

The Hip-Hop Academy:

“Let no one ignorant

of” poetry

“enter.”

by

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Abstract

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In my thesis, I intend to explore the foundational relationship between classical rhetoric and Hip-Hop. I will argue that Hip-Hop music embodies principles of classical rhetoric and applies rhetorical strategies, creating a space for a rhetorically Hip-Hop education. I am not claiming that Hip-Hop artists consciously incorporate principles of classical rhetoric, but I am arguing that principles of classical rhetoric are present in Hip-Hop.

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## Introduction

In my upcoming chapters, I depict the conceptual relationship between Hip-Hop and classical rhetoric. For those, specifically students and Hip-Hop fans, who do not see the use of Aristotle, St. Augustine, and Quintilian, and rhetoric for that matter, I illustrate how rhetoric correlates to rap music. For those, specifically educators and others who do not see the value of Hip-Hop, I convey how this music genre can be taught along with or can teach rhetoric. I do use Hip-Hop and rap and rappers and rap artists and Hip-Hop artists interchangeably to avoid being repetitive with word choice. Hip-Hop music can be used to connect with students. I intend for my thesis to show Hip-Hop's relationship with classical rhetoric, to emphasize Aristotle's contemporary relevancy, and to show how Hip-Hop can be better understood through rhetorical analysis. I hope that my chapters also reveal why Hip-Hop and Aristotle deserve to be treated with the same level of dignity.

In my first chapter, I examine how Aristotle's canons of rhetoric, invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery, impact the freestyle rap battle and rap battle through song. I provide examples from songs, classical Hip-Hop battles, videos, and Hip-Hop films that show how Aristotle's canons of rhetoric apply to rap music. For my second chapter, I illustrate how Hip-Hop artists utilize Aristotle's three means of persuasion, or ethos, logos, and pathos appeals. For each appeal, I include examples that reiterate how rap artists make successful appeals to their audience. Then in my third chapter, I focus on the usage of narrative in Hip-Hop. I begin by showing how two different rappers use Quintilian's forms of narrative, the fable, the argumentum, and the history, to create song structures. Then I provide song lyrics from three different rappers to show how they also use Aristotle's epideictic, judicial, and deliberative narratives.

## Hip-Hop History

Hip-Hop music is an art form that utilizes narrative, verbal warfare, poetic language, and rhetorical techniques. The birth of Hip-Hop in the 1970s represents a genre of music that combined classical rhetorical strategies and word games of slaves to create a more competitive and contemporary form of rhetoric. One of the earliest recognized founders of this music genre was DJ Kool Herc who popularized the four elements of the music. The main four elements of Hip-Hop are: the MC or the rapper, the DJ or disc jockey, graffiti, and break dancing (“History of Hip-Hop Style”). From the beginning, there was a relationship between speaker and audience. The MC, master of ceremony, influences the reactions of the audience through performance and rhetoric.

In 1974, DJ Lovebug Starsky gave Hip-Hop music its name. Then in 1979, the formations of the rap groups, The Furious Five and The Cold Crush, validated the creation of a new music genre. The start of Ice-T’s rap career in 1983 marked the start of West Coast Gangsta’ Rap which was followed by the establishment of Def Jam Records by Russell Simmons and Rick Rubin a year later. The arrival of the Beastie Boys in 1986 indicated that Hip-Hop music was not limited to a specific race, and the formation of the Geto Boys, a rap group from Texas, symbolized the creation of Southern Rap. The release of N.W.A.’s *Straight Outta Compton* elevated Gangsta’ Rap due to the rap group’s controversial and aggressive lyrical content in 1988. Most of the 1990s were dominated by Death Row Records, a West Coast rap label that had Tupac Shakur as their main rap artist, and Bad Boy Records, an East Coast rap label that had the Notorious B.I.G. as their superstar rap artist (“Hip Hop History Timeline”). Eazy-E, a key member of N.W.A., was invited to George H.W. Bush’s luncheon in 1991, but many speculate that Eazy-E’s invitation was due to his donations and charity work (Chuck Philips “Rap’s Bad



Boy to Get Lunch With the Prez”). In 1999, Eminem, a white rap artist, began his rap dominance with the release of his second album, *The Slim Shady LP*. The 2001 classic rap battle between Hip-Hop legends Nas and Jay-Z restored the battling aspect of Hip-Hop (“Hip Hop History Timeline”).

Now, there are different types of rappers, and Hip-Hop has grown considerably. As Michael Newman states in “Rap as Literacy,” there are conscious rappers who encourage “uplift and political awareness,” “gangsta” rappers who emphasize “stylized imagery and action...associated with the ghetto life,” party rappers who stress “the beat over the wording,” (404), and battle rappers who use wordplay to display their superiority. Regardless of the classification of the rapper, the goal of a rapper is to persuade the audience that he or she is a great MC. On the other hand, rappers, such as Ice Cube, are now actors, screenwriters, and directors, while other rappers, such as P. Diddy, Eminem, and Three 6 Mafia, have won Oscars (“Diddy Wins First Oscar”). There are now Hip-Hop radio stations, magazines, and even websites such as RapGenius.com that decodes rap lyrics for listeners. 50 Cent, a New York rapper, and Dr. Dre, a producer and former member of N.W.A. have had much success with their own headphones companies (Alice Truong “The Hip-Hop Headphones Showdown”), and Kanye West has become part of the list of rappers who create their own shoes with West’s shoe deal with Adidas (Alex Young “Kanye West to release first shoe with Adidas in June”). Hip-Hop has even been welcomed at the White House because Jay-Z, Beyonce, and their daughter Blue Ivy were invited to Michelle Obama’s private 50th birthday party at the White House in January 2014 (Leah Chernikoff “Beyonce and Blue Ivy Go to the White House”).

Classical rhetoricians aimed to create statesmen while Hip-Hop did not have access to power in the beginning. Since the beginning of rap music, Hip-Hop has grown in influence and

power. It is not that rap music has become sanitized but rather that there are more Hip-Hop subgenres than before. More subgenres of rap music are more socially acceptable. I propose that we continue to contribute to the growth of rap music by examining its relationship with classical rhetoric.

## Chapter 1

### The Freestyle Rap Battle

Nobody denies Aristotle's impact on the fields of rhetoric and composition, but we do examine other fields to test his influence. In "Advertising Aristotle," M. Burke examines advertisements through a rhetorical analysis based on Aristotle's writings of rhetoric. He instructs his students to find "three good examples of style-based tools" that can be found in "modern pictorial advertisements" (298). In his conclusion, he states that "people in advertisement" do use Aristotle's tools, thus conveying Aristotle's contemporary relevance. On the other hand, in "The Rhetoric of Mock Trial Debate," Felicia R. Walker observes an undergraduate mock trial debate in attempt to expose the importance of Aristotle's three proofs in the field of debate. She reveals how mock attorneys rely on logos in their arguments, how pathos can be used to persuade the jury, and how ethos applies to any speaker because of how "character, competence, confidence, and believability" affect the credibility of a speaker (Walker). Walker shows how Aristotle's three proofs alone have such an impact in mock trials. Both Burke and Walker illustrate how Aristotle's work on rhetoric influences us in the modern day, and they create a space for an examination of other fields. I intend to show Aristotle's relationship with Hip-Hop through rhetoric, thus demonstrating Aristotle's relevance.

Since the creation of Hip-Hop music, this music genre has been critiqued and rejected because of its lyrical content, use of explicit language, and the topics of songs. The perception of Hip-Hop has left us with a small amount of scholarship that addresses whether or not Hip-Hop even deserves to be within the contemporary educational system. In "Ideas in Practice: Bringin' Hip-Hop to the Basics," K. Leigh Hamm Forell argues that the basic elements of Hip-Hop can be utilized to develop a connection between teachers and students and help students grasp the basic

principles of composition. Forell argues Hip-Hop encourages people to have an emotional connection to their writings and reiterates this “never be afraid to speak your mind” attitude. The author concludes that the educational system fails to incorporate Hip-Hop because of the usage of slang and profanity and how Hip-Hop typically speaks from the margins (Forell). In “Writing for Something: Essays, Raps, and Writing Preferences,” Jamal A. Cooks describes how he incorporated rap into his English class. He asked students to compose both essays and raps on various topics. Cooks reveals that a particular student’s, Carlton, essay had different strengths and weaknesses than the writing strengths and weakness in his rap. In “Hybrid Text,” Mary Christianakis reports her observations of a fifth grade classroom. Fifth grade students attempted to use rap in the classroom by reciting rap lyrics in the place of traditional poetry or writing raps instead of poetry, but the teacher dismissed the incorporation of Hip-Hop. Christianakis concludes with the call for a hybrid relationship between the music and the classroom, using Hip-Hop to teach and learn. Stephanie Scherpf introduces rap pedagogy and explores the positive effects of using Hip-Hop in the classroom, in “Rap Pedagogy: The Potential for Democratization.” Scherpf describes the music as counter-hegemonic because the music opposes society in relation to the educational and justice systems. Scherpf’s rap pedagogy requires the classroom to take into account students’ experiences and would make students willing participants due to how their own knowledge would be part of the class as a whole. She even argues that rap pedagogy can have a global impact due to the spread and popularity of Hip-Hop music. Despite how these articles argue for the incorporation of Hip-Hop music in the classroom, as opposed to show how Hip-Hop can be used to teach or learn, these articles reiterate the importance of this topic. Scholars want scholarly writing on Hip-Hop because they believe that the music can be used in the classroom to teach subjects like rhetoric, poetry, or writing.

The scholarship I have read does not focus on classical rhetoric. Most of the scholarship fails to provide detailed examples of how the music can be taught along with a lesson or how the music even has a relationship with education. Despite my focus on classical rhetoric, the scholarship fails to defend the call for the incorporation of Hip-Hop music into the academic setting and does not investigate how the music employs similar composition techniques found in student essays or searches for relationships between Hip-Hop and poetry. Unlike the scholarship on Hip-Hop music, I will focus on how Hip-Hop uses classical rhetorical principles and can ultimately be taught along with or teach rhetoric. In my attempt to convey Hip-Hop's relationship with classical rhetoric, I will start with the freestyle rap battle.

In this chapter, I will focus on the freestyle rap battle, but I will conclude with an analysis of song collaborations. I will use Aristotle's *On Rhetoric*, Quintilian's *On the Teachings of Speaking and Writing*, and St. Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine*. I will display Aristotle's contemporary relevance through showing how his writings of rhetoric are reflected in the battle. I will inspect the freestyle rap battle's relationship with Aristotle's canons of rhetoric, invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery, and I will convey how Hip-Hop music can be better understood through a rhetorical analysis of the genre. Ultimately, I will argue that Hip-Hop utilizes principles of classical rhetoric and applies rhetorical strategies, creating a space for a rhetorically Hip-Hop education.

In *Protagoras* and *Gorgias*, Plato presents a classical form of battling, or verbal warfare, through his depiction of Socrates exchanging arguments, claims, reasons and rebuttals with significant classical rhetorical figures (Plato). The dozens, a game of "verbal sparring," allows African-Americans to insult each other through verbal competition and was popular among slaves ("The Dozens"). The result of the dozens and classical rhetoric is the Hip-Hop battle in

which two MCs exchange verbal arguments in attempt to persuade the audience to choose them as the winner. One of the earliest and most historical rap battles was between Kool Moe Dee and Busy Bee Starsky. Their rap battle was in December 1981 at Harlem World, a club, in Manhattan New York. The battle impacted Hip-Hop music because it popularized the freestyle rap battle (*Beef*). There can be traditional freestyle rap battles, two MCs that are surrounded by the audience, freestyle rap battles on stage, two MCs rap on stage while the audience watches, or rap battles through songs. Throughout the history of Hip-Hop, every rap battle correlates to Aristotle's canons of rhetoric.

### Invention

Before a rapper can participate in a rap battle, he or she has to find and use whatever is necessary for persuasion. In Book One of *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle emphasizes invention, or to discover the means of persuasion. A speaker or writer should not only find the means of persuasion, but a speaker or writer should say or write something new. In the battle of Kool Moe Dee and Busy Bee Starsky, Kool Moe Dee walked onto the stage and asked the crowd "how many people think Busy Bee Starsky rocked the house" just after Busy Bee's performance. After the crowd approves of Busy Bee's performance, Kool Moe Dee states, "I give it to the man. He know how to rock the crowd. But when it comes to havin' rhymes, no way he can f\*\*\* around. And I'mma prove that right now" ("Busy Bee VS Kool Moe Dee"). Kool Moe Dee recognizes the audience's admiration of Busy Bee, declares to his audience that he has the intention of proving his argument, and clearly understands that he has to make appeals to the audience to prove he is a superior MC. Before Kool Moe Dee begins to rap, he acknowledges that Busy Bee is a great party MC, but he also stresses the difference between lyrical ability and entertaining the audience. Through distinguishing the difference between lyrical ability and entertainment for

the sake of a party, Kool Moe Dee found what he wants to say, representing an example of invention.

