The meanings selected Rhodes University student-fans of hip-hop make of the gendered scenarios portrayed in designated South African commercial hip-hop music videos.

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By

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to the memory of my father Timothy Thembalami Mtengwa, my mother Siphetheni Mtengwa my sisters Elizabeth, Onai, Gamuchirai, and cousin Tim Mtengwa

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ABSTRACT

Hip-hop is frequently linked to misogyny and other forms of violence. This link, in many instances, is often presented outside of a critical understanding of complex underlying societal and gender dynamics. South Africa's high rates of violence against women make it necessary to understand how hip-hop videos interact with society, as hip-hop, in its commercial form, has become a growing music genre in South Africa. Rhodes University, which has a notable student following of hip-hop, has experienced concerning levels of gender-based tensions as evidenced by the rise of the "*fallist"* movement's #RapeCultureMustFall, #RUReferenceList and the suicide of Khensani Maseko, at the instigation of an alleged incident of rape, perpetrated by her boyfriend and fellow student. It is therefore of interest to investigate how a select group of Rhodes University student-fans of hip-hop make meaning out of selected South African commercial hip-hop music videos. The hip-hop music videos chosen for the study, hence *Pitbull Terrier* (Die Antwoord), *Pearl Thusi* (Emtee), *Dlala ka yona* (L'Tido), *All eyes on me* (AKA featuring Burna Boy, Da L.E.S & JR) and *Ragga Ragga* (Gemini Major featuring Casper Nyovest, Riky Rick & Nadia Nakai), were selected on the strength of their popularity and uniquely gendered scenarios. This study draws on qualitative research methods, thus qualitative thematic content analysis, focus group and in-depth interviews. The study establishes that despite gender being a contentious issue at Rhodes University, students make meaning out of the gendered portrayals based on their own experiences, socialisation, cultural values and level of submission to the discourse of hip-hop. This study seeks to understand how selected student-fans of hip-hop read the gendered portrayals of the music videos, based on their own experiences, socialisation, cultural values, and level of submission to the discourse of hip-hop.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the meanings selected Rhodes University students who follow South African hip-hop, make of selected South African commercial hip-hop music videos. Scholars attribute the rise of South African commercial hip-hop to the merging of corporate marketing imperatives, and the material ambitions of the rappers themselves (Sithole, 2017: 258). South African rap acts such as Die Antwoord and Casper Nyovest, have realised significant commercial success and global acclaim (Sithole, 2017: 259). South African contemporary hip-hop did not however only assume the American commercial business model, but also appropriated its hyper-masculinity and misogyny (Sithole, 2017: 258; Kunzler, 2011: 38). The study broadly investigates meanings made of the gender order, as portrayed in South African hip-hop. This includes audience responses to depictions of gender-based violence, and how these meanings interface with the student's everyday lived experiences. This investigation will be carried out against a background of concerning levels of gender-based violence in South Africa, directed towards vulnerable groups of women such as lesbians, elderly and disabled women (Gennrich, 2013: iii), and the rise of *"fallist"* university student movements, where #RapeCultureMustFall, #RUReferenceList and the suicide of Khensani Maseko at the alleged instigation of an incident of rape by her boyfriend and fellow student, brought to light untenable issues of gender-based violence and male sexual entitlement, leading to a Rhodes University shut-down in 2016 (Henney, 2016). Hip-hop has a significant following among Rhodes University students, with formal and informal activities taking place in and around campus, as well as emerging acts rising within Rhodes University hip-hop circles, such as Yonela Faba (Yosh) and Lunakill (Liwani, 2017; Witi, 2018).

As a high school student growing up in Zimbabwe, I escaped what I considered a banal existence through finding meaning and resonance in American hip-hop (symbolic distancing). This was achieved through music videos (recorded from satellite tv e.g. *Yo!MTV raps*) and local music television programmes such as *Teen-Scene* and *Music-Box*. I developed a keen interest in South African hip-hop after Zimbabwean hip-hop failed to establish itself as an independent music genre. The often-violent sexual activities portrayed in hip-hop are however,

at odds with my sense of gender justice. This contradictory response led to my interest in what other audiences make of the gender constructions in rap music videos.

This investigation will be carried out against a background of concerning levels of gender-based violence in South Africa (Gennrich, 2013: iii), and misogynistic themes popularised in local hip-hop. My interest in student audiences of South African commercial hip-hop arises against the background of university campus-based and social media-driven #RapeCultureMustFall and #RapeMustFall protest movements. These protests aimed to make visible a "rape culture" in South Africa and on university campuses, which is driven by patriarchal attitudes of sexual entitlement. According to Du Preez et al., students at Rhodes University (RU) were also exposed to a dramatic increase in rape attacks in 2016 (2017: 100). Rhodes University's Student Representative Council (SRC) revealed that 21 students had allegedly been sexually assaulted on campus in 2016 (Sesant, 2016 qtd. Du Prez et al., 2017: 100). #RUReferenceList was another on-line anti-rape "movement" that was initiated after the publication, in April 2016, of 11 names of male students who had allegedly raped fellow female students at Rhodes University (Henney, 2016).

General Background of the study

Hip-hop originated in the South Bronx and the northeast area of New York, in the early 1970s, as a music genre and a form of cultural expression (Rose, 1994: 2; Bennett, 1999: 3; Alridge et al., 2005: 190). It is a combination of rapping, breakdancing, urban graffiti and deejaying (McLeod, 1999: 135; Ferguson, 2008: 6; Love, 2016: 415). Rapping constitutes performing a style of singing-speech over background music (Bennett, 1992: 2; Ferguson, 2008: 6; Maxwell, 1997: 52).

Hip-hop culture emerged in South Africa in Cape Town's Cape Flats, in the mid-1980s (Pieterse, 2010: 435). Several phases in its development are distinguishable. The appropriation of American hip-hop as a conscious expression of shared political and socio-economic experiences, marks the first phase (Kunzler, 2011: 28). "Conscious" hip-hop emphasises the notion of "knowledge of self," which is reflected in the content of their songs, and the artist's active engagement in/with their communities. For example, their work dealt with themes such as HIV/AIDS awareness, education, and the physical conditions in the townships. Rapping was their form of political engagement in the anti-apartheid struggle (Pieterse, 2010: 436). Conscious rappers (Prophets of da City, Black Noise, Brasse Vannie Kaap) not only focused

on live performances, but also produced their own work on their own recording labels, and in so doing were able to maintain their economic, ideological, and creative independence (Kunzler, 2011: 38; Watkins, 2012: 73). The first phase embraced all elements of hip-hop culture noted above (Pieterse, 2010: 435).

The second phase in the development of South African hip-hop can be located in the post–Apartheid era. Increasing commercialisation of rap occurred in the context of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), which was introduced to redress economic marginalisation (Kunzler, 2011: 39). Rap group Skwatta Kamp signed up with major local recording label Gallo, in 2003. Its album *Mkhukhu Funkshen* sold over 40 000 copies, becoming the first South African rap album to achieve gold status (Kunzler, 2011: 39). Hip-hop, in this phase, witnessed the emergence of vibrant Johannesburg-based rap groups (Skwatta Kamp, Hip Hop Pantsula (HHP), Proverb and Zubs) (Pieterse, 2010: 436). Although these groups tried to maintain ideological and political relevance, they became professional hip-hop artists for whom material success was important (Kunzler, 2011: 39). This success was accomplished through the merchandising of products such as clothing, thus enabling hip-hop culture to permeate many aspects of young people's lives (Pritchard, 2009: 52).

Contemporary South African hip-hop from around 2009 may be regarded as the third phase, and emphasises success and the "rock star status" of individual rappers, some of whom succeeded in penetrating the international market (Kunzler, 2011: 42). For example, Die Antwoord achieved international success after the release of its first album *O* (Chruszczewska, 2015: 63), while Casper Nyovest became the first South African artist to fill the Ticketpro dome arena in Johannesburg (Modise, 2015). These contemporary stars emulate their North American counterparts by appropriating their forms of showmanship, empire building, conspicuous consumption, hyper-masculinity and misogyny (Kunzler, 2011: 42; Meer, 2012). This was realised through the development of the music video as an advertising vehicle for the promotion of popular music (Englis, 2011). The music video extended the star status of musicians beyond the imagination of radio listenership and concert attendance (Englis, 2011). "Video" was the medium that enabled the Southern appropriation of North American popular culture, expedited by the one-way flow of these cultural products from the global north to the global south (Ritzer, 1993 qtd. Bennett, 1999: 4).

Male rappers dominate hip-hop music in South Africa (Haupt, 2003: 10). Godessa is the first female rap group to have been commercially recorded (Haupt, 2003: 10). Such a scenario

arguably limits gendered perspectives in hip-hop to those popularised by males. Kunzler claims that even the conscious rappers paid little attention to gender equality (2011: 37). *Women* (2005) by rapper Proverb, a song dedicated to the achievements of women, stands as a rarity in the gendered politics of hip-hop. Women have often appeared in South African hip-hop as objectified entities for the male gaze, as exemplified by Pitch Black Afro's 2004 music video *Matofotofo* (Khan, 2010: 155; Kunzler, 2011: 38). The representation of women as willing partners to heterosexual male protagonists in hip-hop videos has generally been to the exclusion of any non-sexual or non-objectified conception of womanhood (Balaji, 2010: 6). Such representations in local hip-hop frustrate efforts to achieve gender equality and end gender violence.

Gendered representations in hip-hop promote male heterosexual dominance and passive/compliant femininity, while emasculating male rivals through feminisation (Hill, 2009: 32). The transactional depiction of gender relations in American hip-hop videos emphasise the heterosexual material dominance of men, and the sexual obligation of women (Hill, 2009: 30). Women in American rap videos are generally described in sexualised terms such as diva, gold digger, baby mama, dyke, gangster bitch, sister saviour, freak, earth mother, etc., which fall within conceptual frameworks of African American women's sexuality (Stephens et al., 2007: 251). Individuals therefore appropriate such gendered identities through their interaction with hip-hop (symbolic interaction) (Hall, 1992: 275).

Objectives of the study

Against this background, the study examines how such audiences read and make sense of such texts. This is achieved through reception analysis, a methodology developed within Cultural Studies research. Cultural Studies proposes a holistic perspective on social life while acknowledging an individual's capacity for intervention in the role of meaning-making (Jensen et al., 1990: 212). Reception theory makes a comparative analysis of textual data (music videos) and audience data gathered from audience feedback (Jensen et al., 1990: 212). The everyday experiences brought into the consumption of South African hip-hop music videos assist in explaining audiences' preferences and pleasures (Morley, 1992 qtd. O'Sullivan et al., 1994: 169).

Theoretically, a viewing audience is likely to respond to video content in one of three ways. First, they may make a hegemonic or dominant reading, in which case they may interpret

gender portrayals in the music videos as how things naturally should be. This is no different to the magic bullet or hypodermic needle effect (Strelitz, 2000: 37), and the cultivation theory (Gerbner et al., 1986: 18). Such a reading will resonate with members of a hyper-masculine and patriarchal culture, where men feel sexually entitled to women within the cultural logic portrayed in contemporary hip-hop imagery. Second, a negotiated reading can be made where certain aspects of the gendered arrangements may be deemed acceptable, while others may be construed as operating in conflict with the audience's cultural values. The material dominance of a man as portrayed in a heterosexual relationship may be considered the norm, whilst audiences may take exception to depictions of female sexual aggressiveness. Finally, an oppositional reading occurs when an audience rejects the message completely. An audience may take exception to matters of male sexual dominance and sexually violent contexts of the relationships as portrayed in hip-hop videos (Hall, 1973 qtd. Hall et al., 2005; 127). Social and cultural practices in this regard are therefore the investigative focus of mass communication (Jensen, 1990: 12).

Hall's (1973) seminal Encoding/Decoding article conceptualises the processes of meaning-making that are engaged in by both producers and receivers of communication, thereby linking production and interpretation (Hall et al., 2005: 127). In as much as it remains pertinent to investigate attitudes towards matters of gender within the university student body, it is also important to understand how these attitudes may perpetuate the regeneration of such gendered stereotypes as portrayed in South African commercial hip-hop music videos.

The stereotypical representations of hegemonic black masculinity and emphasised black femininity are conceptualised and maintained by the music industry on the production side of the circuit of culture, for the imperative of profit (Hall et al., 1992: 1). This is especially true in the case of a music genre that may be deemed a risky product or a "wild card" by industry analysts (Negus, 1999: 493). This often prevents the music industry from introducing other concepts such as those that promote the dignity of black men and women e.g., for fear of market failure (Negus, 1999:493).

Significance of the study

The media has often been accused of negatively influencing its audiences, and playing a role in encouraging destructive behaviours, consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of the hypodermic needle effect (Strelitz, 2000: 37). Although this notion of media effects theory has

largely been debunked, it remains important to understand how audiences of hip-hop music videos interact with the gendered concepts they portray. This study investigates the role played by the media in perpetuating gendered stereotypes in sensitive spaces, such as South African centres of higher learning.

Though a number of studies of hip-hop have been dedicated to the investigation of gender relations in America and South Africa, this particular study focuses on the attitudes of Rhodes University students to gendered scenarios in popular South African commercial rap music, against the background of recent protests against gender-related violence at Rhodes University and within the country as a whole.

Thesis outline

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the study, thus providing an outline to the thesis as a whole.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the key literature in the field, and offers a theoretical framework for making sense of the data gathered through empirical research. This chapter will discuss broader issues regarding hip-hop in America, the diaspora and specifically South Africa. Key to this chapter is its exploration of theories regarding Southern understandings of gender, Northern theories of and how masculinities and femininities are manifested in society in general, and South African society in particular. This chapter also introduces the concept of reception theory.

Chapter 3 examines the principles and limitations of qualitative research. This chapter provides an historical approach to audience studies, from the perspective of effects theory to the recognition of the concept of the *"active audience,"* realised through Uses and Gratifications theory and Cultural Studies. The nexus between *"textual data"* and *"audience data"* presents reception analysis as an advanced methodological approach, and an extension beyond the aforementioned methodologies.

Chapter 4 and 5 form the analysis chapters of the thesis, which compare findings from textual analysis and audience research (thus focus groups and in-depth interviews), focusing on the broad issues expressed by participants. These chapters will also attempt to understand the basis of meaning-making predicated on information gathered in the literature review, as well as participant's responses.

Finally, Chapter 6 will conclude the study, suggesting further research on matters of gender and South African commercial hip-hop.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter addresses the origin and elements of hip-hop, and in so doing discusses the emergence of hip-hop outside of the United States and specifically its development in South Africa. The chapter also interrogates misogyny, its nature and relationship with hip-hop. The approaches to the understanding of gender will be discussed from both a "Southern" and "Northern" perspective. Since this study focuses on the interpretation of gender dynamics in South African commercial hip-hop music videos, the key concept of reception theory will be addressed.

Foundations of Hip-hop in America

Hip-hop originated in the South Bronx and the northeast area of New York, as a music genre and a form of cultural expression in the early 1970s (Rose, 1994: 2; Bennett, 1999: 3; Alridge et al., 2005: 190). It is a combination of rapping (*emceeing*), break-dancing *(B-Boying/B-girling),* urban graffiti *(tagging/bombing)* and deejaying *(sampling, mixing and blending, cutting and punch phrasing, beat-juggling, and scratching)* (Mc Leod, 1999: 135; Ferguson, 2008: 6; Love, 2016: 415; Snapper, 2004: 11). Rapping implies executing a style of singing-speech in which catchy or rhyming lyrics are spoken over selected portions of a vinyl record as background music (Bennett, 1999: 2; Ferguson, 2008: 6; Maxwell, 1997: 52). The word "rap" and its practice were realised after deejaying and break-dancing had already become established (Perkins, 1996: 5). Afrika Bambaataa, one of hip-hop's founding icons, claims to have appropriated the term hip-hop as a broad reference to the cultural movement from musician and record producer Lovebug Starski (Perkins, 1996: 5-6; Williams, 2015: 58).

According to Afrika Bambaataa, Grandmaster Flash and Kool Herc, the vocal element of hip-hop *(rapping/emceeing)* was established in 1974 (Perkins, 1996: 5). This element originally functioned for the purpose of instructing break-dancers and rousing spectating crowds (Ferguson, 2008: 6). Hip-hop's vocal culture can be located as far back in origin as ancient African ritual chanting, storytelling, and slave narratives (Perkins, 1996: 2; George, 1992 qtd. Ferguson, 2008: 6; Persaud, 2011: 626). Other linguistic adaptations incorporated into the wordplay culture of hip-hop include "Playing the dozens" (Labov, 1992 qtd. Ferguson, 2008:

6). This is a game that has its origins in working-class African American adolescent culture (Abrahams, 1962: 209; Hazzard-Donald, 2004 qtd. Forman et al., 2004: 509). This game involves insulting an opponent's family member and spurring others in the group to react by making disapproving sounds in anticipation of the coming exchange (Abrahams, 1962: 209; Hazzard-Donald, 2004 qtd. Forman et al., 2004: 509). The insulted participant is compelled to answer back with a witty slur against the protagonist's family to defend his and his family's honour. Many of them take the form of rhymes or puns signalling the beginning of the bloom of verbal dexterity, which comes to fruition later in the long narrative called the "toast." Ultimately verbal dexterity increases to a point where insults can be articulated more through subtlety and innuendo than through rhymes and obvious puns (Abrahams, 1962: 210). This verbal duel goes back and forth until it is no longer interesting to its participants (Abrahams, 1962: 210).

Playing the dozens is a male-dominated ritual, whose jibes though purely comical at early adolescence, become more sexual in late adolescence (Abrahams, 1962: 211). The mothers of participating adolescents are often targets of sexual insults (Abrahams, 1962: 211). Homophobic jibes are typically directed towards male family members. It has been claimed that the "dis" (insult) element reinforces raps macho culture. Scholars argue that this practice of lyrical sexual wantonness is essentially a disavowal of femininity and matriarchal socialisation (Abrahams, 1962: 214). African American inner-city males experience a post-puberty crisis of being considered a potential abuser by womenfolk in their neighbourhoods, whilst lacking masculine socialisation from positive male role models (Abrahams, 1962: 214). Interestingly, pioneering female rapper Roxanne Shante introduced a feminine perspective to emceeing - which included lyrically battling male rappers in a masculine manner, as well as addressing misogyny (Perkins, 1996: 16).

Other vocal factors that have been incorporated into the act of rapping include Cab Calloway inspired scat singing (the singing of words that do not make sense) to "jive talk," which is a combination of slang, style and verbal agency that emerged from the 1940s American jazz underground, where black jazz hipsters would validate themselves by hailing each other "man" - in stylistic defiance to being referred to as a "boy," under the overtly racist, patriarchal system of the time (Chibnall, 1995: 58). Vocal deliveries of established soul musicians such as Barry White, Isaac Hayes, the message wordplay of black civil rights activists, the rhymes of Muhamad Ali, as well as innovative personal styles of black radio Dj's (of the early 1940s to

1960s) such as Daddy O Daylie, Poppa Stoppa and Maurice “Hotrock” Hulbert, were infused into the rapping style (Perkins, 1996: 3).

Hip-hop graffiti originated in New York City in the 1960s and early 1970s (Brewer, 1992: 188). In its inception, the subway system became the central focus of hip-hop graffiti in New York (Brewer, 1992: 188). This cultural expression was exported to other major US cities, as hip-hop culture grew in the 1980s (Brewer, 1992: 188). Graffiti art embodies the visual culture of hip-hop. Hip-hop graffiti can be considered an act of unofficial self-publishing, or unconventional self-announcement. This includes a unique signature or style affirming the graffiti artist’s presence in a public space (Maxwell, 1997; Rose, 1994 qtd. Ferguson, 2008: 6). Hip-hop graffiti also appeared in busses, trains, buildings, bridges and other features of modern urban infrastructure (Brewer, 1992: 188).

