# I Mix What I Like!
# In Defense and Appreciation of the Rap Music Mixtape as "National" and "Dissident" Communication

JARED A. BALL

Morgan State University

The rap music mixtape is hip hop's original mass medium. Yet, despite its importance historically and its current relevance within hip hop, the mixtape remains one of the more overlooked aspects of the world's most popular cultural expression. Similarly, the interdisciplinary approach applied here—seeking to place the mixtape within a broader international anti-colonial struggle and also to examine the mixtape as a "national" mass medium developing within a colonized "hip-hop nation,"—is also an underappreciated and potentially fruitful approach to the mixtape and communication as examples that help to expose those colonial relationships. By taking popular, but rarely explored concepts of hip hop as a "nation" and applying theories of internal colonialism, the mixtape's history and current position assume different meanings.

### Introduction

Not long ago, Derrick Bell (1999) described the current impact of U.S. public policy on African America as the equivalent of "weekly, random round-ups of several hundred" black people who are then "taken to a secluded place and shot" (Bell, 1999, p. 806). James Cone recently described these same policies in terms of a prison industrial complex, adding that the existence of ghettos acts as an institutional mass "lynching," or mass "crucifixion," which instills "social order" and "control" via "terror." These institutions, Cone went on to say, impose constant restrictions on an ability to "express and articulate [a people's] humanity" (Moyers, 2007).[1] These conditions of internal colonization determined for the "hip-hop nation" the need and form of its cultural expression; they also shaped its nationhood and the national character of its original mass medium—the mixtape.

Jared A. Ball: jared.ball@morgan.edu
Date submitted: 2010–05–23

[1] Further details on the actual devolution of black/Latino material conditions in the United States can be found in Muhammad et al. (2004), Ball (2005, 2010, 2011), Rivera et al. (2008), and Austin (2008), who described black America's economic recession as "permanent," or they can be summarized in the statement from Charles Ogletree that black America's percentage of the nation's wealth has not improved since 1865 (Levine, 2004).

As an expression of the colonized, the mixtape remains a kind of unsanctioned or "dissident communication" (Simpson, 1993; Streitmatter, 2001) exercised by oppressed populations seeking to disrupt imposed media environments, which of necessity narrowly limit the roles and function of communication. The rap music mixtape, evolving out of colonial antagonisms, asks for no permission, is bound by no laws of the state, and disseminates a national mythology essential to all national groupings. It represents, in practice and potential, "revolutionary media"—that which is "illegal and subversive mass communication utilizing the press and broadcasting to overthrow government or wrest control from alien rulers" (Darling, 2007). As such, it is also subjected to all the traditional responses of power, primarily criminalization and co-optation. When analyzed as national communication, the mixtape, itself already often ignored by scholars of all disciplines, becomes a rich source of information exposing broader systems of dominance, while offering exciting options for those looking to "Upset the Setup."[2]

It is in this context that *I Mix What I Like!* is an honorific to Steve Biko's *I Write What I Like!*[3] The purpose is to engage a "critical memory . . . the very faculty of revolution," which "is always in crisis" because it "judges severely, censures righteously [and] renders hard ethical evaluations of the past that it never defines as well-passed" (Baker, 1995, p. 7), so as to allow for the placement of the mixtape in a pan-African (indeed a pan-anti-colonial) lineage of Biko's own politically driven journalism. In previous work on the subject, my focus was on a specific mixtape radio project on which I have worked for many years. That work emphasized the rationale and history behind the application of Shah's theory of "emancipatory journalism" (Shah, 1996) to the mixtape and the experience and study of one (our own) attempt at developing that concept in Washington, DC (Ball, 2009a). In this article, the focus shifts more to the political, social, and historical context in which the mixtape emerged and still operates. Here, the mixtape is discussed more as a communicative tool subsumed within a process of African/Latin American internal colonization, where it is perceived as a "national" medium with the hope that such a perspective can broaden a focus on those processes that continue to impact these and similarly situated communities. This view sees the mixtape as akin to Biko's journalism in support of a black consciousness and of a political movement seeking to "wrest control from alien rulers" (Darling, 2007). That is, the mixtape is more appropriately placed within a context and legacy of media production from oppressed populations seeking to address their own mass communication needs.

Similarities or comparisons made, such as those of the mixtape's evolution to pan-African, anti-colonial journalism/media making, can also be found in its multivocal nature. That is, just as it is understood that African responses to enslavement, colonization, partition, and apartheid were varied—even among the most left and militant (Mandela, 1984; Wilderson, 2008)—so, too, were (and are) the responses to and uses of what is widely accepted as hip hop's pan-African foundation and experience (Chang, 2005). In this case, the mixtape too is conceived differently. For some, the mixtape once provided a burgeoning hip-hop nation with its sole mass medium, which today remains, despite the massive increase and spread of new and global media technology, essential to the survival of hip-hop artists (Eure & Spady, 1991; Maher, 2005). For others, mixtapes are corporate guerrilla marketing

---

[2] As noted by D. J. Eurok at http://www.djeurok.com

[3] A collection of newsletters penned by Biko under the pseudonym "Frank Talk." They were meant to inspire a black consciousness movement (BCM) and to incite a colonized population into spirited rebellion.

mechanisms to build street credibility prior to the fully sponsored promotion and release of artists into the mainstream (Pulley, 2010). This, on the one hand, is how a U.S.-born artist like Jay-Z and a Senegalese-born artist like Akon would use mixtapes on their way to becoming corporate-funded, politically expedient mainstream artists who top last year's money-earnings list (Greenberg, 2010). It is also why South African-born artists protesting the commercial purposes of the 2010 World Cup and more radically political U.S.-born artists like Baltimore's Precise Science or Washington, DC's Head-Roc would find the mixtape as one of only a few outlets available to distribute or "air" their work (Ball, 2009a).

Mixtapes did not originate with rap music, nor do they today retain solely the definition or style of rap music mixtapes. Rather, the mixtape, as a tradition within hip hop, is a specific and distinct form of mixtape and will be the sole focus here (Brewster & Broughton, 2000; Moore, 2004). Today, rap music mixtapes are distributed via CD (compact disc) or digitally as MP3 or AAC files and yet, despite a relative obscurity, it is understood that "there wouldn't be a rap music industry if it weren't for mixtapes ... the development of hip hop revolves around [them as] a singularly crucial but often overlooked medium" (Maher, 2005, pp. 138–139). Moreover, while the mixtape indeed suffers a lack of attention, so, too, does the larger approach of its emergence as a national medium or as national communication, and by extension, what this means for other studies. When the African and Latin American communities—out of which evolved a hip-hop cultural expression—are put within a context of internal colonialism, or "nations within nations," other modes of interpretation similarly evolve, revealing important frames of analysis and active response to these conditions.