Kool Moe Dee's rap battle illustrates how every battle correlates to a topic. Aristotle would categorize this exchange under the topoi of "the causes of envy and the people who are envied" (145). He states that "and those who got something with difficulty or did not get it at all envy those who got it quickly" (Aristotle). Kool Moe Dee attacks Busy Bee and causes the battle because he explicitly states that Busy Bee became popular due to entertaining the crowd as opposed to lyricism. Although it is documented that Kool Moe Dee supposedly started this battle with Busy Bee because Busy Bee implied to a fan that he could defeat Kool Moe Dee in a battle (Beef), there is no denying that Kool Moe Dee believes he deserves the praise that Busy Bee receives from the crowd because Kool Moe Dee dedicates more of his time to composing complex lyrics, or had more of a difficult time earning his recognition.

Traditional freestyle rap battles force rappers to recite or make up sentences on the spot that appeal to the audience. Aristotle states that "for verbal attack and pity and anger and such emotions of the mind...do not relate to fact but are appeals to the juryman" (31). Because traditional freestyle rap battles cause rappers to be surrounded by and close to their audience, rappers have to invent lines that appeal to their audience based on the reactions of their audience. The significance of an audience member's reaction is prevalent in all battles. In "Moving the crowd, 'crowding' the emcee," H. Samy Alim observes a battle between a "black and Latino emcee." He discovers that a rapper singles out an audience member, recites lyrics about his opponent, and the audience member "bobs his head," or approves of the rapper's lyrics (431).

In Kendrick Lamar's, a new West Coast rapper, battle, he does not get much of a reaction from the crowd until he raps "I f\*\*\* over these beats with no condom/This ain't rap/this really a

porno. Rewind it back.” Then the crowd laughs, and a crowd member extends his hand for Kendrick Lamar to shake his hand. Kendrick Lamar does not cause the crowd to react when he raps “ya’ ain’t nice. N\*\*\*\* ya’ just okay/I’m Mike Jordan in his prime/Modern day Isaac Hayes...Study my craft/You ignorant? I do it without a pen and a pad/Just inspiration. Something ya’ never had.” On one hand, his allusions to popular African-American figures and boasts about his memory’s abilities to store rap lines do not appeal to the crowd because he fails to say something new. In their song lyrics, most rappers compare themselves to numerous popular figures. On the other hand, this can be categorized as topics for epideictic rhetoric because Aristotle says to “consider... the audience before whom the praise [is spoken] for” (79). Kendrick Lamar praises Michael Jordan and Isaac Hayes for a crowd that knows who these people are and, possibly, approves of his praise. He has to remember his crowd before he alludes to those he praises because the crowd has to know who the praised are, agree with the praising of these individuals, and understand the praising. Because Kendrick Lamar gets no reaction from the crowd, he raps “I’m on a mission for pay/ Now you astronaut n\*\*\*\*\* just crowdin’ my space” which results in an “ouuuuu” from the crowd (“Kendrick Lamar-Before He Was Famous”). The crowd approves of his lines, specifically his wordplay, because he continues to try to create or recite lines that move the crowd.

From Kendrick Lamar’s battle, we see that he considers the audience as he recites his lyrics, he creates or recites lyrics based on the reactions of his audience, and he uses multiple components of language, allusions, puns, and sexual references, to express himself to his audience. Although Aristotle emphasizes pathos, logos, and ethos in his discussion about invention (38-9), Aristotle also states that the function of rhetoric “is not to persuade but to see the available means of persuasion in each case” (36). Kendrick Lamar’s battle represents how all



types of language can be used to persuade, but that a speaker or writer should consider his or her audience before deciding on what to say. If we examine this battle in its totality, this example would represent the topic of “good reputation [eudoxia] is a matter of achieving the respect of all people, or of having something of the sort that all or the general public or the good and prudent desire” (Aristotle 59), or a topic for deliberative rhetoric (Aristotle 52). Although Aristotle categorizes this topic under political topics (Aristotle), this topic applies to this particular battle because of Lamar’s words. Based on Kendrick Lamar’s words alone, he attempts to earn the respect of his audience, establish a reputation as a great MC, and believes he has the type of lyrical ability that his audience desires. Yet, other topics appear in other battles.

A rapper can discover his or her argument in the claim of his or her opponent. In rap battles through songs, the battle is not always planned. These battles, just like traditional freestyle rap battles, convey the importance of responding to what others have said. In a song collaboration for “4,3, 2, 1,” the rap icon LL Cool J requested Canibus to change his verse because LL Cool J was offended by Canibus’ reference to “borrowing” the microphone that is tattooed on LL Cool J’s arm. Canibus changed his verse, but LL Cool J kept his verse that was a response to Canibus’ original verse. Canibus felt disrespected by LL Cool J because he kept a verse on the song that subliminally attacked Canibus (*Beef II*). In “Second Round K.O.,” Canibus raps “so I’mma let the world know the truth, you don't want me to shine/You studied my rhyme, then you laid your vocals after mine...I studied your background, read the book that you wrote/Researched your footnotes about how you used to sniff coke/Fronting like a drug-free role model, you disgust me.” Canibus summarizes the entire situation that occurred because of their collaboration song, and he recognizes the claims of his opponent. Then Canibus makes his argument by rapping “you walk around showing off your body because it sells/Plus to avoid the

fact that you ain't got skills/Mad at me because I kick that s\*\*\* real n\*\*\*\*\* feel/While 99% of your fans wear high heels.” In this rhetorical situation, Canibus’ argument is just a response to LL Cool J’s words.

This battle became popular because it featured an established and legendary MC, LL Cool J, and a new and young MC, Canibus. In Aristotle’s topics about ethos, he begins with “the character of the young” and argues “they are impulsive and quick-tempered and inclined to follow up their anger [by action]. And they are unable to resist their impulses; for through love of honor they cannot put up with being belittled but become indignant if they think they are done a wrong” (149). Canibus clearly mirrors Aristotle’s category of the young, but because Canibus was a young rapper, he had to respond in this manner. The original version of “4, 3, 2, 1” had leaked out to the public (*Beef II*). Therefore, Canibus had to respond and embody Aristotle’s characterization of the young because honor can determine whether or not a person has a rap career in Hip-Hop music.

In the feud between Hip-Hop legends Jay-Z and Nas, we find other Aristotelian topics. In “Stillmatic (Freestyle),” Nas makes the claim “remove the fake king of New York/You show off, I count dough off when you sample my voice.” In his claim, Nas references how Jay-Z has sampled Nas in one of his songs, attempting to destroy the credibility of Jay-Z as the “King of New York.” Because Nas brags about his wealth, he represents the topic of wealth in which Aristotle says “the parts of wealth are abundance of cash, land, possession of tracts distinguished by number and size and beauty...and all these things [should be] privately owned” (58). Nas also taunts Jay-Z by alluding to how Jay-Z’ sampling of Nas increased Nas’ wealth. In Jay-Z’ response, “Takeover, he replies “so yeah, I sampled your voice, you was using it wrong/You made it a hot line, I made it a hot song.” Jay-Z concedes that he did sample Nas, but he also

makes the claim that he is the superior song composer of the two. On one hand, Nas considers evidence, the fact that Jay-Z sampled his voice, and utilizes relevant evidence as a means of persuasion. On the other hand, Jay-Z quotes Nas and responds to a larger conversation in his invention stage, but Jay-Z's response can be categorized as an ethical topic (Aristotle 61). Aristotle states "and, in general, the opposite of what enemies want or [of] what makes them happy seems advantageous... but this is not always the case, only generally true; there is no reason why the same thing may not sometimes be an advantage to both sides" (63). Nas' words force Jay-Z to either avoid or acknowledge how Jay-Z sampled Nas' voice, but Jay-Z's acknowledgment of the sampling became an advantage for both Nas and Jay-Z. Although Nas receives the advantage of every listener knowing that Jay-Z sampled Nas' voice, Jay-Z uses this acknowledgment to his advantage by pointing out that he composed a great song by sampling one of Nas' lines, reiterating that Jay-Z is a greater MC than Nas. Although topics and invention are significant in battle, rappers have to consider arrangement in battle.

#### Arrangement

Rappers have to arrange their arguments in the most effective way to win a battle. In chapters 13-19 of Book 3, Aristotle gives an outline for arrangement. He states "it is necessary [first] to state the subject with which it is concerned and [then] to demonstrate the argument. It is ineffective after stating something not to demonstrate it and to demonstrate without a first statement" (230). After a rapper, Big Sean, accused Ludacris of stealing his style, Ludacris responds with "counterfeit rappers say I'm stealing their flows/ But I can't steal what you never made up...Let me explain, nothing's been new since Big Daddy Kane/Flows will get recycled passed around to different names" ("Badaboom"). In the beginning of the song, Ludacris accomplishes the following: he successfully makes the claim that he cannot steal a style from a

rapper who is not the creator of that style, and he supports his claim with reasons, which are nobody has been a creator of a style since Big Daddy Kane and that everyone steals styles from other rappers. Aristotle would label these parts of Ludacris' verse "statement [prosthesis]" and "proof [pistis]" (230). A battle rapper who has mastered arrangement is Eminem.

Eminem utilizes the majority of Aristotle's lessons on arrangement which makes him arguably the greatest battle rapper. In the film *8 Mile*, Eminem writes and recites the verses for his character, B-Rabbit. In his final battle with Papa Doc, B-Rabbit raps in the beginning of his verse, "4 Pac, 3 Pac, 2 Pac, One/ You're Pac. He's Pac. No Pacs. None/This guy ain't no muthaf\*\*\*\*\* MC/I know everything he's got to say against me" (*8 Mile*). He makes his claim, his opponent does not deserve the label of MC, and supports his claim with a reason, he knows the argument of his opponent. Although one may argue that his statement is not sophisticated, there is no denying that he fails "to make clear what is the purpose for which [is being given]" (Aristotle 233). In chapter 12 of Book 3, Aristotle discusses "counteracting a prejudicial attack" (236), and then he argues that "the opening speaker should state his own premises first, then should meet those of his opponent by disapproving them to pieces before he can make them" (245). After B-Rabbit presents his claim and reason, he raps "I am white/I am a f\*\*\*\*\* bum/ I do live in a trailer with my mom/my boy future is an Uncle Tom" and continues to state every insult that can be said about him, leaving his opponent without a response, and then he attacks the credibility of his opponent (*8 Mile*). He successfully counters his opponent in an Aristotelian way.

The conclusion of Eminem's verse as the character B-Rabbit represents the major four components of a conclusion for Aristotle. Aristotle states that an "epilogue is made up of four things: disposing the hearer favorably toward the speaker and unfavorably toward the opponent;

amplifying and minimizing; moving the hearer into emotional reactions [pathos]; and [giving] a reminder [of the chief points in the argument]” (249). In his conclusion, B-Rabbit raps “f\*\*\* a beat. I’ll go a cappella/ F\*\*\* a Papa Doc. F\*\*\* a clock. F\*\*\* a trailer/ F\*\*\* everybody. F\*\*\* y’all if you doubt me/ I’m a piece of f\*\*\*\*\* white trash, I say it proudly/ And f\*\*\* this battle. I don’t want to win, I’m outtie’/ Here, tell these people something they don’t know about me,” and then he tosses the microphone to his opponent (*8 Mile*). In his conclusion, he dismisses his opponent, Papa Doc, and invites his audience to favor him as the speaker. Then he amplifies his argument through his self-degrading comment about being “a piece of white trash” and minimizes his opponent by reminding the audience that he has addressed every possible rebuttal. He also evokes sensation from his audience due to his passionate conclusion. In B-Rabbit’s very last lines, he reminds his audience of his argument, his opponent is not an MC because he knows his opponent’s argument, by encouraging his opponent to give the audience any insult about or criticism of him. Since Eminem’s character does utilize everything from profanity to self-degrading comments in his conclusion, this example just emphasizes the importance of style.