Hip-hop graffiti with unique forms and functions should not be confused with gang, bathroom or other kinds of graffiti (Brewer et al., 1990 qtd. Brewer, 1992: 188; Maxwell, 1997: 58). Hip-hop graffiti has three basic forms - tags, throw-ups, and pieces (Brewer, 1992: 188; Maxwell, 1997: 56-57). The simplest and most prevalent type of hip-hop graffiti rendering are tags. Tags are stylised signatures written in ink marker, spray paint, grease pencil, paint stick, or shoe polish and represent the writer’s chosen, self-styled street name. Throw-ups are larger names written in a bubble, block or similarly expansive styles, in which the outlines of the letters are drawn in one colour and filled in with another (Brewer, 1992: 188; Maxwell, 1997: 57). Pieces are elaborate works of hip-hop graffiti that may require several hours to complete (Maxwell, 1997: 57). This cultural expression was exported to other major US cities as hip-hop grew in the 1980s. (Brewer, 1992: 188). Scholars have identified four main motivations behind hip-hop graffiti. These are fame, artistic countenance, power, and rebellion. *“Fame”* is sought through the quality, exposure, and stylistic characteristics of the writer’s work. *“Artistic countenance”* is achieved through creative references and themes, achieved through style and aesthetics. *“Power”* is achieved by laying claim to surfaces on which hip-hop graffiti artists write, thereby extending their territorial claim (Brewer, 1992: 188; Maxwell, 1997: 57); and finally, *“rebellion”* against conventional norms is displayed in the illegality of the practice - a brazen undertaking conducted surreptitiously, normally under the cover of darkness. As a shared peer activity, urban graffiti brought inner-city children together, developing comradely around a central creative performance through which one could earn respect and recognition, often a much-needed source of self-actualisation under challenging societal circumstances (Brewer, 1992: 188; Halsey, 2006: 281). Writers are differentiated according to class. There

are the elite writers who concentrate on painting pieces, considering themselves as being of greater stature than the more numerous taggers, who focus on producing tags and throw-ups (Brewer, 1992: 188). Brooklyn's Freddy Brathwaite (Fab Five Freddy) and Manhattan's Lower Eastside's Lee Quinones, rose to prominence having landed art shows in Italy (Lipsitz, 1994: 38; Charry, 2012: 2). Graffiti writers traditionally operate as crews or teams, in competition with each other (Brewer, 1992: 188). Writing is almost exclusively considered a male practice (Carrington, 1989: 89 qtd. Maxwell, 1997: 55).

B-boying/b-girling or breakdancing *(breaking)* represents the dance element of hip-hop culture (Maxwell, 1997; Rose, 1994 as qtd. Ferguson, 2008: 6). The dance performance traditionally occurred during the instrumental break or bridge in the music played by the Disk Jockeys (Charry, 2012: 2; Dalecki, 2006 qtd. Ferguson, 2008: 6). Breakdancing was popularised by Latino American (Puerto Rican), African American, and African Caribbean youth (Perkins, 1996: 13; Hazzard-Donald, 2004: qtd. Forman et al., 2004: 510; DeFrantz, 2013: 13; Persaud, 2011: 630). Breaking initially began as a form of combat comprised of complicated and physically challenging manoeuvres. These included stylised punching and kicking movements directed towards an opponent, akin to the Brazilian martial arts form of capoeira, disguised as dance (DeFrantz, 2013: 13). Breakdancing originally developed as a fill-in performance during musical breaks between records mixed by Djs (Hazzard-Donald, 2004 qtd. Forman et al., 2004: 510; DeFrantz, 2013: 13). Breaking is comprised of elaborate spins, balances, moonwalking, contortions, flips, and freezes, which require considerable agility and effective choreography (Perkins, 1996: 13; Maxwell, 1997: 61; Hazzard-Donald, 2004 qtd. Forman et al., 2004: 510; DeFrantz, 2013: 14). Sensational movements such as multiple spins while balanced on ones back, head or on one hand were spurred by dance battles. Complicated and potentially injurious manoeuvres included the *"windmill"* in which dancers spin quickly supported only by the shoulders, and the *"suicide"* in which an upright dancer would throw himself forward landing on his back (Hazzard-Donald, 2004 qtd. Forman et al., 2004: 510; DeFrantz, 2013: 14). Dance crews assembled in subway stations, street corners, playgrounds or club dance floors to battle rival groups with technique, style, and wit determining the winner (Perkins, 1996: 13; DeFrantz, 2013: 14). These often flamboyant dance battles required agreement by the dancers themselves on which was the winning performance. Victory was therefore conferred intuitively (DeFrantz, 2013: 14).

Hip-hop dance's assertive postures in relation to a female partner are essentially masculine. The early stages of b-boying/b-girling rejected the partnering of men and women (Hazzard-

Donald, 2004 qtd. Forman et al., 2004: 508). Rock Steady Crew - a mixed-sex ensemble, was the first dance group to merit national status including television appearances, and being featured in hip-hop's first films *Breakin* and *Beat Street* (Perkins, 1996: 14).

Hip-hop turntablism, disc jockeying or record spinning is predominantly a male occupation, using a twin-turntable record deck (Persaud, 2011: 631). Inner-city DJs retrofitted ordinary record players into technical gadgets that gave them the ability to create a broad spectrum of sound variations and effects, in support of rap and breaking acts (Maxwell, 1997: 60; Snapper, 2004: 9; Gosa, 2014: 63). This primarily included combining or "*mixing"* sections of existing vinyl records together in order to produce a new musical piece (Back, 1996: 192 qtd. Bennett, 1999: 2; Snapper, 2004: 9). "*Scratching"* is a definitive feature of the rap sound. This involves rotating a section of the record backward (on one turntable) in rhythm or against the rhythm of another while using the mixer to control how the sound comes through the speakers. The needle creates a percussive effect as a record vinyl moves back and forth on the deck, due to a circular hand motion (Rose, 1994: 53; Snapper, 2004: 11). Specific scratch patterns have names like "*flare,"* "*orbit,"* "*transformer,"* "*crab"* and "*hamster"* (Snapper, 2004: 11). Grand Wizard Theodore is credited with having introduced this technique (Snapper, 2004: 9; Persaud, 2011: 631). "*Back spinning"* is a technique which involves sequentially rewinding a vinyl to replay and emphasise an interesting part of a vinyl record. The usual sound of back spinning is jarring, which adds to the festoon of djayjing sound effects. The hip-hop sound is noted for innovations which include the playing of only the most intense and percussive portion of a vinyl record, known as the break (Garofalo, 1985: 264; Snapper, 2004: 630; Gosa, 2014: 63). "*Mixing and blending"* are the basic DJ techniques of combining and sequencing records. They require manually speeding up or slowing down one record so that its beats are synchronised and fit together harmonically and rhythmically with the second record. "*Cutting and punch-phrasing"* are a means of inserting a short musical fragment from one record into a song playing on another disc. These can be as brief as a single beat, so accuracy is very important. "*Beat juggling"* refers to the specific mode of creating new sounds and new musical sequences from two simultaneous recordings of the same song (Snapper, 2004: 11). Other material incorporated into hip-hop includes advertising jingles, television sitcom themes, film and soundtracks. This act of creating the new out of the old (sampling) is an important characteristic of hip-hop (Perkins, 1996: 8; Snapper, 2004: 13; Gosa, 2014: 58). Though female DJs have traditionally been a rarity, DJ Spindarilla, from the chart-topping 1980s all-female hip-hop group Salt-N-Pepa, essentially introduced a new role for women in hip-hop (Persaud, 2011: 631).

The rise of hip-hop was facilitated by several significant political and social factors. The construction of the Cross–Bronx Expressway through the centre of the Bronx in 1959, displaced middle-class white communities causing factories and stores to close, leading to unprecedented levels of black unemployment in the South Bronx. The construction of over 15000 Co-opt City apartments, on the northern edge of the Bronx in 1968, drove out the last of the middle-class citizens (Chang, 2005: 12; Persaud, 2011: 634). The flight of manufacturing jobs reduced investment - together with a steady increase in unemployment and poverty in the 1970s produced a new urban underclass (Wilson, 1987; Katz, 1993; Denton, 1993, 1993; Massey, 1993, 1991 qtd. Persaud, 2011: 633). Declining living standards were the conditions of blacks, Latinos and newly arriving immigrants. Out-migration led to lower tax revenues and a decline in public services. Conservative governments at federal and state level, reduced welfare and school funding, leading to further dissolution, racial injustice and an increasing gang and drug culture (Garofalo, 1985; 264; Chang, 2004: 13; Persaud, 2011: 633; Gosa, 2014: 60; Love, 2016: 418).

The realisation of these harsh socio-economic realities and the weariness of the structures behind them led to agency in the form of an important philosophical position in hip-hop, known as “Self-knowledge” or “Knowledge of self”. This refers to the Afro-diasporic mix of spiritual and political consciousness, intended for the emancipation of the marginalised and oppressed. Scholars have touted knowledge of self as the fifth element of hip-hop (Gosa, 2015: 56; Love, 2016: 415).

Kevin Donovan, a former gang member who later changed his name to Afrika Bambaataa (Afro-Islamic for “affectionate leader/protector”), is credited with establishing this philosophical element after having watched the 1964 film *Zulu*, in which a small group of Zulu warriors warded off attacks from a powerful British army in South Africa, in 1906, known as the Bambatha Rebellion, through making terrifying sounds by beating their shields and breaking into song (Gosa, 2015: 60). Afrika Bambaataa believed that hip-hop, as a conscious cultural movement, could be used to resist social ills instigated by institutional policies of marginalisation. Knowledge of self embraces a variety of any and all spiritual beliefs, metaphysics, science and mathematics, world history, Pan-Africanism, black consciousness and other concepts from alien conspiracies to entertainment (Gosa, 2015: 65). Sister Souljah is an example of a female emcee who earned the title of “raptivist” for her combined hip-hop lyricism and conscious activism (addressing issues of race and gender in America), which ultimately cost her rapping career, whilst elevating her political standing (Keyes, 2000: 259).

Africa Bambaataa's creative and philosophical ensemble Zulu Nation, emphasises the inexhaustibility of knowledge referred to as "infinity lessons" (Gosa, 2015: 65). The primary objective of self-knowledge is to promote peace, unity, love and entertainment as a reaction to the social ills of the inner-city, brought forth by institutionalised marginalisation of African American and Latino communities in the United States. The Zulu nation is credited with having forcefully removed drug dealers from neighbourhoods and rallying around political prisoners etc. (Gosa, 2015: 65). However, hip-hop's black nationalist roots are deeply entrenched in misogyny, homophobia and anti-feminism (Love, 2016: 415). It is however a great irony that Afrika Bambaataa is currently under investigation for the alleged molestation of young boys (Love, 2016: 415).

Hip-hop in the diaspora

After the United States, France was the biggest consumer of American hip-hop. Due to its sizable African immigrant population, it is understood that this facilitated the north to south flow of hip-hop culture from the United States to Africa (Charry, 2012: 5). Paris also benefited from rap tours and cultural exchanges led by many of its pioneers from New York (Charry, 2012: 5). Afrika Bambaataa was successful in establishing a French branch of his Zulu nation (Charry, 2012: 6) Bambaataa was instrumental in encouraging French rappers to rap in their own language and speak (rap) from the philosophical perspective of their own social awareness (Osumare, 2001: 172; Spady, Alim, Meghlli, 2006: 264 qtd. Charry, 2012: 8). The speaking of truth (social circumstances) to power as inculcated by knowledge of self and the quest for authenticity or *"keeping it real,"* can be observed as the foundational principals of conscious hip-hop. Rappers in Newcastle, England also kept it real by rapping in a *Geordie* accent, decrying Newcastle's conservatism and its resultant discrimination. MCs such as Ferank also commented on local social ills associated with alcoholism and alcohol-related violence (Bennett, 1999: 19).

Rap in Senegal was influenced by frustrations with many social, economic and political problems including high unemployment rates and school strikes. It is widely recognised as having culminated in the election of Abdoulaye Wade as president in 2000 (Tang, 2012: 83). The Khwe (Central Khoi-San) who settled in the Caprivi strip but were later (2004) relocated to Platfontein in South Africa, use hip-hop to enhance their own creativity and to articulate their struggles against poverty, unemployment, total dependence on the government and a

threatened way of existence (Bodunrin, 2016: 159). However, not all rap content highlights social and political asymmetries. Many young rappers focus on sexual matters or the opposite sex. Interestingly, matters of gender equality have not featured prominently in the empowerment philosophy of hip-hop. An exception is the prominent Japanese female youth's appropriation of hip-hop, which among its social causes also protested the dilemma of social constraints placed on womenfolk in Japanese society (Osumare, 2001: 176).

Cultural scholars have been accused of underplaying the constraints imposed by the state of inadequate resources, thereby undermining the emancipatory potential of marginalised groups (Pulido, 2009: 71). The tension between self-knowledge and the commercial imperative in hip-hop is well documented (Gosa, 2014: 58). From its inception, hip-hop was funded either by the "streets" (illegal gang-related activity) or multinational corporations (Gosa, 2014: 58). Commercially driven content, which may celebrate violent or sexualised themes, is often at loggerheads with the empowering philosophies of conscious hip-hop (Gosa, 2014: 58; Weitzer et al., 2009: 6). Regarding this ambiguity, media scholars of the Frankfurt school therefore claim "culture thus comes to express values, hopes and aspirations which run counter to the existing reality" (Swingewood, 1998: 41).

Hip-hop did not arrive in Africa uniformly but rather by happenstance. South Africa's earliest contact with hip-hop arguably occurred in 1983, when Malcolm McLaren's visit inspired the birth of the new music genre (Charry, 2015: 12). Other modes of contact in the 1980s were through hip-hop films (Watkins, 2012: 57). Successive waves of contact with American hip-hop were made possible through the advancement of communication technology, congruent with Marshall McLuhan's (1964) perception of the medium being the message, and thus the implication of any medium in reordering the nature of our existence (Osumare, 2001: 171; Durham et al., 2012: 100-101). "Video" was the medium that enabled the Southern appropriation of North American popular culture. It's very technical nature changed the way in which dance and musical performance were taught and learned. This phenomenon was expedited by the one-way, north to south flow of these cultural products (Ritzer, 1993 qtd. Bennett, 1999: 5).

Hip-hop in South Africa

In South Africa, hip-hop culture arose in Cape Town's Cape Flats in the mid-1980s (Pieterse, 2010: 435; Kunzler, 2011: 28; Charry, 2005: 1). Hip-hop in Cape Town emerged in an

environment of marginalisation, and in response to exceedingly violent and exploitative societal circumstances (Pieterse, 2010: 428). Townships on the Cape Flats were a product of the legislative process of apartheid (Salo, 2006 qtd. Bay et al., 2006: 150). The Population Registration Act of 1950 defined who "coloured" people were, and allocated them living space according to the Group Areas Act of 1950. Under this law, coloured areas were established in the city's periphery, away from the central business districts and other well-established amenities (Salo, 2006 qtd. Bay et al., 2006: 150). While the coloured community was discriminated against, they were relatively privileged in comparison to those classified as African (Salo, 2006 qtd. Bay et al., 2006: 150). Urban deprivation was experienced in terms of a lack of access to basic social services, universal state protection thus the system of apartheid, and an urban environment of crime and conflict (Pieterse, 2010: 429). Unemployment levels as high as 50% in the Western Cape, were driven by high school dropout rates and general social dysfunction (Pieterse, 2010: 431). Even when jobs are available, the lack of a tertiary education systematically excludes members of marginalised coloured communities. Lack of incorporation into the formal economy consequently expanded the involvement of youth, directly or indirectly into the drug economy (Pieterse, 2010: 431). The acknowledged initiators of South African hip-hop were Prophets of da City (P.O.C). Group members Shaheen Ariefdien and Ready D, drew inspiration from the militant black conscious stream of American hip-hop as an interpretive tool and mode of resistance in the face of the vagaries of the system of apartheid (Pieterse, 2010: 435). P.O.C was the first South African rap group to record and release a track in 1990, two years after the group was formed (Sithole, 2017: 215). Other hip-hop groups that emerged in Cape Flats were Black Noise fronted by Emile YX? and later Brasse Vannie Kaap (BVK), whose vocal delivery was conducted in *Gamtaal* (a dialect of Afrikaans originating from the Cape Flats), consistent with the tenants of self-knowledge. BVK was founded by P.O.C's Ready D in the late 1990s (Lekena, 2016; Watkins, 2012: 57). Communities in Cape Town experienced the same social problems as those of the inner-cities of the United States.

Several phases in the development of South African hip-hop are distinguishable. The appropriation of American hip-hop as a conscious expression of shared political and socio-economic experiences marks the first phase (Kunzler, 2011: 28; Charry, 2005: 1). South African hip-hopers were initially enthused by what they learned through the technologically mediated American experience (Watkins, 2012: 57). Hip-hoppers served the function of entertaining crowds before community protest rallies (Pieterse, 2010: 436; Watkins, 2015: 57).

Conscious or underground rappers (P.O.C, Black Noise, B.V.K) embraced all elements of hip-hop, along with the emergence of established breakdance crews such as Cape Town City Breakers, who raised the profile of American style dancing in the 1980s (Pieterse, 2010: 435; Watkins, 2012: 7). Cape Town-based hip-hop groups did not only focus on live performances, but also produced their own work on their own recording labels and in so doing were able to maintain their economic, ideological and creative independence (Kunzler, 2011: 38; Watkins, 2012: 73). P.O.C's self-knowledge obligations included involvement in community feeding schemes (Rhyme Unit Feed the Needy Organisation) as well as radio programmes championing HIV/AIDS awareness (Watkins 2012: 59; Haupt, 2003: 23), while Black Noise regard themselves as performers who use hip-hop to empower and educate (Watkins, 2012: 60). Conscious rappers maintained their ideological independence even after democracy was realised in South Africa, continuing to clash with authorities, this time in opposition to the "forgive and forget" mantra of the "Rainbow Nation" conception (Lekana, 2016). This insistence on redressing the vagaries of South Africa's colonial and apartheid past led to the banning of their music and subsequent relocation of P.O.C to Europe, in search of new opportunities and innovation (Lekena, 2016).

The second phase in the development of South African hip-hop can be located in the post–Apartheid era, where increasing commercialisation of rap occurred in the context of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), which was introduced to redress socioeconomic marginalisation (Kunzler, 2011: 39). Rap group Skwatta Kamp signed up with major local recording label Gallo in 2003. Its album *Mkhukhu Funkshen*, sold over 40 000 copies becoming the first South African rap album to achieve gold status (Kunzler, 2011: 39). Hip-hop in this phase witnessed the emergence of vibrant Johannesburg-based rap groups (Skwatta Kamp, Hip Hop Pantsula (HHP), Proverb and Zimbabwean born Zubs) (Pieterse, 2010: 436). Although these groups tried to maintain ideological and political relevance, they became professional hip-hop artists for whom material success and economic emancipation was important (Kunzler, 2011: 39). Their commercial direction at the expense of advancing imperatives of self-knowledge earned them ridicule from the conscious groups (Watkins, 2012: 62). The Rhyme and Reason crew in Johannesburg, who are part of a larger crew called Cashless Society, believed they represented the poor and in so doing endeavoured to promote hope and progress (Watkins, 2012: 62). The element of breakdancing had since fallen away by 1978 (Hazzard-Donald, 2004 qtd. Forman et al., 2004: 510), while hip-hop graffiti steadily lost popularity and commercial relevance. Technological disruption through computer generation of sound has

been cited as being responsible for replacing DJs in recording studios (Seibert, 2018). It is at this point that social interests of the earlier phase are no longer represented (Watkins, 2012: 66). Commercial success was accomplished through the merchandising of products such as clothing etc., thus enabling hip-hop culture to permeate many aspects of young people's lives (Pritchard, 2009: 52).