This foundation is essential because of a tradition of communication scholarship (as well as that of most other disciplines) that removes both African and Latin America from their rightful place within an international context. By not extending to them analyses that center imperialism, or its extension—colonialism—so much of what is discussed regarding their material conditions and cultural expression becomes muddied. Approaching hip hop as a cultural expression of a developing "nation within a nation ... [or] a nation without a nation" (Cheney, 2005, pp. 13–19) assists in interpreting the forms of expression (a mixtape), methods of dissemination (street vending, taxi cabs, beauty salons, and barbershops), and the dominant societal response (criminalization, corporate co-optation as undercover street promotion).

Problems in interpretation consistently arise because black Americans are often isolated from methodologies or theoretical lenses (Tabb, 1970) that may result in more substantive conclusions, as opposed to those described by Fred Hampton as "answers that don't answer, explanations that don't explain, . . . [and] . . . conclusions that don't conclude. . . ." (Gray & Alk, 1971). As Tim Lake (2007) has said more recently, the tendency in academia to remove black America from matters of colonialism and imperialism leaves:

> theorists without recourse to the African American experience as a resource for understanding and possibly resolving the knotty problem of positionality. Moreover, this omission allows for the false reading of the Western imperialist impulse as distinct from Black chattel slavery in America and Jim and Jane Crowism. (p. 80)

The naturalness with which the rap music mixtape continues to expose processes of colonization comes initially from its origins in the preexisting conditions and lineages of anti-colonial struggle, which had been passed down to the pre-"hip-hop generation" (Kitwana, 2002).[4] More specifically, some early artists who use(d) mixtapes were themselves directly involved in those struggles. Paris, an artist from the Bay Area in California, was in the Nation of Islam and had intimate ties to former members of the Black Panther Party (Eure & Spady, 1991, p. 82). And Professor X was the son of "Sonny Carson, [who is] very well known within the Black Nationalist community. I could not help being what I am!" (p. 193). Artists themselves from all over the "mother country" were shaped by previously existing anti-colonial nationalist politics. Hip hop, then, was simply the most recent format adopted by those responding culturally to the continuity of conditions.

### Ethnogenesis: The Hip-Hop Nation and the Mixtape as National Communication

Hip hop has often been described as a "nation" (Chang, 2005; Higgins, 2009), but as such, has seen less focused study (Cheney, 2005). More specifically, hip hop or the hip-hop nation has seen even less description or analysis—especially with a focus on communication or media—in terms of its relative conditions of "internal colonialism," or as a "nation within a nation" (Ball, 2009, 2011). Here, I am, of necessity, simplifying long-standing debates over the use of models of colonialism when discussing African or Latin Americans (and including indigenous native populations), as well as the debates around definitions of "nation" and "nationality." At the same time, such an approach even so simplified, assists in the important expansion of frames of reference that help expose the mixtape as a mass medium and as an invaluable tool in identifying important and overlooked aspects of a U.S. communication structure.

On the one hand, I acknowledge that blacks and Latin Americans do not fully meet standard definitions of internal colonies or nations. They do not have "in common a single history, language, culture, territory and economy," nor do they have the requisite "political control" to be considered a "nation-state" (Gonzales, 1974). This is, in part, why some refer to blacks and Latin Americans not as a single internal "colony," but as "colonies" (Pinderhughes, 2009), whose populations did develop, albeit with important differences, as parts of a larger European imperial expansion and establishment of colonies (Blauner, 1972).

On the other hand, what later emerged as a hip-hop nation did develop certain tenets of nationhood, namely, a shared sense of "culture, where culture, in turn, means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating" (Gellner, 1983, pp. 6–7). And perhaps more important, where:

> they recognize each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words, nations
> maketh [wo]man; nations are the artefacts of [people's] convictions and loyalties and

---

[4] Kitwana (2002) defines the "hip-hop generation" as those born between 1965–1985, those who witnessed/experienced the rise of the cultural expression. But even in what has been described as a "post-hip-hop generation" (Asante, 2008), the mixtape exists as a powerful tool of analysis as preexisting lineages are passed from one to the next.

solidarities. A mere category of persons (say, occupants of a given territory, or speakers of a given language, for example) becomes a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognize certain mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership of it. (Gellner, pp. 6–7)

It is:

their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation, and not the other shared attributes, whatever they might be, which separate that category from non-members. (ibid)

More closely to my point is a summary, in the context of hip hop or "rap nationalism," offered by Cheney (2005). Her brief survey of black nationalism is helpful in its discussion of "imagined communities" where "'nationalists' are a nation within a nation, or more accurately a nation without a nation" (pp. 14–15). Similar to Gellner's description of self-proclaimed nationhood, Cheney's summary of Benedict Anderson's classic work is, again, helpful. There, "the nation [is] 'an imagined political community—and imagined as *both inherently limited and sovereign*'" (p. 18, emphasis added). And in this sense, whether or not these terms perfectly apply, it is the audacious, self-determining, and self-identification as a nation that is both essential to note and then build on. If, in fact, hip hop and/or its African and Latin American progenitors are indeed a "nation," what is the status of that nation? And for our immediate purposes, what does that nation's relationship to—and within as an internal colony—a larger more dominant "Mother Country" mean in terms of mass communication, and specifically, the mixtape?

### The Mixtape's Hip-Hop Nationalist Origins

The hip-hop-specific rap music mixtape was originally comprised of DJ mixes recorded at house or block parties and distributed via cassette tape throughout the community. And though today they are just as often distributed via compact disc (CD) or the internet as digital MP3 or AAC files, the conditions from which they extend and the important communicative roles they play are often ignored, just as is their role historically as an inspiring source for communication studies research. Today, they can be found being distributed by artists and street vendors, distributed online, and used as underground journalism (Ball, 2005, 2009a; Maher, 2005). They are also sites for more esoteric forms of art such as "turntablism" and "mash-ups." Because mixtapes often include unlicensed copyrighted material, they are also officially illegal. However, a creeping co-optation of mixtapes by the music industry, which now seeks to use them as low-cost unofficial pre-release street promotion and credibility, has made this illegality mostly ambiguous and unevenly applied. So while much attention has been paid to the craft of the DJ, little has been said of the medium they helped create, its central role in the development of a "national" hip-hop consciousness, or the richness of mixtapes as a source of information about the structure and function of U.S. mass communication.