### Style

Style is arguably the most important element of a rap battle because rappers should have multiple styles in order to appeal to different audiences. Aristotle dedicates 12 chapters in Book 3 to style and the components of style. In *On Christiane Doctrine*, St. Augustine states “speech should be varied with all types of style in so far this may be done approximately. For when one style is maintained too long, it loses the listener” (158). In *On the Teaching of Speaking and Writing*, Quintilian also reiterates the importance of style, specifically the importance of summarizing (69), word choice (35), and grammar (28-4). These three classical rhetoricians all

share the same perspective of style because a writer and speaker cannot rely on just one style, and neither can rappers.

Eminem utilizes a battle-rap, or lyrical, style in “Till I Collapse.” I label this song an example of battle rap because Eminem implicitly challenges all rappers and uses this song to prove that he is the greatest MC. He raps:

Till I collapse I'm spilling these raps long as you feel 'em/Till the day that I drop you'll never say that I'm not killing them/'Cause when I am not then I'ma stop penning 'em/And I am not hip-hop and I'm just not Eminem/Subliminal thoughts when I'm stop sending them women are caught in webs spin and hock venom/Adrenaline shots of penicillin could not get the illing to stop/Amoxicillin is just not real enough/The criminal cop killing hip-hop villain/ a minimal swap to cop millions of Pac listeners/You're coming with me, feel it or not you're gonna fear it like I showed you the spirit of God lives in us/You hear it a lot, lyrics that shock is it a miracle or am I just a product of pop fizzing up?/For sizzle my whizzle this is the plot listen up you bizzles forgot slizzle does not give a f\*\*\* (Eminem).

When Eminem performs the verse, the shorter lines in the beginning of the verse allow a person to take a breath before reciting the longer lines that follow. In the majority of the verse, the lines are recited rapidly by Eminem. As Eminem reaches the last lines of his verse, his voice is a bit calmer, he recites his lines slower, raises his voice louder and louder, and then he screams the last word of the verse. Although he does not utilize similes or metaphors and does not have a consistent syllable count for each sentence, he does use internal rhyme in his verse. His style is different because most musicians, not just rappers, tend to rely on perfect rhyme. The internal rhyme also serves a greater purpose because the internal rhyme establishes a rhythm and a meter.

Aristotle states that “speech should have rhythm but not rhyme” (212), while St. Augustine argues “it must be admitted that our authors are lacking in that rhetorical ornament which consists of rhythmic closings” and reiterates how speech has a relationship with rhythm (149). On the topic of composition, Quintilian argues that practice is essential. Practice allows a person to hear his or her own words and address errors. Before a person can do so, a person has to read and learn from previous authors through reading passages aloud. Quintilian argues himself:

Reading remains to be considered. Only practice can teach how a boy may know when to take a breath, where to divide a verse, where the sense is concluded, where it begins, when the voice is to be raised or lowered, what is to be uttered with any particular inflection of sound, or what is to be pronounced with greater slowness or rapidity, with greater animation or gentleness than other passages...let his mode of reading aloud.... Be manly above all (64).

Quintilian argues that reading a passage aloud teaches breath control, the importance of voice, and other styles in order to present by hearing these elements of writing, one will learn how to employ these elements in his or her own writing, but Quintilian also teaches elements of style. Eminem’s verse is an example of a style that embraces Quintilian’s stylistic elements of breath control, voice, pronunciation, different forms of rhyme. Therefore, he creates a unique and specific style. Although this style is effective, rappers have more than just one style.

50 Cent, a New York battle rapper, has a simplistic and clear style, while Jay-Z has more of a subtle style. In “Not Rich, Still Lyin’,” 50 Cent mocks The Game, a West Coast “gangsta” and battle rapper, by imitating The Game’s voice. 50 Cent raps “f\*\*\* 50, f\*\*\* Dre, f\*\*\* N.W.A/Man I'm Hurricane Game (Em this n\*\*\*\* changed) I brought the west back/ I write the

best raps.” In his impersonation of the Game, 50 Cent mocks the ego of his opponent and alludes to how his opponent disregards the work of others before him. 50 Cent’s style is different from Eminem’s style because of the following: 50 Cent does not rely on lyrical ability, he is overly explicit, and he uses his opponent’s voice and characteristics to insult his opponent. Although many would argue that 50 Cent’s style does not offer anything other than the fact that he imitates his opponent’s voice, he does embody the importance of clarity. Listeners will know who 50 Cent is talking about and will know his overall message. 50 Cent’s clear and simplistic style is important because “the virtue of style” is “to be clear... (speech is a kind of sign, so if it does not make clear it will not perform its function” (Aristotle 197). This example reiterates how important clarity is in rap battles, just as clarity is important in writing, speech, and daily conversations. Although one may argue that Eminem’s sophisticated style is superior to 50 Cent’s style, 50 Cent’s style conveys that we should not care “for what sounds elegant but for what well indicates and suggest what” we wish “to show” (St. Augustine 133). No matter what style a rapper employs, he or she has to be clear.

On the other hand, Jay-Z’ subtle style contains other significant components of style. In “What More Can I Say,” a song that samples Russell Crowe in *Gladiator*, Jay-Z raps:

Pound-for-pound, I'm the best to ever come around here/Excluding nobody, look what I embody/The soul of a hustler, I really ran the street/A CEO's mind, that marketing plan was me/And no I ain't get shot up a whole bunch of times/Or make up s\*\*\* in a whole bunch of lines/And I ain't animated like, say, a Busta’s Rhymes/But the real s\*\*\* you get when you bust down my lines/Add that to the fact I went plat' a bunch of times/Times that by my influence on pop culture/I'm supposed to be number one on everybody list/We'll see what happens when I no longer exist/F\*\*\* this (Jay-Z).



Jay-Z is very subliminal, when he references those who rely on their personal struggles, such as being shot, as opposed to relying on talent. Then he separates himself from those who are just entertainers and create a lifestyle and a character in their songs, as opposed to telling the truth. In his criticism of other rappers, he embodies “the explanation of authors” because he summarizes what others do as rappers (Quintilian 69). He also cleverly uses “a Busta’s Rhymes,” which is a pun that references another rapper, Busta Rhymes. Quintilian even argues that word choice is a component of style because of how word choice functions in prose and speech (35). In Jay-Z’s verse, his word choice is both a pun and an insult. Ultimately, his style is different and subtle because listeners are unclear on whom Jay-Z is talking about, but his style is effective because his verse can be an attack on every rapper. In the last four or so lines of his verse, Jay-Z becomes passionate and frustrated as he lists off reasons for why he is the greatest MC of all time but does not receive the praise that he believes he deserves. His emotions correlate to style because “lexis will be appropriate if it expresses emotional and character and is proportional to the subject matter” (Aristotle 210). Using emotion changes one’s style. Jay-Z illustrates how an implicit and subtle style that utilizes word choice and emotion makes this particular style effective. Since Jay-Z uses “ain’t” in his verse, I believe this is the best place to address grammar.

Grammar: “Laughin’ at the grammar ‘cause they didn’t understand us”- J. Cole

Grammar is a component of style, but grammar is not the most important element of style. Aristotle dedicates a chapter to “grammatical correctness,” when he details the components of style (206-209). Despite how Quintilian does reiterate Aristotle’s point about grammar being a key element of style by stressing “the art of speaking correctly,” Quintilian also argues “nor can grammar be complete without a knowledge of music, since the grammarian has to speak of meter and rhythm” in his chapter about grammar (28). Many critique Hip-Hop because of its

alternative grammar, and many will use standard grammar as a reason to not incorporate Hip-Hop into their classrooms. Hip-Hop cannot teach grammar, but it is difficult to find a music genre that exemplifies standard grammar. People learn grammar through reading and writing. Yet, Hip-Hop music conveys how rhetorical effectiveness is more important than grammar.

In “Audubon Ballroom,” a song that praises the struggles and achievements of all African-Americans, Lupe Fiasco, a conscious rapper, raps “black Panthers, black anthems, black blues/With black answers for black stanzas: Langston Hughes/Breaking rules, ain't it cool?/Took it old, and made it new.” Although this is not a battle rap, this verse is appropriate because Lupe Fiasco addresses the concept of standard grammar. When he alludes to “breaking rules,” he uses “ain't” to show that he recognizes that he, like all rappers, is not following standard grammar rules. Yet, he utilizes humor, when he references how “cool” and popular Hip-Hop has made “broken English.” Therefore, Hip-Hop has become influential and very popular without the component of standard grammar because of the music's rhetorical effectiveness.

In “ITAL (Roses),” Lupe Fiasco raps “hey shawty, ain't no future in no gang-bang/And ain't no manhood in no bang-bang/ Ain't no honor cleanin' interstates inside a chain-gang/Know some rap n\*\*\*\*\* put that s\*\*\* inside your mainframe” (Lupe Fiasco). On one hand, this example relates to battle rap because Lupe Fiasco's usage of “Bang-bang” is a criticism of Chief Keef's, a new rapper who glorifies Chicago's gang lifestyle, references to shooting firearms. On the other hand, his lines are grammatically incorrect in regard to standard grammar. His words are not complete sentences and use the double negative. Yet, his song is rhetorically effective because of his message. His message encourages listeners to not be persuaded by the gang lifestyle, to not believe that being a man has anything to do with being “macho” or shooting guns, and to not believe that anyone is proud of being incarcerated. Nobody would disagree with

his message or the rhetorical effectiveness of his message. Graff and Birkenstein argue that writers should analyze the rhetorical situation before using everyday language in their writing (121-128). Lupe Fiasco supports Graff and Birkenstein's argument because Fiasco is more "grammatically correct" in "Audubon Ballroom" than he is in "ITAL." In "ITAL," Fiasco is "grammatically incorrect" because of the type of listeners that he intends to address which are listeners who only use "bad grammar." Ultimately, grammar is part of style, but in Hip-Hop music rhetorical effectiveness and every other component of style is more important than standard grammar.

### Memory

Without the ability to memorize one's lyrics, a rapper will not be successful in battle or in Hip-Hop. Aristotle's *On Memory and Reminiscence* highlights the importance of memory in rhetoric, while Quintilian argues that "pupils should not be obliged to learn by heart what they have composed...Memory will thus be more efficiently exercised in mastering what is another's than what is its own" (114). Memory does not just serve a purpose in Hip-Hop performances, but memory can destroy a rapper's career in battle. In the freestyle rap battle between Canibus and Dizaster, an underground battle rapper, Canibus pulls out a notepad and reads his lines late in the battle ("KOTD-Rap Battle"). After a video of the battle surfaced online, the Hip-Hop world called it the "night that Canibus died." ("Can-i-bus?") Since the earliest rap battle, Kool Moe Dee vs. Busy Bee Starsky, no battle rapper has read his lines. Battle rappers are expected to recite lines from memory. On the other hand, it is not uncommon for rappers to be asked to "freestyle," or rap on the spot. In Papoose's freestyle for Sway, the radio host of "Sway in the Morning," Papoose raps "my rhymes memorized/Y'all read out of y'all phones/nothing but a bunch of dumb n\*\*\*\*\* with smart phones" and continues "freestylin'" over different

instrumentals. Hence, he is giving out free “styles” because of how he has to adjust his rap style based on the instrumental (“Papoose does the 5 Fingers of Death”). Papoose is proud of the fact that he embraces memory unlike those who read their lines which is a reference to Drake, a party rapper, who is synonymous with reading raps from one’s phone (“Drake Freestyle at Hot 97”). In Hip-Hop, just like rhetoric, memory will always be a significant element of the music genre, but invention, arrangement, style, and memory do not mean anything, if a battle rapper, or rapper in general, is incapable of delivering his or her lyrics.

### Delivery

Every rapper, especially battle rappers, has to be capable of delivery. Aristotle discusses delivery in chapter 1 of Book 3 and states “written speeches [when orally recited] have greater effect through expression [lexis] than through thought” (196). Quintilian points out the relationship between the student and the teacher’s “art of delivery” because of how one’s delivery impacts his or her listeners (81-84). In the freestyle rap battle between Hip-Hop legends 2Pac and Notorious B.I.G., Biggie has a high-pitched voice at the beginning of his verse as he raps “I got seven Mac-11’s, about eight .38’s/Nine 9’s, ten Mac-10’s the s\*\*\*\* never end.” Then he tones down his voice as he raps “my slow flows remarkable” which is a reference to his slow and quieter delivery (“Tupac vs. Biggie Freestyle”). On the other hand, 2Pac screams his first lines, “I thank the Lord for my many blessings/Though I’m stressing keep a vest for protection/From the barrel of a Smith & Wesson,” passionately yells every line, and concludes with “the realest muthaf\*\*\*\* that you ever saw” (“Tupac vs. Biggie Freestyle”). Obviously, Biggie understands how to adjust his tone based on his lyrics, while 2Pac relies on a passionate delivery for every line. Despite how their deliveries are different, both rappers understand how their delivery impacts their audience because their audience reacts to every line.

