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Raptivism: the Act of Hip Hop's Counterpublic Sphere Forming into a Social Movement to Seize its Political Opportunities

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RAPTIVISM: THE ACT OF HIP HOP'S COUNTERPUBLIC SPHERE FORMING INTO A SOCIAL MOVEMENT TO SEIZE ITS POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract

This study explores recent attempts by the hip hop community to be recognized in the mainstream political sphere and to have its concerns acknowledged and addressed. This project examines how the scholarship of hip hop (musicology), rhetoric (counterpublic spheres), politics and social movement theory intertwine, and to demonstrate how hip hop's community can emerge as a counterpublic sphere that could become a social movement capable of altering the current cultural and political landscape in the United States. Although hip hop as a culture consists of four major elements: breakdancing, graffiti art, deejaying, and rapping, this study focuses on rappers and the use of rap music in the political sphere. It suggests that hip hop is a counterpublic sphere that has the power to affect culture and politics and examines attempts by both liberal and conservative politicians and organizations to garner the hip hop community's vote. It then discusses political opportunity theory and suggests that it may help the hip hop community emerge as a social movement capable of seizing its political opportunities. It relies upon the rhetorical work of the counterpublic sphere theory as a result of the hip hop community seeking a voice and recognition in the political public sphere. This serves as one of the basis for creating a counterpublic sphere.

Chapter 1: Introduction

He's coming, he's coming, he's coming
He's coming, he's coming, he's coming
He's coming, he's coming, he's coming
He's here
His name is Jesse
His name is Jesse
Hypocrites and uncle toms are talking trash (Let's talk about Jesse)
Liberty and justice are a thing of the past (Let's talk about Jesse)
They want a stronger nation at any cost (Let's talk about Jesse)
Even if it means that everything will soon be lost (Let's talk about Jesse)
He started on the bottom, now he's on the top
He proved that he could make it, so don't ever stop
Brothers stand together and let the whole world see
Our brother Jesse Jackson go down in history
So vote, vote, vote, everybody get up and vote
Vote, vote, everybody get up and vote
Vote, vote, everybody get up and vote
Vote, vote, everybody get up and vote . . .

The 30th day that's in December is a day that everyone's gonna remember
Because on that day a righteous man, thought about taking a brand new stand
The name of the man is Jesse Jackson and his call is for peace without an action
'Cause now is the time to change the nation without just another negotiation
He went to the East for human rights to free a lieutenant shot down in flight
Just another statistic and the government knew it, they didn't even want the man to go do it
Before he left, he called the president's home and Reagan didn't even answer the phone
But I tell you one thing and that's a natural fact, you can bet he calls Jesse when Jesse got back

He started on the bottom, now he's on the top
He proved that he could make it, so don't ever stop
Brothers stand together and let the whole world see
Our brother Jesse Jackson go down in history
So vote
Hypocrites just talking trash (Let's talk about Jesse)
Liberty and Justice are a thing of the past (Let's talk about Jesse) (lyricsfreak.com)
- Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five

The 1984 Democratic presidential primaries featured the famed civil rights leader,

minister, and activist, Jesse Jackson, as the political underdog candidate seeking support against

favorites Walter Mondale and Gary Hart. In an attempt to help garner more support for his

candidacy, Jackson was offered a unique means to get his message out, through a rap song written by the rap group Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five. Grandmaster Flash wrote the rap song "Jesse" as a way to bring young people, African American s, and other minorities into the presidential process.

In addition to its lyrical content, the song attempts to attract people to the song and Jackson through its sound. The sound starts with grunting noises from the rappers and proceeds to build the sound from a low sounding beat of electronic drums up to a loud crescendo announcing the arrival of Jackson. The song's sound represents the time; in that it uses repetitive electronic drums and machines to produce the music's aesthetic. One repetitive sound that stands out is that of "clapping hands." This clapping hands noise indicates the collective support and strength of the coalition who are being encouraged to vote throughout the entirety of the song. The sound helps to amplify the power of the lyrics, in that it brings forth a "new" sound and message that needs to be heard by people who had been affected by the policies of Reagan for the previous four years.

The lyrics of the song portray Jackson as a man who would bring back liberty and justice, who would be able to get soldiers returned to him, as a man who had come from the bottom and made it to the top, and, finally, as someone who was not a hypocrite like the other politicians he was running against or were currently in office (i.e., President Reagan). Part of the inspiration for writing this song was to speak out against the effects of Reagan's policies of the previous four years. In a 1987 *New York Times* article John Herbers summarized the differing everyday realities of black versus white communities under Reagan. Herbers writes ("Black Poverty"):

> A new study . . . finds that the nation's largest cities have a growing concentration of blacks living in poverty . . . Concentrated black poverty in large cities has become a central concern of many political scientists, who see the increasing isolation of the poor as perpetuating the cycle of unemployment, broken families, teen-age pregnancy, crime

and drug use . . . Whites, many of them living in all-white enclaves, fear that black poverty may spread into their areas . . . The cities became both blacker and poorer, with the blacks falling into deeper into poverty while whites rose from poverty at the same rate, the study showed.

The illustration of these characteristics is intertwined with the repeated line (or lyrical hook) "Let's talk about Jesse" as a means to reinforce in the potential voter's mind how important Jackson was and would be for "history" and in the White House.

This was not the first time that Flash and his group had attempted to meld hip hop into politics to create a greater political awareness. The 1982 rap song "The Message" was the first music video that integrated "lyrical content with harsh ghetto realities" to show what it was like living in the streets of New York and dealing with police harassment (Keyes 212). Though not stated in the rap song "Jesse," it can be inferred that Jackson, being one who had lived and seen the "harsh ghetto realities" ever since his days in the civil rights movement, would be the ideal candidate who could bring "the message" to all Americans and help to change these harsh realities. However, when presented with the rap song, Jackson never used it and Flash never performed it as a means to garner political support (Asante Jr. 95). Regardless of Jackson's refusal to use the song, hip hop as a culture and rap music as a vocal expression of hip hop has attempted to influence politics for the past four decades (from the 1980s to now).

Starting during the 1980s and 1990s, rap music and hip hop culture became the medium to bring awareness to issues of social, economic and political marginalization. During this period rap music dealt with the topics of drugs, violence, police brutality, gangs, and turf wars (East vs. West coast rappers). These topics drove fear into politicians, well-positioned whites and the elders of many black communities who did not know how to understand the music and/or the realities these rappers were talking about. Instead, rap music became the focal point for political and social censorship as "warning labels" were created in order to curb what was a growing hip

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hop audience. Politicians like William Bennett and activist C. Delores Tucker worked on anti-rap campaigns to control the graphic gangsta-rap lyrics that were causing a moral panic to take place in conservative and liberal circles (Keyes 4).

In 1994, Congressional hearings were conducted looking into how important the need for censorship was to bring back a form of "civil responsibility" to society because of rap music. Record executives from Time Warner and Death Row Records were brought in to justify the merits of the music they were producing; all the while protests in the streets were being held, in some of which rap CDs and tapes were destroyed with a steamroller (Keyes 163).

As a cultural phenomenon, rap music and hip hop culture were lightning rods that faced political opposition to their message and way of life. As Common writes: "hip-hop matters, that this art form has said and continues to say so much about the world we live in. Read it. And listen" (quoted in Dyson and Daulatzai xi).

The political fighting that hip hop faced in its first two decades set the stage for the community to attempt to shape not just musical consumption, but also the politics of everyday life. For instance, the Hip Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN) was formed in 2001 to address the sociopolitical issues affecting the communities of African American s and Latinos involved in hip hop culture. The purpose of the HSAN is to harness "the cultural relevance of Hip-Hop music to serve as a catalyst for education, advocacy and other social concerns fundamental to the empowerment of youth" ("Mission Statement"). The HSAN has held numerous rallies, protests, conferences, and voter registration drives to help put forth a political arm for hip hop to attach itself to. The HSAN has helped to provide the foundational steps for hip hop to be a social movement that attempts to enlighten and shape politics and culture.

During the 2004 US presidential election, rapper, producer, and occasional activist Sean "P. Diddy" Combs put together the "Citizen Change" initiative. According to their then-website: "Citizen Change is a national, non-partisan and non-profit organization created to educate, motivate, and empower the more than 42 million Americans aged 18 to 30 that are eligible to vote on November 4, also known as the 'forgotten ones'" ("About Citizen Change"). The explicit message that Diddy wanted to send out to the "forgotten ones" is to Vote or Die! Diddy enlisted the help of fellow rappers 50 Cent, Ludacris, rap producer (and creator of the HSAN) Russell Simmons, and many other celebrities to be part of his cause. In the end, the campaign helped to register two million new "forgotten ones" voters (Vargas).

Four years later, hip hop took even more of a step forward into shaping politics and culture by attaching itself directly to a presidential candidate. However, unlike the 1984 Democratic primaries, this candidate embraced the help of the hip hop community. The 2008 presidential election of Senator Barack Obama versus Senator John McCain not only saw rappers pushing to get young people out to vote, they took a much more active political role through verse and campaigning. Rappers wrote numerous songs endorsing and urging the hip hop community to elect Obama for president over McCain. A couple of rap songs that talk about or mention Obama consisted of Jay-Z–"You're All Welcome," Jadakiss–"Why (remix)," Common–"The People," and Ludacris–"Politics in Rap." In addition to these rap songs, Jay-Z, Ludacris, and Common all went out on the campaign trail hosting fundraising concerts and/or performing at political rallies where Obama would come and speak (Kaufman).

The coupling of these songs with previous political activism has led to an important question to be asked: "Is our goal to run hip-hop generationers for office, to turn votes for Democratic and Republicans, to form a third party, or to provide our generation with a more

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concrete political education?" (Kitwana 346). The election of Obama marked a massive change in the history of US presidential elections; not only was he the first African American president elected; but his electoral campaign and win demonstrated how full circle hip hop had come to be a potential political force.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s hip hop was an unknown commodity. Was it simply going to be a "fad" (e.g., a fashion trend) or was it going to be a potential cultural force? As hip hop and its elements (breakin', graffiti, deejaying, mcing/rapping) grew from actions done within specific places (parks, houses, the streets) into a global cultural icon so has its potential power to be a force for sociopolitical change.

This project explores recent attempts by hip hop (and/or to recruit hip hop) to be recognized in the mainstream political sphere and to have its concerns acknowledged and changed. Since its inception hip hop culture has been counter. Counter to the music being played at the time (R & B, funk, disco, etc.), counter to the fashion trends, and counter in its means of expression. It is this counter culture and its vocal expression (rappers and rap music) that provide the basis for this project. Hip hop has demanded in the past to be recognized for the issues affecting its community members. Yet, it has not sustained this demand for sociopolitical recognition and/or effective change to their issues. Robert Asen and Daniel Brouwer (2) write: "Many publics arise as well from the demands made by long-suppressed and marginalized groups for the rights and responsibilities of political membership, collective sovereignty, or both." The power to change the issues within their community that have been denied is what compels the actions of those within the community to form a counterpublic sphere that can seize its political opportunities (Asen and Brouwer 3). Hip hop has a counter-discourse that those within the community use to express their anger to being excluded from the political sphere;

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which in turn serves as the basis for an oppositional identity (Asen and Brouwer 7). Hip hop's "counter-ness" exists primarily in its agents (rappers) and its messaging (rap music), but it needs to move toward a form of raptivism by which the community has equal access to the political public sphere and change can occur.

This project is designed to explore how the scholarship of hip hop (musicology), rhetoric (counterpublic spheres), politics and social movement theory intertwine, and to demonstrate how hip hop's community can emerge as a counterpublic sphere that could become a social movement. This project relies upon the rhetorical work of the counterpublic sphere theory as a result of the hip hop community seeking a voice and recognition in the political public sphere. This serves as one of the basis for creating a counterpublic sphere. Asen and Brouwer (8) argue that "notions of counterpublic suggest unequal access to power and uneven distribution of symbolic and material resources advantage dominant social groups and disadvantage subordinate groups in public discourse."

The project provides a different location for rhetoric to be uncovered and then analyzed; in order for the hip hop community to emerge as a counterpublic sphere that can become a social movement. The scholarship of counterpublic theorist (Robert Asen, Daniel Brouwer, Nancy Fraser, etc.) give the hip hop community a different voice than it has had before that can serve to address issues of political legitimacy, political and social suffrage, political and social transformation, and the "the specific conditions in which discursive practices take place" (Asen and Brouwer 15). As a result, the project advances the idea that the hip hop community has power within its marginalized status that can be used to call people to the sphere. Additionally, the project advances the idea that rappers serve as change agents that voice the counter-discourse of the community and can serve as the leaders of an emerging counterpublic sphere. Next,

through case studies, the counterpublic status of the hip hop community is questioned through an examination of its connections to and interactions with mainstream politics (Democratic and Republican appeals). Examining how the Democratic and Republican parties attempt to appease the hip hop community serves as a way to visualize how recognition by the mainstream political sphere will look, what it will mean, and what it will result in. Finally, the project advances the idea that the counterpublic hip hop sphere can emerge as a social movement through the implementation of political opportunities theory.

The appearance of hip hop's rappers, music and culture as part of the last two presidential elections requires an exploration into the connections of music to rhetorical theory. Two basic questions drive this exploration: one, "how is music rhetorical?" and two, "how has communication studies investigated music as a rhetorical means?" The interest in studying how music is rhetorical dates back to comments made by Plato about the effect of music upon a society. Plato stated: "the introduction of novel fashions in music is a thing to beware of as endangering the whole fabric of society" (Sellnow and Sellnow 395). The basic premise for how music is rhetorical is that music is a form of communication and that this medium attempts to provide a site for discourse to occur. Robert Walser (195) argues: "If we regard a group of people as possessing 'music' or . . . 'culture,' we are more likely to see them as human beings like ourselves and to think them worthy of respect and fair treatment." The importance of music being tied to a particular culture is that it not only brings awareness of the cultural existence of people; but more importantly, the issues affecting them and those within a given cultural community. Robert Tinajero (2) writes: "The situated realities and discourses espoused by Hip Hop rhetoric are important for understanding the social and political culture whose worldview is highly influenced by the culture's discourse. These discourse . . . not only display the worldview

of those persons, but they are central in creating that worldview." Music, and specifically, rap

music provides a new place to find rhetoric. A place to investigate the worldview of this cultural

discourse and to criticize the ramifications of their situated realities in relation to other realities.

One of the ways that rhetoric can be found within music is through the messenger and

their message. Hip hop's messengers are rappers, and their message can be found in both their

lyrics and musical accompaniment. Though rap music has had to fight the label of being "anti-

intellectual" rappers serve the function of being "public intellectuals" who use symbols and

labels to mediate the realities of their community (Dawkins 62). Hip hop (or rap) music is able to

appeal to a wide variety of audiences, and therefore derives its rhetorical power from its ability

to be "noisy." Robert Walser defines "noisiness" as: "always relative to whatever articulates

order in a discourse or a culture, and the noisiness of hip hop contributes to its ability to express

dissent and critique, and to articulate the identity of a community that is defined as, or that

defines itself as, noise" (197). "Noise" provides a new site for rhetoric to be explored; it provides

a means for a substantive dialogue to occur regarding the lyrics (and sounds) used by rappers,

and it requires those within the community and rhetorical critics to investigate the realities being

put forth by this "noise." Therefore, hip hop as a cultural force and rap music as its vocal means

of expression provide differing noise sites for that embody the philosophy of rapper KRS-ONE:

"rap is something that is done, while hip-hop is something that is lived" (Shaw). Marcia Dawkins

draws the parallels between rap music and rhetoric in five distinct manners. Dawkins (62)

explains that:

> The rhetoric is strategic, functional, active in the world of events and affairs, and
> fundamentally persuasive. The rhetorical nature of hip hop allows it to (1) tackle salient
> issues and aim at specific audience; (2) use vocabulary with which the audience is
> familiar; (3) use rhythm to regulate how words are said and understood; (4) act as
> education and entertainment; and (5) move the audience to some action.

The five distinct ways rap music is rhetorical lends itself to rhetorical critics investigating the messages and ramifications of them for the hip hop community.

The rapper, as a public intellectual, is seeking to move the community and those who have marginalized it to embrace the kairotic truths that exist within lyrics and musical beats. Hip hop has a kairos, in that it requires people to recognize and be moved by the truths/realities being expressed within the music. Robert Tinajero (17) explains that rap's "kairotic truths are always situated in real life situations and among real and perceived social conditions . . . illustrates the lives and struggles of often poor, minority, and socially-rhetorically silenced individuals in their real and perceived struggles with social issues." The kairotic truths are speaker-audience based in that they require the speaker and audience to communicate in the same language (Dawkins 72). The ability for the speaker and audience to communicate using the same action brings forth a powerful voice that can be used to offset the tools used to marginalize their voice. The rapper's discourse (or lyrics) coupled with a motivated audience, can have an affect upon the thoughts and actions of those social structures and events that impeded hip hop's voice from being heard (Tinajero 18). It requires us to consider the ramifications of their message and what (or whom) they are attempting to persuade.

One of the ramifications to consider is the ability for music to have an effect upon democracy. Music has the ability to reach into the public sphere and affect the type of political debate that is or is not occurring (Naerland 473). Torgeir Naerland's article about hip hop expressivity as political discourse analyzes the way by which Norwegian rapper Lars Vaular depicted the fictional death of Siv Jensen, the female leader of the Progress Party (Naerland 474). The rap song challenged the economic, moral and right-wing political agenda of the party by showing how the musical expressivity of hip hop could affect the public sphere in Norway.

Therefore, rhetorical musical communication takes place on three levels for Naerland. First, its expressivity articulates specific identity positions and lifestyles that need to be explored. Second, music is proven to be "an integral part of public life" that has to encourage people to discuss, interpret and criticize a given expression. Third, musical communication is often about the articulation of private and or subcultural experiences or perspectives which should be brought forth to engage with the public sphere (Naerland 475). The three rhetorical levels produce the effect of providing an alternative voice to the public sphere and show another way that music is rhetorical.

The result of challenging the public sphere is that music can be used as an activist means to explicitly transform the very nature of events that have left them voiceless in the public sphere. Kerran Sanger analyzes how the function of singing within the civil rights movement attempted to bring about personal and economic freedom for blacks. First, music was viewed as a means to bring people into the movement. Music became an outlet that could attract all people regardless of skin color (Sanger 180). The music served as a positive reinforcement to combat the actual hatred and negativity that activists would face in their everyday life. The music acted as symbolic behavior that encouraged people to take up other rhetorical actions: freedom rides, sit-ins, and marches (Sanger 181). The rhetorical power of each song was that it was able to fill in the gap when others could not speak up. Music provided the emotion when one could not communicate. The emotion then carried to another and was used as the positive reinforcement to continue the fight for economic and political equality.

Overall, music during the civil rights movement fundamentally changed the people. Sanger (191) writes: "singing changed them, created strong positive emotion, banished fear and hatred, and changed them with a previously unexperienced sense of spirituality." These changes

were transformative and helped to overcome the impediments that attempted to restrict the counterpublic voices against the dominant public sphere. The ramification to consider going forward is how hip hop (rap) music can be a transformative force that can bring about a counterpublic sphere that can seize upon political opportunities to challenge the racial, economic, gender, and political inequalities that exist for this community.

A secondary means to explore the rhetorical nature of music has been studied by scholars interested in the lyrics and musical accompaniment of a given song. The scholars interested in this combination contend that there is a greater context to the music and not just a strict focus on the "lyrics." Context is created for rhetorical analysis by the consideration of both the actual sound data and factors that affect one's listening experience (Matula 218). Scholars like Deanna Sellnow and Timothy Sellnow, Alex Bailey, Theodore Matula and others are interested in the rhetorical impact of how meaning, value and persuasion occur when sound and context are explored as rhetorical for music (Matula 218). Sellnow and Sellnow (396) contend: "any method designed to analyze music as a rhetorical form must consider the dynamic interaction between lyrics and score to capture a full meaning of the message." Alex Bailey (20) argues that music frames our everyday experiences and contextualizes our understanding of the world. Both Sellnow and Sellnow (395-396) and Bailey's (20) articles trace the theoretical scholarship that has been postulated over the last thirty years to create a rhetorical framework for music.

The scholarship done by Susan Langer in 1953 is regarded as the start of crafting a theoretical framework for music to be viewed in a different rhetorical light. Langer proposed the idea of music crafting an "illusion of life" for those who listened to it. Bailey (21) writes: "The illusion of life occurs when an audience internalizes aesthetic symbols (music in this case) and experiences the life-view offered within the musical phenomena." Langer believes that music

creates a sense of feeling and that it serves as a symbolic expression of emotion. The composer manifests their emotions and feelings through their sound and lyrics, and this gets translated into an "illusion of life" as the music represents the "highest organic response" to another human being (Bailey 21). That is, how the listener now views their "life" is through the perspective of the composer or rapper. Langer's perspective allows for music to be seen as a rhythm of life, by which organic movement occurs and interaction with the music becomes a new site for rhetorical exploration.

The work of Langer provides the foundation for Deanna and Timothy Sellnow's work. The Sellnows take the "illusion of life" and craft a different way to view this rhetorical perspective. One of the operating premises for their work is that "music sounds the way feelings feel . . . where words fall short in expressing the inner emotions . . . music is able to do so" (Sellnow and Sellnow (397). The twist for the Sellnows is that they are looking for incongruent symbols that can have an effect on the meaning of the listener and composer. Two concepts that drive this theory are that of the virtual experience and virtual time. The lyrics that one uses create a "virtual experience" in that the listener is persuaded by the artist perspective. "To clarify, musicians are more than reporters documenting a succession of events as they happened . . . they present an illusion of life, amplifying a particular perspective of a situation" (Sellnow and Sellnow 399). One must look for the comic or tragic rhythm that is used by the musician. Visual time takes into consideration the musical score for analysis. The visual time now brings to life the audible tensions or feelings of a song into a sensible means of understanding. Therefore, the critic should look at how the music symbolizes the feelings and subsequent release of the feelings through the musical patterns structured within a song (Sellnow and Sellnow 402). The key difference between their work and Langer is that, for the Sellnows, rhetoric resides in the

incongruity of the musical score and lyrical structure and not just in the artist idea for the music (Bailey 29).

Communication scholars James Irvine and Walter Kirkpatrick have explored the ways by which symbols can be used to persuade, and effect human behavior (272). Irvine and Kirkpatrick (273) write: "music derives its rhetorical impact from the *participatory insight* that is developed in the formation of *amplificative meaning* in both the artist and the listener. The "amplificative meaning" considers the interaction of musical variables on two levels: an act and an event. The "act" takes place in the mind of the musician (or rapper) as one manipulates the musical variables in order to entice a "range of effects in the mind and behavior of the listener" (Irvine and Kirkpatrick 274). The "event" takes place in the mind of the listener and one must explore the relationship between the musical variables and the specific response that is evoked in the mind of the listener. The rhetorical impact of this theory comes in the deconstruction of the meaning produced by the act that affects the event.

The scholarship exploring how music is rhetorical expands into other areas for consideration. First is the incorporation of hip hop into the classroom as a rhetorical teaching tool. Nick Sciullo writes about his experience as a professor who utilized rap music as a way to bring students and teachers together. Sciullo ("Instructor's Corner") contends: "music is in fact a critical part of studying communication . . . A better understanding of hip-hop's potential as communicative art and analytical lens is important for understanding many of the ways today's students and teachers think of the world."

Rap music provides a more modern way of seeing Aristotle's three proofs taking place. For instance, pathos as the means of emotional appeal can be heard through the sound and lyrics of various rappers. Tupac talking about the struggles of single motherhood in "Dear Mama" or

Kanye West in "New Slaves" critiques the ways that blacks have become "new slaves" due to mass consumerism and laws that lock blacks up in prison. The emotional appeal of these songs reflects rage, sadness and a contemplation of what one's life is like through the sound and lyrics of each song. Since it is a language of many young people, the issues discussed within the lyrics provide a way to prompt participation. Hip hop has become a lens by which to see how oneself and others communicate.

A secondary consideration for rap music and communication is the work of scholars who see them as intrinsically linked. For instance, Bryan McCann has looked at how "Black rage" has provided an "affective impulse" that has influenced the lyrics of rappers in hip hop. McCann (408) writes: "By theorizing Black rage as a radically contingent founding affective impulse of the hip-hop nation, critics can identify common affective threads across the genre and spy emancipatory potential in hip-hop's most jarring excesses" "Black rage" provides the inherent anger that drives the African American community. There is a difference between "emotion" and "affect emotion." "Affect emotion" is raw, it is pre-existent. However, "emotion" shows the capture of the political, social and cultural articulation of affect (McCann 409). McCann, analyzes the work of rapper Tupac and demonstrates how black affect was foundational to the lyrics he crafted and shared with others.

Though this project does not explore black affect, it does continue in the evolution of exploring rap music and the politics of the hip hop community through a new rhetorical, critical lens. Hence, it is important for rhetoricians to write about music so that it considers the conditions that caused this counterpublic sphere to surface. Next, it shows how those within the sphere are affected by the rhetoric and politics of the mainstream political sphere. Finally, it offers a means for the counterpublic sphere to continue to criticize and evolve its message and or

results it seeks recognition for. Simple recognition is not enough; equal access to the political sphere and change to the issues of the counterpublic sphere are required for a movement's mission to be achieved.

Preview of Chapters

The project consist of five chapters with each one having a different function but serving to build upon one another to eventually offer suggestions as to how hip hop can seize its political opportunities to affect the people of its community. Chapter 1, "Introduction," has demonstrated the power hip hop music and its community has had in recent elections. Additionally, it has drawn connections between music being rhetorical and how music as rhetoric can have an effect on others.

Chapter 2, "The Roots–From Ancestral Speech to the Politics of Hip Hop," broadly covers the details as to how the hip hop culture and community came about and its use of rap music to voice the concerns of its community. The current stylizing of rap music and spoken word is grounded in the ancestral oral traditions of West Africa's "bards" or "griots." It is the use of their oral storytelling containing their history along with various word play games (e.g. signifying or the dozens) that spread through the African diaspora that provides the foundation for how rappers rap. The intent of the chapter is not to fully retrace the entirety of hip hop's development, but to show where the culture comes from and how the language of rap has become the verbal representation of the streets. Overall, hip hop culture is comprised of four pillars: one, DJ's (disc jockeys); two, breakdancers; three, graffiti artists; and four, rappers (MC), but the focus of this project will be on rappers and rap music and its attempt to shape culture and politics. This chapter will outline the contributing factors that led to the development of hip hop culture (i.e., gangs, commercial vs. conscious rap), and will emphasize the politics of rap's

message. The central focus is on the politics of a rapper's placement in the community and their message's ability to garner attention to make a difference.

Next, chapter 3, "Rap's Space–Argumentative Spheres, Counterpublic's and Identity," broadly covers the rhetorical framework necessary to examine rap music's attempt to craft a space for its message to be heard. To begin, the chapter follows in the steps of Thomas Goodnight and establishes the three central rhetorical spheres: personal, technical and public. The latter sphere becomes the focus of the chapter in looking at how Jurgen Habermas constructs the meaning and purpose of this sphere. Diverging from the public sphere is the work of Nancy Fraser and Robert Asen about the creation of a counterpublic sphere that directly critiques Habermas's public sphere by providing space for different voices. Connected to the counterpublic sphere is one's identity in the sense of how does this new sphere bring one into the fold? Identity is wrapped up in issues of power and the role of the speaker to the audience. This latter part of the chapter relies on the work of Michel Foucault and Kenneth Burke.

Moving from the scholastic foundations provided by the pervious chapters, the next two chapters provide case studies to apply the scholarship. Chapter 4, "Hip Hop President?–Obama and Hip Hop's Outreach to Each Other," broadly covers the connection that the politician had to the people and vice versa. Taking into consideration the previous two presidential campaigns prior to Obama's (2000 and 2004), hip hop had become more politically active but had not embraced and endorsed a candidate as they did with him. Accordingly, I am not trying to conflate all members of the hip hop community as a "singular" person or group. The discussion as to what the hip hop community is comprised of will take place, but for the purpose of this chapter it is important to analyze how forceful hip hop became about its politics and its potential political representative. As mentioned previously in this introduction, there have been multiple

rap songs that talked about voting for Obama or what it would mean to have a "black president." Additionally, rappers went out on the campaign trail and attempted to garner support for Obama. This chapter focuses on how the rap songs about Obama crafted a counterpublic sphere to not only voice their concerns but to demand political action taken by Obama. Plus, Obama engaged in the acknowledgement of this sphere by writing letters to hip hop magazine *Vibe* and employing hip hop elements in his campaign. In the end, however, one must ask whether Obama represents the fulfillment of the hip hop community's desire to have a "hip hop politician," or is this the desire at all? Obama is not the "hip hop politician" the community needs to lead the emergence of this counterpublic sphere into a social movement. However, he has made two contributions to the members of this sphere. First, is to change the conversation to issues affecting the hip hop community, and second, to embrace more community outreach through the use of raptivism.

In 2009, having suffered a political defeat to now President Obama, Republicans were seeking a way to better understand why they had lost and what they could do to fix things in the future. The newly elected Republican chair Michael Steele told the *Washington Post* that Republicans needed a "hip hop makeover" (Hallow). It is this attempt at a makeover that leads to the case study examined in the next chapter. Chapter 5, "Hip Hop Republicans–A New Face for the Grand Ole Party," broadly examines the website hiphoprepublicans.com and their attempt at creating a new urban message for the "hip hop community." Looking at the rhetoric of their website and the actions attempted to be taken by Steele (now former chairman), this chapter will examine what this new face is and how hip hop affects or would represent it.

The final chapter of the project will serve as a discussion of a sociological, musicological, and rhetorical framework that the hip hop community can use to help transform a counterpublic

sphere into a social movement. Chapter 6, "Crafting Hip Hop's Social Movement to Seize

Political Opportunities," broadly covers the scholarship that the hip hop community can employ

to shape itself into a movement. First, this chapter discusses the role of music/musicians in

movements as the agents of change. Work done by Ron Eyerman contends that worldviews and

consciousness change due to music taking on the role of the political moderator (445). In support

of this perspective, Courtney Brown argues: "A successful protest song will initiate a reaction

among the masses that will be sufficiently noticeable such that politicians respond out of fear of

losing their influence, and possibly their jobs" (181-182). It is the accompaniment of rap music

to the sociological theory of the political opportunity structure (i.e., the political process model).

Initiated by Peter Eisinger, the theory is interested in exploring the interrelationship of one's

political environment affecting one's political behavior, in particular within an urban setting

(11). Eisinger sets the groundwork for understanding what a "political structure" is and it is

through the work of Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, David Meyer, and Doug McAdam that

guidelines are constructed for the factors /elements needed to make a social movement. Coupling

these two schools of thought together will provide a blueprint for how hip hop can turn itself into

a social movement. In addition, insight will be offered as to whether the artist or the politician

should be the one to direct a movement and where the movement can have (or is having) an

influence.

Conclusion

Hip hop has critics as to whether or not its messages and political activism can

substantially offer a means to change the issues facing this community. James McWhorter

writes: "there is nothing hip-hop music . . . has to offer black America in terms of political

activism . . . Hip-hop presents nothing useful to forging political change in the real world. It's all about attitude and just that. It's just music" (8 & 12).

It would be blindly ignorant of me to assume there are no critics of rap and/or that rap's political activism does not deserve to be criticized. Yet the importance of the message and the means by which it is attempting to reorder the politics of today deserves attention and analysis. Bakari Kitwana argues "from hip-hop generation activists to local entrepreneurs to the everyday hip-hop kid on the block–must not only be brought to the table, but must have a major voice" (345).

I am not attempting to write a history of hip hop or rap music; instead, I am looking to discuss how the formation of the hip hop community into a counterpublic sphere will allow this sphere's voice to make a cultural, political difference that, if seized, can change the political structures this community continues to face by means of a social movement.

Chapter 2: The Roots–From Ancestral Speech to the Politics of Hip Hop

 [Verse 1]
Hip means to know
It's a form of intelligence
To be hip is to be up-date and relevant
Hop is a form of movement
You can't just observe a hop
You got to hop up and do it
Hip and hop is more than music
Hip is the knowledge, hop is the movement
Hip and hop is intelligent movement
Or relevant movement
We selling the music
So write this down on your black books and journals: hip-hop culture is eternal
Run and tell all your friends
An ancient civilization has been born again, it's a fact . . .

[Verse 2]
Hip-hop
Her Infinite Power, Helping Oppressed People
We are unique and unequaled, hi-hop
Holy Integrated People, Having Omnipresent Power
The watchman's in the tower of hip-hop
Hydrogen Iodine Phosphorous, Hydrogen Oxygen Phosphorous
That's called hip-hop
The response of cosmic consciousness
To our condition as hip-hop
We gotta think about the children we bringing up
When hip and hop means intelligence springing up
We singing what, sickness, hatred, ignorance and poverty
Or health, love, awareness and wealth
Follow me

[Hook]
I come back, every year I get newer
I'm the dust on the moon, I'm the trash in the sewer
Let's go, I come back, every year I get brighter
If you thinkin' hip hop is alive, hold up your lighter
Let's go, I come back, every year I'm expandin'
Talkin' to developers about this city we plannin', c'mon
I come back through any endeavor
This is hip hop, we gonna last forever (lyricsfreak.com)
- KRS-One & Marley Marl "Hip Hop Lives"

I was attending a speech and debate team practice when our head coach told us that our policy debate team was going to be performing their affirmative case for the entire team to give feedback on. This was not an unusual exhibition to take place, as other members of the team would routinely perform their individual speeches or test out debate theories to see what others thought before taking their speeches/debates to a tournament. Yet this debate exhibition was different right from the start. Our policy team was not stacking plastic tubs on top of each other to make a faux "podium" to speak behind, nor were they pulling out sheets of paper to read to us; instead they pulled out their computers and speakers and started playing rap music to the entire team. I was completely caught off guard as I had never seen rap used as an "affirmative case argument." Come to find out, our team was not the only policy team to attempt this new form of performance debate, which was called the "Louisville Project."

The Louisville Project was designed to challenge the notion as to how an argument can be made, but more importantly, to provide a more realistic message about what is happening in the world by using the various vocal means of expressions to alter the politics of the given policy debate topic. This new form of debate was implemented as a means to bring urban voices to a competitive speech world that mainly only cherishes the standard form of debate. This standard form of debate typically consists of reading as many sheets of paper (which is called a constructive speech) as fast as possible to get in as many types of arguments as possible. Next, the opposing team (the negative) will do a version of the same and this goes back-and-forth for over an hour until a winner is declared. This is not to say that there is no intelligent academic research being done; but what the Louisville Project was attempting to do was alter the narrative, the message, and the means of communication to show how others think and to bring new debaters to the forensics community.

In watching this debate practice, I started to challenge my own notions as to what hip hop was, what rap music was trying to say, and the various means by which it can be used and to what end. This is not to say that I never had conversations about the messages of rappers like Tupac, Biggie, Public Enemy, etc. but I had never been exposed to the application of hip hop as an academic means to talk about what is happening in our world. It is this debate practice, coupled with my subsequent research and attempt at a new understanding of hip hop, that made this musical form an intelligent movement that I had to hop to.

The track "Hip Hop Lives" by KRS-One and Marley Marl is an attempt at prophesying the power rap music has to bring about an "intelligent movement." Verse one of the track puts forth the notion that rap music is not going away, but instead is a movement that requires people to be active in. Lines two through six of the first verse require the listener to see the knowledge in rap's messaging and to put that knowledge forward in how one interacts with others or talks about the culture of hip hop. It is in the second verse that KRS-One and Marl define what hip hop is and what it is all about. Hip hop is about helping oppressed people, about having an omnipresent power that can be in all places, talking about all conditions of life (not just what is happening in the United States). It is a call to the consciousness to bring forth a message that helps to heal and strengthen this community. The rap's hook professes the enduring nature of hip hop, that it is a musical form that will continue the test of time. The conditions of the rap's hook illustrates hip hop's ability to be brighter though the development of a "new city." This new city is one that embodies the two previous verses by having people intelligently craft messages that help to lift oppressed people out of their conditions and moves people forward to change those conditions. As my teammates were using their constructive speech to formulate a new consciousness as to how we should research for a debate topic or talk about the issues affecting

real people through the use of hip hop music, so are KRS-One and Marley Marl. The way hip hop lives is by bringing forth the everyday lives (experiences, conditions, etc.) that affect this community and which in turn require the listener to help build a new city to change these conditions.

