May 2021

When I Rhyme It's Sincerely Yours: Burkean Identification and Jay-Z's Black Sincerity Rhetoric in the Post Soul Era

Antoine Francis Hardy
University of South Florida

When I Rhyme It's Sincerely Yours: Burkean Identification and Jay-Z's Black Sincerity Rhetoric in the Post Soul Era

by

Antoine Francis Hardy

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Communication Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Christopher McRae, Ph.D.
Jane Jorgenson, Ph.D.
Navita Cummings James, Ph.D.
Elizabeth Bird, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
October 30th, 2020

Keywords: Hip-Hop, Black creativity, rhetorical analysis, Black masculinity

DEDICATION

This Dissertation is dedicated to my big brother Dominic and my pops Lorenzo Hardy for introducing me to music. Dr. Jody Natalle, Dr. Ananda Mitra and Dr. Eric K.Watts , this is dedicated to your mentorship. This project is also dedicated to the memory of my best friend Markeysha Williams and my classmate Daniel Blauer who encouraged me to pursue this when everybody told me to give up. And to the memory of my uncle Anthony "Amp" Briggs who taught me Rap is not music its "rhythm and poetry" from our perspective. I wish ya'll were here.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Basu for his patience and support on this project. Extreme thanks to my chair Dr. McRae aka Crockett you are truly a life saver sir. Thanks to my committee past and present. I would like to thank the entire USF Comm Dept and staff for making the impossible possible. I have to thank my NYC crew BW and BP for their super support and encouragement. Thanks to my classmates TB and JO for coming through in the clutch. The 115th Street Library in Harlem, thank you for all the extra pc time and interlibrary loans. Big shout-out to my inner circle: JG, GS, PB, KC, CC, KJ and SK for being my hip-hop council on this project. Major props to the Hardy, Anderson and Lane families for their prayers. Special shout-out to my students at schools in TX, FL, NYC and MA for challenging my hip-hop ideas and telling me people needed this dissertation. Big thanks to all of my colleagues, homies, and Twitter fam who came through for me. Special thanks to MJ for her support, insight, and edits; I could not have finished this without you. Thank you for restoring my confidence. Lastly thanks to my parents LH and BH for being the best. I am forever indebted to all of you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The slang, attitude, cultural memory, creativity and innovation of African diasporic youth created a global cultural movement-hip-hop--that informs all aspects of our society. In this dissertation; however, I examine how post-soul hip-hop featured black cultural conversations, specifically the 'conversation' between Jay-Z and his imagined black audience. Over the past 25 years Jay-Z has been known as one of the most acclaimed and successful recording artists of his time; however this study examines what I term his *black sincerity rhetoric (BSR).* At times Jay-Z is praised for his commitment to community in verse; and at times he is rejected and criticized by his imagined audience. In short, I look at one of the most prominent rhetors in recent times and particularly his discourse seeking to affirm allegiance, kinship and *consubstantiality* with black audiences at the end of the post-soul era (1982-2008) via my theory of BSR. In this project I examine his discography through a hip-hop like mélange of Kenneth Burke, hip-hop scholarship and African American rhetoric studies. Burke's trenchant belief in the poet as the ultimate rhetor and poetry as conduit for communion is concomitant with AAR valorization of the "word" as a means of black reunion. I engage in a close textual analysis informed by these conceptual schools to examine how Jay-Z's black sincerity rhetoric adjusts, negotiates and transforms over this period. Indeed, this project provides an exemplar and method for making sense of black discourse concerned with maintaining cultural ties. The analysis demonstrates that appealing to and finding consubstantiality with black audiences in this era and beyond requires repeated, creative performances of sincerity. This project highlights how Jay's style of *BSR* has informed a generation of black rhetors. Indeed, Barack Obama is regarded is one of the greatest speakers of our time and even he will tell you he was listening to Jay-Z before his most notable speeches.

WHEN I RHYME IT'S SINCERELY YOURS: BURKEAN IDENTIFICATION & JAY-Z'S BLACK SINCERITY RHETORIC IN THE POST-SOUL ERA

We see the process of identification in its simplest form, when the music lover clamorously admires a particular composer and so shares vicariously in the composers' attainments.[1] Kenneth Burke

It is one thing for young people to see rappers making appearances on MTV or to see their records fly up the charts. But it is another thing for a young boy from the hood to go into the library at his school and check out a book on why his culture matters-Jay-Z 2010[2]

This study is a critical examination of hip-hop music as a form of African American rhetoric. I view hip-hop musical performances as a rhetoric that is concerned with African American identity. Issues of African American identity constitute primary themes of hip-hop music and when viewed as rhetoric, one can identify the ontological, gendered, social and cultural function of this discourse as it seeks to find acceptance from African American audiences. In this project, I position Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter as a poet of the post soul generation who rhetorically deployed modes of identification to find acceptance for his discourse by African American audiences. This dissertation features Jay-Z as an exemplar of what I have characterized as *Black sincerity rhetoric. Black sincerity rhetoric* is at work when Black folk discuss, interrogate, challenge and declare their commitments to Black communities, codes, traditions and mores as a means of persuasion to affirm personhood, respect, acceptance and kinship with imagined Black audiences. *Black sincerity rhetoric* achieves consubstantiality or a sharing of substance with Black audiences when a Black rhetor develops and deploys an ethos of sincerity that speaks to the "commonplaces or topics, which are survey of the audience's opinions[3]" and rings as genuine with imagined Black audiences.

The dialectic of Black public speakers being "joined yet separate" from Black audiences has been a reoccurring topic of inquiry for many scholars attempting to analyze Black public rhetors.[4] Indeed, the negotiation of individual and communal responsibilities is a main thematic concern in Black cultural productions post integration. This particular examination of what is known as the later *post-soul* era, saw Blacks populating previously barred spaces but also a decline in Black public spaces; thus as Nunley detailed specifically in the late 90s-early 00s, a demand for Black public speakers to demonstrate care, concern and

commitment-sincerity to Black audiences-- emerges in public discourse.[5] Post-Soul Hip-hop music of the 90s and aughts was a unique space where the issues of Black folk doing for self but also doing it for the "community" was interrogated, discussed and refashioned. The music reflected the ambivalent anxiety of doing for self and the community when one achieved mainstream success or acceptance.[6]

Hence, this project analyzes how Jay-Z deployed a post soul *ethos of sincerity* to transcend the emergent issues of being "joined yet separate" from his core audience at this time: post-soul Black folk. This project focuses on the rhetors work from 1995-2007, as this project extends scholarly discussions that contend that Jay-Z's "lyrical oeuvre represents an epic tale of him sizing up his situation for himself and his audience over the past 20 years, (84)".[7] Indeed, I believe an examination of the lyrical discourse of his first decade provides readers a significant exemplar of my concept of *Black sincerity rhetoric.* Jay-Z's ability to adapt, adjust and align himself with Black audiences whilst being a mainstream figure through his rhetorical performance exemplifies my interest in Black public speakers attempts to affirm sincerity. Michael Eric Dyson, a pioneer in hip-hop rhetorical studies, recently contended that Jay-Z is one of the great rhetoricians of our time and demands critical inquiry:

> In many ways, this is Jay-Z's America as much as it's Obama's America, or Trump's America, or Martin Luther King's America, or Maxine Waters' America Jay-Z has given this country a language to think with and words to live by, and his lyrics have shaped the self-understanding of a culture that grapples with race and injustice and inequality every day. He's an important thinker and artist. [8]

Dyson highlights one of my main entryways into Jay-Z discourse. My project is concerned with a rhetorical analysis of Jay-Z's conversation with Black culture, and the grammar and language he has used to find acceptance by his "culture." Moreover, Dyson's words hint at the notion of how in his career Jay-Z developed an ethos—a character and a *dwelling* space that influenced how America and particularly post soul Black culture discussed, communicated and attempted to make sense of the psycho-social challenges of being Black in America.

As a critic and fan of Jay-Z's music, his continued dialogue with Black audiences always intrigued me. For long-time Jay-Z fans, we have heard him claim to never forget his Brooklyn neighborhood and how he finds pride in the communities' attempts to achieve their dreams on "Hard Knock Life." Or in latter works such as "Murder to Excellence" he states, "power to the people, when you see me, see you,"—configuring

himself as a symbol of Black excellence and sharing substance with his Black audience. Extending this theme of representation, later in the song, he is found lamenting that himself, Will Smith and Oprah are THE token Black representatives in a room of "successful people," implying that there are still more glass ceilings for Black folk to break and inequality exists despite his personal gains. While in the next breath he may complain about Black folks criticizing his business moves or his silence on social issues claiming that he is trying "to represent us, Black folk, hip-hop, or as I say my culture. . . to represent us like we've never been represented before, I just want people to know I am an extension of you. Don't hassle me I am out here trying to help you, you feel me?"[9] Such statements speak to a rhetorical motive of finding c*onsubstantiality* with your community and a desire to be viewed as a community spokesperson not simply an enterprising artist. Listening to his discography, this identity dialectic of" doing it for us and doing it for him, "is abundant in the music; and before I knew what rhetoric was, I have always been interested in this dynamic, this ongoing conversation of doing for self and audience.

In this dissertation I examine Jay-'Z's "prime" output to understand how Jay Z developed and distributed his *BSR through* a*n ethos of Black sincerity* to invoke rhetorical identification with Black cultural communities and at times, transcend and fail the essential identification dialectic of poet and audience: the two being "joined yet separate."[10] In the early 2000s, Jay-Z was arguably the most popular Black voice in hip-hop. His discussion of his individual desires and communal commitments imbue his post-soul discography.[11] Historian Jelani Cobb has argued that Jay-Z was, "One of the first acts in hip-hop history to find equilibrium between their core and mainstream audiences, it will have to be acknowledged that he is the greatest of his generation. (p.150.).[12] this project is interested in how he achieved this rhetorically at the tail end of the post soul era.[13] Dyson is right when he argued hip-hop features some of the greatest rhetoricians of our time and their work deserves critical inquiry.[14] I suggest that studying Jigga's[15] discourse and discography as *Black sincerity rhetoric* offers a novel approach for studying African American rhetoric. In this next section, I give a brief introduction on hip-hop and its focus on identity and rhetorical identification. Next, I refer to African American rhetoric scholarship, which situates hip-hop as an exemplar of enduring Black rhetorical traditions and a site of critical conversations about identity. I then delineate the key themes my rhetorical criticism will

explore. The introduction closes with a brief discussion of Burkean identification as a method for charting *Black sincerity rhetoric* of Jay-Z

Hip-Hop, Identity, and Rhetorical Identification

In the span of nearly forty-five years, hip-hop culture[16] has evolved from a localized urban culture into an American cultural movement. Hip-hop culture is a pedagogy; a form of social praxis. Hip-hop is a technological folk culture, a billion-dollar business and America's most influential movement of the past 50 years.[17] Fashioned through the experiences and outlooks of African diasporic urban youth, hip-hop culture became "the canvas upon which many people the world over, craft their identities."[18] Certainly, hip-hop culture features multi-cultural fans and artists; however, as Krims[19] argued hip-hop predominately has featured "poetics of Black identity (p.26)." Or as writer Jury recently argued hip-hop still mainly mines from African American culture as the wellspring for sound, slang, topics and performance despite a global fan base.[20] Music has long been a site for youth identity formation, but hip-hop is unique due to its ostensible discussion of the lived experiences and communities Black folks inhabit.[21] Bakari Kitwana, reminds us that "Hip-hop gave Black youth audiences across the country who identified with it and were informed by it a medium to share common ideas, experiences and perspectives" (p.48).[22] Hip-hop music is a critical site, where meanings of Black identity circulate and as a popular discourse, it informs and motivates the common sense understandings of Black identity in our culture.