Particularly when placed within the context of global nationalist, anti-colonial movements, the mixtape becomes a far more exciting analytical or methodological tool for interpreting the realities and conditions of the communities that produce and consume them. In short, the very imperial processes that

created all the world's nation-states also created the internalized nations of black and brown communities. This resulted in the specific conditions faced by those at the dawn of hip hop and, when compared to the contemporary analysis of Bell (2009) and Cone (Moyers, 2007) (among many others),[5] show stark similarities. For example, the South Bronx in the 1970s, which still faces similar conditions, has been described as a "necropolis" where 600,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost. Youth unemployment was said to be as high as 80%, which meant that "if blues culture had developed under the conditions of oppressive, forced labor, [the] hip-hop culture would arise from the conditions of no work" (Chang, 2005, p.13). The people of this "necropolis," however, were far from dead or buried. In fact, the righteous rebelliousness that emerged—and whose cultural expressions included what came to be known as "hip hop"—was quite lively and developed as a nationalist response to these forms of "colonialism" (Allen, 1969; Ball, 2005, 2009; Blauner, 1972; Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967; Ball, 2009a, 2011; Tabb, 1970). This was a particular development within the United States that was also part of an international trend of developing anti-colonial nationalisms.

For instance, Karl Deutsch, writing of a time (1953–1965) just before the emergence of hip hop, described the context of his study of communication as one in which much of the world had "striven hard to increase the degree of autonomy or independence and power of their nation" (1966, p. 1). Throughout Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe, struggles for national identity, independence, and culture were in high gear as groups of varying disparateness were looking to claim power within the nationalisms they been forced to assume after the onslaught of Western European imperialism. Just as Zulu and Xhosa had been thrust into a colonized nationhood as South Africans, so, too, had African and Latin Americans been forced into an internally colonized nationhood. And just as Deutsch recognized that the "nation-state, it seems, is still the chief political instrument for getting things done," so, too, did some from within the United States. Huey Newton, for instance, extending a lineage of domestic U.S.-based nationalism, said that if it works abroad it can be applied here. For Newton, black nationalism was part of an initial realization of the "contradictions in society, the pressure on black people in particular" (Rodriguez, 2006 p. 129). By surveying the global tendency, "we saw that people in the past had solved some of their problems by forming into nations" (ibid.). This was very much part of an African American "political utilization of the symbol nation through discourse and political activity, as well as the sentiment that draws people into responding to this symbol's use" (Verdery, 1993, p. 38).

Fundamentally, Deutsch's inquiry was about the function of communication in managing societies and balancing potential conflict. If the dominant Western world was regrouping itself in preparation for rule over recently emergent lesser nationalisms around the world by developing a "political community" that was "international or *supranational*" (1966, p. 4, emphasis added) it would have to grapple with the ways in which communication could help or deter various needs for assimilation. Just as the West had been struggling with groups internally, now the entire world would have to be dealt with on similar bases.

---

[5] On April 10, 2009, a powerful intergenerational conference took place at the University of California, Berkeley called "A Tribute to Robert Allen: The 40th Anniversary of Black Awakening in Capitalism America." Scholars and activists present all discussed and debated the relevance and current application of Allen's theory of "internal colonialism," offering many important insights into global comparisons of the model and specifics of colonization. Audio available at http://www.voxunion.com/?p=1089

The anti-colonial struggle was indeed global. National independence had become a massive cry from throughout the African continent and Latin America to parts of Europe and also from within Western European/North American countries. Hip hop had emerged as one cultural expression, itself born out of these global crises in an equally globalizing community of New York City, and consciously or not, was part of nationalist, anti-colonial struggles. As James Spady (1991) put it:

> Think of how many wars, conflicts, disturbances (racial, ethnic, religious, territorial) occurred between 1970–1990. Palestine-Israel conflict, Guinea-Bissau, Korea, China, Senegal, South Africa—everywhere. Is it unreasonable to witness domestic violence when so much international violence is occurring, not to mention the proliferation of bloodshed on the domestic front? (Eure & Spady, p. 162)

The drum-based art emerged as part of that naturally cultural response to "the bloodshed on the domestic front" (Eure & Spady, p. 162). Max Roach said of hip-hop that he heard "the revolution in the drums" (Lipsitz, 1994, p. 120), and Professor X of X-Clan explained that "via the drum it connects our African genes whether we are conscious of our connections or not" (Eure & Spady, 1991, p. 191). Kool Herc, the "Godfather of Hip Hop," migrated to the Bronx from Jamaica and brought with him elements of a disc jockey (DJ) tradition. He was part of a pan-African tradition of migration (Walters, 1993) and of "black nomadic forces" (Eure & Spady, 1991, p. xiii) that contributed to the development of what came to be known as the four base elements of hip hop: DJ-ing, dance, graffiti, and rap. Each formed with international influences and as mechanisms of subcounter-cultural, even anti-colonial communicative expressions (Downing, 2001; Lipsitz 1994). But it was the mixtapes—the cassette tape-recorded mixes of DJs at block and house parties—that became what today remains a radical undercurrent, both in practice and potential, of what is a colonized population's attempt at a new public sphere (Ards, 2004; Eure & Spady, 1991; Neal, 2003). Long before the advent of a "hip-hop journalism," which, it was once believed, "might provide a hip-hop nationalism" to unite a "hip-hop nation" (Chang, 2005, p. 410), the mixtape had already become the original mass medium of a developing nation, which itself was already developing hip hop as its culturally expressive force. The mixtape had become a conveyance of sounds that inspired dance and art, and eventually, a "Hip-Hop Nation Language." This language:

> [is] the language which is influenced very strongly by the African model, the African aspect of our New World/Caribbean [Black American] heritage. English it may be in some of its lexical features. But, in its contours, its rhythm and timbre, its sound explosions, it is not English. . . . It is what I call, as I say, Nation Language . . . *a howl, or a shout or a machine gun or the wind or a wave*. (Spady, Lee, & Alim, 1999, xvii, original emphasis)

### The Mixtape: Colonized Communication and Recreation of a
### Black Public Sphere or Counterpublic

A study of mixtapes as national media internally bound within a more dominant and hostile nation helps to reveal these conditions (of internal coloniality), and it also demonstrates the function of media within such a setting, as well as offering alternative uses and potential for the mixtape as part of an

organized response. In this sense, mixtapes can be seen as developing along similar lines as the telegraph, radio, Internet, or other national or international mass media. Unlike these technologies of mass communication, the mixtape's origins are grassroots and countercultural, nonmilitary, and noncommercial.[6] However, they do in ways mirror the development and role of national communication networks. In this sense, as was said of the 19th-century post office, the mixtape established an extended control over a "national" territory (Schiller, 2008).