Contemporary South African hip-hop, which may be regarded as the third phase (from approximately 2009), emphasises success and the "rock star status" of individual rappers, some of whom have penetrated the international market (Kunzler, 2011: 42). For example, Die Antwoord achieved international success after the release of its first album *O* (Chruszczewska, 2015: 63), while Casper Nyovest became the first South African artist to fill the Ticketpro dome arena in Johannesburg (Modise, 2015). These contemporary stars emulate their North American counterparts by appropriating their forms of showmanship, empire building, conspicuous consumption, hyper-masculinity and misogyny (Kunzler, 2011: 42; Meer, 2012). This was realised through the development of the music video as an advertising vehicle for the promotion of popular music (Englis, 2011). The exploitation of youth culture by corporate monopolies, in their attempt to secure revenue streams through marketing a range of products aimed at the youth, has placed communication at the very centre of production (Haupt, 2003: 21/26). This phenomenon has thus extended the star status of musicians beyond the imagination of radio listenership and concert attendance (Englis, 2011). An interesting feature of this phase in South African hip-hop is its increased use of vernacular (Watkins, 2012: 66). Most Johannesburg rappers use a combination of local languages within a single piece of rap music (Sithole, 2017: 180), and over the years have been supported by generous radio airplay and dedicated radio programming (e.g. Good Hope FM's *The Ready D Show*, 5fm's *The Stir Up* and UJfm's *16 Bars Reloaded*) (Sithole, 2017: 201).

This has been followed up with more awards and recognition being given to contemporary hip-hop artists, and popularity promoted through social media. Product marketers are paying close attention to the commercial marketing potential of hip-hop and have thus given rap artists lucrative product endorsement deals (e.g. Da L.E.S and DJ Dimplez endorsing Ciroc, AKA endorsing AXE deodorant, and Khuli Chana becoming brand ambassador of Kentucky Fried Chicken (K.F.C) in 2014 (Sithole, 2017: 259).

Male rappers dominate hip-hop music in South Africa (Haupt, 2003: 22). Godessa is the first female rap group to have been commercially recorded (Haupt, 2003: 10). Godessa challenges

the representations of women in mainstream hip-hop, whether these are anorexic standards of beauty or the gender values of gangster rap and its extreme sexualisation of the female body, in what bell hooks underscores as white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (Haupt, 2003: 24). Alpha Phonetics (AP) is another all-female hip-hop group based in Port Elizabeth, which raps about the plight of black women in society, and the challenges they face regarding the vagaries of rape, alcohol and drug abuse (Watkins, 2015: 64). Such disproportionate gender representations in hip-hop arguably limit gendered perspectives in hip-hop to those popularised by males. Kunzler claims that even the conscious rappers paid little attention to gender equality (2011: 37). *Women* (2005) by rapper Proverb, stands as a rarity in the gendered politics of hip-hop, as a song dedicated to the achievements of women. Women have often appeared in South African hip-hop as objectified entities for the male gaze, as exemplified by Pitch Black Afro's 2004 music video *Matofotofo* (Khan, 2010: 155; Kunzler, 2011: 38). The representation of women as willing partners to heterosexual male protagonists in hip-hop videos has generally been to the exclusion of any non-sexual, or non-objectified conception of womanhood (Balaji, 2010: 6). Such representations in local hip-hop frustrate efforts directed towards achieving gender equality and responding positively to alarming statistics of gender-based violence, which affects as many as 30% of all women (Gennrich, 2013: iii). The videos selected for this study emerged in the third phase of the development of South African hip-hop. These videos are a product of the integration of global commercial (American/European) and local aesthetic concepts, in what Robertson (1995) refers to as "glocalisation" (qtd. Bennett, 1999: 6; Pritchard, 2009: 52).

Southern understandings of misogyny in hip-hop

Misogyny as an ideology is widespread and common in many societies, justifying the use, abuse and diminishment of women (Adams et al., 2006: 939). In such a scenario, women are considered sexually expendable and burdensome to men (Adams et al., 2006: 939-940). The roots of the misogyny can be traced back to the very origins of colonialism, as established through the Spanish and Portuguese occupation of South America. Long after wars that facilitated colonial occupation were fought, race became the reason for the systemic violence towards native men and women, what Maldonaldo-Torres describes as the "non-ethics of war," which continued beyond initial acts of aggression (2007: 247). Coloniality can be understood as the structural institution and naturalisation of the "non-ethics" of war into the everyday

living experience, long after colonialism has ended (Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 247). After the wars of colonial occupation, race became the reason for the systemic violence towards native men and women (Maldonaldo-Torres, 2007: 246).

In addition to misanthropic scepticism (dehumanisation of the conquered) as the basis of subjugation, was the establishment of a structure of the control of labour and resources, together with the condemnation of vanquished peoples, who were then considered inferior and condemned to a "deserving" life of slavery and serfdom (Quijano, 2000 qtd. Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 243). Coloniality places people of colour under a homicidal and rapist sight of established authority. Coloniality also effeminizes men of colour, creating an order of authority where the white male is at the helm of the hierarchy, followed by the white female, black male and finally the black female. It has been argued that capital punishment in America was promulgated to punish black men for the rape of white women (Day, 2016). The rape and sexual assault of African slaves on American plantations are well documented. The inability of black men to protect their female kin caused a conflict of manhood (Foster, 2011: 446). Many felt they could not consider themselves as "men" since they could not protect black women from sexual assault at the hands of their slave masters (Foster, 2011: 446). Beyond psychological assault, physical sexual abuse of slave women and girls took varied forms: various acts of punishment, expressions of desire, forms of forced reproduction and systems of concubinage (Foster, 2011: 446). It is claimed that male slaves were also victims of rape at the hands of their masters (Amwood, 2007 qtd. Foster, 2011: 447).

Black feminist scholars argue that African American experiences of misogyny are a manifestation of the patriarchal system of white supremacist capitalism (hooks, 1994 qtd. Adams et al., 2006: 943). Patriarchy is defined as a system of political organisation that distributes power between men and women. In this arrangement, men hold power while women are largely excluded from it (Facio, 2013). Most forms of feminism consider patriarchy as an unjust social system that subordinates, oppresses and discriminates against women (Facio, 2013). This is predicated on real or perceived differences between the two recognised sexes, therefore the biological inferiority of women (Facio, 2013). Black women find themselves at the very nexus of both racism and sexism (White, 1985:27 qtd. Adams et al., 2006: 943).

Feminist scholars claim that black women are the mules of the world, as they continue to be a means by which others assert their importance (Hurston, 1995 qtd. Adams et al., 2006: 948). The frustrations of men in patriarchal societies are usually channelled towards the weaker

members of society: women and children (hooks, 1981 qtd. Adams et al., 2006: 948). Transactional depictions of gender relations in American and South African commercial hip-hop videos emphasise the heterosexual material dominance of men and the sexual obligation of women (Hill, 2009: 30, Mpetsi et al., 2018: 98). In this case, black women are represented as the property of male rappers (Bailey, 1988: 37 qtd. Balaji, 2010: 8). The subjugation of black women is understood to allow these artists to assert themselves in the world and therefore avow their masculinity (Adams et al., 2006: 948).

Under ethnocentric systems of racial dominance, European concepts of feminine beauty were historically predicated on notions of modesty, delicacy, asexuality and physical frailty, while black women were considered sexually insensitive/immodest, physically resilient and exuding animalistic sensuality (Mowatt, 2013: 650; Bush, 1990 qtd. Tate, 2007: 301). The proximity to European features in women decreed female beauty and desirability (Neal et al., 1989: 325; Bush, 1990 qtd. Tate, 2007: 301).

Eroticised caricatures of African women are evidenced by the fascination with Josephine Baker and her banana tutu, images of Grace Jones in a cage, and the public exhibition of Sarah Baartman (Hobson, 2005 qtd. Tate, 2007: 301). Feminist scholars have argued that rap music binds black women to established stereotypes of sexuality and attainability, historically associated with black women (Sharpley-Whiting, 2007 qtd. Balaji, 2010: 7). Hip-hop is an influential purveyor of colourism, with several lyrics paying homage to "redbones" and "yellowbones" (light skinned black women with red/yellow undertones in their skin), as in the case of South African rapper Mthembeni Ndevu's (Emtee) hit song *Pearl Thusi* (Kasi Lyrics: 2016; Maxwell et al., 2016: 1490). European features (light skin, aquiline nose and straight hair) historically gave colonised and subjugated peoples greater proximity to material and social opportunities denied to those of darker skin - associated with primitiveness, filth and sexual impropriety (Muzondidya, 2005, 23 -24 qtd. Glenn, 2008:284). Preferences for lighter skinned women, remarks against dark-skinned women and the exclusion of dark-skinned women in music videos have been noted as features of the hierarchal politics of hip-hop misogyny (Stephens et al., 2007: 253; Maxwell et al., 2016: 1488). Social theorists have underscored the lack of variety in body size and weight and other celebrated aesthetic features of black beauty (Emerson, 2002: 122). The conception of race and gender in hip-hop is therefore a product of the layering of the aforementioned historically problematic notions of race and gender, accepted over time as common sense (Hall, 1982: 73).

Racialised allegories of what black women were/are purported to be have been were internalised by American society (Rodgers-Rose, 1980 qtd. Adams, 2006: 947). Derogatory references associated with black women such as the "*Sapphire,"* a socially aggressive black woman who tries through manipulation to control her man has resurfaced in hip-hop as *"the bitch"*. The historic "*Jezebel"* reference, a loose and sexually aggressive woman has also been re-embodied in hip-hop as "*the ho*" (whore) (Adams et al., 2006: 945).

Notions of black female identity negate any worthy emotional or intellectual characteristics attributable to black women (Bailey, 1988 qtd. Balaji, 2010: 6). At least eight images (actively in use in hip-hop) have been established as a further development of sexual references pertaining to African American female sexuality (Stephens et al., 2007: 252). These include the *"Diva,"* a woman who enhances her social status even though she may be economically independent and the *"Gold-digger,"* a financially disadvantaged woman who intentionally has sex in order to advance her material circumstances. The "*Freak"* image is enacted with reference to a sexually adventurous woman who involves herself with a multitude of partners for her own sexual gratification. The *"Dyke"* suggests an autonomous and masculine (tough) woman who has rejected sex with men. The *"Gangster bitch"* is a street-wise/tough woman who offers herself sexually in an act of solidarity with, or to support her street-tough man. The *"Sister Saviour"* is an image of a pious woman who repudiates all but marital sex for religious reasons. The *"Earth mother"* image is evoked where a woman is sexually involved for spiritual and nationalistic reasons, thus to support "the race" or "the nation". Finally, the *"Baby mama"* image is that of a woman who is sexually active with the father of her child of whom she is no longer in a relationship with, for the purposes of maintaining financial or emotional links (Emerson, 2002: 117; Stephens et al., 2007: 252).

Though various forms of music have traditionally addressed an array of expressions including emotions of hope, love, fear, anger, frustration and pride; violence and misogyny have also been prominent features. Violence and explicit misogyny became the creative focus of the late 1980s - 1990s Los Angeles based *"G-funk"* or gangster rap, owed to an increasing demand (by middle-class white suburban youth) for the mediated African American ghetto experience (Armstrong, 2001: 98; Adams et al., 2006: 938-939; Gosa, 2014: 56). The gangster lifestyle and its association with hip-hop was popularised by St Ides malt liquor television advertising after its marketing portfolio was handed over to screenwriter, record and film producer DJ Pooh (Quinn, 2005: 1). These advertisements featured many relatively unknown gangster rappers who later became famous. St Ides' advertisements exaggerated hyper-sexuality and

romanticised the stereotypes of ghetto life (Quinn, 2005: 2; Negus, 2017: 496). Interest in gangster rap grew beyond its targeted market of the black working class, "trickling up" to the white suburban middle class. This increasing demand was evidenced by soaring sales of St Ides malt liquor, high grossing African American gangster films, and high selling gangster rap albums (Quinn, 2005: 2). Though most gangster rap combined both violent and misogynistic content, rappers and rap groups such as Too $hort and 2 Live Crew almost exclusively focused on producing misogynistic rap content, as interest in the sexualised ghetto experience of the predominantly south and west coast (where pimping cultures were established) grew (Crenshaw, 1997: 254; Neal, 2012). Oakland's Too $hort is assumed to have influenced almost every rapper who has ever majored in lyrical pimping or hip-hop sexology (Neal, 2012). Mainstream rappers of different generations have featured Too $hort on their albums and music videos for the purpose of validating their "pimping" prowess (Neal, 2012).

Record sales of artists such as Jay Z and Snoop Dogg are evident of the lucrative nature of misogynistic rap (Adams et al., 2006: 949). Recording companies and corporations are more likely to attempt to ward off criticism of misogynistic rap than to alter the production values of lucrative misogynistic hip-hop products (Negus, 2017: 493). Music video models are labelled "video vixens," "hip-hop honeys," and "dimes," among other terms of reference (Balaji, 2010: 9). It has been argued that the emphasis on certain female body parts in music videos follows the logic of pornography, with certain video models cast exclusively for their breasts or buttocks (Emerson, 2002: 122; Jhally, 2006 qtd. Balaji, 2010: 12). Pregnant mothers and women older than 30 are not considered desirable, therefore the commercial hip-hop music video is not open to other representations of women. There is also essentialist heterosexuality bestowed on female performers to the exclusion of homosexual and bisexual themes (Emerson, 2002: 123). Rumours suggesting American rapper Big Daddy Kane (whose act thrived upon a tough playboy image) was gay ruined his career (Hill, 2009: 30). In an effort to restore his reputation and career, Kane later reasserted himself in a more aggressive and misogynistic manner (Hill, 2009: 30). Such gendered representations of male figures in hip-hop promote male heterosexual dominance and passive/compliant femininity, while emasculating male rivals through feminisation (Hill, 2009: 32).

It is claimed that the more hours of rap music videos watched by African American girls, the more likely they are to become aggressive, binge drink, smoke marijuana, have multiple sex partners (STI risks) and have a negative body image (Hunter, 2011: 31; Chen et al., 2006 qtd. Travis et al., 2011: 210). Both boys and girls are considered likely to condone misogyny and

therefore, agree with rape myths. Repeated exposure to misogynistic rap videos reinforces and legitimises its social order (Gerbner et al., 1986: 18). Cultural theorists however claim that individuals may appropriate certain aspects of such gendered identities through their interaction with hip-hop (Hall, 1992: 275). The root of social problems in black male - female relationships is assumed by some scholars to be more widespread than simply stereotypical in societies where black women have little social and/or economic status and power. Transactional connections (where financial support is traded for sex) between black men and women are understood to actually be survival strategies in a Eurocentric structured world, where black women are financially marginalised and exposed to both racism and sexism (Karenga, 1978 qtd. Hutchinson, 1999: 83).

Male producers and sponsors often disproportionately support their female musicians to the extent of overshadowing them in their own music videos. Entering the music business is usually easier when a female rapper is associated with a man who is established in the business (Emerson, 2002: 124).

Conversely, some feminists claim that identity and sexuality have emancipatory potential (Lorde, 1984 qtd. Balaji, 2010: 5). Video models such as Melyssa Ford have endeavoured to take charge of their sexuality. In the video of the song *Shake it fast* by Mystical, Ford reverses the objectification of women by positioning herself in dominant positions in relation to the male protagonist (musician Pharrell Williams). In *Knock yourself out*, she resists the male gaze by looking down on rapper Jadakiss. Ford also pins Jadakiss to the wall, in a show of sexual dominance (Balaji, 2010: 11). She however loses her power, self-definition, and individuality when she is made to blend into the background with a number of other women of similar hue towards the end of the music video (Balaji, 2010: 11). Ford is successful in promoting her visual properties while maintaining a level of independence in how she displays her sexuality. South African female rapper Gigi Lamanye claims, “African women need to take back their bodies, not as a sinful and embarrassing object, but rather one that is as significant to mainstream culture as that of your favourite male rapper posing topless” (Netshiheni et al., 2017: 17).

Hip-hop has been viewed by some theorists as a platform for the resistance to cultural invisibility, sexual objectification, academic reification and mainstream hegemonic white feminist discourse (Rose, 1991: 126). In several black female music videos, the inclusion of darker skinned models has been noted (Emerson, 2002: 125). Artists such as Erykah Badu

denounce neglectful lovers who maintain a coterie of unemployed friends in her song *Tyrone* (Emerson, 2002: 126). In *Sock it to me*, rapper Missy Eliot promotes sisterhood with two other female rappers (Da Brat and Lil' Kim) against a male protagonist played by Timberland (also her producing partner). In this video there is no overbearing male influence (Emerson, 2002: 126). In as much as some feminist scholars have deemed identity and sexuality emancipatory, post-hip-hop era feminists have posed the question of who ultimately controls the image (Balaji, 2010: 5).

All-women South African group Godessa has denounced what it refers to as "anorexic standards" of beauty set by the global capital within the creative industry (Haupt, 2003: 26). Godessa stands out in the face of the misogynistic nature of pop music, Kwaito and gangster rap. Its co-founder Ej von Lyrik's role as a producer marked a further step in the seizing of control over a largely male-dominated sphere of music production. Godessa is well represented on their label's website. They have moved beyond controlling the means of representation and production to controlling the means of distribution as well (Haupt, 2003: 27).

Northern theories of gender

Early Northern theories of gender focussed on biological explanations for gender differences, backed by Freudian Oedipus complex theory (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1990 qtd. Zanardi, 1990: 88), and psychological theories of gender such primary femininity (Stoller, 1977: 59). Liberal feminists however argue the absence of an intrinsic relationship between sex/biology and gender (Annandale et al., 1996: 20).

The concept of "sex role" can be attributed to the postulations of Mirra Komarovsky (Connell, 1987: 30) and Talcott Parsons (1942), who spelt out a theory of sex roles in their early work (Krais et al., 2000: 54). Parsons in his studies of family proposed a female role (Krais et al., 2000: 54). This role is representative of particular fundamentals focused inwards towards the maintenance of the family system (Krais et al., 200: 54). He created a male role which represents collective and instrumental orientations directed outward, through the pre-eminence of gainful employment and thus representative of societal functionality (Krais et al., 2000: 54).

A rapid decline in the adornment of males was experienced in the western world during the 18th century. Due to the pathologising of homosexuality, there was a drive to shed any suggestion of femininity among males (King, 2004: 31). According to Pascoe (2005: 329),

penetrated men symbolise masculinity devoid of power. This was marked with the exaggeration of existing physical differences in gender identity. Elizabeth Wilson notes that fashion in modern times has been preoccupied with the polarisation of genders (Connell, 1985: 267). Female fashion of the Victorian era sought to create distinct differences between sexes in terms of clothing styles, thus emphasising breasts, waist, buttocks exaggerated with the aid of corsets, bustles, and bras (Connell, 1985: 267).

Acting outside of the cultural norms of one's gender in later life invites a series of punitive measures (Butler, 1988: 526; Jewkes et al., 2010 qtd. Mugweni et al., 2012: 579). The application of punitive measures as a means of societal control is supported by Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison* (1975), in which he proposes cohesion and threats as a tactic of maintaining societal order, by assigning the judicial function of condemnation to the individual (King, 2004: 30). Through rigorous socialisation, gender is learned and performed (Butler, 1984: 524). Proponents of the performative concept claim that children are classified (on the basis of biological sex) into the male and female categories and assigned masculinity and femininity respectively through gendered toys and play apparatus (Butler, 1988: 524). Therefore, according to Judith Butler "one is not born but rather becomes a woman" (Butler, 1988: 519).

Masculinity can be defined in terms of different ways of being a man, or behaving as a man in relationships within society (Gennrich, 2013: 4). Ways of being a man are predicated on physical makeup, thus culturally, traditionally, religiously, racially and as influenced by class (Gennrich, 2013: 4). Hegemonic masculinities refer to dominant and aspired ways of being a man that are culturally specific (Connell, 2005: 836). For example, in South African townships, schoolboy gender identity drew from the *"Tsotsi"* (street gangster), an oppositional street male gender identity common in black urban townships (Bhana, 2005: 206). Morrell et al., (2012) use the concept of hegemonic masculinity to identify the nature and dynamics of male power in the South African pre-democratic and post 1994 era (Morrell et al., 2012: 12). These hegemonic masculinities include a "white" masculinity (which represents the economic and political dominance of the white ruling class), an "African" rurally based masculinity (fashioned through chiefship, communal land tenure, and customary law), and then a "black" masculinity that is geographically and socially located in the urban areas (Morrell et al., 2012: 12). Traditional Zulu masculinity for example, insists on a man as the head of household, in command of cattle, money, employment and a wife (Hadebe, 2010 qtd. Gennrich, 2013: 12). A crisis of masculinity becomes apparent when conditions of existence undermine the status

of men in patriarchal societies (Hadebe, 2010 qtd. Gennrich, 2013: 8). This is evidenced by a resort to destructive behaviours, in order to re-establish dominance (Hadebe, 2010 qtd. Gennrich, 2013: 8).

