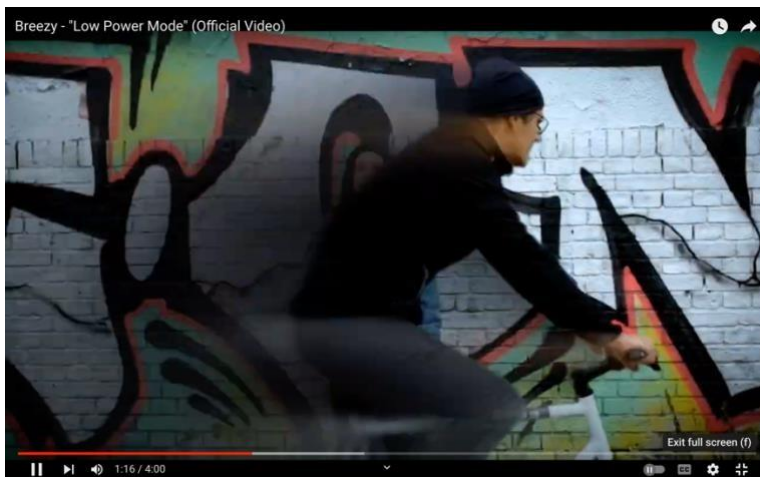


Figure 54 Man on bicycle

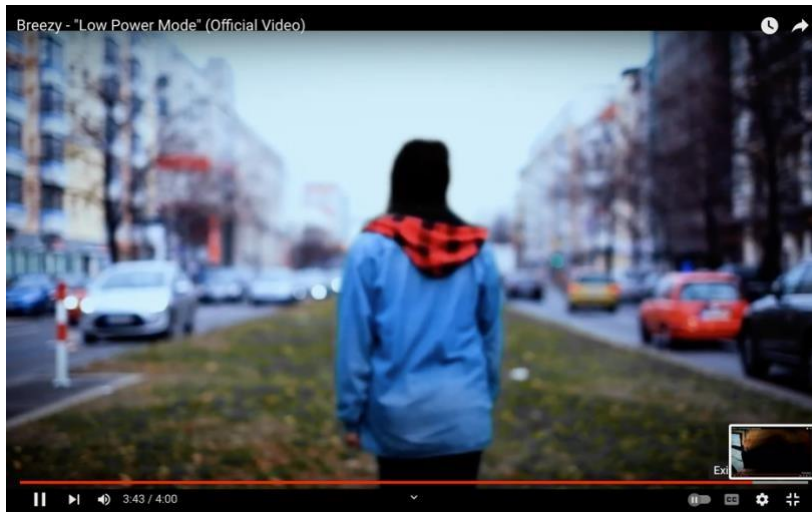


Figure 55 Breezy in the city

People pass by Breezy, and they go unnoticed, literally blending into the background. As Breezy walks down the middle of a crowded avenue Breezy is shown as the only physical body occupying the street whilst car traffic and buildings surround them. This further reiterates Breezy's attempt to "break free" from the isolation of being othered and feeling between two worlds. "Imma be free this year. Imma pick up my head and puff up my chest." However, throughout the video we see how this seems undoable as Breezy feels weighed down by racism. Questioning the state they find themselves in they ask, "why can't I appreciate the food on my plate, that I have a job and my family is safe, that it's only been assault and not rape, that it's only been discrimination and never crimes of hate." Breezy depicts the feeling of guilt that weighs them down and feels inescapable. For Breezy, part of unhinging heteropatriarchal norms is recognizing the ways that the heteropatriarchy works to keep minorities like Breezy in a state of what Breezy describes as "low power mode", where one can always be grateful their current situation is not worse.

The use of the German urban space in Breezy's performance is a strategy to remake the in- between as a place that fosters belonging across the Black diaspora. "Ich bin ja ne deutsch.