For example, the establishment of post office outposts across the country was seen as part of a process of "the U.S. takeover of a continent at the expense of prior inhabitants and designing European rivals" (Schiller, 2008, p. 127). Similarly, though not as part of an imperial expansion or project of genocide, mixtape vending did develop where DJs and bootleggers[7] took to street corners and used cab drivers, as well as beauty salons and barbershops, as "outposts" for a developing mass communication dissemination network. The mixtape played a role akin to that of the post office in that it helped expand the reach of a new cultural expression and establish—communicatively—a territorial expansion of hip hop. For the black/Latin American, internally-colonized hip-hop nation, the mixtape took on the function of "transmission . . . whereby messages are transmitted and distributed in space for the control of distance and people" (Carey, 1989, p. 15).

However, here, because of the anti-colonial design or origins of the cultural expression, the cohesive element of mixtape distribution was not about control over distance and people as a tactic of a conquering empire. It was through mixtapes that a black and Latin American nation, itself in a process (if perhaps unconsciously) of developing a national medium, was developing an alternative—a medium of resistance—to a colonizing dominant media environment. As legendary emcee Big Daddy Kane noted, it was through these mixtapes that he was exposed and then, "caught the fever" (Eure & Spady, 1991, p. xi) of a cultural expression that was, as Sister Harmony put it,

> Revolution. Revolution . . . Rap music is the voice of black people. Not just black people because you're black and you rap, but *black people live in adverse situations* [italics added] like we find ourselves in here in America. And speaking out against that. (Eure & Spady, p. 159)

This underground alternative national communicative network and its distribution was itself tied to the equally alternative public sphere or counterpublic already faced by these internally colonized populations. Hip hop developed in this context, where DJs plugged turntables into public streetlights, turning their neighborhoods into spaces whose purpose was the circumvention of nightclubs or other exclusive, but sanctioned venues. These streets became the original source for the distribution of this new national medium and remain "the loci of the Hip Hop community, a chief conveyor of cultural and social values . . . [and] 'Streets are the terrain of social encounters and political protest sites of domination and resistance, places of pleasure and anxiety'" (Spady, Lee, & Alim, 1999, p. xii).

---

[6] *Noncommercial* in the sense that while they were, at times, sold by individual DJs, they were not initially products of elite corporations.

[7] Distributors of unlicensed CDs and DVDs.

Because of this colonial relationship with a dominant media structure—even with increased development of "urban radio" in the 1980s and 1990s and even when actually black-owned/operated—there was no welcome space for this emerging cultural expression. There was no rap, radio or video. As rap music emerged, it found little welcome space. Both the dominant white society/media and the evolving "national/neocolonial black bourgeoisie" initially shunned this potentially revolutionary sound. Some describe this as resulting more from an ambiguous race and class-based response to a new, untested sound considered to be more abrasive than the established softer forms of R&B, where fear of lost advertising revenue was a driving force behind the explicitly anti-rap, "'no rap' promos on radio" (Watkins, 2005, pp. 78–82). However one prefers to describe the phenomenon of rap's exclusion the pattern of that exclusion mirroring that of any colonial relationship can not be ignored.

As is the tendency within capitalism, which Nkrumah (1964) defined as "domestic colonialism," (p. 72), when the mid 1990s approached—and more so in the aftermath of the 1996 Telecommunications Act[8]—"corporations began to understand the global demand for post-white pop culture" and "hip hop became the primary content for the new globally consolidated media, the equivalent of gold dust in the millennial monopoly rush" (Chang, p. 440). To assure a top-down corporate/colonial control over this new and increasingly valuable resource, the cultural industries tightened their hold over that which would be aired or popularized. Radio station play lists were trimmed, the cost or payola (pay-for-play) involved in placing music on those lists for heavy spin rotation increased, and with the increased consolidation in industry ownership, meant a greater ability for a tiny minority to determine which forms of colonized cultural expression would become popular, and that which would—by omission—disappear (Ball, 2005, 2011; Chang, 2005; Watkins, 2008).

Similarly, Simpson, who also agrees with the analogy of colonialism being applied to black people and other so-called "minorities" (personal communication, July 20, 2009), has described a U.S. policy of mass communication, propaganda, or "psychological warfare," and anti-"Third World . . . counterinsurgency programs" whose goals include the prolonged "*agony* of colonized peoples and they continue to be used for that purpose today" (1993, p. 315, emphasis added). The mixtape emerged into this preexisting context as a necessary (only?) outlet for the mass distribution of a new national (colonized) cultural expression. That expression was initially banned from dominant media (radio, television, etc.) and then was mined like "gold dust" and manufactured into forms that belie the real conditions (or the root cause of those conditions) of the people-turned-natural-resource. This psychological warfare today manifests in hip hop's simultaneous global popularity and an utter lack of control by its colonized progenitors.

The very deformed popularity of hip-hop results from that nation's absence of nationalist control over its resource, which has been colonized by the dominant nation or "Mother Country." Every song

---

[8] An influential law that allowed for further consolidation of ownership of mass media outlets. In terms of radio, the FCC reported that "between 1996 and 2001 there had been more than a 7 percent increase in the number of radio stations in the U.S. During that same time the number of radio owners *fell* [italics added] by 25 percent" (Watkins, 2005, p. 137).

heard or seen nationally on commercial radio or television is owned by one of four companies—Universal Music Group (UMG), Sony, Warner Music Group (WMG), or EMI—and usually, the national top 20 songs played on air (measured in "spins") are determined by only two or three (Ball, 2010a; Ball, in press).[9] These songs are notorious for their absence of substantive thought and lack of respect for women, or any signs of political (certainly not radical) viewpoints. Here is the answer to that question of "Who really profits from the cartoonish rap stereotypes of young black maledom that African Americans have been trying to shake for decades?" (Higgins, 2009, pp. 13–14). It is the same colonial elite, those described by Michael Perelman as the 1%, the "13,600" mostly white households that sit atop the colonial or social "pyramid" (McChesney, 2008) or Bernays' "invisible government" (1928/2005, p. 12), whose need for the promulgation of stereotypes was described by Lippmann as "the core of our personal tradition, the *defenses of our position in society* [italics added]" (1921, p. 63).