## Song Collaborations: Consensual Argument

Song collaborations represent consensual argument, as opposed to traditional argument. Song collaborations can be examples of consensual argument because rappers are not always concerned with out-rapping each other. In “Renegade,” a song collaboration between Jay-Z and Eminem, Jay-Z responds to the bigger conversation about Hip-Hop and even starts off with addressing his naysayers when he raps “mutha\*\*\*\*\* say that I'm foolish I only talk about jewels/Do you fools listen to music or do you just skim through it?/ See I'm influenced by the ghetto you ruined.” He argues that critics of Hip-Hop fail to listen to the music, and that the music is just a reflection of the inner-city lifestyle that Hip-Hop critics overlook. Then he comes to the defense of the music:

I penetrate pop culture, bring'em a lot closer to the block where they/Pop toasters and they live with they Moms/Got dropped roadsters from botched robberies, n\*\*\*\*\* crouched over/Mami's knocked up cause she wasn't watched over/Knocked down by some clown when child support knocked/No he's not around/Now how that sound to ya', jot it down/I bring you through the ghetto without riding round/Hiding down ducking strays from frustrated youths stuck in they ways/Just read a magazine that f\*\*\*\*\*d up my day (Jay-Z and Eminem).

He embraces a guide role as he alludes to how he gives “pop culture” a visit to the inner-city through his lyrics. His usage of details about the inner-city lifestyle that Hip-Hop represents adds to his credibility as a rapper because of his specific details. He looks at the inner-city for invention, with his references to the criminal lifestyle that his critics ignore, his references to abandoned pregnant women, and his objective view of the youth. Because of his lyrical content,

specific details, flow, and tone, it is evident that Jay-Z wants to out-rap Eminem, but both rappers are more concerned with coming to the defense of Hip-Hop.

Eminem, like Jay-Z, still uses rhetorical techniques that are used in battle, but he even puts the greater good of Hip-Hop above rap battles through song. After Jay-Z' verse, Eminem raps:

Since I'm in a position to talk to these kids and they listen/I ain't no politician but I'll kick  
it with'em a minute/Cause, see, they call me a menace and if the shoe fits I'll wear it/But  
if it don't, then y'all'll swallow the truth, grin and bear it/Now who's the king of these  
rude, ludicrous, lucrative lyrics/Who could inherit the title, put the youth in  
hysterics/Using his music to steer it, sharing his views and his merits/But there's a huge  
interference: they're saying you shouldn't hear it/Maybe it's hatred I spew, maybe it's food  
for the spirit/Maybe it's beautiful music I made for you to just cherish/But I'm debated,  
disputed, hated and viewed in America/As a mutha\*\*\*\*\*' drug addict, like you didn't  
experiment (“Jay-Z and Eminem”).

Eminem also responds to the bigger conversation about the music, but he uses his style in a humorous way to deconstruct his critics' portrayal of him as a rapper. He explicitly separates himself from politicians, he uses alliteration and assonance through his adjectives for “lyrics,” he references the pathos appeal used by rappers by stating “youth in hysterics,” and he continues to use assonance as he lists off multiple possible intentions of his music but how Hip-Hop critics fail to view him and his music objectively. Eminem, like Jay-Z, still uses rhetorical techniques and embraces a battle-like style because he does not want to be out-rapped by Jay-Z, but his primary focus is to defend Hip-Hop. This song collaboration exemplifies consensual argument because two Hip-Hop icons, who are known for battling, come together for the greater good of

Hip-Hop. Together, they give their music genre a voice. Both rappers acknowledge what has been said in their verses, both rappers use a different style to get their points across, and they both make successful and influential responses to a conversation without sacrificing anything about their music genre in the process.

Ultimately, Hip-Hop does utilize rhetorical techniques that classical rhetoricians wrote about centuries ago. Despite how educators may not listen to or care for this music genre, nobody can ignore Hip-Hop's relationship with classical rhetoric. I provide examples of how to teach rhetoric through the music based on only a portion of Hip-Hop artists which means that there are many more examples. Obviously, I could not use every single Hip-Hop artist, and I am sure there are rappers who I do not know about but use these same rhetorical techniques. There is no denying the relationship between rhetoric and teaching. If we acknowledge the relationship I previously stated, then we have to acknowledge the significance of audience. If an audience will grasp rhetoric through Hip-Hop music, I propose that we should incorporate Hip-Hop to do so.

## Chapter 2

### Logos, Pathos, and Ethos Appeals in Hip-Hop Music

If we analyze scholarship that examines Hip-Hop music, we would find that scholars have uncovered a relationship between the music genre and pathos, logos, and ethos appeals, but these scholars have not explicitly written about this particular relationship. In “Understanding Rap as Rhetorical Folk-Poetry,” Brent Wood conveys the relationship between Hip-Hop music and early African-American folk poetry. He focuses on the poetic elements of song, such as rhyme and rhythm, but states “the most important question to ask about a rap is whether it convinces its audience” (137). Despite how Wood hints at appeals, he fails to discuss how rappers persuade an audience. In “Reaffirming African American Cultural Values: Tupac Shakur’s *Greatest Hits* as a Musical Autobiography,” Timothy J. Brown shows how Tupac Shakur’s music can be used to teach the oral tradition, diunital orientation, and spirituality. Although Brown does not focus on rhetorical appeals, he does state that specific song lyrics will be more relatable to listeners who, like Shakur, “are raised in single-parent homes” (564). Without explicitly stating the connection between Shakur’s music and classical rhetoric, Brown acknowledges how Shakur was credible to his listeners who identified with Shakur’s personal struggles and experiences. In “No Way of Seeing: Mainstreaming and Selling the Gaze of Homo-Thug Hip-Hop,” Robin R. Means Coleman and Jasmine Cobb follow the career of Caushun, a “gay” “gangsta” rapper. Coleman presents how Caushun’s voice, sexuality, and attire prevent him from even having a rap career, reiterating how Caushun fails to appeal to any Hip-Hop listener. Despite the intentions of their article, Coleman and Cobb expose how a rapper’s sexuality denies him credibility. These scholars do suggest that rappers make rhetorical



appeals to their audience, but these scholars fail to explicitly describe the relationship between Hip-Hop and Aristotle's modes of persuasion.

In this chapter, I will utilize specific songs to show the correlation between specific rap artists and logos and pathos appeals. I will discuss ethos at a greater length than I will discuss pathos and logos appeals because ethos is more complicated in Hip-Hop music due to how rap artists employ Aristotle's classical definition of ethos, our contemporary definition of ethos, or ethos as just a performance. I will work primarily with Aristotle's *On Rhetoric*, but I will also use St. Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine* and Quintilian's *On the Teaching of Speaking and Writing*. Ultimately, Hip-Hop music will be more understandable because I perform a rhetorical analysis based on rhetorical appeals.

The public's perception of Hip-Hop has changed in the past two decades. In 1989, Triple J was the only radio station that played N.W.A.'s "F\*\*\* the police," until management "pulled it off the air" ("Censorship and NWA's"). Through my use of classical rhetorical concepts to analyze this music genre, I convey that the popularity of Hip-Hop music has grown because of its universal appeal. The most successful rap artists, who also experience career longevity, understand the importance of appealing to one's audience. The best rappers utilize pathos, logos, and ethos appeals through their music in attempt to persuade their listeners.

### Logos Appeal

Hip-Hop artists use logos appeals in attempt to inform listeners and provide social commentary. In Book One of *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle introduces his modes of persuasion. He states that "persuasion occurs through arguments [logoi] when we show the truth or the apparent truth from whatever is persuasive in each case" (39). Rap artists have always been concerned with showing the truth, specifically the unspoken truth. In Saigon's interview of Ice Cube, Ice

Cube, one of the original members of N.W.A. and founders of “gangsta’ rap,” states that the media gave N.W.A. the label of “gangsta’ rap.” Ice Cube and his group members first labeled what they did as “reality rap” because they rapped about their environment, specifically things about their environment that the media, and country, ignored (“Ice Cube/Saigon Interviews”). Since N.W.A., rap artists make logos appeals to their listeners, but they also aim to present unspoken or unknown facts and information about the music and specific environments.

Jay-Z and Kanye West utilize statistical information as a logos appeal, but they also give attention to the murder rate of Chicago, Illinois in the process. In “Murder to Excellence,” a song that denounces black on black murder, Jay-Z raps “this is to the memory of Danroy Henry/Too much enemy fire to catch a friendly/Strays from the same shade n\*\*\*\*\*, we on the same team/Giving you respect, I expect the same thing.” After his reference to Danroy Henry, a black college student who was shot and killed by a policeman, Jay-Z alludes to the statistical information that represents the blacks who are shot and killed by the police (“Danroy Henry Update”). Danroy Henry is more than a statistic because he embodies all those who have died by police gunfire, or “enemy fire.” Then he criticizes the logic of those who commit black on black crimes because they are only killing and hurting people who look like them and represent a black identity in the U.S. He accomplishes the following in his song lyrics: Jay-Z utilizes Danroy Henry to remind listeners of the number of blacks who are killed by the police, he continuously attacks the logic of those who praise or are not bothered by black on black crime, and he makes listeners aware of people like Danroy Henry. Jay-Z makes a successful logos appeal because he uses Danroy Henry and alludes to the statistics for black on black murder to persuade his listeners to examine how problematic black on black crime has become in the modern day.

Kanye West also utilizes statistical information in his logos appeal. In the same song, he raps “Is it genocide?/Cause I can still hear his mama cry/Know the family traumatized...It’s a war going on outside we ain’t safe from/I feel the pain in my city wherever I go/314 soldiers died in Iraq, 509 died in Chicago” (“Murder to Excellence”). Kanye West emphasizes the obvious connection between genocide and black on black murder because it troubles him that those who commit black on black crime fail to see their actions as actions of genocide. Since he is from Chicago, he supports his argument against black on black crime by comparing the murder rate of Chicago to the murder rate of Iraq. If his listeners researched the statistical information, they would find that Kanye West is accurate because “since 2001” Chicago had 3,000 more deaths by gunfire than the number of U.S. troops “killed in Afghanistan” (“More Americans killed in Chicago”), and in 2008 more Americans, 509, died in Chicago than in Iraq, 314, (“Number of Chicago Murders in 2008”). Kanye West also makes a successful logos appeal because he reports statistics that will persuade listeners to reexamine their stance on and how much attention they give to black on black crime.

Jay-Z and Kanye West could have made a song where they just denounce black on black murder, but they chose to include statistical information. They included statistics because they intended to make successful logos appeals and present information that can be unknown or unspoken. They continue the tradition of N.W.A. by rapping about their communities because if rappers did not do so, then nobody would. On the other hand, Eminem makes a different type of logos appeal.

Eminem makes a logos appeal through his insider’s knowledge as a rapper. In “Sing for the Moment,” a song that samples Aerosmith’s “Dream On” and argues that Hip-Hop can have a positive influence on its listeners, Eminem raps:

They say music can alter moods and talk to you/Well, can it load a gun up for you and cock it too?/Well if it can, then the next time you assault a dude/Just tell the judge it was my fault, and I'll get sued/See what these kids do is hear 'bout us toting pistols/And they wanna' get one cause, they think the s\*\*\*'s cool/Not knowing we really just protecting ourselves/We entertainers, of course the s\*\*\*'s affecting our sales/You ignoramus but music is reflection of self/We just explain it, and then we get our checks in the mail.

Eminem sarcastically attacks the logic of those who believe that music commits crimes or kills people. He does admit that the words of rappers can entice listeners to attempt to live like rappers, but he uses the inside knowledge of a rapper to his advantage. He conveys that rappers are just entertainers, that their lyrics impact their album sales, but ultimately rapping is just an occupation for them. He does concede to the argument that rappers can have a negative influence on listeners, but he utilizes his knowledge to report: rappers do take precautionary measures, such as hiring bodyguards or legally purchasing firearms, because they are popular, they are entertainers which means that who they are as people does not reflect who they are as rappers, and that they do not live their lyrics but rather create albums and wait for payment. Overall, he persuades listeners to enjoy Hip-Hop and not to attempt to live the lyrics of rappers. These are only three rappers and only two songs that utilize Aristotle's logos appeal. Yet, there is a more influential and powerful appeal in Hip-Hop.