Un exotica bin ich och nich. Ich weeiß nicht wohin un zurück kan ich och nicht” (Oguntoye, Ayim, and Dagmar 229) [“I am not German. I’m also not exotic. I don’t know where to go to and I can’t go back”]. Indeed, Breezy’s music exemplifies a third space, which Breezy creates between Los Angeles and Berlin. Berlin’s urban atmosphere becomes the outlet, which allows them to work through and explore the “tragic mulatto” in different racial contexts from Germany to the United States.³⁸ Breezy’s lyrics and performances call into question racial authenticity, and the idea that if one is biracial, or identifies with multiple ethnicities, one must “choose”. One can exist in the “between” and Breezy shows this to be an empowered space. It is in the between that Breezy creates and determines an expansive post-national identity, that disentangles the borders that define “authenticity” within heteropatriarchy.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how Nura and Breezy attempt to disrupt the heteropatriarchy as they come from different sides of hip hop. Nura, as a major record label artist considers the intersection of German/ Western cultures with Islam. Menstruation imagery from her latest album “Periodt” raises questions about the role of women in 21st century Germany and Islam. Embodied performances like Nura’s subvert meanings about the relationship between body and identity. As Nura uses sexualized menstruation imagery, she attempts to redefine the ways women are limited in what they can do and how they can behave by exposing the ways the heteropatriarchy codes her body.

³⁸ Portrayals of the tragic mulatto emphasized her personal pathologies: self-hatred, depression, alcoholism, sexual perversion. If light enough to “pass” as white, she did but passing led to deeper self-loathing. She pitied or despised Black people and the “blackness”; she hated or feared white people yet desperately sought their approval (Pilgrim 1). See Breezy’s “Tragic Mulatto EP”.

I have shown how the distinction between the mainstream Nura and the unsigned Breezy raises questions about how race and heteronormativity are embedded within capitalism and necessitate the act of resistance to affirm an exoticized other. Ideas about the German nation and German identity are reproduced as the image of the exoticized other is upheld through a commercialized version of the “other” that we see through the act of hip hop consumption. Thus, it becomes important to ask: who controls the production/ artist image? If a white German production team is creating Nura’s image for global consumption, how does this contribute to producing stereotypes about an exotic other?

While Nura’s music is controlled by a larger record label, the “underground” Breezy is free to explore the ways that binaries are hard to escape, even in the between space where Breezy often finds herself. Both Breezy’s and Nura’s music are concerned with transnational identity. While Nura is concerned with German- Islam, Breezy explores the intersection of Black American and Black German identity. Breezy shows how Black power movements can build transnational solidarity amongst minorities. Hip hop performance is a lens for understanding how LGBTQ minorities disrupt the heteropatriarchy, which is often reflected within the production of commercial hip hop. This is seen as artists like Breezy must navigate hip hop from the underground to make the art the way they want. Nura does not focus as much on her LGBTQ identity. Songs like “Eine Gute Frau” are meant to question the ways women “ought” to behave across cultures. Many of her songs are about resistance yet still fit into the heteronormative model of hip hop. These two artists show different ways of unhinging the heteropatriarchy while working within a genre that, through commercialism, reinforces strict sites of the heteropatriarchy in hip hop and Germany. Both artists use embodied resistance in an act of

building transnational solidarity and reimagining German identity while remaking the “between” space.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The hip hop genre shows how stage performance and the everyday performativity required of racialized minorities are closely related. I will summarize the findings from each chapter in relation to the research questions and discuss the value and contribution of this scholarship within the field of German Studies and Women's and Gender Studies. Finally, the limitations of this research project are discussed herein and suggest opportunities for further research.

Findings

The chapters have shown how hip hop offers an intersectional lens for thinking through the ways minorities are racialized, sexualized, and “othered” by the mainstream German society. This project highlighted how some minorities in hip hop use the genre to expose their experiences of being “othered” in terms of race, gender, sexuality, and class. Furthermore, my research has shown how the heteropatriarchy is connected to policing “authenticity” and belonging in both German hip hop and German identity. Hip hop performances uphold standards of gender, race, and sexuality that at times mirror those standards outside of the hip hop performance space. Hip hop is particularly situated to show these connections because it has traditionally been a genre for minorities, or as Deluxe mentions in Ch.1 “a genre for the underdogs”. The ways hip hop contends with class makes the genre particularly well suited to challenge mainstream expectations for minority behavior through intersectional analysis.

The chapters contended with the ways national symbols of Germanness have upheld ideas about the nation and belonging. Images of “Blackness” have been perpetuated and transmitted within commercial hip hop. These images are transferred across cultures as other minorities use hip hop as a space for resistance. A discussion about masculinity and the

upholding of German nationalism showed the importance of masculinity in discussions about belonging.