So today, as it was when mixtapes emerged, there remains no popular mass media outlet for the distribution of a hip-hop "Nation Language." In fact, given the increase in abundance and pervasiveness of media technology, and the prevalence of hip hop in mainstream international pop culture, "Nation Language" is less likely to be heard today than ever. If we also consider the more recent discussions over the "Death" or "Disappearing Voices of Black Radio" (Ford, 2003; U-Saviour, 2008), as well as the feelings that the "current state of the majority of blacks in the United States [still] necessitates an oppositional [public] sphere" (Squires, 2004, p. 195), the unfortunate continued relevance of the mixtape is perhaps better understood. For, as Dawson (1995) argues, if public sphere is to be defined as that which allows for public critique of and an offer of remedy to the horrific conditions faced by African America, then "A black public sphere does not exist in contemporary America" (p. 201). Historically, up until the post-1970s, Dawson writes, a "multiplicity of black institutions have formed the material basis for a subaltern counterpublic" that included the church, an independent black press, and "the production and circulation of socially and politically sharp black popular music" (p. 210). However, a 40-year or so decline in these institutions, which included corporate takeovers, theoretical desegregation, and class-based flight have left a void to be filled. Appearances of progress have masked an actual economic and political weakening of black and brown communities.

Into this void, the mixtape continues to step. These that represent "the other music industry, the one where [record] labels don't exist … where the CDs are sold by vendors hawking them off dirty blankets on city streets, and bootlegging is encouraged" (Maher 2005, p. 139), can and do also represent potential for the development of a new politically defined counterpublic. In fact, the repression faced by mixtape DJs and vendors alike speak to this fear. In a situation often mirroring that of the illicit drug, trade mixtapes today are often the result of corporate leaks intended for promotion of their artists (or product) and then also targeted as illicit contraband by those same entities. Popular arrests of people like DJ Drama or Alan Berry, targeted by the industry's lobbying body, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), often leads to their questioning why they are being arrested "just for selling hip-hop

---

[9] When national radio spins are charted, usually the top 20 are dominated exclusively by UMG and Sony, with an occasional artist from WMG. EMI, unless in a shared-artist relationship with another major, never has its artists in the top 20. Most important—and regarding the need to determine or manage popularity—absolutely never are independent artists and unsigned or non-major-label artists on the top 20 spins list.

music" and to their noting the similarity that "some cats are arrested for selling dope, some for CDs" (Bell, 2006). The industry claims it is protecting its property and that of its artists—though no artist protected by the RIAA is likely to own her or his own music, as this is traditionally the first thing signed away upon inking a deal—but it is better interpreted as actions seeking to manage popular culture or the potential for "dissident" communication.

Again, while industry claims are that the sale of unlicensed materials hurts their business, they are made fraudulently, either by denying the rise in online sales, ignoring the massive profits generated by their larger parent companies (Ball, 2005, 2008) or side-stepping the fact that, as mentioned, even while sales of CDs are declining, a corporate elite can still determine that which is popular—their ultimate goal—and have their artists sell "three million units" like UMG's Lil' Wayne did in 2008 (Higgins, p. 8). Instead, those mostly young teenage and black/brown boys who sell these mixtapes on blankets are chased, harassed, and arrested. When asked why, one unidentifiable New York City police officer said, "because they are criminals . . . [and] Yes, they do get taken in and given a record" (personal communication, June 16, 2005).

But it is the fear that mixtapes might genuinely assist in the evolution of that missing, but necessary counterpublic that can be said to be unconsciously behind this criminalization. Even as mixtapes have undergone their own degree of co-optation, where artistry, musical combinations, blends, and a focus on DJ skills—rather than "exclusive" prerelease industry tracks—has become a dominant trend (and is likely related to an absence of a full-fledged "war on mixtapes"), most, when asked of their love for mixtapes, describe a desire, again, perhaps unconsciously, for that counterpublic. The founding mothers and fathers of mixtapes were clear that theirs was a mission of developing space for their art, space that had been initially denied them. DJs Hollywood, Brucie B, Jazzy Joyce, and later Capri[10] and Ron G all have described a concern of theirs that the mixtape, which had initially been such a liberated zone for their art, had become increasingly co-opted and turned against itself. They lament a shift in focus from mixtapes being DJ-centered, where their name was all that was needed on a tape, to the present, where so many mixtapes promote the prerelease industry exclusives as opposed to their own talents. Most acknowledge DJ Clue as the first to bring mixtapes from cassette to CD, to downplay or remove altogether the style or techniques of DJ-ing, and to truly become the industry's street promotional gatekeeper, with mixtapes that are merely isolated tracks, unblended, unmixed with only his echoed voice dropped over them. In fact, this echoed voice shouting over the music has itself become considered a trademark promotional tool (Bell, 2006; Faison, 2005).

This corporate influence of mixtapes has been best documented in a number of documentaries made by those closest to the phenomenon (Bell, 2006; Faison, 2005). The simplicity of the method of co-optation described in these documentaries via interviews with DJ legends and industry insiders, belies the damage caused. Though still technically illegal, major record label representatives merely sneak pre-released copies of upcoming artists' CDs to DJs—even literally right outside their downtown New York offices—who then take, duplicate, and distribute them throughout the hip-hop community. This allows

---

[10] Capri has acknowledged that the police repression of his selling of mixtapes in the early 1990s led to his retirement from the practice, something much lamented by mixtape enthusiasts (Faison, 2005).

artists to boost their all-important "street cred" (Pulley, 2010) by seemingly having a connection to the community that is not mediated by giant media and entertainment companies. What those closest to the history of mixtapes argue is that this process undermines both the grassroots elements of bottom-up management of culture and the DJ's traditional role as the musical expert who first "breaks" or popularizes song. They also argue that it distorts the very function of the mixtape. This encourages and results often in the commercial industry retaining, even increasing, its ability to determine popularity, as artists without massive budgets or those lacking promotional or duplication abilities (or both) cannot compete.

Many artists who apply various art and politics to mixtapes are often pushed further to the margins—from turntablists to politically progressive artists, many of whom genuinely need the mixtape for access to an audience. What this means is that the emancipatory potential—the value of the mixtape as national or anti-colonial communication—is weakened. This is merely the mixtape version of the co-optation of black radio from that which once served a community's political, educational, and cultural needs to something that most often serves, via a lack of news, industry-selected music (with no time for community service programming) to obfuscate or worsen existing conditions (U-Saviour, 2009).