Before I begin with the historical African oral traditions that have provided a foundation for modern day rap music, I want to define a couple of terms so that it is clear what I am referencing in relation to this project. I want to provide a definition of "hip hop / rap" as compared to "hip hop culture." In regards to the terms "hip hop / rap" and "hip hop culture," it is important to know the spelling elements that comprise hip hop culture and how one of the elements (rap) is synonymous with being used to talk about the entire culture. Hip hop as a culture consists of four foundational elements and is defined by Cheryl Keyes as:

> Hip-hop is a youth arts mass movement that . . . Comprised of disc jockeys (DJs/turntablists), emcees (MCs/*rappers*), breakdancers (b-boys and b-girls) and graffiti writers (aerosol artists) . . . hip-hop further encompasses what its adherents describe as an attitude rendered in the form of stylized dress, language, and gestures associated with urban street culture. (1)

Each element has within in it its own history, means of expression, style, and purpose to represent the hip hop community. Now scholarship has developed that discusses hip hop culture in regards to the images that it produces or the means by which it has shaped American culture as a whole. The US government's website *America.gov* has multiple reports from scholars, journalists, etc. about the effect that hip hop has had on reshaping American culture. For instance, Emmett Price III discusses the impact it had on language when he states:

> The greatest impact of hip-hop culture is perhaps its ability to bring people of all different beliefs, cultures, races, and ethnicities together as a medium for young (and now middle-aged) people to express themselves in a self-determined manner, both individually and collectively. Hip-hop culture has influenced not only American English, but numerous languages around the world. ("What's New?")

Therefore, hip hop culture deals not only with the four elements that provide the foundation of what is known as "hip hop," but also scholarship talks about the way this specific culture has shaped (and continues to shape) the larger American and global cultures.

Rap music in contrast deals with the specific messages of rappers (emcees). Cheryl Keyes goes on to define "rap" specifically as "music defined as a musical form that makes use of rhyme, rhythmic speech, and street vernacular, which is recited or loosely chanted over a musical soundtrack" (1). Brent Wood explains that rap music consists of three parts: "rhythm, rhyme and rhetoric . . . 'Rap' to refer to the principally rhythmic vocal component of the music which has come to be known more generally as 'Hip-hop'" (1). Jason Tanz contends that "if you are deeply invested in hip-hop, you may not even think of it as a noun but rather as an adjective that describes a mind-state, confidence, a swagger, a commitment" (ix).

For this project I am narrowing down my focus to examine hip hop/rap music and the rhetoric coming from it and not the three other elements that have created hip hop culture. One could do an entire dissertation on any of these four elements, yet it is the rhetorical musical expression that intrigues me the most. This interest coincides with attempts by politicians, organizations, etc. that see hip hop culture and/or musical expression as a cheap political ploy to garner potential voters. As a warning, there will be times where I talk about "hip hop culture," but this will be specifically contextualized as to how the rap music lyrical content has attempted to reshape the hip hop culture as a whole. I will focus my uses of the terms "hip hop" to talk about the community or its issues and "rap" to be a moniker to talk about the musical expression of this community.

African Oral Traditions for the Foundation of Modern Rap

The connection of modern rap to African oral traditions is grounded in the importance of the spoken word and the functions that it provides. To begin, the phrase "hip-hop" is grounded in historical connections to Africa. Molefi Asante Jr. writes in a fictional phone conversation with hip-hop itself that: "The word 'hip' comes out of the Wolof language, spoken by the Wolof people in Senegal, Gambia, and Mauritania. In Wolof, there's a verb, *'hipi,'* which means 'to open one's eyes and see.' So *hipi* is a term of enlightenment. My first name means 'to see or to be enlightened.'" (250). Thus, the foundational principle that shapes the roots of hip hop is to be a light to help open the eyes of others. The historical connection for rap music and the other three elements that comprise the hip hop community is that each element provides a different way to allow people to be part of the community and to see how each element highlights different means to enlighten others to that which is affecting society as a whole.

Asante Jr. goes on to define the purpose of "hop" for hip hop overall. "Well 'hop' is an Old English word that means 'to spring into action.' So what I'm about is enlightenment, then action. Without the enlightenment, you're not going to know what to do, but without the hop or action, well, then it's just rhymes" (255). Therefore, the function of hip hop, and in turn rap music (for this particular project), is to provide a means by where people can be shown what is going on in their own community or the communities around them, and to have a recourse as to spring into action to help resolve those issues. This becomes the importance of understanding how the various African oral traditions allow the modern day emcee (a.k.a., rapper) to speak about what is going on, and to call people to action. It is not enough to have rappers use the spoken word to "uplift, educate, and inspire;" there must be "foot soldiers on the ground" making a movement with what is being passed down to them (Asante Jr. 255).

Rap as a form of spoken word and musical expression can trace its ancestry for several centuries to West African oral traditions (Keyes 17). Due to millions of Africans being sold during the West Atlantic slave trades, the spoken word became an even more important means of connecting the diaspora to the histories of home. Rap's oral traditions are located in the social, oral functions of the griot, djali, or bard. Depending on the West African location, these three words would be used to describe the function of each person and how their spoken words represented the histories, cultures, and conditions of life for these various groups. For instance, Jon Yasin writes that:

> The role of the griot existed in West African society before the great empires of Ghana (700-1200), Mali (1200-1500) and Songhay (1350-1600). During the Mali and Songhay Empires, the slave trade began, directed toward Europe and later the Western Hemisphere. When captured and forced into slavery, Africans were stripped of their personal and social identities. (203)

As a result, the bard, griot, or djali provided the means by which to re-identify oneself and to talk about the current situation one found themselves in. William Jelani Cobb argues: "enslaved in a land of strange deeds and customs and shackled into a new language, made speech into a metaphor for identity" (16). One's identity was grounded in the bards, griots, and/or djali's ability to serve as a storyteller or cultural historian who passed their traditions and history to their fellow community members through the use of stories and music (Keyes 19).

Having broadly defined the role of the bard or griot, it is important to contextualize more what each one did and how the African oral traditions provided the foundation for rap music and its role in the hip hop community. To begin, the bard, griot, and djali serve different functions but use the different African oral traditions to complete their task. In drama/theater there is the phrase "smile now, cry later." Loosely, this phrase can be attributed to the differing

roles/functions of the griot and the djali. Amiri Baraka (79) writes that "Griot means 'cry.' Djali, on the other hand, does not mean cry but to 'promote laughter.'"

The dichotomy of these roles shows the complex functions that the griot and/or djali play for enslaved Africans and the foundations of modern day rap. Specifically, the role of the djali was to bring "jolly" to the people by telling the history of the place they came from or were in (Baraka 81-82). Overall, their function was to bring light to the mind of the people. Baraka writes, "their job is to light up the mind, to make the mind shine, to make the mind smile, to make the mind laugh, to make the mind laugh with understanding, recognition, to understand history as revelatory story" (82).

One of the oral traditions that helped to shine the mind through jolly was storytelling through trickster consciousness. The trickster told the stories of Brer Rabbit or Anansi the Spider in order to "represent the superiority of intelligence and cleverness over brute force" (Perry 30). The shining of the mind comes about by the use of the character Brer Rabbit to act as the metaphor for Africans in America who were enslaved in their own "briar patch." Jon Yasin argues that this story "represents a mode of resistance to the evils of slavery, as he displayed qualities as 'slickness, deceit, evasiveness and ruthless self interest'" (211). Brer Fox, in this case, represents the slaveholder and how he attempts to eat or make slaves of the African people in his briar patch. Yet, the moral of the story is that there is freedom in the location that Brer Rabbit knows about but no Brer Fox. The Fox just sees the briar patch as an area that is engulfed with thrones and has no possible ability to be a place where someone wants to live. However, Brer Rabbit knows the ways in and out of the patch. This element of "surprise" allows the trickster consciousness to convey that there is freedom where one looks. Freedom can be found in the shackles one finds themselves in; it may be a freedom of the mind (and eventually a

physical freedom), but it is the ability to speak around the slave master that provides the jolly and revelatory story (Perry 31).

Next, the griot and the bard serve similar functions but are perceived differently. Amiri Baraka calls the griot a "crier" or the "town crier" (81). This is an individual who knows the history of a given place, culture, etc. Melbourne Cummings and Abhik Roy explain, "The rap artist serves, as the African griot did, the role of the village oracle, making life comprehensible, defendable, and reachable. Rappers are traditional storytellers in that they are both creators of rhetoric as well as critics of rhetoric" (61). In this case, the oracle or crier would simply tell the story of a specific moment or cultural experience without the story being accompanied with various musical stylings or rhetorical characters like Brer Rabbit. Yet, the bard is one who is a storyteller and singer, who chronicles the history of a given nation, and passes down their "cultural traditions and mores through performance" (Keyes 19).

The bard is more identifiable to the modern rapper as they craft their message to the musical accompaniment that the DJ has crafted for that particular song. The bard is placed into the role of being an intermediary and interpreter amongst the members of their community and even other poets (Keyes 19). Bards, through their use of language and musical accompaniment, release what is known as *nyama* or a "malevolent force" that operates to "transform chaos into peace or transmute things and man himself" (Anyanwu, quoted in Keyes 20). Ceola Barber points out that the efficacy of *nyama* (or nommo) "generates the energy needed to deal with life's twists and turns; sustains our spirits in the face of insurmountable odds, transforms psychological suffering into external denouncements . . . and verbal recognition of self-worth and personal attributes" (quoted in Keyes 22). The result was that the poetic language and speech of Africans "documented one's existence, hopes, and desires" (Keyes 22). This description helps to provide

the foundational elements as to how rappers see their role or function within the hip hop and greater community as a whole.

Rappers as modern day griots/bards of their community tell their stories or document their existence through the use of several African oral and performative traditions: storytelling and ritualized games. Noting our modern raps, along with such influences of these African traditions, is crucial to our understanding of rap's foundation. It is important to note that such musical influences came to America during slavery and provided a means of expression. Narrative poems called "toasts" are "composed in rhymed couplets and recited in a humorous manner." The toasts consist of "exaggerated language, metaphor, expletives, boasting, repetition, formulaic expressions, and mimicry" (Keyes 24).

Griots and bards were known for using gossip and satire to express their ideas about history and politics (Cummings and Roy 61). One of the ways in which bards would use "satire" to relay their message was through the use of "signifyin (g)." Sam Floyd describes signifyin (g) as, "a way of saying one thing and meaning another; it is a reinterpretation, a metaphor of the revision of previous texts and figures" (quoted in Perry 61). The importance of "signifyin (g)" as a rhetorical strategy exists on two levels: the micro and macro. Russell Potter argues:

> on a *micro* level Signifyin (g) is a productive agent of difference, an incursion against stability, uniformity, and homogeneity. Yet signifyin (g) politics inevitably play on a *macro* level, particularly since Signifyin (g) has from its earliest origins deployed its linguistic "games" in order to frame and mobilize larger questions of power relations. (82)

The use of signifyin (g) as a rhetorical strategy provides the orator a way to both critique and question the system that has been marginalizing this form of discourse by doing so in a manner that the dominant system cannot explicitly understand. Through one's use of satire and double-meaning, it requires those that are outside this community (or who do not understand this form of

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expression) to attempt to unpack the meaning of the story, the characters, and the setting in attempts to reestablish control over the orator.

However, the power of this form of expression really comes in its layers. Hip hop is not something that is passively listened to. It is filled full of layers that envelop the mind and body into a field of battle. Potter explains, "Layer upon layer-one to dance to, one to think on, one to add to the din. Hip-hop itself is not merely *music* . . . it is a cultural recycling center, a social heterolect, a field of contest, even a form of psychological warfare" (108). Hip hop exists in a field of battle, where it denies the dominant discourse's ability to take control over it as the signifyin (g) subverts the power dynamic through its use of double meaning, satire, and performance of expression.

Another form of expression is that of "the dozens." The "dozens" consisted of verbal insults (or what we currently know as snaps) that would be exchanged back and forth through the use of rhymed couplets. The dozens was about the ability to "freestyle" your diss about your opponent. It was an expression of the freedom of form that could come about through one's spoken word. William Jelani Cobb writes: "To battle . . . is to put one's name on the line and test one's self in the crucible of verbal conflict . . . This emphasis on freedom of form emerges in direct relation to a group of people whose history has been defined by physical and time constraints" (78). The lyrical freedom to diss an opponent was more about the freedom to diss the structural constraints one was living in.

The verbal expression of rap music and its historical connections to various African verbal stylings has allowed the voice to of hip hop to be heard in numerous manners. Rappers representing the East, West, and Down South corners of the United States and around the world have taken these verbal stylings and re-imagined them in a manner that combines African oral

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traditions with new means of messaging. Additionally, hip hop has other elements (breakin and deejaying) that have connections to the African Diaspora. William Jelani Cobb explains: "Hip hop is literally a product of the African Diaspora–with breakdancing owning its existence to the afro-Brazilian martial art form of Capoeira, deejaying growing from the genius of Caribbean migrants to the United States " (7).

The notation of other hip hop pillars being shaped by the African Diaspora is not to slight the significance of the connection between African traditions and the function of each pillar in the culture, but is to show the other work that can be done in continued scholarship about hip hop and the African Diaspora. Yet, for this project, the emphasis on rapping, and/or the development of rap music, is crucial–as it is the "messages" of rap that serve as the oral representation of the community and its means to demand change.

Contributing Factors to the Formation of a Hip Hop Culture

The creation of hip hop as a form of cultural and political influence was shaped in part by a few contributing factors. The discussion of these contributions is not designed to limit or constrain other factors that other scholarship has found (or will find) to be important in the development of hip hop culture. Yet the factors that are going to be discussed provide a lens so as to see the importance of hip hop's voice in addressing the politics and culture of the day.

One of the first contributing factors that helped to create hip hop and its culture was the performance and poetics of the black arts movement (BAM). The precursor to rap music consisting of spoken words being laid on top of a rhythmic beat comes from the way by which BAM performers illustrated their poetry. Imamu Amiri Baraka is credited with the formation of the BAM after the death of Malcolm X (Keyes 32). Baraka sent out a letter to other black artists urging them to use their work to help rebuild and/or build by the black community. The purpose

of BAM was three-fold: first, "to create an art/poetry that was African American" Second, "to create an art that was mass-orientated "with messages that would come from the universities and could be brought to the people/streets. Third, to "create an art that was revolutionary" (Keyes 32-33). The three-fold purpose was used as an outreach program to garner youth participation and to tap into the experiences the youth were having in their communities, universities, etc. The revolution of BAM came not only in the organization of artists with a purpose, but with a new visual aesthetic and means of communication. BAM focused more on Afrocentric and black nationalist themes where Afros and African dress were embraced by the members of the movement.

The term "rap" was created by Hubert H. "Rap" Brown and his use of stylized speech that would focus on competing with other people around him in "judged competitions" (Keyes 32). Like the African oral tradition games of "the dozens" or toasting, Brown would engage a fellow competitor in this game of words to see who could get the most crowd reaction. The winner of the rap battle would be the one with the greatest crowd reaction. However, BAM took this new stylized way of speaking and used it to focus on African American daily experiences and as a tool to enlighten others to the blight of their community. BAM members like The Watt Prophets, The Last Poets of Harlem, and Gil Scott Heron became the "forebears of rap" as they would turn their poetry into recordings that sold nationwide and talked about various cultural and political issues affecting African Americans (Ards 312 and Keyes 34). Michael Eric Dyson contends: "Rap can be traced back to the revolutionary verses of Gil Scott-Heron and the Last Poets, to Pigmeat Markham's 'Here Come de Judge' . . . " (401).

The importance of BAM to hip hop is that it focused on raising up a youth arts movement. The focus was not placed on the politicians or elder statesmen to lead the charge for

cultural or political change; it was young people. The youth become the lifeblood by which future generations can be spawned to pass down the message of the poetry and the three-fold purposes of the movement. Next, BAM placed a focus on the spoken word being coupled with rhythmic beats that would serve as a new form of communication that placed this new spoken word as being the messages of the streets.

The second contributing factor was the cultural and political environment affecting the people of New York. The genesis of hip hop culture is grounded in the borough of the South Bronx and the cultural and political issues that this borough had to face (Dyson 404). Specifically, the South Bronx was affected by the political and environmental conditions cast upon them due to political decision-makers. During the late 1950s and the through the 1960s and 1970s the Bronx was divided due to housing projects and the construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway (Wood 3). The creation of the Expressway had two effects: it caused middle-class flight within the Irish, Jewish, Italian, and German neighborhoods, and it became a northern border to the people living in the Southern Bronx (Keyes 46).

The result of these two effects was that it left poorer Latino and black residents to pay higher prices for rent, while their living conditions began to worsen due to lack of upkeep by the owners of the rental units. Cheryl Keyes writes: "Exacerbating matters, some slumlords ceased paying taxes on their property. They . . . evade taxes by hiring someone to force residents out by burning down the apartments . . . " (228). Additionally, Angela Ards describes the conditions as the following: "Public schools became way stations warehousing youth until they were of prison age. Drugs and violence they attract seeped into the vacuum that the joblessness left" (312). In the end, the neighborhood housing was torn apart by the attempt to m ake travel easier. Yet, the only thing that was made easier was the means for gangs to take over the neighborhoods.

Studies show that during this period there were over 19,000 gang members and over 300 gangs in New York City (Keyes 46). However, it was the gang members and the gang culture itself that turned being in "different gangs" into something different. No longer were gangs "battling" over territories that they would represent; instead, hip hop emerged as a means to bring about peace and this came about through the work of Afrika Bambaataa. Bambaataa was part of the Black Spades gang and he contends that it was through the parties ran by his friend Kool Herc and the dance battles that took place at them that a transition from violent gang member to being part of a gang was made possible and thus helped to erode the violence of the gang culture. Nelson George writes that the "various hip hop expression (graffiti, breaking, Djing, rapping) filled the gap, effectively killing the gang culture of New York (18).

Bambaataa changed the culture of the gangs by giving it a new purpose and meaning. In 1974 he created the "gang" the Zulu Nation, which was comprised of individuals who used all four forms of hip hop expression to take on a new role in the community. The members of the Zulu Nation were to be role models for the community and to craft an anti-violence and crime message (George 18). The new "gang culture" was founded on the principles of solidarity through artistic competition (Keyes 47). It is through the work of Bambaataa and the Zulu Nation that the term "hip hop" can be credited for its creation. In an interview conducted by Cheryl Keyes with Bambaataa, he states, "So I coined a word myself and started using the word 'hip-hop' to name this type of culture, and then it caught on . . . concept of hip-hop encompassed urban street expressions and embodied a street attitude though gestures, language and stylized dress associated with street culture" (49). While the gangs were connected to the violence and drugs that existed on the streets of New York, they more importantly became the foundational

members of the hip hop community and helped to foster the formation of the hip hop community.

The final contributing factor to the formation of the hip hop culture was that of hip hop capitalism. Specifically, the creation of a genre of rap music known as "commercial" or "mainstream rap music." Tricia Rose defines commercial rap as: "meant to illuminate the significant role of corporate and mainstream American cultural imperatives in shaping the direction and content of what is most visible and most highly promoted in hip hop for profit" (242). The commercial rap genre was created with the first rap song to garner significant radio play and that was "Rapper's Delight." This rap song was the creation of producer Sylvia Robinson, the creator of Sugar Hill Records and the Sugar Hill Gang. The gang was a group of rappers that were thrown together as an attempt to be an alternative to disco. In 1979, "Rapper's Delight" was released for radio play and it found success as it was able to come across as a form of verbal playfulness that sounded different than disco (Werner 240). The sound utilized the disco beat "Good Times" by the group Chic's and became known for the hook "Guess what America? We love you!" (Werner 240). After being played on the radio, "Rapper's Delight" sold over two million records and became the catalyst for a new form of music (Keyes 70). Commercial rap had become a new cultural and capitalistic phenomenon and it inspired musical, food, apparel, and alcohol companies to start using this new musical form as a marketing tool.

Hip hop culture is now thought of in terms of clothing apparel, the type of music one creates, and the type of accessories one can label as being "hip hop" (e.g. Dr. Dre's Beats headphones). The power of hip hop capitalism has turned "hip hop" into a lucrative business to the point that *Forbes Magazine* has been doing a top "Hip Hop Artist" list for the past couple of years. This list complies the money an artist has earned for one calendar year by looking at how

much revenue their albums have generated and their concert sales, as well as the type of endorsement deals they have. The top three artists for 2013 were: Diddy (at $50 million), Jay Z (at $43 million), and Dr. Dre (at $40 million) (Greenburg).

These artists and numerous others like them show how far hip hop has come as a cultural and economic force. The result has been that hip hop has been appropriated as a means of defining culture and thus not being a force to change culture, like the Zulu Nation. Hip hop has now become known for "valuing" materialism, sexism, homophobia, brand consciousness, and a 'thug life'/gangsta lifestyle, but we ignore how these are by-products of a greater American culture (George xiii). Molefi Asante Jr. warns that the "current crisis isn't just that rap music, hip hop's voice box of values and ideas, has drifted into the shallowest pool of poetic possibilities" wherein the hip hop community does not want to be known by the label of being part of the "hip hop generation" (5). Artists have embraced hip hop capitalism to provide a means to escape their neighborhoods and to lift themselves out of their situations, yet it has had the effect of hip hop losing its way, its purpose.

Hip hop capitalism is a double-edge sword for the hip hop community. On the one hand, if rap music is going to be used to challenge and change the community's cultural and political issues, it must be done so it is pleasing to the ear. John Street writes: "Musical–or any other cultural–texts cannot be read simply as documents of political aspiration or resentment or compliance. They have to be seen, first and foremost as sources of aesthetic pleasure" (128), meaning that people have to want to listen to what you are saying and must see the artist's music as something they want to be part of. Yet, on the other hand, hip hop music becomes defined and restricted by corporate power to sell hip hop as only mainstream rap, which continues to promote distorted values like sexism, and materialism. Tricia Rose argues that "commercial culture is

central to 'the mainstream'; it shapes our collective conversation. As a space we all share, it must

be taken seriously and challenged" (242). The challenge that is being put forth to commercial rap

is through the alternative–conscious rap or message rap.

"The Message" and The Politics of Rap's Voice

It's like a jungle sometimes
It makes me wonder how I keep from goin' under [Intro]

Broken glass everywhere
People pissin' on the stairs, you know they just don't care
I can't take the smell, can't take the noise
Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice
Rats in the front room, roaches in the back
Junkies in the alley with a baseball bat
I tried to get away but I couldn't get far
Cause a man with a tow truck repossessed my car [Verse 1]

Don't push me cause I'm close to the edge
I'm trying not to lose my head
It's like a jungle sometimes
It makes me wonder how I keep from going under [Hook] (lyricfreaks.com)
- "The Message" by Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five

In 1982 Sugar Hill Records released a very different song than their first song "Rapper's

Delight." The new song was written and performed by the group Grandmaster Flash & the

Furious Five and it was called "The Message." Michael Eric Dyson argues that this song

"pioneered the social awakening of rap into a form of combing social protest, musical creation

and cultural expression" (402). Therefore, socially conscious rap is defined a "rap that is socially

aware and consciously connected to historic patterns of political protest and aligned with

progressive forces of social critique" (Dyson *Know What I Mean?* 64). Thus, socially conscious

rap describes and analyzes the "social, economic, and political factors" that affect the hip hop

community and does this through their lyrical content (Dyson 402). In comparing the two

different rap styles, they push and pull on the community to either take notice of an issue

(socially conscious) or reify stereotypes /personas (gangsta-hoe-pimp trinity) designed as desirable images for consumers to envision themselves to be like (commercial rap) (Rose 4-5).

The opening intro and verse one provide some of the social context as to what people living in New York City (specifically South Bronx) were experiencing within their own neighborhoods. Craig Werner writes that "Melle Mel immerses his listeners in an urban nightmare of broken glass, rank smells and inescapable noise" (241). Courtney Brown contends that "The Message" serves as a "graphic verbal acknowledgement of the quality of life that was common for so many inner city African American youths" (190). The hook of the song becomes important as it functions as a form of hyperrealism as to how the "ghetto" should be viewed as a "jungle." Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five are calling into question the ability of the ghetto to not only survive but to make something of itself. The last line of the hook illustrates the difficulties facing these individuals as they question if they can "keep from going under."

In total the song has five verses and each one describes a different reality that people faced while living in their neighborhood. These ranged from "pimps and prostitution, pawning a mother's television set, harassment from bill collectors, inadequate educational opportunities, violent assaults, incarceration, and premature and tragic death" (Brown 190). The rhetorical function of "The Message" was to create a paradigm shift in the thinking of what the realities of the inner cities were. Additionally, this song and other message songs provide both a sense of hope and fear that rap music "can influence political attitudes, through consumption and exposure" (Spence 93). Overall, "The Message" became the influential political rap song that allowed for rap to be viewed as more than entertainment but instead become a means of sociopolitical expression.

The politics of rap is located in the complexity of the question posed by Hannah Arendt: "*What is politics?*" According to Arendt, politics is about the coexistence and differences between men. In this case it is the way by which men organize that affects politics. Arendt writes: "*Man* is apolitical. Politics arises *between men,* and so quite *outside* of *man.* There is therefore no real political substance. Politics arises in what lies *between men* and is established as relationships" (95). The result is that the meaning of politics really deals with the issue of "freedom" (Arendt 108), the freedom to not be oppressed, the freedom to exist equally, and the freedom to be able to trust that something will be done to make a difference. Thus, the politics of rap revolves around warring for position and social power.

Tricia Rose writes: "Rap's contestations are . . . engaged in discursive 'wars of position' within and amongst dominant discourse . . . These wars of position are not staged debate team dialogues; they are crucial battles in the retention, establishment, or legitimation of real social power" (*Black Noise* 102). Erin Trapp supports this argument by stating, "musicians give voice to silenced segments of society and the hip-hop artists are leaders whose voices are a clarion call to other African Americans that social injustice not only exists but can also be fought" (1484). Yvonne Bynoe contends that any use of hip hop as a political organization must be bold enough to rise up and "conceive of a new America. From whatever political vantage they emanate, whatever causes they choose to champion, these groups will be articulating an alternative social and economic vision for this country" (22).

Therefore, the politics of rap is one that demands a social space to discuss, challenge, and solve issues of inequality, power relationships, and the meanings/interpretations of rap's lyrics. Tricia Rose sums it up best with the following: "Rap's cultural politics lies in its lyrical

expression, its articulation of communal knowledge, and in the context for its public reception . . . The struggle over context, meaning, and access to public space is critical" (*Black Noise* 124).

Since the politics of rap lies in its lyrical expression, there is a call for rappers to be raptivists that utilize a conscious rap form to express the concerns of the community. Bynoe defines a "raptivist" as "a rap artist who dabbles in activism on the side" (vix). The latter part of the definition is one that troubles Bynoe because far too often rappers are just part-time activists and not fully engaged in making a difference (xii). However, Michael Eric Dyson rebuts this point by stating that "socially conscious rappers tackle thorny social problems and perhaps inspire those who engage in action. Such a role for the artist should not be downplayed, underestimated, or even undervalued" (*Know What I Mean?* 70). In this case, the lyrics of the rapper are what makes one a raptivist. Thus, the function of rap music can be summed up by the following: "Hip-Hop can give us the mirror to the ills of society and to tap that potential we need to look in that mirror and work to change the things that we see" (Pough 288). Dyson supports this argument by stating:

> hip hoppers have the potential to raise people's awareness . . . if it will challenge and renew itself in the cycles of history and social struggle, can continue to play a vital role in inspiring young folk to become politically astute human beings and citizens . . . Yet hip hoppers can find noble cause in preserving the quest for freedom by extending its reach in their lyrical and aesthetic visions. (*Know What I Mean?* 86)

For this reason the conscious politics of rap demands a vocal expression of the thorny social issues affecting the hip hop community that provides a mirror to reflect on how we can recognize these issues and that inspires people to come to the message and be part of the movement for change.

Hip Hop's Community

The "hip hop community," the "hip hop nation," and the "hip hop generation" are all monikers used to describe a sect of people who have some sort of affiliation with the hip hop culture at large. To be part of this community does not mean that you have to be a rapper, or a musical producer, a graffiti artist, a breakdancer, or a DJ. I am none of these things, but I am a person who sees each of these hip hop elements as part of a larger movement to seek out social justice for all people regardless of one's race, class, gender, and/ or sexuality.

Message rappers like Common, Talib Kweli, Nas, Yasiin Bey (formerly Mos Def), and even Eminem speak about conditions that exist in our world and seek for people to be part of something that will help to change those conditions. This is why rap music is so powerful in places like the Middle East. The 2011 Arab Spring was influenced by rappers like El General, who used this African American stylized speech to create beats and songs that called for the people of Egypt to protest their government and change their political conditions (Hebblethwaite). Although they are thousands of miles away, they are part of a grander, global hip hop community. Yvonne Bynoe writes:

> *Community* is a powerful term . . . it is also a group of people with common interests, beliefs, religion, history, culture, lifestyle, ethnicity, or profession . . . The concept of community encourages citizens to seek out like minds, be they in their immediate neighborhood or across the country . . . As more citizens in their communities work together to improve society, a new cadre of citizen leaders will inevitably emerge. (12-13)

The *community* is powerful as it demands a return to the hip hop values of pride, racial unity and urban creativity (Tanz 184).

Bakari Kitwana has provided the most cited reference for defining the hip hop community/generation starting in 2002. In 2002 Kitwana defined this community as "African Americans born after the civil rights movement between 1965 and 1984" (*Why White Kids Love*

Hip Hop 165). This is a definition for a group of people who came of age after the civil rights movement and who saw that saw many of the issues (e.g. segregation, racism) could be addressed through political means. However, now there is an entire generation and beyond that sees rap music as providing the means to express themselves concerning issues dating as far back as the 1960s but that are socio-politically relevant to today's group of hip hop fans and community members. Jeffrey Ogbar contends that this definition needs to be extended post-1984 as there are many more "attuned to hip-hop as a group" and are not necessarily socio-politically consciously linked to the civil rights area (201*n*47). In regards to hip hop being a political voting bloc, Kitwana has revised his definition of the community to be comprised of the following:

> to include those individuals, regardless, of race, age or sex . . . is not limited to a rap music-buying audience but is composed of young people (from 18 to 40-something) whose hip-hop sensibilities goes beyond simply being consumers. Understanding . . . requires one to consider a world of hip-hop that more often than not goes far beyond the confines of the ways hip-hop is most often publicly discussed–as music or pop culture alone . . . As a culture, in the community and beyond, hip-hop has its own value system, along with spiritual, political and economic imperatives that can't be defined by pop music alone. (*Why White Kids Love Hip Hop* 166)

Therefore, I argue that this community is one seeking to use message raps to reeducate its members and organize them into a movement that can have a greater affect upon its cultural and political conditions than it does now. Yet, in order to do so, the hip hop community must craft its own counterpublic space in order for its message to be recognized and to formulate a political movement capable of seizing its political opportunities.

Chapter 3: Rap's Space–Argumentative Spheres, Counterpublics and Identity

[Spoken: The Last Poets]
We underrated, we educated
The corner was our time when times stood still
And gators and snakes gangs and yellow and pink
And colored blue profiles glorifying that

[Verse 2: Common]
Streetlights & deep nights cats trying to eat right
Riding no seat bikes with work to feed hypes
So they can keep sweet Nikes they head & they feet right
Desires of street life cars & weed types
It's hard to breath nights days are thief like
The beast roam the streets the police is Greek like
Game at it's peak we speak & believe hype
Bang in the streets hats cocked left or deep right
Its steep life coming up where sheep like
Rappers & hoopers we strive to be like
G's with 3 stripes seeds that need light
Cheese & weaves tight needs & thieves strike
The corner where struggle & greed fight
We write songs about wrong cause it's hard to see right
Look to the sky hoping it will bleed light
Reality's and I heard that she bites
The corner

[Spoken: The Last Poets]
The corner was our magic, our music, our politics
Fires raised as tribal dancers and
war cries that broke out on different corners
Power to the people, black power, black is beautiful . . .

[Spoken: The Last Poets]
The corner was our Rock of Gibraltar, our Stonehenge
Our Taj Mahal, our monument,
Our testimonial to freedom, to peace and to love
Down on the corner...(lyricfreaks.com)
- Common ft. Kayne West & The Last Poets "The Corner"

Where you "come from" says much about who you are, what you are about, and what

you care about. Growing up one would hear people ask "where you from, cuz?" Or "what's your

hood?" These questions were attempts at marking where one's corporal body lived, but there was

much more being inquired by those questions. Depending on where you said you came from, you were from the "right" side of the block or invading another's space. This mentality was an injection of gang culture that Afrika Bambaataa and the Zulu Nation attempted to stomp out by prompting break dancing and freestyle rap competitions. Yet, the colors that you wore and the streets/blocks that you named off to others all marked your space. However, "space" is not just the literal area that one encompasses but it is also a call to understanding the plight facing this space and the people who are involved in it.

Rapper Common, with Kayne West and The Last Poets, crafted the song "The Corner" to speak to the mentality one has about the "space" that they occupy. The first hook by The Last Poets speaks to the issue of "the corner" being a place for all people to come together. The corner became a meeting place where, regardless of your colors/gangs (snake, yellow, blue), people talked about the issues of that "corner." Addressing the issues of one's space was not merely an academic talk that the educated could have, but the corner marked a much-needed place where those who were underrated (the poor, the gangs, etc.) could look to rectify the issues of their corner.

Common takes on the struggles of life taking place within the corners of street life in the second verse. In this case it is posed as a duality of lifestyles, "the struggle vs. the greed." In the opening part of the verse, Common is describing the desires that people are told to believe in that represent the corner or their block, but this is nothing but hype about the greedy life. Common raps, "We write songs about wrong cause it's hard to see right." This line epitomizes the plight of the rapper or member of the community as one who cannot talk about the issues of their community because the rapper is too busy promoting the Nikes one should buy, the car one should drive, or the weed one should smoke. Therefore, this verse is to condemn the messages of

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rap promoting the greed lifestyle and instead there needs to be a reawakening as to the importance of the corner and how it can be used to change the community.

The last two hooks of the song speak to the power and possibilities that the corner has for rappers and the members of the community. The corner is now a place for the politics of movement. It marks the coming together of people for a message of freedom, peace, and love; thus, a moving forward, a taking of the corner back and using it to bring forth new life and meaning. This new message requires people to see their connection to the corner, to see what their politics are, and to be part of something that requires a new message, a new way to see right, and it can be located on the corner. The first part of this chapter will explore the spheres of argumentation and the rules that govern them.

The Three Spheres of Argumentation

The argument coming from Common's song "The Corner" was about the need to relocate the importance of the corner and to gear one's message and politics to the re-appropriation of the corner for sociopolitical change. Yet, this argument does not take place solely in the minds of Common, Kayne West, and The Lost Poets; their message is disseminated through the beats and rhymes of the song to garner attention of the literal community one represents and the greater hip hop community throughout the United States. This attempt at a deliberative argument illustrates the importance of knowing where one's argument is going to be understood, evaluated, and potentially acted upon. The work of G. Thomas Goodnight provides the means for understanding how an argument placed within a particular argumentative sphere will be received, judged, and acted upon.

Overall, the purpose of spheres is to provide a space for decision-making to take place. Goodnight writes "rhetoric is an art, a human enterprise engaging individual choice and common

activity, and that deliberative rhetoric is a form of argumentation through which citizens test and create social knowledge in order to uncover, assess and resolve shared problems" (251). Thus, the root of the issue for a sphere is to overcome the "uncertainty" of an argument. Any argument that one poses requires another to evaluate what it means to them, those around them, and the potential implications of one's argument. Goodnight contends, "The study of why uncertainties appear, what they mean . . . and what practices shape the course of future events is important, for knowledge of argument's varieties may illuminate the values, character, and blindspots of an era, society or person" (253). Therefore, the argumentative spheres are needed to provide an enduring set of tests or criteria for an argument to be understood and acted upon (Rieke, Sillars, and Peterson 19).