In relation, scholars argue that hip-hop music features an ongoing communal discourse, between Black artists and audiences.[23] Jay-Z is not the inventor of such, but his aural oeuvre from "Hard Knock Life" in 1998 to "4:44" in 2016 exemplifies the hip-hop song as a communal discourse; particularly about his relationship with his imagined community of Black listeners. We see it currently in contemporary hip-hop. Whether it's Grammy winner Kendrick Lamar discussing being seduced by the root of all evil Lucifer, while trying to maintain his sincerity with his Compton community and Black audience on the acclaimed album *To pimp a butterfly*[24]. Or NC artist J. Cole whose *Forest Hills Drive* is an album dedicated to rejecting mainstream acclaim and staying committed to Black uplift and his rural NC community[25], or polarizing superstar Kanye West's *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* an album dedicated to his indulgence in his individual desires and his

disconnection from community. Thus, this project features Jay-Z as an innovator on this Black cultural tradition of negotiating being committed to one's 'hood and doing for self; that has informed contemporary hip-hop discourse

Hip-hop features a use of Burkean identification, a rhetorical strategy where voices "suggest common viewpoints, values, experiences and ties of kinship to connect with their audience" (p.133).[26] My study is interested in how Jay-Z deployed common viewpoints and ties of kinship with Black audiences to maintain a connection throughout his career. I contend we can chart his work functioning as modes of identification vis a vis an ethos of Black sincerity; a character of sincerity that emphasizes genuine care and concerns and testimony about these ties of kinship. As discussed in my first book *Loving the Cool,*[27] this project continues a discussion and analysis of black male rappers discourse and rhetorical ethos functioning as a mode of identification and a dwelling space where rappers and their imagined Black audiences attempt to "know-together" matters that concern self and community. No doubt, hip-hop is a global phenomenon that speaks to all cultures, but I am interested in the ongoing conversations about rappers declaring they are "still down" with Black communities, despite their mainstream success and economic distance. Furthermore, this project continues my look at black masculine discourses as a critical site for rhetorical inquiry. Similar to the southern Pentecostal preacher, hip-hop rhetoric privileges the interconnectedness of the rhetor with the audience.[28]

This interconnectedness of Black bodies via discourse is rooted in Black rhetorical traditions that featured a focus on three integral common topics of Black identity seen here: "expressive narratives of an individual's everyday life" (authenticity), a belief in "the transformative power of words" as a rhetorical tradition (Blackness/nommo),[29] and an emphasis on communalism (Community). In order to articulate a Black identity in historical and contemporary Black cultural expressions.[30] Angela Davis suggests the above themes, are the "essence of Black song," as historically Black singers have expressed their personal testimony, employing aesthetic and communicative traditions rooted of their cultural past and cultivating a personal voice, while simultaneously giving voice to the yearnings of their community. [31]

In this study, I situate hip-hop music as a part of this Black rhetorical continuum, as it retains and reanimates these African American rhetorical traditions geared towards communalism and connection in song. Important to this project, Davis derides the idea of African American rhetorics viewed only in relation to resisting white discourse. The scholarly focus solely on oppositional discourse is vital to understanding hip-hop as a social force; however, this perspective ignores the rhetorical situations and practices geared towards African American sense making within their communal cultures. In agreement, Wright and Kynard[32] have argued against the limited view that the rhetoric of African Americans primarily work to protest oppressive conditions. Thus, Kynard contends that African American rhetoric (AAR) in Black music emerges out of the social world and Black consciousness in which it is constructed" and reshapes and creates new social worlds. Richardson has further argued, *AAR* emanates from Black people's socioeconomic, cultural, and historical experiences and hip-hop is one of the richest sources for examining this in public discourse.[33]

In relation to this study's interrogation of sincerity, Adam Banks contends *AAR* speaks to the way Black folks negotiate intra-communal tensions and communicate with each other.[34] Indeed, *AAR* is what gets said in stories, dance, song, and everyday banter, and, as such, it communicates belief systems, social values, a sense of the past, notions of shared identity, and communal aspirations.[35] It is a concerted focus on rhetor and audience's co-production of meaning. As a marginalized group; however, historically only select members garner the opportunity to express their identities to the public. Thus, as Lubiano[36] has argued, Black voices throughout history deal with the pressure to reconcile the ability to speak for the 'we (Black collective)' and articulate the 'me' simultaneously in cultural expressions. In particular, post soul scholar Bambi Haggins identified how this was the dominant dialectic of the 90s and early aughts post soul generation; deploying rhetoric that continues to speak to Black experiences in an era of integration and social assimilation.[37] Thus, this project reflects on and contributes to critical conversations about the dialectical tension between individual and community demands that arise when looking at post-soul rhetors (speakers born 1965-1988).[38] This study employs a Burkean lens of viewing the rap rhetor as a poet seeking to find acceptance and to share common substance with an imagined Black audience. Along with Burke's concept of identification, I identify three primary commonplaces that emerge when looking at Black sincerity rhetoric.

Topoi of Black Sincerity Rhetoric: Authenticity, Blackness and Community

In critical scholarship on Black media, many scholars have noted that issues of authenticity, Blackness and community emerge as key themes[39]--let's call them *ABC's of Black sincerity*. As common topics of African American discourse, I style these themes with the rhetorical term *topoi*, serving as broad fertile common places where artists and rhetors go to find arguments germane to articulations of a sincere identity. I discuss each in more detail in the methodology, but I want to introduce topoi as a key term. Topoi can be understood as "a bit of knowledge that is commonly understood among a given audience or community via rhetorical praxis."[40] Nunley's work on *hush harbor rhetoric* greatly informs my project, with his claim that certain commonplaces and the tropes, and figures imbued in them, circulate with "such volume in African American communities that they become entangled with African American's subjective experience of themselves."[41] Knowledge of African American commonplaces he argued is what makes Black speakers "consubstantial" with Black audiences, Kenneth Burke's term for the existential sense of unity between speaker and audience. Hence, topoi are more than resources of persuasion; they resonate due to the ability of the speaker to use these topoi to connect audiences with their rhetoric.

Commonplace topics provided orators with a stock of familiar material to which audiences often responded positively. Nordvquist reminds us that *topoi* are stock formulas such as puns, proverbs and cause and effect.[42] I propose authenticity, Blackness and community function as common places for Black rhetors to find stock formulas of Black autobiography, signifying, and communalism. I find the term *topoi* useful because it reveals these themes as constructed in and through discourse and this is the perspective from which I wish to view hip-hop music. Hip-hop retains and animates Black oral traditions, strategies and topics, but its core strength is in how hip-hop accommodates these traditions for new situations and changing realities. Viewing these topoi as discursive tools we see how these themes are expressed via language and not fixed, but unstable notions subject to be altered or transformed over time in their usage. These discursive common topics are not merely conventions of discourse but reflect social and political concerns of Black folk. Given their weight, a range of scholars argue that these topoi reflect recurring issues and concerns that particularly reflect the struggles over *AAR* throughout history.[43] Rhetorician Eric K. Watts has argued that

often, Black public identities act as spokespersons, which intentionally and unintentionally represent Black people in the public sphere, and in the process animate notions of authenticity, Blackness and community to the public sphere.[44]

W.E.B. Du Bois most notably addressed this pressure/paradox of representation in his theory of Black double consciousness, arguing that Black identity was informed by an *existential negotiation* between American individualism and African collectivism. Du Bois claims that it is the ongoing struggle of Black folk to reconcile these "two warring souls" of self, in American public culture. I read Du Bois, in the context of my argument, as articulating the dilemma of trying to express the dialectics of Black identification—speaking for self and community. Post-Soul Rappers similar to other Black public figures tried to negotiate the impulse of American individualism and capitalist desires of success versus the African collectivism ethic of never forgetting home in their music. This identification dialectic is what makes African American rhetoric distinct yet complex. As discourse, these arguments shift and turn imbued by historical fragments, but contingent on the cultural, and political landscape in which they express. In relation to music, Guthrie Ramsey[45] has argued Black music is a site where the tension between individual and communal identity is animated. I believe these topoi of Black sincerity can highlight how these common topics of Black identity are deployed in hip-hop discourse and generate a rhetorical equilibrium between the warring individual and collective. The rhetorical concept of identification is uniquely suited for the dialectic of individual and communal for Black speakers in hip-hop.

Burkean Identification

The common definition of Burke's notion of identification is that: "you persuade a person only insofar as you can talk their language by speech, tonality, etc." *Identifying* your ways with theirs [sic].[46] However, this project is also guided by Burke's earlier discussion of identification and the poet as spokesman:

> Let's suppose identification as one's material and mental ways of placing oneself as a person in the groups and movements; one's ways of sharing vicariously in the role of leader or spokesman; formation and change of allegiance; the rituals . . . the modes of initiation and purification, that are involved in the response to allegiance and change of allegiance; the part necessarily played by groups in the expectancies of the individual. . . one's ways of seeing one's reflection in the social mirror (p.228)[47]

For Burke identification was more than advice for persuasion; it is a theory geared towards exploring the use of language to mediate social unity and personal identity; a strategy for developing and building one's character with one's desired audience, a positioning of rhetor as social spokesperson. The key to identification according to Quigley is the speaker creating a sense of social unity—*consubstantiality* is the term for this sharing of substance between audience and speaker of a chosen society.[48] Moreover, she contends that *identification as representation* is the most visible form of Burke's theory in contemporary culture. In connection, Sciso[49] has argued that identification for public rhetors is a habitual performance, where an audience publicly acknowledges one's *ethos*[50]. Thus, I propose analyzing Jay-Z's discourse as employing a use of ethos as a particular mode of identification; Black sincerity rhetoric geared to "represent" for post soul audiences during his 1996-2007 era. Burke posits that while individuals seek consubstantiality and shared substance with each other via identification, individuals also have exclusive perspectives, observations and pains fueled by individual motives. Therefore, Burke suggests that one is "both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial (sharing substance) with another" and identification is predicated on negotiating this dialectical tension (p.21).[51] Burke explains that in the act of rhetorical identification, the poet represents not only himself, his story but "the [the poet] speaks for an audience sometimes demarcated in 'addressed' tone, he represents his constituents" (229). His discussion of a rhetor's identity as negotiated--joined yet separated—is central to my concept of Black sincerity rhetoric. In the next section, I discuss how negotiating this dialectic was a key concern of the post-soul generation's modes of identification and how my project contributes to post-soul scholarship.