Chapter 1 showed how authenticity within hip hop has been policed through the upholding of certain ideals of masculinity. George Mosse's scholarship highlighted how 19th and 20th century images of the German nation were upheld through masculinity. Samy Deluxe and Haftbefehl showed the importance of upholding heteronormativity in their sub-genres of "Conscious" and "Gangster" rap. Street credibility and misogyny were strategies that both artists used to appear as "authentic" within hip hop. By incorporating these markers within their performances, they were able to explore their outsider experiences regarding German identity. This shows how hip hop requires performativity of certain aspects of gender, class, and sexuality so that it is regarded and marked as "the hip hop genre". The performative aspects within hip hop are precisely the aspects that are transferred across the Atlantic as Haftbefehl adopts similar "markers" of belonging to establish himself within the hip hop genre. Only then is he able to begin reflecting on and refuting his position as a German outsider.

Throughout the dissertation, the everyday performativity required of minorities is contended with in the hip hop space. Chapter 1 revealed how respectability politics are a critical component that minorities in Germany are expected to uphold. The project defined respectability politics as the white norms surrounding race, gender, class, and sexuality, for minorities. Chapter 1 marked how performativity is an aspect of authenticity and belonging in both hip hop and Germanness. Hip hop offers a space outside of the dominant society for viewing how performativity is related to respectability.

Deluxe's performance used multiculturalism to appeal to the German majority and present Deluxe as the "good outsider". In contrast, Haftbefehl, with his "gangster" persona and

criminal activity did not try to appeal likeable or respectable. Both male performers needed to uphold hip hop's standard of masculinity to appear credible within hip hop as they attempted to navigate the experience of being racialized. Deluxe's performance was from 2001 and Haftbefehl's "Wieder am Block" was from 2021. Twenty years later, this shows hip hop is slow to change how masculinity must be performed to appear "authentic". Contrasting the two forms of masculinity opened a discussion about how respectability becomes the starting point for discussions about the everyday performativity required of German minorities. Furthermore, Chapter 1 showed how hip hop offers limited possibilities of expression for women and LGBTQ artists.

Women and LGBTQ artists in Chapters 2 and 3 attempted to renegotiate their position within the masculine hip hop space by intersectionally challenging the norms upheld for their bodies. As they sought to reframe how their bodies are read, this raised parallels to how Women of Color are racialized and sexualized in Germany. Again, hip hop provided a lens to explore how the heteropatriarchy maintains power structures within hip hop that mirror everyday life outside of the hip hop space. Artists demonstrated how hard it is to break from the model of hip hop that is reinforced through commercialism. Representations of sexuality were critical for how gender was performed and read as "authentic" for both male and female artists. Heteronormative sexuality was critical to participation in commercial hip hop. Even in attempts at "feminist resistance", performances required displays of sexuality that affirmed hip hop as a heteronormative genre. In chapter 3, Breezy, an underground, unsigned artist, attempted to move past binary identity within hip hop. The binary pushes strict standards of gender and sexuality. They attempted to reposition themselves as belonging within the "between", as neither "man nor woman". This space allowed them a unique position to explore more expansive ways of

embodying hip hop performance that moved past the ways the artists in chapters 1 and 2 were restricted by limited subject possibilities. Breezy was the only artist whose performances attempted to step outside of the heteronormative component policed in hip hop.

In chapter 2, Lady Bitch Ray grappled with how the hip hop space is a “boys club” and how, as a Turkish German woman, she has little autonomy over her own image. This relates to the already existing possibilities for Turkish German women in the broader society. Turkish-German minorities today still occupy the role of an “other” that is classed due to the former “guest worker program”. Class is why LBR’s sexual performance is coded as “not respectable” or “obscene”. As LBR attempted to make feminist protest music, she relied on her sexuality to make a point that her body is reduced to only sexualized performance. She needed to display sexuality as a component of her authenticity within hip hop. At the same time this reaffirmed some German’s understanding of LBR as exotic or hypersexual. The German majority could not look past this aspect of her performance, even in her feminist protest attempts. Thus, her aesthetic attempts failed to communicate her message because of how class and sexuality intersected in her performance and reaffirmed her incapability of adopting respectability standards for her body. LBR offers a unique lens for viewing how Turkishness is classed in Germany because of the two spaces she occupies as both rapper and academic. People could not overlook her sexuality that seemed out of bounds. They discredited her as an academic due to her non-respectable behavior. This shows how commercial versions of authentic identity that are produced through hip hop are highly intertwined with how minority identity is coded outside of hip hop. LBR offers a case of how Turkish- German minorities are still classed today.