The notion of femininity alludes to ways of being a woman (Paechter, 2006: 254). Unlike the notion of hegemonic masculinity, *emphasised femininity* refers to ways of being women fashioned under a patriarchal system of dominance (Paechter, 2006: 256). According to Connell (1987), femininities cannot be hegemonic because they can neither confer cultural power nor guarantee patriarchy (Paechter, 2006: 256). Femininities are fashioned as an assortment of disavowals of the masculine. Femininity by definition is understood as the absence of masculinity (Paechter, 2006: 256). Distancing oneself from stereotypical femininity, whether from a feminist standpoint or through the personal denunciation of the feminine by "tomboys" or "butch" women is considered tantamount to attaining power (Halberstam, 1998; Reay, 2001 qtd. Paechter, 2006: 256).

Femininities and masculinities are not specific to the female and male sex explicitly. According to Butler (2004), drag queens perform femininity much better than some women do (Peatcher, 2006: 256). Performing femininity well has been understood by gender theorists to involve the enactment of a hyper-femininity that most women do not perform most of the time (Butler, 2004 qtd. Peatcher, 2006: 256). Queer theory pursues the task of dissociating the critique of gender and sexuality from narrowly conceived notions of lesbian and gay identity (Halperin, 2003: 341). This theory challenges notions of compulsory heterosexuality as ascribed by patriarchal definitions of gender (Rich, 1980: 631). Standards of masculinity and femininity vary from one culture to the next, as well as from one historical period to the next (Connell, 1993: 606).

Gendered roles and practices are systematically assigned, reinforced and maintained by individuals who generally share the same ideological outlook (Bourdieu, 1990 qtd. Krais et al., 2000: 56). Human beings in their social context are able to derive information on socio-economic status, patterns of perception, principles of judgment, and geographic location of origin (which are much a product of one's history) through one's dialect, posture, dress, use of words and way of speaking, known as *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990 qtd. Krais et al, 2000: 56). A gendered understanding of the world is stored in an individual's habitus and communicated through action (Bourdieu, 1990 qtd. Krais et al., 2000: 58). Hierarchal notions of gender are reinforced where individuals are aware and accepting of the cultural dynamics of domination

and submission (Bourdieu 1990 qtd. Krais et al., 2000: 59).

Institutions and complex human interactions are responsible for the construction and maintenance of a system of societal ordering which structures gendered social practices. Connell calls this the "gender order" (1995). Three key structures that regulate such gendered interactions involve the division of labour between men and women, issues of where power and authority is vested (control and coercion in relationships), and the question of who determines libidinal rules and matters of sexual energy (cathexis) (Connell, 1995: 74 qtd. Wedgewood, 2007: 333). All three aforementioned structures can be observed in social institutions that make up society, such as family, state and the street (Connell, 1995: 74 qtd. Wedgewood, 2007: 333). As with any system of power imbalance, patriarchy is challenged and therefore requires considerable effort to maintain through the policing of men as well as the discrediting or exclusion of women (Foucault, 1998: 95-6 qtd. King, 2004: 37). In hip-hop, where such contestation of male power occurs ("streets"), appearing a weak man invites censure and in so doing encourages aggressive displays of patriarchal dominance (Hill, 2009: 32).

Several scholars have criticised the notion of hegemonic masculinity. According to Collinson and Hearn (1994) and Hearn (1996, 2004), the concept of hegemonic masculinity tends to deemphasise issues of power and domination (Connell et al., 2005: 836). The concept of multiple masculinities has been construed to present fixed masculinities which are not subject to contestation (Connell et al., 2005: 836). According to Petersen (1998, 2003), Collier (1998) and MacInnes (1998), the stratification and groupings of masculinities creates a false impression of unity within masculine groupings (qtd. Connell et al., 2005: 836). The very concept of masculinity has been framed within a hetero-normative context, ignoring difference in gender categories (Connell et al., 2005: 836). The concept of hegemonic masculinity does not acknowledge that women can be masculine and men can be feminine (Connell et al., 2005: 836). The concept of hegemonic masculinity has also been criticised for being conceptually confusing as well as essentialist (Connell et al., 2005: 836). Furthermore, masculinities are in constant flux, depending on changes in a social setting where the range of masculine behaviour can change (Connell et al., 2005: 836).

In order to consider the way in which South African viewers may make sense of the hip-hop videos, an understanding of how various forces shape their understanding is important. Giddens' theory of structuration is useful as such an overarching explanation (1984 qtd. Lamsal

2012: 113). Structuration is a way of thinking about structures: namely, that they are produced through agency. It is an approach to understanding the relationship between structure and agency (Giddens, 1984 qtd. Lamsal, 2012: 113). Structuration as a concept recognises macro (structures) and micro (agents) phenomenon. Certain individuals (agents) may rebel against laid out social norms impacting on the nature of the current structure (Craib, 1992: 33 qtd. Lamsal, 2012: 113). In this way, one can understand how ideas and attitudes regarding gender and gender relations within society are reproduced and also challenged.

Reception theory

Reception analysis is the most recent addition to the tradition of audience research, following on mainstream traditions of effects research, uses and gratifications, literary criticism and cultural studies (Jensen et al., 2002: 207). The approach developed from concerns over the problematic interpretation of literary texts (Jensen et al., 2002: 211). Over time it became apparent that texts written in one era ran the risk of being construed inaccurately, as ways of life and generational experience evolved over time (Holub, 1984: 58).

The effects tradition viewed audiences as cultural dupes, who could be influenced by the dominant media in a manner similar to the way in which a hypodermic needle “injects” ideas into the minds of the masses while facing very little resistance (Strelitz, 2000: 37). From this perspective, audience research focused on empirically accounting for the effects of the media on individuals, through social science methods of inquiry (Deacon et al., 1999: 4).

Uses and gratifications research revolved around what audiences did with the media, rather than what the media did to the audiences. As in the case of the effects tradition, uses and gratifications was initially vested in positivist social scientific methods of inquiry (Jensen et al., 2002: 210).

Important tools for Reception analysis were realised from developments within Cultural Studies research. Cultural Studies is an interdisciplinary field that combines social theory, cultural analysis and critique, as well as politics, with the objective of analysing current configurations of culture and society (Kellner: 2016). The approach proposes a holistic perspective on social life while acknowledging an individual’s capacity for intervention in the role of meaning-making, in order to facilitate social interaction (Jensen et al., 2002: 212). Social and cultural practices are thus the investigative focus of mass communication (Jensen

et al., 2002: 212). Hall's (1973) seminal Encoding/Decoding article conceptualises the processes of meaning-making that are engaged in by both producers and receivers of communication, thereby linking production and interpretation (Hall et al., 2005: 117). Social forces are instrumental in conditioning the processes that shape both production and reception (Hall et al., 2005: 117). With this understanding, Cultural Studies theorists such as Ang (1985), Morley (1986) and Radway (1984) used qualitative research methods to explore the different conditions that shape the reception of texts (Jensen et al., 2002: 213).

Reception analysis conceives of audiences as active meaning-makers. It is concerned with the possible difference in meaning derived from textual analysis and real audience's sense-making (Jensen et al., 2002: 217). In so doing, reception analysis questions the validity of content analysis as a source of knowledge about the uses and effects of mass media texts (Jensen et al., 2002: 214), while producing empirical data about the audience through research methods such as in-depth interviewing and observation. Like Cultural Studies, reception analysis sees media as culturally and generically coded discourses, while defining audiences as agents of meaning-production (Jensen et al., 2002: 217). Within this complex theoretical framework of social semiotics, the question to be addressed empirically by reception studies is how specific audiences differ in the social production of meaning (Jensen et al., 2002: 218).

Reception analysis can be said to perform a comparative reading of media discourses and audience discourses in order to understand the process of reception. In comparing these discourses with the structure of media content, reception studies have indicated how particular genres and themes may be assimilated by specific audiences (Jensen et al., 2002: 222). With reference to the social context of audience background variables, as well as to other cultural and political institutions, reception analysis has explored how audiences may contribute to social meaning-production and cultural patterns, generally through their membership of socially specific interpretive communities (Jensen et al., 2002: 222).

While the media may construct rather than simply represent a particular version of social reality through prevailing forms of understanding, recipients or readers may intervene and apply alternative frames of interpretation, rendering meaning variable (Jensen, 1987: 23).

Situational factors determine the understanding of the social uses of communication in a particular cultural setting (Jensen, 1987: 23). In the home, a television's function may just be to create an atmosphere for a family to come together. Viewers in this regard may not be fully vested in meaning-production. This is however countered in a structured focus group, where

the main agenda is a discussion around specific videos viewed. Audience factors constitute the realisation of the presence of various audiences or interpretive communities. Viewers of certain programming, subject areas and cultures develop an aptitude for interpretation specific to their viewing genre of choice i.e. soap opera (Jensen, 1987: 30). A viewer of hard news may not have the acquired skills to comprehensively decode the content of a soap opera and vice versa. Media factors are predicated on the type of media. Exclusive readers of print (text) may lack the semiotic and auditory vocabulary to read film and televisual productions (Jensen, 1987: 30).

Successive developments in reception studies focused on various areas. Initially, reception analysis focused on factual genres such as news and explored the ideological implications of reception in a political sense (Lewis 1985; Morley, 1980 qtd. Jensen et al., 2002: 138). Studies that followed in soap opera and romance novels reception studies (feminine genres) led to the shifting of reception value from ideology in a political sense, to the question of pleasure or emotional stimulation (Ang, 1985; Hobson, 1982; Radway, 1984 qtd. Jensen et al., 2002: 138).

These genres were seen to carry emancipatory potential for audiences in their families and other social contexts (Ang, 1985; Hobson, 1982 qtd. Jensen et al., 2002: 138). Historical and theoretical psychoanalytical work (which followed) has addressed the relationship between media use and gendered identities (de Lauretis, 1984; Modleski, 1984 qtd. Jensen et al., 2002: 138). Other studies dedicated to ethnic, cultural and subcultural contexts of reception (Liebes et al., 1990 qtd. Jensen et al., 2002: 138) have examined variations in reception, with reference to ethnic, cultural and sub-cultural contexts of audiences (Liebes et al., 1990; Lull, 1988 qtd. Jensen et al., 2002: 138).

The experimental qualities regarding the interrelatedness of contemporary media have marked a source of further academic exploration regarding reception studies (Jensen et al., 2002: 138). Reception analysis aims to empower audiences in education and politics by developing media literacy, and advising political regulators in the alleged interest of their audiences (Jensen et al., 2002: 228).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This research attempts to account for gendered meanings that designated Rhodes University student audiences make of selected South African commercial hip-hop music videos. Reception theory predicated on the phenomenological (naturalist/interpretive) paradigm will form the relevant qualitative research design as mentioned in Chapter 2. Reception analysis places empirical emphasis on the examination of the text on one hand, and its reception by audiences on the other (Jensen et al., 2002: 218; Hart, 1991: 60). Therefore, communication research cannot be conceptualised as a mere linear act of transmission, but a dynamic process that is complementary in nature, regarding the imperatives or "versions of reality" of the producers, their resultant texts, and audiences that consume these texts or cultural products (Jensen et al., 2002: 218; Fairclough, 1995: 103). This phenomenon is better explained by what is termed the circuit of culture (Johnson, 1986-7: 46). The circuit of culture explains the production, circulation, and consumption of cultural products, where each point in the circuit depends on the others and is indispensable to the whole (Johnson, 1986-7: 46). Under these circumstances, audiences may impact on the nature of the cultural product in one way or the other, from one revolution to the next within the circuit of culture (Johnson, 1986-7: 46). Communication must therefore be conceptualised in terms of both parties (as co-producers of meanings) involved in generating meanings, through dialogue (Johnson, 1986-7: 46; Jensen, 1988: 3; Fiske, 1989a: 35 qtd. Strelitz, 2000: 41).

The sense people make of the media texts is therefore not limited to what its producers intended, and is always impacted upon by the various cultural perspectives and worldviews of their audiences (Bryman, 1984: 73; Johnson, 1986-7: 46; Fiske, 1987: 82; Hart, 1991: 60). In employing these research tools, the researcher will be able to determine the "preferred reading" offered by South African commercial hip-hop music video content, or how texts resonate with the attitudes and perceptions of selected audiences. This chapter will discuss the epistemic fundamentals of qualitative research as a broad methodology, the underpinnings of reception analysis, the relevant research design, pertinent sampling techniques and research procedures (qualitative thematic content analysis, focus group interviews, individual in-depth interviews and procedures of data analysis).

Qualitative/Reception research

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz claims "Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (1973: 5). By this deposition, Geertz underscores the goal of qualitative research and its dedication to gathering "thick descriptions," as a research method suitable for understanding societal processes as they unfold. Qualitative research endeavours to account for human behaviour and social action non-intrusively as social processes unfold, through the use of specific qualitative tools and techniques, in order to collect rich amounts of relevant social data-that can lead to the comprehensive explanation and understanding of human behaviour (Bryman, 1988: 51). In the case of audience research, it is the ability to penetrate the subjective understandings of audiences (Lindloff, 1995: 21; Hansen et al., 1998: 257; Babbie et al., 2001: 270). The duty of a phenomenologist and a qualitative researcher is to capture the process of interpretation. Phenomenologists attempt to understand social situations from the subjects' point of view, so as to grasp meanings of social action (Bryman, 1984: 73; Bogdan et al., 1975: 13-14 qtd. Babbie et al., 2001: 271). Qualitative research is therefore relevant to this study as it aims to gather knowledge on how selected Rhodes University student-audiences interpret gender dynamics, as portrayed in a select number of South African commercial hip-hop music videos.

Quantitative research, which is predicated on the logic of mathematics and methods of numerical analysis, is not suitable for this type of investigation, as it is principally concerned with recording relevant "facts" in terms of quantities or numbers processed through statistical techniques (Lindloff, 1995: 21; Deacon et al., 1999: 4). Quantitative research is driven by hypotheses and preconceived assumptions outside of the social reality of the subject. Social "facts" are deemed to be pre-existent, waiting to be discovered through the use of relevant positivist research and experimental techniques (Glesne et al., 1992: 6; Deacon et al., 1999: 4; Babbie et al., 2001: 271). Qualitative research affords the researcher what anthropologists term the "emic" or "insider's" perspective (Bryman, 1988: 51; Babbie et al., 2001: 271). Qualitative research is inductive and therefore enables the researcher considerable insight into the subjects' social reality and perceptions (Babbie et al., 2001: 270). Bogdan et al. (1975) link this concept to the phenomenological foundations of qualitative research. This not only allows the researcher to become more than just a participant observer in the natural setting that is being investigated, but also puts him/her in the shoes of the subjects they study and observe, in order

to understand their social actions from their own perspective (qtd. Babbie et al., 2001: 271. See also Deacon et al, 1994: 4; Patton, 2001: 39).

Quantitative research, which is driven by a hypothesis (hypothetico-deductive) from the onset, is more concerned with a statistical end result than with the gathering of important data as the social process unravels (Bogdan et al., 1998: 4; Babbie et al., 2001: 270). Therefore, quantitative research is not a suitable methodology to investigate or explain social phenomena associated with the meanings that selected Rhodes University students make of particular South African commercial hip-hop videos. Qualitative research is able to account for social phenomena because the researcher is primarily the "main instrument" for research, while verbal communication, gestures and other social actions are "the raw materials" that facilitate an in-depth understanding of social phenomena (Anderson et al., 1988 qtd. Lindloff 1995: 21; Patton, 2001: 14).

The inductive nature of qualitative research makes it possible for hypotheses and theories to be generated through research carried out in the natural setting of the social actors (Babbie et al., 2001: 273). Patton (2001) suggests that immersion into the social setting affords the researcher the opportunity to note and record social processes as they evolve (qtd. Golafshani, 2003: 600). In contrast, quantitative research is conducted under controlled laboratory type conditions, with the expectation of generating results that are replicable no matter how many times the research experiment is performed (Bryman, 1984: 77). Quantitative empiricism is nomothetic (as research findings are considered scientific law), and therefore results can be used to make broad generalisations (Babbie et al., 2001: 270; Winter, 2000 qtd. Golafshani, 2003: 598). Social phenomenon understood through qualitative research are specific to a sub-group or sub-culture (idiographic), and therefore the essence of that societal group can only be understood within the reality of its own context (Babbie et al., 2001: 270; Hoepfl, 1997 qtd. Golafshani, 2003: 600).

This study explores how the audiences mentioned above respond to the depiction of the gender order, as well as gender violence evident in selected South African commercial hip-hop videos. This could only be understood from observing the social process as mandated by qualitative research (Babbie et al., 2001: 273).

Reception Analysis

All audience research involves some sort of intrusion into the social setting, unlike ethnography in its truest sense, as practised in anthropology (Schroder et al, 2003: 16; Patton, 2001 qtd. Golafshani, 2003: 600). The reception researcher is not afforded an entirely natural setting under which to gather qualitative data, and therefore it is difficult to study audiences empirically without interfering with the very phenomena being investigated. This differs from the analysis of texts where it is possible to analyse them without interfering with the texts in the process (Schroder et al., 2003: 16).

Though this understanding may sway researchers into favouring the study of texts with the aim of avoiding interference with research phenomena, far-reaching claims can be made by content analysis. Content analysis can suggest a "preferred reading." However, content analysis itself cannot paint an accurate picture about how these texts interact with their audiences, which is why reception analysis (which combines both the analysis of texts and audience responses) was developed in the early 1980s (Schroder et al., 2003: 16).

The production of meaning from the social interaction between society and the media is empirically understood through reception research (Jensen et al., 2002: 222; Morley, 1992: 84; Schroder et al., 2003: 122). According to Tufte, the concept of reception studies aims to explore social and cultural consequences of media texts, regarding the articulation of identity, social relations/actions, and opinions (2000: 51). Reception research explores media experiences through extended dialogue (focus group interviews/in-depth interviews), and is not limited to a finite set of questions as in the statistical methodology of surveys (Schroder et al., 2003: 147).

Though this discursive process occurs in a non-natural environment, it occurs in an open situation in which informants have considerable power to influence the agenda. Reception research is expected to produce useful data as in any other methodological approach (Schroder et al., 2003: 147).

Understanding a group of people who may have their own beliefs, cultural practices, customs and language complexities set apart from that of the researcher may present its own challenges. Therefore, the nature of the surrounding cultural system and its accumulated historical concepts of culture, as well as their lingering effects or Gramscian layers of "common sense" (Hall, 1982: 73), were considered in the interpretation of data (Jensen et al., 2002: 147). As mentioned in Chapter 2, it is not uncommon for South African commercial hip-hop songs to contain lyrics that transcend the complexities of several of its official languages. Various levels of audience

feedback formed the raw data for my analysis of South African commercial hip-hop video audiences.

Research procedure

This research followed three processes, in the following order.

i. Qualitative thematic content analysis.
ii. Focus group interviews.
iii. Individual in-depth interviews.

Qualitative thematic content analysis

In order to preside over focus groups and generate relevant questions for in-depth interviews, it behoves the researcher to understand the content of the text about which the researcher endeavours to receive feedback. This was achieved through qualitative thematic content analysis (Schreier et al., 2014: 3). Five music videos were selected for this study, on the strength of their popularity (all having over a million views on YouTube) and uniquely gendered scenarios. These include *Pit Bull Terrier* (Die Antwoord), *Pearl Thusi* (Emtee), *Dlala ka yona* (L'Tido), *All eyes on me* (AKA featuring Burna Boy, Da L.E.S & JR) and *Ragga, Ragga* (Gemini Major, featuring Casper Nyovest, Riky Rick & Nadia Nakai). As mentioned earlier, a sizable number of South African rappers convey their vocal delivery in a variety of local languages including slang and *Tsotsitaal,* which require understanding within the contexts presented. Scholars of reception research maintain the desirability of researchers familiarising themselves with the texts, in order to understand their cultural dynamics, and how research-based discussions can be planned from the perspective of an informed interviewer. It is deemed unnecessary to conduct a detailed textual analysis (Schroder et al., 2003: 126). The music videos were analysed for gender-associated themes.