#### Pathos Appeal

Rap artists make emotional appeals to their listeners. Aristotle states that “[there is persuasion] through the hearers when they are led to feel emotion [pathos] by the speech; for we do not give the same judgment when grieved and rejoicing or when being friendly and hostile” (39). Rap artists' lyrics have to evoke emotions from listeners, but they also have to depict

experiences or thoughts that listeners can relate to. AnJeanette C. Alexander-Smith argues in “Feeling the Rhythm of the Critically Conscious Mind,” “adolescents identify with the lyrics that resonate with their personal and cultural experiences” (59). Two Hip-Hop artists who commonly utilize pathos appeals are the rap legend Tupac Shakur and the new rapper J. Cole.

J. Cole evokes emotion by expressing his feelings about being raised by a single-parent. In “Breakdown,” J. Cole raps:

Look, I just shed tears homie and nah I ain't to proud to admit it/Just seen my father for the first time in a minute/And when I say a minute I mean years man/Damn, a whale could have swam in them tears fam/Cause as I left em' I reflected on my younger days/When it was just me and my brother and my mother played/Father, cause no other man bothered/Not even my biological, it never seemed logical/But I accepted it cause I ain't know no better.

He recounts his most recent encounter with his father, after telling his listeners that he is not too proud to express his emotions about his father. He uses a hyperbole, when he exaggerates how many tears that he has cried for his father. Although his first lines read and sound painful, his following lines are filled with disappointment as he recalls the lack of any male role model in his childhood. This part of his verse concludes with a feeling of shame because he is ashamed at himself for accepting his biological father’s choice. His target audience is those who were or are raised by a single-parent, specifically those who were or are raised by just their mother. He makes several successful pathos appeals in the first half of his verse as he evokes pain, disappointment, shame, and possibly hate.

J. Cole continues to use pathos appeals to evoke different emotions in the second half of his verse. He raps:

So many things you could have told me/And saved me the trouble of letting my mistakes show me/I feel like you barely know me/And that's a shame cause our last name is the same/That blood type flowing through our veins is the same/My mama left you and maybe your anger's to blame/But that's no excuse, only you and God know the truth/And why you only call monthly, barely ever saw me...Maybe I should be tellin' you f\*\*\* you cause you selfish/But I want a father so bad, I can't help but...breakdown.

His lyrics express frustration because of how much his father could have helped him. As he lists off things, such as a last name, that remind him of his father and why his father should have been in his life, his frustration builds. Then he expresses anger as he concludes that his father cannot convince him to accept his father's actions, building to an act of possible hate as he curses at his father. At the end, all of his emotions lead back to sorrow. For his listeners, he makes successful pathos appeals because his expressions of frustration, anger, hate, and sorrow evoke similar emotions from his listeners. Tupac Shakur does the same, but he combines appeals in his songs.

Tupac Shakur is highly regarded as either the greatest Hip-Hop artist of all time or the most influential rap artist of all time because of his music where he uses multiple appeals to evoke emotions. In "The Rhetoric of Mock Trial Debate: Using Logos, Pathos and Ethos in Undergraduate Competition," Felicia R. Walker argues that "while successful mockers need to utilize logos, they will be more persuasive when it is coupled with Aristotle's other proofs." Walker explicitly states that a person using two or three of Aristotle's modes of persuasion will be the most persuasive and influential person. In "Keep 'Ya Head Up," Tupac Shakur raps "you know it's funny when it rains it pours/ They got money for wars, but can't feed the poor" (2Pac "Keep Ya Head Up"). Shakur utilizes logos by pointing out that funding wars instead of addressing the tribulations of the lower class reflects an error in the logic of the country. On the

other hand, Shakur establishes an emotional connection with his listeners by acknowledging the lower class. His words evoke hope for those of the lower class and sympathy from those who are not part of the lower class by encouraging all to acknowledge the struggles of the lower class.

Shakur can also illustrate how to use more than just two modes of persuasion.

In “Unconditional Love,” Tupac Shakur uses each of Aristotle’s modes of persuasion.

Shakur raps:

Eternally in my mission/is to be more than just a rap musician/The elevation of today's generation if could I make'em listen/Prison ain't what we need, no longer stuck in greed/Time to plan, strategize, my family's gotta' eat/When we make somethin out of nothing/No pleasure in the suffering, neighborhood would be good/If they could cut out all the busting/The liquor and the weed, the cussing/Sending love out to my block/The struggle never stops (“Unconditional Love”).

He makes one pathos appeal by arguing that prison does not solve the problems of the inner city. Shakur evokes admiration from his listeners who agree with his claim. Then he makes a logos appeal through his argument that the inner-city life would be better off without gunfire, drugs, profanity, but these lyrics also evoke hope for better inner-cities. I would argue that he makes an ethos appeal from the start of his verse where he states that Hip-Hop is not just a job or entertainment to him. He hopes to be more than just an entertainer to his listeners. Ultimately, he wants to educate his audience and make a positive impact on his audience. Tupac Shakur is arguably one of the only rappers that obtains his credibility through his words as opposed to his reputation.

## Aristotelian Ethos Appeal

Tupac Shakur gains credibility in two ways: utilizing Aristotle's traditional definition of ethos and utilizing our contemporary definition of ethos. Aristotle states himself:

[there is persuasion] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence; for we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly [than we do others], on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt. And this should result from the speech, not from a previous opinion that the speaker is a certain kind of person (38-9).

Based on Aristotle's definition of ethos, a speaker makes a successful ethos appeal and gains credibility through his or her words. Basically, a speaker is judged on his or her words and not his or her reputation, appearance, accolades, or hearsay. Tupac Shakur represents the Hip-Hop artists who establish ethos through speech. From 1994 until his death in 1996, one can argue that his several arrests, prison sentences, and having been shot enhanced his ethos, but we have to consider that these events transpired three years after his first album release in 1991 ("2Pac Biography"). He became a credible rapper with his first single.

"Brenda's Got a Baby" was his first single for Shakur's first album, *2Pacalypse Now*. In the song, Shakur tells the story of a twelve year old African-American girl who has a baby, is incapable of taking care of the baby, leaves the baby in a dumpster, and later dies as a prostitute (2Pac "Brenda's Got a Baby"). He gives specific details such as "now Brenda never really knew her moms/and her dad was a junkie putting death into his arms," and he depicts a harsh reality as he raps:



She tried to hide her pregnancy, from her family/Who didn't really care to see, or give a damn if she/Went out and had a church of kids/As long as when the check came they got first dibs/Now Brenda's belly is getting bigger/But no one seems to notice any change in her figure/She's twelve years old and she's having a baby/In love with a molester, who's sexing her crazy/And yet and she thinks that he'll be with her forever/And dreams of a world where the two of them are together, whatever/He left her and she had the baby solo/She had it on the bathroom floor (“Brenda’s Got a Baby”).

Shakur’s narrative about Brenda reflects how he favored evoking emotions, giving his perspective on the problems of many communities, such as teenage pregnancy, and using his songs to address real life situations over illustrating how many styles he has as a rapper. Shakur’s first album is significant because his success as a rapper was not due to hearsay or a reputation. He did not use his first single to create a character that fit in a specific rapper genre. Coleman describes how certain rappers wear specific clothing and embrace a hyper-masculine appearance or rely on “deep, rough voices” to obtain their credibility (100), but Shakur relied on his words to start his rap career. His lyrics, Shakur’s speeches in song format, give him credibility with his audience because he did not sell an image but rather he just gave us his opinions and thoughts. I am not arguing that the events of his personal life did not enhance his ethos, but the controversial events of his life were after his first album. Shakur’s first album conveys that speech can give rappers credibility, but he also made successful ethos appeals by living his lyrics.

### Contemporary Ethos Appeal

Tupac Shakur embraced a contemporary ethos by gaining credibility through his actions, reputation, and accolades. In *Welcome to Death Row*, Jeffrey Jolson-Colburn, a Hollywood reporter and former music editor, describes Shakur as “the outlaw who was living life in some

romantic Ernest Hemingway world where you lived out your art.” On one hand, his usage of contemporary ethos represents how we are still connected to St. Augustine’s view of ethos. St. Augustine argues the following: a teacher “should teach, delight, and persuade” (143) which means that ethos can be just a performance, but that “they benefit by preaching what they do not practice; but many more would be benefited if they were to do what they say” which means that a speaker should live up to his or her words (165). Shakur did make successful ethos appeals through a performance, but his dedication to “practice what you preach” defined his rap career.

Despite how Tupac Shakur releases his first album before being shot five times, he was on trial for a sex-abuse charge when he was robbed of his jewelry and shot at a recording studio later in his career. (“2Pac Biography). He became famous for his expression after his shooting, shown in the photograph of Shakur on an ambulance stretcher (Fig. 1). I am not glorifying this type of lifestyle, but I am conveying how performance was an ethos appeal for Shakur. This picture represents a successful ethos appeal to his audience because he is the same vocal and controversial rapper even when he is wounded. His shooting highlights the beginning of a rap career where a rapper’s lyrics are not for entertainment or profit, but are rather non-fiction and auto-biographical raps.



Fig. 1. “2Pac’s 1994 New York Shooting.” 1994. Photograph. *2Pac World*. Web. 26 Dec. 2013.

While he was in prison and serving four and a half years, his album, *Me Against The World*, was released, sold millions of copies, and was “No. 1” on “national pop charts” “for a month” (“Tupac Shakur”). In the introduction of this album, “Intro,” Shakur chooses to use comments by reporters that reiterate his shooting, checking himself out of the hospital after being shot, and a case being dismissed in which he shot two off-duty police officers. On one hand, his single, “Dear Mama,” utilizes a pathos appeal with lines like “and even as a crack fiend, mama/you always was a black queen, mama/I finally understand/for a woman it ain't easy tryin to raise a man.” He continues to make successful pathos appeals by deciding who his target audience is and evoking emotions through his words. On the other hand, his use of contemporary ethos, such as in his “Intro” for *Me Against the World*, makes his future lines such as “forgive me for my mistakes, I gotta’ play my hand/and my hand's on a sixteen-shot, semi-automatic/crooked cop killin’ Glock” credible (“Hellrazor”). I am not stating that his lyrics or lifestyle at this time are commendable, but he does embody the use of an Aristotelian ethos and a contemporary ethos appeal.

Years after his shooting, Shakur continues to use his experiences to make successful ethos appeals as he raps “this little n\*\*\*\* named Nas thinks he live like me/Talkin bout he left the hospital took five like me/you living fantasies” (“Against All Odds”). He criticizes Nas for rapping “caught a hot one, somebody take this biscuit 'fore the cops come/ Then they came asking me my name, what the f\*\*\* /I got stitched up and went through/Left the hospital that same night, what” in “The Message.” Shakur emphasizes that Nas’ credibility stems from fictional raps as opposed reality and credibility because Shakur literally was the one who was shot and had checked himself out of the hospital within 24 hours “against doctors’ orders” (*Welcome to Death Row*). Unknowingly, he drew a line in Hip-Hop and separated those who lived their lyrics and gained credibility by their actions, reputation, appearance, and accolades

from those who gained credibility by their talent, or words. His contemporary use of ethos made lines like “this Thug Life will be the death of me” believable (“Blasphemy”), and his usage of pathos and logos appeals made him credible because of his words.

The combination of Ethos, Logos, and Pathos appeals in Tupac Shakur’s rap career  
Shakur’s rap career reflects that ethos appeals mean nothing without pathos and logos appeals. Despite how he became synonymous for going to court cases right after his shows (*Welcome to Death Row*), he never abandoned his original style of evoking emotions and appealing to the logic of his listeners. He continued to make songs like “Baby Don’t Cry” in which he raps:

Now here's a story 'bout a woman with dreams/so picture perfect at thirteen, an ebony queen/Beneath the surface it was more than just a crooked smile/Nobody knew about her secret so it took a while/I could see a tear fall slow down her black cheek/Sheddin' quiet tears in the back seat; so when she asked me, 'what would you do if it was you?'/couldn't answer such a horrible pain to live through/I tried to trade places in the tragedy/I couldn't picture three crazed ni\*\*az grabbin' me/for just a moment I was trapped in the pain, Lord come and take me/four ni\*\*az violated, they chased and they raped me/Even though it wasn't me, I could feel the grief/thinkin' with your brains blown that would make the pain go/No! You got to find a way to survive/cause they win when your soul dies.