In order for decisions to be made, they must be marked by a space that provides a means for arguments to be judged, and these spaces are known as spheres. Goodnight defines the sphere as "branches of activity-the grounds upon which arguments are built and the authorities to which arguers appeal" (253). In this case, spheres act as decision-making groups that have a set of goals, norms, rules, resources, and a pattern of interactions with an outside entity (Rieke et. al 18). The importance of these patterns of interactions is that they provide the starting point by which an argument is created and evaluated by members of a particular sphere. Therefore, there are three argumentative spheres that exist for Goodnight: the personal, technical, and public spheres. For Richard Rieke, Malcolm Sillars, and Tarla Rai Peterson:

> Spheres, then, consist of people functioning as a group who share a cluster of criteria for the production and appraisal of argumentation. People in spheres share language interpretation strategies, facts, presumptions, probabilities, and commonplaces. But remember that sharing is in the present, subject to ongoing change, and is never certain to yield a critical decision. (18)

Broadly speaking, we traverse various argumentative spheres and must understand how each sphere allows for an argument to be crafted, evaluated, and acted upon. The study of these different spheres allows for one to uncover the "prevailing expressions of human conditions and the avenues for criticism" that affect these spheres (Goodnight 254).

The "personal" sphere is one where a person does not have to prepare an argument to necessarily engage with another person. When it comes to presenting an argument, the subject matter and evidence used is determined by the individuals involved in the debate. The way one is judged is based on each speaker's experience and the doctrine of fairness (Goodnight 254). Thomas Goodnight uses an example by Charles Willard to explain what takes place in the personal sphere. The setting is an argument at a bar in the airport. Though no context is provided for the fight at the bar, the personal sphere operates as a lens by which one may view how interpersonal rules and structures affect how one argues with another. Goodnight writes: "The statements of the arguers are ephemeral . . . the subject matter and range of claims are decided by the disputants. Evidence is discovered within memory . . . rules emerge from the strangers' general experience at discussion, fair judgment, strategic guile, and so forth" (254). The importance of this altercation is that it is short-lived; eventually someone has to get on the plane and get into another potential argument elsewhere, meaning that some arguments are fleeting and that one who is presenting an argument in one personal sphere must be able to adapt and move to another. Additionally, within the personal sphere others may join in and use the same principles mentioned as a means to determine if one's argument is correct, valid, and/or helps increase one's social knowledge. Yet, with the adoption of more individuals, smaller pockets of people will break off and conduct conversations about a given subject; but one must still learn to navigate the lands by which others will listen, judge, and act upon your argument.

The second sphere is the technical. This is a sphere that consists of members of a particular community such as doctors, lawyers, and scholars. As compared to the personal sphere, there is extremely limited access as to who can participate and, more importantly, judge one's argument (Rieke et. al 19-20). Goodnight writes, "the technical sphere where more limited rules of evidence, presentation, and judgments are stipulated in order to identify arguers of the field and facilitate the pursuit of their interests" (256). These spheres become judged "by referees as worthy of preservation" (Goodnight 255). For instance, the debate about global warming or climate change has been going on for the better part of thirty years. However, there are those who still argue that global warming does not exist. In this debate, scientists, scholars, reporters, and the like attempt to shape the argument from their particular field of interest, but for many it still boils down to the numbers. In the uncertainty of being able to prove that global warming exists, the field limits who can speak and, more importantly, who is perceived as credible to speak about the issue. As a result, it is not until the findings of this sphere are published and/or are made known that they are open to criticism by the other spheres. As a result, the creation of the final sphere results from the demand for more participation in the making of decisions (Rieke et. al 20).

The final sphere is the public sphere. Goodnight contends that the consequences of this sphere's arguments extends beyond the other two spheres (256). The reason they extend beyond the other two is the demand by individuals to be part of a larger debate about what is right or wrong about a given issue or to demand that a particular sub-set of individuals from the overall sphere be heard when oftentimes people are left out of the "public debate." Goodnight describes the public sphere as a "realm . . . discrete insofar as it provides forums with customs, traditions and requirements for arguers" (256).

The public sphere extends beyond the other two spheres in terms of the interests that it represents. The public sphere must be interested in the needs of the entire community and not those within a private (personal) or specialized (technical) community (Goodnight 255). Yet, the public sphere is being eroded by the representatives who engage in public debates that exclude "socially fragmented groups" (Goodnight 259). Due to groups being socially fragmentized the agencies in the technical sphere (politicians, governments, states) are increasing their status insofar as being the decision-maker for the public sphere. As a result, the argumentative rhetoric being used by representatives of the public sphere is eroding public knowledge.

Habermas: From Bourgeois Public Sphere to the Public Sphere

The formation of the public sphere is centered on the notion that public opinion can be formed and expressed and that a public body can be used to potentially assert its expression to challenge and change institutionalized political control (a.k.a., the state). Habermas defines the concept of the public sphere as (49): "realm of social life which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens . . . Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion." Thus, the purpose of the "public sphere" concept is to examine the means by which publics create and can affect democracy (Loehwing and Motter 221). The public sphere becomes the place by where public information can be disseminated to others who are part of this sphere. This is unlike times in the past where states or monarchies would control what people knew by the means by which it was told to them (Habermas 50).

Connected to the creation of a public sphere and its public opinion are the norms and modes of behavior that affect the functionality of the public opinion to be shared. These norms and modes include: "a) general accessibility, b) elimination of all privileges and c) discovery of general norms and rational legitimations" (Habermas *n3* 50). Overall, the importance of studying

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about public spheres comes from understanding where they were first formed. The importance of reviewing the work of Habermas is to understand how a public sphere was transformed into a bourgeois public sphere that would later serve for the creation of scholarship in counterpublics.

The importance of the public sphere for Habermas was to provide a discursive domain by where there were opportunities for citizens to get together and to discuss the issues affecting themselves and others, while also attempting to influence public knowledge and those who made decisions for people (the state). Habermas defines the public sphere as: "a sphere that mediates between society and state, in which the public organizes itself as the bearer of public opinion" (50). The history that Habermas engages in and looks to develop his theory of a public sphere goes back to the European society that emerged during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and how power was represented to others. Specifically, one must look at the "status" one held and how that shaped what sphere one was in and what would happen within that sphere.

Habermas contends that, regardless of the time one finds themselves in, the power of one's authority is still represented in the political power one wields and at the highest level one is placed in, like being a head of state (Habermas 50). "Representation" in connection to the bourgeois public sphere is not just in mere title alone, but is in the functionality of the land one has and what it "represents." Habermas writes, "As long as the prince and the estates of the realm still 'are' the land, instead of merely functioning as deputies for it, they are able to 're-present'; they represent their power 'before' the people, instead of for the people" (51). A public sphere is formed by the mere presence of the estate's title and who occupies within it. Thus, those who do not have the title or only live within the estate were excluded from being part of the public opinion.

Beyond representation, it is necessary to explore how changes in society during that time affected who was part of the public sphere and who was not. The authorities of the time consisted of churches, princes (or monarchies), and/or nobility, and beyond their lands or titles representing their voice, people became linked to these different authorities in order to have a public opinion or voice. Yet, during this time these authorities started to experience political and authoritative polarization. These entities began to restructure themselves and broke into two different camps: private and public (Habermas 51). First, there was the church whose use of religion became a private matter. Yet, it became a public political body that used its divine authority to carve out a space for itself and those who felt represented by it. Second, princes and/ or one's nobility were affected by the legal institutions that were crafted to break away from past monarchies. Habermas writes:

> the nobility became the organs of public authority, parliament and legal institutions; while those occupied in trades and professions, insofar as they had already established urban corporations and territorial organizations, developed into a sphere of bourgeois society which would stand apart from the state as a genuine area of private autonomy. (51)

The result is that a definitive re-definition of private versus public authority and opinion occurred due to the changes caused by polarization. The former members of nobility who now owned corporations became known as the public because they were able to formulate themselves into institutions that regulated the amount of authority that one could assert (Habermas 52). On the other hand, "Private individuals subsumed in the state at whom public authority was directed now made up the public body" (Habermas 52). Society became the outlier who stood in direct opposition to the state. The change in one's social and economic "network associations and exchanges outside the official institutions of power became a self-consciously autonomous domain of self-regulation" (Hauser 40). Therefore, the rise of the "bourgeois public sphere"

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comes about when private individuals assemble to formulate a public body but do so in "intellectual papers" for use against those who regulated power.

The changing social, economic, and political factors of the seventeenth and eighteenth century led to the formation of the bourgeois public sphere. This sphere became concerned about the supervision of power and who could speak about it. Habermas writes:

> Bourgeois individuals are private individuals. As such they do not rule. Their claims to power *vis-à-vis* public authority were thus directed not against the concentration of power, which was to be 'shared' . . . the bourgeois public opposed the principle of supervision–that very principle which demands that proceedings be made public. The principle of supervision is thus a means of transforming the nature of power, not merely one basis of legitimation exchanged for another. (52)

The concern with supervision was driven by desire to influence a form of intelligent public opinion that can be shared and felt by others who are private (Hauser 40). Therefore, there became a demand for a discursive domain to be had. This development was the result of an ever-changing Europe whose culture, politics, and commercial situations differed based on the place one found themselves in (Hauser 41).

The importance of Habermas's work is that it places a focus on how ideological domination can have an effect on public deliberation. Coupled with this focus is the fact that his theory rests on the notion that it is the "noninstitutional character of public discussion that engenders reasoned consideration of issues and problems pertaining to personal interests" (Hauser 41). One's "interest" affected one's potential to be part of the bourgeois public sphere and/or to be supervised by those who rule.

The analysis that Habermas engaged in occurred with the café society in London, the salons of Paris, and the "table societies" of Germany (Hauser 41). The examination of the café society during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries showed that one could enter the site of the café regardless of one's birth, job, and/or formal education. Yet, there were two prevailing

requirements for one to be able to be part of this public sphere: one, how current one was on potential topics that could provide relevant ideas to discuss with others, and second, the ability to be in those cafes (meaning, the middle classes needed to be able to afford a drink in that sphere) (Hauser 41 and Loehwing and Motter 225). The product that was created in these cafes was a public sphere that was crafted by the literary practices and learned criticism of the middle class that started to appear in the press, which opened the doors for others to engage in the conversations taking place in the cafes.

As a result a "bourgeois public sphere" was created due to the middle-class concerns with protecting its commercial interests through political courses of action. Habermas defines this sphere as "private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicity relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor" (as quoted in Hauser 42).

The definition of the bourgeois public sphere places an emphasis on "critical publicity" and how this sphere provides the means for this to take place (Hauser 42). Overall, this sphere comes about when individuals or groups gather in a public forum (i.e., café, street corner, etc.) and discuss issues of a public matter. The people who gather are not necessarily vested in the matter and/or have the ability or authority to act to change the matter. Yet, this site serves for the flow of ideas, the conducting and proposing of ideas, and the testing of them through refutation (Hauser 43). The way that a decision is made and/or a public opinion is formulated is through a generalizable argument that adheres to the norms of an ideal speech (Hauser 43). The expression of this "public sphere" serves to be understood as one that presents itself as the consensus of the sphere.

The academic work done by Habermas has had a profound effect upon the study of public sphere theory and scholars like Gerald Hauser, Catherine Squires, and others. It is this other work that will be used to further develop the function and role of the public sphere before analyzing the criticisms of Habermas's scholarship. First, Gerald Hauser contends that the public sphere needs to be evaluated as a rhetorical means to express the public's opinion. Overall, the "public" is portrayed by scholars, the media, and critics consisting of a group of people ("a single inclusive entity"), who are held together by a similar set of beliefs and attitudes about a given matter. The members of the public sphere are known through their "corporate identity" and can participate in the political world based on their identity (Hauser 30).

Yet, Hauser takes exception to this over-generalization about the public sphere as it assumes that all members share similar interests. Hauser argues "hotly contested public issues parse along lines of age, gender, region, ethnicity, class, and a host of considerations that lead to incompatible and perhaps, incommensurable attitudes and beliefs" (30). Today we are not simply motivated by similar class interests that sparked the formation of the bourgeois public sphere, but we are affected by our ideological fragmentations (Hauser 30). Spheres are more accurately formed around the political leaning that one may identify with than one's particular race, class, and/or even gender. A Pew Research Center study done in 2012 suggests that America is more divided than ever based on one's political/partisan lines than issues of race, class, or gender (Goodwin). Now, this does not mean that those other factors do not contribute to the formation of a public sphere, but one cannot assume that all individuals who are black and/or female carry the same attitudes, beliefs, or values as others in their racial, class, or gender group.

Besides one being motivated to join the public sphere based on "shared interests," another misconception is that the members of the public sphere do not contribute to the social

knowledge or cultural awareness of an issue. However, this runs counter to the fact that people

are at least somewhat motivated to join or be part of the public sphere based on their ideological

identifications. But how one identifies also has the potential to affect how others may culturally

and/or politically identify with an issue. For instance, one does not have to be gay to believe that

there should be equality in the law for all couples regardless of their sexual orientation. Yet,

those who join the public sphere to influence this social justice/knowledge issue could be viewed

as only a "they" (meaning homosexual) and not as a person who views equality as an issues

regardless of one's race, class, gender, or sexual orientation.

As a result, Hauser contends that the public sphere should be defined as, "*a public as the interdependent members of society who hold different opinions about a mutual problem and who seek to influence its resolution through discourse*" (32). Catherine Squires provides a bit of a

different way to view the public sphere. She "refers to a set of physical or mediated spaces where

people can gather and share information, debate opinions, and tease out their political interests

and social needs with other participants . . . The spaces . . . can be formal or informal;

conversations may occur spontaneously or be planned" (448). The public in Hauser's view

becomes a collective that can manifest its attention towards an issue through political voting,

economic capital, demonstrations, having debates, writing letters to an editor, and other various

forms of outreach (Hauser 33). This view of the public views them as an emerging public who

uses discursive processes to make themselves heard and felt.

The importance of this shift in viewing of the public is that it puts an emphasis on

political meaning as a means of experience. This does not mean that all of the issues a public

sphere may engage in are political, but it requires us to analyze the means by which we

experience the political meaning. Hauser writes:

Sensible thought about publics requires capturing their activity: how they construct reality by establishing and synthesizing values, forming opinions, acceding to positions, and cooperating through symbolic actions, especially discursive ones. Put differently, any given public exists in its publicness, which is to say in its rhetorical character. (33)

The public sphere for Hauser provides the basis by which communication theory and praxis intersect so as to allow the words and actions of a given public sphere to occur in a place that is free of supervision and restraints, and free to have members discover and pursue their own interests.

The power of the public sphere comes not just in its ability to get people to think about their ideology, but it comes in what they are attempting to express through their communication or "public opinion" (Habermas's term). Hauser argues that the "public sphere is the arena in which society continually produces itself by managing the symbolic resources of knowledge and power that set the conditions for community" ("Features of the Public Sphere" 441). The study of the public sphere becomes a rhetorical activity that explores how social will is shaped by rhetorical forces that affect our lives (Hauser, "Features of the Public Sphere" 439). The central rhetorical force that affects the members within the public sphere and those in direct opposition to this sphere (i.e., the state, a political organization, etc.) is power. Thus, it is important to know the conditions that must exist for a public sphere to form and to potentially run smoothly.

Borrowing from Habermas, Hauser argues that there are three conditions that must exist for the public sphere. One, "it must be accessible to all" (Hauser "Features of the Public Sphere" 438). Two, "there must be access to information," and three, "there must be institutional guarantees for a public sphere to exist" (Hauser "Features of the Public Sphere" 439). The first condition takes into consideration the issue of a special interest being a partial reason for the formation of the public sphere. Although Hauser disagrees with this condition, it is still important that people who want to have their voice heard can find a means to be part of the

sphere regardless of their "special interest." The second condition refers to the ability of the people to be well read and/or have the means to become knowledgeable about a given topic. This goes back to the importance of eighteenth century journalism for Habermas where the media started to talk about an individual's private interest as being a public interest (Habermas 53). The final condition refers to the importance of having a means to be heard and then judged. Catherine Squires argues: "The political success of a marginal public sphere is impacted by the institutions a public is able to form . . . 'Stronger' public spheres are those with ready access to organized forms of association and publicity" (457). Put another way, there is a necessary push and pull from the public sphere to the people who are in control (or supervising) the issue that concerns this sphere. The result is that the members of the public sphere are seeking a "judgment" to be made. This comes about through the manifestation of the public sphere's publicness. One must be seen and heard in order to have an influence upon social knowledge or the larger culture being made aware of a given issue. Hauser writes:

> The dialogic characteristics of the public sphere invest it with a conversational quality. The give-and-take of conversing creates a common space in which a complementary *I* and *we* can appear. Dialogue requires both a sense of our own identity and that of the social entity we bring into being through participation . . . It creates a common discursive space shared by dialogic partners. Their movement through it requires that they abide by the imperative to distinguish between the *I* and *we* to retain their complementarily and prevent the *we* from disintegrating. ("Vernacular Dialogue" 97–98)

The rhetorical and political discursive space provided by the public sphere allow for the conditions to be a framework by which people can express their ideologies and look to influence the outcomes of a given issue.

Counterpublic Spheres: Formation & Function

The formation of counterpublic theory has revolved around the central concern of who can participate in the democratic process and if that process is equal (Loehwing and Motter 222).

Two theorists that have explored the need for a counterpublic sphere and how it can influence politics and various social, political, or theoretical issues are Nancy Frazier and Robert Asen. Each offers their own perspective as to what a counterpublic is and what function they serve in the democratic process.

Nancy Fraser and her article "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy" is concerned with yielding a field of study that will provide a theory that explores the actual limits one faces within a democracy (Fraser 57). At the start of her article, she does not deny the importance of Habermas providing a critical theory to see how political practices can affect participation, but points out that his theory is lacking the complexity needed to thoroughly explain how democracy *actually* exists (57, my emphasis). One of the first realities that exist for Fraser is that people are excluded based on issues of race, class, and gender and this makes Habermas's bourgeois public sphere exclusionary. Habermas assumes that interlocutors (or representatives of the public sphere, in particular from the state) can "bracket" the inequalities that exist amongst people. Fraser states: "This public sphere was to be an arena in which interlocutors would set aside such characteristics as differences in birth and fortune and speak to one another as if they were social and economic peers . . . were not eliminated, but only bracketed" (63). The bracketing of these inequalities forces groups to the margins where they must attempt to group themselves together and create their own power. As a result, Habermas's theory ignores the reality that race, class, and gender have all been used as rhetorical and political tools to leave the public opinion quieter. The effect of Habermas's exclusion of these categories is that creates a false sense of "common good" for those who are not part of these groups (Loehwing and Motter 223).

In connection to this first criticism of Habermas's work is the direct effect it has had on discursive contestation. Fraser uses the phrase "discursive contestation" to explain how a counterpublic sphere or Habermas's public sphere cannot have a sense of publicity if it is assumed that all people are "concerned" about the same issues (e.g., the common good). Fraser writes that "democratic publicity requires positive guarantees of opportunities for minorities to convince others that what in the past was not public in the sense of being a matter of common concern should now become so" (71). One who attempts to formulate a counterpublic sphere can do so based on issues of race, class, and/or gender if the attempt is to raise cultural awareness to an issue and/or to influence a matter that is still affecting people of a particular group that may not be affecting a rhetorically constructed bourgeois public sphere. In connection to Habermas's third condition for a public sphere to exist, being that of the institutional guarantee, this addresses the issue of *I* and *we*. Oftentimes the *I* will attempt to speak on behalf of the *we*; yet if there is no member of the *we* based on different factors (e.g. race, class, gender, etc.) then the formation of the public sphere does not address all members of the *we*. Therefore, the counterpublic sphere attempts to provide a place for all people (a true sense of *we*) to have a place to express their public opinion and influence social knowledge. The "common good" is not this *I* inspired projection onto the *we* to be what is best for them. It allows for all voices to be heard and included.

The second major problem Fraser has with Habermas is that he assumes that a singular, comprehensive sphere is one that is preferable to having multiple publics. Meaning, democracy would not be improved by the recognition and participation of multiple publics (Fraser 62). Fraser writes, "This narrative, then, like the bourgeois conception itself, is informed by an underlying evaluative assumption, namely, that the instructional confinement of public life to

single, overarching public sphere is a positive and desirable state of affairs" (66). The reality is that by having multiple publics competing against one another, better political participation is achieved. However, these excluded spheres of people having to formulate their own counterpublic in order to be recognized and heard.

Consequently, Fraser argues that in a democracy "subaltern counterpublics" exist and are seeking to make an impact on the bourgeois public sphere. A "subaltern counterpublic" is where a "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (67). These counterpublics provide a dual service. First, they provide a space for members to withdraw or regroup, and second, they serve as a base or "training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics" (Fraser 68). For Fraser, in competition with one another are two public spheres: a dominant vs. a subaltern. The dominant consists of "a province of white, middle and upper class males" and the subaltern sphere is typically represented by historically marginalized groups (Squires 450). Since these groups are in "competition" with one another it does not allow for the complexity of multiple publics to exist and/or seek influence about an issue. For Fraser ,a more realistic system is one that consists of a dominant sphere and then multiple subaltern counterpublics that develop more contestation and discourse toward the dominant sphere (Squires 450). Ultimately, the effect of the criticisms by Fraser is to point out how the bourgeois public sphere fails to exert any influence over the dominant sphere and/or state due to its exclusivity and lack of discourse (Loehwing and Motter 224).

One additional criticism about Habermas's sphere, not written by Fraser, comes from Gerald Hauser and the concern about "interest." In his book *Vernacular Voices* Hauser writes six

criticisms (46-55) regarding various problems Habermas's public sphere has, yet problem three gets to the point as to why counterpublics or subaltern publics begin to formulate. Hauser argues: "The principle of disinterest *excludes those subspheres whose members are decidedly interest"* (40). The point of concern for Hauser is that people get involved with a sphere or a political issue because it touches their life. There is a connection of emotion about the issue to a person's life and taking a more rhetorical understanding to the formation of counterpublics would take into consideration the power of emotions and getting involved. Hauser contends: "Emotions are essential for establishing the relationship between an attentive and empowered audience and their particular circumstances" (51). Our connection to issues dealing with politics, socio-cultural issues, and economics affects our consciousness and in turn reflects our interests, which can serve as the basis for a counterpublic sphere.

Counterpublic scholar Robert Asen takes the approach of attempting to understand what makes counterpublics "counter." Robert Asen and Daniel Brouwer write: "counterpublics derive their 'counter' status in significant respects from varying degrees of exclusion from prominent channels of political discourse and corresponding lack of political power" (2–3). The central concern for Asen is that power drives exclusion and that this results in the need for counterpublic spheres. Exclusion from the dominant sphere results in potential participants, topics, and speaking styles being unable to be part of this sphere's publicity (Asen 438). For Asen, the rationale for the exclusion of certain people, topics, and speaking styles connects to the bourgeois predisposed rationale for debating in public. Social and economic conditions were presented at the time as being "equal" for all people to achieve, and thusly exclusion from the public sphere was needed because those "educated and propertied persons were best-able to advance the general interest" (Asen and Brouwer 5). Therefore, the purpose of the "counter" in

counterpublics is to provide a more direct and expansive participation of those who have been excluded from the decision-making process.

In order to expand the participants in the decision-making process, those within the counterpublic sphere recognize the power of discourse. Asen argues: "Counterpublic theory discloses relations of power that obliquely inform public discourse and, at the same time, reveals that participants in the public sphere still engage in potentially emancipator affirmative practice with the hope that power may be reconfigured" (425). Power lies in the language, symbols, rhetoric, and message that are used and it can serve an emancipatory power. "Their publicist orientation suggests that the consequences of exclusion–suppression of identities, interests, and needs–can be overcome" (Asen 429). Part of the function of this sphere is to provide a voice to the oppositional needs and values based specifically on one's "race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, or some other axis of difference" (Asen and Brouwer 7).

In an attempt to help understand what the "counter" in counterpublic means, Asen notes that there are two approaches to consider. First, "one may locate the 'counter' of counterpublics in the identity of persons who articulate oppositional discourse" (Asen and Brouwer 8). The focus of this approach is to explore the historical experiences of exclusion and oppression that have caused a need for a counterpublic sphere. This is more of a group-identity approach that knows that oppression and exclusion do not happen randomly (Asen and Brouwer 8). However, there is a concern with this approach in that it reifies people's preconceived notions that this group is only forming because they are "black" or "women." This denies the historical significance of their oppression and exclusion and lumps together all of these members' interests as being only about one central issue.

The second approach looks to find the "counter" in counterpublics in the topics that have been introduced to wider publics. The function of this approach is to demonstrate the history of "contestation and transformation" that this topic has gone through (Asen and Brouwer 9). It can potentially show how a topic that was once viewed as a private issue has become a bigger issue that affects multitudes of people. The concern with this approach is the understanding of the term "public." Robert Asen and Daniel Brouwer contend that "public" can be viewed in four different lights: one, "potentially open to all;" two, "potentially concerning all;" three, "potentially known to all;" and four, "potential movement toward all" (9). Depending on how the topic is viewed as either "public" and/or "counter," it can exacerbate the resolution of the topic. The multiplicity of spheres shows how different groups or topics have been excluded but can serve as an alternative to the dominant public sphere.

Factors Affecting the Counterpublic Sphere

The two key factors affecting the formation of a counterpublic sphere are identification and power. The exploration of these two factors will be done through the scholarship of Kenneth Burke and Michel Foucault. Although these schools come from different perspectives, it is their insight that lends itself to be used to show the importance of counterpublic sphere formation and what they are attempting to do with their formation. The work of Kenneth Burke will be used to explore how rhetorical identification takes place and why this is needed for a counterpublic sphere. Additionally, one must engage the question as to whom within the hip hop counterpublic sphere should the members identify with: the politician or the artist.

The work done by Robert Asen about how counterpublic spheres are formed proposed two approaches for their formation: the first deals with identifying with the person who explains their historical oppression. The second deals with exploring how various topics have attempted

to be shared with wider publics, which relates to issues of power and recognition. For Burke, the concept of consubstantiality provides the rhetorical tool to understand the importance of needing to connect with those within your sphere and/or the decision-maker who you are trying to influence. The reason that there is a need to say that one "identifies" with another is because we inherently see others as a divide from ourselves (Burke 181). Burke writes: "Identification is compensatory to division. If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetoricians to proclaim their unity. If men were wholly and truly of one substance, absolute communication would be of man's very essence" (182). It is this division of "men" that has allowed for the dominant sphere to continue its historical oppression and to leave those who identify with others based on one's race, gender, or sexuality to be left excluded from public debate. This in turn affects the ability of the counterpublic sphere to have publicity. Publicity is designed to represent the *I* and/or the *we,* meaning that the "*I*" has been used by the dominant sphere to cast out members the excluded spheres because their issue or topic is too private a sphere and is not important to the common good or the "*we*" that the dominant sphere attempts to represent.

As a result, there is a need to explore the role of rhetoric and how it functions to bring people together to identify (consubstantiality) with one another. Burke argues: "It is [rhetoric] rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic . . . the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (188). The ability to address one's historical oppression based on their race, gender, and/or interests allows for all people, regardless of their direct similarities with other members of the counterpublic sphere, to develop a means to socialize and come together. Burke writes: "In pure identification there would be no strife" (184). Yet, this is not reality. Strife is the cause for

people to separate and to unite (identify) with one another. There is a push and pull connection between identification and division; without them both the formation of a counterpublic sphere would not take place. The dominant sphere divides the subaltern spheres into *"I's"* that do not care about the common good of all and who are just attempting to get people to relate to them because of their race, gender, etc. Yet, unlike Habermas, who did not consider these factors in the formation of his bourgeois sphere, it is these interests that can be derived by one's condition they exist in (or are born into) that can afford for identify formation to take place. The use of symbols should not be viewed simply as a magic trick that one uses to get people to be persuaded. It should be viewed as realistic (Burke 191). Identification for either approach to counterpublic formation provides the means for influence to take place.

The question then becomes, who do the members of a counterpublic attempt to identify with? In this, I would argue that the hip hop community has been formulating itself into a counterpublic sphere that utilizes the rapper as a central figure by which to express its public opinion and to influence socio-cultural knowledge upon politicians and the dominant sphere. Kenneth Burke in *Counterstatment* looks at the role and function of the politician versus the artist. The connection that the politician and artist both share is the "neglected minority." This minority are the ones who attempt to make a cultural movement happen but from a restricted quarter.

Yet, the role and function of the politician and artist differ when it comes to this minority (Burke *Counterstatment* 71). The first connection that these two have with the minority is the connection to human potentiality. Burke compares the way an artist and politician can get people to care about their country more. The artist can use a book to garner people's attention, but no one would really have to know it was their contribution to the destruction of the country that

motivated the author to write the book. Yet, for the politician, he or she could not merely advocate for a bond issue to fix their city until every one of his or her constituents had the chance to vocalize their opinion (Burke *Counterstatment* 71). In this case the author/artist is "free" to make himself be heard and is not required to expressly explain how the other people surrounding them influenced the book or central message of it. This artist can make himself the centerpiece by where people can identify with the message and then potentially take action. On the other hand, the politician must work within a rigid frame of making others be heard and then offer his (*I*) opinion as being that of the *we*'s opinion.

Burke continues that the real action taken by the politician is to align himself with issues that people will consciously advocate. Therefore, he can speak on behalf of their common good, but he is not required to think about the past or address forms of oppression unless it is part of the consciousness of his people. Comparing again to the artist, he/she can tap into their emotion or utilize the motives that he/she is aware of but the others may not be. To be received by the people then, one must take the artist's method and situation into consideration. This connects to the third problem that Hauser had with Habermas and his bourgeois public sphere, which is the alleviating of the sphere of its emotions. The artist can use emotion to inspire, educate, and influence others to his/her cause.

In regards to the hip hop community, it is the rapper (raptivist) who takes a central role and position within the community to help people to form a consubstantial identification with others in their immediate (local) and national neighborhood. S. Craig Watkins contends that is it the message rappers' desire to give a voice to the experiences of the youth that caused their status to grow (382). As a result, "Message rappers resonate strongly with youth because they assume the role of educator, entertainer, and spokesperson" (Watkins 382). Murray Forman

explains, "Since rap's invention, it has become somewhat of a convention for the rapper to be placed at the center of the world, as the subject around which events unfold" (213). The central space that the rapper places themselves in acts as a counterpublic space that calls the individual members of the grander public sphere and the hip hop community as a whole to recognize the divisions that exist between the two of them and requires the hip hop members to identify with the rapper's lyrics as a confirmation of membership. Imani Perry explains:

> The rapper or MC is both subject and artist in much hip hop composition . . . The MC usually occupies a self-proclaimed location as representative of his or her community group . . . As a representative, he or she encourages a kind of sociological interpretation of the music . . . hip hop nourishes by offering community membership that entails a body of cultural knowledge, yet it also nourishes by offering a counter-hegemonic authority and subjectivity to the force of white supremacy. (38-39 & 44)

The centrality that the rapper possesses as being the occupier of the sphere and subsequently its leader affords the hip hop community its "counter" in counterpublic spheres. The politician attempts to embark on this centrality, but ends up possessing the *I* and *we* (or publicity) of the sphere. The rapper does not want to necessarily be the politician, but they want to make the politician hear their message and be influenced by it. It becomes a politics of representing for the rapper versus the politician. Robert Asen writes: "Representing does not proceed exclusively through one mode of communication, but may employ linguistic and visual symbols simultaneously and complementarily. In doing so, representing function as multimodal process" ("Imagining in the Public Sphere" 353). It is the rapper's ability to be part of the community (to represent) and to invite others into the community that affords them a counter that the dominant cannot possess.

The central theme to the formation of the public versus counterpublic sphere has been the issue of power. For Habermas, power was affected by status and nobility. Today, contributing factors to the issue of power are one's status and marginality. This lends itself to the work of

Michel Foucault and Robert Hariman. Robert Hariman explains: "as rhetoric is marginal, it also

is a reservoir of power–a zone of those potencies suppressed in our society" (45). In society and

sociopolitical discourse, rhetorical or sociopolitical discourse conceives itself as having a center

and a periphery. Social marginality exists in order to contain what one is but should not be, and

to discipline an individual so they learn to avoid the margin by being socialized. However, the

margin has become the place by where their message can be heard by others facing similar

situations and want to see sociopolitical change occur. Hariman explains:

> To empower discourse one must do what always is done to create power through
> discourse–consign someone to marginality–and this mutual defining of self and other as
> esteemed and marginal is a process of transformation: each individual is made into a
> social character. Consigning a type of discourse to marginality involves more than a
> subsequent inattention to the discourse; it necessitates a change in the substance of the
> discourse. (43)

Thus, once pushed to the margins, rhetoric can develop power by which to change the

dominant discourse. Power is created in the margin by utilizing a language that the dominant

discourse does not understand. Marginality generates verbal power by limiting those who can

sanction its use and the conditions by which it can be used. Additionally, by generating power

within the margin, deconstruction of the dominant discourse is possible. The social marginality

that one operates within can provide the safe space needed to generate more participation from

those that have been historically oppressed or rejected.

In relation to the hip hop community, rap becomes the means for this excluded group to

create messages that challenge their marginality and status. Tricia Rose contends that rap music

consists of hidden transcripts that utilize cloaked speech and distinctive cultural codes to

"comment on and challenge aspects of current power inequalities" (*Black Noise* 100). Rose

borrows from James Scott and his idea of there being "open" and "hidden" transcripts that affect

one's ability to critique social domination. Rose writes:

> Referring to these transcripts of power and resistance respectively as 'public' and 'hidden' transcripts, Scott argues that the dominate 'public' transcript, a 'shorthand way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate,' supports the established social order, whereas the 'hidden' transcript, the 'discourse that takes place 'offstage,' or in disguised form,' critiques and resists various aspects of social domination. (*Black Noise* 100)

Rappers engage in a contestation over what the message of their rap is, what it is designed to talk about, and how that message can bring about change. It is the ability to change the things that we see as a community that creates a counterpublic space that, in turn, brings people together from the margins to overcome exclusion. This marginality affords the rapper the ability and opportunity to work within a space where others who share similar interests, or who have been historically marginalized or had the power taken from them, can now create a sphere that invokes awareness and change.

The perspective that Hariman offers sees these counterpublic spheres as a means to garner participation and express one's public opinion without retribution from the dominant sphere. It is necessary to understand how power affects us and the spheres we attempt to engage. Foucault defines power as the following:

> If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (61)

The point here by Foucault is that power is that which exists when it is being used by one to hold over and exert control over another. In this case, power becomes a "conduct of conducts" wherein individuals, groups, or state political entities attempt to direct how one is or is not supposed to act within relation to one another (*Power* 341).

The effect of this relation is that fear is driven into the minds of the oppressed. Paulo Freire argues: "The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom . . . Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift . . . Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes a myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion" (47). The purpose of Freire's work in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is to have people be made aware of their struggles and the conditions that they find themselves in. Power for Freire is a struggle that can transform a situation and/or make one feel incapable of running the risks to change their situation (47). Fear acts as a double-edged sword that causes one to know the importance of freedom but become their own oppressor (Freire 48).

The need to investigate power is really a need to understand the relations of power to freedom. Foucault writes:

> power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, not a supplementary structure over and above 'society' whose radical effacement one could perhaps dream of. To live in society is, in any event, to live in such a way that some can act on the actions of others. A society without power relations can only be an abstraction. (*Power* 343)

The connection then of Foucault-to-counterpublic space-to-rap is the questioning of how free individuals are to craft a space where they can use a message to overturn, invert, or subvert the dominant bourgeois public sphere to encompass the multiplicity of politics and spheres. Yet, power is tied to freedom as it is a way that some act on others (Foucault *Power* 340). The conduct of conducts explores that power exists in that only some get to enact power onto others.

One of the central concerns for counterpublic studies is the "supervision" factor; that is, who was watching who and in turn controlling power over others. Foucault calls this disciplinary power. This form of power is "exercised through invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility" (Foucault *Discipline & Punish* 187).

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Foucault warns that every relationship dealing with power utilizes our differences as the conditions and results by which power is distributed (*Power* 344). The result is that "power produces, it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (Foucault *Discipline & Punish* 194). In the end, hip hop as a counterpublic sphere looks to bring forth its power from the margins into the dominant sphere and to change the dynamic of who is supervising who by their message and attempts at sharing their interests and topics with others.