Qualitative thematic content analysis is an important methodological undertaking that aims to understand the themes and message within a text. This is usually a preferred approach to understanding texts where meaning is less obvious (Schreier, 2012: 2). This is achieved by analysing meanings, representations and dominant positions in these texts, rather than counting the number of times certain features within the texts appear, as in quantitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012: 2). This approach enabled the researcher to examine the key thematic features

of selected South African commercial hip-hop music videos, within the logic of the study undertaken. The examination of the sociological and lyrical content of the music videos was key.

Sampling

The sampling method selected for this study is purposive. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method. Under non-probability sampling, not all members of a population have a chance of participating in the study (Nansen et al., 1998: 241). For the purposes of this dissertation, it was not feasible (cost or time effective) to consider the whole student population of Rhodes University (Schroder, 2003: 265). It proved prudent to identify students who have an interest in South African commercial hip-hop.

Snowball or chain-referral sampling is a method of convenience sampling, commonly utilised to find characteristic-specific research subjects from general populations who would otherwise have been difficult to locate, as a representative sample of the research population (Cohen et al., 2011: 427). Snowball research is therefore an effective method for accessing hidden or elusive sub-groups (Valdez et al., 1999 qtd. Cohen et al., 2011: 427). Hidden or concealed populations shield themselves from public awareness for reasons of cultural, religious, political, legal or economic predilection. Some populations, though not hidden are hard to reach as a result of social or political status, or because of sub-group protocols e.g. gangs (Cohen et al., 2011: 427). Hip-hop enthusiasts among the student body are not easy to locate, making chain-referral sampling ideal. The researcher identified potential interviewees through student associated hip-hop activities (Open mic sessions at various night spots in Grahamstown), and identified hip-hop fans among the student body from their hip-hop associated clothing (band t-shirts). Related networks of interviewees thus expanded the researcher's potential contacts (Thompson, 1997 qtd. Cohen et al., 2011: 427).

Snowball sampling helps to identify appropriate subjects for research, it saves time and money and this allows effort to be spent on other crucial aspects of the research project. The accessing of a member of an otherwise closed society has the potential of extending goodwill and trust to those later referred to the researcher, if one can gain the respect of the initial subject or interviewee. This enhances cooperation in environments where sub-groups feel unsafe or not open to the inquisitiveness of outsiders (Cohen et. al., 2011: 427). In order to maximise the

effectiveness of snowball sampling, the researcher was mindful of evidently polarised views and immoderate consensus among potential participants (Schroder, 2003: 153). After following this process, the researcher relied upon his judgment regarding the selection of members to participate in the research project (Nansen et al., 1998: 241).

Focus groups

This research project made use of three focus groups of four males, four females and a mixed focus group of three males and three females. Though academic research traditionally favours the use of six focus groups (Hansen et al., 1998 qtd. Schroder, 2003: 161), the reduced scale was deemed sufficient, as this is a small research project, though there were enough potential participants to pursue a larger project (Schroder, 2003: 161). According to Kitzinger et al. media researchers can work with as few as three participants per focus group (1999 qtd. Holliman, 2005: 5). According to Litosseliti, within social science research, the use of mini focus groups comprised of between four to six participants is acceptable (2003: 6). The size of focus groups is also determined by practical considerations, as well as the researcher's level of experience. The less experience the researcher has, the smaller the group (Holliman, 2005: 5). Schroder et al. advise that a focus group should not be too heterogeneous because the flow of the natural discussion may be impeded by a lack of common ground (2003: 161). Too large a focus group may break off into subgroups, to the exclusion of other participants, while a focus group that is too small may lack the requisite level of depth, as participants may feel intimidated (Adams et al., 2008: 24). In the case of this study, participants were generally of the same level of education and general socialisation, being university students. This prevented situations where hierarchies based on education and socialisation could stifle participation (Holliman, 2005: 5; Adams et al., 2008: 24). Participants of generally similar levels of education were gathered from the university in accordance with the recommendations of Schroder et al. (2003: 161). One of the biggest virtues of focus group interviews is the interpersonal negotiation of meaning through opinion leaders, in a way that may mirror a societal situation (Krueger, 1994: 19 qtd. Litosseliti, 2003: 2; Liebes et al., 1990: 29 qtd. Schroder et al., 2003: 152). Focus groups are also ideal for hard to reach groups (Silverman: 2004: 181). The significance of focus group interviews is the ability to produce data and insights that would not be possible outside of the group dynamic, therefore considering how various perspectives are contested within the reality of a group setting (Morgan, 1988: 12 qtd. Schroder, 2003: 153). In order to avoid pre-empting

responses from focus groups, the researcher endeavoured not to reveal too much about the nature of the research (Litosseliti, 2003: 5).

The strength of using focus groups can be located mainly in their ability to reveal group norms and understandings, as they are not concerned with being representative of the general population (Hansen et al., 1998: 268; Patton, 2001: 39; Schroder, 2003: 154). Focus group interviews were conducted in a seminar room in the department of Journalism and Media Studies, while in-depth interviews were conducted in group study rooms, located in the main library, within a free, enjoyable and non-threatening atmosphere (Krueger, 1994: 6 qtd. Litosseliti, 2003: 1; Adams et al., 2008: 26). The sharing of experiences and the giving of reassurances of trust and privacy proved instrumental in encouraging an atmosphere of openness and participation. The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any point, while the researcher requested permission to record the conversations. Participants were reassured that their contributions would be granted anonymity (Adams et al., 2008: 26).

In-depth Interviews

Focus group participants may not wish to offer information they deem sensitive within the group, especially if these groups include people they might know outside of the research exercise (Schroder et al., 2003: 154; Kitzinger, 1994 qtd. Holliman, 2005: 4). Focus groups were therefore combined with in-depth interviews. The in-depth interview also mirrors the interpersonal negotiation of meaning afforded by focus group interviews, as the individual also brings his/her lifelong experiences into a one on one interview (Schroder et al., 2003: 152).

In-depth interviews facilitate the development of relevant arguments or narratives within the duration of the interviewing process than in a focus group. The researcher is able to ask more detailed questions within the line of reasoning of the specific informant and his or her circumstances (Schroder et al., 2003: 153). In-depth interviews are very effective for digging deep into sensitive issues such as those of gender and associated social vices. Within a focus group, societal norms tend to value the avoidance of its members losing face, and therefore interviewees in a focus group may avoid upsetting each other and thus avoid expressing controversial opinions (Schroder et al., 2003: 153).

In-depth interviews make interviewees accountable for their perspectives on certain issues as consensus may have been achieved at the expense of other members of the focus group. In-depth interviews therefore eliminate the possibility of group pressure, which may compel interviewees in a focus group to withhold information (Schroder et al., 2003: 154; Kitzinger, 1994 qtd. Holliman, 2005: 4). Interview questions were based on important information disclosed during the focus group interview. An interview guide was drawn up on the bases of themes emerging in the focus group interview. However, inquiry was not limited to the interview guide as suggested by Morgan (1988: 56). Jansen (1988) further claims that reception analysis should not be assumed to be a simple matter of participants "telling it like it is," as participants may endeavour to appear politically correct. However, he maintains that in-depth interviews though "incomplete" are worthy of analysis and interpretation (1988: 4).

It must be mentioned that this research was carried out under a considerably sensitive student atmosphere (amid rape fears and associated concerns). It therefore behoved the researcher to be mindful of these apprehensions during the interviewing process.

Validity of Qualitative research

Qualitative research unlike quantitative research does not enjoy the hegemony of being predicated on the "truth" of natural sciences. Quantitative research based on maximum control over extraneous factors, enjoys the significant advantage of producing identical results under the same conditions and therefore the findings of this type of research can be extended to make broad generalisations (nomothetic) (Deacon et al., 1999: 4-5; Babbie et al., 2001: 270; Patton, 2001: 14). However, for qualitative research to be deemed valid outside of a "natural science" understanding, there are a set of important criteria it is required to adhere to (Babbie et al., 2001: 270).

Inter-subjectivity is an important consideration that should be made regarding qualitative research, with the aim of controlling various sources of error that may invalidate research results. Within qualitative research, "objectivity" is understood in two different but complementary ways. First, it is imperative for the researcher to be impartial in his/her investigations. Second, the researcher needs to gain legitimacy by gaining the trust of his/her research subjects (Babbie et al., 2001: 273). Scholars of qualitative research claim that the establishment of rapport facilitates access to a truthful "insider" perspective. Therefore, objectivity in qualitative research is not achieved through the control of extraneous variables,

but through the generation of credible, truthful and unique experiences of a group of individuals or subculture (Hoepfl, 1997 qtd. Golafshani, 2003: 600; Babbie et al., 2001: 273).

As a result of the non-natural scientific nature of qualitative research, objectivity is based on several factors: triangulation, writing extensive field notes, peer review, member checks, reasoned consensus, and audit trails. This set of measures collectively fall under the term Munchhausen objectivity, thus expressive of the quest to achieve objectivity, validity and reliability at a higher level of abstraction (Babbie et al., 2001: 274).

Triangulation or the use of multiple research methods by researchers, creates an epistemic position where academic research rises above the biases or limitations that emerge from single methodologies (Adams et al., 2008: 25; Babbie et al., 2001: 275; Mathison, 1988: 13; Patton, 2001: 247). It is considered one of the most effective ways of validating qualitative research. The advantages of using different methods in the investigation can counter some disadvantages of using one method. Triangulation can be achieved according to paradigms, methodologies, methods and researches etc. (Babbie et al., 2001: 275; Patton, 2001: 247). Barbour (1998) however argues that while mixing paradigms can be possible, mixing methods within the qualitative paradigm is problematic since each method has its own assumption regarding the theoretical frameworks researchers bring to bear on their studies (qtd. Golafshani, 2003: 603). The combination of thematic content analysis, focus group interviews and in-depth interviews will strengthen this research's level of epistemic integrity.

Reliability and objectivity can be further enhanced through the gathering of extensive field notes. Babbie et al. encourage the keeping of at least two sets of notes (2001: 275). One describing the environment in which the study took place, which includes the extensive observation notes (detailing the various factors that evidence participants concerns, comfort and discomfort), and a second set of notes containing theoretical memoranda, hence observations made during the investigative process that contradict prior theoretical ideas gathered from the thematic content analysis. Since qualitative research is inductive, hypotheses are fathomed through the experience of the actual ethnographic process, and therefore within this process extensive notes assist in the realisation of validity (Babbie et al., 2001: 275). Though some researchers argue about the applicability of the term validity in qualitative research, they realise the need for qualifying checks or measures regarding the research, preferring the use of terms such as quality, rigour and trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003: 602).

Member checks were made; where texts and transcripts were verified by the respondents to make certain that the respondents were in agreement with data gathered of their circumstances (Babbie et al., 2001: 276). It is assumed that respondents are generally truthful and honest - where there is good faith between researchers and their research subjects (Babbie et al., 2001: 276). Various concerns within the research project can be tackled by two or more researchers and deliberated upon until consensus is reached (Peer review). Independent examiners can also be invited to critique a researcher's theoretical standpoint and/or to inspect notes and raw data etc. (Babbie et al., 2001: 276). Smaling (1989) calls these "counterfactual regulatory practices" (qtd. Babbie et al., 2001: 276). Lincoln et al. (1985) underscore the notion of trustworthiness and neutrality of qualitative research findings. A qualitative study can therefore not be considered valid unless it is reliable (qtd. Babbie et al., 2001: 276). A good qualitative study is able to afford an understanding of a situation that would either have been considered enigmatic or confusing (Eisner, 1991: 551).

Credibility in qualitative research can be understood in terms of the consensus reached between the realities that exist in participants' lived experiences and information compiled of the sub-group. This is achieved through the observation of certain fundamentals; namely, staying in the field (focus group) until a situation of data saturation is achieved (prolonged engagement). Persistent observation involves interrogating certain perspectives on research information gathered, and referential adequacy involves inspecting the quality of recorded ethnographic audio and video material in order to strengthen research validity (Babbie et al., 2001: 276). Peer debriefing, thus opening one's research to scholarly critique and member checks (which include the verification of certain epistemological perspectives), is a measure that is used to bolster the epistemological integrity of qualitative research (Babbie et al., 2001: 276).

Transferability, with regards to qualitative research, implies the contextual relevance of research to the understanding of the nature of a sub-group. This means that the result of a reception study should represent the views of Rhodes University students who listen to South African commercial hip-hop music in general, within the context presented. Using the aforementioned criteria for ensuring credibility will determine the dependability of the study (Babbie et al., 2001: 277).

Triangulation as mentioned earlier, also ensures credibility and resultant dependability, which is why this research follows the three research processes as explained above. In order to further reinforce credibility and dependability an inquiry audit can be made. The inquiry audit involves

the examination of data, findings, interpretations and recommendations; to investigate if they are internally coherent (Babbie et al., 2001: 276; Lincoln et al., 1985: 317). This determination of dependability also ensures conformability. An audit trail involves reviewing at least six classes of data; namely, *raw data* (field notes, video and audio recordings), *data reduction and analysis products* (write-ups, summaries and condensed notes, working hypotheses, concepts and perceptions, inspecting findings and final reports), *data reconstruction and synthesis products* (themes, findings, final reports), *process notes* (methodological notes, audit trail notes), *material relating to intentions and dispositions* (personal notes and expectations) and finally *instrument development information,* thus the inspection of preliminary schedules, observations, formats and surveys for example (Babbie, et al., 2001: 278).

Data Analysis

Data from focus groups and interviews were examined for themes in accordance with the research objectives, thus investigating how selected Rhodes University students make sense of the gender order evident in the commercial rap music videos, and exploring how these audiences respond to the gender violence depicted in the hip-hop videos. The accuracy of this study was ensured by the use of voice recorders which captured the full range of developments throughout the interviewing processes as prescribed by Patton (2001 qtd. Golafshani, 2003: 600). This was followed by the transcription process, the organising of data, the coding of data and familiarisation with the findings.

As mentioned earlier, Jensen (1988: 4) emphasises that in reception studies "audiences cannot be expected to give a comprehensive account of their viewing experience." This therefore warrants the analytical decoding of audience interviews, in order to facilitate the further understanding of the viewing experience. Emerging themes were extracted from focus group and in-depth interview transcripts. This was achieved through the careful reading of lines, sentences and paragraphs of transcribed material. The data was colour-coded and then categorised. This process continued until saturation was realised and no further information could be gleaned (Glaser et al., 1967 qtd. Wasserman et al., 2015:146).

This study's concerns are centred on the sense Rhodes students make of the gender order, as well as their responses to the depiction of gender violence as portrayed in the aforementioned

South African commercial hip-hop music videos. Data narratives were written with the support of extracts from the interviewing process.

Limitations to the study

As mentioned earlier, the research interviewing process was carried out under a tense campus atmosphere, in the aftermath of the death of Kensani Maseko, whose suicide was linked to an alleged incident of rape by her boyfriend and fellow student. Female students approached for the study were generally hyper-vigilant. Though the researcher was able to put female participants at ease, there was a level of apprehension regarding in-depth interviews. With the passing of time, most female students felt comfortable to participate. One particular student was undergoing therapy during the interviewing process; therefore, this necessitated great sensitivity to determine an approach in the interviewing process. It must also be pointed out that the interviewing process was carried out in English, and because language is the storehouse of culture, participants whose first language is not English may have oversimplified certain culturally specific expressions and insights (Jiang, 2000: 328). However, In-depth interviews effectively responded to this challenge, allowing greater scope for individual self-expression.

Ethical Considerations

The interviewing process as explained earlier was carried out in accessible, comfortable and safe environments, as it behoves social research scientists to ensure no harm befalls participants (Krueger, 1994: 6 qtd. Litosseliti, 2003: 1; Adams et al., 2008: 26). Written consent was obtained from participants prior to each interviewing process. The general objective of the study was communicated to participants; upon which it was made clear why they were chosen to participate. Participants were guaranteed the right to opt out at any time during the interviewing process. Before each recording, written and verbal consent was obtained from the participants. Pseudonyms were used in the referencing of extracts employed to support the data.

Conclusion

This chapter describes the research methods and methodologies which were used for the study. Qualitative research as a methodological approach was deemed relevant by the researcher.

Reception analysis was undertaken to investigate the perceptions of selected Rhodes University student-fans of South African commercial hip-hop, regarding the gender order and use of violence towards women evident in the selected videos. This study initially followed a rudimentary thematic content analysis, followed by focus group interviews, and ultimately in-depth interviews.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The aim of this study is to investigate how Rhodes University student-fans of South African commercial hip-hop: (a) Make sense of the gender order evident in South African commercial hip-hop music videos and (b) Respond to the depiction of gender violence in particular South African commercial hip-hop videos. The five music videos selected for the study were *Pitbull Terrier* (Die Antwoord), *Pearl Thusi* (Emtee), *Dlala ka yona* (L-Tido), *All eyes on me* (AKA feat Burna Boy, Da L.E.S & JR) and *Ragga Ragga* (Gemini Major feat Casper Nyovest, Riky Rick & Nadia Nakai). Participants selected for my study primarily listened to American hip-hop, and then South African commercial hip-hop as a sub-genre. As mentioned in Chapter 3, people who watch a certain genre of audio/visual production acquire relevant interpretive skills through the viewing experience (Jensen, 1980: 30). This shared understanding of hip-hop facilitated meaningful exchange among the participants; in line with Bourdieu's conception of habitus (Bourdieu, 1990 qtd. Krais, 2000: 56). The focus group discussions began with showing participants the selected music videos, based on their popularity as expressed by their YouTube view scores (hits). Music videos were also selected on the basis of their uniquely gendered scenarios.

A qualitative thematic content analysis of the selected music videos was undertaken to establish the key themes in each video, which then became the focus of both in-depth individual and focus group interviews. For further details, refer to Appendix A. The study's findings were realised through a qualitative thematic content analysis of the selected music videos, focus group, and in-depth interviews. The findings and analysis are underpinned by theoretical frameworks discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2) and methodology chapter (Chapter 3). Three focus groups and eight individual in-depth interviews were undertaken as described in the methodology chapter. The findings have been grouped into the following themes: (i) Objectification of women through discourses/imagery of beauty ii) Power, violence, misogyny.

This chapter will address findings under theme (i) "Objectification of women through discourses/imagery of beauty". It explores trends and patterns expressed within the research findings. Theme (ii) will be discussed in Chapter 5.

According to Bordo (1993:21 qtd. King, 2004: 31) “The human body is within itself a politically inscribed entity. Its physiology and morphology shaped by histories and practices of containment and control.” This claim is supported in Hutchinson’s (1999: 71) deposition that American society has given men the right to look at women and normalised the role of women as visual stimulators for men. This societal phenomenon is evident in the broad culture of hip-hop and is a reflection of historically layered sediments of the common sense practices of patriarchal societies (Hall, 1982: 73). Furthermore, the camera gaze of the music video reinforces and normalises the sexual availability of women (Emerson, 2002: 123). Jhally (2006) likens the hip-hop video’s emphasis on female body parts to that of women in pornography (qtd. Balaji, 2010: 12). This translates to a power asymmetry in which a woman’s body is no longer an autonomous entity but a subject of amusement, assessment and critique by male onlookers.

This chapter bases its submissions on the hypothetical positions of encoding and decoding proposed by Stuart Hall (1973 qtd. Hall et al., 2005: 117). He offers a schema of three potential readings. First, a dominant/hegemonic or “preferred” reading suggests that readers decode a text in terms of codes in which the text (in this case a music video) has been encoded, and thus operates within a dominant code which identifies the message as legitimate, natural, inevitable and in accordance with the cultural order. The second hypothetical position; a “negotiated” reading, is realised when an audience decodes the encoded message in partial agreement with it. In this case, additional or certain elements in the message adhere to the norms of the cultural order of the decoder, while others are perceived as alien to the decoder’s cultural order. The final hypothetical position is that of an “oppositional” reading in which audiences decode mediated messages in opposition to their “preferred” or hegemonic reading because they politically disagree with the view on offer (Hall, 1973 qtd. Hall et al., 2005: 127). Umberto Eco (1972) offers aberrant decoding as additional reading. This occurs when the readers of the text completely lack the symbolic tools/vocabulary/references to make sense of the world of the text (Munteanu, 2012: 233). Failing to make sense of the text will thus also be of importance. Hall asserts the non-existence of an exact alignment between codes used by the encoder and interpretive schemas (“cultural maps”) used by the decoder to decode the meaning of the text (Hall et al., 2005: 125-126).