In his verse, he acknowledges that this is a fictional narrative. By his own admission that he created the story in his verse, he makes a successful ethos appeal. For his audience, Shakur’s credibility continues to rise because he has no problem admitting that his words are fictional or non-fictional. Then he makes another successful pathos appeal by depicting the emotions for a rape victim. He accompanies his pathos appeal with another ethos appeal by admitting how

difficult it is for him to even grasp the emotions of the victim. In his conclusion, he gives social commentary by stating that a rape victim gains nothing in suicide.

Shakur even reiterates how reaching his listeners is always his primary goal, as he states himself:

Everything in life is not all beautiful, not all fun. There is lots of killing and drugs. To me, a perfect album talks about the hard stuff and the fun and caring stuff. What I want to know, though, is why all of a sudden is everybody acting like gangs are some new phenomenon in this country? Almost everyone in America is affiliated with some kind of gang. We got the FBI, the ATF, the police departments, the religious groups, the Democrats and the Republicans. Everybody's got their own little clique and they're all out there gangbanging in their own little way. ... I'm the kind of guy who is moved by a song like Don McLean's 'Vincent,' that one about Van Gogh. The lyric on that song is so touching. That's how I want to make my songs feel. Take 'Dear Mama'--I aimed that one straight for my homies' heartstrings ("Tupac Shakur").

Even in his interviews, Shakur does not stop making logos and pathos appeals. He does the following: he reiterates how he intends to make music that reflects all aspects of life, he logically attacks Hip-Hop critics who claim the music embraces the gang culture but fail to acknowledge how several organizations function and mirror the structures of gangs, and how he always wants to appeal to the emotions of his audience. His contemporary use of ethos did help his career and enhance his credibility, but ethos alone did not define him. Overall, one can even argue that without his pathos and logos appeals, his career would have not been as successful. Although he embraced a classical and a contemporary ethos, his career and death led to the embracing of a different ethos appeal in Hip-Hop.

## Ethos as a Performance

Ethos as a performance constructs characters in Hip-Hop, thus establishing a false ethos and presenting an ethos where a lie is favored over attempting to represent a truth. Since the death of Tupac Shakur in 1996, several rap icons have expressed their frustration at rappers who are successful because of their experiences and personal life as opposed to their talent and words. In “Letter to B.I.G.,” Jadakiss raps “and everybody's the king now/you ain't gotta' be nice gettin shot is the thing now.” He criticizes rap artists, like 50 Cent who built his career around surviving nine gunshot wounds and his authenticity, for lacking talent (“50 Cent Biography”). One particular rapper built his career off of redefining both classical and contemporary definitions of ethos.

A contemporary rapper, Rick Ross, embraces ethos as a performance and has been successful. The rapper Rick Ross stole the name, appearance, and lifestyle of Freeway Rick Ross (Fig. 2), a notorious 1980s California drug dealer (“Rick Ross Wins Right to Use Former Drug Lord’s Name”). For the rapper’s first album, *Port of Miami*, his first two singles are called: “Push It” and “Hustlin.” Then he successfully composes song lyrics that correlate to his appearance and name. He raps “I know Pablo, Noriega, the real Noriega” (“Hustlin”), and he depicts himself as Tony Montana from *Scarface* in his music video for “Push It” (Rick Ross “Push It”). Aristotle’s

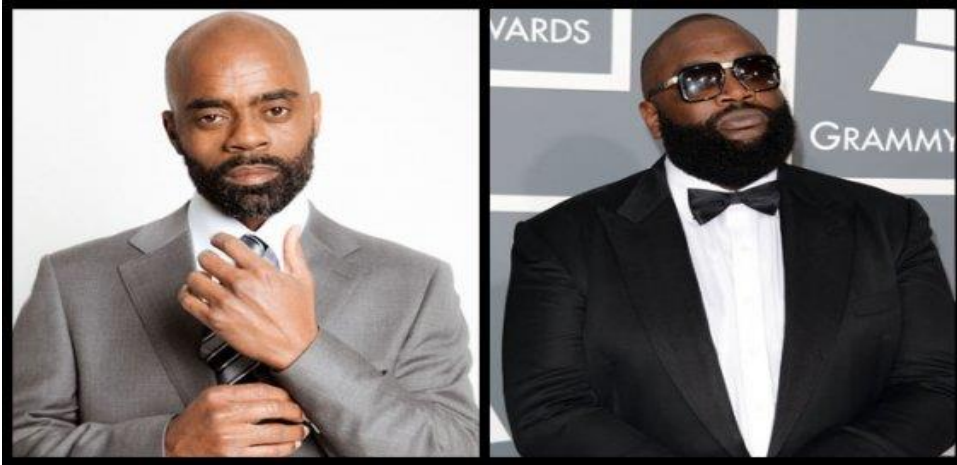


Fig. 2. Freeway Rick Ross, left, and Rapper Rick Ross. 2013. Photographs. “Freeway’ Ricky Ross Taking Battle over Rapper Rick Ross to Appeals Court.” *Hollywood Reporter*. Web. 14 April 2013.

definition of ethos becomes problematic in Hip-Hop because rappers like Rick Ross can make ethos appeals through lies. Rick Ross’ song lyrics combined with his performance give him a career. One would assume that his ethos will come to an end if he is ever exposed as just a performer, but this is not the case.

Rick Ross is still successful and has credibility with his core audience, despite how photos expose him as just a performer. St. Augustine states that when a preacher does not live by his or her words, many will ask “why do you not do what you preach that I do?” The implications are the following: those who do not practice what they preach will lose their followers if their followers find out that they do not live by their own words, those who do not practice what they preach will lose whatever credibility that they had in the beginning, and that a person can establish and rely on a false ethos until he or she is exposed as false.

In 2008, a picture surfaced that showed the rapper Rick Ross as a correctional facility officer (Fig. 3). I am not stating that there is anything wrong with this occupation, but this picture

contradicted everything that the rapper said and represented as a rapper. The picture did not damage his career. According to “Rick Ross Scores Fourth No. 1 Album,” Keith Caulfield, a writer for Billboard, reports that Rick Ross had two “No. 1” albums and that his first-week sales actually have increased since his infamous picture. Rick Ross does not seem to have fewer fans which means that ethos is irrelevant in contemporary Hip-Hop music. One may argue that his words give him his ethos, fitting Aristotle’s definition of ethos, but this is impossible because pictures have proved that all of his lyrics are lies, or acts of entertainment. The rapper Rick Ross is not Freeway Rick Ross. He is just a performer, or entertainer. On one hand, many rappers are performers, but no rap career has been proven to be false like Rick Ross’ career. Although, as Baurti N. Kopano states in “Rap Music as an extension of the Black Rhetorical Tradition,” “for rappers, ‘keepin’ it real’ means being true to the rich legacy of rap,” a rap career can be built on a false ethos.



Fig. 3. “Rick Ross was a Cop.” *Kastnfameprod*. Wordpress, 25 Sept. 2008. Web. 15 April 2013.

Hip-Hop artists utilize Aristotle’s modes of persuasion to create great music but to also connect with their fans. Ethos, pathos and logos appeals allow rap artists to state their messages



to any type of audience. Regardless of how successful rappers become inside and outside of the Hip-Hop world, they do not stop making music that relates to their fans. The most successful rappers utilize pathos, logos, and ethos appeals in most of their songs because of the importance of an audience. Aristotle's modes of persuasion and St. Augustine's definition of ethos apply in Hip-Hop because these rhetorical strategies have created numerous careers. Although ethos has become problematic in this music genre, ethos, pathos, and logos appeals will continued to be used by rap artists because audience will always be a factor.

## Chapter 3

### Narratives in Hip-Hop

Scholars have emphasized the importance of narrative in Hip-Hop music. In “The Rhetoric of Violence in Rap and Country Music,” Edward G. Armstrong utilizes lyrics to inspect the use of acts of violence in both music genres. He concludes that both music genres have song lyrics about violent acts, and both music genres reflect on acts of violence. Then in “Constructing Racial Rhetoric: Media Depictions of Harm in Heavy Metal and Rap Music,” Amy Binder examines how the media’s rhetoric shapes society’s perception of both heavy metal and rap music. She reports that the media gave rap music a “*danger to society* frame” in which the media critiqued rap for its “brutality” and “harmfulness” (761). Although both authors emphasize violent lyrics and the influence of the media, they fail to examine the context of the lyrics, thus calling for an examination of narrative.

The scholarship that analyzed the context of rap lyrics exposed the relationship between Hip-Hop music and narrative. In “Tragic Narratives in Popular Culture: Depictions of Homicide in Rap Music,” Gwen Hunnicutt and Kristy Humble Andrews also analyze an act of violence, homicide, mentioned in rap lyrics from 1989-2000. They conclude that homicide served multiple purposes in rap music because homicidal lyrics can be used to convey one’s superiority as an MC, homicidal lyrics can be used as a warning for others not to disrespect a rapper, homicide is inevitable and part of life, and homicidal lyrics can be a response to corrupt and repressive power structures, such as the police (Hunnicutt). In the process of their analysis, they use the term, tragic narrative, to represent rap songs that correlate to violence. Then in “Poetic Expressions: Students of Color Express Resiliency through Metaphors and Similes,” Horace R. Hall describes how “students of color” used different forms of writing to discuss their lives (217). In three

students' writings where they used the forms of non-fiction prose, a poem, and a rap, each student used a personal narrative (224-34). Although Hall intends to emphasize "the essentialism of student voices," she unintentionally reiterates the relationship between narrative and Hip-Hop music (240). All of these articles call for a rhetorical analysis of rap music to find the significance of its relationship with narrative.

I will utilize Aristotle's *On Rhetoric* and Quintilian's *On the Teaching of Speaking and Writing* to inspect Hip-Hop's use of classical rhetorical forms of narrative. Ultimately, I will show how rap artists utilize Aristotle's three forms of narrative, or judicial, deliberative, and epideictic narratives (238-42), and Quintilian's forms of narrative, the fable, argumentum, and history (98). Although rap artists may have different intentions in relation to their use of narrative, their ultimate goal is to persuade. In the process of my examination of rap artists and narrative, I will also illustrate how Hip-Hop music can be better understood through a rhetorical analysis that examines narrative.

In Hip-Hop music, narrative is used for both persuasion and social commentary. Melbourne S. Cummings and Abhik Roy argue that "a careful analysis of rap music can demonstrate that not all rap lyrics have negative messages" in "Manifestations of Afrocentricity in Rap Music" (60). From Eminem's "Stan," a fictional story that depicts a fan's deadly obsession with Eminem, to Lupe Fiasco's "Jonnyah Forever," another fictional story that tells the future of Jonnyah who was shot and killed at just the age of six months in Chicago, rap artists utilize multiple forms of narrative. Unknowingly, Hip-Hop also uses classical rhetorical forms of narrative to persuade, give social commentary to their audience, and to entertain their audience. Because of my rhetorical analysis of Hip-Hop based on forms of narrative, the messages and the appeal of narratives in Hip-Hop become clearer for a wider audience.

## The Fable

Although fables are untruthful, rap artists do utilize fables for persuasion. Quintilian states that “*the fable*, which is the subject of tragedies and poems, and which is remote, not merely from the truth, but from the appearance of the truth” (Quintilian). A recent rap song that utilizes the fable form is Lupe Fiasco’s “All Black Everything,” a narrative that describes black history if the slave trade never occurred. In the song, he raps:

Uh, and we ain't get exploited/White man ain't fear it so he did not destroy it/We ain't work for free, see they had to employ it/Built it up together so we equally appointed/First 400 years, see we actually enjoyed it/Constitution written by W.E.B. Du Bois/Were no reconstructions, civil war got avoided/Little black sambo grows up to be a lawyer/Extra extra on the news stands/Black woman voted head of Ku Klux Klan/Malcolm Little dies as an old man/Martin Luther King read the eulogy for him/Followed by Bill O'Reilly who read from the Quran/President Bush sends condolences from Iran/Where Fox News reports live/That Ahmadinejad wins the Mandela Peace Prize (“All Black Everything”).