Chapter 4: Hip Hop President?–Obama and Hip Hop's Outreach to Each Other

[Verse 2]
I see no changes. All I see is racist faces.
Misplaced hate makes disgrace to races we under.
I wonder what it takes to make this one better place...
let's erase the wasted.
Take the evil out the people, they'll be acting right.
'Cause both black and white are smokin' crack tonight.
And only time we chill is when we kill each other.
It takes skill to be real, time to heal each other.
And although it seems heaven sent,
we ain't ready to see a black President, uhh.
It ain't a secret don't conceal the fact...
the penitentiary's packed, and it's filled with blacks.
But some things will never change.
Try to show another way, but they stayin' in the dope game.
Now tell me what's a mother to do?
Bein' real don't appeal to the brother in you.
You gotta operate the easy way.
"I made a G today" But you made it in a sleazy way.
Sellin' crack to the kids. "I gotta get paid,"
Well hey, well that's the way it is.

[Hook]
We gotta make a change...
It's time for us as a people to start makin' some changes.
Let's change the way we eat, let's change the way we live
and let's change the way we treat each other.
You see the old way wasn't working so it's on us to do
what we gotta do, to survive. (lyricsfreak.com)
- Tupac "Changes"

West Coast rapper Tupac Shakur wrote the song "Changes" to address the ever-growing

problems facing the black and hip hop community. The musical opening of the song starts out

with a slow melody being played on the piano. However, there is a quick "change" in tone as the

piano fades to the background and the drums and percussion pick up their speed. This musical

expresses the emotion that "change" is coming and that one needs to brace themselves for it. The

only time that the music goes back to that slower opening melody is between the verses. Here is

where the lyrical "hooks" demonstrate an auditory change in the music and prepare you to listen specifically, for the slow-down rapped message.

Lyrically in Verse 2, Tupac directly calls out the members of the hip hop community to be willing to forgive those that have done wrong toward them. In the beginning of this verse he is calling for an erasing of the hatred people have towards one another. The willingness to erase this hate will help to erase the pains of the past (segregation, racism, police brutality, etc.) but for him, he still sees that some things will never change; for instance, that people will still make money selling dope although members of the black and hip hop community are constantly incarcerated in jail. Tupac attempts to present the rationale of the crack dealer by showing that they need to get paid, but at what cost? Are you willing to continue to sell it to the kids that live within your own hood; or is it an ill-advised "survival by any means" necessary mentality? The juxtaposition of calling for change but showing the "rationale" for someone continuing their actions brings importance to the song's hook.

The song's hook is where Tupac slows down and steps away from rapping and instead talks directly to the listening audience by making a plea for all of us to recognize the need for change in our own lives, which will in turn have an effect on the community. Lines 2 and 3 address specific ways that we can start to make those changes: it can happen by the way we eat, live, and interact within one another in our community. While Tupac does call for members of the community to make changes, he is not opposed to political and sociocultural change as well, and in particular the election of a black president. "Changes" was written in 1992 (but not released until 1998, after Tupac's death), and just four years prior Jesse Jackson had made his second attempt at being the Democratic Party's candidate for president. Both times that he ran he lost (as discussed in chapter 1), but he provided a potential role model for Tupac to see society

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change its racist, hatred ways of the other and to bring about political sociocultural change. Tupac was correct –the greater American public was not ready to elect a black president –but one can argue that his song was a prophecy of things to come with the eventual election of now President Barack Obama.

The 2008 presidential election offered the United States the opportunity to elect its second black (and Democratic) presidential candidate for president. During the campaign Senator Obama had many monikers placed upon him from critics, supporters, and the like. Monikers like Obama is "the Messiah," or "the chosen one," and/or that he "pals around with terrorists" were often used to label the senator.

However, after the election of Obama there was a new moniker placed on him: "hip hop's first President." On the Monday, January 19, 2009 evening broadcast of the *The O'Reilly Factor*, Fox News contributor Monica Crowley was asked by Bill O'Reilly "what kind of change has come to America" in regards to the expectations voters have of now President Obama. Crowley stated the following: "Younger voters see Barack Obama as the first post-baby boom president . . . He's hip, he's cool, he's the first hip-hop president. They also believe he will be more progressive on issues that matter to them - the environment, education, gay marriage" (billoreilly.com). Now, Crowley never does explain what she means by "hip-hop's first president," but one could look at the label as an embedded racial comment that the only reason Obama is the "first hip-hop president" is due to blackness.

Alec Barrett takes a different perspective at the christening of Obama as the "Hip Hop President:" "However, the true measure of Obama's hip-hop legacy will not be measured in the number of mentions he receives in hip hop songs, but rather the social and political problems they discuss, and the tone that they take" ("Hip-Hop President"). Overall, this chapter will

explore the relationship that hip hop had with Obama and vice versa. It will explore the calls for change within the hip hop counterpublic sphere and how Obama attempted to be part of that sphere. Additionally, the question as to how hip hop has been affected by Obama will provide a means to see the political efficacy hip hop can have going forward.

Hip Hop's Counterpublic Sphere: An Expression To Alter the Cultural Battlegrounds

The formation of a hip hop counterpublic sphere connected to the counterpublic sphere scholarship was discussed in chapter 3, and argued by Nancy Frazer, Robert Asen, and Daniel Brouwer. Specifically, utilizing the work of Kenneth Burke and Michel Foucault, I argued that there are two additional factors that have affected the formation of the counterpublic sphere, which are the issues of identity and power. This scholarship provides the foundation for hip hop to craft itself into a counterpublic sphere, but it is necessary to explore the purpose for this formation. Hip hop's counterpublic sphere exists as a means of expression to bring recognition and a voice to the cultural battlegrounds that exist in the public sphere. Fernando Pedro Delgado argues: "Most likely, rap will always have a political edge simply because the majority of its artist represent racial, ethnic, and class groups that are typically marginalized" (96). In this case, the hip hop community is attempting to use rap as a means to alter the politics of culture and the battleground that revolves around whose culture or politics is to be heard.

The way that one "expresses" themselves serves as a means to alter one's experience. John Dewy writes, "If all meanings could be adequately expressed by words, the arts of paintings and music would not exist . . . values and meanings . . . expressed only by immediately visible and audible qualities, and to ask what they mean in the sense of something that can be put into words is to deny their existence" (74). In this case, the mere existence of paintings, rap songs, sculptors, etc. demonstrates the need to experience how others communicate and the importance

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of that communication. Due to these various forms of expression, one attempts to convey in their message the emotion of the experience that one has lived and that he/she wants another to have. Dewy contends:

> Expression is the clarification of turbid emotion; our appetites know themselves when they are reflected in the mirror of art, and as they know themselves they are transfigured. Emotion that is distinctively esthetic then occurs . . . It is an emotion induced by material that is expressive, and because it is evoked by and attached to this material it consist of natural emotions that have been transformed . . . only because when they are matter of an experience they, too, have undergone a change similar to that which the painter or poet effects in converting the immediate scene into the matter of an act that expresses the value of what is seen. (77)

Expressing one's experience brings forth the emotion one can use to create consubstantiality with those that are listening to their rap song. The ability to identify with the rapper's experience creates the experience of *we* instead of *I*, which is, as Burke points out, the means to bring people together. The power in one's expression comes in the ability to evoke an emotional response out of the other (Dewy 79).

The exchange of one's expression to evoke an emotional response out of another is connected to the viewing of "man as actor" (Sennett 107). Richard Sennett explores the relationship between man and the city, relying on the work of Denis Diderot and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, as to how man is affected by the theater of the city. Man is a "public actor" who presents his emotions to others through the use of style. Man is one who will emphasize certain words while suppressing other parts of a story in order to fit into a form or pattern that those listening to him could understand (Sennett 107). The question of how man acts becomes one of understanding the motive by which emotion is used to represent that person. "Expression as a presentation of emotion is the actor's job . . . his identity is based on making expression as presentation work" (Sennett 108). The effect of man's emotion being used as a form of representation is that one can lose their identity, their sense of self. The emotion that one

attempts to express becomes detached from the actor's act(ion) and the result is an emotion devoid of expression.

Man is often questioned as being true to his feelings as to not just express emotion as a formula that one can calculate to evoke a response out of another. The importance of one's feelings is to find the acts that can make them believable and bring forth repeatable emotions. Sennett references the work of Denis Diderot and the "paradox of acting" that exist in the theater and in society. Diderot contends that there is only an exact representation of an emotion once, and as a result one must study the form that governs our world (Sennett 112-113). By investigating the actor and his representation of emotions, one can find the power to become conscious to the emotion and form that is attached to our natural feelings. Diderot attempts to juxtapose how one acts to nature to see how they can influence each other. In this case, the way that one can use emotions as a form of real expression or representation is through their social acts offstage. Taking one away from the stage allows for the actor to develop repeatable acts that provided a space between what they present on the stage and how they interact or evoke emotion out of others on a daily basis. One must be aware of their appearance, their speech, and how these are placed within certain circumstances (Sennett 113). The social acts (of how one speaks or interacts with others) can provide a means by which their expression of emotion is believable and repeatable.

The connection that Sennett makes is to the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his critique of the city as a theater. Understanding the circumstances one finds himself or herself in allows for the actor to be conscious of what they are doing and what they are attempting to communicate. Rousseau is concerned about how the city can have an effect upon one's creativity and the relationships developed with others. Rousseau contends that: "The theater, rather than

licentious books or pictures, is a dangerous art form because it promotes the vices of men and women who do not have to struggle to survive. It is the agent of losing of self."

In this case the city is viewed in two different perspectives: as a "small" versus a "large" city (Sennett 117). The cosmopolitan (large city) is one that's corrupt, and due to the intersection of social and economic relationships one cannot tell what kind of person you are within a given situation. It is not until one is placed within a situation of survival (or a small city) that one can see the virtues that you possess. The conditions one is in ought to have an effect upon them (Sennett 118). The small city is the idealized location by seeing how one survives in order to find one's truer self. Rousseau argues that one's expression is determined by how "honest" a person is, and in turn, one's honesty is reflective of how unique a person is (Sennett 120). "Truly creative expression is done by the man in search of a true self; he expresses this discovery in words, music, and pictures. The works of art are like reports of a psychological inquest" (Sennett 120). Man is not an actor if his creative expression is true and is representative of his struggle to survive.

The "man as actor" plays an important role as to how the hip hop counterpublic sphere is able to express itself so that others can get a sense of their struggle and feel their expression. Tricia Rose argues: "the politics of rap music involves the contestation over public space, expressive meaning, interpretation, cultural capital . . . it is not just what one says, it is where one can say it, how others react to what one says" ("Fear of" 276). Hip hop attempts to avert one to the "extreme local," which is the focus on specific cities, hoods, projects, and/or area codes (Hill 109). This focus on the "extreme local" forces us to examine the circumstances by where one attempts to express their emotion about their struggle. The struggle becomes a site by where we

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can place ourselves into the "small city" to see how it has been influenced by their circumstances.

The focus allows us to question the honesty of one's creative expression by viewing the small world as a classroom by which "particular beliefs, values, identities, and stories are sanctioned at the expense of others" (Hill 110). William Jelani Cobb argues that "At the core of hip hop's being, its rationale for existence, is this refusal to exist as unseen and unseeable" (109). The hip hop community and its counterpublic sphere represent the refusal to be portrayed as Ralph Ellison's "invisible man" (Cobb 109). Hip hop and its expression of emotion for survival is tangible and exists in the material world. Hip hop is looking to awaken the "vision-impaired citizens on the street" who refuse to see their struggle because of the complexities of the cosmopolitan (large) city (Cobb 109).

The emotion, the struggle for survival, and the need for expression for the hip hop counterpublic sphere centers on cultural politics. Hip hop, as a small city, is in a fight for the recognition concerning the context, meaning, and public space that it operates in, in relation to the larger city (or the public, political sphere) (Rose "Fear of" 277). Bakari Kitwana writes: "Hip hop politics is arguably one of the few political spaces to have emerged in the past three decades where any real potential exists for challenging prevailing public policy approaches to issues like education, criminal justice, employment, health care and foreign policy" (165).

The argument made by Kitwana sets the groundwork for understanding the struggle of cultural politics for the hip hop community and its sphere. Cultural politics exists as a battlefield where people are left struggling to survive and hip hop is demanding a means to alter their survival.

The recognition of cultural politics being a battlefield comes from the theoretical underpinnings of Don Mitchell and cultural geography. Mitchell argues that culture should be viewed as a war and is one that "battles over the meaning and structure of the social relationships . . . the institutions . . . and the spaces . . . that govern our lives" (xvi). The purpose for studying culture as war or within a war is that it allows for us to see how "'culture' is in the making" and how our "'culture' is always and everywhere inextricably related to social, political, and economic forces and practices" (Mitchell xvi). Culture wars are not those that are fought over on the typical battlegrounds of economics or military might; instead they revolve around specific questions of how one identifies, their social values (or in conjunction with another's), and/or who gets to determine the control over the meaning of their culture (Mitchell 5). Don Mitchell argues:

> wars over culture are territorial, they literally *take place,* whether that place is on the wall of a convention center, on the city streets outside, or in the print and electronic media. Culture wars are about defining what is legitimate in a society, who is an 'insider' and who is an 'outsider.' They are about the social boundaries that govern our lives. (5)

The battlefield over culture is one where the hip hop community is fighting for its politics to be recognized and for change to occur. Hip hop wants to see changes in relation to the cultural politics concerning our education system, prison system, living system (for instance, cost of living, having an affordable living wage), and our means of political expression/representation. Mitchell warns though that one cannot use "culture" as a means of explanation; instead, culture needs to be explained (12). Mitchell writes: "People do not 'have' culture . . . there is only a very powerful *ideology* of culture, an ideology that asserts people do this or that because of 'culture;' . . . 'culture' exists as a . . . medium of social interaction" (12). One must attempt to understand what the "culture" is and how it is constructed to see how the battle over cultural politics takes place.

The word "culture" has many different applications and meanings based on the context that one finds themselves in. In the news or the classroom one may hear phrases like "Western culture" or "high versus low culture" or "black versus white culture;" all of these phrases attempt to label "something" in order for it to be "understood," but one is not seeing how culture exists and is fought over and recognized. Culture is a complex term that explores the issues of power, politics, economics, and the relationships those create from being intertwined.

Mitchell argues that culture can be viewed as a "nebulous 'structure of feeling' that defines the life of people (or perhaps is constructed out of lives of people) *and* a set of productions . . . that reflect upon, speak to, or attempt to mold that 'structure of feeling' through various strategies of representation" (13). Therefore, "culture" becomes a site of contestation where the meaning of politics is called into question and one can be left wondering how they are to survive. Hannah Arendt argues: "The task, the end purpose, of politics is to safeguard life in the broadest sense. Politics makes it possible for the individual to pursue his own ends, to be, that is, unmolested by politics–and it makes no different what those spheres of life are that politics is supposed to safeguard" (115).

Cultural politics exist as man is a political animal seeking a space to live and to cultivate their culture to have freedom. The cultural politics of hip hop is one that is deeply political as it seeks access to public space, communal resources, and the ability for its emotive expression of survival to be interpreted and visible to the greater public sphere (Rose "Fear of" 289).

The end result for the hip hop community and its counterpublic sphere is the cultural right to *be*. Although the pursuit for cultural justice is not new in America, to groups consisting of marginalized members of the greater society it is still a pursuit the ever growing and changing hip hop community is seeking. Don Mitchell argues that the cultural right to *be* "means an

institutional, societally sanctioned promise . . . social justice struggles is to continually expand the realm of the positive, enshrining the right *to* particular social goods" (289). The positive cultural rights consist of having access to and the ability to vote, a living wage, an ability to be who *I* want to *be*, and to have *our* music shine a light to the struggles surrounding politics, power, and space. No longer is the pursuit for cultural justice/rights one that solely rests on the shoulders of the individual, but it is the cultural group(s) who have suffered and are seeking a change. The pursuit of cultural justice now becomes an important means to identify with the hip hop community and a means to test the power one may use to ignore the expression being put forth by this community.

"I Need You:" Barack Obama's Appeal to the Hip Hop Community

Appealing to the hip hop community has been the focus of several political organizations and events sponsored by them as a way of bringing attention to the community and its need. Prior to the running and election win by Barack Obama as president, groups like the Hip Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN) and Citizen Change Initiative attempted to turn the hip hop community into a decisive voting bloc that required politicians and the like to give notice to the struggles within the hip hop community and to address how those concerns would be resolved. For instance, the HSAN in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections organized programs like "Rock the Vote" or "Get Your Money Right" to talk about the power of one's vote and/or to teach the community the importance of financial empowerment. Sean "Diddy" Combs used his position as a leader within the hip hop community due to his success and position of wealth to create the "Vote or Die!" campaign. The purpose of this campaign was to affect the youth vote (or the hip hop community) by bringing more people into the voting process by registering to vote and then turning out to vote.

The result of these campaigns was an increase in the youth (under 30) vote making up "18.4 percent, translating to about 20.9 million votes" (Vargas). Ultimately, these hip hop attempts at making a political difference resulted in making an impact but lacked a great political agenda for the hip hop community (Forman "Conscious Hip-Hop" 9).

The intention of these organizations provided the hip hop community with a renewed sense of struggle and energy to convert their cultural power into a political difference maker. This new potential difference maker was Senator Barack Obama with his "hope and change" slogan geared towards bringing America out of the political, social, and cultural discontent caused by the previous two terms of President Bush (Forman, "Conscious Hip-Hop" 8). Obama's message of "hope and change" was interpreted as a breath of fresh air that could bring about substantive change to all people; but specifically, the hip hop community saw it as a way for their concerns to be addressed.

Prior to his running for the presidency, then Senator Obama gave a speech to the 2004 Democratic National Convention in which he provided a new sense of energy and gave an insight into his future political agenda. Obama famously stated, "There's not a liberal America and a conservative America–there's the United States of America. There's not a black America and a white America and a Latino America and Asian America–there's the United States of America" (C. Fraser 21). The statement made by Obama was a means to inform people that there was no longer a politician who looks out for certain people (or interests); instead, there was a shift to addressing the needs of all groups regardless of the differences. This final part of his speech helped to set the agenda for his "hope and change" message and his eventual appearance to the hip hop counterpublic sphere (community).

Obama provides a nexus by whereby his means of being appealing to and then addressing the hip hop community can offer insight as to how Obama and hip hop affected each other. Obama's appeal to the hip hop community comes first in being different than the norm. In this case, I am not referring to his ethnicity or race, and while that does provide a different appealing factor, the "normativity" is more connected to his political experience. Obama was able to position himself as an "outsider" during the Democratic primaries as opposed to his Democratic challenger Hilary Clinton by pointing out all of the things that he was not. He did not have a long pedigree of being "part" of Washington, he had voted against the Iraq war, he was youthful, and he used ever more popular technology like Twitter and Facebook to put himself out there for the people to see. He was not the "career politician;" instead, he came in with a new message that attempted to bring all people out of the troubles they were facing (Forman, "Conscious Hip-Hop" 8).

Due to this first appeal and his ability to "articulate oppositional discourse," Obama was able to become part of the counterpublic sphere (Asen and Brouwer 8). He was able to position himself as the individual who would not do things the same as other politicians would. For instance, during the tail end of the 2008 presidential election, the economy virtually collapsed, and Republican presidential candidate John McCain wanted to cancel the upcoming debate so that they could go back to Washington and fix things. However, Obama rejected that offer and instead pointed to the importance of having the debate and getting their ideas out to the people so that they could decide how one's political agenda, experience, thoughts, etc. would have an effect upon the people that were beginning to suffer the effects of the economic changes.

In that moment, Obama stood out as the oppositional discourse that wanted to bring people into the discussion instead of retreating to Washington and living in the political vacuum

of Republican and Democratic inaction. The "norm" would have been to explore the reasons as to why the economy was going bad and then try to fix it, but Obama showed that the "usual politics" was the reason that people were suffering, so that he must go out and show how he was counter to the technical / political sphere of Washington. Additionally, he knew that, no matter who won, they were going to address this issue as soon as they became president. One could say that this was more of an example of political showmanship, but I argue that Obama was embodying Gerald Hauser's third critique (as discussed in chapter 3) of bringing the "subspheres" out of the area of disinterest into the area of interest (46-55). Obama was attempting to show that he was part of their life, that he was understanding of their problems and struggles, and expressing his emotions and ideas about the economy, recovery, and future policies to the people directly affected. Therefore, he began to embody and appeal to the counterpublic hip hop sphere.

The next factor that appealed to the hip hop community was his connection to the hood. In this case, it was his political and social background of being a community organizer that grounded his cultural politics in the improvement of one's surroundings. After his time at Harvard Law and return to Chicago, Obama worked on South Side neighborhood projects where there were people of black, Latino, and other immigrant populations that resided in those projects (Forman, "Conscious Hip-Hop" 10). By working in the projects, Obama grounded his sense of identity, culture, and politics in the everyday lived struggles of the people that he worked with and for.

Additionally, his personal family struggles resonated with the stories of people living within those projects. Jeff Chang writes: "His story, told in *Dreams From My Father*, . . . is a familiar hip-hop generation tale about a boy raised by a single mother and his grandparents,

trying to reconcile with a mostly distant dad" ("It's Obama Time"). Unfortunately, the projects

suffer from too many stories of being without one family member or another, and Obama

showing how he was raised had a profound effect upon who he was and the cultural politics that

he believed in. Connected to Obama's broken family history though was his ability to adapt to a

given cultural audience due to the elements of his background of moving. Obama moved from

Hawaii to Indonesia and eventually to Chicago, and during those times developed cultural

references (or codes) that allowed him to understand the different styles and potential struggles

that he would encounter. Maya Soetoro-Ng (his half-sister) spoke about Obama as, "He was able

to understand people on both sides of the fence . . . and he was able to negotiate the worlds of the

relatively affluent with a profound understanding of what it was like to be poor" (Chang).

The appeal of Obama's background is that it grounds him in the familiar life struggles

that many within the hip hop community deal with. Murray Forman would call this appeal "hood

work." "Hood work" is used as a term to describe how one vocalizes and brings attention to the

urban hood that one is part of. It is a form of hood authenticity (14). Jeffery Ogbar writes:

> all artists reveal themselves as authentic and 'true to the game.' The criteria . . . are in
> constant flux, reflecting larger social and political currents in society at large. At its most
> fundamental level, 'realness' in hip-hop implies an intimate familiarity with the urban
> working-class landscapes that gave rise to hip-hop in the 1970s. (39)

Jeff Chang articulates part of Obama's authenticity as being his ability to be located

within the generational gaps of the civil rights movement and the rise of politically conscious rap

music. Chang writes, "He's too young to have been a Freedom Rider and too old to have worn a

Public Enemy t-shirt like a middle finger" ("It's Obama Time"). The familiar struggles he

endured based on a broken family and moving around afforded him an opportunity to see the

importance of the civil rights movement in bringing about change to the cultural politics of the

day. Needs had to be addressed while working and having lived in different hoods. Yet, Public

Enemy becomes the hip hop counterpublic's expression about fighting the powers that be in order to bring change to one's life or project.

In connection to the counterpublic sphere, Obama's work as a community organizer or "hood work" embodies the need to bring forth the excluded into the decision-making process. By bringing power into the decision-making process, power is then able to be shifted to those within the margins so as to see how they voice their struggles, and their means of expression can be used to bring about change to their hood. This means that one's suppression within the public sphere based on how they identify, their interests, and/or their needs can be overcome (Asen 429). Power resides in the margins of the hoods, and so Obama used this power to bring forth the interest of these hoods in order for them to be heard.

Hoods on their own are consigned to the margins, but it is the discourse of Obama's personal story and the lessons he learned while working within the hoods that shifts the sociopolitical discourse into focusing on the cultural politics of the hood (Hariman 43). Murray Forman writes: "The primary mission among 'hood workers is to educate youth about their life options and about positive, pro-social attitudes and behaviors . . . Hood workers comprise an intervening force" ("Conscious Hip-Hop" 14-15). Though Obama was targeted from within his own party and then his opponent's for being merely a "community organizer," it is this hood work title that placed Obama in the center of the hip hop counterpublic sphere and made it possible for those within it to be brought into the decision-making process. The hood worker is able to intervene through terms like "empowerment," "agency," and "responsibility." Each of these terms are power terms, ones that exist in order to reverse control over one another (Foucault 61). Obama's "hope and change" message coupled with his connections to the hood provided the impetus for the hip hop community to stand up and be heard.

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The third means of appeal for the hip hop community was the question of Barack and his "blackness." Before any discussion of how race appealed to the hip hop community, I want it to be known that I do not propose to discuss how Barack defines his blackness and/or the politics that are influenced because of it. Yet, as a white scholar, I argue that it is important to recognize my own whiteness as it can be viewed as a lens by which to explore how hip hop was appealed by Obama to due to issues of blackness. Barack has had a difficult time in his life attempting to negotiate his race with his connection to the projects and hoods that he worked with and/or grew up in. Carly Fraser writes: "As he approached adulthood, Obama describes a continuing struggle with his racial identity. He frequently discussed racism with African American and biracial friends . . . He sought out the writing of Langston Hughes, Malcolm X and other African American figures" (19). The impact of exploring one's own blackness is to find how one aligns their identity with others and what the repercussions of that alignment are.

His book *Dreams From My Father* attempts to explore the complexities of all the different elements that have shaped who he is and what he believes in: being biracial (Kenyan father, white mother), being abandoned by his father and being raised within the whiteness of his grandparents, growing up literally a minority due to the geographical location (Indonesia) he spent part of his childhood in. His search for the meaning of his blackness comes across as a point of reconciliation for all people who have read his book or listened to his story (C. Fraser 19).

Obama faced not only his internal questions of his blackness, but he was criticized in the media about it as well. Jeff Chang points to an article written on *Salon.com* by Debra Dickerson who states, "'Black,' in our political and social reality, means those descended from West African slaves" ("It's Obama Time"). This comment amongst many attempted to stifle the much-

needed racial conversation about how we value people, the expression, their interest, and their cultural politics. Therefore, Obama has attempted to be post-racial in order to show how his understanding as to how his diversity can be (and is) reflected in the people of America and specifically the hip hop community. Ultimately, the journey of one's self cultural discovery, or a group's discovery of their cultural politics, is affected by our desire for due recognition.

Recognition is a vital human need that shapes who we are and the relations that we have with others around us (Taylor 26). Susan Talburt, relying on the work of Lacan, argues: "Identity seeks recognition. Yet depends on social relations and social knowledge to be recognized. As Lacanian argument . . . recognition is never 'full' or complete; 'it is conferred upon a subject, but forms that subject'" (11). The cultural politics of recognition demands that one be allowed to discover their own sense of self, but also that people be able to understand that how one attempts to identify or "recognize" them can become a rhetorical marginalizing tool. In terms of connecting to race or blackness, David Theo Goldberg contends:

> Racial construction is what gives one racial identity, what makes one (up as) a racial member, what inscribes one racially in society and in the law and identifiably gives substance to one's social being. It is, in short what partly locates one as a social subject . . . . Who counts as in and who out, who is central to the body politic and who peripheral, who is autonomous and who dependent. (83)

Goldberg's argument is that race's social construct defines who can be recognized and how they will be recognized.

For the members of the hip hop community, Obama became a point of recognition and not a sole definition of blackness, meaning that their vote was a means by which to demand recognition, to be seen, and to express their emotional desires to survive. Prior to the election of Obama, *The Source* magazine wrote an article entitled "Hip-Hop Stand Up!" The intent of this article was to present the various voices of hip hop, and demonstrate how they saw the two

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candidates and what they represented. In total, twenty-seven individuals were interviewed; below

are a couple of the comments surrounding the candidates, particularly Barack Obama.

> Jay-Z: If [Barack Obama] loses I really will feel sorry and sad for the state of America. The world is watching. And the world will judge us on that. And I'm not voting for him simply because he's Black. The worst thing ever for Black people would be to put someone in who wasn't capable. I'm voting because he's capable. What he represents to a little kid in Marcy Project right now is to make him feel like he's part of America. We never felt like we were part of the American dream. (52)

> Mos-Def: You have this extraordinary engaging, charming, very well-spoken, passionate yet somehow very subdued, above-the-fray type of character politics hasn't really seen. The best guy for the job, at this point, is a Black guy. [And] I'm cool with that. (53)
> 50 Cent: Obama just represent the thing that we've all been wanting to see for a long time, feel me? And at the end of the day, it ain't a Black thing or a White thing. It's just a principally correct thing. He reps principles, and I respect principles. (54)

> Common: I'm voting for Obama. He's just there to do some good things in the world, for people all around the world, whether you're Black, White, Latino or Asian. Obama is down for us. (54)

These comments represent the importance of recognition. The voting for Obama is not only a

vote for one's agenda, but it is a vote of recognition of identification. In connection to the

counterpublic sphere, Obama becomes the representative of the group (Perry 38-39). He has

taken on the role of leading the hip hop community into identifying with him as he pursues his

own identity and the recognition of self (and others like) him to be made by the greater public

sphere. As discussed in chapter 2, Burke looked at the role of the politician and the artist and

argued that they both attempt to share the "neglected minority." Obama takes on the role of

being the voice for the community and encouraging others through their vote, and through their

identification with him to make this minority stand out from the margins (Burke *Counter-*

Statement 71).

One difference though from Burke's discussion of the neglected minority is that Obama

relies upon his past as a means to have others see how his cultural politics and demand for

recognition match with theirs. In terms of a political effect, Obama saw members of the black

and youth (or hip hop) communities come out and support his campaign. Zach Baron reports:

"the African American vote was up two percent and was five points more Democratic than it

had been in 2004; the youth vote was up five percent and, crucially, swung 25 points more

Democratic. By some math, these demographic shifts added up to 73 electoral votes—an

enormous chunk of Obama's final margin" ("Rappers for Obama"). It was not his race or

blackness that caused people to vote for him, it was how he attempted to convey his own sense

of identity and recognition of that which garnered people to support his (their) cultural politics.

The final appeal made to the hip hop community was through the direct use of hip hop

mannerisms, rappers, and calling for the participation of the community. *Spin.com* has a

complete "history" of Obama's moments (connections) to hip hop (see Appendix A for a

timeline of those moments). The chronology of these moments attempts to articulate and locate

Obama's "realness" to the hood. Overall, these moments attempt to provide the importance of

reaching out to the hip hop community. I will analyze a couple of these moments as to

demonstrate Obama's representation of hip hop and its counterpublic sphere.

One of the first connections of Obama to hip hop took place on Nov. 30, 2006. This was

a meeting that Obama had with Atlanta rapper Ludacris. During this time, Obama's political

stock was on the rise and he was going to be running for the presidency soon. The purpose of this

meeting was to talk to Ludacris about the issues facing the youth in Atlanta and all over the rest

of the country. The meeting was held behind closed doors, but the image that came from that

meeting was Obama standing next to Ludacris wearing a "Wanted" Ben Franklin while Obama

was wearing a suit and tie. This shows the juxtaposition of the artists versus the politician as

described by Burke. The artist is not beholden to traditional conventions of dress or means of

speech as Obama was coming to meet him. Yet, Obama is able to embody both the role of the politician and seek out the artist in order to affect the neglected minority.

Though not at the meeting, another Atlanta based rapper Young Jeezy described his connection to Obama and the hip hop community as being one where he is endorsing Obama because he's saying what he wants to hear: "just like my favorite rapper. If [an MC] is saying what I wanna hear, I'mma go buy his album. If [a candidate] is saying what I wanna hear, I'mma go vote for him" (Reid and Kaufman). The indication is that holding this meeting with Ludacris and talking about how to empower the youth of today speaks to the artist as the artist can speak to their listeners. The rapper and politician can both come together and represent the streets in a manner that is true to themselves and represents the cultural politics of that area.

A secondary means by which Obama has attempted to elicit the support of the hip hop community is by the use of one of their symbols–"brushing the shoulder off." This is in reference to the Jay-Z song "Dirt Off Your Shoulder;" by where the speaker will take one hand and "brush off" what anyone may say about them or the "dirt" that one throws at another. On April 17, 2008, Obama was giving a stump speech during the Democratic primaries and responded to challenger Hillary Clinton by saying "You've got to expect it," and then he brushed his shoulders off about what she had said about him ("My President Is Rap"). This moment helped to solidify his membership into the hip hop community, because people at the speech and those watching TV knew exactly what he meant. On more than one occasion Obama had referenced Jay-Z lyrics and/or that his "bodyman" Reggie Love had been keeping his iPod up to date with rap jams ("My President Is Rap"). The connection to the sphere is that Obama embraces the uniqueness of hip hop. Michael Jeffries writes:

> Another factor contributing to the Obama/hip-hop association is the tendency to commoditize and sell blackness as the mark of trendiness: Obama is young, and he is

black/biracial, and he plays basketball, and he charismatic, and that makes him cool. And if he is cool, he must be down with hip-hop, because hip-hop is cool too. ("Is Obama Really")

This "coolness" factor becomes a means by which the politician and artist can be seen as representative of the community. It is a potentially dangerous path when a politician just uses "some symbols" of a given subculture or counterpublic sphere and expects to be considered part of that sphere. Case in point, author and activist Kevin Powell points out about Obama: "Were there elements of hip-hop around Barack Obama's campaign in '08? Absolutely . . . all those young people who grew up on pop culture and hip-hop who made that election happen in 2008 . . . . . Just because someone listens to hip-hop doesn't mean they're hip-hop, it doesn't mean that at all" (as quoted in Laymon). Powell rightly corrects any assumption that people have that because someone can name a rap lyric or "brush" their shoulder off means they are part of this community.

However, Obama was seen as a new representative for the hip hop community, a model that others could follow, and as such the hip hop community crafted organizational events and came out in force to support him and the community. Zach Baron points out that the Hip Hop Caucus put together an eighteen city swing state tour that featured artists like T.I. T-Pain, Jay-Z, Jeezy and others ("Rappers for Obama"). Additionally, rappers were uploading videos as to why they were voting for Obama and how others could join his campaign or make themselves heard. In particular, Jay-Z, at a concert the night before the election, rapped: "Rosa Parks sat so Martin Luther King could walk. Martin Luther King walked so Obama could run. Obama's running so we all can fly" (Baron). The rolling out of rap artists to be the leaders for Obama's campaign demonstrates the identification between Obama's message and the power cultural politics can make in the lives of others.

One of the final means of appealing to the hip hop community was through Obama's open letter written to *Vibe* magazine before the 2008 election. In the September 9, 2008 edition of the *Vibe* magazine, Obama wrote to the readers and members of the hip hop community, asking them to come out and support his campaign on Election Day (see Appendix B for the complete letter). Obama starts his letter by addressing some of the pressing issues of the day: war, the economy, and people being personally affected by these factors (Obama). The listing of these elements demonstrates the attention to the issues affecting the hip hop community and greater American public sphere, but it is in the next two portions that he attempts to directly relate the power of their expression to making a political difference. Obama writes:

> And too many Americans have lost faith that their leaders can or will do anything about it. That's why this election is the most important of our lifetime . . . We cannot wait to fix our schools, rebuild our communities, or end this war in Iraq. We cannot wait to change the game in Washington. I am running for President to take this country in a new direction. But I can't do it alone. I need you. ("Letter")

Obama is attempting to relate the issues of the day to the urgency of the moment they find themselves in. It is only through the collective action of the hip hop community that the issues they have been struggling to survive with will be positively affected. Obama is looking to overcome the rhetorical divisions used to separate people and instead place them back into the urgency of the moment; and as a result become an effective leader for change.

Next, Obama attempts to spin the skepticism people have of him, Washington, and the power of their vote by addressing the concerns people have about their individual power. Obama writes:

> Now, I've heard people say:..."I'm just one person, what possible difference can I make?" And I understand this cynicism . . . I sometimes doubted that my thoughts and actions really mattered in the larger scheme of things. But I made a choice. I chose to check in, to get involved, and to try and make a difference in people's lives. It's what led me to my work as a community organizer in Chicago . . . So I understand the temptation

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to sit elections out. But this year, when the stakes are this high, and the outcome will be so close, I need you to choose to vote. ("Letter")

In this portion of the letter, Obama is embracing the role of the hood worker. He is attempting to educate the youth so as to understand how the positive, social attitude of voting one can now challenge him and others to recognize the needs of the community and to be held accountable if action is not taking place (Forman "Conscious Hip-Hop" 14). Obama is placing himself in the center of the community and saying to put their trust in him and be part of the "change" and not just "hope" that something will occur to better one's situation. The connection he directly makes to his community organizer role makes the connection to the community that he is part of this hood and part of the hip hop culture more generally (Forman "Conscious Hip-Hop" 13).

