RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Introduction to Special Issue:
Hip Hop, Critical Pedagogy, and Radical Education in a Time of Crisis

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"DO THE REAL HARLEM SHAKE" HARLEM, NYC, PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS TINSON

"Hip-Hop [can] use . . . a binding formula or philosophy. In the time since its creation, its subtending parts have each gone off along their own vectors, some more or less prosperously, but all at great deficit to the potency of others. The question, then, remains, much as it does in the study of the heavens, whether hip-hop is, in fact, a closed universe—bound to recollapse, ultimately, in a fireball akin to its birth—or an open one, destined to expand forever, until it is cold, dark, and dead."[1]

Depending on whom you ask, Hip Hop is in perpetual crisis. Those who are concerned about Hip Hop's fate, mainly artists and fans of the culture, and those who teach and write about it, are in constant debate and dialogue about its traditions, its rituals, its political potential and, in a word, its power. This special edition of *Radical Teacher* is our attempt to look specifically at one aspect of Hip Hop—its function in the realm of critical education. This places us squarely in the largely disregarded "Fifth Element" of Hip Hop[2]: Knowledge, or a concern for the vast array of understanding that fuels Hip Hop culture and its practitioners around the world. We are concerned with what is known about Hip Hop and equally, perhaps more specifically, how it becomes known. Accordingly, we ascribe to Hip Hop a form of critical education at the intersection of and inseparable from political engagement. In this sense, we view Hip Hop as an apt modality of critical pedagogy, demonstrating and reflecting on Hip Hop's ability to "read the world."[3]

Hip Hop's seemingly continuous state of crisis requires frequent accounting of its engagement with the social, political, and cultural climate that surrounds it. While we seek to amplify "media assassin" Harry Allen's call for a "binding philosophy" of Hip Hop, none seems on the horizon. The urgency of his statement, however, is a clarion call for artists, practitioners, educators, and activists to take seriously the meaning, stakes, and desires of Hip Hop, considering its persistent resonance amongst youth and its expansive global recognition. Allen's statement also carries a sense of ethical responsibility put to practitioners of Hip Hop culture, suggesting it is their duty to craft such a unifying philosophy. And yet, Hip Hop Studies remains as variegated as Hip Hop itself, making Allen's statement all the more potent, and no less prescient. Though varied by the particular strengths and outlooks of a given instructor, and honed by student demand for an educational experience centered on their life experiences, Hip Hop has gained recognition in the realm of critical pedagogy. Regardless, if the direction where Hip Hop is headed matters to us at all, some assessment of its current status is long overdue. In this introduction, we highlight some of the issues that emerge in contemporary explorations into Hip Hop's burgeoning impact on community organizing, teaching, and institution building. Collectively, the essays and syllabi in this special issue of *Radical Teacher* represent our attempt to examine current pedagogical practices driven by Hip Hop, signaling its reach into traditional educational settings, while identifying emergent limitations in its trajectory. We make no claims of exhausting every angle of Hip Hop-based instruction. A single issue, no matter how ambitious, could not accomplish that. However, we do intend for scholars, practitioners, and students whose work is influenced by Hip Hop to join with us in thinking critically about the ethical styles it proffers, the consequences of its academic code switching, and the impact of its pedagogical power moves.

Hip Hop and the Color of Crisis

Among several notable events that have recently captured national attention, two particular incidents pinpoint Hip Hop's current engagement with political struggle and critical education: the murder of Trayvon Martin and the subsequent acquittal of his killer George Zimmerman, and the renewed bounty on Assata Shakur. From San Francisco to New York, supporters calling for justice for Trayvon expressed anger and frustration and took to the streets just hours after the jury announced its not guilty verdict on the evening of Saturday, July 13th. Though Zimmerman was technically being tried for murder, the case felt like the latest prominent example of blackness on trial. For many, it was further evidence of the lack of value associated with Black life in the United States. As expected, pundits weighed in from all corners. Some echoed President Obama's initial statement on the verdict: "We are a nation of laws, and a jury has spoken."[4] Yet, for those who marched in protest, the verdict, followed by the president's statement, was another thumb in the eye.

In the intervening months between the reluctant arrest of George Zimmerman and through the disingenuous effort to prosecute him, Hip Hop artists and activists utilized what skills and resources they could to express their profound dissatisfaction. Yasiin Bey (Mos Def), dead prez, and Mike Flo joined forces to produce "Made You Die," a moving tribute and rallying cry in honor of Trayvon. This and other cases motivated the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM) to compile the study "Operation Ghetto Storm," an expansion of two earlier reports, "Trayvon Martin is ALL of US!" and "Every 36 Hours." These studies documented the frequency of Black people's death at the hands of police or other self-deputized entities in the first half of 2012. According to the report, there were over 300 such deaths last year.[5] Inspired by that study, over a dozen emcees and producers came together to produce an accompanying CD entitled "Every 36 Hours: The War on Afrikans in America," which featured songs by Jasiri X, Immortal Technique, Zayd Malik, and The Outlawz, among others. Despite the demands for justice that have ensued throughout and beyond the radical Hip Hop community since the murder of Trayvon on February 26, 2012, there was no justice for him. He was effectively killed twice.[6]

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While the Martin killing and Zimmerman acquittal sent shockwaves through activist circles and dominated national news, it unintentionally eclipsed an equally significant event. In May of this year, the FBI doubled the bounty on the head of former Black Liberation Army member Assata Shakur from $1 million to $2 million.[7] Shakur, granted political asylum by the Cuban government since her escape from prison in 1973, was also the first woman placed atop the FBI's newly established Most Wanted Terrorist list.[8] This action was taken under the direction of Eric Holder, the first Black U.S. Attorney General, Aaron Ford, the African American head of New Jersey FBI, and with the tacit approval of the first Black U.S. president, now in his second term.

Assata's importance to the Hip Hop community is indisputable. Her connection to Hip Hop extends from her participation in a range of black radical political activity to her familial ties to slain emcee Tupac Shakur. Artists such as Mos Def and Common have spoken out and dedicated verses and full-length tracks to Assata's case.[9] Since the 1990s, MXGM has been instrumental in highlighting the state sanctioned violence directed toward Assata Shakur, Mumia Abu-Jamal, and dozens of other political prisoners throughout the U.S. MXGM members range in age and experience; however, much of its constituency is made up of the Hip Hop generation. Their Black August celebrations directly engaged the politics of imprisonment and collected proceeds were dedicated to political prisoners and their families. More than concerts, these celebrations were the culmination of month-long activities commemorating the struggle for racial justice in the United States and beyond.[10] For many in Hip Hop, MXGM is their preferred method of social activism, despite renewed calls for civic participation exclusively through the vote.

For the more political-minded of the Hip Hop world, Assata is a living deity of resistance. She has earned a sacred space in the hearts and minds of many who have felt trapped under the weight of state repression. Her case is a fitting point of departure for any serious discussion of black radicalism, as she represents a direct link between black liberation politics, radical education, and Hip Hop activism. Her career is emblematic of radical Afrodiasporic traditions of protest and demands for social transformation in the face of state violence. How can self-styled Hip Hop activists learn from Assata's example? In our view, if the term "Hip Hop activism" possesses any value, it is located in its ability to consistently and publicly critique the state and create platforms of resistance against conditions of oppression. In this sense, Hip Hop activism, informed by histories of cultural and political struggle, may be said to follow in the tradition of Civil Rights and Black Liberation protest movements. These movements consistently critiqued power and vocalized dissent on behalf of the downtrodden and disenfranchised. So long as the neoliberal tide of global capital continues to produce stark forms of inequality, it is unfavorable for Hip Hop activists to side with those who wield state power. This view may be at odds with a music and aesthetic climate that is indifferent, if not hostile, to a consistent expression of Hip Hop politics. Most of the emcees and intellectuals that do

engage Hip Hop in their work make few explicit political demands. As such, their definition of politics typically reverts to established political lines. On the other hand, self-described Hip Hop radicals—those who explicitly position themselves and their work in a tradition of anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-oppression activities—advance a political view not beholden to either Democrats or Republicans. In our view, Hip Hop Studies lie at the intersection of politics and education, and thus play a unique role in reviving political education inside and outside of the classroom. School and college educators who oppose what Pauline Lipman calls the neoliberalization of education[11] have to act strategically to transform these spaces into sites of growth, inspiration, and critical knowing and find ways to incorporate radical histories in their pedagogy.

Hip Hop, Popular Culture, and Critical Education

In an educational environment preoccupied with transferrable skills into a labor market that can at best be described as flimsy, scholars of all kinds, but especially those who use Hip Hop culture as their lens of critical inquiry, are challenged to get students to think about society beyond mere job prospects. Despite the strictures of the Department of Education's Race to the Top[12] hovering ominously over public education, Hip Hop scholars do have an advantage. Over the past decades, Hip Hop culture has been impacted by such issues as urbanization, gentrification, police brutality, prison expansion, education cuts, electoral politics, immigration debates, fights for LGBTQ rights, and the onset of the hyper-individual technological age. Hip Hop scholarship and teaching is well positioned to weigh the effects of these issues on Hip Hop and larger society, which requires an engagement with the social issues that contributed to Hip Hop's origins and its continuing relevance as a cultural force and premier form of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Hip Hop, like all popular culture, has to wrestle with its contradictions. For one, Hip Hop scholarship and activism is mired in the trap of taking its cues from the mainstream profit-driven world of entertainment. The tension between what is available through mass communication and what should be made available is at the center of all engagement with Hip Hop culture. Voices critical of the mainstream, globalized, corporatist definition and distribution of Hip Hop culture are rarely heard with any amount of frequency. While specific practitioners of Hip Hop culture take on the challenge of advancing radical media democracy,[13] these efforts are unable to compete with multinational media corporations. Though outfits such as Davey D's Hard Knock Radio, Jared Ball's Vox Union, our own TRGGR Media Collective, and past shows such as Pacifica's Divine Forces Radio persist in providing a broad, historically rooted Hip Hop and informed social commentary through radio and internet, these efforts—largely conducted on a volunteer basis—are far from achieving a critical mass. This is compounded by the fact that few educators at any level consistently produce radio and internet media for public consumption, which ironically includes professors who teach and write about Hip Hop.

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In accordance with Hip Hop's global appeal, universities and colleges are increasing their utilization of faculty resources in expanding their curricular offerings to include elements of Hip Hop culture. However, it remains to be seen if these resources can be used to advance increased opportunities for local communities. Hip Hop courses that open up spaces for broad community participation may be a critical factor in the development of this field. Through such an approach, Hip Hop might facilitate the use of university space in the service of broader community needs. These are issues that challenge the neat integration of Hip Hop into classrooms at all levels. The ability of both scholars and practitioners to creatively and critically address such questions will have an impact on the relevance and expansion of Hip Hop Studies in the coming decades.

A series of interlocking questions emerges when contemplating the reach of Hip Hop into the academy, including: Who should teach Hip Hop and how should it be taught? Are professional practitioners and Hip Hop pioneers best equipped to teach Hip Hop Studies? Can teachers of common subjects, such as history, math, science, and philosophy, learn to teach Hip Hop? Is the teaching of gender, race, ethnicity, sex, and region critical to the teaching of Hip Hop? Should Hip Hop Studies have a community based learning component? There are no obvious answers to these questions, but they are no less critical to Hip Hop's ongoing engagement with education and social justice.

Though the intersection of race, gender, sexuality, and class combine to produce certain social outcomes, we argue that the salience of race in Hip Hop-based education requires particular attention in our current moment. Although we are not promoting an essentialist view that Hip Hop can and should only be taught by people of color, specifically African Americans and Latin@s, we do recognize the obvious limitations in Hip Hop only being taught in the United States by white professors and educators who have not been marginalized in the history of the academy or the teaching profession. The best Hip Hop scholarship embraces questions of privilege, racial discrimination, social isolation, and cultural fetish as interwoven with an engagement of deejaying, emceeing, b-boying, graffiti writing, fashion, and education. Critical Hip Hop Studies, like critical education in general, confronts these issues with attention to complexity and nuance. Considering the "rap industrial complex"[14] and popular media landscape already rife with white male media

ownership, it is perhaps understandable that there would be strong apprehension and uneasiness towards Hip Hop being taught in academic institutions where faculty are also overwhelmingly white. Our point is that whiteness in Hip Hop Studies must be interrogated as much as questions of essentialized blackness.[15] It is important here to note the inherent limitations in the well-circulated aphorism that "Hip Hop transcends race." While many of its practitioners and enthusiasts are not Black or Latin@, the ownership class of Hip Hop—record labels, recording studios, publishing outlets, distribution companies, etc.—remains overwhelmingly white and male. This is hardly transcending race.

It should be evident at this stage of Hip Hop's evolution that blackness, whiteness, as well as ethnic and gendered constructions of Asian American, Latin@, and Muslim identities do not all possess equal stakes in discussions and public reception of Hip Hop culture. The easy inclusivity of Hip Hop might suggest otherwise. Yet, we cannot emphasize enough that Hip Hop emerged out of African diasporic cultural traditions and it proceeds that the descendants of those traditions have the most at stake in any Hip Hop-based social discourse. White scholars who have taken up teaching Hip Hop in their classrooms are most successful when they appreciate the fullness of a cultural form that grew from a complex set of African diasporic cultural practices and beliefs that confront and clash with an array of socioeconomic factors, not when they can assert the Beastie Boys, Eminem, or Macklemore as racially transcendent artists. This requires an engagement with the histories, practices, and beliefs that emanate from and are germane to Africana and Latin@ communities today, including their discomfort with "experts" of the culture and encounters that define their daily life experiences.

Regardless, as the articles in this collection demonstrate, anyone professing an ability to teach any aspect of Hip Hop must "show and prove." They must demonstrate either a mastery over form, i.e. one or more of the performative aspects of Hip Hop culture, or they must reveal a mastery over the knowledge of Hip Hop culture, its histories, the plethora of philosophical ideas that contributed to it, from the influence of the Nation of Islam, Five Percenters, and even Christianity, to Afrika Bambaataa's articulation of Knowledge of Self, while keeping abreast of its current manifestations. Equally important, scholars invested in teaching Hip Hop should be deeply familiar with the body of literature on the subject and possess an awareness of Hip Hop's political engagement. Yet, the latter is arguably the most underrepresented aspect in Hip Hop Studies.

Hip Hop in the Contested Academy[16]

Hip Hop Studies reveals Hip Hop culture as a form of critical social inquiry, in that it urges a multipronged and agile investigation into raced, gendered, and classed social and political structures around the world. As a form of *trans*disciplinarity (working across existing disciplines) or even *un*disciplinarity (intentionally defying existing disciplinary boundaries) Hip Hop Studies practitioners and teachers are required to be conversant in a range of

cultural, social, and political issues. In this sense, Hip Hop Studies is not as concerned with methodology as with fluency in Hip Hop's multiple forms of articulation.

Recently, scholars Travis Gosa and Erik Neilson have commented on the impact and status of Hip Hop's growing frequency on college and university curricula throughout the country. Though they arrive at different conclusions, the authors largely agree that the academy has become a home of sorts for Hip Hop in the past few years. In two *Huffington Post* on-line articles, Erik Neilson has argued favorably for Hip Hop's presence in the academy arguing that the university and college space has not been given enough credit for Hip Hop's expansion into the mainstream. To prove his point, in one piece, Neilson drops a list of emcees, producers and pioneering contributors who attended college at some point along their rise to mainstream notoriety. In the second article he imagines universities as "vital partners" in the celebration and deep understanding of Hip Hop Culture.[17]

For his part, Travis Gosa is skeptical about Hip Hop's presence in the academy.[18] While he applauds the increasing interest in Hip Hop Studies, he questions the intentions of universities who are receptive to Hip Hop Studies at a time when institutions of higher education are increasingly hostile or indifferent to the educational needs of Black males, many of whom identify strongly with Hip Hop. Considering what can only be called hostility towards Black Studies being felt across the country from Cornell to Temple to CSU Long Beach, Gosa's point is well taken. Black Studies is suffering and Ethnic Studies is being absorbed by traditional fields of study or merged with Cultural Studies or American Studies at a given university or college. And in Arizona, Mexican American Studies has been completely banned from public high schools.[19] In this climate, Hip Hop Studies can at best only be the latest gold mine to help stave off declining student enrollments.

Nielson can argue that the university deserves more credit than it has received thus far, especially since, with exceptions, there are very few consistent independent institutional spaces rooted in Hip Hop culture. A few examples stand out: the Trinity College Hip Hop International Festival recently held its eighth conference, and Ohio State hosts an annual Hip Hop Literacies conference. In terms of Hip Hop's preservation of history and knowledge of the culture there is The Hip Hop Archive at Harvard University, which recently recognized the emcee Nasir "Nas" Jones with a fellowship in his honor[20], and Cornell University houses its own Hip Hop Collection. Hip Hop Studies in the academy largely depends on individual faculty members who feel adequately experienced or compelled enough to engage with their students and colleagues about Hip Hop. Institutions such as NYU, Cornell, Harvard, and the University of Arizona seem to have provided resources devoted to either preserving or cataloguing Hip Hop's sociocultural history.

At New York University's Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, independent media producer Martha Diaz has helped to establish the Hip Hop Educational Center, which has documented and indexed a range of Hip Hop based educational approaches, organizations, and institutions. Beginning in 2010, it is arguably the most elaborate program currently in the academy specifically dedicated to Hip Hop-based instructional practice. Its website states that the organization "was formed to fully promulgate and explore the potential of Hip-Hop pedagogy." And further, its mission is "to cultivate and support Hip-Hop scholars, teaching artists, cultural workers and activists, and social entrepreneurs to professionalize the field of Hip-Hop Education and inform the larger education sector."[21] Though promising, it remains to be seen how successful their efforts will be in influencing social and educational policy throughout the New York City public school system or elsewhere. For instance, can this and similar organizations influence policymakers' views on standardized testing, school closings, budget cuts, and police in schools? While influencing contemporary social policy may be one of several important goals of Hip Hop-based education, the creation of repositories of Hip Hop knowledge represents yet another form of strategic institutionalization.

Cornell University is home to The Cornell Hip Hop Collection, whose stated mission "is to collect and make accessible the historical artifacts of Hip Hop culture and to ensure their preservation for future generations."[22] Since 2008, Harvard University has housed The Hip Hop Archive, though it was originally founded in 2002. It describes its work as facilitating "the pursuit of knowledge, art, culture and responsible leadership through Hip Hop . . . our commitment [is] to build and support intellectually challenging and innovative scholarship that both reflects the rigor and achievement of performance in Hip hop and transforms our thinking and our lives."[23] The University of Arizona has developed a minor in Hip Hop Culture, within the department of Africana Studies,[24] and CSU Dominguez Hills is developing a shared Hip Hop minor between that university's Africana Studies and Music departments. While universities are devoting resources to these institutionalized sites for Hip Hop, whether those resources are sufficient is another question. Within the functioning of the academy, perhaps this form of legitimization makes sense, but it should not go unquestioned and without close scrutiny. Are there any costs associated with this form of legitimization?

Will Hip Hop Studies have the transformative impact on American higher education in the way that Ethnic Studies has for the past four decades?

Though these few examples are promising, both Neilson and Gosa fail to acknowledge that such collections and institutes depend on the university or college's willingness to house them. Though there are plenty of spaces to discuss and debate issues related to Hip Hop culture, as Harry Allen reminds us, there is very little that links them in common effort beyond their claim to Hip Hop. Producers of Hip Hop culture lack widespread institutional

credibility and presence, just as Hip Hop intellectuals yearn for institutional autonomy and support to expand their work. How do Hip Hop scholars address this sense of institutional nomadism? Hip Hop culture, its practitioners, and its critics-from-within cannot depend or rely solely on institutional support, the conference format, the publishing industrial complex, or the college panel and honorarium as substitutes for genuine movement building, or stand to merely view such moves as some kind of natural progression.

At this stage, scholars whose lens of critical social inquiry is Hip Hop and who possess academic privilege have a particular duty to reflect the multifariousness and breadth of Hip Hop experience, from the popular to the political. So long as there are academics and educators with a sincere interest in Hip Hop, it goes without saying that Hip Hop culture will have a presence in university spaces, even if marginal, transient, and ultimately insecure. But this limited presence remains driven by the intellectual tastes of specific faculty members and educators. All this makes the idea of Hip Hop in the academy—by itself—a necessarily unstable vehicle for substantial transformative activity, even as it offers up classroom space for critical engagement with a wide array of social structures.

Will Hip Hop Studies have the transformative impact on American higher education in the way that Ethnic Studies has for the past four decades? When Ethnic Studies emerged as a force on college campuses throughout the United States it filled an expansive vacuum. The history, experiences, culture, and literature of people of color were identifiably absent from academic spaces prior to the emergence of Ethnic Studies. Upon their arrival, Black Studies, Chicano Studies, Native American Studies, Puerto Rican Studies, and Asian American Studies challenged the very structure of the academy. What political or structural vacuum does Hip Hop Studies fill? What challenge does it pose to the university structure? How does it force a rethinking of the way the university functions? These seem to be questions that Hip Hop Studies will do well to wrestle with in the coming decades.

Hip Hop's emergence as a cultural social force was anticipated by the arrival of Black Studies as an educational and political social movement. This might be reason enough to state that an engagement with the history, legacy, presence, and overall health of Black Studies and Ethnic Studies is requisite for any serious engagement with Hip Hop culture and studies. But, what is Hip Hop's relationship to Black Studies and Ethnic Studies? As a direct outgrowth of the social struggles waged by communities besieged by domestic warfare, institutional racism, depletion of social welfare resources, and shaken by military intervention in Viet Nam, Black and Ethnic Studies emerged to provide context and critical insights from people of color urging a reimagining of American history and social structures in the process. Though Hip Hop Studies seem to follow the same trajectory as Black Studies, it is unlikely that it, independently, will have a similar institutional legacy. It is unclear whether it will constitute a challenge to the structure of the academy in the way that Black and Ethnic Studies have even in the

face of budget cuts and the reinstitution of more or less traditional academic hierarchies. Moreover, discourses of postracialism, hyper-technological independence, and sporadic political engagement have encouraged distance from Black Studies' roots for many students. Can Hip Hop Studies assist in bolstering the institutional legacy of Black and Ethnic Studies? If scholars fail in taking up this challenge, Hip Hop Studies may merely be the latest pretext for uprooting such legacies.

Despite these challenges, it is important to highlight some of the effective strategies that have emerged in recent years. An excellent example of a Hip Hop Studies curriculum focused on music is the Hip Hop Education Literacy Project (H.E.L.P.). Based in Washington D.C., the H.E.L.P. program was designed to address a range of issues related to the achievement gap by creating alternative ways to engage students to read and improve literacy skills. Gabriel "Asheru" Benn, the original developer of the H.E.L.P. program, is also an established emcee, educator, and activist. Through his own life experiences and career, Asheru has been able to bridge methods of his own work and use music to create a platform for young folks who have been failed by traditional public schooling. Co-designed by a team of educators and artists, H.E.L.P. offers 60 lesson plans that place a familiar Hip Hop song under analytical scrutiny, extrapolating the range of interpretation of sociocultural vocabulary, exploring the use of grammar, syntax, and sentence structure in the process. This approach, which combines a number of related activities that vary in complexity depending on the class level, are designed to align with National Reading Standards. In the process H.E.L.P. encourages youth to consider a variety of strategies that allow them to engage their preexisting cultural competence and conscious understanding of the world around them. Through the development of their voice and a critique of oppressive conditions included in their own narratives, the young folks in the program strengthen their vocabulary, grammar, literacy skills, and build academic resilience.

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Utilizing similar strategies to those found in the H.E.L.P. program, *Conscious Women Rock the Page* is a curriculum workbook developed by three award-winning activists and novelists, Sophia "Black Artemis" Quintero, Elisha "E-Fierce" Miranda, and Jennifer "J-Love" Calderon, who joined forces with social justice educator Marcella Runell Hall. Their workbook explicitly engages questions of gender and sexuality, and approaches violence, patriarchy and racism as interlocking oppressions. The lessons therein are grounded on conscientious resistance to oppressive conditions, be they inside or outside of school classrooms, and provide strategies on how to cultivate a liberatory life practice. By providing an intersectional approach to their lesson plans, *Conscious Women Rock the*

Page deepens existing Hip Hop educational models and allows for facilitation of issues around social injustice that can cater to a broad community of 6-12 graders.

Lastly, we recognize the effective Hip Hop-based approaches developed by Dr. Dave Stovall, Associate Professor of Educational Policy Studies and African-American Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Stovall has been active in working with students and educators at the Social Justice High School in the Lawndale/Little Village High School in Chicago for well over a decade. He has published a number of articles based on his instructional experience that considers the significance and ethics of utilizing Hip Hop and Critical Pedagogy that intersect with issues ranging from the school-to-prison pipeline and gang violence to issues of gender inequality. In his work, Stovall provides a bridge from an institution of higher learning to a secondary school and utilizes personal testimony and critical reflection on his experiences as a man of color, a resident of Chicago, and a scholar to bridge multiple platforms of education.

> ### *Hip Hop as critical pedagogy faces numerous challenges, including adaptability to ongoing political struggle, institutional legitimacy, and pedagogical innovation.*

These are but a few examples of solid work being done that merges Hip Hop and critical pedagogy with educational social justice imperatives. Legitimating Hip Hop Studies in the academy, though necessary, cannot replace actual social movement, especially when Hip Hop Studies emerged absent from a broad based social movement militantly demanding institutional reform. Hip Hop scholars, artists and critics are not unified on many topics whether the issues include entrepreneurialism and commercialism, unified political ideology, or academic sanctioning. However, for Hip Hop to remain a relevant sociocultural and political force, it would appear that Hip Hop Studies must negotiate, interrogate, and challenge the restructuring of institutions of higher education away from radical student activism and sustained community engagement.

Toward Hip Hop and Critical Pedagogy

As we have outlined here, Hip Hop as critical pedagogy faces numerous challenges, including adaptability to ongoing political struggle, institutional legitimacy, and pedagogical innovation. As scholar-activists of color who are of African, Native, and Puerto Rican ancestry, we have long viewed ourselves as life participants who identify with Hip Hop culture beyond the infrastructure of a capitalist system for which the active process of cultivation and liberation of black and brown communities does not register. At the same time, we recognize the privilege and responsibility we possess as scholars and activists, and view efforts to close the distance between those inside and outside the academy critical to all dialogue and debate that emerge in Hip Hop Studies.

In assembling this collection of essays we selected scholars whose work employs a critical interrogation of Hip Hop while viewing the culture as offering various strategic lines of critical inquiry into an array of interlocking social conditions. This issue situates Hip Hop Studies at the center of an active process of critical and reflexive teaching, learning, and research. In this sense, the work of critical pedagogy is always changing, shifting, responding to and drawing from new contexts and adapting to new social and political environments. As these studies in teaching strategy demonstrate, Hip Hop Studies continues to represent the mobilizing of critical knowledge derived from the lived experiences of predominately Black, Brown, and urban communities that reflect political desires and projects of liberation, but necessarily takes stock of the impact of this knowledge outside of those communities with equal force. Mirroring the expansive capacity of Hip Hop, these scholars' areas of emphasis and expertise vary greatly. However, these authors are linked through their rigorous interrogation of questions of institutional privilege while appreciating the potential for transformational activity in educational settings.

In this collection, Steven Netcoh's perceptive essay is chiefly concerned with the ethics of teaching Hip Hop to white "colorblind" youth through an explicitly anti-racist lens. In Todd Craig's reimagining of the use of citations, the Hip Hop deejay reemerges as a bibliophile, while Andrew Hafner's article locates Hip Hop squarely in the hopes and dreams of immigrant Latin@ youth trying to make meaning of their changing world. Antero Garcia's insightful essay imagines pop culture icon Kanye West as a critical pedagogue. Rounding out the essays, Jared Ball's essay comments on the imperatives and impediments of radical Hip Hop scholarship and activism from classroom to community. Finally, we have included two syllabi that demonstrate possible approaches to Hip Hop Studies: Sarah Hentges' course "Hip Hop: Art, Culture and Politics," and another by Priscilla Page and Djola Branner focused on a critical engagement with Hip Hop Theater.

Our hope with this special issue is to encourage a discussion that would appreciate the challenges and potential dangers of Hip Hop's institutionalization. We aim to mobilize contemporary debates about the role of this U.S. urban-originated, now globally-situated, embodied cultural knowledge in educational spaces. As an on-going dialogue, we recognize what may be perceived as gaps in this current collection of essays. Admittedly, we may have included a discussion of sexuality, gendered constructions, and specifically queer remapping(s) of Hip Hop pedagogical space. Considering the expansive reach of Hip Hop's current phase, we may have done more with what James Spady, et al., have termed the "Global Cipha."[25] And finally, voices of contemporary youth practitioners who are imaginatively challenging traditional understandings of educational relevance are essential to marking Hip Hop's next generational milestone. With those shortcomings in tow, we have assembled an issue sure to open more lines of inquiry into Hip Hop's pedagogical possibility. In so doing, we are confident that these efforts will acquaint a new readership with *Radical Teacher* and with the voices herein, while connecting longtime readers of the journal to

new threads of radical possibility. It is our intention to raise a different series of critical questions and take stances that may seem unpopular. We make no apology for our position, and challenge other scholar-activists to share in the effort to amplify the narratives of those who do not have the luxury of considering such scholarship in the broad-based struggle for social justice. Above all, these studies reflect the politics of aesthetics and the aesthetic in the political. In this sense, the spaces in the academy where Hip Hop Studies occur constitute sites of everyday struggle. Effectively, Hip Hop Studies becomes the lens through which new sites of contestation are marked. As contested space, the college, university, or school classroom are remade into sites of resistance, where students and faculty consciously engage with legacies of social and political power, oppression, and resilience. In this way, Hip Hop as critical pedagogy forces us to read and write the world (albeit in spray paint), while working towards the creation of the liberated future we all seek.

We, the editors of this special issue on Hip Hop and Critical Pedagogy, wish to thank *Radical Teacher* editorial board members Rachel Rubin and Jeffrey Melnick for their guidance and encouragement in helping us produce this cluster. We also thank K.C. Nat Turner and Tanisha C. Ford for their editorial guidance in choosing these essays.

Notes

[1] Harry Allen, "Dreams of a Final Theory," in *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop*, edited by Jeff Chang (New York: Basic Civitas, 2006), 7-9.

[2] Hip Hop Culture is made up of five elements: deejaying, break dancing, emceeing (rapping), graffiti writing, and knowledge. These elements are certified by two of the pioneering organizations in Hip Hop: The Universal Zulu Nation and the Rock Steady Crew, and are accepted by practitioners around the world.

[3] Paulo Friere and Donald Macedo, *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World* (New York: Praeger, 1987).

[4] Gregory Korte, "Obama 'A Jury has Spoken' in Zimmerman Case" *USA Today*, July 14, 2013. http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2013/07/14/obama-trayvon-martin-zimmerman-verdict-statement/2516137/. Accessed on July 23, 2013.

[5] Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, "Operation Ghetto Storm: 2012 Annual Report on the Extrajudicial Killings of 313 Black People by Police, Security Guards and Vigilantes," April 2013.

[6] At the time of this writing, it was reported that the Department of Justice is considering reviewing the Zimmerman case with the possibility of charging Zimmerman with violating Trayvon Martin's civil rights. The NAACP has reported that is has obtained over 300,000 signatures for its petition demanding DOJ intervention into the case.

[7] Christopher Maag, "New Push to Capture Woman in '73 Killing of State Trooper," *New York Times*, May 2, 2013. Accessed on July 15, 2013.

[8] http://www.fbi.gov/newark/. Accessed on July 25, 2013.

[9] Ironically, Common, one of the president's favorite Hip Hop artists, drew the ire of many on the right when he accepted Obama's invitation to perform at the White House. Common has been an outspoken critic of the justice system and has advocated for the release of numerous political prisoners. See Janee Desmond-Harris, "Common White House Invitation Sparks Conservative Outrage," *TheRoot.com*, May 10, 2011. http://www.theroot.com/buzz/commons-white-house-invitation-sparks-conservative-outrage Accessed on August 6, 2013.

[10] Black August emerged as a month of solidarity with the incarcerated in California prisons in the 1970s. Specifically, it honors the lives of George and Jonathan Jackson, Ruchell Magee, James McClain, William Christmas, Khutari Gaulden, and other slain, deceased, or current political prisoners. MXGM has taken up this effort from the 1990s to the present. In honor of Black August, individuals are encouraged to engage in intensive political education, fasting, and meditation throughout the month.

[11] Pauline Lipman, *The New Political Economy of Urban Education: Neoliberalism, Race, and the Right to the City* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

[12] The ARRA provides $4.35 billion for the Race to the Top Fund, a competitive grant program designed to encourage and reward states that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers; and implementing ambitious plans in four core education reform areas: adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction; recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and turning around our lowest achieving schools.   http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html. Accessed on July 14, 2013.

[13] Though our use of this term is in line with Kellner and Share who

argue that "Media education should be connected with education for democracy where students are encouraged to become informed and media literate participants in their societies," we want to expand this concept to directly connect it with the political desires of people of color who have long advocated for deep rooted structural social transformation. See Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share, "Critical Media Education and Radical Democracy," in *The Routledge International Handbook of Critical Education*, edited by Michael W. Apple, Wayne Au, and Luis Armando Gandin (New York: Routledge, 2009), 281-295.

[14] To our knowledge, Rosa Clemente was the first to use this term on the "Beyond the Beats: Towards a Radical Analysis of the State of Hip-Hop" panel at the National Conference on Media Reform in Boston, MA, 2011.