The dissertation focused on examining U.S. hip hop’s influence on German hip hop because that raised questions about the development of Black German identity alongside

representations of “Blackness” transnationally. Artist’s like Samy Deluxe and Haftbefehl felt they identified with the image of Black masculinity constructed in U.S. hip hop. The study showed how it is necessary to consider U.S. hip hop alongside German hip hop because it offers nuanced understandings of how race is coded on a global scale and how commercialism reinforces versions of “authentic identity” that the artists in chapter 2 and 3 have trouble breaking from, as can be seen above with LBR. Women’s bodies are accessories for upholding the standards of masculinity in mainstream hip hop. The women in chapter 2 demonstrate how it becomes hard to break from this, even in feminist protest.

A queer of color analysis shows how commercialism advances ideas about normativity. The music industry produces images of identity that fit within hip hop sold as a commercial product. For consumers of hip hop to know they are purchasing “the right product” certain markers of gender, sexuality, and class need to be performed accordingly. My dissertation demonstrated how “authenticity” is performative. This calls into question the limited ways bodies are coded within society. When Haftbefehl flaunts his fancy cars and material wealth, along with his gangster status he is employing a similar aesthetic seen in U.S. hip hop. In doing so, he performs an essentializing image of “Blackness” that commercial hip hop has put forth. When a Kurdish- German minority does this, it disrupts how Blackness is coded outside of the hip hop space. This allows possibilities for more expansive subjectivities within hip hop and decenters Black heterosexual masculinity as the only possibility for hip hop performance. Embodied resistance is a critical aspect for challenging restrictive performance scripts advanced through the commercial industry. Disrupting these scripts highlights the performativity required in upholding “authenticity”.

Embodiment was central to how artists expressed their experiences of racialization. Artists adopted personas or acted in ways that challenge German belonging outside of the performance space. Their performances called national symbols of the nation into question as they performed outside the bounds of German respectability. In chapter 2, the figure of Germania was challenged as artists such as Leila Akinyi and LBR attempted to embody a new German womanhood that incorporated empowered sexuality. Through embodied resistance, artists tried to disrupt the ways national symbols of Germanness represented ethnically rooted German identity. Leila Akinyi used a Volkswagen as an accessory of her own embodiment to reconfigure how national symbols construct an idea of Germanness that is both culturally and historically situated. Akinyi stole a Volkswagen “the people’s car” and vandalized it, writing the word “Slumdog” across the hood of the car. Akinyi used symbols such as the Volkswagen as a strategy to redefine what is considered German identity.

Urban space functioned within the dissertation as the physical place where hip hop transformed borders that define culture, ethnicity, and language. Haftbefehl, Deluxe, and Breezy all contended with the urban space in different ways. For Deluxe, Hamburg became the place to build community as he proclaimed his multicultural vision for Germany. Haftbefehl’s Frankfurt/Mainpark became the place to traverse codes of belonging. He showed how financial prosperity through street crime in his local neighborhood gave him status that he could not get in the dominant German society. He depicted how he built a reputation for himself in his local “block”. For Haftbefehl, the urban space functioned as a counter to the dominant German society. Contrasting the ways artists saw themselves within the urban space offered ways of understanding different “betweens”. Deluxe found the urban space to be a site of community building with the dominant society. Haftbefehl’s performance depicted the urban space as a site

where alternative rules reign supreme. Breezy found the urban space to be a “between”, situated in both Los Angeles and Berlin. Their performances traversed both urban spaces to situate them in a post-colonial vision of “between” that decenters binary thinking while detaching geographical location from a specific culture. Regardless of how artists used the urban space in their performances, the importance of the hyperlocal within hip hop is critical to a now global genre. Hip hop offers a lens for viewing how race is coded both internationally and locally. Artists must contend with racial histories in Germany, while still navigating ideas about “Blackness” in hip hop that are transmitted largely through the commercial industry. Haftbefehl, Deluxe, and Breezy, displayed the ways that different urban spaces allowed them to renegotiate belonging outside of the dominant German society.