Mixtapes such as those described in previous work on *FreeMix Radio: The Original Mixtape Radio Show* (Ball, 2009a) that feature explicitly radical songs from artists like Dead Prez, Head-Roc, Godisheus, Precise Science, and Immortal Technique, and that also include forms of grassroots emancipatory journalism that ranges from broadcast radio news packages to speeches and interviews, must now compete against an industry-established mixtape "mainstream" in ways that were unnecessary in the past. DJs who once compiled mixtapes from the streets and communities, finding new artists and blending them stylistically with others in unconventional ways, no longer have the kind of bottom-up credibility or attention they previously enjoyed, because so many can now so easily get industry "leaks" as simple MP3 files, then mass duplicate them, and claim them as their own mixtape (Faison, 2005; Bell, 2006).

 Most of these issues are encapsulated in a simple research project (currently underway) in one of my classes on media criticism. Using the new mixtape release from Dead Prez (and featuring DJ Drama), *Revolutionary But Gangsta Grillz* (2010), which consists exclusively of new lyrics added to existing popular commercial rap music tracks, students are exposed to the stark variation in content offered by the group as opposed to that of the original tracks with which most are more familiar. In one example, Dead Prez remade "Kind of a Big Deal" (2009), the popular song by Clipse.  In the original, Clipse rhymes that "they whisperin' about us, I know you haters doubt us, how can you count our money we ain't even finished countin'? Pardon me I must say I'm kinda like a big deal." Whereas Dead Prez, over the same beat, say in their version, renamed, "Let the People Be Heard":

> Sick of these crooked police, sick of these politicians, sick of the school and the church,
> sick of they whole system. Instead of education they building new prisons, generation
> fed up seeking a new vision, waiting on health care, dying on a stretcher, taking away
> the welfare no food, clothes or shelter . . ." (2010)

In fact, the new mixtape from Dead Prez is further subtitled "Turn Off the Radio: Volume 4" and is part of a movement the group has been attempting to build for several years to do just that. The idea,

as explicitly stated by group member M-1, is that mixtapes and other forms of outreach must be employed due to the lack of access to mainstream radio and video. Instead of continuing in vain to gain access to those venues, the group argues that they be turned off in favor of these kinds of alternatives (U-Saviour, 2009).

Similarly, when DJ Lazy K expressed that mixtapes for her are "how I communicate . . . they are my TV, my radio" (Bell, 2006), she also spoke to the views of other artists such as Divine, Dedan Kasimu, North Star, and DJ Dr. Dust, who all spoke of the desire of people to avoid the commercially established hip-hop environment and of the role mixtapes play in allowing people to recreate their own. Each has acknowledged that this is an essential part of reconnecting the youth to the early origins of hip hop as an avenue of ingenuity and political consciousness (Ball, 2009b). Where there is some disagreement today, it does not center in the use of or potential for the mixtape, but rather mostly around the methods of dissemination. That while traditionally mixtapes have relied on the street vending, community-based distribution networks, the Internet today has become the primary means for distribution. It is felt that, though some legal risks exist online, this is a worthwhile effort in that its reach potentially exceeds that of those previously existing networks of local distribution. For some, the Internet represents an ability to break through the confines of their internally colonized nation, to reach wider audiences and expand their impact (Ball, 2010b). It is here that the differences in interpreting the origins of either technology are most apparent, and that the initial contradiction of the mixtape as national communication—but colonized within a dominant nation—and the national communication of that dominant nation is most felt (Ball, 2010c).

### Conclusion: The Mixtape and the Hip-Hop National Medium

As mentioned, the focus here has been specifically the rap music mixtape, or the mixtape within the hip-hop nation. Whereas others have incorporated aspects of this history into their own work (Ards, 2004; Kitwana, 2005; Moore, 2004; Maher, 2005), none have centered the rap music mixtape specifically, or the mixtape itself, as national (or colonized) communication. The emergence of both the DJ and the mixtape outside of the hip-hop nation is often described in terms of the 1970s spread of the turntable and mixer technology and disco music throughout Europe and the United States. In fact, it was earlier in 1943 that "the revolutionary concept of dancing to records played by a disc jockey was born not in New York, not even in London or Paris, but in the town of Otley, West Yorkshire. Here, in a room above a working men's club, we find the very first example of the club DJ" (Brewster & Broughton, 2000, p. 44). By 1974, when *Billboard* magazine first "alerted the industry to this illegal practice" of recording disco and dance club music from DJs' nightly sets, the concept of selling the mixtapes had taken hold and was grossing those involved roughly "$1,000 per month" (Brewster & Broughton, p. 173). But it was with the rise of hip hop as one of the "new postdisco genres [that] gave unprecedented freedom to the nonmusician to make music," with the DJ as "the cream of the musical nonmusicians" (Brewster & Broughton, p. 340) that the mixtape took on a new and unprecedented context.

The post-1970s emergence of hip hop and the hip-hop nation, taking on the previously established colonial relationships of the cultural expression's progenitors, forced the rap music mixtape to take on its own particular form and function. That is, it was these very colonial antagonisms that

demanded that the mixtape be the initial mass medium of rap music due in part to its anti-colonial, aggressive sound and content, as well as to commercial radio's forcible omission—especially that of an emerging neocolonial black bourgeoisie radio. Hence, Max Roach's previously noted comments about the revolution being heard simply in the drums themselves which, even for black radio:

> fueled concerns that the music's youthful exuberance, street inclinations, embrace of ghetto authenticity, and complete disregard for mainstream notions of respectability would alienate older and more affluent black listeners and, thus, taint how advertisers perceived and valued black stations. (Watkins, 2005, p. 79)

The specific conditions faced by the hip-hop nation formed and continue to form the role and relationship they have to the mixtape and the mixtape's function within those communities. So while rap music today can be found in any format and be as popular as any cultural expression in the world, it must be noted that this popularity has an inverse relationship to its radical political content. Here again is where the multivocalism of political views from within (and without) the hip-hop nation meet and compete with one another for use, need, and function of the mixtape itself. For the music industry, the mixtape must be co-opted to suit its needs for guerrilla marketing, street promotion, and generation of credibility, while for the politically radical or form-shattering DJ or turntablist, the mixtape is among their brightest hopes for an audience. The historic reluctance of radio (black or white) to play rap music described by Watkins has shifted to solely a reluctance of radio to play noncommercial or politically radical rap music—for the same or similar reasons (Ball, 2009a).