[15] George Yancy, ed., *White on White/Black on Black* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

[16] We use this term to describe the contentiousness that perpetually hovers above certain fields of study in the academy. It is meant to mark the tension between tradition areas of study and relatively new ones such as Black Studies, Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies, Queer Studies, etc. These fields intersect in important ways with traditional fields, yet they also push the boundaries of traditional epistemologies and canons.

[17] Erik Nielson, "Where Would Hip Hop be Without Colleges and Universities?" *Huffington Post* on-line, April 12, 2013, accessed June 6, 2013. Nielson, "High Stakes for Hip Hop Studies," *Huffington Post* on-line, April 29, 2013, accessed April 30, 2013.

[18] Travis Gosa, "Colleges Love Hip Hop, But Do They Love Black Men Too?" *Chronicle of Higher Education* on-line, February 15, 2013. Accessed April 30, 2013.

[19] Julian Kunnie, "Apartheid in Arizona? HB2281 and Arizona's Denial of Human Rights of People of Color," *The Black Scholar* 40, No. 4 (Winter, 2010): 16-26.

[20] Gerrick D. Kennedy, "Harvard University Announces Nas Fellowship," *Los Angeles Times*, July 16, 2013. Accessed July 17, 2013.

[21] http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/hiphopeducation/. Accessed on July 8, 2013.

[22] http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/hiphop/. Accessed on July 8, 2013.

[23] http://dubois.fas.harvard.edu/hiphop-archive-harvard-university. Accessed on July 8, 2013.

[24] http://www.arizona.edu/features/ua-introduces-nation%E2%80%99s-first-hip-hop-minor. Accessed on July 9, 2013.

[25] James G. Spady, H. Samy Alim, and Samir Meghelli, eds., *Global Cipha: Hip Hop Culture and Consciousness* (np.: Black History Museum Press, 2006).

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Droppin' Knowledge on Race: Hip-Hop, White Adolescents, and Anti-Racism Education

By Steven Netcoh

"SPREAD LOVE: COMMANDANTE BIGGIE" ARTISTS: JOHN GARCIA, CERN ONE, SEAN MEENAN

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS TINSON

1. White Kids and Hip Hop

Though white adolescents comprise a large percentage of Hip Hop's audience, relatively few academic studies examine why they readily gravitate toward the music and how they engage with the culture. The majority of scholarship on white adolescents and Hip Hop focuses on how these individuals adapt the music and culture to their local settings. Rodriguez (2006) investigates the racial ideologies of politically conscious Hip-Hop fans primarily in Northampton, Massachusetts. Hayes (2004) examines how white Canadian youth in rural Ontario identified with Hip Hop to distinguish themselves from their racially and culturally homogenous home community. Cutler (1999) explores how a white teenager from one of New York City's wealthiest neighborhoods aligned with Hip-Hop by adopting African American vernacular English and stereotypical features of urban street culture such as gang membership and drug use. Each of these studies illustrates the unique ways that white adolescents have incorporated Hip Hop into their lives in disparate local settings.

One text that provides a more overarching view of white adolescents' engagement with Hip Hop is Kitwana's (2005) *Why White Kids Love Hip-Hop: Wankstas, Wiggers, Wannabes, and the New Reality of Race in America*. In the book, Kitwana argues Hip Hop has a critical role to play in moving America beyond its old racial politics, which he defines as being "characterized by adherence to stark differences—cultural, personal and political—between Black and white . . . cultural territorialism on both sides, and . . . uncritical acceptance of stereotypes, also on both sides." He believes Hip Hop will bring America toward a new racial politics, which is "marked by nuance, complexity . . . and a sort of fluidity between cultures" (pp. xiv-xv). According to Kitwana, Hip Hop creates grounds for youth of diverse racial backgrounds to converge and share their common interest in the music and culture (p. xiv). Within these spaces, youth can collectively "explore" new conceptions of race that transcend understandings of racial boundaries as fixed and biological. Kitwana argues Hip Hop is a "vehicle to educate and bring down the walls of ignorance when it comes to American race relations" (p. 132).

While Hip Hop may expose whites to diverse racial representations and create spaces for youth of all races to share a common interest in Hip Hop, the notion that the music alone can facilitate significant transformation in white Americans' racial ideologies is rather idealistic. Hip Hop has become a staple of a media culture that promotes consumerism and self-gratification while "devaluing citizenship" (Yousman, 2003, p. 370). Mainstream Hip Hop serves primarily as a spectacle for its audiences and rarely invites critical social or political dialogue (Watts, 1997). Most consumers perceive Hip Hop strictly as a form of entertainment and fail to comprehend or ignore its capacity as an agent for critical discourse on race. Provided the media culture in which Hip Hop is produced and consumed, it is unrealistic to assume the music can independently affect any comprehensive change in white adolescents' racial ideologies and politics.

The minimal scholarship on Hip Hop and its white audience supports the notion that rap music has been limited in its capacity to mobilize racially just ideologies and politics in white youth (Hayes, 2004; Rodriguez, 2006). One study indicates Hip Hop may in fact hinder racial progress as many whites use stereotypical representations of black males and females in Hip Hop to legitimize discrimination against black Americans in both "personal" and "political behaviors" (Reyna, Brandt, & Viki, 2009, p. 374). Additionally, Hip Hop has been a prominent cultural force for over twenty years, yet there has been little change in white Americans' racial discourse, ideologies, or politics. Since Hip Hop entered the mainstream, color-blindness has been solidified as the dominant racial ideology, and the belief that the United States is a "post-racial" society has been accepted as "common sense" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Winant, 2002, p. 33). Hip-Hop has been unable to destabilize these prevalent notions that mask the degree to which racism is institutionalized in American society and prevent the United States from realizing true racial equality.

> *The minimal scholarship on Hip Hop and its white audience supports the notion that rap music has been limited in its capacity to mobilize racially just ideologies and politics in white youth.*

Given Hip Hop's limits in mobilizing racially just ideologies and politics in its white listener population, I draw on critical media studies scholarship to argue that secondary and post-secondary schools provide useful spaces for white adolescents to deconstruct Hip Hop's representations of and discourses on race and participate in meaningful dialogue about race as an embedded feature of America's social institutions. Though most Hip Hop is produced for a media culture that is market and consumption driven, it can serve as an arena to challenge the foundations of America's racial order when its representations, discourses, and ideologies of race are made subjects of explicit and critical investigation. Secondary and post-secondary classrooms provide spaces to maximize Hip Hop's democratic potential by examining, among other subjects, Rick Ross's constructions of authenticity, Lupe Fiasco's anti-racism discourse, Nas's challenges of color-blindness, and Eminem's rearticulation of whiteness.

2. Race, Racial Ideology, and Whiteness

Before examining Hip Hop's racial representations, discourses, and ideologies, it is instructive to outline the theories of race from which this study works. Although race is commonly understood as a biological characteristic, there is little dispute among social scientists that it is a socially constructed entity. Humans created race as a means to organize and structure the social world, and thus it has no grounding in nature or biology. As Bonilla-Silva (2006) contends, "notions of racial difference are human creations rather than eternal, essential categories" (p. 8).

All racial classifications are flawed as they incorrectly assume homogeneity across a range of "nationalities, geographical origins, languages, dialects, and cultural traditions" (Keating, 1995, p. 911). Broad racial categories cannot possibly account for the diversity contained within them, which thus highlights their arbitrary nature.

Because race is socially constructed, it is impermanent, unfixed, and subject to change. Omi and Winant (1993) assert the meaning of race is "defined and contested throughout society, in both collective action and personal practice. In the process, racial categories themselves are formed, transformed, destroyed, and re-formed" (p. 61). Racial categories have been updated and revised throughout history to encompass different groups of people. For much of the nineteenth century, "White," "Negro," and "Indian" were the only recognized racial categories in the United States (Keating, 1995, p. 911). In California, Mexican immigrants were classified as "white," which afforded them all the rights and privileges of white Americans while Chinese immigrants were labeled "Indian" and thus "denied the political rights accorded to whites" (Omi & Winant, 1993, p. 82). Since their categorization as "white" and "Indian," both Chinese and Mexican Americans have been reclassified into various racial groups such as "Orientals," "Asians," "Persons of Spanish Mother Tongue," and "Hispanics" (Keating, 1995, p. 911). This process of continual racial reclassification underscores the subjective nature of race.

Though race is fluid and unfixed, it produces real effects in the social world. Bonilla-Silva (2006) uses the term "racial structure" to describe how race has historically provided privileges to those with white skin and restricted the distribution of economic, political, and social capital to those with darker skin (p. 9). This inequality persists today as a variety of statistics suggest some racial groups face institutional disadvantages in America's racialized social structure. A report released by the Bureau of Justice Statistics showed that as of December 2010, black males were imprisoned at a rate "nearly 7 times higher than white non-Hispanic males" (Guerino, Harrison, & Sabol, 2011). Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the unemployment rate for black Americans has consistently remained around double the jobless rate for white Americans during the past thirty years ("Unemployment Rates," 2010). Cited are just a few statistics that suggest racial inequality is embedded in America's social structure and that race functions as a mechanism to order the social world.

Because race is socially constructed, it is impermanent, unfixed, and subject to change.

While race is an integral feature of social structures, it is also experienced at the micro social level. As Omi and Winant (2008) note, "Race always operates at the crossroads of identity and social structure" (p. 1565). All representations of race inevitably "invoke social structures, power relations, lived experiences of identity and difference" (Omi & Winant, 2008, p. 1570). Racial

signification is thus inseparable from the larger racialized structure that shapes individuals' social experiences. When people interpret representations of race, they immediately draw on "preconceived notions" created within and perpetuated by the racialized social structure. White people who signify "blackness" in their speech, dress, or body movements are understood to be acting "against their race." These individuals might face discrimination or social stigmatization because they do not conform to their racial scripts. As such, all racial representation is understood and experienced within an established racial order (Omi & Winant, 1993, p. 59).

Individuals and groups develop racial ideologies to interpret and explain their varied experiences with race. Bonilla-Silva (2006) defines racial ideology as "the racially based frameworks used by actors to explain and justify (dominant race) or challenge (subordinate race or races) the racial status quo" (p. 9). A variety of racial ideologies exist within racial structures and engage in a perpetual struggle for dominance. Color-blindness is arguably the dominant racial ideology in America, and it "disconnect[s] race from the power relations in which inequality and racial discourses are embedded" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Rodriguez, 2006, p. 646). Color-blindness presumes race inconsequential in individuals' social experiences and opportunities. People who employ color-blind ideologies claim they "don't see any color, just people" and tend to believe racism no longer affects society (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 1). Conversely, those who adopt more progressive racial ideologies recognize race as an organizing feature of social structures and thus advocate policies that directly redress institutionalized racism and past racial oppression (Omi & Winant, 1993, p. 57).

Whiteness is implicated in the maintenance of structural racism, and it serves as a "site of racial, economic, and political privilege" (Giroux, 1997, p. 290). Lipsitz (1998) uses the term "possessive investment in whiteness" to describe white America's collective interest in protecting white supremacy and dedicates a book-length study to examining how white privilege has been created and sustained in the United States. He illustrates how discrimination in housing markets, inequality in the education system, and "intergenerational transfers of inherited wealth that pass on the spoils of discrimination to succeeding generations" has provided whiteness a "cash value" and contributed to "the racialized hierarchies of our society" (p. vii). In a similar investigation of white privilege, Harris (1995) examines how whiteness has been afforded property value in American society and provides "a host of public, private and psychological benefits" (p. 286). Harris deconstructs the legal implications of "whiteness as property" to demonstrate how the "judicial definition of racial identity based on white supremacy reproduced . . . racial subordination at the institutional level" (p. 284).

Lipsitz and Harris's analyses are examples of "Whiteness Studies," which is a field of scholarship that emerged to unveil the institutionalized advantages and privileges of whiteness. Dyer (1988) argues it is imperative to unmask the privileges of whiteness because "[W]hite power secures its dominance by seeming not to

be anything in particular" (p. 44). As a result of its "invisibility," "'whiteness' operates as the unacknowledged standard or norm against which all so-called 'minorities' are measured" (Keating, 1995, p. 905). Academics who study whiteness attempt to destabilize its normalcy and call attention to its role in racial oppression and exclusion. Such a focus on the insidious nature of whiteness and the social effects of institutionalized white supremacy provides grounds for whites to become aware of their "dysconscious racism" and recognize their collective involvement in racial inequality (King, 1991).

3. Hip Hop, Color-Blindness, and Racial Stereotyping

Provided Kitwana's argument about Hip Hop as a "vehicle to educate" about race and transform America's racial ideologies and politics, one might expect white adolescents at Hip Hop concerts where artists critique "racist hypocrisies" and "rap about black nationalism" to recognize white privilege and display some semblance of understanding racism as an institutionalized feature of American society (Rodriguez, 2006, p. 653). To the contrary, Jason Rodriguez demonstrates in "Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop" that the majority of participants in his study displayed color-blind ideologies in their discourse on race and Hip Hop. Rodriguez conducted participant observation research at twenty Hip-Hop concerts, primarily in Northampton, Massachusetts, to examine how white Hip Hop fans understand their participation in an "unmistakably African American art form" (p. 648). Rodriguez found that the majority of those he interviewed recognized race as a "salient" feature of others' lives while simultaneously denying its significance in their own (p. 657).

Most participants claimed they were attracted to "conscious" Hip Hop's "radical politics," but they refrained from associating with its racialized politics. Rodriguez attributes his participants' reluctance to adopt Hip Hop's racial politics to their color-blind ideologies, which are defined by race neutral social and political outlooks (p. 654). Such color-blindness was reflected in a number of the interviewees' comments about Hip Hop and race. One participant asserted, "Well, with Public Enemy or Dead Prez, they say a lot about black people, and you know, it's like black music, but you have to make it . . . a bridge between the race differences, and you have to realize that it's all just people no matter what the color of your skin" (p. 661). The majority of participants in the study made similar "rhetorical maneuvers" to downplay the significance of race in American life. Rodriguez argues that these white adolescents' color-blind ideologies allowed them to justify their participation in Hip Hop by "taking a racially-coded art form and turning it into a color-blind one" (p. 663).

Rodriguez's research illustrates, at least in one locale, Hip Hop's limits in independently mobilizing progressive racial ideologies in its white audience. Although the white adolescents in his study attended concerts where race was a focus of the artists' lyrical and performative content, they remained ignorant, at least in their discourse, of white privilege and structural racism. The participants' engagement with racially progressive and sometimes radical Hip Hop did not destabilize their color-blind

ideologies nor did it prompt them to adopt more progressive racial politics. Rodriguez suggests the overtly racialized nature of the music may have exacerbated the interviewees' color-blindness as they worked to justify their presence in the scene by asserting the irrelevance of race in their lives and ignoring the privileges of their white identities.

In a similar attempt to investigate white youths' participation in Hip Hop, Hayes (2004) studied how white Canadian youth in rural Ontario interpreted Hip Hop music and adopted aspects of the culture to distinguish themselves from their racially and culturally homogenous community. Hayes found that the majority of participants in his study had little to no interaction with black people and thus displayed "limited understandings of the complexity and diversity of blackness." He argues the youth came to understand "*all* black people as the embodiments of rap culture" as they "distill[ed] the heterogeneity of black identity to a handful of racial stereotypes" (p. 67). For these youth, Hip Hop artists such as Tupac Shakur and Notorious B.I.G. represented authentic black culture because they rapped about life on the streets of America's inner cities and the struggles they faced as young black males. Consequently, these youths' performances of Hip Hop culture reinforced their predominantly white town's understanding of the black male experience as characterized by "violence, crime, and poverty" (p. 65).

While Hayes believes in Hip Hop's potential to facilitate meaningful dialogue about race in urban spaces that are culturally diverse, he is pessimistic about its capacity to mobilize progressive racial ideologies and politics in racially homogenous communities. He argues that the youth in his study were unable to move beyond their stereotypical understandings of race to investigate the heterogeneity of blackness and race in general. Further, he asserts their inability to "overcome local perceptions of race" prevented them from taking any significant steps toward "progressive race relations" and "displac[ing] their town's unspoken yet pervasive whiteness" (p. 80). While the youths' adoption of Hip Hop presented opportunities to destabilize the normalcy of whiteness in their town, they ultimately reinforced its power with their fixed representations of and discourses on race. Hayes's research suggests that Hip Hop may negatively impact racial progress in predominantly white communities as many white youth uncritically accept detrimental stereotypes presented in Hip Hop as authentic representations of "blackness."

Reyna et. al.'s (2009) "Blame It on Hip-Hop: Anti-Rap Attitudes as a Proxy for Prejudice" also demonstrates the potential dangers of Hip Hop's representations of race. The authors conducted three different studies, two of which are instructive for the current analysis, to determine if and how "non-Blacks [could] use their stereotypes of rap to justify prejudice and discrimination against Blacks—especially the Black urban poor" (p. 364). In the first study, they found white participants' negative attitudes toward Hip Hop music were associated with negative beliefs about black Americans and anti-black policy stances. The authors attribute the relationship between distaste for rap music and anti-black policy positions to what they term

"responsibility stereotypes" associated with Hip Hop music such as the notion that all rappers advocate "get rich quick through crime and violence" lifestyles (p. 364). These stereotypes suggest rappers violate "important societal values," are responsible for their impoverished and violent living conditions, and thus do not deserve the benefits of favorable social policies (p. 364).

To obtain more current data and improve the methodology of their first investigation, Reyna et. al. conducted a second study in which they surveyed 98 participants about their attitudes toward Hip Hop, the black community, and race relations in America. The second study corroborated their analysis of the 1993 GSS data as the results indicated that, once again, white respondents' anti-rap attitudes were associated with both negative feelings toward black Americans and anti-black policy positions. The authors found that the responsibility stereotype was a primary factor in whites' discriminatory attitudes. According to Reyna et. al., "responsibility stereotypes fully accounted for the relationship between anti-rap attitudes and street crime policies, as well as anti-rap attitudes and opposition to policies designed to help Blacks that do not fit the stereotype portrayed by rap (affirmative action for qualified Blacks)" (p. 371). These results suggest that whites' discriminatory attitudes and politics toward black people extended beyond just those who fit rap's stereotypical representations of "blackness" to black Americans in general.

> *During approximately the past twenty-five years, movements have emerged within the fields of cultural studies, communication, and education, among others, to demonstrate the necessity for media education and literacy programs that equip youth with the skills to deconstruct and critically interrogate the media they consume.*

The aforementioned studies indicate that Hip Hop may encourage color-blindness in certain locales and a general acceptance of injurious racial stereotypes by its white audience. With little formal knowledge of how race functions in society, many whites adopt the dominant racial ideology of color-blindness, and Hip Hop becomes one channel through which their color-blindness is deployed. Additionally, Hip Hop is wrought with stereotypical representations of black males and females that many white listeners internalize and mobilize in their racial politics and attitudes toward black people. Such acceptance of deleterious stereotypes is evident in the research of Hayes (2004) and Reyna et. al. (2009) who found that many white participants used representations of black males and females in Hip Hop as a "proxy" for discriminatory personal and political attitudes toward all black people (p. 361).

This scholarship on Hip Hop and its white audience underscores the importance of mediating Hip Hop's racial representations and discourses. While Hip Hop has potential to mobilize racially just ideologies and politics in its white audience, many white listeners internalize rap music's stereotypical portrayals of race while they remain ignorant of its more progressive racial discourses. The existing research on Hip Hop and white listeners suggests further measures must be taken to minimize rap music's negative influence on the struggle for racial justice and maximize its democratic potential. In the rest of this essay, I build on critical media studies scholarship to illustrate how secondary and post-secondary schools provide useful spaces for white adolescents to deconstruct Hip Hop's stereotypical representations of race, develop anti-racism voices, destabilize color-blindness, and rearticulate their whiteness.

4. Hip Hop, Race, and Education

During approximately the past twenty-five years, movements have emerged within the fields of cultural studies, communication, and education, among others, to demonstrate the necessity for media education and literacy programs that equip youth with the skills to deconstruct and critically interrogate the media they consume (Kubey, 2003). Advancements in technology have led to an inundation of media in individuals' daily lives, which necessitates "critical approaches that make us aware of how media construct meanings, influence and educate audiences, and impose their messages and values" (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 4). Advocates of critical media education argue schools are prime spaces to deconstruct the media's representations of the social world and empower youth to both critically read and produce their own media texts. Many theorists assert critical media education will help students situate the media in their social and historical contexts and investigate the intersections of "media and society, information and power" (Ferguson, 1998; Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 6). Media education as a whole is more a theoretical framework than a concrete set of practices, but the ultimate goal of the movement is for students to become independently critical of media so they can effectively navigate the ideologies, discourses, and representations they encounter in the media landscape (Buckingham, 2003).

Within the critical media education movement, scholarship has emerged to examine how Hip Hop can be mobilized in schools to empower youth and facilitate students' development into socially and politically active citizens (Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2005; Scherpf, 2001; Daspit, 1999). This research locates Hip Hop as a site of resistance to oppressive power relationships and argues its energy can be channeled into transformative pedagogies in the classroom. Because Hip Hop "invokes counterhegemonic voices from the margins," some academics argue it is a prime location to challenge America's dominant politics and forge multicultural coalitions (Scherpf, 2001, p. 107). The following analysis builds on this research by specifically examining how Hip

Hop can be deployed in secondary and post-secondary classrooms to help white adolescents interrogate the genre's representations of and discourses on race and develop racially just ideologies and politics in their personal lives[1].

To begin, I will focus on the controversy surrounding Rick Ross and his disputed employment as a corrections officer. Ross, who is one of contemporary Hip Hop's biggest stars, has fashioned an image of himself as a hustler and ruthless drug dealer. Hit songs such as "Hustlin'" and "Aston Martin Music" characterize Ross as a feared drug pusher who has amassed tremendous wealth from his involvement in trafficking narcotics. Ross had his authenticity called into question in 2008, however, when a photograph surfaced of him graduating from the Florida Department of Corrections's training academy for corrections officers (Eells, 2012). When the photograph was exposed to the public, Ross first denied its legitimacy claiming he had been digitally added to the picture. As further evidence surfaced to support the validity of the photograph, Ross fabricated a story claiming he had taken the job to start selling drugs to inmates in prison (Eells, 2012). Knowing his reputation and authenticity could be damaged by revelations of his employment as a corrections officer, Ross resorted to lying and distorting the truth to protect the public self-image he had so carefully crafted.

While many rappers like Rick Ross claim their lyrics about drug dealing and violence are reflections of their life experiences as young black men in America, their narratives are often hyperbolic spectacles that gloss over the details of their lives that do not conform to their constructed images. Rick Ross's biography reveals that he became a corrections officer to escape the life of crime in which many of his friends were entrenched. When his best friend was incarcerated on felony drug charges, Ross decided it was time to distance himself from the "street life," and he subsequently sought employment with the Florida Department of Corrections (Eells, 2012). While Ross publicly touts his successes as a drug kingpin, his biography exposes a more complex image of a man looking to remove himself from the drug game.

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Secondary and post-secondary schools can serve as arenas to debate and deconstruct the controversy surrounding Rick Ross's employment as a corrections officer. By critically examining Ross's self-representation, claims to authenticity, and biography, white adolescents can explore how stereotypical portrayals of black males in Hip Hop are often hyperbolic representations of rappers' lived experiences.[2] After studying the discrepancies between Rick Ross's biography and his public persona,

white students could delve further into the realm of identity construction in Hip Hop by performing research on artists to explore how their life stories compare with the images they have created for themselves in the recording industry. While some rappers write rhymes from their true life experiences, many embellish their backgrounds to appear "hard" and earn "street cred" in the Hip Hop industry. Regardless of the truth in each rapper's public image, an examination of Hip Hop artists' biographies can help white youth see through, if only to a minor degree, the glamorization of real life hardships and tragedies in Hip-Hop and recognize the devastating effects of institutionalized racism. This research could lead to presentations or campaigns in which students educate their peers and communities at large about the pressure Hip Hop artists face to conform to injurious stereotypes in order to succeed in the music industry. If Rick Ross did not create "The Boss," would he still be one of the most popular rappers in the industry today? What role do fans play in the popularization and perpetuation of these media stereotypes? These are questions white adolescents could ask within the context of their projects to help those in their communities interrogate representations of black males in popular culture that are often passively accepted as true to life depictions.

While many mainstream rappers like Rick Ross promulgate stereotypical portrayals of black males, some Hip Hop artists expose and rail against racist power structures that function to provide privilege to certain groups while limiting opportunities and freedoms for others. Though racism is not the predominant subject of Lupe Fiasco's lyrical content, his commentary on race and its implication in institutionalized inequality is present in many of his recent compositions. Lupe's discourse extends beyond the common conception of racism as a "black/white" issue to demonstrate how many racial groups have been oppressed by white power and privilege. In one of his most recent radio standards, "Around My Way," Lupe begins by referencing Pine Ridge, the site of the Wounded Knee Massacre and the American Indian Movement's standoff with the federal government, and other violence against American Indians to call attention to Native Americans' struggle against white racism throughout the history of the United States. Within the same verse, he addresses the U.S. government's sluggish response to Hurricane Katrina and corporate benefits of the American occupation of Iraq to illustrate more contemporary examples of racism perpetrated by the predominantly white American government. Together, these lines help interrogate, as Lupe puts it, why "poverty is chocolate and privilege vanilla" (Fiasco, 2012).

Another Lupe Fiasco song, "All Black Everything," demonstrates the prominent role that race has played in American society throughout the country's history and imagines life without race as a defining feature of social life. The song begs the questions, what would America look like if slavery had not existed, and how would America be different if segregation was not a part of the country's history? Without race as a organizing aspect of social relationships, Lupe imagines America as a more peaceful society in which "racism has no context," black Americans

have equal opportunities for upward social mobility, and the social ills that stem from institutionalized racism have all disappeared (Fiasco, 2011). In the final verse of the song, he acknowledges that his vision is idealistic and that nothing can be done to erase the racial atrocities of the past, but he encourages all Americans to work together to create a better future by turning inward, reflecting on how race and racism affect people's lives, and taking action to end racial oppression.

Lupe Fiasco's songs provide openings for white adolescents to reflect on how race is implicated in power dynamics that structure the social world and voice their opposition to racial oppression. By critically dissecting "Around My Way" in secondary and post-secondary classrooms, white adolescents can examine how white racism has afflicted a multitude of racial groups and served to advance white power and privilege around the world. It is important for white youth to see specific ways that racism is more than a "black/white" issue and continues to affect people both in the United States and across the globe. Lupe's commentary in "Around My Way" is just one example of the rapper speaking out against racism in both his music and public discourse. He can serve as a model for white adolescents to identify racism in the United States or internationally and voice their opposition to it in a rap song, video, public service announcement or community-wide anti-racism campaign. These students can join Lupe Fiasco in his efforts to expose and oppose institutionalized racism by carving out spaces for their anti-racism voices in their local communities.

White adolescents should also be encouraged to consider the questions that "All Black Everything" inherently asks, which make the song an ideal site for reflection on the implications of race in secondary and post-secondary classrooms. What would America look like if slavery had not existed? How would America be different if segregation was not a part of the country's history? These questions can help white adolescents examine contemporary social dynamics and structures through an historical lens to better understand how past racism has shaped present social realities. Lupe's call for reflection and action on racial oppression at the end of the song could also serve as a starting point for white adolescents to develop action plans to combat racism and create a more racially just society. What concrete steps can individuals take to realize Lupe's vision for a more racially equitable society? What steps can groups and organizations take? The last verse of "All Black Everything" calls on youth to take agency in shaping a more racially just future. Secondary and post-secondary classrooms serve as prime sites for white adolescents to heed Lupe's call and determine what they and others can

URBAN ART GALLERY PHOTO BY CARLOS MCBRIDE

do to ensure the world is more racially equal in the future.

Nas is another rapper whose music and public discourse can help white adolescents disrupt America's dominant ideology of race. Nas has specifically used his music as a platform to challenge color-blindness and America's racial politics. In 2007, Nas propelled race into the national conversation with the announcement that his upcoming studio album would be titled Nigger. The title prompted debates in both black and white communities about "the N-word" and its place in contemporary American discourse (Reyna et. al., 2009). The album title forced race into the public's consciousness, at least for a short time, and invited critical dialogue on both the historical and contemporary implications of race in American society. In addition to the title, a number of songs on the album such as "America," "N.I.G.G.E.R. (The Slave and the Master)," and "Black President" critique dominant racial politics in the United States and invite critical reflection on how race continues to work to the advantage of some and to the detriment of others in American society.

"America" in particular challenges color-blindness and interrogates contemporary manifestations of structural racism. In the first verse of the song, Nas describes his ascent from a poor youth in the projects to a rich and famous international Hip Hop star. Within the context of this narrative, he describes an encounter with an "old German" who calls Nas a thug and looks at the rapper's Mercedes Benz suspiciously as if to wonder where he earned the money to drive such an expensive car (Nas, 2008). The underlying commentary of these lines is that America is far from a color-blind society as black men with money are shrouded in clouds of suspicion, skepticism, and doubt. The second verse of "America" addresses the degree to which racism is embedded in America's social fabric and provides examples of racial injustice in America's legal and education systems. Nas asserts white police officers are more frequently acquitted of crimes than black officers and that the education system inadequately serves black youth as they are underrepresented in prestigious career fields such as aeronautics. He also calls for a critical examination of America's "law books" to expose the racism embedded within the criminal justice system (Nas, 2008). "America" effectively undermines claims to color-blindness by highlighting the ways race continues to influence and shape individuals' social experiences and life opportunities.

Nas's commentary on his now untitled album can be mobilized in secondary and post-secondary classrooms to invite white adolescents to interrogate race's role in American society and expose them to an alternative racial discourse that undermines claims to color-blindness.

Within the context of studying "America," teachers can instruct their students to venture into their local or nearby communities, observe social interactions, and draw conclusions about the validity of Nas's challenges to color-blindness. Are black males more frequently surveilled in retail stores than white males? Are black males treated differently in public spaces than white males? Students might also perform research to investigate Nas's assertions about racism in the criminal justice system. Are black police officers more frequently convicted of crimes than white officers? Are black Americans unfairly targeted by the criminal justice system? Such assignments, paired with critical examinations of Nas's lyrics, could help white adolescents see through claims to color-blindness in America by identifying actual instances of racial discrimination in their local communities and the country at large. Though not all white adolescents will necessarily subscribe to Nas's ideology of race and might seek out ways to discredit his claims, challenging their color-blindness is an important first step to helping them understand the ways race continues to structure the social world and impact individuals' life experiences.

Eminem's music also undermines color-blindness, but his racial discourse aims primarily to expose white privilege. Like Nas, Eminem has been a prominent figure in Hip Hop for over a decade, and he continues to hold the spotlight as one of America's most popular rappers. Rather than downplay the significance of his white identity, Eminem often highlights the privileges he receives from his whiteness. For example, in "White America" he raps:

> Look at these eyes, baby blue, baby just like
>
> yourself
>
> If they were brown, Shady lose…
>
> Look at my sales, let's do the math
>
> If I was black, I would've sold half

While many white Americans assert the United States is a color-blind country in which race has no bearing on individuals' opportunities and social experiences, Eminem acknowledges that his whiteness has, more likely than not, played a critical role in his success as a rapper. Rather than adopt color-blindness to justify his participation in Hip Hop, he undermines such an ideology by unmasking his white privilege. Eminem's racial discourse renders whiteness visible as a site of power and privilege and exposes its inconspicuous and often uncontested nature.

Along with his exposition of white privilege, Eminem challenges fixed and discrete understandings of race in his self-representation. According to Rodman (2006), Eminem "manages to perform 'Blackness' and 'Whiteness' *simultaneously*, blending the two in ways that erase precisely the same racial boundaries that White America has worked the hardest to maintain over the past several centuries" (p. 109). Eminem's self-representation demonstrates race's fluidity and destabilizes the notion that there are inherently "black" or "white" ways of acting.

As a white man who was raised in a "predominantly Black Detroit neighborhood" and who often signifies "blackness" in his speech, dress, and body movements, Eminem blurs the lines between "black" and "white" to illustrate that race is socially constructed and maintained (Fraley, 2009, p. 48). His presence in Hip Hop undermines the dominant notion that there are natural distinctions among racial groups and illustrates that human differences often attributed to race are in fact products of socialization.

Eminem's discourse on and representation of race serve as sites where white adolescents can reflect on their racial identities and reconceptualize their own whiteness. Giroux (1997) argues that pedagogies of whiteness begin with "a critical engagement rather than a denial of 'Whiteness'" (p. 299). Eminem's racial discourse provides a model for white adolescents to critically engage their whiteness as he frequently acknowledges and exposes his own white privilege. White youth should be invited to follow Eminem's lead by interrogating their whiteness and investigating its role both in their own social experiences and larger systems of domination. White students might ask themselves, what privileges do I receive from my whiteness? How would my life be different if I was not white? How can I minimize the negative effects of my whiteness? As Chaisson (2004) notes, "Whites becoming conscious of their participation in whiteness is the first step to achieving racial justice and equity" (p. 348). Even if they cannot or refuse to identify white privilege in their own lives, Eminem's racial discourse exposes youth to alternative conceptions of whiteness and encourages critical reflection on race.

While discussions of race and racism are often discouraged in schools, it is imperative that adolescents are provided spaces to participate in open conversations about race and encouraged to develop new understandings of how it functions in society.