Obama wraps the letter up with a call to action, a call to make a "change." Obama writes: "At defining moments like this one, the change we need doesn't come from Washington. Change comes to Washington. Change happens because the American people demand it–because they rise up to say 'enough,' and insist on new ideas and new leadership, a new politics for a new time" ("Letter").

This final statement of the letter embodies Foucault's concept of the "conduct of conducts." This is where individuals, groups, or political entities attempt to direct how one is to act in relation to another (341). Obama in this case is directing the conduct that one should engage in, but is attempting to have it be a means of oppressed neglected minorities to experience freedom. Using the power of the ballot, one is using their freedom to transform the situation they find themselves in and rejecting the fear of power being executed over them by another (Freire 47). Overall, it is through these appeals that Obama is able to demonstrate how he

is part of the hip hop community and is attempting to bring forth the concerns of this counterpublic sphere to the greater public sphere.

Hip Hop's Expressive Messages To Promote and Challenge Obama

Barack Obama's appeals to the hip hop community provided them with an opportunity: to embrace this politician who was placing his cultural political agenda directly in the center of the hip hop counterpublic sphere and addressing those who continued to be disenfranchised with the political system. It was the rappers' response to Obama that put the artist and politician on equal footing in that they were representing the neglected minority. Rappers went on political tours for Obama, helped to raise money for him, left voice messages for voter roll-calls, and even wrote rap songs about him. The rap songs ranged in their function and purpose, from full promotion of Obama to putting forth questions (or concerns) the community should have with this politician.

Erika Ramirez for *Billboard.com* has ranked the top ten best rap (hip hop) songs about Obama. Ramirez writes: "Hip-Hop has been behind Barack Obama since his first presidential campaign in 2008. From Jay-Z to will.i.am, artists have shown their support for the first African American President of the United States through inspirational odes and unforgettable performances" ("Barack Obama"). The list consists of artists like Mariah Carey, Common, Young Jeezy, Nas, and Jadakiss. Each song was crafted from the perspective of the artist to demonstrate how they identified with Obama and/or what Obama can do (bring hope and change). In particular, there are three songs that are going to be analyzed: Young Jeezy's "My President," Nas' "Black President," and Will.I.Am's "Yes We Can." The songs chosen were based on the popularity of the artist or song to the campaign and the messages coming from the lyrics.

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"My President," performed by Young Jeezy and featuring Nas was the first rap song to garner major radio play and to provide a political anthem for the streets (see Appendix C for complete rap lyrics). Rapper Young Jeezy is not known for writing "message raps" or socially conscious rap songs, as he typically emphasizes crack dealing and the expensive lifestyle that it affords him (Nielson 349). Growing up in one of the poverty-ridden parts of Atlanta, crack deals represented a way to survive the struggle, a way to improve one's status, and a means of mobility. Jeezy's work perpetuates the continued "gangsta lifestyle" that provided the impetus for rap music to be viewed as a potential commentary upon the dire conditions artists found themselves in. Yet, it is this "lifestyle" that turned an eye to the issues affecting these various communities. Issues such as violence, drugs, sex, money, cars, and others provided the elements for rap to be viewed as a culture that was obsessed with materialism, sexism, and other forms of destructive behavior (Nielson 347). The rhetoric of these elements pits potential destructive behavior against politics as a means of change. However, in "My President" Young Jeezy combines the consumeristic elements of rap to make a politically conscious rap song that represents the hip hop counterpublic sphere.

It is important to incorporate a brief description of the musical score, so as to provide a fuller context and present the mood of the song before its lyrical analysis. Theodore Matula defines "musical contexts" as "a set of significant symbolic events, musical and music-related, that occur together in the perception of a listener and that function to frame listening experiences." The framing of the listening experience occurs with the opening tone of the song, as you can hear cheering taking place. As if the president was arriving and the people were cheering him into the place he was going to speak. This creates a sense of excitement as one anticipates what the next musical note and eventual lyric will produce. Once the song begins, it

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has a very uplifting, positive beat to it. There are layered tones that the musical score elevate to a higher beat, and then bring it back down, only to brought back up moments later. The emotional mood of the song is one of satisfaction. The occasional "laughter" intertwined with the up-scaling beats demonstrate that this is a good message going forth.

The opening to the song (its lyrical hook) raps: "My president is black, my Lambo's blue / And I'll be goddamned if my rims ain't too . . . Tryna make a plate, anybody seen the scale?...My money's light green and my Jordans light grey / And they love to see white, now how much you tryna pay?" ("My President"). At first glance, Jeezy is playing into the gangsta lifestyle's commonplace elements of representing in the streets. The president in this case becomes a member of the hood, someone that he hangs out with, and they are mobile because of the quality vehicle a crack deal ("they love to see white") affords them. There is no overt socially conscious message being put forth by Jeezy; instead, it marks him and the president as being part of the hood. However, within the first verse Jeezy does make explicit political commentary when he raps: "Just cause you got opinions, does that make you a politician? / Bush robbed all of us, would that make him a criminal? / And then he cheated in Florida, would that make him a seminal? / I say and I quote, 'We need a miracle'" ("My President"). Here Jeezy directly points out the problems with the previous administration as they have committed acts of destructive behavior that require for an agent of change.

In these two parts Jeezy meshes two competing forms of rap messaging to demonstrate how Obama is going to be different. Eric Nielson argues: "Obama serves as a kind of catalyst, causing seemingly self-contradictory themes and images to co-opt one another and generate new meaning in the process" (350). The influence of Obama onto Jeezy is that it is one that provides a new means for turning one's hope into change.

Looking back to the opening hook by Jeezy, "My president is black, my Lambo's blue," the focus now needs to be on the context of the word "my." "My" can be seen as Jeezy accepting Obama as an authority figure that can be the agent of change. Therefore, Obama is embraced as being "my [Jeezy's] hood worker, one who put a focus and bring value to the hip hop community and culture (Forman "Conscious Hip-Hop" 14). The influence of Obama as being a hood worker who can bring change to the hip hop community can be seen in the latter part of the second verse. Jeezy raps: "If he could speak down from heaven he'd tell me stay on my grind / Tell him I'm doin fine, Obama for mankind / We ready for damn change so y'all let the man shine / Stuntin on Martin Luther, feelin just like a king / Guess this is what he meant when he said that he had a dream" ("My President"). The first part of this verse is in reference to Jeezy's friend Pimp C, who died, and is telling him that he is fine now because Obama is to be the embodiment of Dr. King's dream. In this case, Obama becomes the answer to the culture war as to who is to be recognized as being in or out of the cultural political decision-making process (Mitchell 5). Obama as King's "dream" culminates the struggle that the black arts movement, civil rights movement and the hip hop community have had in having a leader who comes from and understands their politics. Looking back to the first line about the hook and Obama being put next to the blue Lambo, the car becomes the metaphor for change, for mobility (Nielson 351). If the hip hop community is going to have their survival struggles expressed, and changed then we all must be in the car and moving Obama into the presidency (Nielson 352).

The significance of this moment, of being in the Lambo and having "my" president (the embodiment of my struggles, my emotional expression as to the ability to survive) next to "me," we can see a moment of critical reflection as Jeezy marks the importance of both of their roles within the hip hop community. He raps:

Nigga I won't say win, lose or draw / Man we congratulate you already homie /
See I motivate the thugs right / You motivate us homie, that's what it is /
This a hands on policy, y'all touchin me right nigga / Yeah, first black president, win,
lose or draw nigga / Haha, matter of fact, you know what it is man /
Shouts out to Jackie Robinson, Booker T, Washington homie / Oh you ain't think I knew
that shit? / Sydney portea what dey do? / Haha, my president is black /
I'm important too though . . . ("My President")

Jeezy is starting out by showing how the politician and artist can serve two important roles

(Burke *Counter-Statement* 71). Obama is celebrated no matter the electoral result because he has

altered the conversation as to the cultural politics that get waged in the culture wars. Obama is

the influence for Jeezy to generate new rap songs that reflect on the hip hop idioms of violence,

drugs, etc., but with a new conscious twist to require the hip hop sphere to understand what he is

rapping about and how it represents all of their needs to be recognized. Jeezy's embracing of

Obama as a hood worker (a former community organizer) allows him to use his "thug life"

cultural politics to be reflected in his song about Obama. Jeezy inspires the hip hop community

to ride in the Lambo with the soon-to-be president because he understands their cultural politics.

It is a reciprocal cycle that can lead towards change.

The second significant rap song was done by Nas called "Black President." The musical

score for the song starts with an excerpt of an Obama speech where he starts out by saying "They

said this day would never come" This incorporation of Obama's speech is quickly mixed

together with a newer up-beat version of Tupac's rap song "Changes." The musical tone is of a

rapid drum being tapped on top (rat-at-tat-tat) in quick precession with a slower melody layered

over it. This creates a juxtaposition, where the drum beat has a "worrisome" feel to it as

compared with the melody, which is "uplifting" in its tone. The song uses this juxtaposition to

show that there is complete confidence in what that lyrical messaging of the song entails but

there is reason to be optimistic.

Overall, the purpose of the song is to provide an endorsement of Obama and what he will do differently than previous politicians (Forman "Conscious Hip-Hop 12). However, this endorsement is done by placing two potential competing realities against one another (Nielson 356). The competing realities appear in the opening and chorus used for the song where Nas plays the following: "Although it seems heaven-sent, we ain't ready, to have a black president– Tupac . . . Yes we can...change the world...Barack Obama." Nas took musical samples of Tupac's "Changes" lyrics (see beginning of chapter) and put it with a sample from one of Obama's speeches, using his catch phrase "Yes we can." On one side, the Tupac lyric shows the concern (the skepticism) within the hip hop community that we are "not ready" as a community and greater public to put in a "black" president. Yet, it is the positive influence of Obama's slogan and the ending with "change the world" that shows that if people are willing to embrace this expression, then hope and change can come about. Courtney Brown considers these types of lyrics to be a form of representational music: "Representational political music presents a clearly defined political point of view that corresponds with the composer's intent with respect to the music" (4). The intent in this case is to see the hip hop community as a raptivist group of people who can redefine their reality within society and bring about change to it (Bynoe xi).

In the first verse of the song, Nas addresses the issues of police brutality and how those in the black and hip hop communities currently only exist in a "box" (jail cell) and therefore there is a need for this policy to end. Nas offers himself to be a leader in this cause, but to also rally others to be led by a new leader, Obama (see Appendix D for complete rap lyrics). Nas raps: "A predicate felon, a ghetto leader / Lendin my poetical genius, to who-EVER may need it . . . / Never defeated, so a president's needed . . . / America, surprise us, and let a black man guide us" ("Black President"). In this first verse, Nas is positing another competing reality: the ghetto

leader versus the politician. Yvonne Bynoe draws a line between these two competing realities when she argues, "In basic terms, raising awareness about police brutality though a song or performance is Hip Hop, but actually motivating the masses to force changes in police department procedures or the laws used to prosecute corrupt cops is politics" (xi).

It is my contention that Nas disagrees with this perspective as it denies the empowerment, agency, and responsibility of people within the community who seek to change their reality by using an emotive expressive means that demands recognition. Obama serves as the political change agent, but it will only happen if people are willing to be guided by two black men. As stated in "My President," Obama motivates the rapper and the rapper motivates the "thugs." The connection of these two songs' opening verses and hook/chorus shows the change taking place in the message consciousness of rappers and is crafting a representational musical politics.

The second verse of the song provides another strong example of representational music being used to challenge how we think and affect the cultural politics of the hip hop community. Nas raps: "I think Obama provides hope, and challenges minds of all races and colors to erase the hate and try to LOVE one another; so many political snakes / We in need of a break . . ." ("Black President"). Nas embraces the notion that Obama can explain the cultural issues afflicting the hip hop community and that this would be a change in the right direction as the "political snakes" have attempted to continue to divide people based on racial constructions (Mitchell 12 and Goldberg 83). The break will allow the hip hop counterpublic sphere and the greater political sphere to potentially not see each other as different, but to create a political conversion geared towards recognition and change. Cornel West writes: "But there is a chance for conversion . . . Any disease of the soul must be conquered by a turning of one's soul . . . A love ethic has nothing to do with sentimental feelings or tribal connections. Rather it is a last

attempt at generating a sense of agency among a downtrodden people" (29). "Love" for Nas is an attempt at getting all people (inside or outside of the hip hop counterpublic sphere) to generate a sense of agency for all so that hate can be erased and so that the downtrodden can change the cultural politics afflicting them.

While Nas is willing to be an agent for a love ethic conversion, there is still some doubt that Obama will not turn into a "political snake." Nas raps: " I'm thinkin I can TRUST this brotha....but will he keep it way real? / Every innocent nigga in jail, gets out on appeal / When he wins, will he really care still?" ("Black President"). Though Nas shows a sense of optimism that the hip hop community and Obama can turn hope into change, there is still doubt that the cultural politics of Obama will still represent those of the counterpublic sphere. Obama has appealed to the counterpublic sphere by utilizing his community organizer background, but there is still doubt that all politicians can be trusted to create effective policies.

Murray Forman writes: "The sentiment among many in the hip-hop community remains that Obama's words must translate into workable policies and his declarations of 'change' must be accompanied by measurable outcomes . . . " ("Conscious Hip-Hop 13). Nas and others like him want to see results and not just rhetoric used to garner one's vote or to only "recognize" the hip hop community for access to their voting power. Zach Baron notes: "Hip-hop was a small activist subsection of one of the most precisely organized campaigns in the history of American politics" ("Rappers for Obama"). Nas is projecting the skepticism that Obama only used them to ascend to the political mountain top and will forget those who got him there and the cultural policies they expect to see addressed when he arrives there.

The final song that hip hop generated was Will.I.Am's "Yes We Can." This is not a song that was written for Obama but rather the lyrics of the song come directly from Barack Obama's

January 8, 2008 New Hampshire primary speech. Will fused Obama's speech with poetic

musical rhythm to give the speech a hip hop feel. Along with the unique combination of written

speech with musical accompaniment are the forty additional collaborators Will.I.Am has perform

the song with him. Individuals like rapper Common, actress Scarlett Johansson, retired NBA

player Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and others sang the speech into an uplifting political song

(Kaufman). The reason for this performative collaboration was that Will was waiting for a

candidate to emerge and this particular speech made him reflect upon the sacrifices made by

JFK, Dr. Martin Luther King, and Abraham Lincoln (Kaufman). Will states: "I reflected on my

life and the blessings I have and the people who fought for me to have these rights and blessings.

And I'm not talking about a 'black thing,' I'm talking a 'human thing'" (Kaufman).

The musical score of the song lends itself to be more lyrically orientated than musically

so. This is conveyed in the decreased tone of the song. It sounds as though being played on an

acoustic guitar, and the emotion comes forth by the various performers reciting in unison with

Obama the "lyrics" from his speech. The musical tone is more reflexive, so as to have one think

about what the words mean to you. Yet, towards the later part of the song the crowd's repeating

of "Yes We Can" builds so that it becomes the loudest part of the song. You want to be part of

this crowd; you can feel yourself being pulled into chant and to ultimately be part of the

message.

Will.I.Am turns Obama's "Yes We Can" into a musical hook that attempts to uplift the

hip hop community into grabbing opportunity and making the most out of it. The hook states:

"Yes we can to opportunity and prosperity. / Yes we can to opportunity and prosperity. / Yes we

can heal this nation. / Yes we can repair this world." The use of this lyric is to garner an

emotional reaction from those listening to the song. The reaction is of one having a communal

experience through the repeating of "Yes We Can." This experience takes us from being *I's* that

have a reaction to being *we's* who see how others are affected (Dewy 79). Will.I.Am wants us to

have that emotional connection to the song because he had that with the content of the speech,

and by making connections to others the ability to make a change increases with each person

who has that similar experience.

The connection that Will wants us to make comes in the first verse where Obama traces

past struggles that people have gone through but who have been able to change their situations

through "Yes We Can." Will.I.Am (Obama) sings:

> It was a creed written into the founding documents that declared the destiny of a nation. /
> It was whispered by slaves and abolitionists as they blazed a trail toward freedom . . . / It
> was the call of workers who organized . . . / And a King who took us to the mountain-top
> and pointed the way to the Promised Land. / Yes we can to justice and equality. ("Yes
> We Can")

The listing of these struggles demonstrates the social marginality that people went through in

order to survive. Yet, it is in this marginal status that these people, and now the hip hop

community, can find its rhetorical power to change the substance of the discourse (Hariman 43).

The struggles of these individuals creates a form of verbal power that the un-marginalized cannot

sanction or control until they are confronted by it.

In the second verse Will.I.Am addresses those that have attempted to stifle Obama's

voice, which in turn mutes the voice of the hip hop community. Will.I.Am (Obama) sings: "We

have been told we cannot do this by a chorus of cynics who will only grow louder and more

dissonant. / We've been asked to pause for a reality check. / We've been warned against offering

the people of this nation false hope. / But in the unlikely story that is America, there has never

been anything false about hope. We want change!" ("Yes We Can"). Obama answers the critics

by turning their productive network of criticism into an agent of change. Hope cannot be false,

and it is with this hope that the various struggles that were listed in verse one were able to be overcome. We cannot be afraid of retaliation when a political group, state, or other entity attempts to exert control over our hope (Foucault *Power* 341). For Obama and the hip hop community, it is the fear that Obama will not be real once in the White House (Nas "Black President"), the fear that things cannot be changed, and the fear that the actions taken will not have an effect upon those downtrodden. Fear is a form of retaliation that can constrict our actions and allow the oppressor to continue to control our lives (Freire 48). Will.I.Am uses this verse and the content of the speech to act as a musical motivator to show that hope can overcome fear.

Reflections on Barack Obama: Hope for Hip Hop?

The title of "Hip Hop's President" used by Monica Crowley to categorize Barack Obama's presidency created some confusion as to what the cultural politics of the hip hop community are and how Obama represents them. The reality is that is difficult to pinpoint the exact cultural political points, as this is an ever growing and changing community. Imani Perry writes: "It is even more difficult to associate hip-hop with a particular politics when the most visible representatives of 'hip-hop politics' are also often representatives of corporations and corporate interests, interests that are frequently at odds with the interests of poor and working class people" ("How Rap Can").

The critical question that must be asked is: "What has the effect of Obama been for hip hop?" For instance, rap historian Davey D asks: "Is President Obama the Hip Hop President? Let's move away from that question and start asking how is Obama serving the Hip Hop community? What is Hip Hop's relationship to Obama? What sort of things has Hip Hop done for Obama and how has it been reciprocated?" ("Is Obama"). It is too much of a burden to place on one individual the entire representation of a counterpublic sphere /community. The question

posed: "What has the effect been of Obama for hip hop?" provides an opportunity to explore the

hopes and changes attributed to the relationship between these two entities.

The first effect that Obama has attempted to have is to change the conversation within hip

hop. This becomes a point of potential consternation as you have message rappers and

commercial rappers being pulled in divergent directions. Message rapper Common contends that

hip hop will have no choice but to alter the message as to what they are talking about and why

(McLaughlin). Common states:

> I really do believe we as hip-hop artists pick up what's going on in the world and try to
> reflect that" (McLaughlin). The potentiality of the Obama administration in 2008 and still
> now in his second term deals with how we are talking about our community, our politics,
> and how that is being affected by Obama and his politics. The politics of Obama will
> provide a new conversation to be, as people have grown "tired of hearing the same
> things. (Common as quoted in McLaughlin).

The Obama effect is one where the message and the messenger are different, and it is within this

difference that change can come about.

The second effect is that Obama's past can be used to motivate raptivism within the hip

hop counterpublic sphere. The "raptivist" is a rapper who engages activism on the side (Bynoe

vix). The definition and engagement of a raptivist must be altered. I argue that a "raptivist"

should have two new connotations. First, a raptivist is one who uses their messages (or raps) to

address the contingent issues of the community and offer solutions for them. In this definition, it

is geared toward the rapper (or MC) using their mic skills to be the voice of the hip hop

counterpublic sphere.

However, not everyone is an MC or has the ability to reach potentially millions of people

through their raps. Therefore, the second connotation of "raptivism" should consider the active

engagement one has committed themselves to, to affect the contingent issues of the community.

This takes away the negative connotation of "raptivism" being only a side hobby and instead

allows for those who engage in various ways to be recognized contributors to the betterment of the community. This new application would embrace the hip hop scholar who is writing about the issues of the local and or international community. This application would embrace the activist who actively gives of their time to help those in need but has a connection to the hip hop community.

Once the shift is made, the effect from Obama is the consideration being made towards pushing people to be activists. Imani Perry implores people to not solely focus on the message rapper and what they say; instead "activism in hip-hop, we have to be careful to not think that music can be a substitute for the day to day work of civic and political engagement, or that celebrities represent 'the people.' Instead, we must look for the music that is connected to real struggle and clear positions that serve the greater good" ("How Rap Can"). This takes into consideration the duality of the raptivist definition proposed in the current project. The need is for both the expression (rapper) and the action (activist) to promote the best means of solving the issues of the community. Due to Obama's background of being a community organizer and him having used this as means of portraying himself as a member of the hip hop counterpublic sphere, he must be held accountable for the encouragement of solutions to address the ills of the community. Kristine Wright argues:

> Hip Hop's power is realized in truth and self-determination through community activism. Community activism in inner cities across the country is taking on a hip hop sensibility and offering real alternatives for youth at community levels. Hip Hop's power is realized simply in its ability to *move the crowd* as a collective, challenging hegemonic power and building solutions as a community. ("Rise Up")

Obama had the ability to garner millions of votes and in particular make himself part of the hip hop counterpublic sphere. Voters (in and out of this community) cast their ballots because he was able to convince many people that they could hope for change, and that change could take

place. At the same time, "Obama gave rap a sense of relevance at the exact moment that its most venerable artists were searching for one" (Baron). The effect of encouraging and embracing the need for raptivism may be the greatest effect Obama has on the community. "the true measure of Obama's hip-hop legacy will . . . be . . . the social and political problems they discuss, and the tone that they take. The Obama presidency has the potential to influence hip hop music insofar as he can bring about solutions–both through policy and a longer-term cultural shift" (Barrett). The ability to change the conversation and focus it on the need for raptivism in the community will help to prove if Obama brought hope to the hip hop community.

Chapter 5: Hip Hop Republicans–A New Face for the Grand Ole Party

[Intro]
Look, if you had one shot, or one opportunity
To seize everything you ever wanted, one moment
Would you capture it or just let it slip?
Yo

[Hook]
You better lose yourself in the music, the moment
You own it, you better never let it go
You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to blow
This opportunity comes once in a lifetime yo
You better lose yourself in the music, the moment
You own it, you better never let it go
You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to blow
This opportunity comes once in a lifetime yo

[Verse 2]
The soul's escaping, through this hole that is gaping
This world is mine for the taking
Make me king, as we move toward a new world order
A normal life is boring, but superstardom's close to post mortem
It only grows harder, homie grows hotter
He blows. It's all over. These hoes is all on him
Coast to coast shows, he's known as the globetrotter
Lonely roads, God only knows
He's grown farther from home, he's no father
He goes home and barely knows his own daughter
But hold your nose 'cause here goes the cold water
His hoes don't want him no more, he's cold product
They moved on to the next schmoe who flows
He nose dove and sold nada
So the soap opera is told and unfolds
I suppose it's old partner but the beat goes on
Da da dum da dum da da

   "Lose Yourself," the musical anthem to the 2002 movie *8 Mile*, tells the story of Jimmy

"B-Rabbit" Smith, who is a white rapper living in one of the poorer sections of Detroit called 8

Mile. The anthem marks B-Rabbit's failures as a man and his struggle to survive, but this

provides in words the motivation to rise to the moment, to seize the mic, and to find his voice.

The movie is based on the life of rapper Eminem. The movie shows how he had to survive in a poor neighborhood by working a low paying job, while having an alcoholic mother and being surround by dilapidated conditions that he was desperately trying to get out of. Being white posed a challenge, as his neighborhood was divided along the "8 mile" marker that kept the more affluent parts of Detroit on one side and him living in conditions that he could not get out of until he found his voice. In the movie, B-Rabbit is well known for having creatively worded rhymes and being able to diss his friends with no problem, but when he gets on stage he "chokes." Every time he had to prove himself, he allowed it to take him over (or slip).

The hook of the song becomes the central motivator by telling B-Rabbit that you can no longer lose your moments, that all you have is this one, so you must take your shot. Interestingly, this is one of the motivational songs that Florida Senator Marco Rubio identified as being a song that he would use to walk down the steps of Congress to go and vote (Hainey). In a December 2012 *GQ* article, Rubio was asked about his biography where he indicated that hip hop had been a form of cultural influence that affected how he saw the world. Rubio states: "People forget how dominant Public Enemy became in the mid-80s. No one talks about how transformative they were. And then that led to the 90s and the sort of East Coast v. West Coast stuff, which is kinda when I came of age" (Hainey). The interviewer asked him to identify three of his favorite songs and Eminem's "Lose Yourself" was one of his favorites. Jokingly, he is asked if he used a song to "psych" him up before he voted on the Senate floor and Rubio responded: "I'm not like an athlete. The only guy that speaks at any sort of depth is, in my mind, Eminem. He's a guy that does music that talks about the struggles of addiction and before that violence, with growing up in a broken family, not being a good enough father. So, you know that's what I enjoy about it" (Hainey). Rubio is never asked to explain how the song actually psychs him up, but the

connection is clear that the struggles Eminem raps about have become cultural identifiers for

him, ones that can bring people together even though they come from completely different

worlds.

The world that Rubio came from was one, as he tells it, shaped by the political takeover

of Fidel Castro into Cuba (Roig-Franzia). Rubio has written in his biography and given political

speeches where he has used the "plight" of his parents' move to America to get away from the

communist influence of Castro as a means to "seize the moment." Now, the story of when his

parents came to America has become a point of political controversy, as it has been determined

that his parents had arrived in America before the takeover of Cuba by Castro, but this does not

deny the difficulties he had growing up with parents who were immigrants and did not have

much money (Roig-Franzia). Rubio is B-Rabbit in the sense that his view of the world was

shaped by the cultural politics that he had to survive through. The "moment" that Rubio had to

grab is whether to be a "politician" or a "leader." Rubio states:

> A politician is very good at navigating the process of politics. It involves getting a few
> things done for the people who sent you there, but mostly perpetuating your time in
> office. A leader may end up being able to accomplish that, but is more motivated by the
> desire to accomplish something, and usually when you try to accomplish something
> you're almost never judged kindly by your contemporaries. (Hainey)

Just like in a rap battle where B-Rabbit had to prove his lyrical skills to a crowd of

"contemporaries," he was able to show that what he said and how he said it made him stand out

from others and prove that you can seize your moment.

Looking at the Grand Ole Party, they have a "moment" that they need to grab onto and

not allow to continue to slip away, and that is the members of hip hop community. Keeping in

step with the 2008 presidential election and the effects that this had on the hip hop community,

the GOP has been coming up short in terms of having the hip hop community identify with them.

The Grand Ole Party has become the Grand Outtatouch Party, and the moment to seize back young people into the conservative fold has been slipping. The question becomes: "Is the GOP hip hop?" Meaning, are they actively attempting to be part of the community, to help bring about new ideas, voices, and solutions to address the issues of the community, or are they simply trying to siphon off voters to regain a political foothold for the future? This chapter will explore the various means that the GOP has tried to become hip hop.

The GOP's Need For A "Makeover"

The 2008 presidential election of Barack Obama was caused by a new alliance of political voters. In looking at the exit polls from the election, Obama won with the help of several groups based on sex, race, age, and first time voters as compared to Sen. Jon McCain. For instance, Obama won women voters 56% to 43%, black voters 95% to 5%, Hispanic voters 67% to 31%, 18-29 year olds 66% to 32%, 30-44 year olds 52% to 46%, and first time voters 69% to 30% ("Exit Polls"). The ability for Obama to invigorate and bring these diverse groups together became a political wakeup call for the GOP as they were only able to win a couple of specific groups as compared to Obama's multiple groups. McCain (GOP) won in the categories consisting of White voters 55% to 43%, and 60 years of age and older 51% to 47% ("Exit Polls"). The political loss, coupled with the election of the first ever African American Republican National Chairman, Michael Steele, required the GOP to formulate a new political strategy to bring back voters to the fold. In February 2009, Michael Steele was interviewed by the *Washington Times* to discuss what he would call a political "makeover" for the Grand Ole Party.

The strategy involved an "'off the hook' public relations offensive to attract young voters, especially blacks and Hispanics, by applying the party's principles to 'urban-suburban

hip-hop settings'" (Hallow). Michael Steele recognized that there was a miscalculation being made by the political party to assume that women would have voted for the McCain/Palin ticket due to Palin being a woman. There was a need to reach out to the communities of color to demonstrate how Republicans could represent the people of these communities. Michael Steele stated, "We need messengers to really capture that region–young, Hispanic, black, a cross-section . . . We want to convey that the modern-day GOP looks like the conservative party that stands on principles. But we want to apply them to urban-suburban hip-hop settings" (Hallow). The impetus for reaching out to the "hip-hop settings" is that the GOP had lost states like Virginia and North Carolina and the party's image was that of being more regionalized (Baron, "Ah Jeez").

Overall, the message of the 2008 GOP was that they were a party of older, White, central and southern voting members. There is additional evidence that proves there was a diversity deficit for the GOP. Zach Baron comments on the attempt by Steele to be inclusive of blacks in particular by pointing out that there were only "26 total black delegates at the 2008 Republican National Convention, a figure that was good for slightly less than 2% of the total delegation" ("Ah Jeez"). This lack of diversity typifies a party that has lost its way with people of all formats as the low black delegation was the first of its kind since 1968 (Baron "Ah Jeez"). In total, the political effect of what Baron defines as the hip hop voters (black and youth voters) accounted for "73 electoral votes," which provided a strong number that the GOP could not overcome ("Ah Jeez").

Michael Steele's declaration that he and the GOP are going to reach out to "hip-hop settings" was a tacit acknowledgement of the power of rap messages and the need to be more inclusive. Courtney Brown writes, "Rap has becomes one of society's most importance mediums

of political expression across a large segment of contemporary youth precisely because of the potency of the musical medium" (219). Now, there is no indication made by Steele in his interview of what this "off the hook" public relations campaign was going to consist of, but it did lend a potential new perspective for the GOP to embrace.

For instance, during the twenty-seven interviews done by *The Source* magazine mentioned above, there was one rapper who came out in support of Sen. John McCain, Daddy Yankee. Yankee states: "I believe in his ideals and his proposals to lead this nation . . . he has been a fighter for the Hispanic community . . . I choose him as the best candidate because he has been a fighter for the immigration issue" ("Hip Hop Stand Up!" 53). This was the only "hip hop" endorsement that McCain or the GOP garnered during the 2008 election. This indicates that there was a divide between the members of the hip hop community and the GOP.

However, there is the potential that if the right political issues are addressed, then this community could potentially feel connected to a GOP candidate. Additionally, there is more of a connection that Steele could use to make the GOP more hip hop, and that is the capitalist nature of the hip hop industry. Hip Hop scholar and Professor Lester Spence was being interviewed by Michel Martin for *NPR* and was asked if there is a conservative strain of hip hop. He stated: "I think hip-hop actually does tend to be conservative . . . I mean it tends to be pro-business" ("Can Hip-Hop"). This statement is one that is grounded in the very nature of hip hop's rhetorical aesthetic, meaning that rappers are known for their "bling" or rapping about the number of cars they have, the new places that they bought or live in. Part of rap's narrative is about how one has pulled themselves out of their desolate situations to rise to the top. There is nothing more pro-business than this type of messaging. Michael Steele's "hip-hop makeover" is one that can be

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connected to current messages put forth by rappers to the listening audience; as such, his attempt is that of a constitutive rhetoric to formulate a new audience.

The makeover attempt by the GOP attempted to use a form of constitutive rhetoric. This type of rhetoric calls an audience into being or existence (Charland 134). The 2008 presidential election results created an exigent moment where Steele has to draw the youth, minorities, and women back into the political fold. Steele stated as such, "Where we have fallen down in delivering a message is in having something to say, particularly to young people and moms of all shapes . . . We don't offer one image for 18-year-olds and another for soccer moms but one that shows who we are for the 21st century" (Hallow). The need to make over the political messaging of the GOP for these specific groups indicates that there is a power in what they said and how they say it, which is recognition of constitutive rhetoric. Maurice Charland writes: "constitutive rhetorics have power because they are orientated toward action" (143). Action in this case is the acceptance of a new ideology that will result in the hip hop community's material practices being altered. Charland explains, "Ideology is material because subjects enact their ideology and reconstitute their material world in its image" (143).

The means by which ideology can be used to alter material practices is through the weaving of it with narratives. Narratives place the individual as the "agent" in the world and provide motivation to the agent to make changes (Charland 143). Narrative is powerful in the hip hop community as rappers place themselves in the center of their community (Forman 213). It is this placement within the community that Steele is seeking by stating they are going to create a hip hop makeover. The narrative of the GOP needed to be one where they express the concerns of hip hop and use a rhetoric of *we* as compared to *I*. The "we" is that Steele placed himself and the ideology of the GOP as matching that of the hip hop community. The community must sense

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that they are part of the solution and not being told they are the problem or that their issues are not ones that need to be focused on. The "I" comes about when narrative is used to tell the hip hop community what it means to be conservative and not how they are already are ("we").

The end result is that Steele is seeking to call forth a new rhetorical audience. Michael Calvin McGee's article "In Search of 'the People:' A Rhetorical Alternative" explores the question of "the people" and what they truly consist of rhetorically. McGee writes: " In the current sense, 'people' is no more than the plural of 'person,' a grammatic convention which encourages the notion that the people of a nation are objective, literal extensions of the individual" (342). In this case, Steele's desire to make over the GOP's messaging is an attempt to be seen as the extension of the "the people," meaning the hip hop community. Steele's public relations campaign was centered on the notion that people are subjects who have the ability to speak and to be spoken to (Charland 147). The GOP's desire to be more hip hop is one where the community is the subject to be spoken *to* and not spoken *with*. The nature of Steele's comments about being perceived as too regionalized and not having a message for eighteen year olds and moms of all shapes did not admit to how they have crafted their rhetorical GOP audience; instead, it just said this is who is missing in their "audience." The GOP wanted to craft a new political myth as to how they will be inclusive of the groups Obama galvanized, but it was setting up to be a false consciousness. McGee quoting Sorel contends: "Myths are not descriptions of things, but expression of a determination to act . . . A myth . . . is, at bottom identical with the convictions of a group, being the expression of those convictions in the language of movement" (346). The movement that Steele sought was a rhetorical repositioning of the hip hop community to the right so that they would realign themselves to the attitudes and conditions of the other (being the GOP) (McGee 347).

The acknowledgement by Steele that the GOP has bad messaging seemed to be an outward acknowledgment that the GOP had done some sort of critical reflection. Yet, there are concerns connected to this "makeover;" and they deal with the cultural politics of the two groups. For instance, Zach Brown argues in response to Steele's quote about being considered too regionalized: "Nevermind that 'urban-suburban settings' are fundamentally deaf to a message that involved enormous emphases on incarceration, draconian drug laws, regressive taxes, and the shredding of whatever meager social safety net still remains in this country" ("Ah Jeez"). The issues that Brown attests to are central to the hip hop community, though he only defines this group as being black and youth-based voters. Each of these issues is a representation of the cultural politics that has created material world practices of excluding these community members.

Steele's makeover embodies the "man as actor" critique that Richard Sennett writes about in relation to emotion and actions. As discussed in chapter 3, Sennett uses the work of Denis Diderot and Jean-Jacque Rousseau to discuss how the "man as actor" is affected by his emotions and conditions. Since Diderot contended that there was only one exact emotion and that the form of its use governs the world, Steele seems to not offer what that "emotion" is for GOP and its loss of the hip hop community. One could surmise that the emotion that governs this situation is "regret" or "disbelief" and not one of "sorrow." Sorrow in the sense that they did lose who the GOP was and the importance of being part of the hip hop community, of actually speaking to their concerns and not what the exit polls showed of being white, older voters ("Exit Polls"). Brown's comments show a sense of caution in embracing this new makeover. Brown and the hip hop community are calling for a change in their (the GOP's) social acts to see how the expression of their emotion can be believable and repeated (Sennett 113).