The main theme has been divided into six sub-themes hence: (a) Sexual objectification & Exploitation (b) Justification of objectification (c) A South African emphasised femininity (d)

Patriarchal views of women (e) A case of sexual agency and (f) Depiction of the female body beyond the sexual. These generally interrelated themes will be interrogated individually.

Sexual objectification & Exploitation of female body

Objectification theory claims that girls and women are subjected to gendered societal power asymmetries which force them to internalise an observer's perspective as a primary conception of their physical being (Fredrickson et al., 1997: 173). This surveillance is no different from that proposed by Foucault (1979) in his societal construal of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, a prison designed to give inmates a state of conscious and permanent visibility that guarantees the automatic functioning of power (Webster, 2004: 38). This perspective has been noted to encourage habitual body monitoring, which further increases the probability of humiliation and anxiety. Sexual objectification is but one form of gender oppression and has been understood to factor into or enable a host of other types of oppression of women (Fredrickson et al., 1997: 174). Gender scholars claim that there is a common thread running through all forms of sexual objectification, hence the experience of being treated as a body or a collection of body parts, valued only for the amusement or use by others. Participants identified the sexual objectification and obsession with female body parts in the music videos screened. Though all participating audiences were aware of the objectification of the female body and body parts, the overall attitudes towards objectification were different. Most of the male participants were responsive to more brazen acts of objectification and the exploitation of the female body parts, while women were generally more sensitive to even the subtlest depictions of objectification in the hip-hop music videos. This is consistent with the consciousness of people on the receiving end of gendered power asymmetries.

Shane: *As soon as the camera came on…a*s! Legs first and a*s, and then we just starred at a*s for the whole music video. I have never seen that much South African a*s in a music video. I've seen a lot of American a*s, like I watch a lot of porn… but that was different.*

Kerry: *The male gaze makes us look inferior. The problem is not the women. The problem is never the women; the problem is the gaze. That is it, the male gaze.*

It is evident that participants were able to recognise the sexual objectification of women and describe it as problematic. Kerry, who was undergoing therapy for social anxiety during the time of this study, decries the pressures and implications of being policed in line with the

patriarchal expectations women are forced to internalise regarding their physical appearance. These expectations were augmented in the 18th century through the optimisation of gender polarity based on biological sex (King, 2004: 31). Balsamo (1996: 42 qtd. King, 2004: 31) claims that the judging of women by how far they deviate from the "male standard" makes them victims of a pathological physiology. Kerry also alludes to the triggering effect of being under the scrutiny of the male gaze. She views objectification as a psychological form of gender violence that paves the way for both more insidious and overt physical acts of gender violence. Their worldview, personal perspectives and cultural values inform the participants' oppositional reading. This is congruent with reception theory that stipulates that individuals approach texts from the inventory of their experiences and lived cultures (Strelitz, 2000: 38).

Kerry: *I found it really creepy. I don't know how to explain it, but I just found it unsettling. But when I saw her (Pearl Thusi) in the music video, I was like "oho, she's ok with it" because I didn't think they knew each other.*

Interviewer: *Can you explain the creepy aspect of it?*

Kerry: *I would be very uncomfortable if some guy I didn't know published a song with my name in it. I would be really uncomfortable with it. Maybe I am just projecting my fears. I found it really unsettling.*

Other oppositional readings were inspired by the intervention of significant others, in the form of older family members who arguably interrupted the cultivation of sexualised values evident within the discourse of commercial hip-hop.

Marvin: *I think for me it's like because I grew with my grandmother and my Aunt. There was no male figure at home. Most of the time I would watch these music videos because I used to love them, and I still do. My grandma would say "turn that thing off, that's bad, why are these women showing their as**s, where's their pride?" So I would say "ok this is a problem," because the mothers don't like this, especially children growing up after me. They will watch this and they will imitate this.*

Other participants' understandings of the disagreeability of female objectification were predicated on the degree and crassness of female objectification. There was an overwhelming response in opposition to *Dlala ka yona* as a grotesque showcase of objectification, while others harboured personal resentment for what they regard as toxic characteristics. Other perspectives were informed by the socio-political aspirations of South Africa post-1994, which endeavoured to end all manner of discrimination, as well as the #RUReferenceList and #RapeMustfall student protest movements on campus, mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2. With regards to *Pitbull Terrier* by Die Antwoord, readings were aberrant across the board. According to Haupt (2013:

466), "The global appeal of Die Antwoord tells us a great deal about the extent to which diverse cultural expressions are marginalised, as well as the extent to which colonial conceptions of race, gender and class endear in public discourse." The undermining of diverse cultural expressions by corporate globalisation in this regard, enabled aberrant readings as expressed below:

Bryce: *Either way it's horrible and sad because first of all why are the cats skinny and in swimsuits? Why are they sexualised? I don't get that part. I'm asking them because I don't know. I'm questioning them, I don't have the answers. I'm not the creative team.*

Shane: *I don't think there is a message in this music video, because they are neither talented nor sane.*

Roald: *I think people are intrigued by all that aggression. The visuals are wild bra, he is so animalistic, crazy, skeletal and gross. The images are awful. Personally, I think they have lost the plot.*

The objectification and exploitation of female body parts was recognised across the board as clearly problematic, with the all-female group expressing more sensitivity to objectification than both the all-men and the mixed groups. *Dlala ka yona* was considered the most problematic video in terms of female objectification, while the sexual references of *Pitbull Terrier* were deemed confusing by all participants, therefore registering aberrant readings as mentioned above. *Pearl Thusi* and *Ragga Ragga* generally registered negotiated readings regarding female objectification. In line with the postulations of Schroder (2003: 153), members of the mixed–focus group generally resorted to self-censorship; in order to avoid upsetting other members across the sex/gender divide. Participants were also cautious of not opening up to people they knew outside of the research exercise (Kitzinger, 1994 qtd. Holliman, 2005: 4). *All eyes on me* largely realised a hegemonic or dominant reading from all audiences, for matters that will be addressed under the title of the next sub-theme.

Justification of objectification

Scholars of reception studies argue that certain aspects in the experience and consumption of cultural products render aesthetic judgement redundant (Ang, 2007: 21). These factors have proved to work against the ability and resolve of audiences to impact on the nature of cultural products produced. The economic notion of consumer sovereignty acknowledges the power

that consumers have in influencing the nature of products and services. This is achieved through the withholding of purchasing power (Kuenzler, 2017: xvii). The power to economically impact on hip-hop music in order to encourage more positive conceptions of society may fail because of the strength of other utilities gained from the music produced (Kuenzler, 2017: xvii). Consumer sovereignty therefore experiences limitations when consumers of cultural products experience pleasure from other aesthetic elements of a music video - despite it being misogynistic (Ang, 2007: 21), as evidenced in the extracts below

Trudy: *This song is annoying because it's a very catchy song and I feel it's gonna be stuck in my head for a day, after everything I said against it*.

Valerie: *I consider myself a feminist, but I listen to a lot of hip-hop. For example, I love Eminem and he says the most horrible things about women. I sing along to the lyrics and love these songs, while all the while saying to myself; this song has got a really bad message and he is saying really bad things. But it's such a good song.*

Trudy and Valerie's comments are evident of a mode of enjoyment known as ironic pleasure (Ang, 2007: 21). This is a mode of viewing that is informed by what Ang (2007: 21) describes as a more intellectually distancing, superior subject position which can afford to indulge in the pleasures, while at the same time expressing a confident awareness of its problematic aspects. Participants found *All eyes on me* less problematic in terms of female objectification. However, the music video is dominated by young women of more or less the same body size and weight, non-pregnant, arguably under 30 years of age and therefore representing an emphasised femininity (Emerson, 2002: 123). There is also an essential heterosexuality that exclusively emphasises the appeal of women for the visual consumption of men (Hunter, 2011: 31). The women in the music video also lack any other admirable characteristics (emotional and intellectual) beyond their physical appearance.

Regardless of the concerns highlighted, the pleasurable qualities of the music video rendered aesthetic judgement redundant. Participants acknowledged experiencing a sense of festive well-being. The *All eyes on me* music video portrays a pool party. In the eyes of participants, this justified the women wearing swimsuits and other revealing clothes, congruent with their lived cultures and relatable experiences. The female participants justified the outnumbering of the male musicians by the women in the music video as representative of the reality of contemporary urban rituals, which make it commonplace for a party to have more women than men.

Valerie: *With "All eyes on me" I don't think it was in any way a sexist video. I don't think it was in any way promoting any kind of stereotype towards women. I think they were both just fun time and "vibie" (groovy) videos. They were the least offensive to me. I like "All eyes on me" the most because the guy who sings the chorus is good looking, and has a nice voice. It's relatable; there are people in a pool partying. We've all been to a party before. It's a nice beat. You can dance to it, you can play it at the club or at home when you are cleaning your house.*

Other forms of pleasure realised in this study include the ability of a music video to generate a gratifying sense of nostalgia, the captivating presence of the musicians themselves, clever gimmicks (such as the display of a "money phone" passed around between the musicians as in the case of *All eyes on me*), aspirations of financial success as depicted in the music video and a general submission to the discourse of hip-hop.

Zack*: It reminds me of a house party I attended. It was at a very big house in East London. It was the Marrifield's after party. One of my friends identified the head girl and introduced me to her and her friends as the head boy of my school. At that moment all eyes were on me and I was given free cigars, alcohol and everything.*

Participants generally agreed that Nadia Nakai was portrayed as having equal status as her male counterparts in *Ragga Ragga*. The associated characteristics of female objectification include the rationale of showing sexualised aspects of femininity in order to make a mark in the industry. Lorde (1984 qtd. Balaji, 2010: 5) alludes to the emancipatory potential of female sexuality, which applies to the *Pearl Thusi* and *Ragga Ragga* video (featuring Nadia Nakai).

Kerry: *I have no problem with what she (Nadia Nakai) is wearing; she wears that even in her own videos. I know that it's a sex-sells-thing. She was advised to dress in a very sexual manner because sex sells, especially in hip-hop. I have no problem with it, we are used to it.*

Nadia Nakai distances herself from an emphasised femininity, limiting her objectification as observed by participants (Halberstam, 1998; Reay; 2001 qtd. Paechter, 2006: 256). Participants found *Ragga Ragga* masculine in its sensibility.

Bryce: *The beat is very masculine and aggressive, with fast-paced lyrics.*

Various music videos according to the revelations of this study, possess aesthetic features which compete with aforementioned problematic characteristics. According to the data gathered, it can be stated that *Dlala ka yona's* catchy beat failed to eclipse the video's blatant showcase of female objectification, which explains its oppositional reading by participants.

Kerry: *It just proves our objectification as women. We are targets of men you know.*

Bryce: *This is definitely rape culture. The chorus literally states it.*

Though the video by Emtee objectified Pearl Thusi, participants were largely impressed by the fact that a rapper atypically sang the praises of a woman beyond her sexuality. In both *Pearl Thusi* and *All eyes on me,* the objectified women were located in spaces that were arguably non-threatening, as expressed by most participants. Moreover, the persona of Pearl Thusi as a more distinguished personality in the entertainment industry is construed to be dominant in the music video. *All eyes on me* enjoyed a hegemonic reading as evidenced by the general contributions of the study's participants.

Shane: *They weren't sexualising women; they were hanging out altogether as mates, having a good time. It really makes me want to party. It got me in the mood. I wanna go and drink now, get some special drinks. The beat, the song, everything as well as watching them have such a good time has made me wanna have a good time.*

A South African emphasised femininity

Participants expressed what they considered desirable qualities of femininity. As explained in Chapter 2, femininity is not considered hegemonic, as it is structured and impacted on by patriarchal masculinity of men, as an exercise of power within a hetero-normative society. In any situation where power is exercised, resistance is experienced (Foucault, 1975 qtd. King, 2004: 37). This is exemplified by the contestation of power in gender relations, where men may be socialised to appropriate more effeminate characteristics or where women are expected to internalise patriarchal values (King, 2004: 32). Simone de Beauvoir argues that one is not born a woman but rather becomes a woman. In other words, "woman" is a social construct (Butler, 1988: 519). Gendered identities are however rendered unstable as evidenced by these ideological interruptions. Gendered ideals are instituted through the stylisation of the body and performed through bodily gestures and movements (Bulter, 1988: 519). In South Africa, the subordination of women and the accommodation of the interests and desires of men are manifested in an emphasised femininity. Though non-conforming femininities can exist, they are usually subject to the pressures of societal stigma (Jewkes et al., 2010 qtd. Mugweni et al., 2012: 579). These beauty values have also been internalised by South African women in general, as expressed by Belinda and Natasha.

Belinda: *Guys go out expecting girls to dress a certain way, or to have a certain type of body, and that you should dance a certain way as well, for them to notice you and ask you out. The music video just showed what Joburg (Johannesburg) is about, the little pop-up stores and people relaxing, and the idea of what a woman should look like definitely encompassed it all.*

Interviewer: *How should a woman look?*

Belinda: *She should have big breasts, a small waist, and a big bum. It's mostly the bum and the hips.*

Natasha: *I just think that black women are blessed and God took his time. At least there is something special about them: they took our land but we have our butts (laughter).*

According to participants, there are mainly two celebrated body types that are considered desirable by both men and women to men. The most prominent and desirable beauty values as expressed by participants are the curvaceous body type as articulated in the extracts above. This beauty aesthetic registered a dominant reading from most participants. Other participants highlighted the pressures of possessing such beauty values and consequently enduring unwelcome attention. The audacious celebration of these beauty values however encountered an oppositional reading in the men's group, where L'Tido conceptually combines the facial beauty values of Beyoncé with the posterior of Sarah Baartman. Sarah Baartman's story pushes the limits of insensitive speech acts in hip-hop. *Dlala ka yona* exploits, sexualises and debases the legacy of an icon of colonial, racial and feminist consciousness. This situation evidences coloniality and the ways of thinking that question the humanity (Misanthropic scepticism) and worth of others (Maldonaldo-Torres, 2007: 245). Evidently, L'Tido makes use of this problematic colonial reference to infer meaning. Ironically the participants did not object to the sexual objectification of Beyoncé.

Shane*: There's actually one line. What he said that was actually quite hectic. What popped out of me was the contrast he made between Beyoncé and Sarah Baartman, where he said she's got a face like Beyoncé but an a*s like Sarah Baartman.*

Roald: *Joh! I didn't hear that part*.

Shane: *It's hectic coz you like... almost taking the reason why Sarah Baartman was so famous and the reason why Beyoncé is so famous and comparing them, not comparing them but using it in the same comparison?*

Roald: *It's like Beyoncé owns her sexuality…and Sarah Baartman's was completely stolen you know.*

Shane: *Exactly! You can't, you can't put them in the same space… Yeah, I understand what he was trying to do, but I don't feel like it was a right comparison or right analogies to use in that*

*comparison. He was trying to compare what he would consider the perfect South African woman and the perfect American woman, and use that as the embodiment of the perfect woman, which he just did in a really sh**ty way. So that line for me stood out the most because it was very controversial. It was a controversial usage of two completely different spectrums of female sexuality, and he used it very willy-nilly if I can say that.*

Though they considered her (Beyoncé) as owning her sexuality, they appeared oblivious to the overarching societal pressures of hetero-normativity. It must also be noted that this problematic feature was not picked up by many of the other participants. Many of the participants did not attentively follow the lyrics of the music videos screened, and others failed to grasp the multi-lingual approach that typifies South African commercial hip-hop lyricism.

Marvin: *In terms of lyrical content, I didn't hear what he (Ninja/Die Antwoord) was rapping about. His verses were short and his beat was basically dub-step.*

Nelson: *I didn't really focus on the lyrics of the song (All eyes on me), so I can't really comment on them.*

Shane: *I don't understand a lot of the lyrics (Pearl Thusi); because I don't know what language it is in.*

The other version of emphasised femininity, as evidenced in the findings of this study is expressed in Pearl Thusi. This video registered a mixed reading from the all-female group, who were in agreement with the celebration of Pearl Thusi's beauty, but in opposition to celebrated aquiline features (including light skin and straighter hair). Female participants highlighted the pressures these unachievable beauty values put on black women. Having light skin and flowing hair is naturally unattainable, and this has been linked to skin bleaching.

Valerie: *He mentions in the song something about how she's Zulu and she's yellow, and I think that feeds into the stereotype of what black female beauty is supposed to be. That stood out for me.*

Interviewer: *In what particular way?*

Valerie: *Because of how beauty is automatically associated with how light one's skin is. That's why people bleach their skin and all those other things. They are done to just fit into the definition of what beauty is supposed to be.*

In South Africa, the politics of skin tone is deeply rooted in the divisive politics of colonialism. Blackness was associated with primitiveness, sexual impropriety, filth and pollution (Glenn, 2008:284). In South Africa, those considered racially mixed were subject to less restrictive policies than those classified as "native." The intensification of discriminatory laws targeting

natives led to a growing number of blacks claiming to be coloured (Muzondidya, 2005, 23-24 qtd. Glenn, 2008:284). Though the all-men's group applauded Emtee's favourable acknowledgement of Pearl Thusi, they did not show concern for the song's ethnocentric and colourist propaganda. These expressions of dissatisfaction were echoed within the mixed group over what the song showcased as the hallmark of black female beauty.

Natasha: *I don't like the part where he says swag like Minnie, just more pretty.*

Interviewer: *Why do you say that?*

Natasha: *I feel like the reason sometimes girls don't like each other is because guys make it feel like we are in competition. This is why society is the way it is, because she's comparing two different people, and one can end up having low self-esteem because of that, because he says she is beautiful because she is Zulu and yellow.*

These sentiments were generally reinforced in the individual in-depth interviews. Minnie Dlamini who is unfavourably compared to Pearl Thusi in the music video is of darker complexion and has a fuller and more curvaceous figure. Ironically, a misleading Motions haircare advertisement in which Minnie claimed to be spraying her "natural" hair while donning a weave was ruled unethical by the Advertising standards authority of South Africa (Robin, 2012). It can be argued that this comparison presents itself as a standoff between two competing emphasised femininities. It is also ironic that the participants missed the fact that Pearl Thusi as the more influential entity in the entertainment industry, endorsed Emtee's colourist, ethnocentric beauty values, and offensive speech acts against a female rival in the entertainment industry, in an exercise of self-promotion.

Patriarchal views of women

In hetero-normative societies where patriarchy exists as a default ideology, aspects of culture and life experience socialised through tradition, religion and other societal institutions over generations are eventually and inevitably internalised as an unquestionable common-sense notion of the world, and how it should work (Hall, 1982: 73). Frames of reference and symbolic codes as previously mentioned, form the primary tools which audiences use to make sense of mediated communication (Strelitz, 2000: 26). As mentioned in Chapter 1 and 2, cultural products can also be used to reinforce belief systems. These belief systems can either be interrupted or further modified by a significant other with reference to Giddens' conception of

structuration, as explained in Chapter 2. The proliferation of sexualised images as well as a hip-hop fans' level of submission to the discourse of commercial hip-hop, may render problematic matters of gender invisible. According to Marshal Mc Luhan, "We don't know who discovered water, but we are sure it wasn't a fish" (Mc Luhan, 1970: 2). In other words, Mc Luhan proposes that anything that surrounds one's senses becomes undiscoverable, as is the case of sexualised images of women in hetero-normative societies and within the discourse of commercial hip-hop (Mc Luhan, 1970: 2).

Participants displayed internalised notions of patriarchy. This phenomenon was apparent in even the most gender conscious of participants.

Belinda: *L'Tido used Pulane in the video because she's known to be a hoe, because she only dates people in the music industry, soccer players, basically people with money. The girls look like slay queens but the guys are dressed in expensive suits.*

The term "Slay Queen" refers to a woman of lower economic status who employs various lure tactics (mainly on social media) to attract wealthy and older, promiscuous men into relationships of material convenience (Chidhanguro, 2018). According to Attwood (2007: 234), women in hetero-normative societies use shaming techniques against other women to "out" each other in the sexual market place by demonstrating their virtue and exposing others for being unclean. In so doing they have been accused of aligning themselves with male aggressors. This application of punitive speech acts is rendered as a means of societal control.