While examinations of whiteness can provoke a range of emotions from guilt to anger in white adolescents, both Giroux's pedagogy of whiteness and Eminem's representation of race offer frameworks for whites to transcend the oppressive aspects of their racial identities (Chaisson, 2004; Keating, 1995). Giroux's pedagogy of whiteness defines "racial identities as multiple, porous, complex, and shifting," which he argues "provide[s] theoretical openings for educators and students to move beyond framing Whiteness as either good or bad, racially innocent or intractably racist" (p. 299). Eminem's representation of whiteness provides the ground for white adolescents to recognize the socially constructed and fluid nature of race as he undermines dominant perceptions of racial boundaries as fixed and discrete. Reconceptualizing racial identities as fluid and multifaceted allows white adolescents to view their whiteness through lenses of possibility and optimism. Rather than frame all whites as oppressive, Giroux's pedagogy and Eminem's

representation of whiteness afford space for white youth to rearticulate their racial identities in ways that resist domination and work for the cause of racial justice. Within the context of examining Eminem's fluid racial identity, students could be asked to develop action plans that outline specific steps they can take to build upon on the liberatory aspects of their white identities and minimize the more oppressive features of their whiteness. Performing such an activity would help white adolescents view their whiteness in a more positive light while identifying specific ways they can become more active in the struggle for racial justice.

5. Conclusion

The present analysis merely scratches the surface of Hip Hop's potential to mobilize racially just ideologies and politics in white adolescents, and it should serve as a preliminary investigation of Hip Hop pedagogies of race and whiteness. The dearth of literature documenting Hip Hop's employment in anti-racism curricula necessitates an initial examination of the possibilities for how the music and culture can be used to teach white adolescents about race and racism. With its diverse racial representations and discourses, Hip Hop is a prime location for white adolescents to explore new conceptions of race and interrogate their own whiteness and larger systems of racial oppression, and it must be recognized as such3. The existing research on Hip Hop and white youth suggests, however, that it is necessary to explicitly examine rap music's discourses on and representations of race to mine its democratic and liberatory potential. Independently, Hip Hop has been unable to communicate the intricacies of race to its white audience, and it may encourage color-blindness and acceptance of injurious racial stereotypes in certain settings. With direct and critical inquiry in secondary and post-secondary classrooms, however, Hip Hop has the capacity to expose white adolescents to diverse racial representations and discourses that undermine dominant paradigms of race and invite youth to reflect on how race operates in their own lives and society at large.

While discussions of race and racism are often discouraged in schools, it is imperative that adolescents are provided spaces to participate in open conversations about race and encouraged to develop new understandings of how it functions in society (Lewis, 2001; Castagno, 2008). Hip Hop can serve as a vehicle for such dialogue in secondary and post-secondary schools as it affords counternarratives to America's dominant racial discourse and stereotypical racial representations that are ripe for critical deconstruction. As one of today's most popular youth cultures, Hip Hop is an invaluable pedagogical resource that can be utilized to bridge adolescents' out-of-school literacies with educational investigations of race (Hull & Schultz, 2001). Partially removing Hip-Hop from its consumerist context and inserting it in a more civically oriented arena provides a greater possibility for the music and culture to facilitate meaningful transformation in white adolescents' racial ideologies and politics.

Future scholarship within the present line of inquiry might employ qualitative research to investigate how white adolescents respond to critical examinations of Hip Hop's racial representations and discourses. Some potential questions for future research are: how do white adolescents interpret Hip Hop's challenges of color-blindness? What are the implications of using Hip Hop as a lens to examine white privilege? How do adolescents' ideologies of race change after sustained inquiry of Hip Hop's racial representations and discourses? Investigating these questions would identify some pragmatic implications of mobilizing Hip Hop in schools to teach about race and afford deeper insight into how white adolescents perceive Hip Hop's racial commentary. Though existing scholarship suggests a negative correlation between white youths' engagement with Hip Hop and their understanding of race, the present analysis maintains a positive outlook on the convergence of white adolescents, Hip Hop, and race and calls for further analysis of Hip Hop pedagogies of race and whiteness.

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Notes

1.   While some middle grades teachers could choose to implement the following approaches in their classrooms, the explicit content of some songs and advanced level of the Hip-Hop texts locate secondary and post-secondary classrooms as more suitable sites for these methods.

2.   The more recent controversy surrounding Ross's line from Rocko's "UOENO" that seemingly condones rape also presents an opportunity for educators to deconstruct Ross's song lyrics and examine the inconsistencies between his music, his public assertions, and his actual history with the subjects of his lyrics.

3.   It is important to note here that Hip Hop's relevance in the classroom extends far beyond its use as a pedagogical tool to educate white adolescents about race and racism in the United States and should not be its sole or primary function. It is well documented that Hip-Hop can and has been utilized as a culturally relevant, liberatory, and empowering core of classroom instruction for marginalized youth of color (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2005; Emdin, 2010; Hill, 2009; Seidel, 2011). The present analysis is meant to serve as a supplement to the extensive body of research that demonstrates Hip-Hop's relevance in social justice-oriented educational initiatives.

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

"'Jackin' for Beats'": DJing for Citation Critique

by Todd Craig

"SU GODDESS HANDS," SUHEIR HAMMAD, PHOTO BY CHRIS TINSON

"Funk is the DNA of hip-hop. And sampling is the essence."

George Clinton

Ghostface Killer:

"Nah sun! Lemme tell these niggas something, god: I don't want niggas soundin' like me……on NO album! Knaimsayin? For real, cuz I'ma approach a nigga, for real. I don't want nobody soundin' like me, for real sun. It's bad enuf nigga, I don't want nobody soundin' like nobody from my Clan, man. Keep it real, git'cha own shit man, and be ORIGINAL!"

Raekwon:

"Word up!"

GFK:

"That's all man."

From Ghostface Killer and Raekwon the Chef, "Shark Niggas (Biters)", Only Built 4 Cuban Linx…, Loud/RCA, 1995.

Just letting my brain storm: " . . . there's a breeze in the air that's makin' me think about this joint . . ."

Picture this: about four years ago, you're standing at the launch party of the 2nd edition of your first novel. You're with your peoples who are in attendance. Mr.Len, whose doing a special guest spot for your launch, is killin' his set in APT so ill, that when you're standing outside with two of your peoples, resident DJ Rich Medina opens the door to go to the DJ booth and says "yo Len, I just wanted to say FUCK YOU sun…cuz you're KILLIN' it right now!!!" You speak to Len two days after the party and he tells you an interesting anecdote about how he had gotten a call the next afternoon, as there was a radio personality who was playing the same songs from his set that sounded quite reminiscent of the exact same set order. You've already gotten the word from the day before that the Twitter buzz was CRAZY from that night . . . word on the wire was it was the party of the night. And all you can think is "so Twitter's buzzin' ALL night, but you ain't gon say that's my sun, sun? Yeah, aight…"

At that point, I couldn't deny there was something in the air, a funny type of cool breeze blowin' through the trees that forced me to focus on the fact that this sound was in the air. It was clear to me that somebody was bitin' my sun's style and tryin' to pass it off as his or her own . . . ah, the foulness of it all. Somewhere along the line, people straight forgot that classic Masta Ace line from that classic posse cut entitled "The Symphony" (which, of course, appeared on the legendary DJ Marley Marl's album In Control: Volume 1): "I project my voice so it's right in the crowd/ There's a sign at the door: 'No Bitin' Allowed!'/ And if you didn't read it, I suggest you do so/ or you'll be

stranded, just like Caruso/ Sleep if ya wanna, ga'head, get some shut-eye/ A man broke his jaw tryin' to say what I/ say on the microphone/ you shoulda left it alone/ just for the record, let it be known" (Masta Ace). It only makes me think about the ways in which originality and borrowing have changed based on technology, the Internet and a whole slew of other forces. Masta Ace stated it clearly in 1988. Twenty-five years later, it seems the game done gon' and changed, word. So I sat down to catch it before the wind flipped New England, and started to blow in another way – a different direction, density and temperature.

The Source . . . "that sound comes from somewhere"

In 2013, the wind in the academic air blows a chilly breeze entitled "plagiarism." Flip through any College Handbook and you're quick to find the "Statement of Academic Honesty and Integrity"; it starts in the handbook, appears on just about every forthcoming syllabus (especially in English classes), and becomes more complicated as the idea of "text" jumps off the page and into 21st century Internet and online spaces. For students, this idea is complicated by notions of "summary", "paraphrasing" and "citation" as well as "cut", "copy" and "paste." It seems that students have a blurred and complicated perception of what scholarly research looks like in academia. Scholars like Laura J. Davies, Bill Marsh, Dominic A. Sisti and numerous others continue to push the research and the conversation in regards to the plagiarism debate, and more specifically, how to address and curtail the infamous epidemic. With this conversation in mind, the concept of this article, "DJing for Citation Critique", stems from a few sources. First and foremost, it is important to understand that the history of hip-hop sampling has been referred to throughout various academic texts as a borrowing, a new type of new media composition that is constantly working in the vein of archiving, quoting and citing – paying homage to all those "sources" that come before it and through it.

Alongside the research that positions Hip Hop sampling as a textual borrowing, a second contextual framework guides my concept of DJing-for-Citation-Critique. This framework emanates from Sarah Wakefield's article entitled "Using Music Sampling to Teach Research Skills", in which she explains that "music sampling provides a metaphor for skillful incorporation of quotations . . . discussing, or better yet, playing a sampled song demonstrates to the class how quoted research should be used. The outside material ought to enhance *their* statements and arguments, flowing smoothly rather than standing out" (358-359). Wakefield is able to begin a student-centered conversation by highlighting the example of P. Diddy and his choices in sampling throughout his music career. The third piece of this conceptual framework sits with Alastair Pennycook's work dealing with plagiarism, its connections to Western ideologies with regards to composing and the relationship between authorship, ownership and knowledge. In his essay entitled "Borrowing Others' Words: Text, Ownership, Memory, and Plagiarism", he promotes an alternative view of intertextuality over the archaic black-and-white term called "plagiarism". Pennycook presents an interesting situation in terms of

academic citation with a layered quote where he reads an essay by Morgan citing Ann Raimes who quotes Giroux. When he read the Raimes piece, he sees that Raimes claims she is citing Faigley, who is citing Giroux. When he finds the Faigley source, he sees that Faigley seems to be paraphrasing Giroux; what becomes interesting in this conundrum is when he finds the actual Giroux text as referenced by Faigley in his bibliography:

> *the phrase 'theoretical depth and methodological refinement' does not appear in the Giroux book on the page that Faigley references: (or at least in the copy I looked at). And so, as these words and ideas circulate around the academic community, it becomes unclear quite what their origins are. And does it matter? . . . within contemporary academic writing practices, with layers of citations, e-mail, cutting and pasting, and so on, the adherence to supposed norms of authoriality are becoming increasingly hazy. (Pennycook 216)*

This moment clearly demonstrates a necessity for envisioning texts and citation methods in ways that model an everchanging landscape in English Studies, specifically how we as practitioners approach citation with regards to the 21st century new media writer. Simply put, technology has changed the outlook on citation and paraphrasing; how do we as English scholars begin to help our students envision this issue in a different way – one that reflects the newly-arrived advent of digital technology and cyberspace that complicate the former parameters of the teaching of writing?

Based on the intersection of these three conceptual frameworks, the aim of this article is to explore new ways to frame citation, quoting and plagiarism— all of which can impact English composition classrooms— by exposing us to the utilization and critique of the sampling in which Hip Hop DJs engage. This exposure can, at once, foster a new type of conversation, one that jettisons some of the archaic constraints of plagiarism as a "black and white" phenomenon, but it can also lay part of the groundwork for constructing key elements of DJ Rhetoric and Literacy. What Pennycook so eloquently demonstrates is an idea that appears in the movie "The Pursuit of Happyness". In the film, the protagonist, Chris Gardner (Will Smith), says how in the Declaration of Independence, "Thomas Jefferson calls the English 'the disturbers of our harmony.'" It interestingly demonstrates Pennycook's theories on plagiarism: a Western ideology that constrains, constricts and inhibits students' abilities to find their own voice in writing, as "plagiarism" becomes the disturber of their writing harmonies. With these layered concepts in mind, this article samples these three conceptual frameworks, using Pennycook to further Wakefield's conversation about research skills and Hip Hop sampling.

Since it has been further documented that the Hip Hop DJ has been at the historical forefront and burgeoning of hip-hop sampling, this writing theoretically functions similar to how the Hip Hop DJ both utilizes and critiques sampling. DJ Rhetoric and Literacy through the lens of the Hip Hop DJ allows us to look at this quandary in a different and innovative way. Pennycook's idea of transgressive versus non-transgressive intertextuality has been quite the radical challenge to literature and composition scholars stuck in the engendered and traditional ideologies of plagiarism. However, this complex and organic understanding of intertextuality has been fully manipulated and exploited by the Hip Hop DJ, especially in the categorizing of music with three rhetorical terms: "biters", "jackers" and finally, "transformers". Because the central argument of this article revolves around these three fluid categories, it is evident that the Hip Hop DJ's lens promotes Pennycook's understanding of intertextuality in 21st century literacies in ways that the 20th century notion of plagiarism simply does not and will not work. Complicating the black-and-white of plagiarism to open up a conversation within the new media technologies' creation of the gray areas presents a more fruitful understanding of citation, paraphrasing and quoting for a community of writers. So in order to do this, we need to do a litle work—take this upcoming section as a sample of the samplings.

Lemme find it: ". . . the OFFICIAL 'DITC' Session (Do you REALLY know about that   . . . (?)"

In order to begin, the first thing that must be done is to recognize sampling as a viable means of composition. A quick tour through contemporary academic works will bring us to some important scholars who have already defined the sample. So instead of re-creating the wheel, I will simply sample them.

In his 1991 article "The Fine Art of Rap", Richard Shusterman forges through a quite convincing (and witty) argument positioning an emerging rap music not only as a powerful postmodern form of cultural poetry (with its roots deeply planted in a African-American underclass), but also as fine art. When identifying the role of the Hip Hop DJ in the section "Appropriative Sampling", he shows an early understanding of how "the music derives from selecting and combining parts of prerecorded songs to produce a 'new' soundtrack. This soundtrack, produced by the DJ on a multiple turntable, constitutes the musical background for the rap lyrics [which] in turn are frequently devoted . . . to praising the DJ's inimitable virtuosity in sampling and synthesizing the appropriated music" (Shusterman 614). Two years later in his seminal text, *Black Studies, Rap and the Academy*, Houston Baker not only works toward defining the Hip Hop sample, but also clearly places the Hip Hop DJ in the center of that discourse. Baker shows how Hip Hop DJs would abandon any particular song if they felt that only 20 or so seconds contained the worthwhile music. So with two turntables, two copies of the same record, and some really quick hands, Hip Hop DJs began to sample, or loop, that 20 second beat live. As the technology grew, so did the sampling technique, which included various soundbites and riffs, which demonstrated a unique type of archiving and referencing:

> *The result was an indefinitely extendable, varied, reflexively signifying hip-hop sonics-indeed, a deft sounding of postmodernism. The techniques of rap were not simply ones of*

selective extension and modification. They also included massive archiving. Black sound (African drums, bebop melodies, James Brown shouts, jazz improvs, Ellington riffs, blues innuendos, doo-wop croons, reggae words, calypso rhythms) were gathered into a reservoir of threads that DJs wove into intriguing tapestries of anxiety and influence. (Baker 88-89)

A year later, Andrew Bartlett helps to flesh out the definition of sampling, labeling it as a new form of digital collaboration that entails a dialogue between various pieces of musical soundbites and representations that become overlayed to create a sole 'text': "Sampling in hip hop is not collaboration in any familiar sense of that term. It is a high-tech and highly selective archiving, bringing into dialogue by virtue of even the most slight representation . . . with digital sampling, expropriated material is (often minutely and momentarily) recognizable, yet placed so that it often sounds radically anomalous, especially when the sampled material is overlapped or layered" (Bartlett 647-650).

Jeff Rice brings us full circle to a more contemporary definition of sampling, as the "hip-hop process of saving snippets of prerecorded music and sound into a computer memory. These sounds become cut from their original source and pasted into a new composition" (Rice 454). These sources can be vast: from music, TV shows, speeches, and even video games, all of which are used methodologically to construct a new work based on recontextualized sources or citations (Rice 458). The critical point that Rice later presents that deserves our attention is in his book *The Rhetoric of Cool*, where in the chapter "Appropriation", he states:

> *The mere mention of sampling as a research method tells me to explore hip-hop's usage of digital sampling (inspired by the role DJs play in hip-hop) in order to learn more about how this practice informs rhetoric . . . crying plagiarism has done little to teach writing how appropriation works for various purposes . . . to cry theft is to refuse to recognize the mix's role in new media-based expression and how that role may destabilize rhetorical and pedagogical expectations . . . to teach the mix through appropriation, we have to reject the disciplinary fixation on theft (represented in the general fear of plagiarism— whether that fear is posed as an economic one or a pedagogical one) and recognize that appropriation as mix signifies more than just borrowing texts . . . we become as mixed and appropriated as the compositions we write. (Rice 67-69)*

With this in mind, sampling not only functions as a worthy source of information for composing, but it also lends to a transactional practice, a back and forth interplay between sampling as "text constructing" and the identity of the Hip Hop DJ who "mixes", writes or constructs that text. There is a lineage in the formation of the sampled text; that sonic "text" thus stands as a testament of the musical influences that both precede it and live with it contemporarily. As a form of "new media-based expression", the intricacies of 21st century understanding of the sample cannot be useful in a 20th century context called plagiarism. Rice shows how this lending and borrowing of texts in the sample can be a critical location for students to see intertextuality at work.

Finally, after allowing the academic definitions, I took it to the source to make sure I included the culture I am writing about: Hip Hop. So I called my man Mr.Len: Hip Hop DJ and producer whose worked with Hip Hop artists from Company Flow (as a founding member and DJ) to Jean Grae, Prince Paul to Pharaoh Monch and countless others. When I told Len I was writing this article, we went into one of many frequent extensive conversations about the Hip Hop DJ and sampling. Len put it simply: "Yeah mayn—the DJ was the one who sampled WAY before the producer. That comes from Kool Herc. The true hip-hop DJs sampled based on the name 'DJ'— cuz they Jockeyed the Disc and rode the beat. They would ride that two or three second riff, and stretched it into minutes . . . live!"

What all of these academic and DJ scholars do is not only help us understand the idea of the sample, but place the Hip Hop DJ at the forefront of sampling origins and conversations as a new type of "composer". They also push us towards looking at sampling as a creative way to engage students in the process of composing. What we find in all these texts is the sample being used as re-creation towards the aim of composing but also archiving—the types of quotation and citation sourcing we ask our composition students to do in their writing. These scholars also highlight the importance of the advent of the sample as composition, and with that, Hip Hop culture and pedagogy's "whatever" mentality, that bumps back against a sometimes oppressive and outdated academy that sees composing and writing in simple "black and white" terms: "mainly – either you write it OUR way or it's wrong…you wrote it yourself, or you had to steal it, and NOW you in trouble sun!!!"

Second, we must recognize that just as sampling comes to the table with a rich legacy, so too do the roots of Pennycook's understanding of transgressive versus non-transgressive intertextuality. Around the same time the landscape is being established for the Hip Hop sample, there's another set of records playing from another set of crates in relation to the Hip Hop DJ's "citation critique" contextual framework. Pennycook's notion of intertextuality extends from a movement in recontextualizing, reinterpreting and re-envisioning plagiarism; throughout the 1990's, the scholar who avidly carried this torch was Rebecca Moore Howard. Her overwhelming concern involves reconsidering and revising the notion of the word "plagiarism": from probing students' intentions when deliberating over the individual cases of "patchwriting as academic dishonesty" to completely abandoning the word "plagiarism" because of its negatively engendered and punitive etymology.

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understand the idea of the sample, but place the Hip Hop DJ at the forefront of sampling origins and conversations as a new type of "composer".

In her article "Sexuality, Textuality: the Cultural Work of Plagiarism", Howard lays out a comprehensive history on the legacy of the word (and all that travels with it): "[Plagiarism] is derived from the Latin term for kidnapping, a term whose meaning the Roman poet Martial extended to include not only the stealing of slaves but also textual appropriation" (Howard 479). Howard also illuminates the argument that given the engendered and negatively marred term "plagiarism", along with all its historical and cultural metaphors, meanings and connotations, requires us more so to abandon the term than to actually try to reconfigure its etymology:

> *Gender, weakness, collaboration, disease, adultery, rape, heterosexuality, and property: This whole set of metaphors and associations lies behind every utterance of the word plagiarism, rendering fruitless our pedagogical efforts to teach useful textual strategies and to adjudicate this plagiarism thing…the term plagiarism, denoting a heterogeneous variety of textual activities, is doing cultural work that few of us would deliberately endorse. But notwithstanding attempts (my own included) to redefine that category, as long as the term marks any sort of academic activities, rules, or events, it will continue to do the distasteful, hierarchical work that its metaphors describe, even if some of us eschew or reject those metaphors. (Howard 487-488)*

With this in mind, plagiarism throughout the academy becomes a difficult term to define, an err-filled concept to unilaterally universalize across a disciplinary committee that handles such cases, and an ideal that simply cannot be "washed clean and worn again"; Moore clearly advocates for an extensive "spring cleaning" and a new wardrobe in addressing the concept of "plagiarism".

After cementing her argument in regards to plagiarism, Howard moves forward by offering solutions that might jumpstart the conversation for writers, scholars, English Studies, and the academy at large. She constructs a working draft for a new "academic honesty" collegiate policy (see "Plagiarism, Authorships, and the Academic Death Penalty"), taking into account student motives in cases that could involve various degrees of plagiarism that remove the negative and highly engendered stigma placed on the word. In this document, she deciphers potential student decisions in patchwriting (a source of inquiry for Pennycook in describing certain aspects of intertextuality). As well, Howard writes intertextually—using the scholars from various writing disciplines that have come both before and with her (thus, "a sample of the samplings")—to construct a comprehensive argument for viewing the word "plagiarism" with all its negative metaphors and engendered binary attitudes, and why the prevalent discussion of the word is a Western ideological contortion that should be done away with completely.

Howard introduces a new framework for intellectual and pedagogical conversation in regards to what is necessary in the 21st century for an emerging set of student writers based on all that has come before and through this necessary shift; detailing the large circumference of landscape, spanning over three centuries, involved with an academic and literary conversation on plagiarism becomes Pennycook's intellectual playground in his attempts to set the boundaries on the field where intertextuality can breathe and play. Essentially, the product of her sampling of plagiarism blazes trails for Pennycook's intertextuality sounds.

Because these scholars have advocated for a different view of composing, it makes sense that this leads us to Pennycook's analysis, which requires us to complicate mere "plagiarism" with the idea of intertextuality, where the connection between texts, authorship and knowledge are continuously writing and re-writing each other. The issue is not as simple as "stealing" and theft, but instead, degrees of recycled thoughts and writing to the point where the intertextuality becomes "transgressive"— a violation of the one and/or many sources that may have contributed to the words, ideas or composition a student may present as his or her own.

We now have a sense of the source of our samples and the records required to rock this set. Now we can let a Hip Hop DJ show us what they all sound like with each other.

"Tight, Tight!/ Peace to the ones that DON'T bite!"

How these sound together: In the Midst of the Mix aka R.I.5. Jay Dilla (Ruff Draft)

So approaching this conversation with the Hip Hop DJ's perspective of "biters", "jackers" and "transformers" in mind, Pennycook's notion of intertextuality can help us to further the conversation that Wakefield presents. While she gives her students more extensive examples of P. Diddy and Vanilla Ice, this writing utilizes the philosophies of the Hip Hop DJ to add on and continue a deeper conversation. So instead of Diddy being labeled by students as an artist using "too many samples", DJ rhetoric would speak to this situation by presenting three categories for Diddy's work: Diddy as "biter", "jacker" and finally, as "transformer." After all, it is DJ rhetoric that would speak to the ways in which the practices, modes, methods and cultural critiques of Hip Hop music get defined and classified. Thus, the idea of "biters", "jackers" and "transformers" comes from a categorization the DJ has traditionally made in commenting on and critiquing music.

"Biters" would be considered artists who simply take a loop, disregarding the context the loop comes from and potentially creating a composition that goes completely against the grain of what the original source represents. For example, walking on a crowded college campus, a student named Murv stops me and says, "Hey-that's a cool t-shirt! Where did you get it?" I tell the student, "I got it from a website: www.dontbitemystyle.net— check it out!" A week later, Murv is seen by Lillith wearing an IDENTITICAL

t-shirt. When Lillith asks Murv, "hey-that's a cool t-shirt! Where'd you get it?" Murv's response is "Secret styles…I got it from a undisclosed location I found myself and I ain't tellin' you about it!" Murv has officially become a "biter." He is similar to the DJ who seemed to have snatched up Mr.Len's APT set at the novel launch party.

Wakefield presents an excellent example of chief biter #1 – Vanilla Ice. In her conversation with students, she states "Vanilla Ice, whose 'Ice Ice Baby' includes an obvious backbeat from 'Under Pressure' (Queen/David Bowie) and who denied the similarity, also fits into a lesson where the instructor wants to discourage overreliance on quotation and promote honesty in research" (Wakefield 359). While Wakefield does a good job in highlighting this moment, another aspect of Vanilla Ice that is not present in her work is Ice's complete disregard of the original source in his actual "writing"—as the only time Vanilla Ice was probably "under pressure" was when he denied the sample AND when Suge Knight held him off the hotel balcony by his ankles . . . but alas, I digress. Wakefield's example shows how it is important to reference and cite properly. This can be best described by Pennycook's examination of "transgressive intertextuality" because of

HONDA . PHOTO BY CARLOS REC MCBRIDE

Ice's direct refusal of his original source.

The next category includes "jackers", who can be seen as borrowers or sharers: someone who lifts directly, but is sharing, so never denying where that piece of writing came from. For example, walking through a crowded college campus, I am stopped by Herbie, who says, "Hey man – that's an dope t-shirt! Where'd you get it?" I respond to Herbie with, "a website called www.dontbitemystyle.net – you should check it out!" A week later, Herbie – wearing the same t-shirt in a different color – is approached by Murv. When Murv (our resident "biter") asks, "yo man, where'd you get that t-shirt from?" Herbie is quick to say "I got it from this website, www.dontbitemystyle.net. This dude I met last week put me onto it. You should check it out." While Herbie may have the same t-shirt in a different color, he doesn't deny the source of his knowledge in regards to the website, or who told him about it. "Jackin'" is a concept originally introduced by Ice Cube in his 1990's EP "Kill at Will" on a song called "Jackin' for Beats." The first line of the song: "Gimme that beat fool!/ It's a full-time jack-move!" (Cube), clearly relates to Pennycook's notion of institutional resistance that students can possibly present in their intertextual writing. This song is an intertextual composition, as Cube rocks over various beats

that at the time were hot on the Hip Hop music radar. This idea in practice dates back to DJ Kool Herc and his Caribbean influences. So this process actually demonstrates the vast legacy that Hip Hop has in terms of its musical/cultural roots. Sharing comes from the Jamaica dancehall dub plate and "riddim" mentality, where various dancehall artists share the same beat to create multiple songs. The contemporary example for Hip Hop now would be mixtape culture, which is dominated by "freestyles"—artists rhyming on other artist's beats.

Here, I present three useful examples to help students see both sides of the coin. After sampling from the Isley Brothers' "Between the Sheets", Jay-Z's song entitled "Ignorant Shit" with Beanie Siegel features verses by Jay-Z, who later in the song introduces Beanie Siegel. Two years later, Drake and Lil' Wayne borrow and share from Jay-Z, with a song called "Ignant Shit". This coupling demonstrates Pennycook's intertextuality. Drake borrows the musical composition in the form of the beat, but also shares by referencing Jay-Z at the beginning of the song, by using a very similar conversation in the intro to evoke the original song recorded by Jay-Z and Beans, as well as the actual song structure, where Drake's long verse ends with him introducing Wayne for another long verse (identical to Jay and Beanie). Here, borrowing and sharing differs from biting because the latter source references its predecessor. So Drake makes no discursive and/or rhetorical moves to deny Jay-Z and Beanie Siegel's version of the song; instead, he demonstrates his scholarly prowess in understanding both Hip Hop music and lyricism. So while Drake and Wayne evoke the original, they are able to push the sonic "text" further with their written compositions (which pay homage to those which came before it), but also conceptually, changing the title to "Ignant Shit" to reflect a new persona in regards to music, language and locale. This is a critical staking-holding moment in Hip Hop's cultural economy. "Jackin'" gone well is a chess move: an intricate demonstration of a song's importance to the culture, thus an acute persona in regards to the history of hip-hop culture. "Jackin'" gone wrong is a nightmare: it is based on a checkers-like strategy, which could influence an artist's perception of being knowledgeable and credibility in understanding (or overstanding, depending on how you envision this concept) both the music and culture . . . in hip-hop culture, it leads one to the unwanted category described previously.

While Wakefield presents Diddy and his infamous "this is the remix…take dat, take dat, take dat…that's right!" movement, a more complex example that takes place before Diddy is MC Hammer, with his song "U Can't Touch This", which includes a loop from Rick James' classic soul song "Superfreak". On the one hand, there is CLEARLY a complete difference between Hammer's emcee composition and that of Rick James. One would think, to be blunt, that the Superfreak is indeed touchable. As well, Hammer actually thanks God in a composition where Rick James discusses very unholy topics in his text. However, MC Hammer complicates this idea, as he has credited Rick James as a co-writer of this composition. This example highlights the fine line between "biting" and "jacking" that can be used in student-centered conversations to illustrate

the delicate line between transgressive and non-transgressive intertextuality.

Another, and even more complicated example of jacking can be pulled from popular culture's shunning of a Hip Hop citation. In the recent Nike commercial series with Lebron James entitled "MVPuppets", the Lebron puppet is shown in the barbershop with his teammate Ilgauskas. While they go through a complicated handshake, the song that plays in the background is "The Message" by Cymande: the original source sampled by Masta Ace in his song "Me and the Biz". While Nike is working intertextually, sharing this visual concept from their 1996 commercials for the Anfernee "Penny" Hardaway sneaker campaign, this work was done after Masta Ace shot his video for "Me and the Biz" in 1990: a song where Masta Ace acts as if Biz Markie is on the song, but he is doing a voice mimicking his fellow Juice Crew rapper. In the video, Ace is seen with a Biz Markie puppet, that he works as a ventriliquist. While Nike seems to be borrowing and sharing from themselves, when they use the Cymande song and re-use the puppet concept, they inadvertently evoke Masta Ace, but never reference Ace at all, neither with the Penny nor the Lebron campaigns. While this example demonstrates an "unwriting" of a hip-hop musical legacy in the sense of leaving Masta Ace out of the conversation, it is a fruitful location, and an interesting dynamic to begin a student-centered conversation about the outcome of instances where borrowing and sharing work towards citation, or even malfunction. This example shows a collective memory that does not cite a source and instead writes that source out of a collective history for a population that has for years been a demographic that has kept Nike afloat: the Hip Hop community. Is it sharing? Intertextual transgression? I leave that answer to you and your students in the classroom.

The last category is "transforming". This is a moment where intertextuality works at its best: it lends the writer a new voice through a creative usage of ideas and texts that precede it. The transformative category of sampling within Hip Hop is shown when artists are not only borrowing or sharing, but when they are able to use that intertextuality to transform the initial text of a song in order to create a completely new work, while still archiving and referencing the ideas which they originally were cited from. It is a transactional process, where the borrowing or sharing leads to fresh, innovative and creative ways to express a similar idea from the sample that preceded it. So walking through the crowded college campus, I am stopped by Shawn, who says "Nice Tee my dude! Where'd you git that?" Of course, my response is "www.dontbitemystyle.net—you should check it out." A week later, Murv stops Shawn because he has on a completely different t-shirt that Murv's never seen. So when Murv—resident biter—asks Shawn the infamous question, Shawn gives a unique answer: "I saw this dude who had a No Mas t-shirt on, told me he got it from dontbitemystyle.net. So I went to the website, and they had all sorts of fly gear. So I bought this one, cuz it was different. I haven't seen anyone wit' this one yet!" Shawn's answer epitomizes "transforming." While "jackin' as sharing/borrowing" might use a concept to further a new textual conversation, "transforming" becomes an evolution of the text, an evolution that students should strive towards in their journey between citing various resources and finding their own voice. An example of this is the Snoop Dogg remix of "I Wanna Rock" featuring Jay-Z. This song originally begins borrowing or sharing the introduction of the Rob Base song "It Takes Two." It is a small form of borrowing; however, in Jay-Z's opening verse, he specifically references Rob Base's flow from the original song. Jay's actions represent and demonstrate the act of archiving while also re-creating to present a new type of writing that both highlights the author's new ideas while also archiving the original source from which it is borrowed.

Another intricate example of this work on a global level is Prince Paul's album "Prince among Thieves". When I asked Prince Paul about this album, he described it as a intertextual process: "When I sat [down to write], I wanted to parody every wild movie, or black movie or every movie I've ever seen, and I put in my own thoughts as I wrote it" (Prince Paul). So in writing the screenplay for this album, Paul shows that this album is not only a text, but also a transformative process that shows the intricacies of citing. In this story of Tarik (an aspiring rapper), Tarik uses the Big Daddy Kane "Young, Gifted and Black" instrumental for his demo, which he is presenting to be signed to Wu-Tang's record label. The conversation between Tarik and his best friend Tru starts off with Tru saying, "Yo didn't Kane use that?" Tarik responds with "Yeah, but he didn't flip it like this tho…" Not only does Paul use the beat and reference Kane, but Kane also appears later as a character in the story the album tells. He also transforms "Steady Mobbin" from Ice Cube's "Death Certificate" album for a song called "Steady Slobbin". What makes this album significant is that it functions as a complete text, telling an intricate story with each song. This album is a story (and a "text") because no one song truly stands alone: it is only when you listen to the album from beginning to end that you understand its conceptual nature and how each song in sequential order furthers the complete story of the larger "text." What Paul is able to do is also transformative because the story revolves around the idea of a "Prince among Thieves"—an honorous character amongst biters and crooks. This challenges the way Hip Hop albums have traditionally been composed, as a text that contains elements of research and a variety of citation methods: from sharing and borrowing, to transforming.