Post Soul Generation

"Post soul" was a cultural label coined by writer Nelson George to assess Black cultural production by the generation born between the nadir of the civil rights era and the late Reagan era.[52] Neal and Deburg[53] theorize that while the politics and Black cultural production of the civil-rights/soul generation emphasized "the we" in 'we shall overcome' and a fictive but effective homogenous Black unity, the post soul generation was marked by negotiating an ardent desire for individuality and non-essentialism. The negotiation of the *me*

and the we defines the first wave of post soul. Pamela Lordi[54] recently explained that this culture expression of the mid-80s to late aughts was informed by a:

> specific African American experience of post-1960s postmodernity—an era marked by heightened intraracial class divisions, a lapse in Black organizational energy in the wake of COINTELPRO, the massive commercialization of Black popular culture, a fracturing of Black identitarian politics, and an expansive sense of cultural and social possibility for middle-class beneficiaries of civil rights-era gains (p.1).

The quote above highlights how the incongruities of the post-soul era inform the incongruities of the era's art, as movies, literature and music often spoke to and about these dialectics of Black postmodernity. Schinko has argued that "if soul is linked to the emancipatory need [to speak] in one strong voice of solidarity, post-soul stresses internal differentiation and in particular "openness" to the affective, mass appeal of popular culture (p. 124).[55] The post soul era according to Lordi: "denotes a fundamental generation and historical shift from the civil rights era and its emphasis on solidarity as indicative of Black identity, is to signal a fundamental shift of individuality as a valuable resource of community."[56] Zandria Robinson notes, post-soul generally denoted Black culture, whereas post–civil rights era denotes "political and socioeconomic" concerns.[57] In particular, George explains that hip-hop music of the post-soul generation[58] was geared to these "contradictions" and incongruities, using its ironic position as folk culture to improve one's economic situation", symbolizing key features of what Deburg calls the "negotiated identities of the post soul generation.[59]"

For example, since the mid-90s, many hip-hop artists evoked a desire to speak the "truth" of their community yet desired mainstream pop success; they questioned and challenged common notions held by their elders. A range of artists offered self and communal critique of Black identity, revered and praised Black culture and consciousness; but felt constrained by the notion that they must speak for their whole race. Paradoxically, they "had a desire to reconstitute and maintain notions of community" in their discourse.[60] Music scholar Wright sums up this ontological tension when she argues that her early aughts' peers struggled to find a liminal space between a "hyper-collective essentialist identity that subjugates the self and the hyper individualized identity that annihilates the support of a collective" (p.18).[61] Post soul theorists have argued hip-hop reflects and informs the issues of *liminality*[62] visible in post-soul culture. Yet outside of Neal's' mid

aughts work, post soul scholarship is mentioned but rarely interrogated hip-hop discourse. However, the arrival of the first post-soul president and his relationship with rapper Jay-Z, demonstrated the connection between rap and post soul generation.

Betram Ashe's analysis of Obama's autobiography situates him as an embodiment of the post soul era. Ashe notes Barry embracing a Black identity despite not being "traditionally" Black, challenging the civil rights generation and the idea of homogenous Black community/ authentic Black identity yet speaks and critiques specific problems in Black communities, went back to work in these communities and invokes Black kinship in cultural codes, gestures and actions. Obama himself noted the civil rights generation often created an essentialist constraint on Black identity but his generation sampled their best aspects like a rapper to create their own ethos. Ashe argues that Obama and his acceptance by Black audiences demonstrated how the post soul generation viewed Black identity as varied not essential.[63] Interestingly, a noted Jay-Z fan, Obama recently explained in 2017 video, that Jay-Z's was inspirational to him and many of his generation due to his expressed commitment to self and community:

> I like to think Mr. Carter and I understand each other. Nobody who met us as younger men would have expected us to be where we are today. We know what it's like to not have a father around. We know what it's like to not come from much. And to know that people didn't get the same breaks that we did; so we try to prop up the doors of opportunity so that it's a little easier for those who come up behind us to succeed as well. I have been listening to Jay since a young hungry state senator. I sampled his lyrics to close my speech at Selma, I tweeted a reference to "My first song" to the finish touches of my state of the union address…Jay-Z once said something that struck me "I never looked at myself and said I need to be a certain way to be around a certain type of people. I have always wanted to stay true to myself and I have managed to do that. People have to accept that.[64]

In short, Obama explains the post soul audience relationship with Jay-Z and later his own symbolic relationship with this audience. Obama is correct, that Jay-Z inspired many of his generation that they did not have to water down their Black identity to succeed in the white world, even a future president. In 1996, few would think a U.S. American president would praise Jay-Z, a high school dropout and self-proclaimed former drug dealer, as a foundational influencer of his rhetoric. Yet, the quote demonstrates Obama's identification with Jay-Z's character, his values, how Jay's ethos of staying true to self speaks to communal values Obama and other Black folk praised from 96-08. Infiltrating the American imagination without assimilation or selling out; whilst having a desire for the Black community to benefit from increased social access gains of the soul

era are prime goals of the post soul era.[65] For those Black citizens who identified with their discourse, Jay-Z and Obama are exemplars of benefiting from increased access but not forgetting where they came from as the adage goes.

The concept that Jay-Z's mission for self and his desire to 'touch a billion" can coexist with the notion that he aids the community by "propping open doors of opportunity and giving inspiration" encapsulate why I study him as an exemplar of post soul era and BSR. Simply put, I contend Jay's use of Black sincerity rhetoric/identification created this sense of consubstantiality with audiences who felt his individual wins inspired the community. Thus, as Burke says in the opening epigraph, the audiences vicariously shares in the attainments of the musician where fans including Barack feel Jay-Z transcends the dialectic of being joined yet separate. When Jay-Z remarks on record, "I'm part of the reason the president is Black."[66] Carter is not just praising his fundraising but that in his view, his discourse aided the acceptance of someone adored by white audiences but considered sincere and a part of the Black community in the Black public sphere.

Jay-Z is vital to understanding the post soul era, I posit he functioned as a mediator and bridge between the ghetto citizens and upwardly mobile middle-class Black citizens—that both identified with Jay-Z. My project expands on Nicole Persley's assertion that Jay-Z lyrical oeuvre "remixes the folk and bourgeois," using his experience with both to mediate intra-racial conflict.[67] His *Black sincerity rhetoric* is what Burke calls a "bridging device" for a Black audience fragmented by class and region. Bridging devices are rhetorical acts of transcendence, or "symbolic structure whereby one transcends a conflict" or sense of division. Burke contends this is only possible through acts of identification. Jay-Z's incongruous discussion of his past hood origins and his contemporary corporate success was appropriate for the incongruity of the post-soul generation. The efficacy, impact and resonance of Jay-Z's *Black sincerity rhetoric* with a wide demographic of the post soul generation are why a critical study of his post soul work is so vital.

Purpose and Overview

My study employs a close textual analysis of a Jay-Z and his critical conversation—Black sincerity rhetoric-- with imagined Black audiences throughout the late post soul era. The purpose of this study is to

interrogate, chart and analyze Jay-Z's post soul discography as a unique mode of identification employing what I term an *ethos of Black sincerity*. In listening to hip-hop albums as discursive spaces, this project expands on the use of Burke in rhetorical criticism.[68] Burke's work informs my critical lens to track the procedure of a rap rhetor establishing a sincere ethos as a mode of identification with post-soul audiences. As Burke discussed authors, poets and playwrights; this project proposes that Burke's focus on poet and audience and particularly identity and community is uniquely equipped to interrogate Jay-Z's work. Furthermore, this project expands the view of identification as a focus on maintaining membership in community via rhetorical "moments of overlap"[69] that make speaker and audience feel consubstantial.

This dissertation also contributes to the growing field of hip-hop scholarship concerning Jay-Z discourse. Since 1999 there has been scholarly work on Carter; however in the past 9 years a deluge of books, dissertations, documentaries and several journal articles have examined Jay-Z in the fields of sociology, literature, and economics to name a few.[70] Yet, in the field of rhetoric and communication studies, a paucity of works on hip-hop discourse exists. Burke's theory of identification through a lens of hip-hop scholarship is a novel approach that expands and enriches the borders of cultural criticism. In the following section I detail my critical lens for analyzing Jay-z's discourse: a hip-hop mix of common topoi and Burkean theory and African American cultural criticism. I begin with a brief explanation of my rhetorical theory of *Black sincerity rhetoric* and the key terms that guide my analysis.

Critical Lens and Methodology

In the act of rhetorical identification, the poet represents not only himself, his story, or his interests but also his readers. Burke implores that "he speaks for an audience sometimes demarcated in 'addressed' tone; he represents his constituents (227)."[71] A critical belief of Burke is that we should view the poet as a spokesperson of a communal culture and view said poets' poems—acts of identification seeking to find a place in community---as collective poems of communal attitudes. In the 21st century era of popular culture, no poet has framed himself as a spokesperson for self and his demarcated community more than Jay-Z aka Shawn Carter.[72] The self-professed "voice of the young people," once regaled in a Charlie Rose interview, that he feels a responsibility to give voice to Black bodies in the ghetto, but also writes in his book of rhymes

Decoded[73] of his responsibility to be true to his personal motives and things he has experienced—the "me" and the "we". My scholarly contribution looks at this epic oeuvre through a Burkean critical lens to highlight how in this *discography as bildungsroman,* Jay Z developed and deployed Black sincerity rhetoric via an ethos of post-soul sincerity grounded in identification. I examine the albums as critical music reviews focusing on the rhetorical aspects of the discourse. I am inspired by John Jackson's ethnographic work, which introduced the term *racial sincerity* as an alternative to authenticity in Black discourse. Jackson defines racial sincerity as the act of Black public speakers using their personal performance as a liaison for Black emotions without ascribing to essentialist notions of Black authenticity (p.13).[74] The anthropologist points to rappers such as Mos Def and Jay-Z as examples of sincerity, the latter via his nods to community in the face of mainstream success. In relation, Katie Rose has argued this concept of sincerity privileges the interiority of intraracial communication in hip-hop and its audiences instead of a restrictive script of authenticity.[75]

Jacksons' concept of *racial sincerity* informs my belief that in the late post soul era, audiences wanted sincerity not just a script of "street" authenticity, but voices that spoke to their communal realities while advocating for social mobility and a "way out" of social constraints. Thereby, hip-hop discourse at this time was often resisting what Randall Kennedy (2002, p. iv)[76] coins "sellout rhetoric," discourse that claims that Black public figures are no longer committed to cultural and political notions of community. *BSR* is a rejoinder to sellout rhetoric as identification is employed to counter claims of disloyalty. As Kennedy succinctly explains, in order to claim and maintain kinship and belonging to a group there is an evaluation based on community standards.