The conception of an emphasised femininity has traditionally been predicated on the assumed perfection of the male body. The "woman" has been judged against the norm of the "man" and the endeavour to polarise the genders in line with biological sex has been an ongoing project since the 18th century, together with the pathologising of homosexuality (King, 2004: 34).

All participants maintained the validity of established gender polarities in accordance with biological sex. Participants generally ridiculed the masculinity of Emtee in *Pearl Thusi*, while others criticised some male musicians for not being dressed according to what they considered gender norms. Some women in the music videos were deemed not feminine enough, and therefore in contravention to the stipulations of emphasised femininity.

Shane: *He's (Emtee) doing childish things that any respectable grown man wouldn't be doing if he is trying to land a supermodel of her rating (Pearl Thusi). She is doing all these*

extravagant things and he is just living his basic life chilling with his "home-gals" shirtless in his gold chains. Sorry I'm very judgemental.

Belinda: *You just don't expect a man to have braids at all (Casper Nyovest), even to just grow out their hair. It's not normal for men. Men do not do any of that, and when a man does do that… I just associate that with maybe a person being gay. In growing up, I was taught at home and in church that a man dresses this way, a woman dresses that way, and if there is a contradiction either way, cross-dressing or anything, then they are automatically gay.*

Roald: *The female characters are visibly female excluding Yolandi who is pretty androgynous.*

These attitudes ultimately reflect a veiled and patriarchal contempt for the female body, where there is an insistence on femininity being confined to a biological female and optimised for the gratification of the desires of men. Other patriarchal worldviews arise from conservative traditional African socialisation, as expressed by Marvin:

I think Nadia should wear an African print and hide her buttocks. That's why in many countries hip-hop is not respected, because of how they are exposing women. Proverb does not have any music video that sexually exploits women.

All participants find a situation where a large number of young women provide eye candy for a few provider-male party hosts and revellers as unproblematic.

Kerry: *There cannot be a party without girls. Most guys who host parties will usually ask you to bring three or so other female friends. It's quite normal to have a party with say three guys and twenty women. Honestly, that party would be lit (laughter).*

Kerry and others support a patriarchal and hetero-normative arrangement that appears to satisfy both men and women. This is arguably a common social formula regarding contemporary urban rituals. Nightclubs are known to pursue strategies which involve the free admission of a set number of young women. This arrangement lures paying males, who may also feel compelled to purchase drinks to impress revelling women in exchange for the atmosphere and their company.

A case for sexual agency

As mentioned earlier, resistance occurs where the normalisation of domination is evident. Power is never total, uniform or smooth but however, shifting and unstable. It is subject to contestation, and this has no single origin but a plurality of resistances (Foucault, 1998: 95-6

qtd. King, 2004: 37). As explained in Chapter 2, there have been various attempts to defy the power asymmetries of gender in music videos. These examples of defiance are evidenced by observations and contributions of participants.

All participants regarded Pearl Thusi as empowered, uplifted or the dominant entity in Emtee's hip-hop video. Although she was objectified, she appeared to have endorsed her own objectification, as the more influential and accomplished entity in the entertainment industry. She also endorses and celebrates beauty stereotypes naturally unachievable to the target audiences of South African hip-hop music videos; namely, black South Africans. According to all audiences, the male protagonist (Emtee) in the music video is either construed as childish or of questionable masculinity.

Roald: *I suppose for one, the song is named after her. She is established as a celebrity of sorts. I'm not very familiar with her work but one can tell just from the music video that Emtee looks up to her, and sees her not as a sexual object but a sexual superstar. She is gorgeous, and she is successful, and I'm sure everyone would like to take her to bed, and I'm sure Emtee would also. I don't know if he thinks that that's actually possible, or if he's just having fun with it because he knows she is basically out of his league. She's already established and he used her in the music video because her reputation would get him a reputation.*

Nudity in the music videos is not always construed as vulnerability, but also a performance of self-confidence and a demonstration of feminine power (Balaji, 2010: 5).

Marvin: *The women are in power because without women the men wouldn't spend money, especially in strip clubs. I think women have the power to make men do a lot of things you know.*

Trudy: *Let's take the strippers for example. People might look at them and say "oho well they're not dressed" so obviously they're gonna be objectified, or whatever. But I think if you personally choose to be in that situation, I think it shows confidence. It's like you're confident in your body. You are confident enough to stand there naked and just show your body.*

Valerie: *We give men a lot of power you know. At the end of the day these women, all of the women in this video had the choice to say I don't wanna do this, or don't show my a*s like this. I don't wanna wear this. I would rather wear this instead. I feel like I have no problem with them being there. It's their choice. As a feminist, I am prochoice for women. If that's what you want do whatever, that's if you wanna be a hoe. I don't even find the term "hoe" offensive coz the dictionary definition of a hoe is someone who sleeps with many people. If you wanna sleep with many people go be a hoe.*

As established in Chapter 2, there is emancipatory potential in identity and sexuality. But regarding cultural products such as hip-hop music videos, feminist scholars argue that the power is vested in the individual, or individuals who control the image (Balaji, 2010: 5).

Depiction of the female body beyond the sexual

Feminist scholars have accused producers of hip-hop music videos of failing to acknowledge or express the emotional and intellectual characteristics of female video models, and women in general - cast in commercial hip-hop videos (Emerson, 2002: 122). It is claimed that they are cast almost exclusively for their bodies, or even body parts, as discussed in Chapter 2. However, participants identified and celebrated the non-physical qualities of some of the women portrayed in the music videos. All groups generally supported the idea that Nadia Nakai in *Ragga Ragga*, appeared as an autonomous entity, and of equal status and worth as her male counterparts. Arguably this was achieved through the careful balancing of her stage presence, being the singer of the chorus, and through the performance of a slightly more masculine femininity, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Trudy: *Though she is in a male group, she enjoys equal status. It seems she had all the control over her outfit.*

Troy: *She is a central figure in the music video. Not just a side chic. She is not just a prop. She is a rapper, and she has respect on stage. She is up there with South Africa's best.*

Shane: *She is the one who sings the most in the music video, while other people are not seen in the beginning. She is not a piece of meat that somebody is trying to get and own. I don't know if you have noticed, basically, Nadia was there the whole time. There were two front guys and then Casper came and disappeared halfway in the music video, then he appears on the other side of the set and then just appears in front of Nadia again. The same with Riky Rick. He was not there most of the time. You didn't even know he was part of the song.*

All participants appreciated Emtee's ode to Pearl Thusi. According to participants she appeared to be in control of her sexuality. The interplay between her real-life celebrity and appearance in Emtee's music video (as a phenomenon of intertextuality) tipped the power scale in her favour. Participants also considered Emtee as infantile to the point of emasculation. Participants considered Pearl Thusi as out of Emtee's league in the sexual market place. These factors produced a power asymmetry in favour of Pearl Thusi.

Roald: *What he's doing is portraying this woman, of which she sure f*****g is, as way more than just a sexual object, or an object of any kind.*

Shane: *Because he has such a high level of respect for her, it takes away the sexual, even when there's a lot of like… sexualising and everything. It almost takes away from that. It puts the power in her hands and makes him seem like the vulnerable little one, whereas in a normal music video they just literally sexualise and demean women.*

Valerie: *I just think he's trying to depict himself as a simple guy who fell for this girl whose like above his league sort of thing. I think that's what he is just trying to show, himself as just a guy and this girl above his league.*

Interviewer: How would you explain "above his league?"

Valerie: *I mean too good for him, beautiful, perfect basically. Yeah…more money, more famous all that stuff yeah.*

Conclusion

Participants identified and grasped the objectification of women in the selected music videos. The findings of this study however evidence the complexities of mediated communication. Modes of pleasure have proved effective in disguising the problematic nature of female objectification as evidenced by the participants' responses to *All eyes on me*. The aberrant reading of *Pitbull Terrier* also evidenced the inability to account for objectification, as evidenced by participant responses. It is also apparent that power asymmetries that favour male protagonists in South African commercial hip-hop are constantly being challenged, while female protagonists can challenge or resist power asymmetries of sexuality. It is also evident that they can take advantage of established beauty values or emphasised femininity for self-promotion. Participants however failed to comprehensively address issues of objectification. It can be concluded that their senses may have been so saturated by images of sexuality and female objectification that they are no longer visible, as claimed by Mc Luhan (1970: 2).

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This chapter addresses findings under theme: (ii), Power, violence, and misogyny. As established in Chapter 2, Connell (1995) proposes three key structures that regulate gendered interactions: the division of labour between men and women; issues regarding power and authority (control and coercion in relationships); and social practices regarding psycho-sexual drive (cathexis) (1995: 74 qtd. Wedgewood, 2007: 333). Though power is expressed in favour of dominant masculinities within patriarchal societies, it encounters various forms of resistance from its subjects, as established in Chapters 2 and 4. Surveillance through objectification (as explained in Chapter 4) marks the first measure by which the gender order is maintained. This is followed by what feminists maintain as acts of sexual entitlement expressed in favour of men against women: facilitating and enabling other forms of violence against women. Participants identified expressions of male power, violence and misogyny, which will be discussed under the following sub-themes: (a) Displays of male dominance, (b) Male sexual entitlement and (c) Misogynistic practices. Though these sub-themes are interrelated, they will be discussed separately.

Displays of male dominance

As established in Chapter 2, hegemonic masculinities form the authoritative and administrative strata of patriarchal society. The dominance culture of hip-hop in general, is traditionally associated with masculinities of the inner city criminal underground, and dominance hierarchies within the rap industry itself. Psychologists argue that masculinities positioned at the highest level of status in society, as a result of personal and material success, enjoy preferential access to the best places to live, the highest quality of food and the attention of people competing to do favours for them, including limitless opportunities for romantic and sexual contact (Peterson, 2018: 15). Participants were able to identify the reality of the hetero-normative dominance culture of hip-hop and threats to its dominance, consistent with the claim that power is never total and therefore faces resistance (Foucault, 1998: 95-6 qtd. King, 2004:

37). Participants also acknowledged the methods by which such power is consolidated. As previously explained, dominant masculinities aim to consolidate and maintain authority in order to regulate gendered interactions. Male groups who do not command power and authority are unable to impose themselves on women as an act of sexual entitlement. The most common expression of power acknowledged by the participants is that derived from a monopoly over the discharge of violence, as expressed in the extracts below.

Shane: *Ninja was portrayed as this big alpha male bulldog, which just broke loose and just went and started killing all these women. The women had no control over him. He had the power to make them do what he wanted. He took what he wanted almost like the olden day Afrikaans man. He was in charge and that was it. He was in control.*

Trudy: *The overall message this gives is that "it's a man's world," like everybody has already said. In the video, the dog is a male among just two females. You only see the females when they are being attacked. The overall message is of men being in control. They have the power.*

According to participants, power is also demonstrated through the display of material symbols of wealth, hence designer clothes, money, mansions and the consumption of high-end products and services. Participants also acknowledged claims of association and allegiance to powerful individuals and other more established musicians (social capital); as an act of empowerment through name-dropping and shout-outs. Overt demands for respect, egotistic and boisterous behaviours, as well as unflattering speech acts directed towards opponents, were also largely identified as methods of self-elevation. Lastly, participants also identified the possession of sex appeal (of male protagonists) expressed through various forms of the female sexual subordination as an augmentation of power.

Trudy: *A male singer or rapper surrounded by naked women is considered dominant, while the women are regarded as his sexual subordinates.*

As previously explained, violence is one means of eliciting respect from other members of society. Sociologists claim that hetero-normative societies generally admire men for their heterosexual exploits (Weitzer et al., 2009: 8). Participants were able to account for the challenges to male sexual dominance, as in the case of Pearl Thusi. Though participants voiced their concerns regarding the celebration of unattainable features of beauty, they were largely oblivious to the implication of the subversion of gendered power structures. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Pearl Thusi is the dominant personality in the music video, based on her level of celebrity. She took advantage of an emphasised femininity, which she is an exemplar

of, for the purposes of self-promotion. Ironically, Emtee was considered infantile, and the subject of ridicule, with all participants questioning his masculinity.

Roald: *I think that Emtee is humble…but in a sense. In that video, the way he looked up to and idolised Pearl…it gives me the idea that he still needs to grow up.*

Belinda: *I hate to say it but women prefer a bad boy, a person who raps about his hard life. Emtee doesn't have muscle. He doesn't even have a tattoo. Even in the song itself, he (Emtee) just sings about Pearl Thusi. There is nothing more to the song. He keeps repeating these words about Pearl Thusi…and obviously appears like he doesn't have street credibility or other interesting lived experiences.*

Interviewer: *So does that take away from his credibility?*

Belinda: *It does, even his music. I don't know if it's proper hip-hop, its child-like music. I wouldn't buy his album… I wouldn't download his music. He's like a five-year-old trying to learn how to speak a language (laughter).*

All participants considered Nadia Nakai to have been elevated to the status of the leading male rappers in *Ragga Ragga*, while other participants acknowledged the complicity of women in patriarchy.

Trudy: *When you have patriarchy, you have men at the top of their women, then you have some women who either… I can't say enjoy, but kinda find a way to take advantage of that. They find a way of making themselves not equal per se, but position themselves in order to manoeuvre to the top. There are some women who are not necessarily against patriarchy because they benefit from it. You might find that they are able to act in a way that gets them accepted into the system.*

The all-women's group was the most articulate in reading the various symbolisms indicative of how dominant masculinities assume power. All participants were generally able to identify how dominant male power is attained and challenged. However, the in-depth interviews were more useful in extracting gendered information from the mixed-group; as male and female group members avoided upsetting each other; as well as exposing their personal views to people they know outside of the research exercise, as mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4. The successful consolidation of power by dominant masculinities builds an expectation of sexual access as expressed by participants.

Male sexual entitlement

It is commonly understood that sexual aggression is linked to sexual entitlement (Hearn, 2012: 590). Traditional male roles which emphasise dominance over material resources, women and

children, can be considered instrumental in encouraging and normalising ideas of male sexual entitlement. Systems of courtship constructed under patriarchy encourage sexual aggression and a belief that women are sexual property under the control of dominant males. Participants at various levels were able to identify these acts of sexual entitlement and aggression. Participants made a link between material success and heterosexual access. The "provider male" also extends to the provision of personal security or protection as explained by participants. An elevated sense of self-worth based on any of the concepts of power explained as part of dominance hierarchies was also observed. However, participants also recognised the monopoly over violence as a source of sexual entitlement.

Natasha: *I feel like it shows that when you make and have money, you can make it rain! (An act of showboating, expressed by throwing money at people considered to be in need, and making them compete to collect it). You can have anything you want and a woman can submit to you because you have money.*

Trudy: *The cats are female and obviously the dog is male. I think it shows how men just go after women anyway and anyhow. The dog saw the cats from afar and went after them the minute he saw them. He feels he has some sort of claim over them maybe, and he goes after them and they run away… Obviously, they don't feel comfortable, but he then gets what he wants. It represents men in the real world. They see a girl, they want her, and they must pursue her, regardless of how they do it and whether it's wrong or right, coz that's what they want and therefore that's what must get.*

Lauryn: *It was the right thing for L'Tido to stop that guy from harassing that girl into giving him her number. However, it was also wrong for L'Tido to ask for her number just because he saved her. I dislike the damsel in distress narrative. It makes us feel we always have to be saved by men.*

The all-women's group read *Pitbull Terrier* in terms of Hall's (1973) preferred reading, while the same video registered a negotiated reading from the all-male group. The mixed group also registered a negotiated reading which was further explored through in-depth interviews. The overt misogyny in *Dlala ka yona* was identified by all participating groups, while sexual entitlement in *All eyes on me* escaped the critique of participants; as modes of pleasure subverted critical judgement, as explained in Chapter 4. All groups generally considered *Ragga Ragga* not to have registered any sexual entitlement. It is to be mentioned however that generally, the all-women's group was more comprehensive in its reading of male sexual entitlement than the all-male group:

Kerry: *My first thought regarding this video (Dlala ka yona) and as from the other discussions previously held…is that the actions portrayed in this video lead to rape culture. Our*

experiences as women enable this understanding. When you walk into a nightclub you actually experience being watched. You even catch some men peeping at you.

The all-men's group betrayed internalised notions of sexual entitlement which is evidenced by their preferred terms of reference i.e. "chicks" and "big booty hoes," as well as revealing veiled notions of admiration for the male protagonist's sexual conquests:

Roald: *I feel he (L'Tido) just sat down and said to himself. "I would like to make a song with a lot of a*s in it". I wouldn't like to be friends with him; he looks like a little wanker.*

Shane: *But he's got all the a*s. He's got all the a*s.*

Roald: *It doesn't matter, I mean he says in one line, I am buying; I'm the one paying so you better do something for me…something like that. That's bull.*

Misogynistic Practices

As established earlier, dominant hegemonic masculinities are under constant challenge and are impacted by various changes in society. Patriarchy relies on its societal structures in order to resist attempts directed towards its subversion. As has been established, internalised values of patriarchy in both men and women support the maintenance of a hetero-normative gender order. When masculinity and patriarchal control appear threatened, violence is usually considered a legitimate method of regaining masculine and patriarchal control. According to Hearn (2012: 590), violence is not fixed to a set of behaviours. It is related to a set of historical intersections of gender power, social divisions, and hegemony. Hegemony relates to ideology and the domination of "common sense" as explained in Chapter 2, 3 and 4, and therefore the notion of what is considered natural or normal in a society. Violence is also evident in the measures women take regarding their own bodies; in order to perform femininity to the expectations of dominant males and "patriarchal" females. Participants identified violence through emphasised standards of femininity, unsolicited attention, and being "appreciated" on the exclusive strength of external features, rather than the content of their characters. Participants acknowledged the portrayal of other forms of violence such as the double standards of material relationships i.e. where it is deemed culturally acceptable for males to offer material gifts to women in exchange for sexual favours, while at the same time it is understood as culturally unacceptable and morally abhorrent for women to initiate and preside over such transactional relationships. Another form of violence expressed in the participants' comments

includes rendering women who do not possess the emphasised feminine features as invisible, as well as pressurising marginalised femininities to participate in dangerous procedures such as skin lightening. The pathologising of women and holding them up to a male as the ideal subjects women to the psychological violence of being considered incompetent, blameworthy, unreliable and biologically inferior. The most widely recognised practices of misogyny were identified in *Dlala ka yona*.

Bryce: *This is definitely rape culture. L'Tido is saying she came to me asking for a drink and I said bend over or something like that. Something like show me what that thing (buttocks) can do. Dlala ka yona means play with it, dribble with the a*s. It's clearly a transactional relationship where he's the one with the money and you know, buying girls drinks in the club to get them to go home with him.*

Zelma: *It makes it seem like women are just mere puppets. They (L'Tido and friends) are controlling them and making them twerk because they have money.*

Kerry: *He (L'Tido) even said I will take you to Singapore or something like that, in exchange for sexual favours you know. When men do this, it's considered ok, but if you say you are gonna sleep with men because you want this and that from them, you're all of a sudden seen as a gold digger.*

Besides the overt displays of misogyny as in the case of *Dlala ka yona*, participants were also able to recognise overt depictions of gender-based violence targeted at women in *Pitbull Terrier*. The all-women's group read the depictions of gender-based violence in terms of the preferred reading, while the all-men's group registered a negotiated reading. The mixed group also generally construed the gender-based violence in the music video as a negotiated reading.

Troy: *Pitbull Terrier to me represents the aggressive white Afrikaans hyper-masculinity, rap and violence culture. All of that stuff. That thing is killing people and eating people and just being f*****g selfish.*

The all-female group read the celebration of light skin and ethnicity in Pearl Thusi in opposition to its preferred reading, but generally did not recognise other violent speech acts expressed against Minnie Dlamini and younger girls. Participants also failed to recognise Pearl Thusi's own complicity with, and endorsement of unachievable female beauty standards, unfairly expected of black women. All participants failed to recognise the subtle perpetrations of violence rendered in the exclusion of alternative female weight and body types; sexual preferences; non-sexual feminine characteristics (emotional and intellectual); the obvious absence of pregnant women and women visibly above 30 years of age; as a result of modes of pleasure and the level of submission to the discourse of hip-hop, which rendered aesthetic and

critical judgement redundant (as explained in Chapter 4). However, all participants generally considered Nadia Nakai to be of equal status to her male colleagues.