"I'ma play wit' dat": Considering where it goes after finding out how it goes .

Still, none of these categories are "permanently fixed." Artists can inhabit any one, or two, or even three simultaneously, or at many points during their careers. What all the examples present is an extension of Wakefield's conversation, and a conduit by which students can begin to understand the importance of the various modes of citation. As well, this composition functions as an intertextual paper, citing various sources to describe each category through DJ literacy by evoking terminology that springs from DJ rhetoric.

In his essay entitled "Intertextuality in the Transcultural Contact Zone", Pennycook reaches his conclusion with a very intertextual moment for describing

the importance of these ideas: "It is precisely here at this point of intertextual engagement, we suggest, that Bakhtin's dialogue and battle for meaning occur, as teachers and students struggle to locate themselves in the constantly shifting transcultural contact zones that characterize today's global universities [and] as students struggle to establish ownership over and investment in the written academic texts they produce" (Pennycook 136). Engaging in DJ rhetoric to formulate a Hip Hop DJ critique can be valuable to helping students understand the idea of citation and referencing; this should be done through the idea of intertextuality, as opposed to a continuous dwelling within the realm of "plagiarism"—the grand disturber of harmony. This conversation will also help students understand the nature of intertextuality, and how being able to identify with the areas of "bitin'", "jackin'", and finally "transforming", can allow for them to find their voice in their own writing (while sampling various sources), as well as understand the severity of issues involving transgressive intertextuality. With this, we give students a new approach in thinking about how they can reference and cite information. And some of the best examples are clearly demonstrated through DJ rhetoric. We will close with three different Hip Hop DJ anecdotes.

When asked about the significance of DJing to writing, legendary female DJ Spinderella stated very clearly "[DJing] is a form of research" (Spinderella), which clearly connects the idea of the DJ's research legacy entitled "diggin' in the crates" to aspects of research in English Composition classrooms. But when asked what advice she would give to new up-and-coming DJs, she makes a relevant point about not only being able to work with the new contemporary technology, but she also urges DJs to heed this beacon call:

> if you really really want to maintain, and challenge yourself and keep your integrity, and [the integrity] of DJing—the art form itself—you'll learn from the beginning. And that's just a really good feeling to say "I'm a DJ and I learned on vinyl and I use vinyl as well". I'm proud to say that I am one of those DJs who learned from the beginning, but even if you're not and you're just starting to DJ today: challenge yourself to do those things, to learn with the origins. (Spinderella)

It is here that DJ Spinderella is not only giving valuable lessons on the importance of research techniques, but she is labeling the range we can see between "biter", "jacker" and "transformer". Essentially, she is expressing the importance of acknowledging the new and contemporary landscape of information (she says later in the interview "I'm knowledgeable enough to have come this far, with 25 years doing it, but I have to say I'm still learning"), while impressing the importance of understanding the foundation of the culture. Thus, there is new writing in the culture of the DJ, but it is constantly influenced by the writing and the sources that have come before it. Sound familiar?

DJ Skeme Richards eloquently put Hip Hop culture on blast when he talked in his interview about the importance of the cultural legacy of Hip Hop, and rightfully preserving it for the upcoming generations. His statement, quite simply:

> new kids aren't digging. They're playing for the now. I'm trying to play for forever Nobody's going back to where it starts . . . nobody's digging for history like that . . . If you ask a MC—if you ask 90's MCs—who was the first person to say "mic check one-two", they can't tell you. It was Melle Mel. But they can't tell you! You know whut I'm sayin'? They can't tell you! (Skeme Richards)

Besides clearly seeing Skeme's passion about the state of Hip Hop's cultural history, he clearly places the DJ's art of "diggin'" in the paradigm of research and then demonstrates the importance of the research and understanding a historical context to socio-cultural moments. In writing, this can be likened to understanding the inherent characteristics of intertextuality, and that within different pieces of writing, there may be other authors and/or scholars whose work and writing are relevant to the conversation.

Finally, an internationally-known Philadelphia DJ by the name of Ca$h Money shared with me the importance of his legacy on both Hip Hop culture, but on DJ culture as well, by explaining the history of the "Battle Style" turntable set-up. In the interview, Ca$h describes why turntables were turned 90 degrees, set up with the tone arm at the top:

> That's MY style. Grand Wizard Rasheen—the guy that I learned from—that's how he used to spin. Why he turned them that way—I guess it was to fit on the table that he had, cuz the table was mad small. When he was teaching me, I just thought that was the way to do it. I seen everybody else doing it the regular way, but I was a little sloppy. My sleeve would honestly hit the tone arm. I learned from Rasheen, and the world learned from me. So you can look at any tape from 1987 on—no one was doing that. I was the only one spinning that way. Everyone was copying off of me, and the people they were teaching, they never told them any different. So they think "oh this is Battle Style." NAH—that's Ca$h Money style. I didn't know anything about putting a patent on anything like that. Who's thinking that? It was just comfortable for me . . . the set up on that "Ugly People Be Quiet" [record cover] was what everybody was trying to be, that set-up. And what's crazy is the turntable companies, that's how they started making the turntables—with the tone arm at the top! That came from me and Grand Wizard Rasheen. (Ca$h Money)

It is here with DJ Ca$h Money, that we can see the entire paradigm of DJ rhetoric focusing on "biters", "jackers" and "transformers" and enacting its practice. From the DJ champions who came after Ca$h, to the pupils

those champions mentored, all the way down to the companies who began producing turntables specifically with the Hip Hop DJ in mind. And it is here where Skeme Richards shows us the importance of the DJ working intertextually, as well as the relevance and significance of the Hip Hop DJ as cultural historian:

> *If you ask any of these kids now: who was the first person to turn a turntable sideways, "Philly Style"? They'll be like "I don't know, that's just the way it's supposed to be done." NO—Ca$h Money started that. It's called "Battle Style" but really, it's "Philly Style". If you ask who the first person was to do a transformer [scratch], and they can't tell you, then it's like "see—you didn't do your homework. You're a DJ, but you didn't do your homework." So I believe in digging, I believe in knowing history. You don't write a book on a subject until you go back in history. If you're into art, you can't just say "oh, I like this" but then you don't know Van Gough's history, or you don't know Picasso's history, or Andy Warhol's history. People aren't diggin' in this generation . . . but we dig. The dudes that have been doin' it, we STAY digging! (Skeme Richards)*

Now can you think of a better way to express these ideas to students? If so, ga'head and make it happen. But if not, let the DJ walk you through it.

Class is now in session.

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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Beautiful Dark Twisted Pedagogy:
Kanye West and the Lessons of Participatory Culture

By Antero Garcia

"HUGGIN' THE BLOCK"   PHOTO BY CARLOS MCBRIDE

Over the fall of 2010, rapper Kanye West reimagined the way music was distributed. He did this by engaging in an online conversation with millions. For the greater part of that year, Kanye West was firmly present on the cultural radar. This was deliberate and done in a way that made his presence, his performances, and his music an ongoing conversation with his fans, with his past, and with a larger network of engaged online participants. Through demonstrating the affordances of participatory culture, West presents a framework for engagement and communication that critical educators can leverage even within the increasingly restrictive space of public education. Though the capitalist practices that led to his album spending more than six months on the *Billboard 200* may not seem like the obvious place to search for liberatory educational pedagogy, I argue that the strategies developed and tested by West offer an important framework for guiding critical consciousness and fomenting action within our classrooms.

As a Hip Hop fan and former music journalist, I often infused my classroom with beats and rhymes. Whether it was the first Lupe Fiasco album encouraging my students to consider the blend between Hip Hop and skateboarder social groups on my campus or formally utilizing classics like Grandmaster Flash's "The Message" and Dead Prez's "Police State" as starting points for literary and critical analysis, Hip Hop played a formative part in my teaching practice. For the eight years that I spent teaching English and ELL courses at a public school in South Central Los Angeles, my classroom breathed Hip Hop as well as music across genres to speak to the diverse youth population I worked with. Comprised of approximately 80% of my students identifying as Latino and 19% as Black and a dropout rate that rocketed above 60%, my school was characterized in the media by stereotypes of a failing school while my students exuded the passion to learn that showed me an optimism in transforming schools. Throughout this teaching time, I can see now how Kanye West's music acted as a through line in my classroom. On a year-round schedule, my first year teaching allowed me to bring in West's infamous 2005 declaration that "George Bush doesn't care about Black people" during a Hurricane Katrina relief telethon. Meanwhile West's singles filtered into my classroom as music played by students or analyzed for various writing assignments. At the time that West revolutionized media distribution and opportunities for pedagogical growth in 2010, I was working with ninth grade students and exploring how mobile devices like iPods could help connect urban youth with civically engaging movements beyond the classroom (Garcia, 2012a).

Just in time to be heralded critically by music publications ranging from *XXL* to *Rolling Stone*, Kanye West's fifth solo album *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* was released in the United States on November 22, 2010. However, even by the time the album leaked through file sharing networks and torrents online, weeks before the official release date, its music was anything but surprising. Via his own music label, G.O.O.D. (Getting Out Our Dreams), West leaked many of the tracks from his album as free downloads during the fall. A matter of a few clicks from his official website yielded more than snippets from the album. Releasing one song each week on "G.O.O.D.

Fridays," responding to challenges and criticism from fans via Twitter, West sustained interest and anticipation throughout the world. In addition to a slew of tracks from the album including the lead single "Power," West released numerous tracks that were subsequently never officially included in the final album. Speculation of what would make the cut drove buzz around *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* rather than speculation about what kind of sound the album would take. By the end of 2010, fifteen different tracks were given away by West, including two of the lead singles from his album: a remix of "Power" and the cameo-filled "Monster." Through use of simple and public media tools like Twitter, West moved popular hip-hop models of marketing beyond traditional mixtape culture and illustrated how participatory culture can help foment profit as well as awareness and social organization.

Moving Beyond the Mixtape

As far as Hip Hop is concerned, the role of mixtapes is one that dates back to the early days of Hip Hop in the late '70s (Westhoff, 2011). Splicing together popular rap verses with unreleased Hip Hop beats, mixtapes were underground commodities traded and sold by the aficionados within an exclusive subculture. Though it has been years since mixtapes were widely distributed as actual cassettes, the concept is still the same; otherwise unreleased or un-cleared samples are released non-commercially. Like electronic music's prevalent use of "white label", unofficial releases (Reynolds, 1999), to help build interest in a track, Hip Hop has incorporated mixtapes as more than underground productions by individuals and part of a larger marketing and distribution ecology. Transitioning from tapes to CDs and now to direct Internet downloads, mixtapes are used by mainstream rappers to sustain interest between album releases. Lil' Wayne, for example, has benefited from a plethora of mixtape releases that have helped garner radio play and online reviews long before his albums are available for media consumers (Westhoff, 2011). No longer are mixtapes simply an extension of the listening experience for rap fans. Instead, they act as previews and major marketing ploys for Hip Hop artists. Additionally, because they are steeped in the history of Hip Hop, they may signal an artist's credibility for some rap fans. However, where the mixtape largely succeeded in previewing a forthcoming album and playing with the expected commercial limitations of what could be released, Kanye West takes the model and deconstructs it.

> *The recognition that today's media consumer is also a media producer means that sustaining interest means responsiveness.*

Instead of the mishmash of 40-70 minutes of free music usually released on a mixtape, West slowly strings along track after track over *months at a time*, responding and changing his music as responses are blogged and status-updated. In one notable example, teen-idol Justin Bieber, upon hearing that Kanye liked his song "Runaway Love" tweeted, "@kanyewest it's not a so what moment for me. I'm 16 and a fan. I'm kinda hyped u are listening to

my stuff. Thank u. Nice sunday morning" (Vilensky, 2010). Shortly afterwards, West responded to fomenting interest from online fans and released his remix of "Runaway Love" featuring both West and Wu Tang rapper Raekwon.

In terms of his album, *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* also built upon mixtape culture by reflecting the practice within the production of his album. The silly mashup of unexpected artists that is typically reserved for mixtapes became a centerpiece for the album: soft-crooning indie musician Justin Vernon of the band Bon Iver is featured prominently in the album's penultimate song, "Lost in the World;" Vernon's lilting voice is paired earnestly with Hip Hop verses. No longer a mixtape novelty, West builds upon accepted underground Hip Hop practices and subverts what is expected within commercial Hip Hop.

Amplification and the Participatory Culture of G.O.O.D. Fridays

Though the mixtape formula was popular in subverting official release dates, West moved from the singular verses and cobbled together mixes of unreleased music to a model that placed agency and music decisions in the hands of his fans. In short, Kanye West released music in ways that utilized the connected culture of social media to invigorate enthusiasm and to build camaraderie with a continually building fan base. Henry Jenkins et al. (2009) describe the ways media as "participatory culture" shift "the focus of literacy from individual expression to community involvement."

Further, Jenkins et al. write, "Participatory culture is emerging as the culture absorbs and responds to the explosion of new media technologies that make it possible for average consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate, and recirculate media content in powerful new ways." West's G.O.O.D. Friday releases, in responding to and encouraging dialogue with his fans, indicate a mass media application of participatory culture for profit. However, the general tenets of participatory culture typically wrest control of media distribution from traditional mass media outlets in ways that empower teens fluent with the tools on their laptops and smartphones.

The recognition that today's media consumer is also a media producer means that sustaining interest means responsiveness. It wasn't enough, for instance, for West to thank Bieber for the Twitter shout out. The voice (and the thousands that followed echoing wishes to see a collaboration between the two musical stars) encouraged participation, remix and playfulness. YouTube is rife with tributes and parodies of West's songs. From a version of his song "Monster" that pays tribute to the food at Taco Bell (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnUKmk5Lz50) to one that is sung by Harry Potter's nemesis Voldermort (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hA7leadDk9g), the digital tools online allow for new forms of participation and engagement. In my own research on how young people may be able to challenge existing power structures and dominant narratives via social tools, I have described the potential of participatory culture as an "amplifying" process (Garcia, 2012b). In the public, persistent spaces of Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, for instance, comments youth

make can be seen by anybody. However, within the educational world, the participatory culture of out-of-school time is frequently stifled by school and district policies that limit socialization (see Frey and Fisher, 2008). Further, like the central argument of this article: that a massively popular, wealthy rapper can provide meaningful pedagogical guidance for critical educators, I have also argued that the mainstream and profit-driven companies like MySpace and Facebook can build important socializing spaces for critical dialogue and student support (Garcia, 2008). Through reimagining his relationship with an audience of millions, West demonstrates ways to challenge traditional power structures—a model that can be forged within today's classrooms.

A year before the Occupy movement would capture America's consciousness and months before the Arab Spring more fully rolled across northern Africa, Kanye West demonstrated the possibilities of social media as tools for knowledge building and sustained interest. Though critical educators should rightfully challenge West's capitalistic intentions, the pragmatic lessons of utility and philosophy with social media should not be disregarded. To date, West's album has sold more than one million physical copies (Recording Industry Association of America, 2013). His follow up tour a year later, co-headlined by collaborator Jay-Z, was the highest grossing Hip Hop tour of 2011, making more than $48 million in ticket sales (Lewis, 2011). To consider West's popularity anything of an underground phenomenon would be ludicrous.

It is important to recognize that West's lyrical content can lead to further disregard for the relevance of mainstream Hip Hop within the classroom. And the public persona that West plays up does little to convince critical educators to consider the possibilities that West represents. When West grabbed the microphone from Taylor Swift to decry that Beyonce did not win a 2009 MTV Award, even President Obama called West a "jackass" (BBC 2009). To be clear, I do not apologize or account for West's actions. Instead, the focus on the rapper's ability to expand the world of Hip Hop and the possibilities for critical educators mean looking beyond these actions; West's resources for engagement and community building offer myriad tools to encourage challenging and critiquing his non-critical work.

Toward a Beautiful Dark Twisted Pedagogy

West's every step in releasing the album, from ludicrous twitter messages to on-air blowups to banned album artwork meant that there was not a day that I was unable to catch up with the latest in the Kanye-verse. In all of these updates Kanye evolved the Hip Hop mixtape to its proper participatory-culture configuration: it is an "always-on" amalgam of music, personality, and hype.

The pervasive nature of Kanye's approach to marketing *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* is something educators can lift. How can we deconstruct classroom pedagogy to move beyond traditional application of emergent technologies? Is it really the best we can do to simply duplicate textbooks and textbook practices when equipping students with iPads and mobile devices? This is essentially reducing the possibilities of screen and

interfaces to a glowing page. Likewise, pedagogy must incorporate the persistent "always-on" nature of West's approach. His persistence and personality are what helped transfer knowledge, interest, and passion for his work. Critical educators, qualms about West aside, must evaluate how this approach may be adopted for classroom use. Teachers should ask themselves, *how is my practice pervasive? How does the work that I do in my classroom transform students' lives throughout the day?*

> **A year before the Occupy movement would capture America's consciousness and months before the Arab Spring more fully rolled across northern Africa, Kanye West demonstrated the possibilities of social media as tools for knowledge building and sustained interest.**

I want to reiterate that what West accomplished was not some secret phenomenon. West made abundant profits from his efforts. At the same time West was mirroring widely adopted digital practices at a highly visible level: responding to tweets, sharing updates, hosting online Q&As and producing video and music content for others are all attributes of what youth can and do easily engage in while online. In essence, West's efforts mimic what young people regularly do on their own. He mimics the literacy and learning practices that take place outside the classroom. For educators, this is also an important reminder: classroom practices should mirror the *real world* settings that students will venture to after leaving our classrooms. Students are already experts in media production and West reminds us to bring in these outside skills.

How can critical educators adjust their teaching practice in light of the work of Kanye West? Perhaps this may not seem the most astutely worded of education-related questions, but a necessary one nonetheless. West makes participating and communicating with fans fun, memorable, and engaging. Classrooms can leverage similar tools to get young people excited, in conversation, and networking globally around classroom content. To be clear, I am not advocating co-opting youth practices within a classroom. On the contrary, I am speaking about a large-scale effort to update the classroom into the kinds of networked ecologies that are utilized for interaction everywhere except for in schools. As Castells (2009) writes, "A network-based social structure is a highly dynamic, open system, susceptible to innovating without threatening its balance" (pp. 501-502).

A Beautiful Dark Twisted Pedagogy is one that envelops students in opportunities to engage with extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. It allows youth to speak back to the content and see work in dialogue. An instantiation of this pedagogy, despite the capitalistic intentions of its namesake, begins with "a dramatic reorganization of power relationships" (Castells, 2009, pp. 502) and funnels classroom agency toward youth. It begins with youth interest and quickly amplifies key concepts that resonate

within a classroom and well beyond. Like West, this shift toward meaningful engagement is one that requires educators to remain attuned to the interests and cultural landmarks of youth culture as entre into dialogues about socially conscious curriculum. The corners of commercialism—video games, music videos on YouTube, series on MTV—are going to function as signals for how young people's attention is being drawn both outside of schools and in classrooms. Instead of merely challenging the messages, images, and intentions of these multimodal texts, this is a pedagogy that can use these as starting places for youth-oriented production. Youth can remix and speak back to dominant texts not solely as classroom exercises but as public statements to be shared in the same social networks that they utilize daily.

In this sense *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* illustrates ways transmedia storytelling (Jenkins, Ford and Green, 2013) and textual play can emerge fluidly with the many digital pathways enabled for youth. Transmedia, as described here, are media products that unfold *across* multiple platforms: a narrative may be told via movie productions, video game plotlines, comic books, and cartoons (as is the case with *The Matrix* series, for example). Instead of looking at a novel as a singular and definitive version of a text, the notion of transmedia allows youth literacies to demonstrate the text as a hub for building upon and collaboration. How can the canonical text taught in a classroom *extend* learning from the context of the Shakespearean era to contemporary social issues for youth. We can see burgeoning examples of this now: a quick search on Facebook and it is clear I can friend dozens of Holden Caulfields and Othellos and Katniss Everdeens: teachers and students alike are using today's tools to extend stories across various forms. These are not concepts presently being taught in teacher education programs and a Beautiful Dark Twisted Pedagogy calls for intentionality in this respect.

West's album ends with the song "Who Will Survive in America," built primarily around an excerpt from a 1970 poem by Gil Scott Heron, "Comment #1." This finds West not only recontextualizing a critique of leftist organizing in the late sixties and seventies for the modern day but also continuing a dialogue between West's and Heron's work that extended across several albums; in 2005, West sampled a different Heron poem for his song "My Way Home"; Heron responded with a sample of West's "Flashing Lights" for his final album, *I'm New Here* in 2010. West builds upon, reinterprets, and engages in conversation with Heron's work. The narrative and melodic dialogue spreads across three albums and invites listeners to rethink the lyrics, music, and context for both works. It is a transformative work that challenges critical new literacies to build upon the notion of the "meme" as an educational possibility (Lankshear and Knobel, 2006).

With memes helping describe quickly spreading, "viral", media across networks, literature on memes often credits Dawkins (1976) with imbuing the term as a unit that spreads cultural content over time. As not merely a delivery system of information, memes effectively *write* upon the world and change it. In their 1987 text, Freire and Macedo describe literacy as a process of reading the

world and then reading the word. It is an order often lost in discussions of Freire's development of critical literacies: cultural, "worldly" experience imbue the process of reading texts. West illustrates how advances in technology allow the world to be written upon and the need for educators to renegotiate their pedagogical stance.

"No one man should have all that power": The Contradictions of Kanye

In the lead single off of *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*, "Power," West raps that "No one man should have all that power." It is a declaration that contributes to West's ongoing braggadocio. However, it is also a quote that is steeped in pedagogical meaning and historical precedent. A near word-for-word iteration of this quote was printed in 1957 in the *Amsterdam News;* a "stunned" police officer, noted about Malcolm X, "No one man should have that much power" (Marable, 2011, p. 128). It is likely that the quote was picked up by West in the 1992 Spike Lee directed biopic, *X.* This would not be the first time that Malcolm X is invoked in West's lyrics. In "Good Morning" West claims he's "like the fly Malcolm X buy any jeans necessary." Both invocations of the civil rights leader point back to the remixing and transmedia literacies that West demonstrates; they are necessary components of Beautiful Dark Twisted Pedagogy. However, I want to also return to the line from "Power" and its implications both for reflecting on West and for classroom practice.

As a self-critique, West's statement points to the problematic ways his performance of the Hip Hop genre upholds individuals and capitalism in boasts that separate fans through recognizable power structures. However, it is a model that West also challenges in content: the song "Power" was shared in multiple mixes before its profitable release on West's album with power and voice distributed (though not evenly) with his fans.

From my own classroom experience, it is easy for critical educators to look at the realm of capitalism and disregard it wholesale; though I secretly indulged in West's music, I would deride it in discussions with my 11th graders. And yet, while the content is a problematic perpetuation of marketing practices, the approaches themselves speak to the ways students are engaging, interacting, and approaching informal learning. Approaching the challenging domain of capitalism with a lens of pragmatic optimism, West illustrates the potential of participatory media as enacted by for-profit companies and illustrates ways these can be harnessed for wholesale social transformation.

Finally, in returning to West's lyric, "No one man should have all that power," it is important to notice that West distributes production, input, and narrative across various platforms with numerous points of input for others. It is a reflection of what radical educators' classrooms *can* look like. The decentralization of the teacher as singular leader within the classroom is neither new nor revolutionary. However, in looking at the ways teacher-leaders, like West, can spark conversation, invite multimodal exploration, and direct connection with the community, the role of the teacher is not diminished as much as it is altered. Perhaps a problematic source for some, in terms of beginning a conversation of how critical pedagogy continues to shift in the 21st Century, Kanye West's work illustrates practices our students are engaged in *everyday*. His work functions as a provocation for a redefinition of pedagogy that addresses the cultural shifts of participatory media. It is messy, problematic, and—in the liberatory possibilities it signals—beautiful. It is a pedagogy of hope for the digital age.

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"PHONE"   PHOTO BY CARLOS MCBRIDE

RADICAL TEACHER

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Sampling an Inner DJ with Hip Hop Hopes: (Re)Writing Immigrant Identities for English Language Learners in Classroom Third Spaces

By Andrew Habana Hafner

AZTEC ACTIVISTS BY MELCHOR RAMIREZ, TUCSON, ARIZONA 2012 PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER TINSON

argue in this paper that inviting Raul's "inner DJ" (karimi, 2006) and his investment in hip hop culture served to (re)negotiate his school identities in ways that produced transformative third spaces (Gutierrez, Rhymes & Larson, 1995; Gutierrez, 2008) that supported his academic writing and a developing critical consciousness (Freire, 1970). This perspective rests in a foundational critical pedagogy that recognizes immigrant ELL students' resistance to dominant discourses of schooling and mainstream American society, and contends that these lived experiences offer productive opportunities for academic development.

Intro

I made the trip to America alone [which] was scary. It took me one month and fifteen days from El Castillo, Provincia Norte, El Salvador to Springtown, Virginia. I was 12 years old when I made my journey to the U.S.A.

Raul was a ninth grader in my intermediate English Language Learner (ELL) writing class when he wrote his immigration narrative of coming to America as an unaccompanied minor journeying north from El Salvador. He moved around the East Coast to stay with different families in the two years before I met him, resulting in interruptions in his schooling, prolonged absences, and only partial identification of his learning needs. During this first year at Cuttersville High School (pseudonym), these struggles continued as he negotiated a schedule of ELL, Special Education (SpEd) and mainstream classes. Raul dwelled on the social margins, often observed to be sitting alone in the cafeteria, sometimes skipping lunch entirely for the refuge of a quieter space in the library, computer lab, or even the safety of the ELL homebase Room L2.

I recall one day after releasing my class to go to second lunch, I found him sitting quietly on the floor in the dark side hallway across from the ELL classroom L2 that lead to the ELL department office. He was hiding beneath his XXL hoodie sweatshirt, hanging barely baggy on his robust frame, listening to reggaeton artist Don Omar on his iPod. After the ritual exchanges of "what's up?" I asked him why he was not in the first half of class. With a familiar blank expression on his round face, over-stubbled to hide his adolescence, he admitted that he got confused about the rotating lunch schedule and went to first lunch by mistake. I invited him to hang out with me in the classroom, which was an opportunity to check in and maybe get some of his overdue work completed. We spent this quiet time listening to music, while he worked on finishing his draft about his "American Dream" of becoming a famous Hip Hop DJ. Although that Hip Hop dream may still be materializing, Raul eventually graduated high school into the reality of the immigrant struggles of work and living in the United States.

This paper interrogates some of the tensions that immigrant ELL students like Raul navigate between their multiple social and cultural identities in school spaces. I

Raul was a ninth grader in my intermediate English Language Learner (ELL) writing class when he wrote his immigration narrative of coming to America as an unaccompanied minor journeying north from El Salvador.

In his essay "how I found my inner DJ" robert karimi *(sic)* (2006) proposes the notion of a "sampled consciousness" as a Hip Hop construct that recasts Hip Hop's fifth element, knowledge of self. karimi argues for this hybrid intersection of Hip Hop literacies and critical literacies in "sampling", which refers to the DJ's artisitry of remixing parts of other songs, beats, lyrics, soundbites, etc. to create new mosaics of sonic art and discursive meaning through a new multilayered aesthetic. karimi explains that a sampled consciousness "is understood to have the power to transform reality"; it is:

a state of (self) being created by the act of sampling different experiences: education, stories, interactions, and observations. The individual takes these experiences, knowingly or unknowingly, and makes them part of their worldview, the way they create/interact. The consciousness is constantly in flux, alternating, adding, subtracting, choosing. Self (being) is being negotiated. We sample, blend, fade in and fade out the various experiences, remixing the self in service to its goal: zeroness. (p. 323)

As such, this third space study investigates the role of a critical pedagogy that engages the spatial practices of Raul's inner DJ by "sampling the words and sampling the worlds" of his immigrant narrative and Hip Hop hopes for a brighter future. Understanding and embracing Raul's inner DJ involves a remixing of his multiple institutional identities and (re)negotiation of his marginalization in schools. Along this line of inquiry, the principal research question explored in this paper is: How do immigrant ELL students (re)negotiate meanings and identities through hip hop discourses to produce third spaces in the secondary writing classroom? In addressing this question, this study aims to map the productive tensions of producing third spaces with students like Raul to co-construct glimpses of his hopeful future, one that strengthens his Hip Hop dreams that are the American Dream, if there continues to be one.

It is an important time in U.S. history to bring together the research, politics and eduction policy of immigrant ELLs, Hip Hop as global youth culture, and critical pedagogy. In the post-911 surveillance and security era, immigrant students, and Latinos in particular, face the growing militarization of southwestern borders, persecution of the undocumented, detention and separation of families, and constitutional struggles over educational rights. Over the last decade, the conservative, well-funded campaigns promoting English-only linguicisms succeeded in eliminating bilingual education in California (1998), Arizona (2000), and Massachusetts (2002). The dismantling of the successful Mexican American Studies (MAS) program in Tucson, Arizona in 2011, despite years of dedicated community organizing and activism, and the constitutional battle in process, is a continued testament to the fierce political and ideological conflicts that play out in and through public education as a site of struggle. These current struggles reiterate that it is imperative to recognize how school spaces and institutionalized roles of teachers and students have the potential to both perpetuate and resist discourses of power that are represented in educational policy, institutional structures, and formal curricula. This study aims to contribute to better understanding and addressing these issues through production of third space for immmigrant ELL students of the Hip Hop Nation.

Hip Hop as third space for immigrant ELLs

This paper contributes to research on immigrnant ELLs through analysis of how Hip Hop culture promotes productive oral and written comunication supported by engaging youth experiences of oppression in academic literacy development. I foreground the critical construct of third space as taken up in one strand of critical language and litearcy research (Gutierrez, Rhymes & Larson, 1995; Gutierrez & Baquedano-Lopez, 1997; Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, & Turner, 1997; Gutierrez & Orellana, 2006) that is particularly important for immigrant students. With an attention to critical discourse analysis of oral and written texts of the ELL classroom (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto & Shuart-Faris, 2005; Bloome & Clark, 2006), this paper builds on Gutierrez's (2008) evolving notion of a "grammar of third space" which focuses on different grammatical, lexical and semantic qualities of discourses of "social dreaming" within a collective third space. Immigrant students are encouraged to think of themselves as "historical actors" to consider how their past experiences and future visions of 'social dreaming' are manifested discursively and textually in teaching and learning spaces of the classroom.

> *It is an important time in U.S. history to bring together the research, politics and eduction policy of immigrant ELLs, Hip Hop as global youth culture, and critical pedagogy.*

In this third space study, I also draw from critical studies of language and literacy (Leander, 2001, 2002; Leander & Rowe, 2006; Moje, Ciechanowski, Kramer, Ellis, Carrillo, & Callazo, 2004; Moje, 2004; Leander & Sheahy, 2004; Wilson, 2004; Wilson, Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000) that have incorporated cultural geographic perspectives on social space (Harvey, 1989; Lefebvre, 1974, 1991; Soja, 1996). In bridging education research on third space and Hip Hop culture, this study contributes in particular to better understanding how immigrant ELL students can identify with Hip Hop discourses (Ibrahim, 1999) and how teachers can draw on these non-school practices for developing academic literacy (Alexander-Smith, 2004; Dimitriadis, 2009; Duncan-Andrade, 2004; Kamberelis, 2001; Mahiri, 2004; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Hill, 2009; Alim, 2011; Osumare, 2001). Petchauer's (2009) literature review of "Hip-Hop Educational Research" categorizes the emerging field as Hip Hop-based education, Hip Hop meaning(s) and identities, and Hip Hop aesthetics. Irby and Hall (2011) also reviewed research literature on Hip Hop to indicate a need for more research that is not from teacher-researchers and by outsiders to Hip Hop culture. They pointed toward new research directions toward "more expansive, penetrative, methodologically diverse studies . . . that capture how personal (e.g. race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, cultural disposition) and professional (teaching experience, educational background, grade level, subject area) identities shape the ways hip-hop pedagogies are implemented" (p. 234). While this is a teacher-researcher study, I contend that this paper still brings more diverse perspectives on Hip Hop culture in education research through new analytical methods and as I situate myself later on as an undocumented immigrant in the Hip Hop Nation.

Design & methods of a third space study

This paper is part of a larger ethnographic teacher-researcher study of a high school ELL writing class that aimed to redefine third space for immigrant ELL students (Hafner, 2012). This ethnographic case study employs methods of 'thick description' of the local research context (Geertz, 1973; Merriam, 1998), while also is guided by principles of critical ethnography that aim to problematize and make transparent the centrality of the researcher in rendering cultural portraits (Carspecken, 1996; Noblit, Floris & Murillo, 2004). I incorporate critical discourse analytic methods (Bloome & Clark, 2006; Fairclough, 1992, 2003) to look at 'micro-ethnographic' events of classroom interactions (Bloome et al., 2005). Data collection following ethnographic methods compiled a broad data set associated with classroom instruction over one school year, including fieldnotes, classroom video and audio, digital images, student work, semi-structured interviews, curriculum materials.

Analysis of these data was conducted through a recursive process of moving from broad theme or content analysis (Merriam, 1998) of field notes, and reviewing video and audio documentation, and other classroom artifacts, and then revisiting theoretical constructs in light of the data. Initial themes surrounding these classroom texts related to tensions surfacing from course content,

classroom participation and discussion surrounding tensions related to multiple social identities. More detailed codes and subcodes were developed to document varying modalities of classroom participation and textual production as they related to negotiating tensions around discourses of music/hip hop, immigration, race and ethnicity, marginalization, and resistance in school. Within identified critical events of classroom interaction, transcripts were reorganized by interactional units, which are a series of conversationally tied message units that entail both specific language as well as contextualization clues (e.g. intonation, pauses, stress, speed, volume, etc.). Interactional units were analyzed in terms of the social moves and social identities that were being projected into the classroom space through discursive moves, and the strategic interactions through material, abstract and experiential fields of meaning making. Critical discourse analysis with an attention to space and time allowed for a mapping of the shifting identities across teacher-student interactions in classroom spaces. Due to limitations in scope and focus, this paper provides only a partial discussion of the broader data analysis and findings that inform this argument.