Nunley's work combines *AAR* and Burke and inspires my method of analyzing Black sincerity rhetoric/identification. When Nunley states: "For a speaker to become what Kenneth Burke terms "consubstantial" with an African American audience skin is not guaranteed. African American common places and the tropes and epistemologies connected to them are what get your rhetorical documents stamped and approved as "consubstantial (p.232)."[77] Moreover, Nunley demonstrates how an application of Burkean identification and African American commonplaces in combination are how one gets their Black rhetor card "stamped" or approved as sincere. The following sections highlight these *topoi* of *post soul sincerity as* well as

Burkean identification in an African American register. However, along with these concepts it is important to define how I am using sincerity in this project. In particular, in proposing the concept of *BSR and an ethos of sincerity*, it was a choice to document the ethic I hear inherent in Jay-Z's discourses designed to show kinship with the audience.

Sincerity

In this project I use sincerity specifically, as an alternative ethic to authenticity in hip-hop because much of the 90s research focused on the idea of whether a figure was authentically Black, which presupposed a fake Black.[78] I find that definition limiting and unfair to Black audiences whose enjoyment I argue is more complex than identifying with essential Blackness. Rhetorician Kermit Campbell's[79] work details how Black audiences identified with the realities discussed in rap music. Some rap scholars often argued that authenticity was static, only focused on Black urban criminals and focused on how it constrained Black expression and reified stereotypes. However, as Neal has argued most hip-hop fans were not that monolithic in their evaluation, a rap-sheet wasn't enough to make your rhetoric accepted.[80] Moreover, as a fan and a critic I heard Black fans wanting honest artists not just caricatures of gangsters.[81] In particular, in 2013 I spoke with the late Bushwick Bill of the pioneering rap group The Geto Boys and asked him if authenticity or sincerity was most important for his 90s heyday, he explained that audiences want rappers that "care, that are sincere that's why we love 2pac, Biggie, Scarface --we believed they loved us. Anybody can appear authentic but we can hear sincerity."[82]

Thus, that is the ethic that I think defined the post-soul era; the belief that as the Jay-Z lyric goes, that they still loved "us" Black folk despite mainstream acceptance. As rappers bank accounts grew, we listened for who still seemed to love the culture, loved the community, and simply put we felt spoke to us.[83] Post soul audiences demanded *Black sincerity rhetoric* from their popular speakers. Sincerity is a performance as Lionel Trilling tells us, in which "we play the role of ourselves, we present ourselves as what we want our community to know we are" (pp10-11)."[84] This is the defining ethic of public rhetors even in rap, where rhetors present songs that declare they reflect their communities' values. The irony is that an attempt to "perform" sincerity, one can be deemed fake. Meaning that the perception of performing sincerity is often

viewed as pandering and inauthentic... And in hip-hop being viewed as fake, especially in the post soul era was a death sentence for an artist. I agree with Trilling's claim especially when applied to rap that, "sincerity demands that you are who YOU want audiences to believe you are, and that you think you owe it to them to keep up this relationship."

For marginalized groups, questions of sincerity emerge with social shifts such as desegregation-the beginning of the post soul era. Thus, maintaining sincerity with one's ethnic group in a world devoid of legal segregation produced a post-civil right need to perform a rhetoric of sincerity that "keeps up the relationship" of being joined and not wholly separate from Black communities. Interestingly, Hannah Arednt offers a helpful perspective with her argument that the use of "rhetorics of sincerity" demonstrate how identity is predicated on "a negotiating of inner emotions/desires and one's public responsibilities; a recognition of how those desires alienate or connect you to communities which invariably help construct your identity."[85]

In other words, *rhetorics of sincerity* are grounded in a negotiation of individual and communal demands—identification and an awareness of common places of sincerity that connect public rhetors to their communities. As Nunley once explained, when Black public figures of the post soul era, spoke up for Black causes and Black neighborhood concerns it was highly valued by Black audiences with few public platforms.[86] Stuart Hall contended that Black bodies ways of representing self are an "altruistic perspective in the way places, people, and objects are imagined; not a script of authenticity, therefore, these media-scapes are socially constructed norms that are shared within communities."[87] Instead of an essential Black identity, sincerity as ethical lens and rhetorical strategy gestures toward communicating credibility and honesty with the audience; not performing a restrictive script of behavior.

In his ethnographic hip-hop work, Jeffries explains how Jackson's concept of sincerity frees up hip-hop scholars, "he theorizes racial sincerity as a non-essentialist form of racial realness that is based on interpersonal knowledge and mutually respectful relationships with others who presume one another's humanity and shared communal commitment." Jeffries highlights the crux of my argument when he[88] contends "rap authenticity as [90s scholars discussed] is better understood as sincerity. That is repeated efforts of performers to build connections among themselves and with their audiences (p.74)." I contend

rappers such as Jay- Z have to employ repeated performances of sincerity via songs to demonstrate that they share communal concerns, desires and experiences of their Black listeners. Rhetorical critic Mickey Hess[89] co-signs this: "For the rap artist, internal convictions or personal sincerity can extend to careerism and consumerism," as the rap career finds them mediating career, personal and audience demands. Trilling explained that sincerity demands "individuals must demonstrate that they are "who they want their community to believe they are."[90] Thus, sincerity is a perspective and critical lens for understanding Jay-Z discourse geared to convince audiences he is what he wants the community to see him as despite the growing economic gap between him and his core Black audience as he garners more success. Sincerity is also closely associated with ethos—a speaker's character.

In classical rhetoric, sincerity is a corollary of ethos, as Tempest[91] argues in her discussion of Cicero. In particular, she contends that Cicero wanted his audience to perceive his persona as sincere, and in order to understand how he presented his persona as persuasive and credible we must look at "how he created an *ethos of sincerity* (266.)." Altes argues sincerity belongs to ethos as it contributes to an overall impact of one's rhetoric seen as trustworthy and concerned with the demos-the people. Moreover, Wisse argues that sincerity aids the ethos of a speaker by helping the audience "feel the emotions of the speaker as trusted emotions," as an *ethos of sincerity* seeks to engender sympathy and identification with the audience.[92] Classic sincerity rhetoric was produced via an *ethos of sincerity*. *Black sincerity rhetoric* is produced via a *post-soul ethos of sincerity.* In this dissertation, this means that appeals to authenticity, Blackness and community in Jay-Z lyrics work interdependently to establish his *ethos of sincerity and ground his BSR.* Invocations of the topos of authenticity are ingredients of sincerity, as Picket has written recently, you cannot have sincerity without claims of authenticity, as authentic claims are made to bolster your sincerity—it does not work the other way around.[93] Hip-hop's philosophy ordains that one tells one's personal perspective—no one else's story—yet reflect the experiences of the local and listening community. Hip-hop demands an enactment of liminal harmony between the motives, desires, and experiences, imagination of the rapper and hip-hop's base Black audiences.

Allen Moore music work helps us in this discussion of audience identification and its connection to sincerity.[94] Moore argues that in music, audiences authenticate if the performer succeeds in conveying the

impression that his or her expression has integrity and the audience interprets their particular acts and gestures as conveying sincerity, when a listeners values are validated by the performance and when the speakers work is grounded in a communal tradition. I propose Black audiences begin to authenticate rap rhetors as sincere via the commonplaces of Black sincerity. In the next section, I look at the commonplaces of Black sincerity: authenticity, Blackness, and community as spaces of invention. Authenticity is a highly researched and contested term too broad for this project to cover. Instead, I briefly review literature that discusses authenticity as a rhetorical trope for Black sincerity rhetorics and a commonplace for the invention of an ethos of sincerity.

Authenticity

In critical studies of Black culture, scholars have long interrogated authenticity in relation to mediated representations of identity and notions of racial essentialism. Hence an emphasis on "telling it like it is," testifying the truth, in Black cultural expressions acts as an intervention that offers counter-truths to white racism—oppositional discourse[95]. Eversley[96] has argued that post-emancipation, Blacks turned to their folk origins and country practices to affirm an "authentic Black culture" that was oppositional to white culture. Moreover, for an ethnic group united by shared oppression, "authenticity" or an identity was a means to "close ranks" and unify Black folks. Debates and tensions over "which" authentic Black identity should represent the race have thrived since the early minstrel shows and Harlem Renaissance. Critics note that the anxiety towards assimilation of the late 60s and early 1970s, informed the militancy of the *Black is/Black ain't* debates and sell out accusations in Black public discourse[97] .

In music, Neal claimed that while the ghetto advocate singer of the 70s inspired racial pride and gave voice to urban struggle, they articulated a constraining Black authenticity that reflected the exclusionary tone of the Black power movements. In communication studies, Ronald Jackson has argued that hip-hop's focus on authenticity, sells the mythic idea that there is only one "real Black identity" and that was a street ghetto identity heard in popular hip-hop, that he argues perniciously affects middle class Black youth. Judy [98] for instance called it "nigga authenticity," the strategic selling of constructed images of Black rebellion by ghetto youth as a means of garnering success in a capitalist world." I recognize and agree that essentialist notions of

Black authenticity can be a constraint to Black individuality and that Black authenticity is a cultural commodity.

In my dissertation, however I look at and discuss authenticity as an expansive rhetorical tool, trope, and common topic. The above research is vital to understanding and discussing many issues of identity and representation in Black cultural expression and the role of authenticity in commodifying Black bodies. My interests, however, are more concerned with the rhetorical process of authenticity claims; how it is used as a commonplace for signaling sincerity. In regard to authenticity as a trope of witnessing realities, Potter explains that hip-hop authenticity discourse often discuss "realities" that occur in society, while using a constructed and performative medium. In relation, Christopher Holmes-Smith[99] contended late 90s rappers sought to position themselves as witnesses and communal reps speaking of urban America realities.

The work of Geneva Smitherman extends this concept of "representing" to narrative testimony.[100] In her *AAR* research she explains how *narrativizing* is a rhetorical strategy grounded in concepts of truth and authenticity. Narrativizing features a Black rhetor invoking an authentic testimony that testifies their personal truth or individual perspective.[101] Narrativizing is the primary discursive vehicle for hip-hop expression; it is a rhetorical approach where "Black speakers explain a point, an observation, or a perspective on everyday life and attempts to persuade the audience to relate or connect to what might be a novel or opposing view to the norm." Lamont Hill highlights how Jay-Z employs this strategy in "The ballad of the fallen soldier" on Blueprint 2 where Carter explains police were AL-Qaeda to Black youth after 9-11 and ties this present reality to his past story of struggle. A strategy Hill recognizes Carter has mastered and influenced a generation to do the same.[102] Thus, authenticity can function as stock strategy a commonplace where the enduring appeal of *narrativizing* can be mined and deployed. Authenticity as narrativizing appeal destabilizes authenticity as a tool of judgment and instead configures authenticity as a rhetorical strategy with dynamic registers, as throughout history Black voices have offered varied testimonies and narratives to testifying their "truth." In addition, we should view authenticity, as a common topic where speakers can mine and employ notions of autobiography.