This history is also described by musician and writer Thurston Moore, who, in his own work on mixtapes, which describes the mostly non-hip-hop history, does touch on the particular nature of the hip-hop national mixtape. For Moore, mixtapes became a concept in 1978, while reading a writer's creation of compilation tape cassettes of the rock band The Clash. For Moore, these compilations for road trips or for loving gifts with relationship-specific themes signified the importance of mixtapes and prompted his need to edit a book on them. However, he also notes the "mid-80s . . . street trend in NYC of hip-hop heads blasting rap mix tapes through massive boom boxes, or 'ghetto blasters'" (2004, p. 11). Moore also touches on an important point noted earlier that these hip-hop "mix tapes [were] sold on card tables [and] began to heed to a value system dictated by whomever compiled the tracks" (p. 11). Again, it was the grassroots, community-based DJs who were the tastemakers, the gatekeepers, the expert distillers of a burgeoning cultural form. This is precisely the anti-colonial threat that mixtapes represented then and now. Corporate infusion into the mixtape community today is no different than the colonizing efforts of the French in establishing national radio in Algeria for the French settlers, while seeking to restrict the purchase of radios by Algerians, who later established their own anti-colonial broadcasting (Fanon, 1965, pp. 69–97). It is no different than the calls by establishment power players for more of the "underappreciated aspects of cultural imperialism" in the 21st century (Brzezinski, 1997, pp. 24–25). Nor is it any different than more recent calls for more funding for "public relations" (read: propaganda) efforts in the "war against terrorism," which is "fundamentally ideological" and will not be fought on battlefields, but rather in the "newsrooms and the editorial boardrooms" (Pessin, 2006).

So while ultimately small in circulation, the mixtape has been, and in many ways continues to be,

a national medium of the hip-hop nation. In part, this can be seen in its importance to those most colonized (the original progenitors), who are widely considered to not be the bulk of rap music's sales (Kitwana, 2005), and similarly, because the most colonized, poor, and/or oppressed segments of the hip-hop nation are ultimately relatively small compared to the global audience of mostly commercially-sponsored fare. Therefore, the emancipatory potential of the mixtape is found in the colonial contradictions—described even by Marx—where the most alienated, marginalized and/or colonized also represent the most threatening, potentially revolutionary elements precisely because of those conditions of separateness and dislocation from mainstream modes of production (Marx, 1976, p. 93). While the mixtape remains primarily a medium of the poor, mostly black and brown, segments of the hip-hop nation, whose radical political or nontraditional forms of cultural expression are often omitted from mainstream media, it also still remains quite viably a space for such alternative communication to occur. Just as street mixtapes and now DVDs like *Smack, Cocaine City,* and *Trapstar* (Pulley, 2010) are used by gangster rappers, so too can they be employed by the more radically political such as The Troy Reed Project DVD release of *The Larry Davis Story* (2003). While the former are DVDs promoting dope selling and thug living, the latter tells the remarkable story of Davis' violent escape from police-protected and -inspired drug dealing, drug use, framing, and murder. Similarly, while the content of the former is likely replicated in the mainstream, the same cannot be said of the latter.

Mixtapes require relatively little in terms of the technology of production and distribution. They require no FCC regulation, license, or advertising. They conform to no conventional order of format, nor of content. Their use by the industry as covert mechanisms of promotion also means that claims to their illegality, based on an adverse affect on artists, are at best questionable (Bell, 2006) and can be described as merely an attempt to assure that the colonized cannot determine for themselves what forms of their art will be sanctioned or popular. The particular relationship they have to the hip-hop nation make such considerations of them, as made here, essential to an understanding of the political nature of communication and of the impact of communication, specifically for those colonized and for those colonized as a hip-hop nation. It is as Ice Cube once said, "Turn off the radio . . . and stick a fucking tape in it!"

**References**

Allen, R. (1969/1992). Black awakening in capitalist America. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Ards, A. (2004). Organizing the hip-hop generation. In M. Forman & M. A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint! The hip-hop studies reader* (pp. 311–323). New York: Routledge.

Asante, M. K. (2008). It's bigger than hip hop: The rise of the post-hip-hop generation. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Austin, A. (2008 January).  What recession means for Black America. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved August 1, 2010, from http://www.epi.org/publications/entry/ib241/

Baker, H. (1995). Critical memory and the black public sphere. In The Black Public Sphere Collective (Eds.), *The black public sphere: A public culture book.* (pp. 7–37). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Ball, J. A. (2005). The mixtape: A case study in emancipatory journalism. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland at College Park).

Ball, J. A. (2008, Fall). Mixtape Inc. and the definitive incorporation of dissident culture [Review of the film *Mixtape Inc*]. *The Global Journal of Hip-Hop Culture from Words, Beats and Life*, *3*(2), 18–22, 49.

Ball, J. A. (2009a,). Freemix radio: The original mixtape radio show: A case study in mixtape radio and emancipatory journalism. *The Journal of Black Studies*, *39*(4), 614–634.

Ball, J. A. (2009b). A Bronx mix: Mixtapes then and now [Audio].  Retrieved August 1, 2010, from http://www.voxunion.com/?p=1562

Ball, J. A. (2010a). Communicating liberation in Washington, D.C. In R. Waters & T-M Travis (Eds.), *Democratic destiny and the District of Columbia: Federal politics and public policy* (pp. 225–254). Lanham: Lexington Books, Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Ball, J. A. (2010b). The Titans of technology: The Internet, radio and our Newton's Laws.  Retrieved February 13, 2010, from http://tns1.blackagendareport.com/?q=content/titans-technology-internet-radio-and-our-newton%E2%80%99s-laws

Ball, J. A. (2010c). Save the Internet, but start a social movement. Retrieved April 14, 2010, from http://www.blackagendareport.com/?q=node/11709

Ball, J. A. (in press). *I mix what I like: A mixtape manifesto*. Oakland: AK Press Inc.

Bell, D. (1999). Great expectations: Defining the divide between blacks and Jews (1994). In M. Adams & J. H. Bracy (Eds.), *Strangers and neighbors: Relations between blacks and Jews in the United States*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Bell, W. (Producer/Director). (2006). Mixtape, Inc. [Film]. Universal City, CA: Pixel Propaganda.

Bernays, E. (1928/2005). *Propaganda*. Brooklyn: IG Publishing.

Blauner, R. (1972). *Racial oppression in America*. New York: Harper & Row.

Brewster, B., & Broughton, F. (2000). Last night the DJ saved my life: The history of the disc jockey. New York: Grove Press.