Building Comm.Unity: Transformative designs for the ELL classroom

Academic and critical literacy development is negotiated around lived experience and negotiated social identities in the classroom third space that was governed by a spirit of Comm.Unity. This was a proposed collective identity that is reflected in the formula: communication + unity = Comm.Unity. Even though I am not a graff writer, a large graffitti-esque poster hung on the wall at the front of the classroom with the sub-text: Comm.Unity: The place where me, we and the world come together. I developed this notion of Comm.Unity previously during a summer school communications course for high school students with learning differences in which I developed a thematic unit around Hip Hop culture and personal expresssion through writing "verse" (e.g. rap) and creating "visuals" (e.g. graffiti). In developing Comm.Unity for a critical pedagogy, I have continued to use this construct in shaping collaborative learning communities in college education and youth development courses, and have increasingly invited students to co-construct and redefine its implications based on context.

Classroom group norms of behavior (in place of rules) were collaboratively generated as guiding social codes that scaffold academic and critical literacy work. This classroom third space of Comm.Unity is characterized by tensions around the academic content, interactional processes and compositional products of academic tasks, which are negotiated from the standpoint of members' diverse worldviews—or cultural, linguistic, religious, class and gendered identities. As a critical pedagogical framework for a diverse group of immigrant ELLs, my notion of Comm.Unity is allied to ethnic studies programs that seek to build students' full humanity, build caring communities, and bridge gaps in building transformative education for teachers and students (Romero, Arce, & Cammarota, 2009; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2011; Ginwright, Noguera & Cammarota, 2006).

The classroom Comm.Unity of this study was an ELL writing class comprised of ELL students in Grades 9-11 with ranges of intermediate proficiency. The class enrollment fluctuated with 12-14 students because of student mobility as some left the area or country and others arrived mid-year. Students represented countries including El Salvador, Ecuador, Thailand, Korea, Cape Verde, Cameroon and Bangladesh. There was a also a range of socioeconomic and class backgrounds of students and their families which reflected the college town of Cuttersville in the state of Northeast (pseudonym). Several students were children of academic professionals affiliated with local higher education institutions, but the majority of students had poor, rural, and working class backgrounds. Most of the Latino students like Raul had migrated in arduous journeys, and some also experienced arrest and detention at the U.S. southwestern borders before relocating to be near extended family in Northeast. Some students were in legal proceedings regarding pending deportation, petitions for legal immigration status, and securing home country passports. There were two teen mothers at the start of the year and four by the end of the year; so discourses of family, culture, and gender roles and identities, for men and women, were also central in the broader data analysis.

Many of these students, especially those with financial needs for family in the United States and/or their home countries, worked heavy part-time or full-time schedules, mostly in the kitchens of local food establishments and fast food chains. During the school year, several students were directly affected by immigration raids on such restaurants, targeted for their employment practices. Some students even skipped work and lost their jobs out of fear of arrest. This context is important to understanding how these third space tensions were integral to the classroom Comm.Unity by engaging students' diverse and multiple identities with attention to lines of oppression of their lived social spaces.

As a starting point for framing third space production in the Comm.Unity, it is relevant to position my own identity in relation to Hip Hop culture alongside Raul's membership engagement with the Hip Hop community. I am a long-time fan who was born along with the birth of Hip Hop and came of age in the Golden Age of Hip Hop. Out of respect, and in recognition of identity politics and claims of authenticity and "the real" (e.g. Forman, 2002), I situate myself on the sociocultural margins of the hip hop community. While I enjoy and appreciate the multiaesthetic arts of Hip Hop culture, and I believe in the power of the fifth element, knowledge of self, I am not one who contributes to cultural production directly. This is significant because it positions me outside the discourse community. By contrast, Raul was actively invested in the Hip Hop community, constantly plugged into the music, working and learning to DJ, wearing Hip Hop styles, producing social space imbued with Hip Hop discourses, and his Hip Hop hopes in writing about the future. Taken as a cultural difference between us, our lived experiences intersected around Hip Hop in ways that allowed for renegotiation of our common identities in school spaces. Irby and Hall (2011) suggest there is a need for new research that engages Hip Hop from the outside. I propose

this study as my remix as an undocumented immigrant of the Hip Hop Nation. I am a hip hop dreamer awaiting immigration reform.

Immigrant identities of a hip hop American Dream

What I am feeling in the USA, is that people can get a lot of opportunities working really hard to make it. But if you are just coming to have fun, it can make you pay the consequence, like getting in jail and being deported or even dying because there is a lot of violence in the best cities.

This excerpt from his narrative provides glimpses of Raul's take on the "American Dream." There is the hope of opportunity and meritocracy that rewards hard work but also the reality that social and cultural adjustments include many potential snares as people strive to get ahead. Raul faced his own struggles during the school year that entailed conflicts with his school obligations, family expectations, and his investment in Hip Hop. Further analysis of Raul's compositions and classroom participation reveals a particularly complex profile of an immigrant ELL student with special needs that becomes marginalized within institutional spaces of CHS, where 8.8% of the sudents were Latino and only 2.2% recorded as Limited English Proficient (LEP).

Raul would fit the deficit-laden label of an "at-risk" student, although his complex learning needs are obscured by intersecting lines of oppression as a second language learner, as an immigrant, as a low-income minority, as an adolescent male of color in America. Excessive absences, accumulated missed work, and failing grades were part of Raul's profile as a struggling student. He was often positioned in school as even further "at-risk" when he got arrested and had to serve a community service probation. Raul's lived experiences in school were greatly structured by his dual institutional designations as a SpEd and ELL student. These two institutional labels get stuck in disproportionate numbers to culturally and linguistically diverse students like Raul (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005; Harry & Klinger, 2006; Klinger & Artiles, 2003). These institutionalized identities, and the official and unofficial discourses that shape them, can have significant impact on tracking immigrant students along educational paths characterized by unchallenging subject matter and low expectations for student achievement (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). As immigrant students are often tracked by low expectations, often stemming from deficit perspectives of Limited English Proficiency, their learner identities can be shaped by a trajectory of frustration and failure rather than success and potential, which can lead to students' disengagement and resistance to school. In addition to the cultural-linguistic diversity of immigrant communities and the influence of varying historical conditions of migration, ELLs are affected by contexts of prior schooling, native language literacies, and divergent experiences across immigrant generations (Harklau, 1994; Matsuda, Canagarajah, Harklau, Hyland, & Warschauer, 2003; Roberge, 2002).

> *Bringing marginalized groups, especially immigrant ELL students like Raul and families from low-income households, further into the center of the educational process is of paramount importance.*

Raul was sixteen years old and in the 9th Grade at the time of data collection. He emigrated from El Salvador in a 3-month journey over land as an unaccompanied child that turned 13 years old along the way. He arrived in the Cuttersville school district for grade 7 when his initial referrals for special education began. He relocated to Virginia where his father was living at the time since his parents migrated separately. However, this proved to be a "lost year" as Raul reportedly had periods of truancy for several weeks at a time. He returned to Cuttersville for Grade 9, when his Individualized Educational Program (IEP) underwent a formal annual review during the course of the study. Some of the details of his "non-specific disability in writing" included problems with generating written language in longer assignments, comprehension of longer reading assignments, retaining and recalling instructions, recalling information in testing situations, and short-term memory problems. A significant clue of narrating his institutional marginalization as a SpEd-ELL student is that the re-evaluation process for his IEP included the frequent backlog in referral and assessment processes, which in this case required a trained bilingual psychologist. Raul was eventually reassessed late in the spring of the school year.

Bringing marginalized groups, especially immigrant ELL students like Raul and families from low-income households, further into the center of the educational process is of paramount importance. Differentiated approaches aimed at academic success for ELLs (e.g. Gebhard, Author & Wright, 2004) in an era of high stakes testing (Orelus, 2010; Pandya, 2011) need to increasingly incorporate critical pedagogies that draw on and interrogate the lived spaces of cultural and linguistic marginalization that are inherent for immigrant youth, and especially those that are low-income, undocumented, and undereducated.

These aspects of Raul's insititutional identities, and their programmatic role in shaping the school spaces he inhabited (including the quiet side hallways), are key to analysis and understanding of tensions he encountered and perpetuated in the classroom. Through closer ethnographic analysis of the broad data set, the chronotope (i.e. time-space construct; Bakhtin, 1986) of "mediating Raul" surfaced where Raul's "(mis)placed humor" during student sharing became a flash point; this was the case during the Comm.Unity Café readings of student compositions at the end of the focal unit. However, in looking more closely at challenges and opportunities in supporting Raul's learning, I also argue in this study that critical interrogation of the chronotope of immigration tied to his investment in Hip Hop culture offer moments of production of third space that generate transformative opportunities for renegotiating student identities in the classroom.

The DJ "doing my dream job"

Raul's social identity and investment in Hip Hop culture, as a discourse community and commercial industry, was his hope to "get my driving license and get a car to became a famous DJ." In the beginning of the school year through the Christmas break, Raul had been helping his uncle on Sunday nights working with him as a DJ in the nightclub despite being underage. As he recounted to me on several occasions, he was exposed to the nightlife both inside and outside the club after hours. As he wrote in his New Years Hopes composition: "I was DJing on December 31ˢᵗ, New Years; I was at the **Pacific Club** (sic) seeing all the people dancing. I felt so good." He underlined and bolded the club name, which could carry many semiotic meanings, but in the least, represents an attempt to literally underscore that he was "doing my dream job." He beamed with smiles and almost giddy pride at sharing with me what it is like to see people grooving to **his** music. He wrote in his immigration narrative later about his hopes in Hip Hop: "It feels really good that I could be famous someday and get a mansion with many kids and a wife." While one can scrutinize such adolescent statements as idealistic day dreams, such hopeful visions for our immigrant students carry our national mythology of an American Dream that is attainable through hard work and dedication. However, as mainstream institutions readily point out, the educational and career pathways in business, law, medicine, or even education, and the trends toward dwindling K12 arts programs, signal ever narrowing opportunities for pursuing that dream by sampling the inner DJ in formal education curriculum.

Ironically, his progress toward these future goals was impeded by his work as a DJ, which became a source of tension and conflict with his familial obligations and school responsibilities. Unfortunately, one incident of his coming home at 5:00 a.m. on Monday morning after DJing on a Sunday night, and coming to school late and unprepared, would eventually be the cause for this dream job to end. This ending was negotiated in the context of an IEP re-evaluation meeting, and while he consented that these interests were in conflict, it is a hard reflection of third space tensions central to this analysis. Up until this incident, I was actively encouraging him to pursue his Hip Hop dreams and encouraging his textual exploration of this identity in writing assignments. The conflict that arose, however, forced me to retreat somewhat to an institutional space of teacher, with principal obligation to his best interests as a student and adolescent who had to refocus priorities and attention to school space.

Following the meeting I addressed the issue with him directly and in private. I explained that I understood how important the experience was because of his passion for Hip Hop music and that it was also a great opportunity to learn the skills of DJing working with his uncle. He recounted that after the club closed that night he was brought along by his uncle to eat with some "crazy" girls, which was accompanied by the sexualized suggestion of his reaction to their dancing style and other social behavior. We discussed directly that even though he loved DJing this was not something he could continue because there is no way he can be ready for school being out so late, and especially the issue of respecting the wishes of his mother. At the end of our conversation following the IEP meeting, Raul admitted to me that he knew it was problematic and he eventually stopped DJing at the Pacific Club.

Reading the world through Hip Hop: 'The government is always cheating'

The tensions of negotiating his DJ identity and investments in Hip Hop discourse communities becomes apparent in a key curriculum unit that was focused on students writing their own personal narrative of Coming to America. The unit began after the national holiday for Martin Luther King (MLK) Day and we had a discussion and viewing of MLK's "I have a dream" speech in which the students discussed the meaning and significance of this civil rights leader, his work and message about the oppression of American history and contemporary politics. Students used this text to identify key nouns such as freedom, hopes, opportunity, and began to make intertextual connections to an immigrant narrative of a female student from El Salvador. This textual model was a significant connection for our many Salvadoran students in negotiating the tensions between home and school discourses. We engaged in textual analysis of the narrative while identifying different genre features of narratives such as descriptive language, simile/metaphor, and use of dialogue with correct punctuation. Students did writing skills work on organizing information by time and sequence, while practicing the past, present and future tense.

Raul's composition from this unit met similar organizational challenges of lost pre-writing and a string of absences set him back in his writing process. One decision I made in this process was to allow him to rework his previous unfinished New Years Hopes essay. In this unfinished work he talked about his dreams of becoming a Hip Hop DJ, so we negotiated how he could continue developing these ideas and incorporate them as the "after" part of his immigration story; the writing process and unit was scaffolded sequentially in before, during and after segments, each with distinct language objectives related to time, verb tense, transitions, etc. As he was behind in the drafting stages, I was concerned that he would not be able to complete the composition. He reinvested himself in that draft and was able to expand his ideas considerably. He evidenced his discourse knowledge and incorporated more descriptive supporting details in defining reggaeton's musical genealogy "from basic beats of hip hop, reggae, dancehall and all the Latino rhythms like bachata, merengue, salsa and cumbias." Aside from the material wealth of musical success so prevalent in discourses of Hip Hop bling bling, his justification relates to dreams of family: "It feels really good that I could be famous someday and get a mansion with many kids and a wife." His cultural identity and pride is a clear motivation for his future success, as he also wishes proudly to become a famous rapper to "defend all my Latin people." This reference clearly illustrates an identification with Hip Hop, and reggaeton, as a discursive form that is a source of community pride. In the concluding paragraph of his essay he connects his musical dreams to the chronotope, or time-

space in Bakhtinian terms (1986), of the American Dream being achieved through hard work. A critical awareness of the tensions between myth and reality of these immigrant discourses is also clear as he comments that "if you are just coming to have fun, it can make you pay the consequences, like getting in jail and being deported or even dying because there is a lot of violence in the best cities." This statement also indexes class position of his lived experience and the space-times of his arduous immigration journey as an unaccompanied youth traveling by land from El Salvador.

Raul's understanding of political themes of Hip Hop discourse such as class politics is evident in an informal interaction in which the teacher is scaffolding the students' own critical literacy and "reading of the world" through Hip Hop. As narrated in the opening vignette, the classroom interaction occurred when the teacher and student had the time and space for a focused exchange over a lunch period when Raul decided to stay in the classroom. The represented interaction below illustrates how the teacher and student negotiate this relationship in immigrant discourses of his Hip Hop hopes and the American Dream. This transcript is an excerpt from the full Hip Hop Hopes (Appendix) that is the basis for detailed analysis of the interactional units (Appendix) that informed the identity mapping diagram presented in the subsequent section.

Transcript: Hip Hop Hopes (Excerpt covering IUs 2-4)

1. Teacher: So when you are talking about your hope related to your music, how does the music make you feel? Why do you love hip hop? Why do you love reggaeton?
2. Raul: I don't know. I just love it.
3. Teacher: Why? You got a reason. This is about you figuring it out.
4. Teacher: Why? What do you love about reggaeton?
5. Raul: Huh? *(Staring at the floor)*
6. Teacher: Why do you love, why do you love music? Why do you love hip hop and reggaeton
7. Raul: I don't know, the beats, hip hop and …
8. Teacher : What does it tell you about the world?
9. Raul: It tells you many things happening in the world.
10. Teacher: Like?
11. Raul: Like, the government is always cheating about us.
12. Raul: That people are from minus class, little class.
13. Teacher: Lower class
14. Raul: Yea, lower class. They just think that we are like nothing.
15. Raul: That's just what I think … and also I like the dance, how XXXX (Spanish). *(breaking into a smile, changing tone).* Yeah. *(sweeping his head to the side)*

The teacher prompts the student to explicitly reflect on the discursive meanings he draws from Hip Hop. When probed for the reason why he loves Hip Hop, the student is not able to immediately articulate a reason (Line 2, 7); although upon second questioning he mentions "the beats" which is a reference to the material aesthetics of pulsing rhythms that drive the dance floor (Line 15) in the work of the DJ. He mentions in later interactions that the reason he loves DJing is because it makes him feel great that people can "come together to my music" which is source of fulfillment and hope for a musical future.

The teacher changes his line of inquiry, however, by asking directly about how Hip Hop discourses are representative of a critical literacy that helps Raul "read the world" (Freire, 1970); "What does it tell you about the

world?" (Line 8). The student responds with a social critique about inequitable class politics and a social position as "low class" that is oppressed by a government that "is always cheating about us" (Line 11), implying his own lived spaces of marginalization and hardship both in his home country and as an immigrant in the United States. Here the community of "us" could refer to the low-income communities in general, or more specifically to the Salvadoran or Latino immigrant community with which he identifies. Fairclough (2003) explains that space and time, co-constituted as space-time, are socially constructed and represented in texts, and also constitute a linking of different scales of social life (Harvey, 1989, 1996, 2006). In this example, the space-time of Raul resituates himself on the margins of these abstract spaces of a global class politics, in which the government does not equally represent the interests of all its citizens equally. His immigrant identity and lived spaces (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996) of his physical migration over land are rooted in material spaces of poverty. After advancing his social critique at a global space-time, Raul repositions himself locally on these margins of political discourse, by qualifying in the subsequent line that this is "just what I think" as if he is not in his place to critique the system, especially not from within the official spaces of the school and classroom. However, the analysis and argument of this paper supports Raul to bring his critical "sampled consciousness" into the classroom as a basis for academic literacy development.

Mapping student identities: Teacher and student (re)negotiating profession and passion

Analysis of this critical spatial event with Raul, the classroom transcript of Hip Hop Hopes (Appendix), lead to an elaborated analysis that was the basis for the identity mapping (Figure 1). Analysis of both space-time scales and temporalities provided clues to later identifying the discursive boundaries of interactional units (see Appendix). I conducted a detailed line-by-line analysis of the transcribed interactions with an attention to the communicative functions of each interlocutor to identify the particular discursive meanings being negotiated and their implications for social identities being animated in classroom space (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, & Shuart-Faris, 2005). I revisited in a recursive fashion each of these different spatial analyses across the transcript, revising and deepening analysis in order to identify discursive boundaries and interactional units. Detailed analysis of interactional units over a 20-page matrix lead to the mapping in Figure 1 of shifting identities of Raul as teacher an student renegotiated immigrant identities in the classroom.

The subsequent interactional units of the transcript show a shift in chronotopes (Bakhtin, 1986) that reflect a discursive movement across time and space. This also affirms the student's musical dreams and positions him and the teacher on equal ground being passionate about their work. These chronotopic shifts and renegotiations of student identity are represented in mapping of space-time shifts. Through the remaining interactional units, we trace a shifting of chronotopes that allows space for diverse student identities to be incorporated in classroom work. In interactional units (IUs) 5-6, it prompts a time-space shift

from the student's Hip Hop hopes of the future to the chronotope of immigration which is the focus of the composition. As the teacher relates the chronotope of the student's personal immigration and his discovery of Hip Hop, the student shifts the time-space stating that Hip Hop music is important to his future. IU7 shows a time-space shift to the present as the teacher prompts the student to reflect on what he can do to work toward this future goal which sets up an invitation to talk about his present activities as a DJ (IU8). With several time/tense shifts, the teacher critiques the immigration myth of the American Dream building discursively on the student's previous reflection on Hip Hop as critical literacy by nominalizing America as a "nobody" that is not going to "show up at your doorstep."

The chronotopic shift of IU8 takes the exchange into the time-space of a Hip Hop club and Raul's current activities as a DJ mixing music. These exchanges within the club chronotope are significant as the teacher prompts the student to reflect on the emotional sensation—the lived spaces—of making people "come together" and "move to my music." This repositions the student as Hip Hop DJ, as an important and central community member in Hip Hop, and as the one who produces the musical space of the Hip Hop dance party. Ironically, the student's sense of importance within the club time-space reflects a principal third space tension of the study: the student's strong investment in Hip Hop, and the teacher's encouragement and attempts to build academic literacy from those lived spaces. Yet, an eventual Hip Hop-home-school conflict re-positions both teacher and student within dominant institutional spaces that discourage the DJ.

IUs 9-11 are also significant in repositioning the student as having valid professional aspirations as a DJ, affirming that making music and making people move is personally fulfilling which is of great importance in choosing a profession that is a "labor of love." The teacher makes chronotopic parallels in asking if students would want a teacher that does not like teaching, to which he answers emphatically "No!" This shift to the chronotope of fulfillment of teachers—and, therefore, myself as his teacher—can also be interpreted as a statement about the current interaction (i.e. Hip Hop Hopes as critical spatial event) as fulfilling and that my relationship with him as his teacher is fulfilling. In making this chronotopic parallel of the DJ and the teacher as having equally fulfilling "labors of love", teacher-student discourse puts the DJ and the teacher on equal professional ground that I argue represents third space production in the classroom. Nevertheless, in IU-12, the teacher quickly shifts back to the present academic task and the time-space of the writing assignment. As it appears that the student has lost the focus on the conversation as scaffolding for his writing assignment, the teacher proceeds to review the key ideas that were discussed, underscoring in particular the emotional reflections of the student on his sense of fulfillment and hope in making people dance and move: "That gives you hope, joy, happiness."
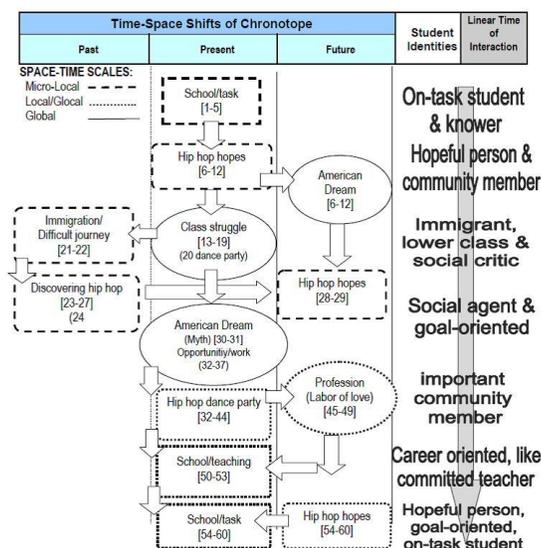

FIGURE 1. MAPPING IMMIGRANT STUDENT IDENTITIES IN CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

Implications

The consistent theme of Hip Hop discourses are prevalent in this study of Raul's multiple identities as seen in analysis of focal data discussed in this paper. These data also illustrate the content themes of his immigrant experience that reflect a first-hand awareness of contexts of poverty and economic and social survival in America and El Salvador, his "two hoods" as he later represented in a visual text for a project on describing place. Murray Forman (2002) draws on Lefebvre's spatial theory (1991) to frame and analyze the inherent spatialities of Hip Hop discourses and the lived spatial practices that shape identity construction of its community members. He writes, "The prioritization of spatial practices and spatial discourses underlying hip-hop culture offers a means through which to view both the ways that spaces and places are constructed and the unique kinds of space or place that are constructed" (Forman, 2002, p. 3).

As data and analysis of the broader study illustrate, Raul's investments in Hip Hop discourses are a prominent situated identity which is layered in his classroom participation in the ELL composition classroom. The tensions that arise in negotiating his Hip Hop identities, and their hybrid mixtures of his ethnic and immigrant identities, present both challenge and opportunity in building investments in his academic literacy and school spatial practices. Textual analysis of Raul's compositions provides an important perspective on how he negotiated the multiple meanings stemming from his academic and personal (i.e. social, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, racial) identities. Situated at the nexus of his student identity as a member of the ELL writing class and as a "struggling" SpEd-ELL student, Raul's meaning-making process involved the constant interplay of participation and resistance in academic tasks largely due to his (dis)organizational problems related to his identified (and unidentified) learning needs. The discursive representations in the focal transcripts evidence how Hip

Hop culture and discourse has offered him a lens of critical consciousness through which he makes meaning of his lived experience; the beats, rhymes and life through which he gains a partial view of the world (Hill, 2009). In addition, attempts to encourage his DJ identity are shown to have important potential for student engagement that builds academic literacy by incorporating his funds of knowledge and lived experience through Hip Hop. His Hip Hop dreams are clearly voiced and narrated in his compositions discussed in the data analysis. Narrative analysis of his work over the school year reveals these consistent chronotopes of his Hip Hop dreams as part of his immigrant hopes. Nevertheless, these findings also illustrate the need for deeper consideration of the tensions of negotiating school identities with his personal identities as an immigrant Latino male, an invested member of Hip Hop culture, and his marginalization as a "low class" person "cheated" by the government, as his words describe.

As a teacher-researcher, I also draw methodological and epistemological implications from this third space study on how teachers' own reflective practice, enacted through our own multiple identities, can both encourage and discourage the development of both critical and academic literacies in the classroom. As a critical teacher-researcher, I aim to engage reflexively in how my own identities influence the production of third spaces, which rests in recognizing and navigating social tensions. Following Solsken, Willett & Wilson-Keenan (2000), my intention is to "disrupt the prevalent dichotomy in research whereby classroom practices are described in terms of either celebration or critique in favor of a more complex view of the necessary interweaving of celebration and critique" (p. 204). I caution that an essentialized conception of immigrant and ELL students has become a substitute for defect perspectives of "low income", "at-risk", "minority", "bilingual/bicultural" students, among other labels. Being critically aware of how we position immigrant ELL students, especially those with SpEd designations, has increasing relevance and intersection across urban and suburban contexts as immigrant populations migrate, relocate, and are resettled to transform the (sub)urban social spaces of schools and communities across the United States. There is a need to look at the cultural, linguistic, and discursive resources immigrant ELL students bring to the classroom, which includes investments in global Hip Hop culture, as well as the need to resist oppressive discourses that inhibit progress and prosperity toward that American Dream. Academic writing can provide that critical spatial praxis (Soja, 1996) that can be transformative for immigrant ELL students, and their teachers alike, as we allow the work of words become the work of transforming our world.

The negotiation of meaning and identities in the production of hybrid third spaces (Bhabha, 1996) as sites of cultural conflict has direct implications for considering school practices, curriculum and texts as colonizing. This implies the need for considering the experiences of immigrant ELLs, and non-dominant students generally, who can experience doubling of consciousness or dissonance between home discourses and school discourses. This dissonance, however, also reveals tensions that can also be mobilized in producing a hybrid social space of cultural production in the classroom. "Thirdspace, then, becomes a productive hybrid cultural space, rather than a fragmented angst-ridden psychological space, only if teachers and students incorporate divergent texts in the hope of generating new knowledges and discourses" (Moje et al 2004; p. 43).

This also entails a balancing of institutionalized power structures not only reified in teachers' roles and responsibilities, but also in how students' cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge (Moll, 1990; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992) are incorporated in the negotiation of academic meanings and identities within a permeable curriculum (Dyson, 1993). The instructional synergy between the content and process of classroom third spaces indicate, however, the need for a respatialization of classroom pedagogy in which teacher and students can relinquish traditional classroom roles, identities and hierarchies. This encourages a redefinition of curriculum as social practice that reframes dialogic instruction that includes and constructs multiple forms of knowing that are rooted in students' lived experiences (Gutierrez & Baquedano-Lopez, 1997).

Outro

Hip Hop as cultural discourse constitutes one of the principal social communities that have points of convergence for the teacher and student, thereby serving as a discursive field for (re)negotiating meaning and participation in the lived spaces of school. The meditations on Hip Hop as a cultural and commercial phenomenon have become more widely prevalent across an array of arts and humanities, and social science disciplines, especially as the musical and discursive permutations of Hip Hop are seen in global spaces and are politically intertwined with social movements and struggles of the oppressed (e.g. M. Dyson, 2003). Hip hop is making its way across the world, in local and global ways, through its main discursive forms, or the four traditional elements, which include rapping, DJing, break dancing and graffiti. The fifth element of knowledge of self, speaks to a Freirean critical consciousness of the social conditions of the oppressed and how one is historically located, with the liberatory goal of positive social transformation. "It [hip hop] provides a sustained articulation of the social partitioning of race and the diverse experiences of being young and black or Latino in North America" (Forman, 2002, p.3).

There is increasing investigation by practitioners and researchers on tapping Hip Hop as popular culture as well as a valued discourse community that finds relevant intersections for building academic and critical literacies, particularly with urban youth of color (Alexander-Smith, 2004; Dimitriadis, 2009; Duncan-Andrade, 2004; Morrell, 2004; Kamberelis, 2001; Mahiri, 2004). Au (2005) provides an intriguing essay on how rap music has engaged in a discursive battle with education, using textual analysis of lyrical discourse that traces lived experiences of alienation and marginalization in school spaces. Nevertheless, invoking hip hop discourses in school curriculum to engage youth of color can quickly fall into the

snares of disempowering ideologies and benign multiculturalism in ways that are reproductive of oppressive structures.

In this study, I aim to engage these discursive tensions in significant ways that are in students' interests and have some contributions to improving classroom practice for immigrant ELLs; yet I too heed cautions of the trap of the "pseudocritical educator" (Macedo & Araujo Freire, 1998) who does not engage the tensions of Hip Hop and its cultural meaning for youth identity development. This shared identity and membership in a Hip Hop discourse community was intentionally reified by me as the teacher at different strategic moments as a means to engage the students in academic tasks. While there was the general interest in tapping students' funds of knowledge in creating a dialogic and permeable curriculum (Dyson, 1993), Hip Hop culture, and Raul's aspirations of becoming a DJ, were particular third spaces I pursued strategically as a means of engaging his student identity through academic writing, building Comm.Unity relationships, and developing a critical "sampled consciousness" (karimi, 2006) in the ELL classroom that has the power to transform realities.

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APPENDIX – Hip Hop Hopes Transcript w/ Interactional Units (IUs 1-12)

Context: During lunch period, when the student (RM) has chosen to spend time working on unfinished composition on New Year's Hopes, which was originally due before the Christmas and New Years holiday break. The student is sitting at the computer station next to the teacher's desk in the front of the room. The teacher is arranging materials near bulletin boards at the back of the

u-shaped classroom desk set-up. Conversation begins from across the room and teacher makes his way to be next to the student as the transcript of classroom interaction begins.

INTERACTIONAL UNIT 1 – Student on-task, teacher moves to scaffold student writing; Student establishes hip hop discourse and interspatial links to future hope

---

T: So what are you working on?

RM: My essay

T: So you are on the computer right now? So, you need help with anything? You got an idea about the pieces?

RM: I am working on my music, my rapping, my hopes *(point to different writing on the computer screen)*

T: There you go.

INTERACTIONAL UNIT 2 – Teacher takes up hip hop discourse and scaffolds student reflection on investments

---

T: So when you are talking about your hope related to your music, how does the music make you feel? Why do you love hip hop? Why do you love reggaeton?

RM: I don't know. I just love it.

T: Why? You got a reason. This is about you figuring it out.

T: Why? What do you love about reggaeton?

RM: Huh*? (Staring at the floor)*

T: Why do you love, why do you love music? Why do you love hip hop and reggaeton

I don't know, the beats, hip hop and …

INTERACTIONAL UNIT 3 – Teacher shifts inquiry to discursive level of hip hop as textual representation of the world; Student signals marginalized as 'low class' and social critique in global chronotope of systemic injustice

---

T: What does it tell you about the world?

RM: It tells you many things happening in the world.

T: Like?

RM: Like, the government is always cheating about us.

RM: That people are from minus class, little class.

T: Lower class

RM: Yea, lower class. They just think that we are like nothing.

INTERACTIONAL UNIT 4 – Student discursively reverts and situates himself on the margins, underscoring his perspective based in lived experience

---

RM: That's just what I think … and also I like the dance, how XXXX (inaudible Spanish). *(breaking into a*

smile, changing tone). Yeah. *(sweeping his head to the side)*

INTERACTIONAL UNIT 5 – Teacher redirects to immigration narrative, proposes/acknowledged an interspatiality of immigration & American dream; scaffolding academic task at hand;

T: So how does that relate to you and coming to America?

T: You came to America, you had a difficult journey.

T: You found reggaeton, you found music

RM: No, well that was already here

T: But you found it. It was something that you found

RM: I think about that kind of music in my future.

RM: That is something that is important to me.

INTERACTIONAL UNIT 6 – Student restates interspatiality of hip hop and his future goals; teacher prompts his reflection on agency in fulfilling mythologized American dream and present activities

---

T: How do you think you can make it part of your future?

T: What do you think you will have to do?

T: Because people always talk about coming to America, there's lots of opportunities,

T: but nobody is going to show up at your doorstep with a record contract.

INTERACTIONAL UNIT 7: Teacher prompts student to think about present activities; recognizes student membership in Hip Hop discourse community; invites student lived experience into school discourse, task.

T: What have you been doing?

RM: I have been trying to mix music;

RM: So my cousin can put it on in his dancing parties

T: So start DJing parties.

RM: I Start djing, yea,

T: And you have a connection, you know somebody that owns a club, so you get to go and dj a little bit.

INTERACTIONAL UNIT 8 – Teacher prompts student reflection on lived space of DJing a dance party (i.e emotional experience, personal fulfillment); repositions student within chronotope of dance party as powerful, influential.

T: What is the feeling that you get when you are out there?

RM: People are dancing, it's so cool. When people can come together to your music. That feels really good.