In terms of connection, it has been demonstrated how Obama was able to appeal to the hip hop community/counterpublic sphere. He was able to place himself as a "hood worker" that was familiar with the inner community issues and had been affected by them himself. His "hood worker" appeal provided him with a legitimate form of credibility that the GOP had been lacking with this counterpublic sphere / community. Ari Melber argued that "Obama's comfort with that culture, and endorsements from its leaders, has earned him generational credibility . . . Obama invoked hip-hop deftly and accurately . . . Obama signaled that his political approach--transcending trench warfare and pessimistic snark--was cool, current and strong" ("The GOP's Hip-Hop Makeover").

By appealing to the hip hop community, Obama was able to create a sense of emotional attachment to them that resulted in the formation of being. The hip hop counterpublic sphere refuses to be unseen and unheard, and so their emotional expression is one of survival (Cobb 109). Obama recognized this survival expression as he positioned himself as part of this sphere/community and presented his presidency as one of a movement of ideas, attitudes, and conditions. The GOP was lacking in this movement; instead, it fell within the realm of a rhetorical audience. McGee contends "that 'the people' exist, not in a single myth, but in the *competitive relationships* which develop between a myth and antithetical visions of the collective life" (348). Steele was attempting to craft a "competitive relationship" with Obama, but there was no articulation as to how he was going to craft this public relationship campaign and, more importantly, there was no discussion of the issues affecting this community or signs that they were going to address them. Being pro-business and having one person talk about immigration is not enough to craft a GOP rhetorical audience. Although McGee sees the "the people" as being a mass illusion, Obama was still able to reach out to them through their cultural politics to create

this "myth" of being a hip hop community member (345). Ari Melber welcomes this new "makeover;" but it must be questioned as to the intent of this makeover and if the struggle for survival will be recognized in order to change the cultural politics of the GOP ("The GOP's Hip-Hop Makeover").

Conservative Connections to Hip Hop

During the transitional period between the Bush and Obama administrations, the United States faced a national and global economic meltdown. The infamous "Great Recession" saw many people in the U.S. lose their jobs, their savings, and their homes while, depending on the size of a business or bank, some were able to get a government bailout. During this transitional time, President Bush created T.A.R.P. funds to help bail out big banks or companies so that there was not a complete economic collapse, as in the earlier Great Depression. However, there was political opposition to the T.A.R.P. and it came in the form of a newly minted political group called The Tea Party. The Tea Party, in existence since 2009, has been an offshoot of the Republican Party, where they have focused more on the need to return to "conservative" principles, specifically the need for a smaller federal government and a reduction of government waste (spending).

During the 2012 presidential and national elections, a new congressman from Florida was elected to represent the 19th District, Republican Trey Radel. Radel was a first-time elected congressman who had made his way into politics after having been a conservative talk-show host (Jacobs). However, besides being a member of the Tea Party, he also identified with another group, the hip hop community.

Trey Radel is a self-described "hip-hop conservative" who sees rap music as having opened his eyes to a different world (Jacobs). During his time in office, he would make mix

tapes for his congressional aides, which they affectionately refer to as "Beats by Trey" (Neff). In a profile piece for *The Hill*, Radel recounts the first time that he was exposed to rap music. He had found a slightly damaged, unwound cassette tape, so he took into his house and wound it up and put it in his player. "The first words were 'You are now about to witness the strength of street knowledge,' the opening line of N.W.A.'s classic 'Straight Outta Compton'" (Neff). For an identified rich kid who lived in the "burbs," this rocked his world because he was now exposed to something that his "burb" or hood did not possess, the reality of the other. Radel explains: "By hearing this, I heard about other parts of the country outside my little box in Ohio. I heard stories that would explain everything from violence, to gang warfare, to the crack epidemic and issues with law enforcement. This gave me a wider view of the world" (Neff). Taking into consideration Michael Steele's 2009 attempt at a GOP "hip-hop makeover," Radel embraced the label of "hip hop" as he used it as a means of self-identification.

The essay Trey Radel wrote for *Buzzfeed* called "Why I'm A Hip Hop Conservative" (see Appendix XXX) explores this conservative hip hop connection. By looking at this essay, it can provide insight as to how the GOP can bridge the gap to the hip hop community/counterpublic sphere. In identifying oneself as a "hip hop conservative" or a "hip hop liberal," or just a member of the hip hop community regardless of political affiliation, the origin of your awakening helps to situate who you were before and who you are now because of this identification.

As I mentioned at the start of chapter 2, my exposure to rap music as being used to make academic and progressive argumentation took place at a debate practice where our policy debate team was looking to employ the message of the streets to talk about the reality of the debate topic. However, prior to that I was exposed to rap music in the environment that I lived in. Growing in an ethnically diverse smaller city, my first neighborhood was literally defined by

who lived on what side of the street. On the right side was primarily African American s, and on the left, Hispanics with a bit of Asian (I did not know the specific ethnic types at that time). Music was a vibrant part of our hood. Specifically, music was important to me as my mother was the church song leader and my father was the pastor. On many occasions we would open the church doors to have the community hear the music and feel invited into the church. Yet, it was rap music that had a different beat, sound, or emotion to it that was not like the typical church song we would play. It is that uniqueness that drew me in, and through years of material practices, education, and debate practices, rap music has come to mean much more than just something that I heard in my hood.

Trey Radel presents a similar historical origin story with the start of his essay (see Appendix E for the complete essay). For Radel, his connection to rap music came in the white, youthful land of Cincinnati, Ohio. Radel states: "Unlike most young, white teenagers growing up in the suburbs of Cincinnati, Ohio, my favorite musicians were hip hop artists, including rappers such as Eric B., Big Daddy Kane and Chuck D of Public Enemy" ("Congressman Trey Radel"). In this opening part, he situates all of the other white teenagers as being like him. As a result, these "similar teens" lack an understanding as to the struggles faced by the hip hop community. This start places rap music, and the experiences of these rappers, into a rhetorical margin as they are outside the purview of his sphere of recognition. Additionally, Radel continues to show his lack of awareness to this community by stating: "Before I bought my first Public Enemy cassette tape . . . exotic food was Taco Bell and my exposure to different cultures came through the television" (Radel). One cannot be completely faulted for the experiences that they have, but this places rap music and its emotional expression as being viewed as something you should not be or

something "out there" (Hariman 45). Therefore, rap music becomes an enticing entity that needs

to be explored and understood, and which can potentially re-appropriated for political means.

The exploration into rap music comes with the first words he hears from the N.W.A. song

"Straight Outta Compton," and how for him the world became anew. Radel writes:

> as a young, rebellious kid, I felt a thrill listening to this music. Immediately, the hip-hop artists did what artists have been doing for centuries–they opened my eyes up to a whole new world. NWA was doing what blues, folk and rock stars have been doing for generations-they were describing hardship and pain. They described their experience as young, black men coming of age during the crack epidemic, gang wars and violence in every direction. Where else could a sheltered suburban kid hear or learn about these issues in such a graphic way? Not the local library. ("Congressman Trey Radel")

The song "Straight Outta Compton" is considered the preeminent "gangsta rap" song that

marked the location of "West Coast" Rappers and helped to usher in a new cultural awakening to

the issues of this coast. The N.W.A. song talks about the brutal street experience of people living

in that area, and attempts to be a message about finding the strength to continue to live on

(Werner 290-291). "Straight Outta Compton" provides a social awakening similar to the way that

Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five's "The Message" did. Craig Werner writes: "The drums

hammer home the dangers of trying to make it home from the subway when home's in the

middle of a war zone" (241). Radel's listening to N.W.A. marks his expedition into a cultural

library, one that is unlike the one that he has at home. The song alerts Radel to the cultural

politics that have been existing outside of his "burb's" bubble. In particular, it shows that he is

outside of the many different social and cultural politics that attempted to govern the members of

the hip hop community (Mitchell 5).

Radel's newfound expedition into rap music and the cultural politics of the hip hop

community places him in a dynamic new relationship with the language and experiences coming

from the N.W.A. John Dewy writes: "Language exists only when it is listened to as well as

spoken. The hearer is indispensable partner. The work of art is complete only as it works in the experience of others than the one who created it . . . There is the speaker, the thing said, and the one spoken to" (106). Radel becomes an important member of this relationship as it forces him to alter his perception of the reality that he has been living with up to that time (which is about the age of 13). The N.W.A. opens Radel up to a new ideology that is based on cultural social interactions. The N.W.A. becomes the "speaker," the opening lyrics and subsequent rap lyrics ("You are now about to witness the strength of street knowledge.") become the thing said, and Radel embodies the one who is spoken to (Radel). The effect of this relationship is multifaceted as Radel has traveled to over fifty different countries and is able to speak three languages, has become aware of the "street knowledge" outside of his "burb," and most importantly, has found his political ideologically infused with rap music (Radel).

The second half of his essay discusses how he identifies as a "Hip Hop Conservative," and why this self-imposed title is needed in politics today. The preeminent song that Radel attributes to having a political effect on him is Public Enemy's "Fight the Power." Radel writes: "Chuck said it best, 'our freedom of speech is freedom or death.' This is a message we can all get behind, Republican or Democrat. I find a conservative message in 'Fight the Power' because I believe when government expands it becomes a political tool meant to oppress" ("Congressman Trey Radel"). Radel adopts the anthem of Public Enemy as it speaks to him about an issue he finds to be important (political freedom), and it provides an outlet to fight those that seek to take away his freedom.

This goes back to the central concern that Hannah Arendt has when it comes to the purpose of politics. Politics is about "freedom," and there is a need to protect the political space to have each person achieve their own "freedom." Arendt writes: "The freedom of movement . . .

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It is rather the substance and meaning of all things political. In this sense, politics and freedom are identical, and wherever this kind of freedom does not exist, there is no political space in the true sense" (129).

Radel is attempting to get the hip hop community to see that he is about the protection of their freedom and that we should share these connections because of the music that influenced their politics, rap music. Radel attempts to reposition conservatives as a voice within the hip hop community; one that is concerned with issues of cultural justice. Radel's reliance on "Fight the Power" shows that since Public Enemy was against the "powers that be," he is willing to fight the modern day "powers that be" who affect the hip hop community. For instance, political repression caused by the political targeting of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), or the American people being spied upon, or "liberties" being taken away (though not specified) by the government (Radel). Courtney Brown contends: "Political music sometimes has the potential to affect us more deeply than political content conveyed through other means. There is something deeply psychological about the musical method of delivery with regard to political thought" (219). Radel's use of "Fight the Power" acts as a psychological bridge to bring the two groups together for a common cause, to keep this country great.

The most important part of the essay is not the historical retelling of how he got into rap music, or the listing of songs and cultural political issues the two share in common; it is the identification of himself as a hip hop conservative. Radel writes: "I am a Hip Hop Conservative, and that is not an oxymoron. It is the future of many others in my generation of 40 and below. My goal as a Member of Congress is to connect and communicate the conservative message to people, cutting across cultural, generational and ethnic lines" ("Congressman Trey Radel"). The importance of this statement comes in his ability to act as a bridge between the two groups and to

help them come together so that they can negotiate hip hop conservatism in relation to each

other. Charles Taylor contends:

> Thus my discovering my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation, but
> that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others. That is why
> the development of an ideal of inwardly generated identity gives a new importance to
> recognition. My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others.
> (34)

Although Radel was elected to Congress after Michael Steele's time as chairman of the

Republican party, it is his identification of being a "Hip Hop Conservative" that could be the real

GOP makeover they were looking for. Radel is attempting to have a dialogue with the hip hop

community that attempts to re-orientates them to identify with each other. The hip hop

community is one that continues to fight out of the rhetorical and cultural margins and it will

take more politicians who see themselves as being part of the hip hop community to bring them

out of this space. Radel attempts to convey how he "recognizes" the hip hop community by

talking about his rap origin story, referencing two major rap groups, and discussing the cultural

political issues facing them both. Overall, the essay serves as a way to alter the culture and

politics of rap. If the GOP is going to be recognized as hip hop, then it must reach across the

ethnic, racial, and political bridge and show the hip hop community what the "other side" looks

like.

The second conservative connection to hip hop comes through the recognition of rap

lyrics containing conservative principles. Stan Veuger in May 2013 wrote a multi-week piece by

where he would reveal the "21 greatest conservative rap songs of all time" on the *AEI-ideas.org*

website. AEI stands for the American Enterprise Institute; they are a conservative public policy

organization that seeks to uphold the principles of freedom, opportunity, and enterprise. The

project, created by Stan Veuger, consists of a compiled list of the "greatest rap songs of all time"

and then illustrates how conservative principles lie within the text of the message. The inspiration for the list came from the December 2012 *GQ* interview done with Senator Marco Rubio (as discussed at the beginning of the chapter) that mentions the inspiration he received from rap's messaging.

Veuger contends, "There is a strong undercurrent of deeply conservative thought expressed in songs by a wide range of some of the most famous rap artists of all time" ("The 21 Greatest"). The means test to determine the "21 greatest songs" is based on a mix of "ideological purity (primarily), musical quality, and popular appeal, all three legs of President Reagan's 'three-legged stool'" ("The 21 Greatest"). The issues that are addressed range from drugs and law enforcement to anti-feminist, anti-abortion, pro-life, and pro-responsibility messaging. The structure of the list starts out with the bottom (or 21st greatest) and works its way to the top. Additionally, Veuger provides a write-up for each song that indicates the conservative principles it espouses and the particular lyrics that prove that conservative and hip hop connections coexist. One of the most interesting points about the list is the artists that have a conservative underlining in their raps. Jeb Lund and Jay Friedman writes: "Then there's the matter of the artists who made the list. Busta Rhymes, Eminem, Nas, Jay-Z and Wyclef Jean all supported Obama in 2008" ("The Miseducation"). Other artists include, but are not limited to, Lauren Hill (two times), 2Pac (three times), Daddy Yankee, and The Notorious B.I.G. ("The 21 Greatest").

The list starts with one of the most interesting declarations of being "hip hop:" Justin Bieber and his song "Drummer Boy." The indelible link to "hip hop" seems to be the featured rapper Busta Rhymes, who provides a couple of rap verses to complement Bieber's R&B stylings. This song makes the list because it is a reimagining of "The Carol of the Drum," which is a Christmas song about a poor drummer boy who uses his talents to play a song for Jesus. The

underlining conservative principle that this song promotes is the "private charity not government redistribution that he sees as the way forward" ("The 21 Greatest"). The focus here for the song is similar to the comments that Radel made about the size of government affecting one's liberties. In this case, it is the community that can take care of people and not the government. Another talking point is that the government is about creating a welfare system, or system of dependency. Thus, this song is important to show how, in asking that the rich donate to charity, this is a way for them to pay their fair share and to not have the government use coercive tactics through the tax system to help those in need ("The 21 Greatest").

This is just one of the conservative principles that can be found in rap music. Entry 20, 2pac's "Keep Ya Head Up," consisting of anti-feminist beliefs, provides criticism of single-parent homes, and is a shout out to African American men to take responsibility for the children that they have created. In the end, this song represents the call for upholding traditional family values as being the bedrock to the society as a whole ("The 21 Greatest"). Entry 16, Nas' "I Can," consists of preaching the importance of education and hard work being the means to finding success. This is different than the current culture that can only find opportunities through government handouts or being a thug ("The 21 Greatest").

Entry 10, Kanye West's "Jesus Walks," consists of preaching the importance of having "Jesus" walk with you wherever you go. In particular, this song presents a criticism against liberals who have made people dependent on welfare. West has a line that speaks to the devil trying to break people down, and one of these ways this is achieved is through making people the "victims of welfare." For Veuger, if people walk with Jesus, then they will no longer need liberal politicians throwing money at them to solve the problem of their victimhood. It will be Jesus who provides the means for their survival ("The 21 Greatest").

Other songs in the top ten are number 6, Jay-Z's "99 Problems" which serves as a defense of the Fourth Amendment (illegal searches and seizures), and entry 5, 2Pac's "Dear Mama," which serves as a testament to the family life being on the verge of societal collapse. The lyrics discuss the hardships of a single mother living in a poor area and how the intrigue of "thug life" can only be fought against through traditional family values. Entry 3, Daddy Yankee's "Gasolina," though written in 2004, is a call for the need to frack as there is a current lack of energy being produced by the United States ("The 21 Greatest").

However, the central focus for analysis will be on the number one entry, "Juicy" by The Notorious B.I.G. The 1994 song "Juicy" by The Notorious B.I.G. (a.k.a., Biggie Smalls) marked his entry into the field of rap music. This song was the first one to be released for radio play off of his *Ready to Die* album. "Juicy" embodies the difficult journey that Biggie had to endure to propel himself to the top of the rap industry. In total, it is the mixture of ideological purity, musical quality, and popular appeal that places this song at the top of Veuger's list. Overall, Veuger argues that "Juicy" is "A classical rags-to-riches" story, and that The Notorious B.I.G.'s solo debut single is an unapologetic tribute to the Republican party's domestic policy agenda, being one based on the premise that individuals can achieve the American dream.

First, Veuger articulates the "rags" element of Biggie's story by pointing out the intro to the song where he raps: "*This album is dedicated to all the teachers that told me I'd never amount to nothin*" [his emphasis] ("The 21 Greatest"). The ability to rise out of his circumstances "was all a dream," but his ability to rap allowed him to afford "*Condos in Queens, indo for weeks*" *("The 21 Greatest").* Biggie's ability to own land comes in a sharp contrast to his days when he and his mother would struggle to make it. *"We used to fuss when the landlord dissed us / No heat, wonder why Christmas missed us"* ("The 21 Greatest"). The effect of his rap

career is that he is now a job creator who has moved himself into the top income tax bracket. Veuger quotes lines from "Juicy:" *"50 inch screen, money green leather sofa / Got two rides, a limousine with a chauffeur / Phone bill about two G's flat / No need to worry, my accountant handles that"* ("The 21 Greatest").

Ultimately, Biggie is seen as the embodiment of conservative hip hop in that he overcame Big Government (*"Celebratin' every day, no more public housin'"*) and he has used his fortune to help those in need (*"And I'm far from cheap, I smoke skunk with my peeps all day / Spread love, it's the Brooklyn way").* The rags-to-riches story of "Juicy" is what all people can achieve if they are willing to put forth the effort to overcome their circumstances *("You know very well who you are / Don't let 'em hold you down, reach for the stars") ("The 21 Greatest").*

The list of "The 21 greatest conservative rap songs of all time" is an attempt to bring unity to a division that exists between the hip hop community and conservatives. Kenneth Burke argues that we only attempt to identify with each other due to the inherent divisions that exist among us (Burke 181). The hip hop community must understand that conservative principles exist inherently in rap songs. Once this recognition takes place Burke's inherent divisions will no longer exist, because hip hop is conservative. The use of rap songs and the brief explanation as to which lyrics equate to a different conservative principle acts as a symbolic form of inducing cooperation that invites others to respond to it (Burke 188). The way that this produces a response is that the members of the hip hop community feel a sense of recognition from a group that has typically been viewed as in opposition to them. Lester Spence contends: "No. It's pro-black. And we make this casualist link between being pro-black and being on the left" (Martin). This provides a unique opportunity for conservatives to demonstrate that at least some, if not

many, of the values and principles rappers articulate are ones grounded in the views and agenda of the Republican party.

The result could be that conservative hip hop can provide the means to bring the hip hop community out of the rhetorical cultural political margins. Charles Taylor argues: "Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (25). Stan Veuguer's list gives recognition to the voices, issues, and people impacted by a rapper's message. It is important now to find a means of agency to actively change those issues that persist within the hip hop community.

Hiphoprepublican.com (HHR): Providing Conservative Hip Hop a Voice

The cultural politics of rap music has been grounded in the expression for recognition and survival. Rap's politics deals with the contestation over the use of public space, the meaning of expression, the interpretation of this expression and how cultural capital can be spent to positively influence the hip hop community (Rose, "Fear of" 276). However, stereotypically rap music has not had much debate about the political leanings and interpretation of its politics as it has been viewed as being politically "left" (i.e., Democratic). Yet, it was this stereotype, plus the rise of primarily conservative African American s that wanted a place to express their views, which lead to the creation of the website *Hiphoprepublican.com* (i.e., as HHR). Started in 2005, HHR was inspired by the then newly elected Lieutenant Governor of Maryland, Michael Steele, who was known for incorporating urban slang into his speeches as a means of connecting with his potential voters (Compere). Steele used the urban slang to speak to the liberal policies that had been in place but were not helping the members of that community. Therefore, the slang

provided a type of critique as to how these liberal policies were failing, and thusly, his slang

became an alternative to the liberal view.

The founder of the website, Richard Ivory, attributes his desire for having created HHR

out of his own experiences of growing up in an urban setting and with rap music but seeing the

lack of social or cultural progression take place through policies created by a liberal agenda

(Compere). Though not attributed to HHR, on another conservative website entitled

Humanevents.com, creator Jason Matera explains the connection he makes to conservatism and

hip hop. Matera states:

> My worldview has definitely been shaped by my urban roots . . . I've first-hand how
> families and communities have been destroyed through the proliferation of government
> activism. 'Work ethic' and 'personal responsibly' have been replaced in urban areas with
> a government welfare check . . . and look at the result: awful public education and
> economically starved minority population. It's disgusting. Liberalism is to blame. And
> that's why I'm a conservative. (Compere)

The outrage over liberal leadership as contributing to the reasons for a poor education system

and people being dependent on their welfare check has created an exigent moment where

conservative hip hop can provide an alternative voice to those living in the urban setting.

The desired effect of HHR is to promote awareness regarding the existence of a freedom

consciousness movement. Ivory states: "I think hip hop at its roots are Libertarian. The ideas of

no government interference, selling CDS in back of your car, no taxes . . . There are freedom

conscious movements in the right; they come from a Libertarian school of thought" (Compere).

The uniqueness of this statement is that the identification of Libertarian politics goes without

explanation. Little is attributed to this perspective but the lone example of "selling CDS" out of

the back of one's car, and this is supposes to equate to being hip hop.

The website functions as a portal to connect hip hop to republicanism. Optically, the first

attempt at joining these two together is the background and logo designed for the website. The

background visual is an aerial shot of New York City. At the center-top, the logo design has a smaller version of this picture coupled with an interesting icon. To the left is a male head, with an afro, sunglasses, and wearing a knotted tie with the letter "HHR (capitalized) and "Hip Hop Republican" underneath. This visual icon attempts to show how urban, cool and part of a greater community you can be by joining the HHR.

The "About Us" section of their website provides more generalities as to what they do ("offering general news, original content and covers politics, music, and science") and offers other's comments/reviews of their website's work as a means of testifying that their work is legitimate ("About Us"). Toward the bottom of this opening section, they provide a "Terms of Use & Guidelines" by which one is to abide by. "At HHR a healthy debate and exchange of ideas are encouraged; threats, abuse, hate-speech, personal attacks, and harassment will not be tolerated. Think of it this way: Attack the idea, and not a person" ("About Us"). The tone of the "About Us" section provides an aura of wanting to engage in a dialogue with all members of the hip hop community regardless of their political ideology. Additionally, this is represented in the topic areas they offer to explore, which include poverty, education, politics, op-eds, religion, politics, policy, and New York city specifically. Each topic has several full-length articles discussing specific topics, including some on how to resolve these issues.

An analysis of one of the articles written after the 2012 presidential election in order to provides insight as to what conservative hip hop looks like from the HHR perspective. Chris Ladd is one of the contributing authors to HHR. He wrote a piece on January 7, 2013 entitled "When Black Meant Republican." The thesis of this piece is that the former party of Lincoln was one that represented the needs of black Americans and that this bond no longer exists. The purpose of the essay is to examine some of the historical connections black Republicans had so

that current day Republicans can feel they are ideologically and politically home again (see

Appendix F for complete essay).

Chris Ladd starts his essay with a discussion of two competing historical figures who had

a lasting effect upon being a "black republican," Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. In

particular, it was the Atlanta Compromise proposed by Washington that set the black community

back and helped to turn them away from the party of Lincoln. The Atlanta Compromise was a

speech given in 1895 at the "International Expositions," where he advocated that Southern blacks

become quieter and work more diligently for White rulers in exchange for the guarantee by

White rulers for access to basic education and due process of the law (Ladd). Ladd explains the

miscalculations in Washington's speech. "First he thought that institutional southern racism

would weaken as the black community began to realize its economic potential. Secondly, he

failed to appreciate that capitalism cannot work its magic without government protection of basic

property rights" (Ladd). The effect that this had was that it crushed the potential for black

business as Jim Crow laws, violence, and other forms of discrimination were created to limit the

access to political and economic freedom. Washington is marked as being a regressive leader

who still has an effect today.

In comparison to Washington, W.E.B. DuBois started the National Association for the

Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and fought for political equality in northern cities.

Ladd writes: "He pressed to make the fight for political equality the community's highest priority

and dismissed Washington's emphasis on economic development and Capitalism" ("When Black

Meant"). One effect of DuBois pushing for political equality as the top priority is that he became

a celebrated figure in the 1950s and 1960s during the civil rights movement (Ladd). The basic

premise for the civil rights movement was to be that of a freedom consciousness movement.

Chris Ladd points out later in the essay that Washington was viewed as a "sell-out," an "Uncle Tom," as compared to Dr. Martin Luther King, who adopted the approach of DuBois to push for political equality ("When Black Meant"). Ladd writes: "Blacks who had led the successful fight for equal protection focused their continuing efforts less on free enterprise than on government social programs and poverty relief. At the moment when Booker T. Washington's dream of individualism and enterprise held the most potential promise it was eclipsed by a very different vision" ("When Black Meant"). The views of King and DuBois become entrenched in the rhetoric and politics of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s Democratic Party and the result is that black Americans changed their political allegiance.

The solution proposed by Ladd comes in the latter half of the essay where he states his desire for modern day Republicans to understand the past so that adjustments can be made to current rhetoric and politics. Ladd writes: "There is a vibrant, secure black middle class emerging for the first time in America. The growth of black prosperity will be a key to the country's future, but it depends heavily on leaving behind a vision of government dependence with deep, well-justified roots" ("When Black Meant"). The newly justified roots will also require an understanding of the cultural political experience for white versus black voters. Ladd draws a cultural experience line in that whites see the government as a "necessary evil to be treated with great care" and that the functions of this government should be limited so as to not crush one's personal and economic freedoms. This is counter to the black experience (from Ladd's perspective) in that, when the government has been weak, they have been the ones to suffer. The effects of this type of weak government are that blacks have become prone to suffer from acts of violence, humiliation, and looting (Ladd). In the end, Ladd calls this new

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understanding appeal a moral and political imperative that will succeed if they have the will to understand when black meant Republican.

The intent of the HHR and Ladd's article is to reposition hip hop into a conservative political ideology. In the attempts to understand where black Republicans come from, it opens the doors for others who may possess similar feelings and thoughts about the government and encourages them to express them. This intent is designed so that blacks who do not find a political, cultural home with the Democrats can then express their oppositional concerns in a way that alters the current conservative sphere.

In this regard, HHR and Ladd are attempting to create their own counterpublic sphere, one that emphasizes the importance of racial historical understandings that can emancipate blacks from the cultural and political stronghold Democrats have had over these voters (Asen 425). It is not that the HHR wants to create a completely different counterpublic sphere as the hip hop community has attempted to do; but rather that it wants to acknowledge that the mistakes of the conservative past have influenced the creation of this sphere so it may have people migrate back to their cultural and political home. HHR and Ladd article's aims at making blacks feel comfortable in using oppositional language in terms of the current Democratic political agenda insofar as this will create a new (old) means of identification. The result of this new identification is that it can have an effect upon how blacks recognize themselves and in turn foster a potential of respect and equality for all. Charles Taylor writes: "The politics of equal dignity is based on the idea that all humans are equally worthy of respect . . . the potential, rather than anything a person may have made of it, is what ensures that each person deserves respect" (41). Chris Ladd and the HHR want blacks to know that their freedoms, their issues, and their

potential for improving themselves is respected within the conservative sphere and that the Democratic Party has lost that respect.

Collectively, the attempts at appealing to the hip hop community (black and youth voters as defined by Hainey) have been about creating a new form of political identification grounded in conservative principles. The "hip hop makeover" was a call to bring attention to the whiteness and oldness the Republican Party currently exists in. Therefore, the outreach to hip hop is at least an acknowledgement that change needs to occur. The subsequent examples of Trey Radel and the 21 greatest conservative rap songs attempt to show that the Republican Party has always been hip hop. Having rap music identified as containing conservative principles helps those who have been disgruntled with the Democratic Party and offers them a place to address their concerns. Trey Radel, the HHR website, and Chris Ladd's article advocate the Republican Party coming to a new cultural, political understanding so that it can truly represent those they feel should be part of their sphere.

Reflections on Hip Hop Being Conservative

The fight over who can claim to be the cultural, political representation of the hip hop community is one of the fundamental reasons that they have formulated a counterpublic sphere. Rap music articulates the struggle for survival, the need for recognition, and the desire to change the institutions and policies that have had an adverse affect on its people. This chapter has attempted to explore the relationship between hip hop and conservatism. This "relationship" is contentious at best, but there are a couple of concerns that have grown out of the conservative desire to stake a claim in speaking to or for the hip hop community.

The first concern is that there has been an outright denial of the importance of rap music and hip hop as a cultural force by conservative leaders and writers. Specifically, there seems to

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be no desire at all to have a relationship between the two. On January 7, 2014, *Salon.com* ran an article on Mississippi State Senator Chris McDaniel, who equated the gun violence in Canada with the people there listening to rap music (Isquith). McDaniel is quoted as saying:

> Name a redeeming quality of hip-hop. I want to know anything about hip-hop that has been good for this country. And it's not—before you get carried away—this has nothing to do with race. Because there are just as many hip-hopping White kids and Asian kids as there are hip-hopping Black kids. It's a problem of a culture that values prison more than college; a culture that values rap and destruction of community values more than it does poetry; a culture that can't stand education. It's that culture that can't get control of itself. (Isquith)

Although McDaniel attempts to side step the potential racist implication that only "blacks people" listen to rap music, he still denies the rich sociological and cultural history that formed the creation of hip hop culture, and indeed denies that it represents a community at all.

But rap has become one of the premiere means of political expression in contemporary America, and specifically of the African American community, and it is grounded in primarily African American cultural forms and expression (Brown 218). In speaking to the issue of race, Jeffery Ogbar quotes Bakari Kitwana when he states: "It would take an army of Eminems to divorce hip-hop from young black men, who after thirty years still dominate this art form" (55). This means that yes, there are hip hop members who are diverse ethnically, racially, and based on gender, but what rap brings is a questioning of the values of the day. Rap and hip hop as a culture provide a mirror to the ills that affect society (Pough, "Seeds and Legacies" 288). The ignorance of Kitwana's comment shows that the relationship between hip hop and conservatism is more of a rhetorical creation than an attempt to bring people together. This continues to impede the ability for the GOP to "makeover" itself in order to show how its principles are inherent within the hip hop community.

In connection to the denigration of hip hop's culture is the factor that there are problems that this community faces, but they become the only focus. Rap music is criticized for the stereotypical musical focus only on materialism, misogyny, and "gangsta" lifestyle. There is truth to this criticism; however, little effort is put into understanding why those conditions exist, or why they are rapped about. This creates a distaste for rappers becoming affiliated with politicians.

For instance, in 2010 Thomas Chatterton Williams wrote a scathing criticism of President Obama and his multiple references to New Orleans rapper Lil Wayne. Williams writes of Lil Wayne, saying he "is emblematic of a hip-hop culture that is ignorant, misogynistic, casually criminal and often violent . . . His music is vigorous endorsement of the pathologies that still haunt and cripple far too many in the black underclass" ("President Obama's"). His comments on Jay-Z: "Just as disturbing is Mr. Obama's appreciation for Jay-Z, the rapper and unrepentant ex-drug dealer . . . Mr. Obama is certainty not responsible for hip-hop's grip on black America . . . but what president would ever let Marilyn Manson drop by the White House? Is Jay-Z better?" (Williams). The reference to these two rappers and Obama is that Obama should define his blackness and politics on his own and not in connection to people who represent the worse (to many people) stereotypes and figures for young black people to emulate.

The effect of these two instances, and other like it, is that it continues to push rap music as representing only the worst of society. There is no ability for the culture and music to be seen as advocating the empowerment, agency, or responsibility aspects that hood workers do in order to affect the hip hop community (Forman, "Conscious Hip-Hop" 15). Any ability of Obama or conservative politicians like Trey Radel to show the ways rap music can be illuminating get instantly discarded, and hip hop music and culture continue to be seen in a negative light.

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The second concern relates to the means by which the hip hop community is being appealed to. This is in regards to how rap music is being projected (or repositioned) for a conservative perspective. John Dewey explains: "Projection in fact is a case of transferred values, 'transfer' being accomplished through organic participation of a being that has been made what is and caused to act as it does through organic modification due to prior experiences" (249). The attempts by Michael Steele, Trey Radel, and Stan Veuger are to project "conservatism" onto hip hop. In relation to Veuger's rap list, Jeb Lund and Jay Friedman write: "In 2008 and again in 2012, Barack Obama won well over 90 percent of the black vote . . . Under normal circumstances, one assumes that a political party's response to demographic antipathy is to alter its programs . . . The GOP's strategy . . . 'We already appeal to you, you just don't know it'" ("The Miseducation"). One must seriously question the sincerity and method of appeal to the hip hop community. Does listing a group of rap songs and/or saying that we will create a hip hop public relations campaign demonstrate to the community that their concerns will be truly addressed? On the other hand, is it an empty rhetorical gesture to potentially garner some political empathy?

Looking at the examples provided, it would appear that though the sentiment may have been there to be inclusive of the hip hop community, there was little action taken to cement it. For instance, Michael Steele never did reveal what that "public relations campaign" was going to be. It became mere rhetorical lip service as he was voted out of the chairmanship three years later, after serving just one term. Current Chairman Reince Priebus has made no declaration to be more hip hop. However, he did commission a report and project called "Growth and Opportunity Project" (Gentilviso). The report indicates that the GOP is perceived as "out of touch" and narrow-minded, and comprised of "stuffy old men" (Gentilviso). But this does provide a unique

opportunity to critically reflect on the ideologies, policies, and material practices the GOP have employed for the past two presidential elections and see if the members of the hip hop community are people they truly want to represent and how.

Positioning takes place in relation to the hip hop lyrics chosen by Trey Radel and Stan Veuger so that they become political tools to conflate what the rapper said to what they want them to mean. Country Brown calls this "associational political music." "Association political music . . . is created when someone or some group makes a connection between a particular piece of music . . . and a political message or ideology" (4). Veuger (more than Radel) is attempting to fit the round peg of rap music into the square hole of conservatism. Although "Juicy" is ranked as the greatest conservative rap song, there is no connection that The Notorious B.I.G. would make to the way Veuger attempts to use its messaging. The song is about a "rags-to-riches" story but there is no explicit recognition in it as to the Republican political policies launched in the 1980s that helped to inspire the need for rap music. Issues such as public housing projects, drugs, violence, gangs, and a poor education system all contributed to the lyrical context and content that influenced Biggie Small's raps (Ards 312 and Keyes 46).

While there is little doubt that Radel's eyes were opened to a new world through songs like "Fight the Power" and "Straight Outta Compton," but it is my contention that the issues of power, freedom, and politics are being discussed (and potentially understood) in the same manner as attempts to appropriate these rappers' voices and intention for their songs. The way that Radel sees "oppression" taking place by the government deals more with his ideology being crushed, and not with the literal and figurative oppression that "Fight the Power" attempts to address.

Interestingly enough, Radel resigned from Congress in January 2014 for having been caught purchasing cocaine from an undercover police officer (Jacobs). This helps to highlight a point of contention for Radel in terms of fighting oppression, in that he had taken two different stances on drugs on two different bills. For the 2013 Farm Bill he agreed that states should be allowed to drug test welfare recipients. However, he was a cosponsor of a bill to reform mandatory minimum sentencing laws (Jacobs). For Radel, this could be a unique moment where he embraces a form of raptivism and actively works to change the oppressive policies that affect the hip hop community. If he wants people to not see "Hip-Hop Conservative" as an oxymoron, he and others like him must define and implement what "conservative hip hop" is.