Brzezinski, Z. (1997). *The grand chessboard: American primacy and its geostrategic imperatives*. New York: Basic Books.

Carey, J. (1989). *Communication as culture: Essays on media and society*. New York: Routledge.

Carmichael, S., & Hamilton, C. V. (1967). *Black power: The politics of liberation*. New York: Dimensions Books.

Chang, J. (2005). *Can't stop, won't stop: A history of the hip-hop generation*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Cheney, C. L. (2005). *Brothers gonna work it out: Sexual politics in the golden age of rap nationalism*. New York: New York University Press.

Darling, J. (2007). Re-imaging the nation: Revolutionary media and historiography in Mesoamerica. *Journalism History*, *32*, 4.

Deutsch, K. W. (1966). *Nationalism and social communication*: *An inquiry into the foundations of nationality* (Rev. ed.). Cambridge: MIT Press.

Downing, J. (2001). *Radical media: Rebellious communication and social movements*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Eure, J. D., & Spady, J. (1991). *Nation conscious rap*. New York: PC International Press.

Faison, J. (2005). The mixtape documentary. Retrieved_August 1, 2010, from http://www.TheMixtapeAwards.com

Fanon, F. (1965). *A dying colonialism*. New York: Grove Press.

Ford, G. (2003, May 29). Who killed black radio news? Retrieved August 1, 2010, from
        http://www.blackcommentator.com/44/44_cover.html

Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and nationalism.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Gray, M., & Alk, H. (Directors). (1971). *The murder of Fred Hampton* [Film]. Chicago: The Film Group.

Greenberg, Z. O. (2010). Hip hop's cash kings 2010. Retrieved August 17, 2010, from
        http://www.forbes.com/2010/08/16/jay-z-diddy-akon-business-entertainment-hip-hop-cash-
        kings.html

Higgins, D. (2009). *Hip-hop world*. Toronto: Groundwood Books.

Kitwana, B. (2002). *The hip hop generation*. New York: Basic Books.

Kitwana, B. (2005). *Why white kids love hip hop: Wangstas, wiggers, wannabes, and the new reality of
        race in America*. New York: Civitas Books.

Lake, T. (2007, November). Postcolonial theory and the African American experience. *The Journal of Pan
        African Studies*, *1*(10), 79–96.

Levine, A. (2004, January 20). Ogletree highlights King weekend celebrations. *The Chronicle*. Retrieved
        August 1, 2010, from http://dukechronicle.com/article/ogletree-highlights-king-weekend-
        celebrations

Lipsitz, G. (1994). *Dangerous crossroads: Popular music, postmodernism and the poetics of place*.
        London: Verso.

Lippmann, W. (1921/1997). *Public opinion*. New York: Free Press.

Maher, G. C. (2005, September). Brechtian hip hop: Didactics and self-production in post-gangsta political
        mixtapes. *Journal of Black Studies*, *36*(1), 129–160.

Mandela, W. (1984). *Part of my soul went with him.*  New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Marx, K. (1867/1976). *Capital*. New York: Penguin.

McChesney, R. (2008, July 20). Interview with Economist Michael Perelman on Media Matters with Bob
        McChesney, WILL AM 580 Radio, Urbana-Champaign, IL. Retrieved August 1, 2010, from
        http://will.illinois.edu/mediamatters/show/july-20-2008/

Moore, T. (2004). *Mix tape: The art of cassette culture*. New York: Universe Publishing.

Moyers, B. (2007, November 23). Interview with James Cone. *Bill Moyers Journal.* Retrieved August 1, 2010, from http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/11232007/profile.html

Muhammad, D., Davis A., Leondor-Wright, B., & Lui, M. (2004). The State of the dream 2004: Enduring disparities in black and white. Boston: United for a Fair Economy.  Retrieved August 1, 2010, from http://www.faireconomy.org/dream

Neal, M. A. (2003). *Songs in the key of black life.* New York: Routledge.

Pessin, A. (2006, March 2). Rumsfeld says war on terror takes perseverance of Cold War.  Retrieved August 1, 2010, from http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2006/03/mil-060302-voa08.htm

Pinderhughes, C. (2009, April 10). How black awakening in capitalist America laid the foundation for new internal colonialism theory. Paper presented at the *Tribute to Robert Allen and the 40th Anniversary of Black Awakening in Capitalist America.* University of California Berkeley. Retrieved August 1, 2010, from http://www.voxunion.com/?p=1089

Pulley, B. (2010, June 10). Music industry: How rappers boost street cred, *Bloomberg Businessweek.* Retrieved August 1, 2010, from http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/10_25/b4183019425527.htm

Rivera, A., Cotto-Escalera, B., Desai, A., Huezo, J., & Muhammad, D. (2008).  Foreclosed: State of the dream 2008. Boston: United for a Fair Economy.  Retrieved August 1, 2010, from http://www.faireconomy.org/dream

Rodriguez, B. (2006). Long live Third World unity! Long live internationalism: Huey P. Newton's revolutionary intercommunalism. *Souls*, *8*(3), 119–141.

Schiller, D. (2008). The militarization of U.S. communications. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, (1), 126–138.

Shah, H. (1996, May). Modernization, marginalization, and emancipation: Toward a normative model of journalism and national development. *Communication Theory*, *6*(2), 143–166.

Simpson, C. (1993). U.S. mass communication research, counterinsurgency, and scientific reality. In W. S. Solomon & R. W. McChesney (Eds.), *Ruthless criticism: New perspectives in U.S. communication history* (pp. 313–348).  Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Spady, J., Lee, C. G., & Alim, H. S. (1999). *Street conscious rap.* Philadelphia: Black History Museum Umum/Loh Publishers.

Squires, C. R. (2004). Black talk radio: Defining community needs and identity. In J. Bobo, C. Hudley, & C Michel (Eds.), *The black studies reader* (pp. 193–210). New York: Routledge.

Streitmatter, R. (2001). *Voices of revolution: The dissident press in America*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Tabb, W. K. (1970). *The political economy of the black ghetto*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co.

U-Saviour. (Director). (2009). Disappearing voices: The decline of black radio [Film]. Jersey City, NJ: A Black Waxx Nation, Inc.

Verdery, K. (1993, Summer). Whither nation and nationalism? *Daedalus*, *122*(3), 37–46.

Watkins, S. C. (2005). *Hip hop matters: Politics, pop culture, and the struggle for the soul of a movement*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Wilderson, F. (2008). *Incognegro: A memoir of exile and apartheid*.  Boston: South End Press.