T: How does that make you feel?
RM: Really good
RM: People enjoy the music, my music
T: You got everybody up there moving and jumping and having a good time.
RM: Yea
INTERACTIONAL UNIT 9 – Teacher recharacterizes the dance party chronotope as 'fulfillment' for a DJ, and constituting a professional aspiration
T: Yea, so that's something that makes you fulfilled
T: So that's something about you making that as part of your profession,
INTERACTIONAL UNIT 10: Shifts to global time-space of having enjoyable work (i.e. labor of love)
T: hopefully we have jobs that we love to do also,
RM: Yea
T: It makes working … right.
INTERACTIONAL UNIT 11 – Teacher uses hypothetical parallel to teaching as a 'labor of love' to validate students' passion, fulfillment as DJ
T: You don't want to have a teacher that hates teaching.
RM: Nooo!
T: because they won't be a very good teacher.
T: So you know, anyway …
INTERACTIONAL UNIT 12 – Shift back to teacher scaffolding writing task with explicit summary of ideas and instruction to include in text
T: So that's something right there. It makes people, when people are dancing –
T: Put that in there!
[RM turns back to computer, puts hands to keyboard to type]
T: That's why I asked you. I didn't ask you because … –right? [T slaps him on the shoulder; slight laughter]
T: [Continues talking to Ss who is facing the computer] We were talking about your life in America and your hopes for your music.
T: What did you just explain to me.
T: You love it when people are dancing. How does it make you feel, right? That's hopeful, what you just told me. When you make people move and dance. That gives you hope, joy, happiness. *(Teacher walks away from student, and student remains seated at computer and typing)*

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Hip-Hop Fight Club:
Radical Theory, Education, and Practice in and Beyond
the Classroom

By Jared A. Ball

BLACK AUGUST POSTER, 2010

Bolekaja! . . . Come on down, let's fight! – Marimba Ani[1]

The press does not exist merely for the purpose of enriching its proprietors or entertaining its leaders. It is an integral part of the society, with which its purpose must be in consonance. It must help establish a progressive political and economic system that will free [women and] men from want and poverty . . . It must reach out to the masses, educate and inspire them, work for equality of [women and] men's rights everywhere. – Kwame Nkrumah[2]

Introducing . . . In This Corner. . .!

Few who have any working knowledge of Hip Hop are unaware of the importance battling plays in all its elements. Emcees battle, DJs battle, graffiti artists battle, dancers battle, everyone battles. Well, not everyone, or at least not nearly enough. If, as has been suggested, "hip-hop journalism" is to be a "sixth"[3] element and "hip-hop scholarship" now a "seventh"[4] element of hip-hop then these elements must also "*Step in the Arena*" or "*Enta da Stage*."[5] As someone loosely affiliated with each of these elements, I have for sometime now thought this necessary but have only really found a home for this argument in my classrooms, as tacit pedagogy. There I have taken advantage of the classroom space to engage this idea as a method of teaching communication studies and of developing a theoretical approach to media studies since 2006. The battle I am interested in furthering is a traditional one, found in any field or any social or cultural movement; it is a political battle, an ideological battle. Yet, we might ask, from what political, cultural or ideological lineage should we draw? What is the nature or goal of our work? With what organization or movement are we connected or how do we define those organizations or movements? While I have not seen or been able to engage these arguments in ways I would like to outside the classroom, I have found them to be welcomed supplements to coursework and bases from which students can gain interest or find involvement in critical, even radical, thinking.

The study or application of Hip Hop as pedagogy is as contested (though still not nearly contested enough) as most fields of inquiry have ever been. Over the last 20 years or so an emergent field of Hip Hop Studies (HHS) has entered the fight for relevancy even as other related fields, such as Africana/Black Studies, that once proposed to study and advance the liberation of Hip Hop's progenitors, struggle for survival.[6] This shift or passage of fields in and out of the dark night of U.S. "higher education" is also indicative of unfinished ideological fights among those within these fields and prefigures similar conflicts to come over the purpose of academia/academics and the relationship these fields have to the conditions faced by those ostensibly under study. I see these fights as necessary aspects of field insertion, co-optation, hierarchies of spokespeople and codification of canons, narrowing of ideological limits, eventual ineffectuality, and the subsequent liberalizing or altogether dismissal loom large on the horizon of predictable outcomes from unchanged systems and structures. Hip Hop then becomes

an avenue in the classroom through which I attempt to engage these concerns, even if in relative isolation, and work to show how Hip Hop continues to reveal the intransigence of colonial power relationships and the particularities of anti-Blackness in our contemporary world. My goal, in its broadest sense, is to have Hip Hop be the conduit through which my students and I can grapple with existing traditions of radical thought and practice.

The struggle to find space in the classroom for often omitted or diminished traditions of radical thought and practice is part of an equally conscious—and overtly stated—goal of having my classroom be an intellectual training ground for future political activists. As will be discussed, this includes the development and application of an Africana Media Theory or Black Radical Media Criticism (AMT/BRMC), as well as the deployment of a Fight Club model of discussion/debate. AMT/BRMC attempts to infuse long-standing traditions of globally situated African radical thought and journalistic practice into, or in contradistinction from, established forms of media criticism and theory with the explicitly-stated goal of opening up space for students to aggressively confront imposed notions of the role or function of media and journalism. Fight Club is a fitting heuristic device suited to these goals as it allows for an energetic, overt and positive confrontation to occur where student and faculty notions are challenged and encouraged toward the evolution of political consciousness, organization and activity beyond the classroom. Fight Club as a method for the inclusion of Hip Hop and AMT/BRMC—or hip-hop as radical theory—also greatly assists the struggle over time, syllabi or curriculum constrictions set by my academic environment.

Fight Club v. Time and Space

. . . I am the inescapable, the irresistible,

The unnegotiable, the unchallenged

I am time

I scroll in measurements, control the elements,

I hold the evidence, I tell the story

I am time

I know no prejudice, I bare no sentiments

For wealth or settlements, I move forward

I am time

You can't recover me, conceal or smuggle me,

Retreat or run from me, crawl up or under me,

You can't do much for me besides serve...

– Mos Def[7]

My attempt at finding time and space for Hip Hop and radical theory in the university classroom has been mitigated by several factors; first, I teach at an under-funded Historically Black College and University (HBCU),

one that is public and itself part of a specifically conservative academic tradition and which is rife with our own version of being academically ghettoized by overwhelmingly persistent 4-4s (4 classes each fall/spring semester) with more than 100 students per semester, full advising loads and horribly uncompetitive pay. All of this leads to the annual decision by departmental leadership that we simply have too many majors (more than 600, by far the largest in our College of Liberal Arts) for me to teach courses outside the narrowly established core needed by the department. Secondly, I teach within a School of Global Journalism and Communication that is experiencing its own traditional struggles of creeping commercialism and hostility between journalist practitioners and academics, and an overall climate of anti-intellectualism, signaled in part by a total disrespect for terminal degrees by those without said degrees who due to their prior professional journalism experience are promoted to positions of departmental and school leadership. However, I argue that neither of these points approaches the impediment that Hip Hop is an expression of colonized communities whose existence can hardly be said to be "welcomed," never mind their full inclusion as subjects or sources of intellectual inquiry in this country's systems of (higher) education. To much of the academic establishment, be that at HBCUs or Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), Hip Hop in all its loud and brash expression conjures uncomfortable memories of the oppressed whose silence has for so long been required.

In 2010 Dr. Brian Sims, professor of psychology at North Carolina A&T, combined the elements of freestyle battling, street corner oratory and radical intellectualism into what he has since then called "Fight Club."[8] Each week people gather, put topics on a board and debate them until, through crowd vote, a "winner" is determined. It has become an effective way to engage many involved in Hip Hop and higher education to develop and harness critical thinking skills and to most importantly test and challenge ideological positions. Building on the approach Sims initiated, I have found Fight Club to be an appropriate description of my own method of teaching that is tied to critiques of traditional Communication Studies courses. Rather than relying on existing communications analysis, I employ a developmental concept, which I call Africana Media Theory/Black Radical Media Criticism (AMT/BRMC). In my view, one of the glaring gaps in Communication Studies is a theoretical approach to media studies whose foundation are historical works of media analysis or journalistic practice that come from the African world/Black radical traditions of political struggle.

However, I also see this method as practice for or as a test of how those of us involved in what is often referred to as "hip-hop activism and scholarship" can utilize the Fight Club as a model for vigorous debate over the precise meaning of these phrases so that we can identify, define and draw some important political lines. What do these debates mean for this period of Hip Hop-based education? And how do the debates impact professors and other professional educators? I consider my pedagogy as an example of the Fight Club model by bringing students into these debates with Hip Hop as the epicenter of critical thought. In this instance, my Fight Club "chalkboard assertion," an opening bell of sorts, begins as follows: "Hip-hop activists and scholars have yet to properly define or even debate their political and ideological positions and this serves to weaken the potential for hip-hop to serve the liberation of its progenitors." Throughout the semester we wrestle with the ideas that emanate from this statement, as it is intended to provoke discussion and serve as a pivot on which many of the course ideas turn.

The previously outlined constraints of meeting core curricular goals means that I am challenged to find ways to merge Hip Hop discourses with standard communications theory. Because Hip Hop is a highly visible cultural form, students connect easily with these efforts as evidenced by how frequently Hip Hop is referenced in students' written work and in-class arguments, which allow Hip Hop to be a conduit through which important societal contradictions can be isolated, identified, scrutinized. Yet, courses I have developed which link these issues more thoroughly such as Hip Hop as Mass Media or Hip Hop and Pan-Africanism, though popular, have not reached the core Communications course offerings.[9] The question then becomes one of method, strategy, and application, to allow Hip Hop to perform its critical function of expressing and explaining the world, or to paraphrase Kwame Ture, aiding "the job of the conscious [which] is to make the unconscious conscious of their unconscious behavior."[10]

As Hip Hop introduces, expresses, and extends a variety of radical traditions, it has also been the platform of choice for many colonized African communities around the world to identify and communicate their struggles and histories. This includes their navigation through social and industrial mechanisms, which continue to constrain the liberatory aspirations of these aggrieved communities.

When it comes to some of the basic tenets of introductory college-level communication studies courses I will use examples in Hip Hop that explain "mass communication," or the technologically mediated dissemination of ideas, by outlining the process through which a song must go in order to be heard via the media technologies of radio, video, printed or online presses and even internet radio broadcasts. For instance, in any given week we can use UrbanInsite.com to look up the top 20 songs as determined by radio airplay or "spins." We can see by individual radio station or national totals what songs are played and how often. From there we can select songs and artists, determine the particular record label and parent company that owns the song and actually chart the process by which that song went from being written and recorded, to being disseminated and monetized. We can chart the process by which issues of copyright and intellectual property are managed, and how media consolidation allow for management of popular culture by charting how three conglomerates owning most commercial rap music feed us their product intravenously through the equally consolidated feeding tubes of radio, television and internet.

For example, on a given week this past summer, Robin Thicke's "Blurred Lines," featuring Pharrell Williams, was the number one song on the radio. It played 3969 times

nationally, slightly down from 4009 times it was played the previous week.[11] The song/artist is owned and distributed by Interscope Records which is itself owned by Universal Music Group, a subsidiary of international conglomerate Vivendi. Using this data opens a discussion of payola, or pay-for-play, which helps to demonstrate the enormous cost of air-time (roughly $1000 per song, per station) devoted to ensuring maximum public consumption.

> ### *As Hip Hop introduces, expresses, and extends a variety of radical traditions, it has also been the platform of choice for many colonized African communities around the world to identify and communicate their struggles and histories.*

In textbook chapters on the music industry or radio, film, even book and magazine publishing, I use hip-hop-based examples to demonstrate corporate consolidation or to challenge claims of "profit motive" for media companies' selection of what will or will not be promoted. For instance, in our oft-used textbook by Straubhaar, et al., *Media Now: Understanding Media, Culture, and Technology,* the authors briefly describe various elements of media economics including "the profit motive," or the need of media companies to produce products that will sell well in order to "recoup their costs" on the production.[12] While this may be a fitting starting point, taking the previous example of how songs go from production to dissemination allows students the opportunity to challenge the simple argument that it is the right of a given artist to make money however little change they bring to the music industry's tried and true method of commodification and consumption. Students come to realize that the largest record companies are often small segments of much larger operations that are important but not essential to financial sustainability or even growth. In 2011, for instance, Universal Music Group, the largest music company in the world, was only 14% of Vivendi's revenue. Sony Music was only 6% of Sony's overall revenue and Warner Music Group was at the time 3% of its parent private equity group's revenues.[13] The argument I make here, similar to arguments made about Rupert Murdoch's willingness to take losses on his press properties, is that the forms of popular culture we are offered are less about profits and more about managing ideas, ranges of debate, and critical thinking. Beyond making money, the industry process of song/artist promotion deeply reflects the function of and process by which propaganda or psychological warfare[14] is conducted through "message force multiplication."[15]

Moving beyond the demonstration of corporate consolidation of the media industry, I also seek to model efforts that counter degrading images and ideas, linking Hip Hop media analysis with social struggles. When, for instance, in 2012 rapper Too Short was broadcast to the world by *XXL Magazine* sharing some dangerously inappropriate sexual advice for teenagers, I, with the help of Rosa Clemente and a quickly-formed "We Are the 44%" collective, launched through social media, was able to shift the discussion not only to one focused on male violence against women but also into an opportunity to openly critique media function and ownership structures.[16] As we revealed, XXL and its content were linked to its parent company Harris Publications, which placed our concerns in a broader context of media consolidation and the imperial reach afforded mostly white, male and interlocked media ownership.[17]

Fight Club, Hip Hop and Africana Media Theory/Black Radical Media Criticism (AMT/BRMC)

I first studied law to become a better burglar. – Huey P. Newton[18]

AMT/BRMC is my attempt to organize existing but disparate works from within the African world that is routinely ignored by most media theory scholarship.[19] It attempts to argue against the exclusion from Communication Studies the works, for example, of Frantz Fanon and how media form part of the "polydimensional" method of colonization,[20] or Claudia Jones's radical feminist journalism which challenged the limitations of Marxism and called into question the "internal colonialism" of Black America, or George Jackson's call for a militant underground press that would promote revolution, at the intersection of media theory and journalism history. Ultimately, I seek to position ACT/BRMC as the standard by which Communication Studies is measured. Beyond that, I also mean to distinguish the difference between more conventional descriptions of critical or radical media theory and AMT/BRMC in a way similar to how Reiland Rabaka draws out the distinction between Africana critical theory and Africana philosophy.[21]

For Rabaka, Africana philosophy is "concerned only with identifying, reconstructing, and creating traditions and repositories for thought of continental and diasporan Africans."[22] However, Africana critical theory, he continues, is "theory critical of domination and discrimination in continental and diasporan African life-worlds and lived experiences."[23] Similarly, I seek to highlight the main differences between AMT/BRMC and dominant media criticism. That is, while there exists no shortage of media criticism or analysis stemming from the African or Black world and, of course, European or White media criticism – including "radical media criticism" – there exists a tendency to discredit African global thought or omit such perspectives altogether. AMT/BRMC attempts, in a distinct fashion, to organize various traditions of African philosophy, apply them specifically to a criticism of mass media and journalistic practice, so as to have them become, as Rabaka continues of Africana critical theory, "critiques not simply [of] imperialism but the anti-imperial theory and praxis of the past… to better confront, contradict, and correct domination in the present and offer alternatives for liberation in the future."[24]

HIP HOP ONE LOVE, BERLIN, GERMANY, OCTOBER 2012
PHOTO BY CHRIS TINSON

In a journalistic sense this is akin to what I've previously identified as the difference between civic or advocacy journalism and what Hemant Shah once coined as "emancipatory journalism."[25] Drawing on Shah's articulation, this refers to a practice that acknowledges a persistent denial of freedom, then naturally eschews notions of "objectivity" as inherently limited and openly calls for radical political organization and activity. In linking this work with hip-hop I have made the case that the development of the rap music mixtape was in fact an early example of anti-colonial and "national" media/journalism development.[26] I argue that as a form of media theory hip-hop often demonstrates the central tenet of AMT/BMRC. From this view, the presence of hip-hop demonstrates a continuing absence of liberation and explicitly, even if unconsciously (hence the development of the mixtape) calls for alternative forms of communication, organization and ultimately action in response to existing conditions. The explicit distinction between the AMT/BRMC approach and most media criticism, even of the so-called "radical" variety, mirrors the distinction between Black or "minority" journalism/media criticism and the open advocacy of radical organization, even rebellion.[27] Hip Hop is a microcosm of the gross exploitation and worsening conditions for oppressed communities and demands (at minimum) a more aggressive intellectual confrontation that moves beyond simply including racially diverse contributors as part of an already narrowly-formed discussion. Beyond simple inclusion there is a desperate need for unabashed, unapologetic media and journalism *produced by* aggrieved communities that identifies these conditions and calls for their total eradication through radical grassroots political organization and movement-building. In other words, AMT/BRMC marks the journalistic difference between the Afro-American newspaper and isolated Black columns in other news outlets, and fully independent platforms such as the Black Panther newspaper historically, or Black Agenda Report in the present day.[28]

When Straubhaar, et. al., discuss the development of the printing press, or the telegraph I include discussions of the rise of the rap music mixtape as Hip Hop's first "national" mass medium. Much as Dan Schiller has described the expansion of the telegraph wire and post office service in the social formation of the United States,

the mixtape helped create and extend a burgeoning Hip Hop "nation."[29] More directly, the history of the rap music mixtape, and even the broader and international origins and applications of the mixtape itself, can be used to explain the internal colonialism suffered by the Black and Latin American communities from which they were produced.[30] The necessity of a mixtape as a primary conduit for a Hip Hop community/nation excluded from or demonized by existing media tells the political and cultural tale of internally colonized communities while explaining the persistent and special relationship mixtapes have to not only Hip Hop enthusiasts in general but particularly Black and Brown communities who form their core. Additionally, as Straubhaar, et. al., give one and a half full pages in their chapter on newspapers to all of the so-called "people of color" or "minority" presses in a sub-section titled "Diversity in the Press," I encourage students to envision the mixtape as a kind of early "Hip Hop press" which eventually developed into an entire wing of what is now called "Hip Hop journalism" or the "sixth element."[31] In extending the woeful attention given to the world's numerical majority, including discussions of the fully omitted radical press traditions (abolitionist, anarchist, socialist, feminist, Black internationalist, etc.), we are able to add important depth to the question of why these presses or forms of journalism were necessary in the past, and discuss why they may still be required in the age of the Internet and rapidly expanding global communications networks.

> *As Hip Hop introduces, expresses, and extends a variety of radical traditions, it has also been the platform of choice for many colonized African communities around the world to identify and communicate their struggles and histories.*

This wider vision is largely possible by simply centering Hip Hop in discussions of other more "relevant" topics in communication studies. Unfettered by the political function of imposed structures, Hip Hop speaks effectively and radically to the conditions of oppressed communities. One simple pedagogical technique is to let students hear, read and see Hip Hop as it actually exists outside of dominant, corporate, colonizing impediments of mainstream media and business. And if there is a benefit to teaching within communication studies it is that the field itself is necessarily interdisciplinary and as such allows for easy and sound (pun intended) connections to or interactions with any number of arenas of thought. Hip Hop is highly interdisciplinary, multi-faceted and comprised of its own diverse but intersecting elements all of which are born of particular socio-cultural, political, historical and geographic contexts. By looking beyond the imposed limitations of traditional Communication Studies discourse, I am able to relate these to topics imposed by departmental structure and, more importantly, to have those avenues of thought

interact with previously established and continuing radical intellectual and activist traditions.[32]

Fight Club, "Hip Hop Activism," and the Classroom

> *Although Hip-Hop itself was born in the early 1970's in the wake of the heyday of the Black Power and Black Studies movements, "Hip-Hop Studies" or the mainstream study of Hip-Hop by Black academicians and journalists generally takes place and shape in the historical context of this later rendition of Black Studies mainstreamed as "African-American Studies." And it is what it is ("Hip-Hop Studies"). Part of a global "Hip-Hop Revolution" it paradigmatically is not. In actual fact, on the whole, it has an ambivalent or adversarial, even antagonistic relationship to Hip-Hop itself... If it is cliché for bourgeois (petit-bourgeois or pseudo-bourgeois) critics to pontificate on "Hip-Hop" and "commercialization" (while upholding mundane bourgeois values otherwise themselves), no commentators of note have condemned (as a "problem") its commercialization in academia or publishing as a "new" and profitable "object of investigation. – Greg Thomas[33]*

The approach that has had the most powerful impact in the classroom is the introduction of students to some of the debates around the popular discussion and definition of "Hip Hop scholarship" and "Hip Hop activism." In the above quote, Greg Thomas has brilliantly summarized my own concern by identifying that much of what has become Hip Hop Studies' canon is a tendency for authors to condemn commercialism while becoming overwhelmingly commercial themselves. Taking as his example seminal "Hip Hop scholar" Tricia Rose's *Hip-Hop Wars*, Thomas writes:

> *What are the perspectives of this Hip-Hop on the rap that Rose recommodifies as "Hip-Hop," on the "wars" or "debates" over Hip-Hop? Moralistically, Rose criticizes her two target paradigms without a hint of the possibility that the paradigm from which she criticizes is a paradigm and one in dire need of criticism itself. For even if the subject at hand were to remain the likes of Nelly and Kanye West, under a less overblown rubric, the evaluation of Hip-Hop and the "commercial" sold in The Hip-Hop Wars would change drastically as soon as the Hip-Hop repressed by it returns to attack exploitation, Western empire and the complicit academic critic with an oppositional perspective or set of critical values, norms and ideals.[34]*

I often encourage students to see the same in much of what has become Hip Hop journalism. In each case "wars" or "debates" are often reduced in focus to the most commercial rappers and the limited ranges of their thought. Rarely if ever, as Thomas argues, is the focus on journalists or scholars themselves and their own largely commercial, narrow, liberal and intellectually or politically debilitating content.[35]
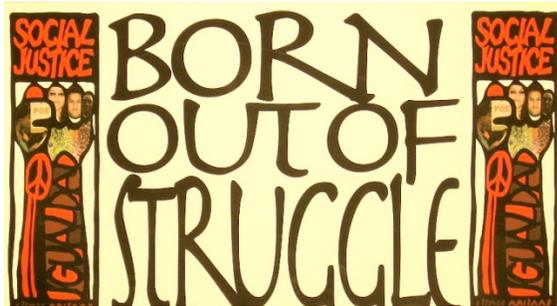
Having these discussions as secondary or tertiary content within different courses and the fact that most students have not read much or any of the developing "canon" of Hip Hop Studies, I provide a few shorter articles and use primarily public media, in particular mine and comrades' radio shows.[36] In this way I introduce students to what I argue are insufficient discussions of the meaning of these phrases (Hip Hop scholarship, Hip Hop activism), the limitations they set as canon, and the often ideologically conservative political positions taken by the most popular spokespeople.

Since the 2008 election of Barack Obama these discussions have centered largely around the tendency among those most popularly referred to as "Hip Hop activists and scholars" to narrow "activism" to Democratic Party electoral politics and the insufficient debate around that fact within an equally nebulously defined "Hip Hop community." The use of mostly radio and selectively chosen archived Internet video greatly assists in introducing students in shorter periods of time to poignant aspects of current debates. In the case of my own radio program or my own involvement in these debates, these media also allow students to experience the extension of the classroom space to a broader public sphere.

One of the teachable moments of this work occurred in March of 2006 when I was invited as a guest on the Michael Eric Dyson show, which formerly aired on Radio One. Prior to my appearance on the show, I wrote a column critical of Dyson's stance as a progressive alternative to rightwing and mainstream media while enjoying frequent and seemingly friendly visits on the show from John McWhorter, a Black representative of the Manhattan Institute's decidedly conservative political agenda.[37] In my conversation with Dyson I argued that McWhorter's appearances weakened Dyson's progressive posture and moreover wasted already limited media space at a time when genuinely progressive news and commentary was sorely needed by Black and Brown communities. In particular I also responded to McWhorter's wholesale and repetitive condemnations of rap music as extensions of his blanket condemnations of Black culture and social behavior all of which was/is devoid of historical or political context or an understanding of how the music industry works or what political state function it serves. Shortly after the article appeared Dyson invited me to debate him and McWhorter. Though I accepted the challenge, I predicted that I would merely be the radical straw man that provided legitimacy to a disingenuous platform of debate.

As a teaching tool, the audio from what would be two appearances on Dyson's program allow for an introduction to some of the key tensions in popular discussions of Hip Hop, as well as examples in the politics of media, interviewing and commentary. Specifically,, the exchange demonstrates the ranges of acceptable political debate as defined by the right-wing McWhorter, who uses Hip Hop as a mechanism for condemning Black culture as the real cause of Black inequality, and Dyson to establish a left

political baseline that legitimizes the right and prevents extensions of the left's position to critiques of planned structural inequality, i.e. colonialism, capitalism, White supremacy. Finally, the exchange demonstrates (my own) poor use of time and argument within the confines of commercial media where time constraints and established norms of the left (Dyson)/right (McWhorter) consensus require skillful and practiced adeptness to overcome. Or as I explain in class, it is not enough to be correct during debate. You must also learn the skill of managing time, staying focused on talking points and being, in this case, radio-ready, clear and engaging. Most importantly, one must become aware of interviewing and debate techniques that rival any skilled propagandist in assuring a message is conveyed with greatest impact on its target audience. Together, my students and I identify areas where debate points were won and lost.

BORN OUT OF STRUGGLE, POSTER, LAWNDALE/LITTLE VILLAGE HIGH SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, CHICAGO 2007

I had initially intended to challenge Dyson and McWhorter on several bases: a) In his criticism of Hip Hop's narrow and debilitating content McWhorter ignored the colonial, corporate process by which songs are selected for popularity assuring that no radical content (so much of what is actually produced around the world) ever reaches its intended audiences and, b) that allowing McWhorter to appear as a regular guest on his program Dyson was disingenuously establishing the boundaries within which these discussions can take place. When he defended his right to have any guest of his choice and argued that he did not fear disagreement, I suggested Dyson drop the Manhattan Institute neocolonial McWhorter and have weekly debates with people to his political left. What happened was more akin to an episode of *The Boondocks*, some kind of faux BET Awards back-stage fight with Dyson descending into rants about his manhood and being unafraid to confront conservatives, and McWhorter being coy, evasive and defending himself by saying that at least his wife liked him, and me ridiculously descending into arguments over footnotes and (accurately if not effectively) equating McWhorter to an intellectual Melvin "Cotton" Smith.[38] After two appearances and two hours I made few of the points I had planned to and, much to my chagrin, allowed both the liberal and conservative viewpoints on the issues to serve as the only legitimate range of argument.

In more serious and clear examples I at times engage students around the development and eventual (for all intents and purposes) demise of the National Hip-Hop Political Convention (NHHPC) of 2004. While many hoped this would be more akin to the 1972 National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana or the beginning of an internally colonized domestic non-aligned movement, it and subsequent conferences ultimately devolved into campaign rallies first for John Kerry and later Barack Obama.[39] I recently revisited this issue on my radio program, which, when used in my class, is for students another opportunity to be quickly introduced to the history of the NHHPC and some of the debates that emerged there around the marginalizing of women and radical politics. From there more current debates are encouraged around the concerns raised earlier about the lack of political clarity of many "Hip Hop scholars and activists," concerns which unfortunately prefigured the largely uncritical support of the "Hip Hop community" for the disaster that has been Barack Obama's two terms.[40]

In addition to the Dyson debates and recent coverage of the history of NHHPC, there is my use of video from a panel convened at the 2011 National Conference for Media Reform (NCMR) in Boston. Panelists, including Rosa Clemente, Mariama White Hammond, Dr. Chris Tinson, and myself, attempted to address these and related issues around "Hip Hop scholarship and activism." One of the many important outcomes of that panel was what I think is the first clear delineation of a distinct "Hip Hop radicals" category. Rosa Clemente coined the phrase, while Tinson and I sought to address some of the troubling trends in popular work around Hip Hop. Most notably emphasis was placed on the diminishing (if not full on erasure) of Black and Latin American radical political traditions that run far left of voting for Democrats. The limitations established and defended by many of Hip Hop's spokespeople meant that even a well-known and established Hip Hop activist like Rosa Clemente could have her 2008 vice-presidential campaign on the Green Party ticket with former congresswoman Cynthia McKinney practically ignored by her own "Hip Hop nation." Encouraged by Hip Hop's "intelligensia," which provided little counter-narrative to the orchestrated and skillful rise of Obama, most were as convinced as the wider public that his election would be transformative. Worse still were the claims that Hip Hop got Obama elected or that he was Hip Hop's candidate because he could make reference to an artist or two.[41]

Let me offer one final example. Recently, Bakari Kitwana, noted Hip Hop commentator and organizer of Rap Sessions, joined my radio program to revisit the debate over the definition of "Hip Hop activism," which provided another teachable media piece.[42] Prior to our conversation on air, he asked me to respond to some questions about Hip Hop activism and found my responses puzzling; in fact, as he said, he was "shocked" to hear that I felt a need for some debates around ideology or political trajectory among those described as part of this Hip Hop activist collective. Specifically, Kitwana found troubling my views that Hip Hop activism has by now become a brand, a euphemism for liberal funding of some "minorities" to ultimately and solely organize themselves to vote for the Democratic party's candidates. Kitwana's acknowledgement of a diverse array of politics within the community, I argued, was not itself evidence that those ideas were equally welcomed, suggested or organized politically by those within these vague categories of "Hip Hop activists and scholars." The wide-array of politics within these communities, including

pan-Africanism, Black nationalism, anti-imperialism, socialism among them, are—as in other fields—overwhelmingly marginalized in favor of liberal electoral politics. For the classroom, however, the most important aspect of these public discussions is that students can hear them debated and be introduced to broader, more radical ideas all within a context of Hip Hop.

The Hip Hop academic and activist debate can function effectively in the classroom by demonstrating the purpose and (often unintended) consequences of debate especially involving educators at the college level. Judging by student responses to the examples, these debates are an exciting break from the norm of most classroom specific exercises. The debate also allows for introductory level students to experience basic media studies concepts such as agenda-setting, framing or gatekeeping and where they can witness how these concepts play out in the context of debating Hip Hop and its relationship to people's lived experiences. For more advanced students the debate allows them to witness the ideological limitations put on popular, commercial media versus the public, community radio format of my own and some of my colleagues' media outlets, and lets them see media theory in practice. This year, for example, graduate students in media theory will read some of the literature, watch and listen to some of these debates and analyze them via conventional (Marxist, Feminist, Critical) and unconventional (AMT/BRMC, Hip Hop Feminism) theoretical angles and will be encouraged to vigorously engage me and each other in a "fight" around my initial assertion that, "Hip Hop activists and scholars have yet to properly define or even debate their political and ideological positions and this serves to weaken the potential for Hip Hop to serve the liberation of its progenitors."

Conclusion: And the Winner Is . . .?

Earlier I stated that I "feel" these debates have been most effective as a teaching tool. This is because to date I am still in the process of measuring the effectiveness of this approach. I, like many of my colleagues, am still engaged in a process of trial and error in developing this approach and developing appropriate tools for measuring its success. Yet, student energy and passion during course discussions, the routine with which these debates and radio-derived teaching tools are referenced in student essays, and the length of time students are willing to spend in post-class conversations that spill over into the hallways and out into the parking lots are a testament to the potency of a Hip Hop centered media analysis. Rarely do our traditional communication studies discussions flourish to that degree.

The Hip Hop academic and activist debate can function effectively in the classroom by demonstrating the purpose and (often unintended) consequences of debate especially involving educators at the college level.

As I reflect on my experiences moving back and forth from the classroom to larger society and back again, I am increasingly cognizant of the political and media environments that seek to locate, destroy, or otherwise thwart the reach of unconventional ideas. And like many activist-scholars, I struggle to find ways to be relevant, which in my case means doing what I can to reacquaint my mostly working-class Black students and communities to the range of their own radical political and cultural traditions. As I frequently remind students, Hip Hop is part of those radical traditions. Observing that fact requires the active use of radical media analyses, especially ones that come from Hip Hop's progenitors and that are overtly concerned with their liberation, in educational settings. My pedagogical approach to these goals is very much akin to the Fight Club model, where a stage is set each week to battle over ideas. By semester's end the "fight" ends as Hip Hop has always intended, with hugs and pounds (which for students translates into grades and graduation), and amicable parting of the ways with the goal of later advancing political organization and struggle. What is more "Hip Hop" than that?

Notes

[1] Marimba Ani, Yurugu: *An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior*, Trenton: Africa World Press, 1994, 1.

[2] Quoted in Herbert Altschull, *Agents of Power*, New York: Longman, 1984, 150.

[3] Raquel Cepeda, *And It Don't Stop: The Best American Hip-Hop Journalism of the Last 25 Years*. London: Faber & Faber, 2004.

[4] Personal communication, a statement made to this author by scholar/emcee Dr. Jason Nichols/Haysoos, March 30, 2013.

[5] Gang Starr, *Step in the Arena* [Album], Chrysalis/EMI Records, 1991 and Black Moon, *Enta da Stage* [Album], Nervous Records, 1993.

[6] Travis Lars Gosa, "Colleges Love Hip-Hop, but Do They Love Black Men Too?" *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 15, 2013. Archived online at: http://chronicle.com/blogs/conversation/2013/02/15/colleges-love-hip-hop-but-do-they-love-black-men-too/. See Also, "HuffPost Live: Is a Hip-Hop Studies Minor Legitimate?" January 16, 2013, archived online at: http://newblackman.blogspot.com/2013/01/huffpost-live-is-hip-hop-studies-minor.html.

[7] "The Hurricane," The Hurricane: Music from and Inspired by the Motion Picture, MCA Records, 2000.