Shane: *It's like they are a class above everyone else, they stand empowered (Gemini Major, Casper Nyovest, Riky Rick & Nadia Nakai), that's why they are on top of the South African commercial rap game.*

Valerie: *Nadia Nakai contributed equally to the song, which gives her equal power. I feel she had the power to decide what she wanted to wear.*

Zelma: *I appreciate the fact that Nadia is actually there with the top dogs, abo (the likes of) Casper.*

Conclusion

Participants were generally able to identify the depiction of power, violence and misogyny in the music videos shown. The all-women's group was more articulate in its readings but still failed to comprehensively account for all depictions of violence and misogyny. The all-men's group was less articulate. This is arguably because they are not subject to the same societal pressures as their female counterparts. Violence discharged on males by male perpetrators was not particularly acknowledged by all focus groups. This phenomenon is understood to represent the concept of male expendability under patriarchy. More dominant males are less concerned about the plight of weaker males (at the bottom of dominance hierarchies), while females are also considered not to recognise any particular value in them (Peterson, 2018: 10).

Shane: *I was listening to the song. I was just literally starring at the dog chasing two cats and humping a man (laughter). That's what I saw. The shock value more than any of the music itself.*

It was however apparent that male and female students carefully crafted their arguments to avoid conflict within the mixed-group. More information was gathered through in-depth interviews.

Lauryn: *I had a problem with how women were addressed in the focus group. When I voiced my opinion people got touched, so I had to hold back and I had to keep on holding back. Women can walk around in lingerie expressing their sexuality just as men do. It's not always about women not having power. Women also have power to express themselves as they see fit.*

The depiction of power (in its various forms) was more widely read than depictions of violence and misogyny. According to participants, problematic lyrics were either ignored due to the

dominance of modes of pleasure, inaudibility or as a result of interpretive challenges presented by South African commercial hip-hop's multilingual approach. The deep submission to commercial hip-hop and its typical celebration of power, violence and misogyny as proposed in Chapter 4, rendered problematic matters of gender undiscoverable (Mc Luhan, 1970: 2).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter summarises the key issues that emerged from this study. The aim of this study is to explore how Rhodes University student-fans of hip-hop respond to the depiction of gender violence in selected South African commercial hip-hop videos.

The videos selected; hence *Pitbull Terrier* (Die Antwoord), *Pearl Thusi* (Emtee), *Dlala ka yona* (L'Tido), *All eyes on me* (AKA featuring Burna boy, Da L.E.S & J.R) and *Ragga Ragga* (Gemini Major featuring Casper Nyovest, Riky Rick & Nadia Nakai), presented a diverse offering of gendered scenarios as emphasised in Chapters 3 and 4). In order to investigate how participants made sense of these gender dynamics, the study was predicated on qualitative research and related methodologies. The main tools of research were qualitative content analysis, focus group and in-depth interviews. Reception theory-based research techniques helped to establish the complexity of the meaning-making process that participants used in order to make sense of the gendered scenarios presented in the selected South African commercial hip-hop music videos.

It has been established that those who watch a certain genre acquire certain interpretive skills (Jensen, 1980: 20). Participants brought their understanding of American hip-hop videos into the meaning-making context of South African commercial hip-hop. This familiarity assisted in partially overcoming language barriers associated with the multi-lingual nature of South African commercial hip-hop. Personal experience, cultural affiliations (religion, areas of study, sexual politics (feminism), the level of submission to the discourse of hip-hop, a general student atmosphere cognoscente of prevailing high levels of gender violence in South Africa; expressed on campus through #RuReferenceList, #RapeMustFall movements, as well as the suicide of a student and alleged rape victim, are understood to have informed the participants' meaning-making processes. I conducted focus groups and individual in-depth interviews.

The reception analysis reveals the following. First, women in the study were significantly more knowledgeable and articulate regarding their understanding of the gender order, and they

identified gendered acts of violence more comprehensively than the men. The men who were active participants in university gender-based movements and social justice forums were more conscious of gender issues than others. Patriarchal values of various degrees formed an interpretive schema (cultural map) used by participants in the meaning-making process. Participants also recognised displays of power (through the celebration of symbols of success and the deployment of violence).

Summary

Chapter 4 and 5 revealed that the proliferation of sexualised images and gendered audio-visual scenarios of misogyny common in hip-hop music videos; reduce hip-hop audiences' awareness of their problematic nature. The music videos were considered problematic when they offered overt portrayals of misogyny. The male gaze was subdued by the abstract incorporation of horror in the case of Die Antwoord's *Pitbull Terrier* (Kerchy, 2003: 182), while both male and female interviewees remained unconcerned about the level of violence perpetrated against male characters of lesser status. Both male and female interviewees missed the complicity of Pearl Thusi in her celebration of colourism, ethnocentricity and her endorsement of violent speech acts against her entertainment industry rival Minnie Dlamini. Both male and female interviewees also questioned Emtee's masculinity (within the context of his favourable appraisal of Pearl Thusi). Pleasure and emotional stimulation offered in *All eyes on me*, together with the simulation of a pool party; normalised misogyny, female sexualisation and accommodation of the male gaze. The problematic nature of Nadia Nakai's sexualised body was reduced by the escalation of feminine masculinity as explained in Chapters 2, 4 and 5).

This reception study evidences the complexity of mediated communication as presented by cultural studies (Strelitz, 2003: 31). Participants did not interrogate the lack of variety in female body and weight size; essential heterosexuality (to the exclusion of other sexual preferences); the absence of pregnant women, or the exclusively youthful age of women in the music videos. This has been attributed to the saturation of these gendered scenarios in hip-hop. As explained in Chapters 4 and 5, the proliferation of problematic gender imagery within society tends to normalise them (McLuhan, 1970: 2).

Scope for further research

One of the major factors regarding this research was the need to understand why hyper-masculine, hetero-normative sexuality has a strong association with hip-hop. It has been established that hip-hop generally emerged as a counter-discourse to prevailing socio-economic and socio-political challenges. It has also been established that a hetero-normative, underclass male status is predicated on the deployment of violence, accumulation of material wealth, as well as the often domination of women and weaker men.

Misogynistic audio-visuals targeted at women are produced to subordinate them to a sexual order that favours dominant masculinities. It is apparent that the content of commercial hip-hop music videos may reflect genuine experiences of negative heterosexual relationships within an urban underclass. Gender theorists maintain that the majority of men do not meet female human standards (Peterson, 2018: 41). This situation is further complicated by financial and societal marginalisation, which encourages violent and other antisocial male behaviours in patriarchal societies (Peterson, 2018: 15-17; Hadebe, 2010 qtd. Gennrich, 2013: 8). Though many women contributed to the culture of hip-hop, it can be argued that their marginalisation is a result of males occupying competitive spaces for the formulation of dominance hierarchies (Peterson, 2017: 10), and in so doing drive out the less physically able among them (particularly women) where such spaces are unregulated.

However, when hyper-masculinity and associated misogyny become the dominant characteristic of hip-hop, this production formula can be considered characteristic of corporate psychopathy (Weitzer et al., 2009: 6). According to Korten (1995: 53), there is a tendency for corporations; as they grow in size, to outgrow social responsibility. Negus (1999: 493) emphasises the profit imperative of record companies over moral/social responsibility. It should also be noted that as in America, South Africa has a high rate of absentee fathers (Freeks, 2016: 90). In the absence of experienced male mentors, male children may struggle to negotiate the development of healthy masculinities (Abrahams, 1962: 214), encouraging male adolescents to construct notions of masculinity from misogynistic cultural products and other negative conceptions of masculinity. On the other hand, the emphasised femininities in commercial hip-hop music videos may contribute to a negative body image on the part of female fans, as discussed in Chapter 2. For this reason, impressionable youth may appropriate gendered depictions in hip-hop to construct femininity and masculinity where significant others

may not be present to interrupt them, as exemplified by the intervention of Marvin's grandmother in Chapter 4.

This research indicates that despite contentious issues of gender being a major concern on Rhodes University's campus, participants still lacked a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of gender, as portrayed in South African commercial hip-hop music videos (as explained in chapters 4 and 5).

As established in this study, negative gender attitudes can be deemed acceptable in the eyes of their victims, based on the status and associated charisma of the perpetrator. It has also been established that promoting the status of women (as in the case of Emtee) may be construed as an act of self-deprecation (emasculation) by both men and women under a system of patriarchy. Such societal attitudes are likely to encourage brazen performances of masculinity and associated compensatory behaviour - in order to gain the respect of other men, and the approval of women (Hearn, 2012: 590). Furthermore, architypes of emphasised femininity may be encouraged to capitalise on their unattainable features for the ascension of social hierarchies.

According to Cronje, the anti-social, violent and destructive behaviour evident in the conduct of young people is indicative of South Africa's weak family structures (2017:56). This formative institution, though not limited to the conservative notion of a man and a woman raising children, but rather that which affords a loving and supportive environment is deemed essential for the impartation of non-discriminatory/non-violent gender values and other humane principles to younger members of society (Cronje, 2017:56; Peterson, 2018:124). It is also important for government to tackle South Africa's mounting income disparities (Cronje, 2017:45), which encourage problematic gender relations as explained in chapter 5.

Notions of gender offered in the media can either incorrectly substitute for unobtainable information or reinforce negative gender concepts. Therefore, it is important that media content is held to the scrutiny of institutions mandated with the safeguarding of gender relations, and those responsible for the welfare of younger members of society.

With the realisation of factors that limit an audience's critical engagement, further research could engage with how best the media can be used to encourage healthy gender relations among Rhodes University students and South African society at large.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A

HIP-HOP ARTIST	VIDEO / KEY THEMES	VIDEO NARRATIVES
DIE ANTWOORD	*(Pitbull Terrier)* • Violence • Misogyny • Domination • Sexual entitlement • Female objectification	The video opens with Yolandi Visser atop a raised platform overlooking an abandoned parkade. On one of the sidewalls of the parkade; lower down, is a graffiti inscribed misogynistic message *"Dick Fok Suckey Dick".* Her face is painted white, has black eyes and a pentagram and anarchy sign drawn on it. As she looks into the camera, Ninja is introduced in a dimly lit parking lot space sporting a grotesque prosthetic dog head, together with two women in white and black swimsuits respectively, wearing cat masks. Ninja then introduces them as the black cat and white cat (two slim women), violently declaring that he is a pit-bull terrier. He is then seen on a leash running around on all fours, pulling a delinquent water pistol bearing child on a skateboard. The child then provokes a look-alike of American rapper "Pitbull," who is then mauled by the dog-man when he attempts to retaliate. Free from his "master's" control, the dog-man runs riot; harassing homeless people in a parking lot, a photographer and the two ladies dressed as cats. In a bloody rage he devours the white cat, while white paint is thrown at the black cat. Yolandi then returns, disrobes and mesmerises the menacing dog-man, by way of a hypnotic dance with the bloodied white cat and the white paint stained black cat dancing on either side of her. Yolandi the ghostly type figure then lures the mesmerised dog-man out of the parking lot, and into the street, upon which he is unwittingly struck by a bus. As the dog-man bleeds to death, a bloodied sangoma appears in a dancing frenzy. Yolandi spits in the dog-man's mouth turning him human. After the video credits, he reappears as a dog-man, holding a live mouse to his nose, curiously sniffing it as if to determine whether it was edible.
EMTEE	*(Pearl Thusi)* • Male hypergamy • Female objectification • Consumption centred relationships	The story is centred on South African actress, model, radio, and television personality Pearl Thusi, of whom Emtee obsesses and marvels over. In the opening scene, set in a township, Emtee is seen with a group of friends discussing the virtues of Pearl Thusi. This scene is then followed by a formal introduction of Emtee (and his crew) as they appear on a ramp wearing hip-hop style attire. This is further followed by an interchanging series of clips focusing on Pearl's body/body parts. By chance, Pearl appears for a photo-shoot in the township prompting Emtee to rush to meet her. He is then later seen sitting in a luxury car used as a prop, on the location of the photo-shoot. After the photo-shoot, he returns a lost item to Pearl from the shooting location, and then manages to talk to her, and get her to save her number in his cell phone. A sexy studio photo-shoot scene of Pearl Thusi follows. Emtee is seen exchanging flirtatious texts with Pearl, after which they are seen spending time together in a house and at a nightclub, with images from the first photo-shoot and ramp reintroduced in retrospect. The video ends with Emtee closing the door of the luxury car/prop, with the implication of driving off to an undisclosed location.
L-TIDO	*(Dlala ka yona)* • Sexual entitlement • Transactional relationships • Domination • Female objectification • Consumption centred relationships	The music video begins with a parental advisory explicit content warning sign, followed by a wide shot of a woman simulating a ramp walk and swinging her hips. The camera focuses on the woman's hips leading the audience into a club scene where L'Tido is found sitting with his friends. L'Tido notices and marvels at her figure as she walks past him in slow motion on her way to meet her female friends. At this point, the camera is trained on to the women's hips without revealing their identities. Their faces are revealed briefly before the scene changes, only showing L'Tido and his crew dancing in an empty warehouse. The scene then switches back to the nightclub where a man is seen harassing the women and her friends. L'Tido instinctively intervenes on their behalf, wards the man off, and obtains a cell phone number from Pulane (A prolific Instagram model whose nude pictures were maliciously uploaded on social media by an ex-boyfriend outside of the context of music video). She is later seen dancing suggestively with him on a balcony. A raunchy strip club scene then follows, where L'Tido and his crew are seen dressed in expensive suits, smoking cigars and spending money on strippers.

AKA, BURNA BOY, Da L.E.S, J.R *(All Eyes on me)*	*(All Eyes on me)*	• Domination • Consumption centred relationships • Female objectification	The scene opens with a wide aerial shot over a swimming pool graced by girls in bikinis, followed by a bedroom scene with Burna Boy and three women. Burna Boy then emerges from the room exploring the rest of the mansion, which is filled with slim and scantily dressed young women; attending the pool party. The camera follows another woman into a room where AKA is in the company of other women. Other camera shots focus on the women's bodies and the pool party, which consist of mostly swimsuit-clad women. J.R is then introduced in a scene in the kitchen surrounded by young women, drinking expensive liquor. He is then shown again revelling with friends in another part of the mansion. Burna Boy introduces Da L.E.S, who concludes the rap song.
GEMINI MAJOR, CASPER NYOVEST, RIKY RICK, NADIA NAKAI	*(Ragga Ragga)*	• Domination • Female sexuality • Collective Unity	The video opens with a blue colour cast as Gemini major introduces the song. All other rappers/dancers dressed in black perform in front of a series of white boards, which form the background. The lighting switches from blue strobes to white light, while camera angles change. The entire ensemble is spread out across the picture plane. The only female rapper; Nadia Nakai is clad in a black leotard, and boots as she sings her verse and the hook with Gemini Major. Silhouettes of dancing figures clad in ninja suits are occasionally seen performing in the background. Riky Rick is introduced followed by Nadia Nakai. Casper Nyovest then formally appears rapping the last verse of the song. In the final shot, the entire ensemble (clad in black) is shown from a bird's eye view.

Appendix B

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Pitbull terrier *(Die Antwoord)*

1) Of what significance is the dog as a character in this music video?
2) What meaning do you attach to the cats as portrayed in the music video?
3) Any comments on the use of sound in the music video?
4) Comment on the location of this music video.
5) What do you think is the message behind this music video?

Pearl Thusi *(Emtee)*

1) Is there anything that particularly strikes you about this music video?
2) How does this music video make you feel?
3) Any comments on the outdoor environment depicted in this music video?
4) Any striking message delivered within the lyrics?
5) Which scene impacts you the most?

Dlala ka yona *(L Tido)*

1) What do you make of the opening scene of this music video?
2) What are your comments on the portrayal of modern society?
3) Is there any striking message delivered within the lyrics of the music video?
4) What are your comments on the fashion and style, as expressed within the music video?
5) Do you like this music video?

All eyes on me *(AKA feat Burna Boy, Da L.E.S & JR)*

1) Does this song influence or support any beliefs you hold?
2) What is your favourite part of this music video?
3) Are there any lyrics that particularly strike you?
4) Are there any lived experiences that resonate with the portrayals in this music video?
5) Do the portrayals in this music video speak to any personal aspirations?

Ragga ragga *(Gemini Major feat Casper Nyovest, Riki Rick & Nadia Nakai)*

1) Any general comments regarding this rap ensemble?
2) Are there any lyrics you find agreeable?
3) Comment on the expression of fashion and style in this music video.
4) What do you think is the major theme in this music video?
5) Do you have any comments on how the music video sounds?

Appendix C

In-depth interview questions

1. What are you studying at Rhodes University?
2. Where are you from originally?
3. When and how did you develop an interest in hip-hop?
4. What type of hip-hop music do you listen to?
5. Does hip-hop music play any role in the way you live your life?
6. Did you feel free to express yourself during the focus group session?
7. What did you think about the music videos shown?
8. Did you make any important observations?
9. Do you feel strongly about any concepts portrayed in the music videos?
10. To what extent do the themes portrayed in the music videos reflect the lived experiences of Rhodes University students in general?

Appendix D

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

School of Journalism & Media Studies

Rhodes University

Research project name: The social meanings selected Rhodes University students make of the gender dynamics in selected popular South African hip-hop videos.

Participant Information Sheet

We would like to invite you to take part in the above named study but before you decide, please read the following information.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to get an understanding of the meanings Rhodes University students make of the gender dynamics portrayed in selected South African hip-hop videos.

Who is doing the study?

Tamuka Mtengwa is the main researcher; he is an MA candidate in the School of Journalism and Media Studies. His interests are in media, cultural studies and reception analysis.

Professor Lynette Steenvelt is the Supervisor of the study.

Who is being asked to participate?

Youth, ages range between 18-35. Youth who follow and are interested in South African hip-hop. Rhodes University was chosen because it is a microcosm of society, its students come from different backgrounds.

Your rights as a research participant

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and anonymous. Information gathered during the research will be used solely for the purpose of this study and all efforts will be made to ensure the confidentiality of participants' personal information. Please note that while your name will be recorded with the data, it will not be used in the report. All identifiable data will be stored securely on a computer with password-restricted access and only the researcher (and supervisor if applicable), and ethics committee members will have access to it. All identifiable information will be destroyed at the end of the study or after 15 years, whichever comes first.

If you decide not to participate there will not be any negative consequences. Please be aware that if you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time and your data will be returned to you or destroyed. You may also decide not to answer any specific question.

What will happen to the results of the study?

This is a mini study, therefore, the thesis will form part of the University's work and it will form part of the body of knowledge that exists at Rhodes University.

Informed Consent Sheet

**** To be signed in duplicate – one copy to be returned to the researcher and one copy to be retained by the participant.**

Thank you for your participation. By submitting this form you are indicating that you have read the description of the study, are over the age of 18, and that you agree to the terms as described in the short questionnaire that follows:

I have read this form and received a copy of it. I understand the purpose and nature of this study and I am participating voluntarily. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without any penalty or consequences. **I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction**.

Yes ☐

No ☐

I agree to take part in this study and I hereby grant permission for the data generated from this research to be used in the researcher's publications on this topic.

Yes ☐

No ☐

I grant permission under the following conditions:

I grant permission for the research to be recorded and saved for purpose of review by the researcher, supervisor / principal investigator, and ethics committee.

Yes ☐

No ☐

I grant permission for the research recordings to be used in presentations or documentation of this study.

Yes ☐

No ☐

Participant's names and signature _____

_____

Date_____

Researcher names and signature_____

_____

Date_____

Contact

If you have any questions at any time about this study or the procedures, you may contact the supervisor Prof L Steenveld Email:l.steenveld@ru.ac.za , Office: +27(0)46-6037142
Mobile:+27(0)825890885

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.