Contributions to the Fields of German and Women and Gender Studies

Performance studies and visual culture are ideal areas for showing how intersectionality works. Jose Muñoz’ theory of disidentification has shown performance to be a strategy for disrupting dominant understandings of identity and belonging. Muñoz’s theory hinges on the understanding that culture is unthinkable without performance. His scholarship shows how minorities use performance tactics that challenge already encoded cultural meaning. In this way minorities can challenge their own exclusion. My research shows how even within performance, there is a performative aspect that at times reflects the dominant culture’s beliefs about minorities. When viewed together, performance and performativity offer an understanding of the ways bodies are coded transnationally and hyperlocally. Only then can minorities break strict codes about gender, race, class, and sexuality. My research offers an example of intersectional approaches to performance and performativity.

Within German Studies, my research expands on what might be considered as “Visual Culture” or “Lyrik”. The artists throughout the dissertation have demonstrated how hip hop is a complex social performance space. One can investigate hip hop lyrics and text as spoken word poetry that expands on what is traditionally considered as poetry. One might also consider that hip hop is not poetry. It may be something entirely different. My dissertation provides a foundation for further investigating what this might be.

I have shown that minority identity is still tightly constricted to performance tropes in visual culture that reflect the dominant culture’s beliefs about minorities. Unhinging these performance tropes requires thinking through the ways the dominant society shapes ideas about performance itself. The commercial hip hop industry provided an example of how this works. Artist’s performances needed certain “markers of authenticity” that fit within the hip hop genre. The commercial hip hop industry offers a product that reaffirms existing beliefs about some minorities in hip hop that gets translated to perceptions about minorities outside of hip hop. Codes about minorities are therefore tightly intertwined between the performance space and the dominant society. Understanding this is important because it shows the necessity of viewing the intersectional aspects of performances. By doing so, more expansive possibilities for performance and Germanness may begin to emerge.

Limitations of Research and Recommendations for Further Research

Throughout the dissertation short YouTube videos, artist lyrics, and internet interviews with artists were gathered and an image of each artist’s experience of racialization was presented. Without directly interviewing the artist’s themselves one cannot know what their experience as a German minority is like. The aim of this project was to expose the existing codes about minorities in German society. It looked more broadly at how “Blackness” is performed in hip

hop outside of the United States as a strategy to refute white supremacist culture. It also showed the importance of “anti-respectability” as a strategy for renegotiating boundaries of belonging. Direct interviews with the artists would allow questions about both of these two aspects. It would be beneficial to gain a closer look at the role of the commercial hip hop industry in how artist performances and lyrics are made. To do this one would need to be in direct communication with industry producers themselves.

This dissertation has been concerned with letting minorities represent or speak about experiences of racialization. I have shown that in hip hop, performances needed to include markers of authenticity. Due to this, it is hard to tell whether artists are performing their own experiences of racialization or if they are performing tropes that show how racialization works. One might expand this project by contrasting the hip hop performance space with an intersectional analysis of another musical genre to see how performance tropes uphold codes about race, gender, sexuality, or class. Contrasting two genres could provide new ways of expanding performance spaces across different cultures.

Social media platforms like YouTube were essential for artists to expose racialization. Such platforms allow fans and non-fans alike to instantly engage with artist content. Glimpses of minority identities are embodied in a short time frame. Performances affirm or refute the dominant society’s perceptions about German belonging and where minorities “fit in.” On the one hand YouTube and other social media platforms used for resistance are ideally situated to challenge German identity. On the other hand, nationalist, monocultural narratives about German identity are perpetuated through social media. A queer of color approach to media studies might investigate how marginalized citizens position themselves within these capitalistic media forms that largely contribute to nationalism and xenophobia. Future research might also consider

engaging with both artist's social media accounts and performances to better distinguish between what is performance and what is lived experience.

Closing Summary

Authenticity is an imposter, out to get us all. Performances trouble everyday performativity. My dissertation has shown that both performance and authenticity are performative. Authenticity within hip hop relies on performance tropes that are hard to break. Different bodies undertake tropes that have come to signify authenticity within the hip hop genre. In doing so, they highlight the performative nature of performing authentically. It is important to consider how different performance spaces incorporate different tropes. An intersectional analysis of performance spaces themselves highlights the performative nature of performance and shows that these two areas must be considered together. This allows one to critically analyze monolithic perceptions of culture and identity that decenter the dominant culture's beliefs about minorities.

Understanding the intersections of performance, performativity, and authenticity allows for more expansive possibilities for embodying Germanness that incorporates a range of identities.

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