[8] "Fight Club was founded by Dr. Brian Carey Sims in 2010 as a student/community outreach initiative of the first annual Dialogue on Progressive Enlightenment (DOPE) conference at North Carolina A&T State University, and serves as the material response to students wishing to carry DOPE forward as an active means to radically interpret and engage the world to produce progressive, transformative social change. Since then the Fight Club

model has been implemented in various other communities including a student-led effort in Washington, DC (Fight Club-DC) and in Ann Arbor, MI." Quoted from an as yet unpublished essay, "Structured Dialogue in the Black College Classroom," Drs. Brian Carey Sims and Lumas J. Helaire.

[9] I will leave out the long, boring and tedious history of attempts to make such courses part of the core; suffice it to say all attempts failed.

[10] Comments made during a meeting of the Patrice Lumumba Coalition, New York: NY., 1996.

[11] The week running August 4-18, 2013, UrbanInsite.com/charts.

[12] Straubhaar, J., LaRose, R. and Davenport, L. (2012), Media Now: Understanding Media, Culture, and Technology, Seventh Edition, Boston, MA.: Wadsworth, Cenage Learning, p 33.

[13] Ball, J. I Mix What I Like! *A Mixtape Manifesto*, Baltimore, MD.: AK Press, 2011.

[14] "Propaganda" would become "public relations" to avoid the negative connotation the term achieved after the second World War and each have a definition and function that is interchangeable with "psychological warfare." Each share as core to their definition and function the conscious use of techniques to mold the worldview for political purposes of a target audience, individual or mass. For a discussion of "message force multipliers" see David Barstow, "One Man's Military-Industrial-Media Complex," *The New York Times*, November 29, 2008. Archived online: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/30/washington/30general.html?pagewanted=all. For a discussion of the modern-day application of what are largely indistinguishable definitions and uses of "propaganda" and "psychological warfare" see Laura Flanders's GritTV episode, "Maintaining Bush's Propaganda Program?" Archived online: http://blip.tv/grittv/grittv-maintaining-bush-s-propaganda-program-2800627.

[15] For a discussion of "message force multipliers" see David Barstow, "One Man's Military-Industrial-Media Complex," *The New York Times*, November 29, 2008. Archived online: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/30/washington/30general.html?pagewanted=all.

[16] The 44% represents the number of Black and Brown girls sexually molested or assaulted before the age of 18. Public Statement: "We Are the 44%" Coalition Challenges Sexual Violence Against Black and Latina Teens, February 21, 2012. Archived online at: https://www.facebook.com/notes/wearethe44/public-statement-we-are-the-44-coalition-challenges-sexual-violence-against-blac/159855520800028.

[17] To extend the similar arguments made from opposite ends of the political spectrum by Ben Bagdikian on the one hand and Zbigniew Brzezinski on the other and

summarized in Jared Ball, *I Mix What I Like! A Mixtape Manifesto* (Baltimore: AK Press, 2011) pp. 55 and 73.

[18] David Hilliard and D. Weise, *The Huey P. Newton Reader.* New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002, 25.

[19] By African world I mean, diaspora and also mean to include Black or African Americans and the Afro-Latino diaspora as well.

[20] Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, NY: Grove Press, 1964, 35.

[21] See Rabaka, W.E.B. Du Bois and the Problems of the Twenty-First Century: An Essay on Africana Critical Theory (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008).

[22] Quoted in, Bassey, Magnus O. (2007). "What is Africana Critical Theory or Black Existential Philosophy?" *Journal of Black Studies, 37; 914.*

[23] Quoted in, Bassey, Magnus O. (2007). "What is Africana Critical Theory or Black Existential Philosophy?" *Journal of Black Studies,* 37; 914.

[24] Quoted in, Bassey, Magnus O. (2007). "What is Africana Critical Theory or Black Existential Philosophy?" *Journal of Black Studies*, 37; 916.

[25] Jared Ball, *I Mix What I Like! A Mixtape Manifesto.* Baltimore, MD.: AK Press, 2011.

[26] Jared Ball, "I Mix What I Like! In Defense and Appreciation of the Rap Music Mixtape as 'Dissident' and 'National' Communication," *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 5, 2011, 278-297.

[27] See for instance, D. Berry and J. Theobald (eds.). *Radical Mass Media Criticism: A Cultural Genealogy.* Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2006. The only Black voice heard in this volume is bell hooks' and only through the lens of the White author's perspective.

[28] This tradition can be said to run through Freedom's Journal, The North Star, David Walker's Appeal, the journalism of Marcus Garvey's The Negro World and the work of Ida. B. Wells, Robert and Mabel Williams, and through much of the "minority" presses described by Juan Gonzales and Joe Torres in *News For All The People: The Epic Story of Race and the American Media*, London: Verso, 2011.

[29] Jared Ball, "I Mix What I Like! In Defense and Appreciation of the Rap Music Mixtape as 'Dissident' and 'National' Communication," *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 5, 2011, 278-297.

[30] Jared Ball, "I Mix What I Like! In Defense and Appreciation of the Rap Music Mixtape as 'Dissident' and 'National' Communication," *International Journal of Communication,* vol. 5, 2011, 278-297.

[31] Raquel Cepeda, *And It Don't Stop: The Best American Hip-Hop Journalism of the Last 25 Years.* London: Faber & Faber, 2004. This is not to suggest that the content or perspective of this journalism deserves to go unchallenged.

[32] These movements would include anti-imperialist, pan-Africanist, as well as Black involvement in socialist, communist, anarchist and labor movements most of whose intellectual and press traditions are ignored. See, for instance, Juan Gonzales and Joe Torres, *News For All The People: The Epic Story of Race and the American Media*, London: Verso, 2011, John Downing, *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2001 or the earlier press history classic, David Armstrong, *A Trumpet to Arms*. Boston: South End Press, 1981.

[33] Greg Thomas, "Hip-Hop vs. The Bourgeois West … and 'Hip-Hop Studies'?" June 14, 2010, imixwhatilike.org. Found online March 30, 2013 at:http://imixwhatilike.org/2010/06/14/thomasvrose/.

[34] Greg Thomas, "Hip-Hop vs. The Bourgeois West … and 'Hip-Hop Studies'?" June 14, 2010, imixwhatilike.org. Found online March 30, 2013 at:http://imixwhatilike.org/2010/06/14/thomasvrose/.

[35] I have also attempted to make this argument here: "Stand and Deliver: Political Activism, Leadership and Hip-Hop Culture by Yvonne Bynoe" (Book Review) in *The Global Journal of Hip-Hop Culture*, Vo. 3, No. 1, January 2007, and here:"Stealing Empire: P2P, Intellectual Property and Hip-Hop Subversion by Adam Haupt" (Book Review) in *The Global Journal of Hip-Hop Culture,* vol. 4, no. 1, June 2009.

[36] My show, The Super Funky Soul Power Hour airs Fridays 11a-12p on WPFW 89.3 FM Washington, DC. My comrades Dr. Chris Tinson and Carlos 'Rec' McBride do even better and more Hip Hop-grounded work on TRGGR Radio Fridays 6-8p on WMUA 91.1FM in Amherst, MA. as does, JR and BlockReportRadio.com, Hard Knock Radio from KPFA 94.1 FM in Berkley, CA. and DaveyD with Breakdown FM at DaveyD.com.

[37] Jared Ball, "Et tu Michael Eric Dyson? Fraternizing with the Devil," BlackCommentator.com, March 16, 2006. Archived online at: http://www.blackcommentator.com/175/175_dyson_ball_guest_pf.html.

[38] FBI infiltrator of the Los Angeles chapter of the Black Panther Party who aided state officials in capturing, framing and convicting BPP member Geronimo Pratt in 1969. See, Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall*, Agents of Repression*, Cambridge, MA.: South End Press, 1990, 84-87.

[39] "The Non-Aligned Movement is a movement of 115 members representing the interests and priorities of developing countries. The Movement has its origin in the Asia-Africa Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955. The meeting was convened upon the invitation of the Prime Ministers of Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan and brought together leaders of 29 states, mostly former colonies, from the two continents of Africa and Asia, to discuss common concerns and to develop joint policies in international relations. Prime Minister Nehru, the acknowledged senior statesman, along with Prime Ministers Sukarno and Nasser, led the conference. At the meeting Third World leaders shared their similar problems of resisting the pressures of the major powers, maintaining their independence and opposing colonialism and neo-colonialism, especially western domination. The Non-Aligned Movement: Description and History, The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) of South Africa. Retrieved September 15, 2013, archived online: http://www.nam.gov.za/background/background.htm.

[40] "Women Tell Some of the Untold Story of the Rise and Fall of the Hip-Hop Political Convention and Saying 'No' to Clear Channel!" March 15, 2013. Archived online at: http://imixwhatilike.org/2013/07/02/women-tell-the-untold-story-of-the-rise-and-fall-of-the-hip-hop-political-convention/.

[41] "Beyond the Beats: Towards a Radical Analysis of the State of Hip-Hop," a panel at the National Conference for Media Reform, April 14, 2011. Archived online: http://imixwhatilike.org/2011/04/09/beyond-the-beats-towards-a-radical-analysis-of-the-state-of-hip-hop/.

[42] "What is Hip-Hop Activism?" with Bakari Kitwana, October 12, 2012. Archived online at: *http://imixwhatilike.org/2012/10/12/what-is-hip-hop-activism-w-bakari-kitwana/.*

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Syllabus: Hip Hop Theater

By Djola Branner (Hampshire College) and
Priscilla Page (UMASS Amherst)

This course examines the influence of Hip Hop music, dance and visual art on the content and character of contemporary American drama. Primary considerations are identifying this "new" aesthetic, its origins and major players, and exploring the convergence of art, culture, politics and community. We will analyze the works of such theatre artists as Will Power, Renita Martin, Rennie Harris, Kamilah Forbes, Marc Bamuthi Joseph and Universes. We will take a close look at the cultural, social, and political conditions in place at the time of Hip Hop's genesis and consider the political nature of Hip Hop as culture and how and when its political roots are acknowledged by contemporary artists

Course Curriculum:

Chang, Jeff. Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip Hop Generation

Euell, Kim. Plays from the Boombox Galaxy

Week 1

Introductions; Review of Syllabus; What is Hip Hop?

1st Assignment: Each student will bring in something that exemplifies Hip Hop. This could be aural, visual, performative; spoken or written. Limit the presentation to 5 minutes.

Week 2

Share 1st Assignment, Group 1.

Share 1st Assignment, Group 2.

Week 3

Lecture/Discussion - Can't Stop, Won't Stop by Jeff Chang, Chapter 1

Film excerpt: Style Wars

Week 4

Lecture/Discussion - Can't Stop, Won't Stop, Chapters 9 & 10

In-Class Response #1: Last Poets & Gil Scott Heron

Lecture/Discussion - Can't Stop, Won't Stop, Chapter 11

1st Critical Response Due.

Week 5

In-Class Response: "a/coltrane/poem" by Sonia Sanchez and "Black Art" by

Amiri Baraka; Film Excerpt: Style Wars

Lecture/Discussion - for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf by Ntozake Shange (electronic copy)

Week 6

Lecture/Discussion - Can't Stop, Won't Stop, Chapters 18 & 19

"Can You Rock It Like This" by Holly Bass in The Fire This Time, edited by Vivien Labaton and Dawn Lundy Martin (electronic copy)

Peer Review Comments Due

Week 7

Goddess City by Abiola Abrams & Antoy Grant in Say Word: Voices from

Hip Hop Theater, edited by Daniel Banks (electronic copy)

2nd Critical Response: White Chocolate for My Father by Laurie Carlos

Week 8

Spring Break

Week 9

Lecture/Discussion: What is Hip Hop Theater?

"Shango's Mixtape", Introduction to Plays from the Boombox Galaxy by Kim Euell

In Case You Forget by Ben Snyder (electronic copy); group one presents

1st Critical Response, second draft due

Week 10

"Minstrel Reprise: Hip Hop and the Evolution of the Black Image in American Popular Culture" by Jeffrey Ogbar

Welcome to Arroyo's by Kristoffer Diaz; group two presents

Week 11

Preface and Introduction to The Hip Hop Wars by Tricia Rose

In-Class Response: "Blink Your Eyes" by Sekou Sundiata on Long Story Short, Righteous Babe Records, 2000; and "No Black Male Show" by Carl Hancock Rux on Rux Revue, 55 Music, 1999.

"World Wide Hip Hop Art Beyond Borders" by Chang (electronic copy)

3rd Critical Response

Week 12

Low by Rha Goddess (electronic copy); group three presents

The Evidence of Silence Broken by Zell Miller III in Plays from the Boombox Galaxy, group four presents

Week 13

Flow by Will Power in Plays from the Boom Box Galaxy, group five presents

Attend Hip Hop and Theater panel, performance & discussion with Zell Miller III, Curtain Theater

Class Discussion of Panel and Performance

Week 14

"word becomes flesh" by marc bamuthi joseph in Plays from the Boom Box

Galaxy, group six presents

Portfolio (with all course work) and Final paper (10 pages) due.

Hip Hop and Theater Course Bibliography

1.   *Style Wars* produced by Public Art Films, 2004.

2.   Banks, Daniel. *Say Word: Voices from Hip Hop Theater*. The University of Michigan Press, 2011.

3.   Carlos, Laurie. *White Chocolate for My Father in Moon Marked and Touched By Sun* edited by Sydne Mahone. Theater Communications Group, 1994.

4.   Chang, Jeff. *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip Hop*. Basic Civitas, 2007.

5.   Chang, Jeff. *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip Hop Generation*. St. Martin's Press, 2005.

6.   Elam, Harry. *Taking It to the Streets: The Social Protest Theater of Luis Valdez and Amiri Baraka*. University of Michigan Press, 1997.

7.   Euell, Kim. *Plays from the Boombox Galaxy: Theater from the Hip Hop Generation*. Theater Communications Group, 2009.

8.   Forbes, Kamilah. *Rhyme Deferred in The Fire This Time: African American Plays for the 21st Century* edited by Harry Elam, Jr. and Robert Alexander. Theater Communications Group, 2002.

9.   Jones, LeRoi. "The Revolutionary Theater." http://www.nathanielturner.com/revolutionarytheatre.htm

10. Jones, Omi Osun Joni L., Lisa Moore and Sharon Bridgforth. *Experiments in a Jazz Aesthetic: Art, Activism, Academia, and the Austin Project*. University of Texas Press, 2010.

11. Ogbar, Jeffrey O. G. *Hip Hop Revolution: The Culture and Politics of Rap*. University Press of Kansas, 2007.

12. Rose, Tricia. *The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop and Why It Matters*. Basic Books, 2008.

13. Rux, Carl Hancock. *Rux Revue*. 55 MUSIC, 1999.

14. Sanchez, Sonia. *Homegirls and Handgrenades*. Thunder's Mouth Press, 1984.

15. Sapp, Steven and Mildred Ruiz. Slanguage in *The Fire This Time: African American Plays for the 21st Century* edited by Harry Elam, Jr. and Robert Alexander. Theater Communications Group, 2002.

16. Scott-Heron, Gil. *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*. Bluebird/RCA, 1988.

17. Sundiata, Sekou. *Long Story Short*. Righteous Babe Records, 2000.

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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Hip Hop Syllabus: AME/MUS 303
Hip Hop:
Art, Culture, and Politics

By Sarah Hentges

*SEE NOTE

"Hip-Hop is More than Just Music to Me. It's the vehicle I hope will someday lead us to change."

—Gwendolyn Pough, Check It While I Wreck It

Hip is to know

It's a form of intelligence

To be hip is to be update and relevant

Hop is a form of movement

You can't just observe a hop

You gotta hop up and do it…

—KRS-One and Marley Marl, "Hip Hop Lives"

"I love the art of hip hop, I don't always love the message . . . Art can't just be a rear view mirror—it should have a headlight out there, according to where we need to go."

—Jay-Z fan, American President Barack Obama

University of Maine at Augusta

College of Arts & Sciences

Professor Sarah Hentges

sarah.hentges@maine.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Hip Hop is an umbrella term for art, music, dance, literature, identity, style and politics. We will begin to understand the art, culture, and politics of Hip Hop by looking at the movements and politics that inspired the birth of Hip Hop as a form of art and music. We will consider the art and aesthetics of Hip Hop and the musical styles that made Hip Hop music possible. Students will create a piece of art or music inspired by Hip Hop. The ways in which Hip Hop speaks to youth and speaks about oppression, violence, identity, culture, and power will also be considered. We will then explore Hip Hop as a form of cultural politics and activism toward social justice. Students will create art or music toward Hip Hop inspired social justice. Finally, we'll consider the possibilities of a Hip Hop future. 3 credits. Prerequisite: AME 201 OR MUS XXX OR ENG 102 OR permission of instructor.

COURSE THEME

The colloquium theme chosen for the 2011-2012 school year is revolution. This theme is fitting to the subject, motives, forms, critiques and actions inspired by Hip Hop. Thus, we will consider the revolutionary aspects of Hip Hop (as well as the challenges to Hip Hop's revolutionary qualities and visions). One of the most obvious ways that we will consider this theme is through the ways in which Hip Hop challenges oppression and creates counter-narratives to dominant misrepresentations and lack of representation in public life. We will also consider the many revolutionary aspects of Hip Hop art, culture, and politics as well as specific artists, albums, or songs that speak to, and about, revolution.

For instance:

Lupe Fiasco, *Lasers*; Immortal Technique, *Revolutionary Volume 1 and 2*; The Coup, *Pick a Bigger Weapon* and *Party Music*; Dead Prez, "Revolutionary But Gangsta"; Sarah Jones, "Your Revolution (Will Not Happen Between These Thighs)"; Payday Monsanto, "Revolution."

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will:

Develop an understanding of the ways in which Hip Hop has been shaped by the experiences of African Americans and other oppressed groups in the U.S. and the ways in which the U.S. (and cultures around the world) have been influenced by Hip Hop.

Understand the various elements that comprise Hip Hop as well as the variety of forms that Hip Hop takes

Develop an appreciation of the cultural, political, and artistic value of Hip Hop

Understand the nuances of mainstream Hip Hop, conscious rap and underground Hip Hop

Create Hip Hop inspired art, music, and activist projects

Develop critical thinking and writing skills as well as skills of observation, synthesis, and connection

COURSE RESOURCES

Dalton **Higgins**, *Hip Hop World* (a Groundwork Guide).

Gwendolyn **Pough**, et al., eds. *Home Girls Make Some Noise: Hip Hop Feminism Anthology*.

Jeff **Chang**, ed. *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop*.

In addition to these books, **Blackboard (BB)** will include a number of resources each week, primarily links to YouTube videos and related websites as well as weekly power point "lecture" videos that review the course material for the week and how it connects to the previous week's material as well as the class as a whole. BB will also be the space where you will submit all of your work and engage in conversation with other students, and this is where you will find the pertinent information for class.

ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly Blog Postings and Comments

All Weekly Blog postings and comments are due by the end of the day on Sunday. There are 13 BLOGS possible and students will be required to submit at least 10 weekly BLOG postings. (Consider that this counts toward your "in-class" time.) Each weekly BLOG is worth 4 points and should be approximately 300 words. (Extra blog entries and thoughtful comments may be completed toward extra credit.)

Generally, each week students will post a BLOG and will comment on other students' BLOG postings. An introduction, questions/connections to consider will be posted on BB for each week of readings. Important!: You should not answer these questions directly. Instead, you should use these questions to shape a BLOG posting that critically engages with the course materials, provides specific examples, and analyzes these examples (see guidelines for writing papers). These questions are meant to give you something to think about as you read and to give you something to guide your writing. These questions also help to focus our reading and conversation on the most important points of these readings—the points that address the theme of our course. The power point/video introduction will also provide guidance and a bigger picture of the readings.

Blog entries should always refer directly to the readings when relevant. You should aim for critical analysis, pertinent questions, deep explorations, and scholarly engagement. You should not summarize the readings and you should not simply offer your opinion. There is certainly room for your own opinions and observations but there should always be specific relevance to the materials. Specific examples (quoted and paraphrased) from the readings and other class materials should be used and analyzed.

Titles for your BLOGS are important in order to give other students an idea of what you are writing about.

Revised BLOG final reflection

At the end of the semester, students will reconsider their blog entries and revise these entries into a final paper that addresses the general question: How can we better understand "Hip Hop" by considering art, culture, and politics through an American Studies lens? A prompt will be provided for this assignment though it is important to note here that this assignment is both about the content of the class as much as it is about the way in which you have understood the content of the class through your BLOG postings.

Both of these assignments (weekly blog and revised final) should be completed according to the guidelines for writing papers. You should have a central argument/thesis statement. You should provide specific examples (from readings, films, and other class materials) and analyze these examples.

Art, Culture, and Politics WIKI Postings and Comments

All Art, Culture, and Politics postings are due according to the schedule below (and on BB). These will be posted in the WIKI format on BB that allows you to post video, photos, and revise posts. Each posting should include a brief summary/description and **analysis of the connections** to some aspect of course materials and course readings and an example (or multiple examples) that also provides a multimedia representation (like a photo, a YouTube video, a website). Students may choose to do these WIKI postings in small groups, covering multiple aspects of the topic, for instance. Students can also choose to make comments or to add to someone else's WIKI page. Examples will be provided in the course materials as well.

<u>Art, Culture, Politics WIKI Topics:</u>

WIKI1: Politics in/of Hip Hop

WIKI2: History/Politics of Race/Revolution

WIKI3: Identity Politics in Hip Hop (Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality)

WIKI4: Hip Hop Across Borders

WIKI5: Hip Hop Feminism and Activism

WIKI6: Beyond the Four Elements

Comments should engage with a specific aspect of the original blog. Comments should question, support, counter, complement. They should not simply agree or praise. They also should not insult, belittle, or attack. Comments should be at least 50 or more words.

Please also be aware that all blogs and comments are public (to our class); therefore, I will comment on these blogs publicly. If there is an issue with a blog that I cannot address publicly, I will send a private e-mail to the person whose post or comment is in question. If a post is particularly offensive or inflammatory, I will remove the blog and the student may choose to re-do it.

Hip Hop Action/Education Project

This project should find a way to put Hip Hop into action—toward your education and/or the education of others. You may choose to create a video to complement your music or someone else's, or create a piece of Hip Hop art, or write Hip Hop journalism or spoken word. You might create jewelry, clothing, political action, or social movement. You may create a lesson plan to teach Hip Hop in elementary school or high school. There are many, many ways to fulfill this part of your course work and this project will include both an action and an analysis. I will provide a prompt for this assignment and students will submit an informal proposal during <u>Week 10. Project and reflection due by the end of finals week.</u> Students may choose to work in small groups for this project and should feel free to discuss project ideas with your professor and/or other students.

Contributions to Classroom Community/Engagement with Education (final statement):

On-line classes have different classroom communities than live classes and the success of this course greatly relies upon students' contributions to the classroom community. These contributions can be made through your assignments—timely posts and thoughtful replies—as well as through other opportunities for engagement. This assignment asks you to assess your contributions as well as the ways you have engaged in your education. For this part of your grade, you will submit a final statement where you will detail your work in the class and reflect upon your work overall including your participation and the ways in which you engaged in the course and your education. This is a report of the work you did throughout the semester and you may also grade yourself on a 10-point scale. For instance, I completed all of my weekly

blogs on time and submitted my revised final reflection. Through this work I learned_____. My project really helped me understand_____. I attended... I commented..... and found _____.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings, supplementary texts, and assignment due dates are listed on the days when they are due. Course books are referred to by the author/editor's last name.

WEEK 1: Introduction to Hip Hop

This week we get acquainted with the books and themes for the course.

Read**:** Higgins. Chapter 1: "The Audacity of Hip Hop"

Read**:** Pough. Foreword (by Mark Anthony Neal) and Introduction (by Gwen Pough) and Afterword (by Joan Morgan)

Read**:** Chang. "Introduction: Hip Hop Arts: Our Expanding Universe"

Web links: Aceyalone, "Ms. Amerikkka"; Nas, "American Way"; Lupe Fiasco, "The Words I Never Said"; "Payday

Monsanto, "Sheeple of Amerika"

WEEK 2: The Old School/ WIKI 1 (Politics in/of Hip Hop)

Read: Higgins. Chapter 2: "The Old School and the Elements"

Web links: The Last Poets, "When the Revolution Comes", "Niggers Are Scared of Revolution"; Afrika Bambaataa

"Planet Rock"; Sugarhill Gang, "Rapper's Delight"; Rock Steady Crew, "Uprock"; Killa Kela, live beatboxing; Beat box

example; Run DMC and Aerosmith, "Walk This Way"

WEEK 3: Roots

Read: Chang. Part One: "Roots: Perspectives on Hip-Hop History"

Web links: Gil-Scot Heron, "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised"; Nas, "Hip Hop Is Dead"; KRS-One and Marley Marl,

"Hip Hop Lives"; Taalam Acey, "When the Smoke Clearz"; Dead Prez, "hip-hop", "(It's Still Bigger Than) Hip Hop", "Hip

Hop" live.

WEEK 4: Race-ing Hip Hop/ WIKI 2 (History/Politics of Race/Revolution)

Read: Higgins. Chapter 3: "What's Race Got to Do With It?"

Web links: Dahlak Brathwaite, "Black Genius"; Murs, "D.S.W.G."; CNN Article "Rapper has defiant words for his new

album" (Nas and his album 'Ni**er'); Tumi Molekane, "Bambezela", TEDxSoweto; ZOLA, "Mdlwembe"; Kwaito

documentary trailer; EES featuring Gazza, "T.I.A (This is Africa)"

WEEK 5: Herstory and Conscience

Read: Higgins. Chapter 5: "Hip Hop's Herstory and Pride Rap" and Chapter 6: "Rap's Social Conscience"

Web links: Funky Four + 1 More, "Rappin and Rockin the House 12 ver. 1 of 2"; Queen Latifah, "U.N.I.T.Y."; Teremoana

Rapley, "Beautiful People"; Invincible, "Sledgehammer", "Shapeshifter", "Spacious Skies"; Democracy Now interview,

"Detroit Hip-Hop Artist and Activist Invincible: Another Detroit is Happening"; Colorlines, "Eight Openly Queer Rappers

Worth Your Headphones"; World Hip Hop Market, "Women's Movement: DJ Leydis Breaks Down Hip Hop in Cuba";

Legendary K.O., "Bush don't like black people"; Common, "A Song for Assata"; The Roots, "Don't Feel Right"; Mos Def,

Immortal Technique and Eminem, "Tell the Truth"; Mos Def, "The Katrina Klap (Dollar Day)"; Emmanual Jal, "We Need

Peace", "War Child"; Flobots, "Fight With Tools"

WEEK 6: Women in Hip Hop

Read: Pough. Section One, "B-Girls, Femcees, Graf Girls and Lady Deejays: Women Artists in Hip Hop," 1-109

Web links: "Brown Sugar" movie trailer, "When did you fall in love with hip hop?" scene; Erykah Badu Featuring Common, "Love of My Life"; JenRO interview, "Try It", "Boss Up"; Interview with Paradigm; Interview with Hanifah Walidah; Ladies Lotto

WEEK 7: Identity in Flux/ WIKI 3 (Identity Politics in Hip Hop [Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality])

Read: Chang. Part Three: "The Real: Identity in Flux"

Web links: Robert Karimi, e-poets.net featured artist; Memorial for Dave Funkenklein on Bomb Hip Hop; Clutch, "Carry on Tradition" article on Joan Morgan; School Library Journal, "Street Fight: Welcome to the World of Urban Lit"; Deep Dickollective, "For Colored Boys"; "HomoRevolution" Tour preview; Humboldt State's Social Justice Summit 2009.

*Bangor Live Discussion Option: Identity Politics in Hip-Hop Culture

WEEK 8: Economics and Globalization/ WIKI 4 (Hip Hop Across Borders)

Read: Higgins. Chapter 4: "Hip Hop's Economic Stimulus Plan" and Chapter 7: "The Globalization of Hip Hop"

Web links: The Coup, "Kill My Landlord", "5 Million Ways to Kill a CEO", "Fat Cats Bigga Fish"; Immortal Technique, "The Poverty of Philosophy"; MSN article, "Who will be hip hop's first billionaire?"; M.I.A. biography on Sweets Lyrics; k'naan, "Soobax"; Poetas de Karaoke "Sam the Kid"

WEEK 9: Hip-Hop Arts Beyond Borders

Read: Chang. Part Four: "Worldwide: Hip-Hop Arts Beyond Borders"

Web links: Theatre Maina, "Border/Clash" article/review of Stacey Chin; KCRA interview with Eli Jacobs-Fauntauzzi; Ted Talk: Suheir Hammad; JAAS, "Newen"; Upper Hut Posse, "E tu", "Ragga Girl"; Invincible, "People Not Places", "Spacious Skies", "Deuce/Ypsi"; Afro Pop, "Hip Hop Revolution"; The Native Press, article on OutKast

WEEK 10: PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE

Web links: This.org, "Quebec's "hip hope historian" raps about Quebecois black heritage", article on Webster; Webster with Karim Ouellet, "QC History X", "La force de la multitude"

*WEBSTER: Live Culture and Discussion Option

Culture Option: Augusta Thursday 6:30

Culture Option: Bangor Friday 12-1

Discussion Option: Bangor (or Compressed Video)

*Bangor Optional Culture, Friday 6:30 pm, "Revolutionary Movements" (fitness-dance class)

WEEK 11: Gender Representation

Read: Pough. Section Two: "Representin' (for) the Ladies: Issues of Gender and Representation in Hip-Hop Culture," 111-299

Web links: CNN, "Hip-hop portrayal of women protested"; Essence, "10 Hip-Hop songs that uplift women"; "Aya de Leon", trailer; Aya de Leon, "99 Reasons"; Luna Magazine, "Santigold"; Santigold, "L.E.S. Artists", "Go"; Jay-Z, "Brooklyn we go hard"

WEEK 12: Cultural Critiques of Gender, Sexuality, and Patriarchy

Read: Pough. Section Three: "That's My Word!: Cultural Critiques of Gender, Sexuality, and Patriarchy in Hip-Hop Culture," 301-474

Web links: ABC News, "Marry Your Baby Daddy Day"; Christian Science Monitor, "Marry Your Baby Daddy Day: Activist Marries Unwed Parents", article about "activist" Marilynn Reed; Revolving Door Reading Series, Tara Betts

Augusta Live Discussion Option: Hip Hop Feminism (BLOG 10 or 11)

WEEK 13: WIKI 5 (Hip Hop Feminism and Activism) **due**

WEEK 14: Beyond the Four Elements/ WIKI 6 (Beyond the Four Elements)

Read: Chang. Part Two: "Flipping the Script: Beyond the Four Elements"

Web link: Rennie Harris, Puremovement; Best of Rennie Harris; Blog interview with Bill Adler and Cey Adams; Slingshot Hip Hop, trailer; Born Here, "Dam"; Eisa Davis was Born To Do It All

WEEK 15: Futures for Hip Hop

Read: Higgins. Chapter 8: "Black to the Future"

Read: Chang. Part Five: "Next Elements: Hip-Hop Arts and Future Aesthetics"

Listen: *Deltron 3030* (album suggestion)

Web link: Spank Rock, "Put That Pussy On Me"; Oregon Humanities – Conversation Project: Break It Down, interview with Walidah Imarisha; Kid Sister, featuring Kanye West, "Pro Nails"; Mickey Factz, featuring The Cool Kids, "Rocking N Rollin"; Kid Kudi, featuring Kanye West, "Erase Me"; K-OS, "Zambony"; Fog and Smog, "Whole Foods Parking Lot", "Yoga Girl"

FINALS WEEK

Final statement on Contributions to Classroom Community; Final Revised BLOG Reflection; and Action/Education Project and Reflection

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A FEW CONCLUSIONS

One of the challenges of this course was the diversity of students who signed up for it. Some students who took this course were self-professed fans and lovers of Hip Hop; other students had only heard mainstream radio Hip Hop and were neither fans nor haters. Both sets of students, and those in between, learned about Hip Hop from where they started. I have found that Hip Hop provides opportunities to talk about ideas, experiences, art forms, and policies that are not often included in students' other classes. For some students, these are important aspects of their past, present, and future lives. We also have opportunities to challenge knowledge production and evaluation through an interdisciplinary approach and to challenge stereotypes and complicate identities and structures through considerations of intersections. Most students conclude the course with a much richer understanding of what Hip Hop is—a form of art, a forum for politics, and a rich part of American culture. And many students take this understanding outside the classroom as they share this new-found knowledge with friends, family, and their communities.

NOTES

*This artwork was created by a student in this course for her action/education project. In her project reflection she writes: "Within the semester, my project ideas kept changing like my environment . . . however I ended up creating some rasquache art." And, "In closing, all of my projects that I have done in the past [American studies and women's studies classes] have a piece of me within them, and this one is no exception. From my introduction to my closing of this class, Hip Hop is a beautiful art form that allows me and anyone to create a voice and connect with people all around the world." I

also include reference to this student's work and use this artwork in my recent/forthcoming article in *Words, Beats, Life: A Global Journal of Hip-Hop Culture*, "*Rasquachismo*: A Theory, Methodology, and Pedagogy for Hip-Hop Intersections."