Fiasco begins by providing exposition in which he explains that the West African Slave Trade never occurred, thus giving blacks 400 years of enjoyment instead of indescribable agony (“The Slave Trade”). Throughout his fable, he describes how several things such as the Civil War and the very meaning of Ku Klux Klan had changed or never happened because of the lack of a slave trade. Then Fiasco raps “uh, and it ain't no projects/keepin' it real is not an understood concept/yea, complexion's not a contest/cause racism has no context/Hip-hop ain't got a section called conscious/everybody rappin like crack never happened/Crips never occurred nor Bloods to attack them/matter of fact no hood to attack in” (Lupe Fiasco). He continues to show the results of not having a slave trade and creates a utopia-like setting for his listeners, specifically African-

American listeners. Fiasco presents that minorities, specifically blacks, did not have to live in the inner-cities, racism and complexion have no impact on the world, black gangs and “hoods” do not exist, nobody embraces a “macho” role, and that Hip-Hop lacks a genre. He describes how slavery connects to everything, especially Hip-Hop, but he implies that the music genre of conscious rap serves a greater purpose because of slavery.

Lupe Fiasco uses the fable form to persuade his audience that his description of a world does not have to be a fable. In his final verse of the song, Fiasco raps: “uh, and I know it's just a fantasy/I cordially invite you to ask why can't it be/now we can do nothing ‘bout the past/but we can do something about the future that we have/we can make it fast or we can make it last/every woman queen and every man a king and/when those color lines come we can't see between/we just close our eyes till it's all black everything” (Lupe Fiasco). He admits to his fans that he is using a fable form and is only depicting a fantasy world, but he persuades his listeners to ask themselves does his song have to be a fantasy world. On one hand, Fiasco uses a fable to narrate a black history that is far from our actual black history but is the preferred black history because of the removal of a slave trade. On the other hand, he gives hope to his listeners and persuades his audience to work toward a world like the world in his song lyrics. Despite Fiasco’s hopeful and serious voice, there are rap artists who make their argument through sarcasm and comedy.

#### The Argumentum

Eminem utilizes a comedy-like narrative to persuade his audience that people are similar to him as a rapper. Quintilian writes “the *argumentum*, which comedies represent, and which though false, has a resemblance to truth” (98). From Eminem’s “Without Me” to Eminem’s “We made you,” he does not adopt a stereotypical “mafia image” or rely on a hyper-masculine image

(Dierdre Glenn Paul 467). Instead, he uses the argumentum narrative through his sarcastic, humorous, blunt, but truth-like lyrics. In “The Real Slim Shady,” he raps:

Y'all act like you never seen a White person before/Jaws all on the floor like Pam, like  
Tommy just burst in the door/And started whippin' her a\*\* worse than before/They first  
were divorced, throwin' her over furniture... 'ah wait, no way, you're kidding/he didn't  
just say what I think he did he... Yeah, I probably got a couple of screws up in my head  
loose/But no worse than what's going on in your parents' bedrooms/Sometimes I wanna'  
get on TV and just let loose, but can't/But it's cool for Tom Green to hump a dead  
moose... Of course they're gonna know what intercourse is/By the time they hit fourth  
grade/They've got the Discovery Channel, don't they/We ain't nothing but mammals--  
well, some of us, cannibals/Who cut other people open like cantaloupes/But if we can  
hump dead animals and antelopes/Then there's no reason that a man and another man  
can't elope.

Eminem compares the disbelief in people's eyes when they first acknowledge him as a white rapper to the public's astonishment of Tommy Lee's history of domestic violence (“Tommy Lee”). Although his description of Tommy and Pam is harsh, it is his attempt at an exaggeration of people but his illustration is not completely false. The juxtaposition of the public's astonishment of Eminem and Tommy Lee's history of domestic violence implies how ridiculous it is for the public to be shocked by a white rapper because there are more serious and shocking actions in the world. He continues to compare the treatment of him as a rapper to the treatment of others by referencing how his words and thoughts are not much different from other adults and by pointing out the, arguably, inappropriate but televised actions of others (“The Tom Green Show”). Hip-Hop critics, such as C. Delores Tucker, have always argued that rap music is

nothing more than ““porno rap”” (“Anti-Rap Crusader under Fire”). Eminem responds to his critics by humorously referencing what children can learn by watching television shows, specifically “educational” television shows like the Discovery channel. He concludes his first verse with references to the questionable actions of people and the hypocrisy of the public to denounce gay marriage when gay marriage should be accepted when we observe horrific and wrong actions actually are in this world. Despite his comedy-like approach, he makes his argument clear.

In his final verse and last words of his song, Eminem persuades his listeners to reexamine how different people are from him. He raps “I’m like a head trip to listen to cause I’m only giving you/things you joke about with your friends inside your living room/the only difference is I got the balls to say it/in front of y’all and I don’t gotta be false or sugarcoat it at all/I just get on the mic and spit it/and whether you like to admit it... better than 90% of you rappers out” (“The Real Slim Shady”). He makes the argument that his lyrics can be blunt and discuss problematic topics, but he does not rap about anything that everyday people do not discuss. In his eyes, his success as a rapper stems from his dedication to his true craft, saying what he wants, as opposed to caring about political correctness. At the end of his song, he states “ha ha, I guess there’s a Slim Shady in all of us. F\*\*\* it, let’s all stand up” (Eminem). Although his entire song juxtaposes the actions of others to Eminem and exaggerates many questionable choices of society, his lyrics resemble our real world, and he persuades his audience to accept his argument: Eminem is successful because every person is a bit like him. Then there are songs that present the actual truth.

## The History

Lupe Fiasco presents the true history of the U.S. through his use of the history narrative. Quintilian says “the *history*, in which is contained a relation of facts” (98). In “Unforgivable Youth,” Fiasco details the birth of the U.S.:

With land on the horizon and passion in their eyes and/what they think are islands are  
much more in their size and/bountiful and plentiful and resource to provide them/supplies  
slim, morale once so heavily inside them... return is not an option as necessity denies  
them/With this they choose to dive in/Now along the shore and so aware of their  
arriving/are the children of this land prepared to share in their surviving/a pageantry of  
feathers stands his majesty with treasure/Not the material things of kings that could never  
last forever/but secrets of the spirit world and how to live in harmony  
together/unbeknownst to him his head would be the first that they would sever/And stuck  
up on a pike up along the beach/kept up as a warning to the rest to turn away from their  
beliefs/and so began it here and for five hundred years/torture, terror, fear 'til they nearly  
disappear.

He begins by giving the colonists' perceptions of the Americas. The Colonists, specifically Christopher Columbus, were documented as enthusiastic in their so-called “discoveries” of the Americas because they expected to find riches (“Christopher Columbus”). Then Fiasco references how numerous “Native peoples like the Massachusetts tribes enthusiastically welcomed European settlers to their shores up to the third decade of the seventeenth century” (“[Indian] Relationships with the Europeans”). Although the Native Americans did not offer the riches that the colonists searched for, they did share their possessions with the colonists and taught the colonists how to survive in their world just as Fiasco says in his verse (“[Indian]



Relationships with the Europeans”). He presents the harsh consequences for the Native Americans’ kindness in his allusion to Metacom, “the Wampanoag Chief” who was beheaded by the Pilgrims and whose head was “placed on a spike” and on display for decades to remind the Wampanoag and the Pilgrims of the Pilgrims’ superiority (“Contested Meanings”). Then Fiasco reiterates the Native American Holocaust, or 500 years war, by teaching that before European contact there were nearly “142 million” Native Americans in 1492 which declined to “less than six million by 1650,” or after European contact (*The Native Population of the Americas 1492*). This song notes the historical evidence that validates Fiasco’s dark but accurate history of the U.S.

Fiasco continues his narrative about the history of the U.S., but he also presents his argument towards the end of his second verse. He raps:

Ways and means from the trade of human beings/A slave labor force provides wealth to the machine/and helps the new regime establish and expand/using manifest destiny to siphon off the land/from native caretakers who can barely understand/How can land be owned by another man?/warns, “One cannot steal what was given as a gift; Is the sky owned by birds and the rivers owned by fish?"/But the lesson went unheeded, for the sake of what's not needed (“Unforgivable Youth”).

He uses a pun with his reference to the “oldest committee of the United States Congress” (“Committee History”) in his allusion regarding the Colonists enslavement of Native Americans (“Christopher Columbus”) as well as the enslavement of Africans (“The Slave Trade”). In his presentation of the true intentions and history of the Manifest Destiny, he alludes to the following: the Trail of Tears, the Louisiana Purchase, and Andrew Jackson’s and many others’ support for the “Indian Removal” (“Trail of Tears”). Fiasco then describes how Native

Americans could not grasp the reasoning behind the taking of their land which resulted in numerous wars between “tribes and the federal government” (“Native Americans Went to War to Protect Their Lands”). The stealing of one’s land also correlates to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo which gave half of Mexico’s land to the U.S. but guaranteed “protection of property and civil rights of Mexican nationals living within the new boundaries of the United States... the promise of the United States to police its boundaries...and compulsory arbitration of future disputes between the two countries” (“Teaching with Documents: The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo”). Maria Amparo Ruiz de Barton’s *The Squatter and the Don* documents how white settlers stole property of Mexicans through squatting on their parts of their land, how the U.S. government did not honor the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and how Mexicans, like Native Americans, could not understand the white settlers’ attempts to steal their land. In the end, Fiasco admits that the colonists and white settlers did not care about the perspectives of native landowners, but he also points out that the U.S. did not need a majority of the land that they stole.

He persuades his listeners of his argument that the U.S. will suffer for its history at some point. Fiasco raps, “and all mistakes will be repeated/by your future generations doomed to pay for your mistreatments/foolishness and flaws, greed and needs and disagreement/and then you rush to have the most, from the day you left your boats/you'll starve but never die in a world of hungry ghosts” (“Unforgivable Youth”). The implications are the following: the U.S. has not learned from its past and continues to cause destruction in the world, the U.S. always wanted to own everything and have more than what it needs since the establishment of the 13 colonies, and that the U.S. will always be haunted by ghosts of its past, or historical events that are reminders of the bad that the U.S has done despite the contemporary image of the U.S. These examples

illustrate how rap artists use Quintilian's classical rhetorical forms of narrative. Although rap artists are successful with Quintilian's forms of narrative, they cannot rely on just these particular types of narrative. Rap artists not only employ Quintilian's forms of narrative, but they also use Aristotle's forms of narrative for persuasion in their music.

### Epidictic Narrative

Lupe Fiasco commemorates two rappers through an epidictic narrative. Because Fiasco commemorates two rappers in his song and the intentions of his song, he creates a ceremonial setting. Aristotle writes "diēgēsis in epidictic speeches is not continuous but part-by-part for one should go through the actions that constitute the argument... a matter of showing either that the action took place, if it seems unbelievable, or that it was of a certain kind of importance or all these things" (239). He also implies that there is no need for the retelling of events in this ceremonial setting (Aristotle). In "Hip-Hop Saved my Life," Fiasco raps:

A Mead notebook and a Bic/that click when it's pushed and a wack-a\*\* beat/that's a track that's weak that he got last week/cause everybody in the stu' was like: 'That's that heat!'/a bass-heavy medley with a sample from the 70s/with a screwed-up hook that went 'stack that cheese'/something something something, 'stack that cheese'... He turns down the beat, writer's block impedes/crying from the next room, a baby in need/of some pampers and some food and place to sleep/that plus a black Cadillac on Ds/is what keep him on track to be a great MC.

Fiasco bases his song on the career of Slim Thug, a southern rapper from Houston, TX, but also dedicates the song to Bun B, a southern rap icon from Port Arthur, TX ("Lupe Fiasco's Latest Single"). He depicts the actions of an upcoming rapper, specifically a rapper's home setting and

writing process. Fiasco is not recalling events because these events of Slim Thug's career are not known by listeners. Then he raps

1100 friends on his MySpace page/'Stack That Cheese' got 700 plays/Producer made him take it down, said he had to pay/open mic champ 2 weeks in a row/ex d-boy with a b-boy flow/glow like Leroy, you should see the boy go/got a daddy serving life and a brother on the Row/Best homie in the grave, tatted up while in the cage/Minute Maid got his momma working like a slave ("Hip-Hop Saved My Life").

He exposes more unknown events about Slim Thug's struggle to become a rapper. His audience overlooks the business of the Hip-Hop industry which is why he references the financial problems that arose for just a song. Although rap fans do not categorize every rapper in the battle-rapper category, Fiasco alludes to how Slim Thug, like most rappers, had to participate in some form of a rap competition in the past. Then he reiterates how problematic Slim Thug's family structure is, emphasizing Slim Thug's success affects everyone in his life.

In his conclusion of his song, his honoring of Slim Thug's career correlates to the chorus of the song, or his main argument. Fiasco describes the results of the success of Slim Thug as he raps:

Get his momma out the hood, put her somewhere in the woods/keep his lady looking good, have her rolling like she should/show his homies there's a way other than that flippin' yay/bail his homie out of jail, put a lawyer on his case/throw a concert for the school, show the shorties that it's cool... man it feels good, when it happens like that/two days from going back to selling crack, yessir (Lupe Fiasco).