Although the HHR website uses the phrase "hip hop" in its title, there is no definition or explanation as to what that means for them. It seems that they are conflating "hip hop" with people of color (primarily blacks) living in urban settings. This just exacerbates the problem that conservatives have with bridging the gap to the hip hop community. The community cannot identify or be persuaded to lean to the right if they only use the term "hip hop" in the title and not in belief or practice.

Chapter 6: Crafting Hip Hop's Social Movement to Seize Political Opportunities

[Chorus]
Come along follow me as I lead through the darkness
As I provide just enough spark that we need to proceed
Carry on, give me hope, give me strength
Come with me and I won't steer you wrong
Put your faith and your trust as I guide us through the fog
To the light at the end of the tunnel
We gonna fight, we gonna charge, we gonna stomp, we gonna march
Through the swamp, we gonna mosh through the marsh
Take us right through the doors (c'mon)

[Verse 2]
All the people up top on the side and the middle . . .
Just let it gradually build from the front to the back
All you can see is a sea of people some white and some black
Don't matter what color, all that matters we gathered together . . .
They ain't gonna stop us they can't, we stronger now more than ever
They tell us no we say yea, they tell us stop we say go . . .
[Chorus]

[Verse 3]
 . . . Maybe this is God just sayin' we're responsible
For this monster, this coward,
That we have empowered
This is Bin Laden, look at his head noddin'
How could we allow something like this without pumping our fists
Now this is our final hour
Let me be the voice in your strength and your choice
Let me simplify the rhyme just to amplify the noise . . .
No more blood for oil, we got our own battles to fight on our own soil
No more psychological warfare, to trick us to thinking that we ain't loyal
If we don't serve our own country, we're patronizing a hero
Look in his eyes its all lies
The stars and stripes, they've been swiped, washed out and wiped
And replaced with his own face, Mosh now or die
If I get sniped tonight you know why,
Cause I told you to fight. (lyricsfreak.com)
- Eminem "Mosh"

This final chapter will explore the potentiality for the hip hop community to emerge as a

counterpublic sphere that can become a social movement. The chapter will discuss the

importance of music and culture in terms of helping to influence a movement. Next, the chapter will explore the social movement framework of political opportunity theory. This theory can serve as a basis for the counterpublic sphere to emerge into a social movement capable of seizing upon various political opportunities. An examination of what political opportunities currently exist for the hip hop community could help the counterpublic sphere come forward as a social movement. Finally, concluding remarks will discuss the impact of this project for the hip hop community.

The 2004 presidential election featuring incumbent George W. Bush (R) versus Sen. John Kerry (D) came down largely to who would be best able to protect this country from "terrorist" threats. The attacks of September 11, 2001 left some Americans with a sense of vulnerability and that sentiment was fanned by both parties and made the central focus of both campaigns, with both attempting to persuade the American people of their superior leadership abilities. Senator Kerry suffered direct attacks by the group "Swift Boat Veterans for Truth" who questioned his military record, awards earned during that time, and his military activism once he returned from serving in Vietnam ("Kerry: Bush"). Kerry complained of how Bush would never speak out against this group of "veterans" who questioned his service. Bush's only retort at the time was that he "was not" saying anything specifically about Kerry's record ("Kerry: Bush"). To refute the allegations made against him, Kerry featured new ads which stated "This election is about character . . . It's about John Kerry, who left no man behind -- and George Bush, who simply left" ("Kerry: Bush"). The latter part of the commercial plays off the evidence showing that Bush was never an active service member, and when it came time for him to serve in Vietnam, he was mysteriously gone.

The competing narratives attempted to push and pull the American voters into seeing the positive and negative aspects of their leadership ethos that, in turn, would affect who they voted for. Yet, there was another form of political campaigning taking place, one that used rap lyrics to call people to action, to "mosh" toward the "doors" to demand answers, and to demand change. In the music video for "Mosh," the "doors" turn out to be to an election hall where people can vote.

Eminem attempted to make the 2004 song "Mosh" a political protest song that demanded that the presidential candidates pay attention to the concerns the hip hop community has with the direction the two candidates wanted to take the country. "Mosh" became the political anthem by which the hip hop community made itself seen as they literally walk up to the steps of the election hall demanding to be heard. The chorus illustrates the importance of the rapper, as Eminem tells the crowd to follow "him" as he guides them through the fog and marsh in order to make them be seen. Eminem's placement as the "guiding" figure to follow provides the hip hop community with an alternative political figure that questions the authority and intent of both presidential candidates. The lyrics "As I provide just enough spark that we need to proceed / Carry on, give me hope, give me strength / Come with me and I won't steer you wrong" ("Mosh") explain to the community what a real leader should be like. A leader should instill hope, strength, and be one that you can trust. This song shows the level of distrust held by the community and therefore demands them to take action.

The lyrics in verse 2 demonstrate the unity of the hip hop community's presence as they approach the doors of the election hall. The lyrics point to how this community is one not divided based on race, class, or gender, but that there is a purpose for them being there. The purpose is to have their voice heard, and in the last part of the lyrics it illustrates the

argumentative stance that the community is taking. No longer are they simply going to be told no when it is time for a yes, or vice versa. There is power in numbers, and by all of them filling up the rows from the "front to the back" and all around, the lyrics prove that their power can have a lasting effect.

The lyrics of verse 3 become the issues that the community has come out for. First, the American public should be held accountable for how they voted the first time around, and even Bin Laden would agree with this point. Using Bin Laden becomes a metaphor for the evil that exists out in the world and for the evil that exists in the White House. This means that the American people must be held accountable for the rise of both Bush and Obama and the subsequent actions both men took. Next, Eminem calls into question the motive for going to Iraq by calling it "blood for oil" and the effect that it has had in terms of psychologically hurting our soldiers and the morale of the U.S. armed forces as well as the general population. Though not said, Eminem is playing off the notion of "you are either with us or against us," Bush's quote given during his State of the Union speech following the 2001 attacks. In this case, we have made our own citizens feel like they are "against us" by not supporting the war through the questioning of Bush's motives or putting our physical bodies on the line. Ultimately, Eminem knows that he may not survive to see the effect of their mass mosh ("If I get sniped tonight you know why / Cause I told you to fight"), but he knows that it must be done ("Mosh").

Music and Culture in the Formation of A Movement

The transition from being a counterpublic sphere to a social movement requires the hip hop community to place a focus on the role of music and culture. Each of these two influence each other and help to shape what the movement could sound like and provide the tools by which to alter their current status. The broader perspective one can take is that music and culture are a

means for reclaiming the political for ordinary people. Ron Eyerman, in writing about the purpose of the civil rights movement and social movements overall, argues: "thus more than a moral outcry against obvious injustice, it was also an attempt to recapture politics and the political by and for ordinary people" ("Social Movements" 538). Although "great men" like Dr. Martin Luther King were at the forefront of the civil rights movement, it was not about him or his interests. It was about how the "ordinary person" actually should be free, should be considered "equal," and should be able to express themselves and be recognized for what they are going through and not be continuously marginalized. Hannah Arendt writes: "Freedom as the end purpose of politics established limits to the realm of politics; the criterion for action within that realm is no longer freedom but competence and efficiency in securing life's necessities" (135).

Thus, it is up to each person to decide how far they will allow politics to affect their freedoms, and that decision requires that people take action. The combing of music and culture into the formation of a social movement requires the personal to become political. Music and culture are avenues by where people engage everyday life in a new way (Eyerman, "Social Movements" 538). Therefore, the music and culture that is often taken for granted becomes the political driving force by which movements can be formed. Eyerman explains: "social movements are creative occurrences that open new public spaces in and through which individuals can reinvent themselves and reinterpret the world in which they live" ("Social Movements" 544).

This project has attempted to demonstrate that the hip hop counterpublic sphere (community) has used their means of expression to demand recognition, with the goal of

bringing about change. It is the hip hop's unique form of expression (rap music for this particular project) and its diverse cultural politics that provide it with a space to make a difference.

The first function that music (or art) plays in the formation of a social movement is the role of political mediator (Eyerman 445). The political mediator is one who sees politics and culture as providing a space for opportunities to learn and experiment with. The political leader can be connected to Murray Forman's "hood worker," who provides a sense of orientation and agency for the people that he or she leads within their community ("Conscious Hip-Hop" 14). Yvonne Bynoe calls the political mediator a "citizen leader" (13). The advantage of this type of leader as compared to the more traditional leader is that they come up from the community and are able to speak to the specific needs they have by relating to them through a common sense of language and culture (Bynoe 13). The function of this mediator, hood worker, or citizen leader is to articulate the collective concerns (cultural political issues) of their community, as well as their own.

This is where the uniqueness of rap music comes into play. Lester Spence argues: "Song lyrics travel faster than even the most powerful political speeches. Those fearful and hopeful of rap and hip-hop acknowledge this" (19). The lyrics are able to act faster in that they utilize two hip hop attributes that members of the hip hop community employ and understand.

The first attribute is that of "realness." The sense of realness that community members have towards one's rap lyrics or a more traditional political speech is a call for authenticity from the speaker. Imani Perry defines "realness" as: "setting the terms for allegiance . . . it is an explicitly ideological stand against selling one's soul to the devils of capitalism or assimilation . . . requires the maintenance of an authentic black urban identity . . . theoretical space that functions as a living testimony to . . . experience" (87). The attribute of realness helps fuel the

ability for a social movement to form in that it provides the fuel to gather people to the cause.

Realness deals with not only what one says, how they say it, and the ability of others to react to

it, but is an expression of the journey the collective has taken (or will take) to control their public

space (Rose, "Fear of" 276-77). The mediator's realness becomes a representation of the

community, and helps it to gather its collective voice and to redefine its needs, interests, and

identity (Spence 21). This redefinition through realness becomes a political act in that it

articulates the struggle over who can speak, where they can speak, and how they (the hip hop

community) can react.

The second attribute that the political mediator relies on for their lyrics are the hidden

transcripts that exist within them. Tricia Rose contends that rap lyrics are cloaked in disguised

cultural codes that challenge the marginal status that the community has been placed into (*Black

Noise* 100). Not all rap lyrics attempt to use cultural codes so as to critique social power, but the

codes illustrate the cultural and ideological warfare that exists. Rose contends: "Rap is a

contemporary stage for the theater of the powerless. On this stage, rappers act out inversions of

status hierarchies, tell alternative stories . . . and draw portraits with dominant groups in which

hidden transcripts inverts/subverts the public, dominant transcript" (*Black Noise* 101).

In chapter 4, it was shown that rap songs written about Obama and what he meant for the

hip hop community employed the use of hidden transcripts to disguise the critique being made

against the political system. For instance, Young Jeezy's "Black President" used implicit and

explicit phrases to convey its message about Obama and his importance to changing the political

system. The opening lyric, "My president is black, my Lambo's blue" was discussed as being

more than a literal comparison of Jeezy riding in a blue car and Obama being identified as black

("My President"). The hidden transcript comes in that the "Lambo" is a metaphor for the rise to

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the top of one's political class. The reference to this high-priced car calls for the hip hop community to see the importance of their own "status" rising in comparison to others.

This is not to say that the hip hop community is trying to overtake a greater public sphere, but instead that it is attempting to engage with it and alter the social power of it (Rose *Black Noise* 101). Obama is a hidden transcript for "change," for bringing about recognition to the issues afflicting this community. The rap songs written about him were more than explicit political rallying songs; instead, they were a cry for the community to see how their cultural politics and representation could affect the content of mainstream politics (Spence 164). However, the consequences of realness and of hidden transcripts that are being used improperly is that the opportunities these afford rap music will continue to be closed and their messages ignored.

The second function of music in the formation of a social movement is that it creates a sense of solidarity that a "group" can identify with and make into a shared community. Ron Eyerman writes:

> music and other forms of cultural expression can articulate as well as fuse a group, offering a sense of group belonging and collectivity as well as strength in trying situations . . . Through a song, a collective, such as a movement, can objectify itself and its history, making itself visible to others, as well as creating and establishing a sense of continuity. (447)

The community is one that is centered on how each person's experiences shape who they are and how this connects them to those within their environment. The environment can be one of a physical sense, much like the song "The Message" talked about the street life and poor living conditions of the 1982's New York City, or 1988's N.W.A. "Straight Outta Compton" talking about the gang culture and lifestyle of people living in Compton; these songs literally constructed messages that shared the experiences of these rappers' lifestyles for others to consume and relate

to. Yet, in addition, "environment" must be considered in the sense of a textual nature of social being (Charland 137). People are socially constructed beings who are affected by the way they are presented with ideology. Maurice Charland cites the work of Louis Althusser and his concept of "interpellation." Interpellation "suggest[s] that ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals, . . . or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects" (Charland 138).

In relation to the hip hop community and its rap expression, interpellation takes place on two fronts. First, rappers place themselves at the center of the community as its form of cultural political representation (Forman 213). The rapper becomes a form of ideology, in that people identify with the individual rapper, what they say, how they say it, and how we can react to it. The rapper takes on multiple roles in that of being a political moderator, educator, hood worker, entertainer, and citizen leader (Watkins 382, Forman "Conscious Hip-Hop" 14, and Bynoe 13). Erin Trapp writes: "hip-hop artists, as prophets of the present, give voice to changes being lived by other citizens" (1483). Each of these roles reaches out to the members of the community, and they commit an act of interpellation once they acknowledge that the rapper represents one of these roles for the individual (Charland 138).

Second, interpellation takes place within the hip hop community as the conditions that one is attempting to survive in become part of the narrative subject. Hip hop's existence as a counterpublic sphere is grounded in the cultural politics of existing in the margins and demanding recognition. Hip hop's contestation exists in the journey that one must take through institutional, political, and discursive territories that shape the environment that one comes from (Rose, "Fear of" 276).

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This is why President Obama was able to appeal to and be considered part of the hip hop counterpublic sphere; he came from the hood and used his "community organizer" experience to show how he was concerned about the various issues affecting this community (as discussed in chapter 4). Rob Rosenthal contends that music serves the formation of a movement in "it must be able to recruit; that is to induce (or help induce) people . . . to joining a movement organization or otherwise crossing the line into an identity (13). The result is that rappers are able to use themselves and their hood experiences as a narrative of subjects that require members of the community to recognize how they identify with these subjects as part of the hip hop community.

The ultimate goal or desired effect of music is that once people identify as part of the community, then they are more likely to participate in the formation of a social movement. Ron Eyerman explains: "Recordings make possible participation without apparent commitment . . . The music encourages bodily movement and contact, and collective experience" (450). The body becomes fueled to take action in that they have the blood of the lyrics (or narrative subjects) acting as a cultural political life force. Courtney Brown writes: "Music is one of the most important of these increasingly pervasive new sources of political content . . . If politics is the blood that feeds our societies with the energy to evolve, then music is an essential ingredient to political transformation" (10). The importance of the rapper as hood worker or civil leader comes into play as they are ones helping to push and pull the community's identity into shape, which results in a particular form of social action taking place (Trapp 1483).

Although Michael Calvin McGee sees "the people" as a political myth, he does recognize the ability to get them to take action. McGee contends: "Each new vision of the collective life . . . represents a movement of ideas (and of 'the people') from one 'world' of attitudes and conditions to another" (347). The rapper's ability to create a shared experience serves as the

motivation needed for the community members to see the importance of taking some sort of social action. Eyerman explains: "Music is central to getting the message out, to recruiting, but collective experience is the core of collective identification / identity formation" (449). For instance, Obama, in his letter to *Vibe* magazine (discussed in Chapter 4), appeals to the hip hop community by talking about how their perception of their vote "not mattering" is incorrect and that it will take all people to be politically active to bring hope and change about ("Letter").

Obama provided a new vision of what the collective's life could look like and pushed the community into the need to take the social action of voting for him. Eyerman writes: "All who participate are co-conspirators, creating an even stronger bond with the experience of the music. This emotionally loaded experience will be talked about, remembered and embodied as powerfully emotional, thus linking the individual to the collective" (450). The ability to turn the personal (how one identifies) into the political allows for the community to see the impact they can have and to then maintain the social movement.

The importance of culture in the formation of a social movement is that it helps to shape action by defining what people want. The avenue by which culture can make its impact is that it provides a "tool kit" wherein one (the rapper, the politician, etc.) can use various symbols, narratives, performances, and ideologies to help in addressing a community's issues (Swidler 273). Using the scholarship of Max Weber, Ann Swidler explores the relationship culture has to politics and human action. "For Weber human beings are motivated by ideal and material interests. Ideal interests . . . are also ends-oriented, except that these ends are derived from symbolic realities" (Swidler 274). The "ideal" interests affect the way that actors will interact with one another. Ideals affect the social system in that people realize whose ideals are more valued than others and it causes different actors to react to the placement of their ideals. For

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instance, during the civil rights movement people were motivated by the "ideal interest" of being equal. Laws for the past two hundred years had dictated who was and was not valued in the literal and political sense, literally in that African American s were the property of white slave owners though the U.S. prophesied the ideal interest of all men "being created equal" in the Declaration of Independence. In the hypocrisy of America's formation as a social system, whites' motivational interests were the ones that were actively pursued, while "others" were made the "ends" by which to achieve them. Whites wanted land, a thriving economy, and a government that ensured their ability to attain their goals and which protected their wealth and property once it was attained. As a result, African Americans served as the labor force, the ends, so that others could succeed.

The ability to articulate one's ideal and material interests comes to what Weber calls the "switchman." The switchman is in reference to the old train track system where a person would "switch" the track for different rails in order to avoid a train crash and/or to direct the traffic. The metaphor works insofar as the switchman pushes the destinations for the interests to go and the interests provide the engine for action to take place (Swidler 274).

In relation to hip hop and their counterpublic sphere, rap music identifies the interest that represents the motivations for the community. However, there is concern as to who speaks for the community, in that there is a difference between the commercial and social conscious rappers. As discussed in chapter 2, commercial rappers' cultural interests are ones that are generally defined by corporations (Rose 242). Rap music labels or music industry ownership unabashedly promotes the negative stereotypes of living a "thug life" or rap materialism (bling, bling) and women as pieces of property because they see these "interests" as representing what is important to the hip hop community.

It is this battle for airplay that has hurt message rappers and their songs, which present a completely different set of interests. Message rappers (i.e., socially conscious rappers) provide interests that align with the historic patterns of social critique with their raps (Dyson, *Know What I Mean?* 64). The role of the message rapper is to be the hood worker who discusses the political, social, cultural, and economic forces affecting this community. Of course, not all rap songs can be "message songs," as this would run the risk of saturating the listening audience and tuning people out to the importance of their message. However, for too long the commercial side of rap has been allowed to "represent" the interests of this cultural counterpublic sphere.

The effect of culture being used for the formation of a social movement is that the process relies on switchmen to help in the reformation of "identities of action" (Eyerman and Jamison 449). The way by which identities of action are formed is that culture produces knowledge, and this provides a social force that opens up spaces to new forms of knowledge. Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison explain that the process of identity formation through culture must be done through *cognitive praxis* and the actors who produce new knowledge are called *movement intellectuals* [their emphasis]: "Cognitive praxis . . . calls attention to the creative role of consciousness and cognition in all human action, individual and collective. Movement intellectuals can be understood as those individuals who through their activities articulate the knowledge interests and cognitive identity of social movements" (Eyerman and Jamison 450).

Music is a direct form of influence that has been and continues to be used to craft new spaces for knowledge. The crafting of this knowledge connects to the hip hop counterpublic sphere in that music creates a cognitive praxis that requires people to imagine the movement (or social progress) taking place. It utilizes the structures of feelings or expresses strategies of action so as to mold those within and out of the sphere, hopefully in the directions the community

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should go to affect change (Mitchell 13 and Swidler 276). The "strategies of action" refer to the incorporation of habits, moods, sensibilities, and views of the world that one person (or group) holds (Swidler 277).

If freedom is to be the end purpose of politics, the function of the movement intellectual (like hood workers, civil leaders, and political moderators) is to use the music or the cultural interests of the hip hop community to create a new space for liberation (Arendt 135 and Eyerman and Jamison 464). The means by which the hip hop counterpublic sphere can transition into a social movement that places an emphasis on the ideal interests of cultural political liberation is through the political opportunity structure theory (a.k.a., the political process model).

Conceptualizing Political Opportunity Structure

The 1984 Democratic national convention with Jesse Jackson, the 2004 presidential election of George W. Bush versus John Kerry, and the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections of Barack Obama presented the hip hop counterpublic sphere with opportunities to have their cultural political concerns voiced through rap songs and recognized by the greater public sphere and powerful political elites. In 1984, the hip hop community was denied a voice by the candidate one rap group had supported with the rap song entitled "Jesse" (Asante Jr. 95). In 2004, Sean Combs organized the Vote or Die! campaign and Eminem wrote the protest rap song "Mosh," both attempts to mobilize and express the frustrations of the hip hop community. This met with more political success than in 1984, as almost two million young people registered to vote for the first time and more young people came out to cast a ballot than in previous presidential elections (Vargas). In 2008 and 2012, the hip hop community (voters and rappers) were intimately tied into the political election of Barack Obama.

This certainly represents considerable progress and the emergence of the hip hop community in the American political sphere. Yet, if the hip hop community is going to be a political force beyond just a presidential election, application of political opportunity theory could provide them with the basis for sustainability and strategies to affect political change. Broadly speaking, the political opportunity structure theory is interested in understanding the success or failure of a social movement based on the political opportunities the movement has or had available to them. Conceptualizing this concept will first consist of defining what the phrase "political opportunities" means. Next, the foundations of the theory will be established, and finally, the components of the theory will be explained.

The scholar that is cited as using the phrase "political structures" and having the "opportunity" to influence them is Peter Eisinger in his article "The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities," written in 1973. In the article, Eisinger is interested in exploring the interrelationship of one's political environment and one's political behavior, and how they affect each other, in particular within an urban setting (11). In order to explore this interrelationship, Eisinger writes about the importance of understanding "context" as a component of the particular structures of political opportunities within a community (11). Eisinger writes, "In short, elements in the environment impose certain constraints on political activity or open avenues for it. The manner in which individuals and groups in the political system behave, then is not simply a function of the resources they command but of the openings, weak spots, barriers and resources of the political system itself" (11–-12).

In this case, context is the reference by which a formal or informal political structure is open or closed to one's protest. A "closed" structure is one where those with formal (local government, e.g., council) and informal (where one is measured based on their occupational and

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skilled resources) power appears to be concentrated in a few hands and where the government is not responsive to the wants or needs of the people (Eisinger 12 & 20). An "open" structure is one where those in formal power are willing to listen to the various groups seeking an answer to their specific needs (Eisinger 21).

Investigating the events in fifty-three urban cities during the 1960s, Eisinger called into question the efficacy of protest and in turn protest's ability to open political structures to meet the needs of those in marginalized power positions. He concluded that one's political actions or behavior to engage in protest against a political opportunity were the direct result of power. Eisinger writes: "If power is concentrated, then groups without membership . . . will neither have many points of access at which to make their case nor . . . groups which seek to enter the political arena are likely to be poor in the necessary political currencies" (18). Overall, protests occur where there is an open space in the polity that affords marginalized groups the means by which to express their interests but are driven when the space is closed and rightly requires dramatic means of expression (Meyer 128).

The work of Peter Eisinger inspired other sociologists and political scientists like Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, David Meyer, Doug McAdam, and many others to develop this theory further. It is the work of these individuals that I will use to put forth the guidelines by which to examine the political expressions and actions of the hip hop community as ones that constitute a social movement. First, it is important to define how "political opportunity" is a social movement that is derived by "contentious politics." Secondly, I outline the three guidelines to consider a social movement, based on the work of Doug McAdam and his work with political opportunity structures.

In general, the purpose of a social movement is to call into question the politics, authority, and means to change issues affecting a polity. The "politics" represents the issues of a group, the "authority" are the ones in power that need to be challenged as to why political opportunities are not being afforded to a group, and the "means" are the strategies and actions that need to be taken, so as to express oneself and reorient the authority's political control. As a result, political process theorist Charles Tilly defines a "social movement" as "interaction between a specific set of authorities and various spokespersons for a given challenge to those authorities" (as quoted in Burstein 7). This definition is supported by Sidney Tarrow, who looks at social movements as "collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities" (as quoted in Meyer and Staggenborg 1631). Both definitions of a social movement allow us to examiine the interactions that are taking place. The result is that political opportunity structure theory (or the political process model) wants to understand how an interaction between those in power and those with grievances comes about and how a social movement may be structured to create opportunities for change. It is the work of Sidney Tarrow that comes into play in order to best understand what a political opportunity is and how it is driven by contentious politics.

Tarrow defines "political opportunities" as "consistent–but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national–dimensions of the political struggle that encourage people to engage in contentious politics" (19-20). In this case, there are no specific conditions or variables that exist in order for one to seek political opportunities to form a social movement. Tarrow contends that the theory is best used as a means to seek or mark clues as to where contentious politics is taking place which, in turn, can create a social movement (20). In relation to Eisinger, Tarrow believes that people have misinterpreted his use of the word "structure" to mean that political

opportunities are the result of a local or state structure whose politics and/or lack of recognition have caused one to rise up in contention with said structure (221n7). Instead, the two key clues that political opportunity theory emphasizes are one, that mobilization of a group is in relation to the resources external to the group, and two, that political opportunities are perceived by the insurgents seeking change (Tarrow 77). As a result, "contentious politics"

> occurs when ordinary people . . . join forces in confrontations with elites, authorities and opponents . . . is triggered when changing political opportunities . . . create incentives for social actors who lack resources on their own . . . Organizers use contention to exploit political opportunities, create collective identities, bring people together in organizations, and mobilize them against powerful opponents. (Tarrow 2–3)

The action that organizers take against a political opportunity is contentious in nature due to the immediate means by which it generates opposition (Meyer and Staggenborg 1630). Contention connects back to the two key clues of lacking external resources and perceived opportunities as those push an organizer to examine the lack of means available for changing their group's needs or wants and for creating an opportunity to challenge and change the structure. One does not have to wait for a local or national election cycle to find a moment to bring contention to the structure; instead, it is the lack of political or social power that can act as a driving force to bring about change. The way by which one marks their contention is through the use of "slogans, forms of dress or music, or by renaming familiar objects with new or different symbols" (Tarrow 5). People are compelled to identify with the movement through the use of one's words, address, and behavior that signifies the purpose of the collective.

In connection to Foucault and Arendt, I contend that the external resource rappers perceive their community as lacking in power and freedom, in particular the power and freedom to decide what is best for them. Therefore, power and freedom provides the impetuous to have contentious politics rise to formulate a social movement.

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Having established what the political opportunity structure theory consists of, the work of Doug McAdam will be used here to outline the three key guidelines for considering the expressions and actions of a group as a basis for the formation of a social movement. McAdam applied the political process model to the examination of the development of a black insurgency, both political and socially, from 1930-1970. His work mainly focused on how the civil rights movement attempted to shift the state's control over to organizational groups who believed that change was necessary and possible (Goldstone 132). In this work McAdam developed a political process model that consists of three guidelines (components or principles) that provide a lens by which to view a group's formation into a social movement. The guidelines are: 1) expanding political opportunities, 2) indigenous organizational strength, and 3) cognitive liberation.

The first guideline of expanding political opportunities falls in line with the scholarship of Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, Peter Eisinger, and David Meyer, all referenced earlier in this section. The point of guideline one is to find that which opens the political structure to change. McAdam writes:

> Any event or broad social process that serves to undermine the calculations and assumptions on which the political establishment is structured occasions a shift in political opportunities. Among the events and processes likely to prove disruptive of the political status quo are wars, industrialization, international political realignments, prolonged unemployment, and widespread demographic changes. (41)

The need to expand one's political opportunities is due to the political challenger being fed up with being put into an exclusionary position outside of the decision-making process (McAdam 40). The weakness of one's position is channeled through the disruptive actions one takes to cause a rift in the political opportunity structure. Although McAdam provides a brief list of ways for the structure to be expanded, he does concede that a "finite list of specific causes would be impossible to compile" and frankly, that the cause of the rift does not matter (41-42). The point

is that once one challenges the structure, then this helps to facilitate increased political activism and provides a means to increase the political leverage of the challenging insurgent group (McAdam 42).

Next, in addition to understanding the political environment (structure) the challenger is going to embark upon, they must have the resources to seize upon their political opportunity. This means there needs to be a "network" whereby members and leaders can convert the political opportunities into a campaign for social protest (McAdam 44). Any movement must have individuals who are recruited and become involved in order for a group to have the strength needed to challenge the political structure. However, this group of people would be better suited to represent a "bloc" of people who merge together from differing groups (McAdam 45). Therefore, a "bloc" of people is not a singular homogenous group consisting of only African American hip hop community members (as discussed in chapter 2 with the definition of the hip hop "community"). The potential strength of the hip hop community comes from its multi-racial, multi-ethnic ability to recruit, involve, and recognize all people. S. Craig Watkins contends that rap has never simply been a "black thing," but it is hip hop's "multi-ness" that provides it with an ability to be used to mobilize a political movement (150). Additionally, it is important to have leaders or organizers to help in the insurgency. Preferably groups will have already established organizations that result in already established and recognized leaders. The leader's role then is to provide the ability to organize and to use their position within the community to recruit others and push the movement forward (McAdam 47).

The ability for rap to have leadership is a point of concern and consideration for Bynoe Yvonne. Yvonne does not deny that rappers have a place in the movement, but she contends that one cannot be both a rapper and movement leader (xiii). She prefers that the political organizing

be left to post-civil rights activists, organizers, and politicians (Yvonne xii). This becomes a crucial point to investigate, the role of the rapper as being one who is just part of the movement or one leading the movement. In applying the newly revised definition of "raptivism" (discussed in chapter 4), the rapper becomes just one of the leaders of hip hop, insofar as hip hop may be considered a social movement. The most important role they can inhabit is being the vocal expression of this sphere, but they cannot be the lone voice. The effect of allowing rappers to be seen by the larger society as the sole voice of hip hop is that the hip hop counterpublic sphere will continue to be viewed as a marginal group that should only be reached out to for the chance of swaying some votes and not for embracing the larger cultural politics and demands of this community or sphere.

The final guideline is the need for cognitive liberation. McAdam contends that while the first two factors are necessary for insurgency, they are not enough. People must attach meaning to the actions that are being taken and consciousness recognizes cues that their situation is important to the movement (McAdam 48). The emergence of consciousness comes about from individuals who perceive the structure as having lost (or losing) legitimacy, from people asserting their rights, which demands change, or a new wave of efficacy where people believe they can change their situations (McAdam 49-50). Overall, Bakari Kitwana warns: "Until hip-hop is recognized as a broad cultural movement, rather than simply an influential moneymaker, those who seek to tap into hip-hop's potential to impact social change should not expect substantive progress" ("The Challenge" 345). Therefore, the importance of the three guidelines together is that the rift in the structure creates cues by which organizations can come together and create a new consciousness that demands change.

Hip Hop Emerging Activism to Seize Political Opportunities

The ability for the hip hop counterpublic sphere to transition into being a political opportunity social movement requires key components of the theory and activism to be resolved in order to progress forward. The theoretical frameworks of Sidney Tarrow ("contentious politics") and Doug McAdam ("three key guidelines"), coupled with the importance of music and culture being at the forefront of a social movement, necessitates a balanced approach into social movement activism. Tricia Rose argues: "We must fight for a progressive, social justice-inspired, culturally nuanced take on hip hop" (29). Therefore, the goal is to provide the hip hop counterpublic sphere with the means to focus its efforts so as to galvanize itself towards achieving their own cultural political ends.

The implementation of hip hop into a political opportunity movement requires a priority be placed on the contentious politics that have influenced the formation of this culture, meaning that cultural politics must be at the forefront of any rap songs, political manifestos, or the soul of a social movement. Part of the apprehension that exists around hip hop is the danger of it being consumed by the materialistic, sexist, and anti-intellectualism "values" that have created the negative connotations of rap music, leading people to think that the hip hop culture lacks meaningful contentions politics. However, as Nelson George writes: "While hip hop's values are by and large fixed–its spirit of rebellion, identification with street culture, materialism, and aggression–it is also an incredibility flexible tool of communication, quite adaptable to any number of messages" (155). The foundational messages of rap music talking about the street life, its culture, and its environmental conditions are what have provided the impetus for contentious politics to formulate a social movement. Tricia Rose argues:

> Hip hop was born and grew up under extreme social and economic pressure; its powerful tales of fun, affirmation, and suffering should be honored but also recognized as

reflections of the stress under which it was brought into creation . . . Too much celebration of hip hop's creativity deemphasizes the fact that it reflects the genius of black people's ability to make delicacies out of scraps. (266)

The "scraps" are in historical reference to the "leftover food" slaves were provided with in order to survive. "Chitterlings" or the "food that slave owners and their families would not eat" provided part of the conditions by which slaves used songs to provide the inspiration to see themselves out of their desperate situations (Rose 265). The scraps of the hip hop community have been the downtrodden living conditions, the emergence of a drug and gang culture that has literally killed potential members for change, lack of quality education, the lack of the ability to politically express oneself (voting rights be taken away), and other situations that have provided the perceived conditions for insurgents to seek change.

The importance of placing the scraps at the forefront of the movement is that it marks the contexts by which the movement grew. Ron Eyerman writes: "Social movements are constituted in contexts where history and biography interact with social structure . . . They take shape in distinct historical situations and are thus fundamentally affected by the political cultures . . . actions . . . attitudes . . . in which they arise" ("Social Movements" 543). A focus on the contexts of a movement allows for an evaluation of the issues, cultural politics, and conditions that brought a movement up. The evaluation of these historical contexts requires that we understand the structures and opportunities that were present so that the music provides a lens as to the openings one sought of the political system (Freeland 267). This then becomes another important component of how contentious politics existed within a given moment and it provides the space to talk about what has influenced a movement.

The contentious politics of a given era will not be the same going forward. The issues that affected the formation of a hip hop culture have changed from the later 1970s to the 1990s

when rap music and hip hop as a culture managed to establish a stable political and pop culture

foothold. The ability for a movement to be formed and then maintained requires the members to

understand where it has come from in order to see the perceived problems and issues that they

want to change nows.

Next, if the formation of hip hop as a social movement occurs, there is a simple but

candid question the community must answer: "What do you want the community to look like?

(Rose 268). The intent of this question connects to McAdam's second guideline about

indigenous organizational strength in that the focus for the movement must be direct and be seen,

"seen" in the sense that organizations, rappers, raptivists, and others must be seen as working

towards bringing people into the movement, and that the movement is taking action. The

question can be viewed in two different lights.

The first deals with what hip hop wants to represent. Tricia Rose writes:

Far too much of the 'representing' energy in hip hop deals with the reflection of what 'is'
(whether true or not). No matter the level of creativity applied to this realist model, it
does not open up enough space for imagining things beyond where we are now. The
emphasis on representing reality doesn't encourage us to seriously consider what we
actually want (which we must imagine) but, rather, trains our eye reflecting where we are
(what we see all around us). (268)

Far too often rap music is caught up in "representing" what reality is supposed to be and the

effects of this are that there is no beyond. Rap music, on one level, is seen through the eyes of

being a commercial representation of the culture. The negative stereotypes of being a thug, or

being a sexist, or rapping about the benjamins (cash) one has makes it so that rap's messages are

seen as a glorification of this lifestyle and not as a critique of what caused this music to exist.

Nelson George points out, "For all Public Enemy's impact . . . its ultimate strength lay in making

and selling records" (155). This points out that even the most ardent supporters of crafting

politically active messages through rap must still be economically viable. Thus, there is the

economics pushing the direction by which rap music "represents" a reality for the culture. This push can provide a means by which one can change the exigent circumstances that caused one to use rap music as an escape.

However, the trap is that the movement can become visionless. Rapping only for potential financial freedom denies much as to what the culture and community was designed for. Rose explains: "We must keep thinking about what we want–not money, cars and materials things, but what kind of communities do we want? How do we want to be treated?" (269). One cannot deny that it was the financial viability of hip hop's elements (breaking, graffiti, deejaying, and rapping) that helped to create an entire culture. Yet, this is a culture determined by CEOs and not hood workers as to what hip hop is to represent. What hip hop wants cannot solely be the cars or the finances; there has to be more or the counterpublic sphere/community will always be looking for a means to make a difference. Therefore, what the community wants turns to the political so as to seize political opportunities.