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Book Reviews

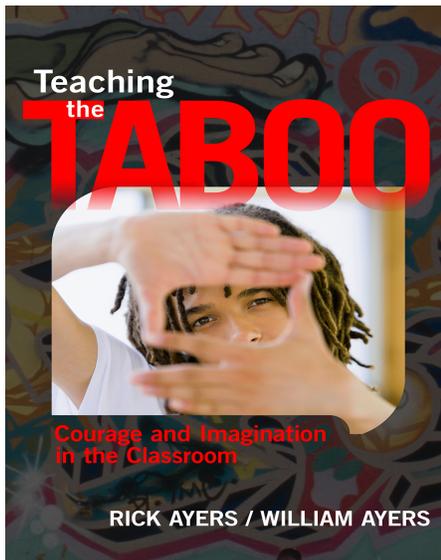**The Failure of Corporate School Reform**
By Kenneth J. Saltman
(Paradigm Publishers, 2012)

Educational Courage: Resisting the Ambush of Public Education
By Nancy Schniedewind and Mara Sapon-Shevin (Eds.)
(Beacon Press, 2012)

Reviewed by Chris Arthur

Politicians, education policy makers, media pundits and business groups present corporate school reform as either an obvious solution or an experiment worth trying given the 'failure' of public schools to close the achievement gap between groups, raise test scores and prepare students to compete in the global market. Informed by a neoliberal conception of social justice, corporate school reformers argue that all students ought to have an equal opportunity to build up their human capital and become life-long learners, constantly adapting to, anticipating and even shaping the global economy's needs by creating novel technologies (products and processes) that can be commodified, patented and used to attract investment. In this narrative, students' skills, knowledge and behaviors are forms of capital that should be prudently and perpetually improved for the benefit of the individual and nation—a moral imperative that naturalizes the global capitalist economy and depoliticizes corporate reformers' ontological and normative claims (e.g. the individual is a form of malleable capital that must be fitted to the economy's needs). Schools, in this vision, must become entrepreneurial units that can be dissolved and reformed to keep up with the needs of the mercurial global economy, preparing students for an uncertain future. In this context, corporate school reformers present themselves as selling the means (standardized testing, merit pay, charter schools, voucher systems, national curriculum standards, deunionization, privatization and turnaround policies that support the replacement of staff in schools with low test scores) to create an education system that by becoming more equitable, accountable, flexible and innovative can better prepare tomorrow's workforce to compete in the global economy.

Given how effective these arguments have been among education policy makers, and the mandate for the states to make education both more effective and cheaper, Kenneth J. Saltman's *The Failure of Corporate School Reform* and Nancy Schniedewind and Mara Sapon-Shevin's edited book *Educational Courage: Resisting the Ambush of Public Education* could not be timelier. Saltman, Schniedewind and Sapon-Shevin make it clear that corporate school reforms fail on their own terms: they are not more efficient, they do not make schools more accountable, and they do not increase test scores or close

the achievement gap—and worse, they are an attack on our democracy. Corporate school reforms transform schools from public spaces that can be used to analyze and democratize social relations to institutions that reduce critical thinking and action to depoliticized problem solving.

Saltman begins *The Failure of Corporate School Reform* with a broad topological analysis of the groups, individuals and dominant ideological and material interests behind corporate school reform. In the second chapter, he contrasts the reformers' claims about the portfolio model of school reform with the available scholarly research. Saltman first highlights that there is no evidence that the portfolio model, an approach in which the district superintendent acts as an investor who keeps securities (schools) that show gains in student achievement and sells those that do not (Saltman, 2012, p. 38), will increase test scores or close the achievement gap between differently privileged groups. Even worse for corporate reformers, there is mixed to *negative* evidence that the portfolio model's constituent elements (decentralization, charter school creation, school closure, test-based accountability, school turnarounds and merit pay based on test performance) increase test scores or close the achievement gap between groups. Finally, as Saltman cogently argues, the claims that corporate reform will increase efficiency and reduce bureaucracy are demonstrably false. Indeed, the new market bureaucracy is both more opaque and expensive.

In the rest of the book, Saltman moves from an immanent critique to a more radical dismantling of the corporate school reform movement's positivist, neoliberal paradigm. Rather than championing either pole in the debate (the old liberal, state-funded public system versus the new *neo*liberal, corporatized system) Saltman argues that both systems of schooling have historically depoliticized and justified the conditions that produce inequality while reproducing a stratified workforce for the capitalist economy. Saltman seamlessly interweaves insights and theoretical concepts from Giroux, Zizek, Harvey, and Althusser to argue in clear and accessible language that we need to jettison the paradigm within which both liberals and conservatives argue about school reform.

As Saltman emphasizes throughout, what we know and how we know are never universal 'facts' or processes but the result of historical and ongoing political struggle. Schools, in his opinion, must do more than fill students up with 'neutral' knowledge so they can fit into the world as it is; they must offer students opportunities to subject our collective forms of knowledge and ways of knowing to critical analysis as part of a collective, continuous challenge to unequal political economic relations of power.

The fourth chapter, "Why Democratic Pedagogy is Crucial", and the fifth, "Toward a New Common School Movement", are particularly effective in making the case to liberal fellow travelers that schools ought to be part of a collective effort to democratize our economic and political practices and relations-shifting power from economic and political elites to the public. For Saltman, challenging privatization and standardized tests is only an interim goal;

the ultimate objective is to extend democratic control over the commons (production, culture, nature, geography and biology) for the benefit of the common good. This book should appeal to all who are concerned about the state of our schools and our democracy.

Nancy Schniedewind and Mara Sapon-Shevin's edited book *Educational Courage: Resisting the Ambush of Public Education* is an excellent companion to Saltman's book. Schniedewind and Sapon-Shevin's collection presents inspiring examples of students, teachers, administrators, academics, and parents challenging the ambush on public education and complements Saltman's broader and more radical analysis of corporate school reform. Situating the assault on public education within its post-Fordist context, these essays answer the perennial question: What is to be done?

Educational Courage: Resisting the Ambush of Public Education is split into four parts: the first outlines the privatization initiative since the implementation of No Child Left Behind and lists its negative effects. The second part features voices of resistance, including a chapter by Alfie Kohn, an eleven-year-old who refused to take a state's standardized test, arguing against national standards, and a teacher who quit Teach For America, viewing it as a means to deprofessionalize teaching and attack public education. The third, entitled "Working in the Cracks", presents examples of how teachers and administrators have creatively worked within the confines of the present educational system to widen spaces of limited freedom while protecting and educating their students. A chapter by primary school teacher Felipa Gaudet stands out in this section, offering a deeply touching example of why we must resist high-stakes testing, and highlights one of the book's strengths: its affective appeal through the voices of those children, parents, teachers and administrators who have been directly affected by education reforms. The fourth section provides courageous examples of collective resistance to education privatization, ending with a chapter by Bill Ayers.

Another of the book's strengths is the diversity of voices, strategies and aims it presents. Students and parents resist mandatory high-stakes standardized tests because they destroy children's sense of self, desire to learn and, if mandatory for graduation, their chance at pursuing higher education or employment. Teachers and administrators recount examples in which they resisted corporate school reform, sometimes at the cost of their employment, because they want to provide a space where students can heal, feel valued, connect with others and pursue projects they find meaningful. Still others—Bob Peterson and Bill Ayers—point to the need to look beyond the school, to link education and resistance against corporate school reform with social justice struggles outside the school. Alongside actions aimed at alleviating the pain students feel when they are set up to fail (English Language Learners who must write standardized tests after having only one year of English language schooling, students with learning disabilities, and students whose cultural knowledge is not represented in the tests) and a desire to help students become economically self-sufficient and fit into the world as it is, the book provides voices who argue, much like Saltman does, that education is a necessary practice for creating a more just world.

These heterogeneous acts of resistance challenge corporate school reform in the name of a 'collective good' that opposes the corporate school reformers' 'collective good': the expansion of perpetual, precarious competition, which supports the marketization of schools and the preparation of students for global economic competition. In contrast, the voices in Schniedewind and Sapon-Shevin's edited collection present the collective good as both synonymous with an ethic of care concerned to alleviate the contextual circumstances of students' lives and as requiring the replacement of unjust, hierarchical economic and political social relations and the practices that sustain them. While different, the notion of a collective good constituting an ethic of care concerned with the alleviation of the social order's ill effects and a more radical notion concerned with replacing capitalism do not have to be mutually exclusive, as Pauline Lipman's call for "nonreformist reforms" makes clear (Lipman, 2011, p. 164). This does not mean, however, that work does not have to be done to bring these two notions together. Certainly, Saltman is correct in his criticism of liberals who believe that corporate school reform is only misguided in its means—leaving untroubled the aims of preparing students to fit into the global economy or transmitting a seemingly universal set of facts and values.

That said, the diversity of problems students face requires a variety of responses, some more pragmatic than radical, and this is where the two books again complement each other well. Saltman outlines the problems confronting us that require radical change while Schniedewind and Sapon-Shevin's edited collection highlights the numerous diverse challenges teachers, students and families face and the heterogeneous micro-political acts of resistance required to combat them. Reading these two books together one can better see that schools ought to provide a space removed from the demands of the world for children to heal, engage with others and learn. However, at the same time, schools must be engaged *with* the world, providing a space where students can learn about and link up with collective struggles outside the school that aim to create a better world. In this, as both books make abundantly clear, corporate school reform has failed on many levels; it falls to us to reimagine and recreate public education for another, more just world.

References

1.   Lipman, P. 2011. The New Political Economy of Urban Education: Neoliberalism, Race, and the Right to the City. New York: Routledge.

2.   Saltman, K. J. 2012. The Failure of Corporate School Reform. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

Teaching the Taboo: Courage and Imagination in the Classroom. By Rick Ayers and William Ayers (Teachers College Press, 2011)

Reviewed By Betsy Bannier

Seasoned teachers, weary from years in classroom trenches and navigating test-this-not-that imperatives, are already acutely familiar with the reality painted by the Ayers brothers in their introduction to their book *Teaching the Taboo: Courage and Imagination in the Classroom* (2011). They write: "While many of us long for teaching as something transcendent and powerful, too often we find ourselves locked in situations that reduce teaching to a kind of glorified clerking, passing along a curriculum of received wisdom and predigested and generally false bits of information"(6). Less familiar to teachers, however, are the seldom-traveled pathways out of this mess. In concise form, Rick and William Ayers offer what could be interpreted as a field guide to help educators find their way into an irreverent (and thus unpopular) teaching space and hold their ground once they have arrived.

Drawing on the educational theories of John Dewey and Martin Haberman, the philosophical frameworks of Michel Foucault, and the liberating teaching practices of Paulo Freire, Ayers and Ayers guide the reader in coming to terms with the reality that our factory-model schools are devolving into prison-model institutions. Along the way, "teaching designed to develop free minds in free people" has become a form of teaching the taboo (37). Timely examples of such teaching are provided, such as one instructor's "curriculum of questioning" centered on the influx of military recruiters in his high school (84). As the multiple realities of living in a nation at war, flaccid employment prospects, and legislation that prioritizes military spending over educational funding all collide, classroom discussion along these lines is urgent.

Teaching the Taboo also includes a personal and self-reflective aspect, when it offers a snapshot of the experiences of a classroom teacher, Malik Dohrn, who happens to be the nephew and son of the two authors, respectively. Dohrn quips about those who actually teach and those who talk about it: "No offense, but you guys are both in the talk-about-it class" (92). This forces Ayers and Ayers to acknowledge their privileged position as academics in a commodity-based educational system where public school teachers are "near the base of the educational hierarchy, just above the student, who is at the very bottom of the barrel" (96).

"Into the Woods," the curiously titled third chapter, drew me into "Avi's World" (50) and stood out as a highlight of the book. This was exactly the concrete and colorful example of who is teaching the taboo and how they approach the task that I was hoping for. Avi, we learn, is an amazing high school educator who dares to engage students in the "vast expanse of … what we don't know we don't know" (52). "Into the Woods" is richly laden with examples of questioning privilege and encouraging self-discovery. This chapter alone has enough power to fuel a spirited discussion among educators, and would make a fantastic opener for an education department meeting in need of a few breaths of life.

The authors make some slips, however, in chapters five and eight. Chapter five, "Banned, Suppressed, Bound, and Gagged," which speaks to the enormous power differential inherent in our schools, offers the candid opinion that "teachers are not invited to do missionary work, charity work, among the oppressed in our society . . . we are only useful agents in [students'] educations if we replace charity with solidarity, patronizing with respect" (78). A call along these lines may sound reasonable to higher education researchers, but comes across as patronizing to those immersed on a daily basis in K-12 arenas. Until our nation's schools receive the funding and support they need, the "missionary work" and "charity work" of individual teachers are in themselves acts of transformative teaching that deserve our respect. And later, chapter eight, "Release the Wisdom in the Room: Language and Power" offers a well-developed example of a lesson on the creation of a classroom slang dictionary, including how the teacher became the learner in the process. This intriguing story focused on classroom experience gets overshadowed, however, when the discussion boils over into political theory.

Overall, this text would be good for teacher education seminars and department reads. *Teaching the Taboo: Courage and Imagination in the Classroom* would also be helpful for policy makers, whom Malik Dohrn refers to as "a blank slate" (92). Somehow, getting this engaging text into the hands of those who need it most feels like wishful thinking.
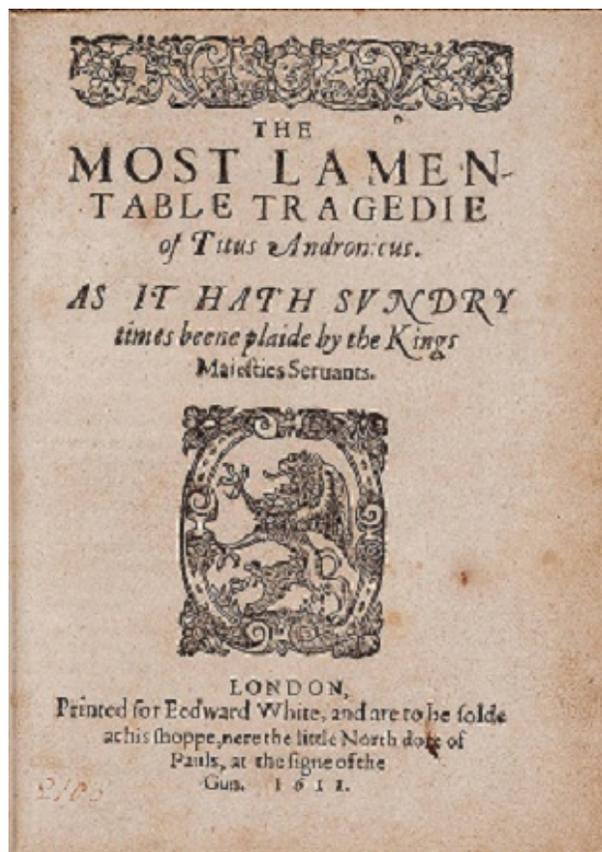
RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Teaching Notes

Teaching *Titus Andronicus* in Contemporary India

by Anna Kurian

Reading *Titus Andronicus* (1594) as the first text in a course on Shakespeare's tragedies, starting in January 2013, most of the M.A (English) students at the University of Hyderabad (a public university deemed to be among the elite higher education institutions of India but with a very mixed student demographic from rural, urban, and semi-urban areas), found the violence over-the-top, the characterization slim, and the lines themselves insipid.

Lavinia's life, rape, and eventual murder by her father consequently became a theme which resonated with beliefs and values that remain deeply entrenched in contemporary India.

It was only as we "read" Lavinia and the way women were narrated into and out of being that students began to see interesting parallels between a late 16th century text and 21st century India. My effort in classes was directed at pointing to the strange relevance of Early Modern ideas regarding gender and femininity, albeit refracted via imperial Rome, to present-day India. I used as the immediate context the brutal gang-rape in India's capital in December 2012—the victim died of her injuries. Three thematic parallels stood out in our discussions.

THE OBJECTIFICATION OF WOMAN AND THE WOMAN AS PROPERTY

Beginning with Lavinia's epithet—"Rome's rich ornament" (I.i)—we examined her passage from hand to hand, in a show of gendered legitimate ownership. Her father, brothers, and betrothed all move her around like a chess piece, her desires irrelevant, her opinion unsought. Reduced by the Emperor Saturninus to "this changing piece," Lavinia remains largely silent. Then female students from conservative Indian backgrounds (irrespective of religious affiliation) saw the connection: their opinions regarding their futures were often ignored in the face of overwhelming societal and familial pressures that determined a suitable time for marriage and the choice of husband.

WOMEN'S BODIES: SITES OF HONOR AND ENACTMENTS OF POWER

In the scene which precedes Lavinia's rape (II.iii), she articulates her fear of being dishonored, and to avert it, pleads for death at the hands of Tamora and her sons. My students perceived the internalization of the patriarchal code of honor which governs the lives of women in India's still largely traditional societies: an honor that is mapped on the body of the woman. We then spoke of India's long history of communal riots with its ignoble tradition of rape and mutilation, and also the use of rape in war. An understanding of rape as being not so much about sexual gratification as a demonstration and claiming of power by those who experience themselves as powerless resulted from a discussion of the ambiguous status of Lavinia's rapists in Roman society. Their actions revealed to my students how in wartime and times of civil troubles women become "soft targets" for the vicious rage of men who perceive themselves as disempowered and seek to thus demonstrate their masculine superiority.

WOMEN, FAMILY-HONOR, HONOR-KILLING

Reading the final scene, where Titus kills Lavinia, citing a noble precedent and approved by the Emperor, we discovered that 21st century India had not moved very far from Shakespeare's time (or Roman times as seen in the play). The "zinda laash" (literally a "live corpse," taken to symbolize death-in-life) argument often cited in our news reports and articulated by politicians in the aftermath of the December 2012 rape, characterizes the rape victim as a someone who would be better off dead, thus sparing herself and, more importantly, her family shame and sorrow. The same views are articulated by the Emperor: "Because the girl should not survive her shame,/And by her presence still renew his sorrows" (V.iii). In India where women are commonly killed (if they marry "outside" their caste/community) to "preserve" family honor, students immediately recognized Lavinia/the Indian woman as a place-holder of family prestige.

Lavinia's life, rape, and eventual murder by her father consequently became a theme which resonated with beliefs and values that remain deeply entrenched in contemporary India.

RADICAL TEACHER

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News for Educational Workers

Compiled by Leonard Vogt

School Closings

An epidemic of school closings in Chicago, New York, Detroit, Washington, Sacramento, Baltimore, Birmingham, and St. Louis reported this spring has been answered with protests throughout the country. Students, teachers, parents and activists are making the point that the savings from closed schools is minimal and the transfer of money to charter schools rarely leads to improved academics. Since most students affected by these closures are students of color, protesters see these closings as a civil rights violation (*The Nation* May 5, 2013).

The Chicago school closings are the largest in U. S. history, eliminating 49 public schools and displacing 40,000 students. Diane Ravitch feels that Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel is punishing the teachers' union for their strike last fall by opening up more charter schools staffed by non-union teachers (http://portside.org, May 23, 2013). Although Emanuel's Chicago Public Schools district says these closings must happen to resolve the $1 billion deficit, Chicago Teachers Union President Karen Lewis says, "Enough with the lies and public deception. School closings will not save money and taxpayers will not see costs benefits in two years. Why? Because vibrant school communities will be quickly transformed into abandoned buildings, neighborhood eyesores and public safety hazards" (http://portside.org, March 21, 2013).

The Philadelphia school district, which proposes closing 37 schools, would displace 17,000 students and fire more than 1,100 teachers (*The New York Times*, December 30, 2012).

The Sacramento school district wants to close seven elementary schools, causing twelve students and their parents to file a civil rights lawsuit claiming the closings will result in "a discriminatory effect on the poor, disadvantaged population which is served by these neighborhood schools slated for closure" (http://portside.org, June 15, 2013).

Although school closings seem to be an urban problem, outrage and protest has hit rural areas like Sullivan County, Tennessee where a grassroots group called Save the South Zone are collecting signatures and fighting for the consolidation of local middle schools into area high schools (www.nationofchange.org, June 13, 2013).

Standardized Testing

"High Stakes Rebellion" (*The Nation*, May 27, 2013) explains that ever since the test-driven mentality of No Child Left Behind took over, protesting parents and educators have not been heard . . . until now, and for a very interesting reason: a cheating scandal in Atlanta, where 35 teachers, administrators, and even a former superintendent changed students' test scores. This act of desperation emboldened anti-testing rebellion across the country. In Texas, the birthplace of the testing movement, legislation reduced the number of tests required for graduation from 15 to 5. In New York, new tests based on new national standards have caused so many complaints that some parents are instructing their children not to take the tests.

An anti-testing op-ed piece in *Time Magazine* (April 2, 2013) reported, "One of the biggest ironies of the Atlanta public schools testing scandal . . . is that the faked scores prevented some schools from accessing three quarters of a million dollars in federal money to support struggling learners because they no longer qualified for help. The impact on individual children was devastating." The piece goes on to say, "Even if we eliminate the cheating, what remains is a broken system built on the dangerous misconception that testing is a proxy for actual teaching and learning."

Cheating on standardized test, however, is nothing new. In the past four academic years, cheating on test score results has been confirmed in 37 states and Washington, D. C. (Answer sheet blog, *The Washington Post*, April 1, 2013).

Cheating on test scores is perhaps one form of rebellion, but the Seattle school teachers took a much more positive step and took the forefront in the movement against testing by boycotting the standardized tests used in the city's schools. The entire teaching faculty of Garfield High School in Seattle voted unanimously to never again administer the Measures of Academic Progess (Common Dreams, January 12, 2013; www.portside.org, January 28,

2013; *In These Times*, March 2013). For an extended interview with teachers from Garfield High about the testing boycott, see www.democracynow.org, January 29, 2013.

Anti-testing protest is extending beyond Seattle. Across the country, 61 schools, including 47 in New York City, are refusing to participate in the latest round of tests (www.huffingtonpost.com, February 22, 2013). In Chicago, over 300 students from over 25 different public school boycotted the second day of the statewide standardized tests (Common Dreams, April 24, 2013).

In "Why I Won't Let My Son Take the PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment)" (www.post-gazette.com, April 3, 2013), an associate professor of English explains why she will no longer allow her 9-year old son to take standardized tests in school: high stakes tests are negatively affecting her son, his family, his teachers, his school and, ultimately, the entire education system.

The Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) has written a position paper called "Debunking the Myths of Standardized Testing" which relates high stakes tests to the education achievement gap, the inability to adequately measure knowledge, the waste of instruction time with negative impacts on student learning, and testing scandals. For a copy, contact CTU.

Charter Schools

The closing of schools and the use of standardized test results to close them is intimately connected with the push for charter schools. A corporate mentality wants to rule public education in the United States. To that end, corporations are trying to starve public schools in order to justify privatization. In Chicago, for example, the Broad Foundation is venture philanthropy/capitalism "dedicated to redesigning school districts . . . [on] business/finance principals and data-driven accountability . . . focused on the 'return on investment'. Basically, venture philanthropists do not donate unless they can shape policy decisions" (*Chicago Sun Times*, July 30, 2013). In the closing of its 37 schools, Philadelphia outsourced its decision to the business world and, according to a Pew study, came to its final consensus after consulting "a California-based engineering design firm, and . . . an Ohio-based company that specializes in school-closing issues." To give even greater encouragement to corporate investment, the New Markets Tax credit law passed in 2000 allows up to a 39% tax credit to investors in charter schools (AlterNet, February 17, 2013 and May 8, 2013). The Walmart business chain has taken advantage of this tax credit since 2005 by giving more than $1 billion to organizations and candidates who support privatization (truthout.org, March 5, 2013).

To read more about the origin and growth of charter schools, how they measure up, how they reinforce school segregation, and how parents and teachers are beginning to fight back, see Stan Karp's "Charter Schools and the Future of Public Education" (http:portside.org/print/node/2003).

Divestment

The Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) became the first academic union in Europe to endorse the Palestinian call for an academic boycott of Israel. Referring to Israel as an "apartheid state," the TUI called for "all members to cease all cultural and academic collaboration with Israel, including the [institutional] exchange of scientists, students and academic personalities, as well as all cooperation in research programs" (LaborAgainstWar, April 10, 2013)

Back here at home and several months earlier, lawmakers threatened the funding of Brooklyn College for hosting an event on the divestment (BDS) campaign against Israel, but failed to stop the program (www.democracynow.org, February 6, 2013). Across the country at University of California Berkeley, the Student Senate passed a resolution in favor of divestment from companies that profit from Israeli occupation (Jewish Voice for Peace, April 24, 2013).

Fossil fuel divestment campaigns are now beginning to sweep the country on over 200 college campuses, with Unity College in Maine, Hampshire College in Massachusetts, and Sterling College in Vermont already committed to divest from 200 fossil fuel companies identified by Bill McKibben's environmental group, 350.org (*In These Times*, March 2013 and www.nationofchange.org, April 12, 2013). These students organizing for climate justice are making the broader connections between the environment and social issues like debt, racism, and immigration.

CUNY Pathways

The City University of New York (CUNY) "Pathways" proposal, an administratively driven system wide overhaul of the curriculum that would weaken content and decrease student contact hours, has received a rousing 92% landslide vote of No Confidence in Pathways, which should help put a stop to the implementation of Pathways during the 2013-2014 academic year (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 3, 2013). For reports on the faculty struggle against Pathways, see *Clarion* (February and March, 2013), CUNY's Professional Staff Congress union paper. For those outside the CUNY system, learn more about the history and background that led to the Pathways proposal at http://pscbc.blogspot.com/2013/sandy-cooper-road-to-pathways.html.

Resources

Books

The goal of Louise Dunlap's *Undoing the Silence: Six Tools for Social Change Writing* (Oakland, CA, New Village Press, 2007, 229 pages) is to reclaim writing as a route to progressive activism. It taps writing tools like free writing, process, feedback, etc. with the specific goal of assisting activists in their work for social change. *Rethinking Schools* adds two more books to its excellent series: *Teaching About the Wars* and an expanded edition of

Rethinking Mathematics. For more information, contact www.rethinkingschools.org.

Films

Bullfrog Films has two new movies worthy of classroom use. *Bidder 70* centers on an extraordinary, ingenious and effective act of civil disobedience demanding government and industry accountability. In 2008, University of Utah economics student Tim DeChristopher committed an act that would redefine patriotism in our time, igniting a spirit of civil disobedience in the name of climate justice. Follow Tim, Bidder 70, from college student to incarcerated felon. *Shadows of Liberty* reveals the extraordinary truth behind news media censorship, cover-ups and corporate control. The overwhelming influence of corporate conglomerates has distorted news journalism and compromised its values. For preview copies, call toll free 800-543-3764 or go online at www.bullfrogfilms.com.

Educaution is a documentary film by graduate students who are concerned about the future of the American Higher Education System. By focusing on the economic issues surrounding the higher education system, the film examines the increasing concerns of many Americans regarding the continuing decrease in the quality, value, and financial return of higher education in the market place. For additional information, go to StudentDebtCrisis.org.

Youngist is a web based publishing project for under-26 voices with editors in New York City, Egypt, Greece, and Pakistan. To view a brief video on the project, see http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/youngist-young-people-powered-media?c=home.

Is there a news item, call for papers, upcoming conference, resource, teaching tool, or other information related to progressive education that you would like to share with other Radical Teacher readers? Conference announcements and calls for papers should be at least six months ahead of date. Items, which will be used as found appropriate by Radical Teacher, cannot be returned. Send hard copy to Leonard Vogt, Department of English, LaGuardia Community College (CUNY), 31-10 Thomson Avenue, Long Island City, New York 11101—or email items to lvogt@nyc.rr.com.

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Contributors' Notes

DOMINOS BX   PHOTO BY CARLOS MCBRIDE

Chris Arthur is an elementary teacher in the Toronto District School Board and a part-time PhD student at York University. His research interests include Marxism, political philosophy, critical policy analysis and financial literacy education. His recent book, *Financial Literacy Education: Neoliberalism, the Consumer and the Citizen* (2012), is published with Sense Publishers.

Betsy Bannier is an Assistant Professor of Chemistry and Mathematics Online at Lake Region State College in Devils Lake, North Dakota. She holds a Ph.D. in Adult & Continuing Education with an emphasis in online science education, as well as an MS in analytical chemistry. She has 15 years of experience teaching in higher education, primarily in the field of undergraduate, online laboratory chemistry. In her current position, Dr. Bannier serves as both an online Master Course developer and a mentor for new online faculty.

Jared A. Ball is the father of two brilliant and adorable daughters, Maisi (7) and Marley (5), and the fortunate husband of Nelisbeth Yariani Ball. After that he is an associate professor of communication studies at Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD. and is the producer and host of the "Super Funky Soul Power Hour" (Fridays 11a-12p EST) on Washington, DC's WPFW 89.3 FM Pacifica Radio. Ball is the author of *I MiX What I Like: A MiXtape Manifesto* (AK Press, 2011) and co-editor of *A Lie of Reinvention: Correcting Manning Marable's Malcolm X* (Black Classic Press, 2012). He can be found online at IMIXWHATILIKE.ORG.

Djola Branner, associate professor of theatre, received his B.A. from the University of California at Santa Cruz, his M.A. from San Francisco State University, and his M.F.A. from the New School for Drama (formerly known as Actors Studio Drama School). His interdisciplinary work, which combines music, movement, and text as language, explores the broad gray area between performance art and theatre, and gives voice to individuals historically absent from the stage. He has presented throughout the U.S. and abroad, contributed to such anthologies as *Voices Rising, Colored Contradictions,* and *Staging Gay Lives*, and published one book of collected plays entitled *sash & trim.* He has taught dance, acting, and dramatic writing at Macalester College, University of Minnesota, and the American Musical and Dramatic Academy.

Todd Craig is a native of Queens, New York. In 2013, Craig completed his Doctor of Arts degree in English at St. John's University where he was awarded the 2008 Academy of American Poets Prize. Craig's research interests are rhetoric and composition, hip-hop culture and pedagogy, African American literature, multimodality in the English composition classroom, creative writing pedagogy and poetics. His dissertation is a qualitative research study that includes interviews from a laundry list of prominent and influential DJs in the hip-hop and music community. This research explores the hip-hop DJ as 21st century new media reader and writer and examines the function of hip-hop DJ Rhetoric and Literacy, and its potential contributions to the English Composition classroom. His multimodal novel *tor'cha* (which comes with a CD-Rom) is out now in its second edition. His most recent publications include the poems "the comfort of shape-shifting" and "comes and go ons" in *The Portable Boog Reader 6: NYC* and "…spy verse spy…" which appears in *Staten Island Noir*, a crime story anthology series published by Akashic Books. As a creative writer with various publications of poetry and fiction, Craig started blacker inkwells Publishing Group, LLC in 2008 to provide an artistic and collaborative space for underrepresented writers and artists within mainstream publishing and media culture. In addition to being a writer, Craig is also a deejay. As an artist, Todd has done numerous readings and performances nationwide, including collaborations with other writers, poets and musicians such as Newspeak, Donnell Alexander, Dr. Jan Ramjerdi, Anne Waldman, Rich Medina, Geoffrey Canada, Dr. Bessie Blake, Lee Ann Brown, David T. Little and hip-hop artists Hypno (The Spooks), Sean Strange (No Good People, Goondox), Mr. Len (Smacks Records), DJ Premier (Gang Starr) and Mobb Deep, in order to bring a musical element to his writing. Craig is currently an Assistant Professor of English at Medgar Evers College at the City University of New York (CUNY).

Antero Garcia is an assistant professor in the English department at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, CO. His recent research focuses on critical literacies, technology, and youth civic engagement. For eight years he was a teacher at a public high school in South Central Los Angeles. In 2008 Antero co-developed the Black Cloud Game. A Digital Media and Learning Competition award recipient, the Black Cloud provoked students to take real time assessment of air quality in their community. Using custom-developed sensors that measure and send data about air quality, students critically analyzed the role pollution played in their daily lives and presented recommendations to their community. He is a 2012-2014 Cultivating New Voices Among Scholars of Color fellow with the National Council of Teachers of English and a 2010-2011 U.S. Department of Education Teaching Ambassador Fellow. Antero's numerous publications and conference presentations address technology, educational equity, youth participatory action research, and critical media literacy.

Andrew Hafner is an Assistant Professor of Education at Westfield State University. He holds a B.A. from Hamilton College, and both M.Ed. and Ed.D. from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Sarah Hentges is an Assistant Professor of American Studies at the University of Maine at Augusta. Her book, Women and Fitness in American Culture, will be published by McFarland in 2014.

Anna Kurian teaches at The University of Hyderabad, India. Her interests include Shakespeare Studies and Children's Literature.

Carlos REC McBride is a Doctoral candidate in the Language, Literacy and Culture program through the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. He is also a photographer, DJ, and Media Maker. His research interests include Hip Hop culture, Critical Pedagogy, Social Justice in Education, multimodal approaches to alternative schooling, media justice, New

Literacy Studies, the Prison Industrial Complex, and Ethnic Studies. Mr. McBride is a lecturer at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, through the Latin American & Latin@ Studies program. Mr. McBride is also co-founder of TRGGR Media Collective and is a co-host of TRGGR RADIO (trggradio.org) on 91.1 FM WMUA, at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

Steve Netcoh is currently the Chief Content Officer for NuSkool and a teacher in the CUNY Start program at LaGuardia Community College. Prior to his work at LAGCC, he taught classes at St. John's University (Jamaica, NY), Mercy College (Bronx, NY), and CUNY Prep (Bronx, NY) that used popular culture to teach information literacy, first-year writing, critical analysis, and media literacy. Twitter Handles: @HipHopPedagogy @NuSkoolOfficial

Priscilla Page specializes in the work of playwrights of color, multicultural theater and feminism, and coordinates the planned Certificate program in Multicultural Theater Practice. Page has served as instructor at Hampshire College in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and as a dramaturg with a number of companies, including The Performance Project, Northampton, Mass.; the *24-Hour Theater Project,* Northampton; and the *Play-in-a-Day Festival* at UMass. She is a member of the Association for Theater in Higher Education and Women Playwrights International, a core faculty member in the Women of Color Leadership Network, a faculty member of the Five College Puerto Rican Studies Seminar and a member of the Five College Multicultural Theater Committee.

Christopher Tinson is an Assistant Professor of Africana Studies at Hampshire College.