Several critics relate that autobiographic/first-person narrative was central to early Black cultural expressions and endures as a dominant form in contemporary Black cultural expressions.[103] Related, James

Peterson posits that when listening to hip-hop; every rapper tells you his or her career narrative or *come up story*.[104] It is their pre-rap story and speaks to the core Black listener who shares their story thus finds it "authentic" depending on the story details. Moreover, as their career progresses, extending the narrative of their "come up" is necessary for continued acceptance. Hess again is helpful when he elucidates that hip-hop features, "rhetorical claims to realness and through narrative evidence that those claims are rooted in lived experience" and that "hip hop's concepts of realness form a discursive spectrum for audiences as the rap career of an artist progresses."[105] No doubt, if the artist is able to convince the audience that he/she has firsthand knowledge about what he/she is talking about; the stories told in rap lyrics is considered legitimate, i.e. authentic.

Indeed, Stokes posits that authenticity is a discursive trope with "great persuasive power," that for ethnic minorities is employed to "display a sentimental, intimate and credible communication with audiences."[106] Specific to this study, Adam Bradley has explained that Jay-Z titles speak to the importance of authenticity as a commonplace for rappers, [107] "*Life* and times of Shawn carter is the subtitle of Jay-z records and not by accident." Bradley contends Jay's personal experience based lyrics gives him poetic license, to dramatize his life to deploy discourse that entertains motivates and affirms the feelings of Black audiences. Bradley connects Jay-Z to Ralph Ellison who he argues dramatizes the autobiography centered on the creation of a self; hip-hop narratives focus on the creation of an artist-self, whose success and celebrity are held accountable to the performer's lived experience-past and present.

Central to my project, McLeod's[108] seminal communication work on hip-hop and authenticity detailed that in mid 90s artist began to invoke claims of sharing and reporting their story based on lived experience to resist claims of assimilation. Hence, authenticity can be a rhetorical enactment used to mediate the dialectical tension between individual and communal aspects of identity. For my study, these works highlight how authenticity can function as a common topic of *BSR/identification*; authenticity functions as a discursive theme deployed to confirm credibility, affirm witnessing and testifying lived experiences with audiences. Authenticity is a formal appeal to legitimize the individual identity of the artist. In the next section, I discuss how I position Blackness as a common topic of *Black sincerity* rhetoric.

Blackness

The term Blackness like authenticity is a highly mutable and contested term. Blackness is an exhaustively explored theme in critical discussions of Black identity, and often time's discussions of authenticity include Blackness; effectively arguing that authenticity claims essentializes what "Blackness means." Blackness is not reducible to authenticity however; it is a key symbolization of *BSR*. For instance, Dyson believes Blackness can be understood as strategies of Black identity expressed in our culture; slang, gestures, signifiers noting that there are several forms of Blackness that Black people employ to communicate an ethnic Black identity and survive systemic racism.[109] In similar fashion, Tate[110] argues that Blackness is a perspective on identity, that Black people confront and make sense of their difference to white norms via coded slang. This latter definition is closer to my use of it, as I highlight codes, signs and tactics that rhetors invoke to signal Blackness and ultimately sincerity to post soul audiences.

Stuart Hall encouraged critics to no longer focus on questions of what symbolizes the "real Black identity", and instead to discuss the heterogeneity of Black identity and the signs employed to represent similarities and differences within Black communities. [111] Paul Gilroy[112] has declared that Blackness was a signifier that Black audiences recognize, informed by lived experiences and social practices. Likewise, media critic Herman Gray suggested Blackness as the "constellation of representations, signs and codes associated with a Black presence in the United States that are constantly struggled over, debated and refashioned by Black speakers and audiences".[113] Hence, in this study, Blackness is a commonplace to mine and deploy ties to cultural, ancestral, and ethnic ties to Black culture via signs, codes and techniques. Indeed, Asante has argued, rappers invoke their ancestors' appreciation and love for "nommo", -- the appreciation of the word, and the inventive, polyphonic creativity of Black speakers with language.

Toni Morrison in relation tells us that wordplay is a Black virtue, "**It** is the thing that Black people **love** so much—the saying of words, holding them on the tongue, experimenting with **t**hem, playing with them. It's a love, a passion."[114] In recent years, *AAR* scholars have focused on the Afrocentric concept of nommo and nomoi to discuss codes specific to Black culture. Banks and Gilyard contend, contemporary rappers exemplify the emphasis on the African rhetoric term nommo which demands Black speakers must

fascinate as well as instruct the *people. Entertain and educate how to come up out of their situation.*[115] They explain that Black rhetors such as rappers, preachers and singers infuse *orature* not just oratory in their rhetorics, as Blackness is expressed in vocality, storytelling, signifying via rhetorical tropes, and a call and response philosophy.

Nomoi –a merging of nomos –the norms of the people and *nommo* describes the social codes, rhetorical conventions and collective memory created in and heard in Black rhetorical discourse.[116] Jarrat believed n*omos/nomoi* connected to rhetoric is a process of "articulating codes…the self-conscious arrangement of discourse to create politically and socially significant knowledge with a community (p.137).[117] Knyard explained that it is the ability of Black singers as rhetors to infuse key strategies of call and response, tonal semantics and shifts in rhythm, Black slang and narrative sequencing that ignores temporal standards that enacts identification with Black audiences. She highlights specifically how Black the call and response modality is the crux of Black rhetorics[118]:

Key discourse strategies of African American rhetorics, such as call and response focus, where writers become directly involved with their topics (also called direct address) and seem to be speaking directly to the audience, almost as if waiting for a response, rather than using the traditional academic or school conventions of distance and third-person pronouns (p.370). In relation, Gates foundational work centers signifying as a go to strategy of Blackness.[119] Signifying as intertextual troping "riff, revise, remix existing "narratives and discourse" by previous authors to show appreciation of past forms, identify with audiences, or offer a critique of previous forms or society.[120] Musicologist Floyd[121] has argued that Black musical traditions feature a focus on discursive intertextuality or musical signifying; the constant repetition, revision and reinterpretation of previous Black codes, signs, rhetorical techniques. Floyd explains these techniques were used to "circulate meanings to which those initiated, knowledgeable and cultural sensitive responded in heightened communicative practices." Several critics explain that rappers reflect on collective memories, language, rhythm, and other Black oral traditions to express a current connection to Black audiences.[122]

In other media formats, Raina Joseph's recent work on the post-soul in late 90s and early 00s television details how Black idioms of evasion and double voiced techniques allowed Black women in the

post soul 90s to find success with white and Black audiences. In particular, she highlights how Burke's concept of strategic ambiguity connects to Black feminist traditions of double voiced speech and strategic ambiguity in front of white audiences. Joseph contends that in this era, Black public rhetors recognized how to feature what I call *nods to Blackness* in their work that were ambiguous to white audiences but visible, embraced and appreciated by Black audiences.[123]

In addition to codes of culture, invoking Black political thought is a means of signifying. Kitwana detailed how hip-hop signifies on past Black political traditions to indicate Blackness and connect with Black listeners.[124] Bradley contends that rappers use of rhetorical devices of past Black political leaders reflect hip-hop's historical lineage of signs and codes that are employed to maintain a diasporic bond with Black communities.[125] Hence, as a rhetorical *topos*, we can view Blackness as a discursive theme employed to express the individual but also to situate the individual as part of a larger cultural community. Related, Ashe has analyzed how Obama used codes and signs of the Black southern preacher and even samples Jay-Z lyrics when speaking to Black audiences, as a means of identification.[126] My point is as a discursive common topic, Blackness can illuminate how stylistically one articulates notions of the individual and the individuals' communal connection. The above literature demonstrates how Blackness can function as a commonplace and common topic, where artists invoke language that reference their connection to a Black community. In the final section, I discuss community as a common topic of Black sincerity rhetoric

Community

Similar to the above arguments against essentialism, I agree that the concept of a mythic unified Black community is not only harmful but restrictive to cultural critics. I also recognize that rappers may target non-Black audiences and communities and their discourse extends beyond Black public sphere. My aim is not to discount other communities, but to instead, focus on the specific discourse geared towards Black communality by Jay-Z. This project focuses on the rhetoric that functions inside a Black public sphere of magazine, radio, TV and online discussions –a constellation of imagined Black communities. Here, I highlight literature that views community as a rhetorical theme geared towards communal aspects of identity. Appeals to authenticity and Blackness both gesture towards issues of community membership and identity. In

much of the scholarship of Black identity, community is THE enduring concept of African American rhetoric. As aforementioned the political and social experience of Black bodies historically, has often framed the Black community as monolithic and essential. Thus, I think that it is important to analyze the Black public sphere where diverse concerns specific to Black bodies are articulated and debated[127]. This project focuses on Jay-Z's discourse as consumed in the Black public sphere and as a space for reactions to his work; as he states the people in the hood decide what culture before the mainstream is.

Squires and most recently Moten detail that Black counterpublics (media, literature, etc.) exist that while available for white consumption; mainly feature and detail concerns and conversations of Black publics.[128] Fred Moten's trenchant work on the end of Blackness, maintains that an ethic of Black communalism "hanging out" via the poet and audience and sharing experiences unites Black communities who may never meet.[129] In early *AAR work*, Brockriede and Scott detail how Black speakers directed their messages to Black audiences and communities; creating audiences through rhetoric.[130] In connection, Brummet has argued that communities are created by texts, as rhetoric calls out to groups who feel a shared understanding of the text.[131] Benedict Anderson's definition of imagined communities is helpful to explain this concept of community.

Anderson explains that communities are *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, or meet them; yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.[132] Imagined does not mean imaginary or essential, Anderson notes that within "the community", there are differences and inequality, but the group is joined by a comradeship centered on shared experiences or culture.[133] Favor reads Anderson suggesting that within a nation there can be several imagined communities, highlighting how Black voices speak to multiple segments of Black communities. In relation, Asante argues that what is unique for Black rhetorical audiences is a belief in the co-production of meaning as essential. That is, persuasion is not the unitary goal, of *AAR per se;* identification with one's imagined community, recognition as skilled and sincere speaker is the goal of Black rhetors he contends.[134]

In popular music studies, Holman Jones reminds us that music can function rhetorically as a way of community building and boundary marking, "a space for deliberation, connection and contention (p.155).[135]

In similar fashion, Robin D.G. Kelley describes how music created a discursive community of "congregation" where Black folks "enact a sense of solidarity, a place to fight with each other, to maintain and struggle over a collective memory of oppression, pleasure and degradation (p.46)."[136] In relation, Watts work on ethos and Larry Neal helps us understand how a speaker can create community through rhetoric. Watts interrogates how Neal merges the ethos of the traveling preacher and bluesman, two figures who urged Black communities to become acutely aware of the harsh realities of life. Neal would combine the call and response of the preacher and oral testimony of the blues to advance a strategy for sizing up Black life. Thus, Watts argues Neal's rhetoric developed a dwelling space/African American home where the profane blues hero and sacred preacher man attitude can coexist.[137] Watts informs my notion of a post-soul ethos as a reflection of authenticity, Blackness and most importantly community.