He reiterates that many people would be better off if Slim Thug became successful. Beyond helping his family and friends, Slim Thug becomes a symbol of hope for those who know him

and the children of his city. Slim Thug's fans can look at his career and have proof that they can become successful beyond the limitations of their environment. In Fiasco's final lines, he concludes his narrative by alluding to how Slim Thug's rap career prevented him from making poor choices. Although this is an honoring of Slim Thug's career and a dedication to Bun B, Fiasco still makes his argument known in the chorus of his song: "One you never heard of, I/push it hard to further the/grind, might feel like murder, but/Hip-Hop, you saved my life" (Lupe Fiasco). In the process of commemorating two artists, Fiasco persuades his audience to also honor these two artists but acknowledge that Hip-Hop music does prevent people from poor choices, incarceration, and, possibly, death. Other rap artists have to defend themselves because of legal matters.

#### Judicial Narrative

T.I., a southern rapper from Atlanta, uses judicial narrative to defend himself against all listeners and persuade people to consider his point of view in a forensic setting through song. Aristotle argues "[as] the opposing speaker, [you] should do the opposite: seize an opportunity in the narration to mention whatever bears on your own virtue...or bears on the opponent's weakness" (240). Past trials, such as the southern rapper Lil Boosie's trial, have used rap lyrics against rap artists ("Lil Boosie Murder Trial"). Because rap lyrics have been used as evidence, T.I. utilizes a song to defend himself against federal gun charges ("Rapper TI arrested on machine gun charges"). In "Ready for Whatever," T.I. raps:

They so judgmental man but they don't understand/if ya' life was in jeopardy erryday' is  
you tellin' me/you wouldn't need weaponry jus' because of ya' felonies/consider this at  
least I got errybody' sweating me/on the streets there's people who won't rest unless I rest  
in peace/killed my folk a year ago still in my sleep they threatin' me/paranoid ya' stressin'

me ain't nobody protecting me/I'm dealing wit' the pressure from my partner dying next to me/thinking no one's arrested, they coming for me eventually/this was all the things that I was goin through mentally/this could be the reason I ignored the penitentiary... now is it that hard to understand if you listen/either die or go to jail that's a hell of a decision/but I'm wrong and I know it my excuse is unimportant/I'm just tryna' let you know that I ain't think I had a choice, fer' real.

T.I. attacks the flaws of the prosecution and the legal system by reiterating that the court system fails to take the circumstances of the accused into consideration. He conveys his own virtues of honesty and humility because he admits that his criminal record does not allow him to own firearms, but he is fearful of death like every other person. Then he continues to attack the legal system through his allusions to a shooting that killed Philant Johnson, T.I.'s label's spokesman, and left three of T.I.'s friends injured ("Member of rapper T.I.'s entourage killed"). This is an attack at the legal system because he mentions how no arrests were made in the case and justifies his actions based on the slow process of the legal system. Two arrests were made two years after the murder took place ("Two charged with the murder of T.I.'s friend").

T.I. uses judicial narrative to highlight positive characteristics about himself and make his ultimate argument: he has the right to protect himself and his family by any means necessary regardless of his criminal record. In his second verse, T.I. raps "I'm a fighter to the heart and I'll forever be about it/I'm a father to my sons, an asset to my community/look at all that I have done, my good outweighs the negativity" ("Ready for Whatever"). Aristotle says "you should introduce yourself- and the opponent- as a person of a certain character so that they will see you as such, but do it inconspicuously" (241). T.I.'s mentions his role as a parent and husband and his actions for the community which include helping homeless veterans, giving free concerts to

support toy and food drives, donating gifts to Children's hospitals, and several other helpful acts ("The humanitarian side of T.I."). Inconspicuously, T.I. depicts himself as an entertainer who does not view himself as above others because he is obviously dedicated to his family and all communities and people in need of help. "Some story telling about homicide confronted injustices, corruption, and neglect from the state and its authorities" (Hunnicut 620). T.I.'s narrative addresses the flaws of the authority as he says at the end of his song: "I mean look at folks like Sean Taylor. You know what they said? They said had he had a strap, he would have lived today. Now true enough I was dead wrong, I broke the law, I deserve to be punished. I understand that. 'Tight cool. But listen man I gotta' house full of kids, a mama, and an old lady whose life is my responsibility you dig that!?" ("Ready for Whatever"). He subtly represents his opponents as unreasonable people who dismiss evidence that supports the need for protection like Sean Taylor's case ("Man convicted in Taylor killing") and who fail to acknowledge that people have to protect their families. Although this song is not in an actual courtroom, this is an example of judicial narrative because T.I. defends himself and utilizes rhetorical strategies to persuade his listeners to understand his perspective and consider his argument for a specific forensic occasion.

#### Deliberative Narrative

The southern rap artist Young Jeezy uses deliberative narrative in his song that supports President Barack Obama. In his song, "My President," Young Jeezy shows his support for Obama, completing the song on "June 3rd...2:08 AM," or the day that Obama "claimed the Democratic presidential nomination" ("Obama Claims Nomination"). Although Jeezy does not physically participate in political oratory, he does use deliberative narrative because his song establishes a political oratory setting, he creates this song for a political oratory occasion, and

“narrative is least common in deliberative oratory, because no one narrates future events...if there is narrative, it will be of events in the past, in order that by being reminded of those things the audience will take better counsel about what is to come (either criticizing or praising)” (Aristotle 242). He reminds his audience of the past as 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  
Seminole?/I say and I quote, ‘we need a miracle’/and I say a miracle cause this s\*\*\* is  
hysterical...be all you can be, now don't that sound like some dumb s\*\*\*/when you die  
over crude oil ...it's really a Desert Storm (“My President”).

He criticizes Republicans for past events that include the controversial Florida ballots count (“Who won Florida?”) and emphasizes the similarities between the Iraq War (“A Timeline of the Iraq War”) and the Gulf War (“Operation Desert Storm”) in which both U.S. presidents, President George H.W. Bush and President George W. Bush, are part of the Republican party.

In his second verse, Jeezy persuades his listeners to support President Obama in preparation for the future. He raps: “Obama for mankind/we ready for damn change so y'all let the man shine/stuntin' on Martin Luther, feeling just like a King/guess this is what he meant when he said that ‘he had a dream,’” and then he ends the song with the chorus, “my president is black/my Lambo is blue/and I'll be goddamned if my rims ain't too,” replaying the chorus twice before the song ends (“My President”). His primary argument is that his listeners should support President Obama, and he effectively uses deliberative narrative to accomplish his goal because there were more minority votes in 2008 than in past elections (“Minority voting surged in 2008 Election”). I am not stating that Jeezy's song is the only cause for the increase in minority votes because many Hip-Hop artists, like T.I., Jay-Z, and P. Diddy, and Hip-Hop organizations, like



the Hip-Hop Caucus, encourage fans to vote. I am stating that the song is an example of deliberative narrative and that Jeezy's song could have influenced his listeners to vote due to the song's popularity. President Obama confirmed the popularity of "My President" because he mentioned Young Jeezy and played a part of the song at the 2012 W.H. Correspondents Dinner ("Young Jeezy gets").

Overall, these three songs do use and can be used to teach Aristotle's epideictic, judicial, and deliberative narratives just as the previous three songs use and can teach Quintilian's forms of narrative. My three examples illustrate how rap artists still use Aristotle's forms of narratives to persuade their audience and get their messages across to their listeners. Ultimately, this entire chapter shows how classical forms of narrative function in Hip-Hop music, but that rap artists use different types of narrative, depending on the rhetorical situation and occasion, to accomplish multiple goals.

## Conclusion

Because of my focus on classical rhetoric in my three chapters, I did not address the pedagogy aspect of my thesis. There can be multiple chapters that address pedagogy and Hip-Hop because of how many rap music examples can be used in the classroom to teach rhetoric. I would like to conclude my thesis with a brief section on how I envision teaching rhetoric along with Hip-Hop music would work. Because my chapters already include several examples, I will only provide a possible lesson on Aristotle's means of persuasion.

### Teaching Rhetoric through Hip-Hop

On the subject of Aristotle's means of persuasion, I will provide just one way that shows how rap music can be used to teach rhetoric. An educator can find his or her own examples or use the following lyrics by Lupe Fiasco: "Now I can't pledge allegiance to your flag/Cause I can't find no reconciliation with your past/When there was nothing equal for my people in your math/You forced us in the ghetto and then you took our dads" ("Strange Fruition"), and "Called the president a terrorist/Corporate sponsors like, how the f\*\*\* you gon' embarrass us?/Ain't my fault, I was just repeatin' this/Professor Emeritus from America/But my tone was like an Afghani kid without a home/Blew that b\*\*\*\*\* up with a drone/An Iraqi with no daddy, Palestinian throwing stones/The fuck you think they call him, I'mma leave that all alone" ("ITAL"). If an educator chooses to introduce the rap lyrics before the rhetorical terms then the educator should ask his or her students what specific parts of the lyrics appeal to the students and why. Based on the responses of the students, this can lead into a discussion about the actual rhetorical terms for appeals. If an educator introduces the rhetorical terms before the lyrics, then the educator should ask the students to identify the appeals in the lyrics. Then an educator should perform a rhetorical analysis on the lyrics which I will do briefly.

The lyrics from Fiasco's "Strange Fruition" that emphasize the history of blacks in the U.S. and the circumstances of black children evoke emotion because it emotionally appeals to those who feel outside of the country which makes these words a pathos appeal. Fiasco's line that mentions math is a reference to the "Three-Fifths Compromise" where slaves were not counted as whole human beings ("The 'Three-Fifths' Compromise"). Fiasco's intention is to persuade others not to pledge allegiance to this country, and this reference to the "Three-Fifths Compromise" emphasizes how U.S. history has shown that blacks were not treated as equals. Therefore in Fiasco's eyes, people who are not treated as equals should not be devoted to their country which is a logos appeal because of its use of logic and historical information.

In "ITAL," Fiasco defends his claim that President Barack Obama is a terrorist. His reasons are: people of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine have experienced casualties and war at the hands of the U.S. which is a logos appeal in itself because we are not above terrorists if we as a country make terrorist-like actions. Then he states that his claim is the exact claim of a professor emeritus which is an ethos appeal because of how he implicitly references how he has researched this topic and how an established educator would agree with him. Fiasco concludes by evoking emotion with references to the children of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine who suffer because of the actions of the U.S. in their countries which is a pathos appeal.

After the rhetorical analysis, an educator can discuss Aristotelian and contemporary ethos appeal, why a combination of two or more appeals is more effective than relying on just one appeal, and this can lead into a discussion about audience, writer/speaker, and topic. If the educator chooses to use the "ITAL" song lyrics, then he or she can do the following: discuss why it is significant that Fiasco proves he is knowledgeable about the topic of terrorism, how his knowledge and words affect how credible he is as a speaker, and how significant his audience is

because his argument would have to be different if he were speaking to supporters of President Obama.

Educators can choose to pick any song lyrics as examples. Although one may argue that song lyrics from any music genre can be used to teach appeals, I believe that my three chapters, specifically my first chapter on the freestyle rap battle in rap music, demonstrates my reasoning for choosing Hip-Hop and demonstrates Hip-Hop's conceptual connection to classical rhetoric.

Classical rhetoric is just one subject that I covered in my three chapters. There can be much more written on how Hip-Hop can be used to teach several different subjects, and I am certain that more can be written on rap music and pedagogy and rap music and poetry. I titled my thesis "The Hip-Hop Academy" because I believe that Hip-Hop can be used to teach any subject. As the history of rap music has shown, Hip-Hop started as an upcoming music genre in New York and became a controversial and disliked national music genre. Now rap music is still a controversial music genre but a music genre that has a worldwide appeal. Hip-Hop took people of all colors and from different backgrounds and made them rappers, directors, actors, and entrepreneurs. Hip-Hop gave rap music fans parents, teachers, idols, and knowledge. Through the creation of a Hip-Hop Academy, Hip-Hop can not only create statesman but much more.

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### Biographical Information

Danny Rodriguez earned a B.A. in English and M.A. in English at the University of Texas at Arlington. His focuses are rhetoric and literary theory, specifically Marxism. His thesis examines the relationship between classical rhetoric and Hip-Hop music. He plans to teach at a community college and write fiction.