The shaping of what the hip hop community wants to look like lies in the second light of the question. The commercial must be political, political in the sense that there are goals, issues, and leaders that are being formulated so as to make an active contribution into shaping what the community wants to look like. John Street argues: "It is the political possibilities inherent in pleasure that are important. Musical . . . texts cannot be read simply as documents of political aspiration or resentment or compliance . . . The question then becomes how that pleasure is linked to politics" (128-129). One must understand the importance of rap music and hip hop as a pleasurable culture. People must see themselves as being part of the music and culture. This is why Bakari Kitwana argues that in order for a sociopolitical change to take place, there needs to

be unity between the commercial and grassroots sectors of the hip hop community ("The Challenge" 345).

The political sector of the hip hop community has been around almost since the inception of the music and culture. Currently, there are numerous organizations that have attempted to espouse the cultural politics of the hip hop community. For instance, the Hip Hop Republicans (HHR, as discussed in chapter 5) attempt to galvanize the hip hop community into seeing the importance of embracing mainly libertarian perspectives about freedom and politics. Their effort is to counter the common perception that rap music and the hip hop culture are only represented through liberal politics. Another form of political activism has been the work of Bakari Kitwana and his organization called *Rap Sessions*. His website *rapsessions.org* is designed to bring rappers, scholars, community organizers, and others involved in the hip hop community together to have a dialogue about various issues afflicting them. Topics of the past have consisted of hip hop, media and the prison industrial complex (current topic), the art of resistance, hip hop activism in the Obama / Tea Party era, and several others ("Welcome To"). The website allows for you to watch past dialogues, reference potential hip hop study guides to help people create their own dialogues, and to find out more information about the issues facing the community. Tricia Rose, in her book *The Hip Hop Wars*, provides a list of various people, organizations, rappers, etc. that one can turn to in order to find one who represents their communal needs (247–-260). However, although this list and the websites of Kitwana and the HHR provide methods for strengthening the hip hop community and helping it show its force, there is still a lack of a clear ideology for the movement.

The cultural politics of the hip hop community are as diverse as the members within it. Yet the ability to sustain itself as a viable social movement requires that a "manifesto" of their

ideology be produced. This runs the danger of the hip hop community being seen as overtaken by politicians or elites, but just as the rapper uses his or her lyrics to represent the issues of their community, so must the community dictate what it wants others to see them working towards. George Freeland contends: "Music is able to maximize its ability to foster social cohesion and political action if its meaning fits with the ideology of the movement" (271). Courtney Brown supports this perspective in stating that "We listen to music to understand ourselves both individually and collectively . . . music is so entertaining that it carries such a great potency as a venue of political expression . . . music becomes a powerful link between the emotionally rich ideas of a political thinker and the listeners" (10). The people will be part of a movement if they see that it has the desired goals or effects that they are looking to achieve. The music cannot be enough of a pleasure to bring people in; strength comes from knowing what is being worked towards. Carlton Usher contends: "For HC to be a viable political instrument, it must contain a political philosophy that allows its followers to ascribe meaning to particular situations and determine appropriate courses of action" (9).

The political philosophy the hip hop community should embrace is one of cultural rights or cultural justice. Informed by Don Mitchell, cultural justice or rights deal with the examination of the social, political, and cultural forces that result in affecting how people are able to "be" (xvi). Cultural wars are taking place over who has the ability to define who can and cannot be part of the greater societal sphere. Boundaries have been formed that articulate a cultural ideology that affects the social interactions various cultures have (Mitchell 12). A hip hop political philosophy must look to how it alters the cultural boundaries placed around the hip hop community that marginalize its voices and the expressions of its concerns. Bakari Kitwana argues: "For hip-hop's emerging political movement to be effective, a hip-hop voting bloc must

frame issues in a way that simultaneously advances the hip-hop agenda and promotes inclusivity" (191). A hip hop movement cannot be solely a "black thing" wherein no one sees how, regardless of race, class, or gender, the issues afflicting the hip hop community are all encompassing. Kitwana writes:

> Hip-hop politics, just like hip-hop music and culture, has an intrinsic appeal to all Americans . . . Properly reframing the issues can assist the crucial need to build a political movement. This movement must have the potential to morph into a political party that can appeal to Americans regardless of race, class, gender, age or sexual orientation. (192)

The strength of the movement comes in its recognition of diversity and of how people can come together for cultural justice issues. The political philosophy of hip hop seeks to have people make the political personal. Ron Eyerman explains: "It meant putting yourself on the line, actively engaging in non-routine political activity, even when it meant great personal rise" ("Social Movements" 538). The ability to include all people not only brings strength to the movement in that it can build stronger bonds for various cultural rights / justice issues, but it makes a bigger statement as to who is affected and how so. Humanity, cultural justice, and cultural rights are at the core of those members of the hip hop community who are seen as political actors. As a result, the goal then of the hip hop movement is to correctly alter those cultural boundaries and political institutions or practices that inhibit the movement's ability to "be."

A particular political opportunity that the hip hop community can seize upon is the call for police and judicial reform. In the last two years (2012-2014), two major killings of young black men, Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, have called into question the value and worth of an individual. The killing of these two men brought rappers forward who used their lyrical and musical abilities to raise a voice that would represent the emotions stirred by these two

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situations. Rappers such as Public Enemy, Mister F.A.B., and the group Dead Prez wrote different songs contextualizing the issues of race, justice, and human worth raised by the Martin shooting (Cowell). In the Ferguson, Missouri protest, rappers Nelly (from St. Louis), J. Cole, Killer Mike, and Talib Kweli physically went to Missouri and walked with the protesters to show that the hip hop community is tired of this type of injustice continuing (Charity). Additionally, various rap songs have been written about the Michael Brown shooting, calling ultimately for justice to be brought to the situation. Justin Charity writes: "Hip-hop is providing right now like no other art form this generation has known; this is literally the music of the poor, the outcast, the downtrodden." Although, Charity questions why these rappers have appeared amongst the protesters, this is where hip hop as a counterpublic sphere can emerge as a social movement for change and not just as a show of solidarity.

The final guideline for implementation of a hip hop social movement comes with the ability of music and/or hip hop messaging to bring about cognitive liberation. Liberation occurs when the consciousness of the members see that the structure inhibiting them is beginning to fail (McAdam 49). The hip hop social movement is in need of a political agenda that can specify the issues affecting them, as well as provide a means for seeing how effective their action can be in bringing change to their situation. Cultural political issues vary upon the immediacy one feels to a given issue. This is where the power of the rapper's lyrics has come from. They have placed their lyrics as cultural representations of the issues afflicting their community. The lyrics have provided a basis for cognitive liberation. Looking back to Congressman Tray Radel, it was his exposure to "Straight Outta Compton" that opened his eyes to issues affecting people outside of his immediate communal sphere (Neff).

One should not deny the different ways that various people identify with the hip hop community, but it is necessary to have issues that all people can relate to. Bakari Kitwana contends that issues of "living wage jobs, military-industrial complex, education, environment and incarceration" broadly affect all people regardless of age and race (173). These can become starting points by where the movement can specify which issue to tackle first or to decide on a multi-pronged attack. The articulation and recognition of hip hop's cultural political issues allows for the movement to imagine all of the possibilities so as to bring about change (Rosenthal 17).

Currently, there are three cultural political issues that a hip hop social movement can use to bring about cognitive liberation. The first deals with the stagnant living wages that exist in the United States. Workers across the United States are "earning" a minimum wage salary of $7.25 an hour. This dollar amount has not been recently adjusted for increases in the cost of living. The effect has been that many minimum wage workers are unable to live on this low dollar amount. Data shows that 52% of fast-food workers have to rely on at least one form of government or public assistance ("Fast-food Workers"). The lack of living wages has resulted in hundreds of protests across the nation, culminating in a massive protest having taken place on December 4, 2013 ("Fast-food Workers). The ability for the hip hop community to show how many of their people are affected by low wages and that it reaches across all boundaries can help demonstrate the failure of the system. This is evident in that President Obama, in his 2014 State of the Union speech, talked about how he was going to take executive action to raise the wages of some federal workers to $10.10 an hour (Berman). Obama has seen how political strife has allowed for the continuance of people's suffrage. The hip hop community can relate its rap lyrics about

social and economic depression to the inability to live; this will help in the bringing forth of

cognitive liberation as it marks the institutions, and politicians who have continued their plight.

A secondary cultural political issue deals with the mandatory minimum sentencing laws

when it comes to drugs and incarceration. Since the inception of the hip hop culture, drugs have

had an influence upon the community and its members. Ironically, rapper The Notorious B.I.G.,

who was celebrated by Stan Veuger's "21 Greatest Conservative Rap Songs" for his song

"Juicy," was a "notorious" drug dealer, hence how he got his rap nickname. Rap songs about

drugs are not new to the hip hop community, but the way by which change can take place is. On

April 8, 2013 hip hop mogul and activist Russell Simmons co-authored a letter to President

Obama urging him to end the war on drugs and help reduce the incarceration rates, specifically

for young black men ("Russell Simmons Writes"). Part of the letter reads:

> Hundreds of thousands of children have lost a parent to long prison sentences for non-violent drug offenses, leaving these children to fend for themselves . . . Some of the initial policies we recommend are to apply the Fair Sentencing Act retroactively so that those sentenced under the 100-to-1 crack-to-powder disparity receive sentences that are more consistent with the magnitude of the offense. ("Russell Simmons Writes")

The letter ends with a list of over two hundred celebrities, activists, faith-based leaders, and

others signing onto this letter urging the President to bring about change. Russell and the other

signees show that there is a groundswell that supports this change in mandatory sentencing as it

has effects on many families and geographic communities within the larger hip hop community.

A couple of days after this letter, Eric Holder announced that he would be seeking a cut to these

sentencing laws as they are a "vicious cycle" who trap too many within them (Merica and Perez).

The final cultural political issue that the hip hop community can bring about cognitive

liberation of is President Obama's new initiative "My Brother's Keeper." President Obama states

that the program "will seek to make sure that every young man of color who is willing to work

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hard and lift himself up has an opportunity to get ahead and reach his full potential" (Goldfarb). This program has been one that many within specific minority communities (black and Latino) have been asking the first black president to initiate. Obama has faced criticism for not doing enough to help these communities that have been traditionally socially, politically, and economically disenfranchised (Goldfarb). One can applaud Obama for attempting to provide a model for minority communities to help raise themselves up.

Yet one must be wary of claims that change can only come about through economic means. The Keeper's program is to consist of two main parts: ensuring that young kids can arrive at school ready to learn and reducing negative interactions with the justice system. Second, Obama will conduct an internal investigation into the programs that are or are not working for young men (Goldfarb).

The hip hop movement could have an impact in a similar program that looks to investigate the social, cultural, and political issues that affect one's ability to succeed. One concern with this program is that it denies that there is a need for a women's keeper's program. Unfortunately, there are many women who are left out of hip hop and out of social programs and this trend must stop. Liberation will occur when the connections are made that all people (men, women, minorities, whites, etc.) are affected and are part of the same community.

Conclusion

The goal of this project was to show the relationship between hip hop rhetorical, sociological, and political scholarship in the formation of the hip hop community into a social movement, especially as seen through the use of rap music. The intersection of these varied scholarships demonstrates the uniqueness of hip hop studies in that it can take from all these fields of study and re-mix them into a means to seek cultural political change. However, one

must always be wary of those who claim to have the best interests of the hip hop community in mind. Imani Perry warns: "Even if we recognize that hip hop has the potential to revolutionize, it also has the potential to suffer co-optation" (197). Co-optation would be the using of the hip hop community as solely a "liberal" or "conservative" means to bring out young people to the voting booths. Bakari Kitwana agrees with the warning that "Hip-hop's emerging political movement must be wary of opportunists who come to the hip-hop political battlefield only to earn the stripes they need to move up the ranks of the establishment parties" (203).

One can argue that this is what President Obama did in order to become president. He intentionally engaged this community and sold himself as a community organizer who would represent their needs. While this may be true, it cannot be denied that hip hop as a counterpublic sphere has continued to press for recognition and demand for change to occur. A hip hop social movement will have to decide if they want to run candidates and form into a political organization like the Tea Party or just be regionally based. A social movement will not be fully formed and sustained without hip hop setting its political agenda and becoming a raptivist movement. A raptivist movement must be one that learns the lessons of the Occupy Wall Street movement and realizes that a non-leader-leader model is one that will leave it visionless.

If hip hop is to become a gateway to seizing political opportunities then it must embrace the newly defined concept of "raptivism" so as to not put unrealistic pressure on rappers to be the sole leaders of a movement. Raptivism can no longer be viewed as a rapper who does activism on the side; instead, it must be seen as an active engagement that one and others have committed themselves to (Bynoe vix). Tricia Rose provides a list of additional potential leaders and members of the hip hop community who are expanding the cultural political power of this movement: "Journalists, bloggers, activists, teachers, students, filmmakers, social workers, and

novelists are all working to broaden the creative and intellectual grounds for progressive hip hop" (246). More expansive hip hop studies and activism can result in the strengthening of a movement. Each of these contributors are helping to bring cognitive liberation to hip hop.

Additional areas of research will be hip hop as a global community, meaning that analysis needs to be done as to how global and specific communities are using rap music and hip hop as a cultural force to bring about political change. This can be seen during the 2011 Arab Spring when young rappers used rap lyrics to comment on the crises in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya (Hebblethwaite), such as the message raps of Deeb, El General, and others who placed themselves as the leaders of a cultural movement. They were supported by many others who used their raps as political motivation. Rap's emerging political influence will provide for future areas of analysis so as to see how the specific context and circumstances affecting a particular country can be affected by hip hop.

Ultimately, the possibility of hip hop emerging as a social (and potentially global) movement is one that requires people becoming political. Ron Eyerman writes: "Social movements are composed of people; people are activated, who move, who politicize, and who become themselves politicized" ("Social Movements" 544). This is at the heart of what a raptivist is: they have turned the personal into the political and use it to make a difference for oneself and others. Bakari Kitwana provides a point to consider when attempting to determine if a hip hop social movement has been successful:

> To that end, a successful hip-hop political movement has something in it, not only for hip-hop voting bloc but for the country at large–the vast majority of Americans who are locked out of the process . . . We no longer have to settle for democracy for the few. This generation, as its cultural movement turns to politics, its creating for us all another choice. (210)

The choice is that hip hop is opening spaces for dialogues to happen about the cultural politics that afflict this community and America as a whole. The choice is that hip hop is allowing people to redefine themselves and the world that they live in. The choice is to find the politics in rap's music, as I did when watching a practice debate round, and then to turn it into a means to bring about cognitive liberation. The choice is for hip hop to be the mechanism for the advancement of freedom and cultural change.

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Appendix A: "My President is Rap: The Complete History of Barack Obama's Hip-Hop Moments"

"My President is Rap: The Complete History of Barack Obama's Hip-Hop Moments"
– By Spin Staff
http://www.spin.com/articles/barack-obama-hip-hop-rap-history-moments-jay-z-beyonce-president/

1. Summer 1989: Young Barry Obama and Michelle Robinson see *Do the Right Thing* on their first date
2. July 29, 2004: After his star-making DNC appearance, Obama schools André 3000 on taxes
3. Fall 2004: Obama gets interviewed on MTV News...by Diddy?
4. November 30, 2006: Senator Obama has a private summit with the King of Atlanta, Ludacris
5. April 15, 2007: Obama lambastes lady-degrading rap lyrics
6. September 2007: Obama, on the hip-hop stump, covers *VIBE*
7. October 29, 2007: Senator Obama dances to Beyoncé and Jay-Z's "Crazy in Love" on *Ellen*
8. December 7, 2007: Obama shows out for Chicago at a hometown fundraiser with Cool Kids
9. March 6, 2008: Q-Tip confirms Barack Obama guest verse on as-yet-unreleased album
10. April 17, 2008: Obama brushes dirt off his shoulders
11. May 27, 2008: The Candidate tells the *New York Times* that bodyman "iReggie" keeps him up on rap
12. June 2008: Obama tells *Rolling Stone* his iPod is full of Jay-Z and Luda
13. July 9, 2008: Barack references Weezy in a speech
14. July 31, 2008: Obama severs ties with Ludacris after campaign song "Politics as Usual"
15. May 18, 2009: Shouting out *Ego Trip*'s *The (White) Rapper Show*, Obama tells a graduating class to "Hallelujah holla back!"
16. July 16, 2009: Barack goes back to the Weezy well, references Wayne in another speech
17. September 14, 2009: #ShotsFired as Obama calls Kanye West a "jackass"
18. May 5, 2010: Obama celebrates Cinco de Mayo with Pharrell and Diddy
19. April 4, 2011: Pharrell gets another shot at Obama-bonding during a White House fundraiser
20. May 1, 2011: Obama shouts out 2Pac, Biggie, Ol' Dirty Bastard, Lil Jon at the White House Correspondents Dinner
21. May 3, 2011: Michelle teaches the world how to Dougie
22. May 11, 2011: The White House invites potty-mouthed, anti-American gangsta rapper Common to the White House
23. April 2012: Obama calls Kanye a jackass *again*
24. April 28, 2012: Obama shouts out Young Jeezy at the White House Correspondents Dinner
25. June 20, 2012: Barack Obama endorses Chubb Rock (sort of)
26. August 17, 2012: The Don himself mispronounces "Nas"

27. Sept 2, 2012: Obama video-bombs Jay-Z's inaugural Made in America festival
28. September 6, 2012: The official Obama campaign Tumblr samples Run-DMC
29. September 8, 2012: America's rap genius deconstructs Nicki Minaj's Mitt Romney "endorsement"
30. Sept. 11, 2012: Obama talks Flo Rida and Pitbull
31. Sept. 18, 2012: Jay and Bey visit the White House, initiate bonus shoulder-brushing
32. October 15, 2012: The Nobel Peace Prize winner mediates the Nicki Minaj and Mariah Carey feud
33. October 26, 2012: Obama tells Sway that hip-hop is "most vibrant [political] musical art form right now"
34. October 29, 2012: Obama reveals that his iPod also bangs Fugees, Eminem, and Gil-Scott Heron on the reg
35. November 5, 2012: Jay-Z invited to perform a "bitch"-less "99 Problems" at Obama's final campaign rally
36. January 17, 2013: Nobody Beats Nick Cannon and the Biz on Obama's Inauguration Playlist
37. April 11, 2013: The White House Press Secretary Ethers Jay-Z Song

Appendix B: "Letter to Vibe Magazine" by Barack Obama

We are at a defining moment in our history. Our nation is at war. Our economy is in turmoil. More Americans are out of work, and more are working for less. More of you have cars you can't afford to drive, credit card bills you can't afford to pay, and tuition that's beyond your reach.

And too many Americans have lost faith that their leaders can or will do anything about it. That's why this election is the most important of our lifetime. We cannot wait any longer for universal health care, or an affordable college education, or good-paying jobs we can count on. We cannot wait to fix our schools, rebuild our communities, or end this war in Iraq. We cannot wait to change the game in Washington.

I am running for President to take this country in a new direction. But I can't do it alone. I need you. Whether it's the first time, or the first time in a long time, I need you to register and vote on November 4th.

Now, I've heard people say: "My vote doesn't matter," "My vote won't count," or "I'm just one person, what possible difference can I make?" And I understand this cynicism. As a young man attempting to find my own way in the world, I faced many of the same choices and challenges facing many of you today. I sometimes doubted that my thoughts and actions really mattered in the larger scheme of things.

But I made a choice. I chose to check in, to get involved, and to try and make a difference in people's lives. It's what led me to my work as a community organizer in Chicago, where I worked with churches to rebuild struggling communities on the South Side. It's what led me to teach and to run for public office.

And even today, I hear the skepticism. Too often, our leaders let us down. They don't seem to do much to make our lives better. So I understand the temptation to sit elections out. But this year, when the stakes are this high, and the outcome will be so close, I need you to choose to vote.

Not just because so many have fought for your right to, even though they have. Not just because our very citizenship demands it, even though it does. I need you to choose to vote because if you don't, you give your silent endorsement to the way things are.

You cast an equally powerful ballot for four more years that look just like the last eight. And at a time when Americans everywhere are hurting, I need you to make a difference. A website to make the process easy–VoteforChange.com–is a one-stop shop to help you register to vote, check your registration status, apply for an absentee ballot, and find out where your polling place is on Election Day.

At defining moments like this one, the change we need doesn't come from Washington. Change comes to Washington. Change happens because the American people demand it–because they rise up to say "enough," and insist on new ideas and new leadership, a new politics for a new time.

All across America, something is stirring. The change we need is coming. And if you register to vote, and get your friends and neighbors, classmates and coworkers to do the same,

and if you stand with me on November 4th, then together, we will win this election and change this country.

Appendix C: "My President"–Young Jeezy

"My President"–Young Jeezy, feat. Nas
http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/youngjeezy/mypresident.html

[Intro: Young Jeezy]
Yeah, be the realest shit I never wrote
I ain't write this by the way nigga, some real shit right here nigga
This'll be the realest shit you ever quote
Let's go!

[Hook: Young Jeezy]
My president is black, my Lambo's blue
And I'll be goddamned if my rims ain't too
My momma ain't at home, and daddy's still in jail
Tryna make a plate, anybody seen the scale?
My president is black, my Lambo's blue
And I'll be goddamned if my rims ain't too
My money's light green and my Jordans light grey
And they love to see white, now how much you tryna pay?
Let's go!

[Verse 1: Young Jeezy]
Today was a good day, hope I have me a great night
I don't know what you fishin for but catch you a great white
Me, I see great white, heavy as killer whales
I cannot believe this, who knew it came in bails
Who knew what came with jail, who knew what came with prison
Just cause you got opinions, does that make you a politician?
Bush robbed all of us, would that make him a criminal?
And then he cheated in Florida, would that make him a seminal?
I say and I quote, "We need a miracle"
And I say a miracle cause this shit is hysterical
By my nephews and nieces, I will email Jesus
Tell him forward to Moses and CC Allah
Mr. Soul Survivor, guess that make me a Konvict
Be all you be, now don't that sound like some dumb shit
When you die over crude oil as black as my nigga Boo
It's really a Desert Storm, that's word to my nigga Clue
Catch me in Las Vegas, A.R. Arizona
Rep for them real niggas, I'm winnin in California
Winnin in Tennessee, hands down Atlanta
Landslide Alabama, on my way to Sevana

[Hook]

[Verse 2: Young Jeezy]
I said I woke up this morning, headache this big
Pay all these damn bills, feed all these damn kids
Buy all these school shoes, buy all these school clothes
For some strange reason my son addicted to Polos
Love me some spinach dip, I'm addicted to Houston's
And if the numbers is right I take a trip out to Houston
An earthquake out in China, a hurricane in New Orleans
Street Dreams Tour, I showed my ass in New Orleans
Did it for Soulja Slim, brought out B.G.
It's all love Bun, I'm forgivin you Pimp C
You know how the Pimp be, that nigga gon' speak his mind
If he could speak down from heaven he'd tell me stay on my grind
Tell him I'm doin fine, Obama for mankind
We ready for damn change so y'all let the man shine
Stuntin on Martin Luther, feelin just like a king
Guess this is what he meant when he said that he had a dream

[Hook]

[Verse 3: Nas]
Yeah, our history, black history, no president ever did shit for me
Had to hit the streets, had to flip some keys so a nigga won't go broke
Then they put us in jail, now a nigga can't go vote
So I spend doe, all these hoes is trippin
She a ain't a politician, honey's a polotician
My president is black, rolls golden charms
Twenty-two inch rims like Hulk Hogan's arms
When thousands of peoples is riled up to see you
That can arouse ya ego, we got mouths to feed so
Gotta stay true to who you are and where you came from
Cause at the top will be the same place you hang from
No matter how big you can ever be
For whatever fee or publicity, never lose your integrity
For years there's been surprise horses in this stable
Just two albums in, I'm the realest nigga on this label
Mr. Black President, yo Obama for real
They gotta put your face on the five-thousand dollar bill

[Hook]

[Outro: Young Jeezy]
So I'm sittin right here now man
It's June 3rd haha, 2:08 AM

Nigga I won't say win, lose or draw
Man we congratulate you already homie
See I motivate the thugs right
You motivate us homie, that's what it is
This a hands on policy, y'all touchin me right nigga
Yeah, first black president, win, lose or draw nigga
Haha, matter of fact, you know what it is man
Shouts out to Jackie Robinson, Booker T, Washington homie
Oh you ain't think I knew that shit?
Sydney portea what dey do?
Haha, my president is black
I'm important too though, my Lambo's blue
I was, I was the first nigga to ride through my hood in a Lamborghini yeah haha

"Black President"–Nas
http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/nas/blackpresident.html

[Barack Obama - taken from victory speech in Iowa]
They said this day would never come... *[crowd cheers loudly]*
They SAID, our sights were set too high. *[crowd still wooing]*
This country is too divided; too disillusioned
to ever come together around a common purpose. They said..."

[Repeat 2X]
("Although it seems heaven-sent, we ain't ready, to have a black president" - *[2Pac]*)

[singers {Barack Obama}]
Yes we can...change the world...
{CHANGE THE WORLD...}

[Chorus]
("Although it seems heaven-sent, we ain't ready, to have a black president" - *[2Pac]*) *[repeat 2X]*
Yes we can...change the world...
(The world, the world, the WORLD...)

[Nas]
They forgot us on the block, got us in the box
Solitary confinement, how violent are these cops?
They need a early retirement
How many rallies will I watch? I ain't got it in me to march
I got a Semi to spark, the game's in a drought
Public housing, projects, cookin up in the Pyrex
My set, my clique, either gettin money
or runnin from homicide trail, that's if they ain't died yet
Tryna be rich, STILL I'm pledging allegiance
A predicate felon, a ghetto leader
Lendin my poetical genius, to who-EVER may need it
I BLEED this from Queensbridge, now living with my feet up
Never defeated, so a president's needed
You know these colored folks and Negros hate to see
one of they own succeeding
America, surprise us, and let a black man guide us

[Repeat 2X]
("Although it seems heaven-sent, we ain't ready, to have a black president" - *[2Pac]*)

[singers {Barack Obama}]
Yes we can...change the world...
{CHANGE THE WORLD...}

[Chorus]

[Nas]
What's the black pres' thinkin on election night?
Is it, "How can I protect my life? Protect my wife? Protect my rights?"
Every other president was nuttin' less than white
'cept Thomas Jefferson and mixed Indian blood and Calvin Coolidge
KKK is like, "What the fuck?!", loadin they guns up
Loadin up mines too, ready to ride
'Cause I'm ridin with my crew - he dies, we die too
Yeah, but on the positive side
I think Obama provides hope, and challenges minds
of all races and colors to erase the hate
and try to LOVE one another; so many political snakes
We in need of a break, I'm thinkin I can TRUST this brotha
...but will he keep it way real?
Every innocent nigga in jail, gets out on appeal
When he wins, will he really care still?
I feel...

[Repeat 2X]
("Although it seems heaven-sent, we ain't ready, to have a black president" - *[2Pac]*)

[singers {Barack Obama}]
Yes we can...change the world...
{CHANGE THE WORLD...}

[Chorus]

[Nas]
Say a prayer for "Do we have to?"
You ain't right, Jeremiah Wrong pastor
in love with a slave master
Sincerely yours, USA's most brave rapper
Jesse carjacker, Uncle TOm kidnapper
Ask around, Bently Coupe off the Richter
Bitch called Life, I pimped her, WHAT?
Politics, politricks, Klan shooter
Deacon for defense, progress producer

Nothing on the stove, a survival booster
Gotta DO what we gotta DO
We ain't got no governors comin through to help!
Anything we need done, gotta do for self
New, improved JFK on the way
It ain't the 60s' again, niggas ain't hippies again
We ain't fallin for the same traps
Standin on the balconies, where they shot the King at
McCain got apoligies, ain't nobody hearin that
People need HONESTY!

[Repeat 2X]
("Although it seems heaven-sent, we ain't ready, to have a black president" - *[2Pac]*)

[singers {Barack Obama}]
Yes we can...change the world...
{CHANGE THE WORLD...}

[Chorus]

[Governor Bill Richardson]
It is my distinct honor, and privilege to introduce
the next President of the United States - Barack Obama

[crowd cheers LOUDLY]

Appendix E: "Why I'm A Hip Hop Conservative"–by Trey Radel

Congressman Trey Radel: "Why I'm A Hip Hop Conservative"–by Trey Radel
http://www.buzzfeed.com/treyradel/trey-radel-hip-hop-conservative-ah8y

Unlike most young, white teenagers growing up in the suburbs of Cincinnati, Ohio, my favorite musicians were hip hop artists, including rappers such as Eric B., Big Daddy Kane and Chuck D of Public Enemy.

As a young man listening to hip hop in the late 80s and early 90s, I was exposed to what was happening outside of my world of finely manicured lawns in the 'burbs. Before I bought my first Public Enemy cassette tape (kids, you can Google "cassette tape"), exotic food was Taco Bell and my exposure to different cultures came through the television. Now, I have backpacked, worked or lived in almost 50 countries and speak three languages. I owe part of that passion, love of people and different cultures directly to hip hop.

It was 1989. I walked off my school bus with my little brother. I set foot onto one of those finely manicured lawns. A cassette tape was on the curb, the top half cut off and unwound. Being a music lover, I took out my number two pencil and wound it up. We got home, and I played the tape. The opening line was "You are now about to witness the strength of street knowledge." It was NWA, the hardcore, gangsta rappers that rapped about life in Compton in graphic, graphic detail.

Of course, as a young, rebellious kid, I felt a thrill listening to this music. Immediately, the hip-hop artists did what artists have been doing for centuries–they opened my eyes up to a whole new world. NWA was doing what blues, folk and rock stars have been doing for generations- they were describing hardship and pain. They described their experience as young, black men coming of age during the crack epidemic, gang wars and violence in every direction. Where else could a sheltered suburban kid hear or learn about these issues in such a graphic way? Not the local library.

My love of hip hop never ceased and included the aforementioned Chuck D of Public Enemy. Chuck said it best, "our freedom of speech is freedom or death." This is a message we can all get behind, Republican or Democrat. I find a conservative message in "Fight the Power" because I believe when government expands it becomes a political tool meant to oppress. We see it when Chuck D addresses oppression and the Civil rights movement or references the Black Panthers. We see it when NWA, or even old-school artists like Paris, address harassment from law enforcement. Targeting and oppression is happening today, from the IRS going after political groups to the government spying on journalists and everyday American citizens.

Liberty does not grow with government; they stand in contrast to one another. We have to vigilantly protect it, so we can continue to live in a free society. Music is and has always been another way to shed light where there is injustice. I am a Hip Hop Conservative, and that is not an oxymoron. It is the future of many others in my generation of 40 and below.

My goal as a Member of Congress is to connect and communicate the conservative message to people, cutting across cultural, generational and ethnic lines. My love for music has helped me do this, and as much as we may disagree philosophically, Public Enemy and NWA have helped me do this. Music has always been a way to bridge people together, whether its sharing a head nod to hip hop or having a jam session with a few Fenders.

We face monumental challenges as a nation and we are only going to find solutions if we find our common bonds, talk to each other, and work together to fight for this great country. I hope our generation can lead the way.

Appendix F: When Black Meant Republican"–by Chris Ladd

"When Black Meant Republican"–by Chris Ladd
http://www.hiphoprepublican.com/when-black-meant-republican/

It's easy to forget now, but just a few generations ago African American s overwhelmingly identified themselves as Republicans. The story of how the Party of Lincoln lost its black support is long and sad, but understanding what happened is critical as the Party looks to improve its standing in the black community.

In the fall of 1895 Atlanta put on one in a series of "International Expositions" designed to highlight its progress in recovering from the war. Racial tensions had been growing since southerners, at the end of Reconstruction, began instituting Jim Crow laws to curtail black civil rights. Those laws were still under challenge at the time. African American s were divided over the merits of direct, legal resistance.

The organizers of the Exposition invited prominent black leader Booker T. Washington to give a keynote address. The position he took in that speech was a calculated gamble. He aimed to improve blacks' social position by aggressively pursuing economic progress while de-emphasizing the battle for civil equality. The approach he outlined, The Atlanta Compromise, became the dominant black political ethos for generations. It was a dizzying failure with consequences we are still working to unwind.

Washington had a rival. W.E.B. DuBois was raised in the north and graduated from Harvard. He pressed to make the fight for political equality the community's highest priority and dismissed Washington's emphasis on economic development and Capitalism. DuBois founded the NAACP and became a leading figure in the northern cities. He was enamored with Marxism and even penned a defense of Josef Stalin on Stalin's death. His influence would increase as Washington's version of compromise began to unravel.

Washington's approach suffered from two crucial flaws. First he thought that institutional southern racism would weaken as the black community began to realize its economic potential. Secondly, he failed to appreciate that capitalism cannot work its magic without government protection of basic property rights. In the face of these tragic misunderstandings, blacks labored away for decades building remarkably successful businesses, professions, and civic institutions, only to watch them crushed over and over again by discriminatory laws and outright violence. There was no hope for economic progress without the most basic civil rights.

A wave of race riots in the teens and '20s were particularly devastating. Only a fraction of the incidents were documented at the time, usually in the form of a brief, euphemistic reference in a local paper to "troubles." But postcards (that's right, postcards), stories, and victim accounts painted a clearer picture. Two of the most notorious riots occurred in Rosewood, Florida and Tulsa, Oklahoma. Prosperous black communities were in many cases wiped off the map, destroying generations of hard-won gains. When the Depression came, the brief flowering of the separate black communities was effectively dead.

By the '50s, as America was bracing finally to confront its racist legacy, the gritty capitalism Washington had promoted was seen by blacks as a discredited failure at best, an "Uncle Tom" sell-out at worst. As Dr. King's effort's bore fruit and African American s began at last to have genuine economic freedom finally open to them, there was little enthusiasm to exploit it. Blacks who had led the successful fight for equal protection focused their continuing

efforts less on free enterprise than on government social programs and poverty relief. At the moment when Booker T. Washington's dream of individualism and enterprise held the most potential promise it was eclipsed by a very different vision.

This emphasis created an opening for Democrats which they successfully exploited. The drift of blacks away from the Republican Party was capped by a cynical effort to recruit disgruntled racist Democrats in the south.

What does this mean for Republicans? In spite of the failures of the Great Society era and with little help from Republicans, there is a vibrant, secure black middle class emerging for the first time in America. The growth of black prosperity will be a key to the country's future, but it depends heavily on leaving behind a vision of government dependence with deep, well-justified roots.

We need to recognize this history to understand its impact on our future. Until a generation ago, accumulating capital across generations, so critical to climbing the ladder in America, was a complete fantasy for African American s in the south. They could reasonably expect that whatever wasn't spent or hidden would be taken from them. This reality has left the black community with a starting point in terms of wealth, capital, and connections far behind whites or even other minorities.

In addition it would serve Republicans well to understand the difference between traditional black and white understandings of government power. For whites who look to European history as their guide, government is a necessary evil to be treated with great care. Its growth should be managed in order to prevent it becoming an interest to itself; capable of crushing personal liberty and economic freedom.

Blacks' experience with government power is almost a polar opposite of whites'. When central government has been weak, they have suffered. This suffering is not merely relative, but has left them vulnerable to random acts of violence, humiliation, and looting. They have good reason to see government power as protection and to be suspicious of white efforts to weaken it. A healthy Republican Party, with its crazy-dial turned down from the redline, could have a lot to offer African American s. But realizing the potential for black involvement in the Party will require us to better understand and honestly confront our own history. The GOP cannot hope to remain relevant if it devolves into a white religious club. Expanding our appeal is a moral and political imperative that can succeed if we have the will.

Vita

Matthew Maddex is a doctoral candidate who investigates the rhetorical, cultural and political means of expression one can use to change the cultural politics that effects one's environment. Matthew started his doctoral pursuit at Long Beach City College, in Long Beach, California where he earned his Associate of Arts degree. During, this time there he became part of the forensics team and used this activity to help cultivate his own his means of expression. In his continued pursuit for his doctoral degree, he graduated from California State University, Long Beach with his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, and from Miami University (Ohio) with his Master of Arts degree in Communication. At both educational locations he continued his connection to forensics as a competitor and then coach as a means to develop others means of expression. The completion of his doctoral degree marks the end of one educational pursuit, but opens the door to teach others the importance of their means of expression.