More importantly, Hip-hop would speak to a post soul community raised on this merging of the sacred and the profane according to Imani Perry. Hip-hop transcends such division—as the blues singer reality testimony and sacred preacher sermonic tone of optimism are merged in popular rap discourse then and now.[138] In my book *Loving the Cool* I contended rapper Andre Benjamin and his rhetorical ethos on the diamond selling Outkast album *The love below,* created discursive spaces for inquiry of self, love, and community for Black audiences. The cultural character of a rhetor –their ethos creates a space of negotiating identity & affirming sincerity. Here, a digital aural community emerges untied by their identification with the rap rhetor; where Black topics are heard and shared, spaces where the lyrics serve as an invitation to negotiate cultural incongruities; a space to affirm kinship and challenge essentialism. Similar to regional blues artists, rappers detail the identifying characteristics of their social spaces in their discourse.

Forman's expansive work on spatiality in rap, posits the 'hood functions as an ontological home;" as artist shout out street names and localities, community figures, neighborhood cookouts, hangout spots, as distinctive spatial tropes that frame their narrative as still connected to community. [139] Unlike any other genre, hip-hop is a virtual tour guide with each rapper telling you about his or her block and often refraining like Houston rapper Scarface "that my block is probably similar to your block. At its best, hip-hop artists and audiences commiserate on the similarities and differences of their communities.[140] Community is a notion

that permeates this entire project, as rappers appeals to identification all seek to affirm membership and fellowship with Black audiences. However, as a separate *topos*, community symbolizes the manner in which odes to community and common communal experiences are invoked in hip-hop identification as a thematic expression. This section on community highlights literature that I believe illuminates the rhetorical function of community in *BSR*.

Specific to Jay-Z, Jawara Giddings contends he upholds the maxim of communalism and the communal role of the African griot when he shouts out his Brooklyn neighborhood and his devotion to it and Black urban America at large. Giddings argues his fidelity to core Black communalism principles and characteristics serve as guideposts for his discourse. In particular, she argues that we should look to his discourse about community to understand how his rhetoric fits into the Black oral tradition. Julius Bailey contends that Jay-Z exemplifies how hip-hop discourse helps us make sense of the strategies and techniques employed to communicate with Black communities and how Black audiences continue to view public rhetors such as Jay-Z as trustworthy agents and representatives of the imagined post-soul community. I believe hip-hop rhetors use commonplaces of authenticity, Blackness and community to develop an ethos-- an identity, a character and a dwelling space-- to "know together" and find acceptance and consubstantiality with imagined Black audiences.

In this section, I have highlighted recent works that discuss commonplaces and topics of Black sincerity specifically the tension between individual and collective aspects of Black identity. Furthermore, I explained how a rhetor can use authenticity, Blackness, and community to develop an ethos of sincerity as a mode of identification. It is apparent that hip-hop music has rhetorical power and influence, but an intricate focus on the relationship between rhetor and audience could aid hip-hop scholarly discussions. Examining how authenticity, Blackness and community are interrelated topoi deployed strategically in hip-hop discourses of identity as a means of identification illuminates the instability, variety, and agency of hip-hop rhetorics. In the next section, I discuss how Kenneth Burke's critical approach fuels my critical lens towards hip-hop rhetoric.

Kenneth Burke and Critical Lens

Black sincerity rhetoric concept of Black speakers establishing and negotiating their commitments with self and audience is an extension of Nunley's discussion of identification in his analysis of hush harbor rhetoric in physical spaces. My analysis accepts his idea of Black public conversations in mainstream publics as form identification and analyzes the rhetorical strategies and process of identification Jay-Z uses in his work---how Jay-Z enacts *consubstantiality* with Black audiences. Knickerbocker argues that Burke was interested in how musicians and poets use identification as rhetorical language to affect our world.[141] I posit that the expansive work of Kenneth Burke and his focus on the rhetorical practices of poets offers an approach acutely geared towards hip-hop.

As discussed in the introduction, *identification* views rhetoric as not only persuasion, but also the identifying and sharing of ideas to appeal and make rhetorical appeals and connections to the audience. I view identification as a process concerned with both separation and collectiveness; it is a function of sociality how we identify with social groups we belong to; but it also floodlights the dialectical tension central to this project. Identification is interested in how we develop social cohesion with language, but also interested in the process and the "points" where language confuses, justifies, unifies, or demystifies an issue. In this dissertation, I am interested in how Jay-Z uses language to demonstrate how he is consubstantial with Black audiences but also the division that emerges as his career rises, that demands *BSR* and an *ethos of post soul sincerity*. Here, I echo the analysis of rhetorical critics who position *ethos* as a strategic mode or embodied performance of identification as rhetoric. Put simply, per Zulick and Hansen, identification is a study of how effective a speakers' ethos can be. Gregory Hansen explains Burke's use of his key term "identification" agrees with Aristotle's observation that identification can be a function of persuasive appeal "as when the politician seeks to identify himself with his audience."[142] By looking at hip-hop as a space for modes of identification, we are invariably examining deployment of Jay-Z'sBSR and ethos seeking to find consubstantiality with post soul audiences. More specifically Hansen explains that:

> Burkean identification extends classical ethos by embodying our most powerful and primitive dialectic: alienation vs. belonging. The relevance of this dialectic –bespeaks rhetoric of group identity and membership should be patent. Identification thus describes a transformative process for

> establishing relations with individuals outside of ourselves and for constituting social forms. Identification in this respect is an appeal to the speaker's ethos based on Book I of Aristotle. (52)[143]

Hansen describes the function of ethos as mediated through identification. In other words, you prove your membership and commitment to community by deploying ethos as a mode of identification and conduit for BSR. Hansen points us to how Jay-Z as a rhetor can use ethos to mediate the *alienation vs. belonging* dialectic of identification in the post soul era. Recently, Peter Scisio aids this idea of ethos being a performance of identification when he states, "ethos is the alignment of the rhetor with community values and the audience's recognition of those values in the person of the rhetor, which results in the audience's granting authority and making the rhetor's case more plausible.[144] Zulick argues Burke's theory of identification is a focus on the active interplay of a speaker's ethos.[145] Burke's concept of identification extends ethos beyond Aristotle's idea to the mechanics of persuasive power inherent in shared interests and values; Burke features identity as rhetorical construct co-produced by rhetor and audience.[146]

In this project, I view an *ethos of Black sincerity* as a particular mode of identification employed by Black rhetors to facilitate *BSR and* mediate the dialectic of being joined yet separate from a post soul Black audience. Hyde explains how *ethos* is geared to discuss how rhetorics speak to community membership and responsibility:

> Burkean theory of rhetoric as a means of identification, , may contribute to our understanding of ways in which people establish and negotiate their identity within a social context-rather than simply showing how the speaker uses artistic discourse for persuasion (xvi).[147]

Burke tells writers, "Identification is a dialectical process of dealing with or reconciling opposites. You give signs of consubstantiality by deference to an audience's opinions. For the orator following Aristotle will seek to display the appropriate signs of character to earn an audience's good will (55)."[148] I contend hip-hop is an exemplar of identification; as rappers erect a character-an ethos that defers to the audience's opinion of what makes one sincere. To have an *ethos of Black sincerity* is to establish ethos in the two traditional means: establishing the character of the rhetor as virtuous based on communal standards and establishing a dwelling place for sharing the concerns, dreams, and memories of marginalized Black communities. I examine how Shawn "Jay-Z " Carter establishes his character as virtuous and how his post soul discourse created a *dwelling* space where audiences feel they can commiserate and make sense of this volatile era.

Zulick explains that repeated usage of ethos as identification and recognition of audience acceptance creates a *formal expression´* where the rhetors repeated performances and deployment of ethos creates an appetite and a desire for audiences. Zulick explains that pattern recognition and invention operate as the same thinking process: "The inventor and the audience of any formal expression share in its production at the formal level as well as the social level" (25)[149]. Ethos, then, is built in both circumstances—over time, as an audience comes to know the speaker's habits—and in a particular speech act, as the speaker confirms his or her character as being what the audience believes it to be. This speaks to the mechanism of form inherent in identification. In the case of the Preacher or the bluesman, the congregants have an expectation of a particular ethos before a first introduction is made based on the use of previous forms. Form describes the transference mechanism by which any appeal succeeds in its aim. The success of identification will rest in the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor and the adequate satisfying of that appetite. I posit that a rap rhetors ethos becomes a formal expression through repeated performances—performances that employ common topics and acceptance frames-strategies for consubstantiality. Identification results from an interaction of form and content, the form and the content of the narrative "induces tensions or expectations which the audience identifies. (Burke 1968, p.55)." Thus, the commonplaces of Black sincerity are formal topoi for what audiences look for prior to knowing your ethos, these commonplaces help post soul rhetors establish an ethos that can bear formal repetition.

In regards to music, Sellnow has extensively detailed how identification is visible in the rhetorical performances of music artists; she contends Burke provides a lens for examining how musicians create audiences who become consubstantial with their songs.[150] In particular, Burke argues that when the music lover admires an artist they often "share vicariously" the singers perspective.[151] Moreover, Burke notes that the artists' situations and conditions change over time; as do their identifications. When looking at my three key topoi of authenticity, Blackness and community; I argue that artist articulation of these themes shifts with social and economic conditions; their identifications are mutable. Burke's concept of *acceptance frames* helps explain how rap rhetors size up their situation and present their rhetoric as beneficial to the audience in concert with their ethos. Along with topoi of Black sincerity, it's a crucial part of establishing *BSR*.

For Burke, acceptance frames (comic, tragic, epic) are lenses which influence the way we approach and consider our history; discursive frames that aid identification. Crucially, Burke argues that public rhetors use frames as a means by which they adopt attitudes towards society and prescribed said frames for audiences; "frames of acceptance are ways of describing and approaching reality 'name both friendly and unfriendly forces" and fix attitudes that prepare for combat.[152]" In particular, he contends the epic, tragic and comic as frames are geared to garner acceptance for the speakers' identity and offer the audience tools to size up their situation. In hip-hop, the tragic frame in many ways dominated the early 90s. Alexander Riley highlights how the tragic frame was the domain of gangster rap where stories focused on the tragic hero refuses to denigrate the inevitable condition of suffering and conflict; instead s/he "make[s] suffering an affirmation" as "the sufferings of individuation.[153] For Black writers, Ralph Ellison and Albert Murrary the tragic frame that Burke wrote of speaks to this doomed knowledge of suffering or shared pain inherent in blues music.[154] Ellison however found limits to the tragic; as it frames Black life as mainly victims.

Thus, Ellison offered the *blues tragic-comic* framing in his work where Black tricksters could outwit the authorities or make surviving white supremacy more bearable through the affirmation of their experience in song.[155] For Burke, the comic frame is the ideal for acceptance and Black scholars connect it to the Black trickster tradition. When Burke contends, a person who falls, breaks their leg, and thanks God they did not break their neck is viewing the event from a comic frame it relates to Ellison's view of Black blues artists finding the humor in tragedy. More importantly, the comic corrective of *perspective by incongruity* allows the poet to "call attention to the narrowness of the accepted interpretation and encourages critical thinking about other possibilities."[156] Banks and Gilyard believe *perspective by incongruity* is foundational to African American rhetoric's trenchant use of irony in music, sermons and everyday language to deal with their incongruous treatment and position as Americans.[157] It is an extension of the Black trickster; Gates [158]has called the presence of a trickster motif one of the fundamental terms for African American rhetoric that the Black enslaved brought with them from Africa, and maintained through the mnemonic devices peculiar to oral literature...to outsmart oppression." Indeed, Burke believes the comic frame is better suited for changing attitudes, which is why scholars have often used it to analyze the rhetoric of Black speakers, as it is firmly

grounded in the humane, allowing people to change attitudes within themselves or others. Murphy's work on MLK and the comic frame detail how MLK uses this framing to cast Blacks as mistaken but also his use of irony to highlight the absurdity of racism. Here, the comic hero points out failures in society and challenges prevailing attitudes.

In relation, feminist scholars Powell and Carlson have detailed how Black women employed the comic frame to challenge and promote change. Powell contends that the comic frame by "prodding the consciousness, or change from within the individual, instead of forcing change through victimage," pushes audiences beyond their original thought.[159] There are few if any works, on the comic frame in hip-hop;[160] however, I think an analysis of Jay-Z's spotlights his use of the comic frame to mediate his relationship with Black audiences. In my analysis, the comic and epic frames provide tools to chart Jay-Z's post soul Black sincerity rhetoric. Burkean frames allow me to interrogate how the use of acceptance frames; along with topoi of Black sincerity help establish an ethos for Jay-Z. Through an examination of his discourse, we can view how Jay-Z employs comic correctives and epic framing that cohere and integrate with common topoi of Black sincerity to convince audiences to accept his discourse of personal and communal uplift.

Burke says frames are a way of sizing up how to approach acceptance in society and the comic frame aids. Jay-Z as his career progresses, I contend combines an epic frame to aid acceptance of his ethos. Along with the trickster, the African epic can be found in hip-hop discourse. *In* his study on Black folk culture, Roberts explained that the African epic hero must be assessed as normative against the backdrop of the heritage and traditions of the group, which is the hero, cannot appear out of character with the morals and values of the group.[161] Burke's definition of the epic hero elucidates how the epic hero embodies the communal[162]:

> An epic hero is a charismatic leader of men. . . the hero is a repository for all the virtues the group needs to believe in to survive. Other men live vicariously in his deeds his courage and self-sacrifice and thus share in a communion (or community) both social and religious of the heroic body (44).

Thus, Burkean frames allow me to analyze how along with his use of common topoi, Jay-Z employs comic strategies as a trickster and epic claims as an epic hero to engender *consubstantiality* with his imagined nation in the prime of his career. Jay-Z takes us on a magnified journey of his rise in his words from 'grams to

Grammy's, bricks to billboard." Lastly, Burke believed the epic hero's valor and sacrifice represents the audiences' aspirational desires and fears of communal exile. Jay-Z's epic tale speaks to his generation's fears of being seen as a sellout by the community

Conclusion

An analysis of the interplay of Burkean frames and common Black topoi as tools of identification demonstrates a new rhetorical method for analyzing the discourse of Black public speakers, one that can be applied to a variety of discourses not only rap lyrics. In true hip-hop fashion, I sample the voices of African American rhetoric, cultural criticism and Kenneth Burke and remix them into a bricolage style critical lens geared towards expanding understanding of identification, ethos and sincerity in relation to Black public rhetors. As a critical lens, the scholars of hip-hop, Black cultural criticism and Burke inform my approach. These resources give me a foundation and a skill set for naming and identifying persuasive strategies and audience appeals specific to Black imagined audiences. Moreover, their work demonstrates the importance of Black public discourse and the ways it informs Black culture. I am interested in how Jay-Z's rhetorical discourse demonstrated a significant moment in Black culture, an influential moment that influenced the way Black speakers would negotiate their relationship with Black audiences and the mainstream public. My approach and strategy of looking at hip-hop as associated with ethos and identification illuminates how rhetorical studies can expand hip-hop scholars understanding of Jay-Z and hip-hop writ large as a Black communal conversation regardless of non-Black patronage and consumption. In the next section I offer an overview of the analysis chapters.

Chapter Previews

In this dissertation I look at Jay Z in four stages of his career charting major changes, emphases, and key case studies of his use rhetorical ethos of post soul sincerity. I look at his public persona as Jay-Z on his solo albums. Burke, hip-hop scholarship, and other rhetorical resources as stated earlier function as a crucial lens to help me understand and translate to some extent how Jay z persuades post soul audiences that his ethos is sincere--as he states in "Murder to Excellence" that he does truly "do it for us, because I love Black, I love us." Prior to interrogating Jay-Z, however, I offer a brief literature review of Black musical rhetors

Black sincerity Rhetoric in the 20th century in that informs Jay-Z's discourse in chapter two. The brief section surveys the evolution from outlaw bluesman, to soul brother freedom fighter to the hustler turned mogul model of hip-hop's late 90s and early aughts--setting the stage for an analysis of Jay-Z's Black sincerity rhetoric in chapter 3.

In Chapter three, I chart how Jay-z establishes an ethos of sincerity that finds consubstantiality with his core audience on his debut album. Thus, in stage one I first establish Jay's rhetorical situation prior to his debut. This section positions Jay the rhetor and his discourse in the hip-hop landscape of 1996. Then I apply a close textual analysis/critical album review that charts Jay-Z's core techniques and uses of topoi and his early use of perspective by incongruity on his debut album, *Reasonable Doubt*. The chapter highlights how the artist develops an *ethos of sincerity* via rhetorical strategies on his debut album, interrogating his strategy to establish a core audience and be seen as a trusted witness. Scholarship on rap debut albums and Burkean identification aid the analysis. This section focuses on the foundational rhetorical techniques of Jay Z and how these comic techniques develop a form—a formal use of common post soul topics—to create an ethos that post soul audiences come to identify with on his debut.

In chapter four I discuss Jay-Z's failure of identification on his sophomore album *Volume 1: Life and Times of Shawn Carter*. This chapter examines the importance of maintaining and reflecting a prior ethos that was accepted by an imagined post soul audience. The analysis focuses on his failures of form, topoi and framing on the album; but ironically how listening to the "audience call the tune" in Burke's words, allows him to update formula on his comeback album Vol. 2. In this section, now that we know the established prior ethos, we can better understand his use of frames and expansion of his topoi usage to maintain his acceptance by his imagined audience. On songs such as "Hard Knock Life", I analyze Jay-Z' use of comic correctives and apologia to transcend his rising incongruity with audiences. Burkean and hip-hop scholarship are applied to demonstrate the struggle and frustration of intra-cultural commitments and not "keeping the commandments" of the folk. I posit Carter frames himself as a community spokesman no longer a hustler/witness and his ethos reflects this change. An emphasis on identification as representation becomes more clear and visible in his discourse. In addition his use of the comic frame to defend his ethos is first

visible in this chapter. In this section we see challenges to the rhetors' ethos and songs functioning as symbolic acts to affirm his sincerity but also voice his frustration.

In Chapter five and six I examine the rise, fall and rebirth of Jay-Z *the hustler as epic hero.* This chapter focuses more on the use of acceptance frames and less on his topoi usage. Here we witness a shift from Jay z the communal spokesman to Jay-Z the epic hero: Jay-Hova the savior of rap on the album *The Blueprint*... In this stage we see Jay-Z claim is rhetorical acts are "doing it for a higher cause" and his motive appears to be revered like the epic heroes/martyrs Biggie and Tupac he arguably replaced and is compared to. The acceptance frames of epic businessman and comic hustler dominates this period as Carter attempts to transcend critiques by framing himself as the post soul generation role model/hero for success. Scholarship on African epic hero and epic heroes in in American culture support the Burkean lens of my analysis here. Transcendence, signifying on his own form and adjusting his ethos via novel uses of old strategies are the focus of this chapter.

The final analysis chapter looks at how Jay attempts to resurrect his career after his retirement with the album *Kingdom Come*. This final chapter examines how he failed to connect with audiences as a change in topoi and framing render Carter too separate from his core audience as his economic wealth increases. The chapter details how the changing social landscape affects Jay-Z ability to find consubstantiality. The project closes with an examination of his proper return *American gangster*, the last Jay-Z album at the end of the post soul era. Here, we analyze how Carter merges his varied performances of an ethos of sincerity of the past decade to find consubstantiality with his core audience and generation before the takeover of digital culture and the Obama tenure. I posit, *American* Gangster demonstrates how one's prior ethos can be adapted to new situations and how Black sincerity rhetoric requires constant reinvention of Black rhetorical traditions.

In each chapter theories of Burke and hip-hop and African American rhetoric provide the critical lens for analysis. This scholarship is a useful tool for teaching complex rhetorical theory, hip-hop scholarship and cultural criticism to students, thus each chapter can work separately or in concert with each other.[163] For my purposes making you a Jay-Z fan is not my goal in this work; instead I want to interrogate what these revered albums tell us about African American rhetorical techniques and the use of identification in post soul

Black culture. Indeed, what persuasive methods help garner consent from imagined Black audiences for Jay-Z the most notable rapper of this generation and what does his rhetorical performance of sincerity tell us about African American rhetorical practices. Lastly, I am interested in how my theory of Black *sincerity rhetoric* demonstrates novel and new ways of understanding how intra-racial rhetoric of the Black public sphere has and continues to function.

Endnotes

[1] Burke, Kenneth. 1974 "Calling of the Tune" in *Philosophy of Literary Form* 221-234

[2] Dyson, Michael Eric. "Jay-Z Intro" Know *What I Mean? Reflections on Hip Hop*. New York: Basic Civitas, 2010

[3] Burke, Kenneth. *A Grammar of Motives, and Rhetoric of Motives*. New York: Meridian, 1962.

[4] Lubiano, Wahneema. 2003. "But Compared to What? Reading Realism, Representation, and Essentialism in School Daze, Do the Right Thing, and the Spike Lee Discourse." *In Valerie* Smith ed., Representing *Blackness Issues in Film and Video*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Pres., Mcphail, Mark Lawrence. "Complicity Theory." *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*, 2013. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412959384.n62. ; Favor, J. *Authentic Blackness: the Folk in the New Negro Renaissance*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999; Eversley, Shelly. 2015. *The Real Negro: the Question of Authenticity in Twentieth-Century African American Literature*. New York: Routledge. Gordon, D. 2004.. *Black Identity: Rhetoric, Ideology and 19th Century Black Nationalism*. Southern Illinois University Press. Gray, Herman. 2005. *Cultural Moves: African Americans and the Politics of Representation*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

[5] Nunley, Vorris. 2011. *Keepin It Hushed: The Barbershop and African American Hush Harbor Rhetoric*. Wayne State University Press.

[6] Neal, Mark Anthony. 2012. No time for fake niggas: "Hip-hop culture and the Authenticity debates." In Murrary Forman and Mark Anthony Neal eds., *That's the Joint! the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Persley, N. 2011. "An Urban Singer of Tales: The Freestyle Remixing of an AfroHomeric Oral Tradition. In Julius Bailey. 2011. *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip Hops Philosopher King*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.67-84

[8] Canfield, David. "Exclusive: Michael Eric Dyson to examine Jay-Z's cultural impact in new book" *Entertainment Weekly. July 9th 2019. Retrieved July 10 2019.* ***https://ew.com/books/2019/07/09/michael-eric-dyson-jay-z-book-announcement/***

[9] Elliot Wilson and Jay-Z Rap Radar interview 2011. Tidal.

[10] Foss, Karen A., Sonja K. Foss, and Robert Trapp. 2002. *Readings in Contemporary Rhetoric*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press. Jackson, Chonticia Y., "The Use of Rhetoric in Public Relations: Kenneth Burke's Theory of Identification and Consubstantiality" (2013). Dissertations, Theses and Capstone Projects. Paper 556.

"Burke sought to broaden the definition and uses of rhetoric. Gregory Hansen of Indiana University (1996) writes that "Burke uses Aristotle's approach as a model when he orients his writing about language specifically to its social context" (p. 50). Burke's primary interest in identification is an appeal to speaker's ethos as discussed in Aristotle's Rhetoric (Hansen, 1996, p. 51). Hansen means that Burke is utilizing Aristotle's model, but defining rhetorical language in a broader way from a social perspective.

[11] Greenburg, Zack O'Malley. 2011 *Empire State of Mind: How Jay-Z Went from Street Corner to Corner Office*. New York: Penguin; Neal, Mark Anthony. 2013. "My Passport says Shawn: Toward a Hip-Hop Cosmopolitan. In *Looking for Leroy: Illegible Black Masculinities*.

[12] Cobb, Jelani. 2008. *To The Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip-Hop Aesthetic. NYU Press. 149*

[13] Ashe, Betram. 2010. "Post Soul President: Dreams of my Father and the Post Soul Aesthetic." 103-116. In Harris, Heather E., Kimberly R. Moffitt, and Catherine R. Squires eds., *The Obama Effect: Multidisciplinary Renderings of the 2008 Campaign*. Albany: State University of New York Press. McAllister, Marvin. 2017. "Embodied and disembodied satire." In Derek Maus and James Donahue eds., *Post-Soul Satire*. 252.;

[14] Jones, Meta Dewu. An Interview with Michael Eric Dyson. **2006.**, *Hip-Hop Music and Culture* Vol. 29, No. 3, pp. 786-802

[15] Jay-Z nickname in the Black public sphere was Jigga as in our nigga Jay. A use of Black transposing of words. See Zora Neale Hurston "Characteristics of Negro Expression."

[16] Hip-Hop culture is made up of four main elements: breakdancing, graffiti, deejaying and rapping. These four elements were created in tandem during the mid to late 1970s by New York ghetto youth. Rap is the music of hip-hop culture. I am looking at hip-hop as a cultural movement and performance, thus I use the term hip-hop music to describe rap.

[17] Durham, Aisha S. 2014. *Home with Hip Hop Feminism. Performances in Communication and Culture*. Pieterlen: Peter Lang Verlag.; Hill, Marc Lamont. 2011. "Critical Pedagogy Comes At Halftime: Nas As Black Public Intellectual" in Michael Eric Dyson and Sohail Daulatzai in *Born to Use Mics: Reading Nas Illmatic* Hua, Hsu."The End of White America?" *The Atlantic. January/February 2009*.

Dyson, Michael Eric. *Know What I Mean? Reflections on Hip Hop*. New York: Basic Civitas, 2010. Dyson, Michael Eric. *Tupac Shakur: Holler If You Hear Me*. London: Plexus, 2001. Neal, Mark Anthony. *Soul Babies: Black Popular and the Post-Soul Aesthetic*. New York: Routledge, 2010 2nd edition.

[18] Harrison, Anthony Kwame. 2009. *Hip Hop Underground: the Integrity and Ethics of Racial Identification*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

[19] Krims, Adam. 2011. *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.

[20] Also see James Braxton Peterson's. 2014. *The Hip-Hop Underground and African American Culture: Beneath The Surface* or Sued Jury March 26, 2016 article: "Respect the Architect: Hip-hop Has Gone Global but its Still Black Culture. Complex.com. https://www.complex.com/music/2015/03/hip-hop-is-Black-culture-gone-global; a recent 2018 survey has highlighted that 72 percent of Black users cite hip-hop not only as their favorite genre but the genre that speaks most to their lives compared to nearly 30% of non-Black respondents. You.Gov. August, 2018. "Americans and Music Genre Survey. https://today.yougov.com/topics/entertainment/articles-reports/2018/05/22/one-two-believe-rap-and-hip-hop-best-represent-tod. The survey groups hip-hop and R&B together and focused on demographics 18-45.

[21] Perry, Imani. *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop*. Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2006. ; Rose, Tricia. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Cultural Resistance in Contemporary American Popular Culture*, 1993; Krims, Adam. *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2011.

[22] Kitwana, Bakari. 2008. *The Hip Hop Generation: Young Blacks and the Crisis in African American Culture*. New York: Basic Civitas Books.

[23] Gosa, Travis L. 2015. "The Fifth Element: Knowledge". *In The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop. Edited by Justin A. Williams*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 56–70.; Ewoodzie, Joseph C., Jr. 2017. *Break Beats in the Bronx: Rediscovering Hip-hop's Early Years.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. Dyson, Michael Eric. *Know What I Mean? Reflections on Hip Hop*. New York: Basic Civitas, 2010.

[24] referencing Jay-Z's D'evils,

[25] J.cole was the first artist signed to Jay-Z's Roc Nation Label in 2010.

[26] Campbell, Karolyn Kohrs, Susan Schultz Huxman, and Thomas R. Burkholder. 2015. *The Rhetorical Act: Thinking, Speaking, and Writing Critically*. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.

[27] Hardy, Antoine. November 8, 2010. *Loving the Cool: A Rhetorical Study of Black Masculinity and Contemporary Hip-Hop Love Songs.* VDM Verlag Dr. Müller.

[28]Smitherman, Geneva. Talkin That Talk: Language, Culture, and Education in African America. London: Routledge, 2006.; Pough, Gwendolyn D., Mark Anthony. Neal and Joan Morgan. *Home Girls Make Some Noise: Hip-Hop Feminism Anthology*. Mira Loma, CA: Parker Publishing, LLC, 2007. 2005; Durham, Aisha S. *Home with Hip Hop Feminism: Performances in Communication and Culture*. New York: Peter Lang, 2014.

[29] Asante, Molefi Kete. 2006. *The Afrocentric Idea.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

[30] L., Jackson II Ronald, and Elaine B. Richardson. 2014. *Understanding African American Rhetoric Classical Origins to Contemporary Innovations*. Florence: Taylor and Francis.

[31] Davis, Angela. 1999. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*. New York (NY): Vintage

[32] Kynard, Carmen. 2008. "'The Blues Playingest Dog You Ever Heard Of': (Re) Positioning Literacy Through African American Blues Rhetoric." *Reading Research Quarterly*43 (4): 356–73. https://doi.org/10.1598/rrq.43.4.3. ; Wright, RL. 2003. "The word at work: and ideological and epistemological dynamics in African American rhetoric dynamics. In L., Jackson II Ronald, and Elaine B. Richardson. 2014. *Understanding African American Rhetoric Classical Origins to Contemporary Innovations*. Florence: Taylor and Francis.

[33] Richardson, Elaine. 2006. "Hiphop Literacies." https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203391105.

[34] Gilyard, Keith, and Adam J. Banks. 2018. "Introduction." *On African-American Rhetoric*, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315108636-1.

[35] This is an amalgamation of Banks and Gilyard (2018) definition and D.F Atwater's. 2009. *African American Women's Rhetoric: The search for dignity, personhood and power. Lanham: MD,* and my own interpretation.

[36] Lubiano, Wahneema. 2003. "But Compared to What? Reading Realism, Representation, and Essentialism in School Daze, Do the Right Thing, and the Spike Lee Discourse." *In* Smith, Valerie. 2003. *Representing Blackness Issues in Film and Video*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press.

[37] Nunley (2011); Haggins, Bambi. 2007. *Laughing Mad the Black Comic Persona in Post-Soul America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

[38] George, Nelson. 1992. *Buppies, B-Boys, Baps, & Bohos: Notes on Post Soul Black Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, Others say 1960-1980 see Ashe. 2010. Womack. 2011. believes there is a first wave and a second wave of ost soul.

[39] Mcphail, Mark PLawrence. "Complicity Theory." *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*, 2013. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412959384.n62. ; *Authentic Blackness: the Folk in the New Negro Renaissance*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999

Smith, Valerie. *Representing Blackness Issues in Film and Video*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2003. Gates, Henry Louis. 2014. *The Signifying Monkey: a Theory of African American Literary Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[40] Crowley, Sharon, and Debra Hawhee. 2012. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*. Boston: Pearson

[41] Nunley (2011, p18)

[42] Nordvquist, R. March 17, 2018. **Definition and Examples of the Topoi in Rhetoric. Thought Co.** https://www.thoughtco.com/topoi-rhetoric-1692553 Retrieved July 15, 2019

[43] L., Jackson II Ronald, and Elaine B. Richardson. 2014. *Understanding African American Rhetoric Classical Origins to Contemporary Innovations*. Florence: Taylor and Francis.

[44] Watts, E.K. 2012 "An exploration of Spectacular Consumption: Gangsta rap as commodity." In Murrary Forman and Mark Anthony Neal eds, 2012. *That's the Joint! the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge.

[45] Ramsey, Guthrie P. 2009. *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop*. Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press.

[46] Burke, Kenneth. 2013. *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press

[47] Burke, K. 2012. "Calling of the Tune" in Burke, Kenneth. 2013. *The Philosophy of Literary Form Studies in Symbolic Action*. New Delhi: Isha Books.pp 221-229

[48] Quigley, B. 2009. Identification as the Key Term in Burke's Rhetorical Theory. *American Communication Journal*.http://www.people.okanagan.bc.ca/marellano/communications/Cop_and_Identification_files/Identification%20Quigley.pdf

[49] SCISCO, PETER L., Ph.D. 2014. *Organizing Rhetoric: Situation, Ethos, Identification, and the Institution of Social Form* . UNC-Greensboro Dissertation

[50] And for Burke, the literary writer or poet was an exemplar of this notion of taking on the role of a leader or spokesman and using identification as a strategy to maintain membership in one's desired community.

[51] Burke, Kenneth. 2013. *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press.

[52] Haggins. 2007.

[53] Neal. Mark Anthony 2006. *Soul Babies: Black Popular Culture and the Post-Soul Aesthetic. New York, NY: Routledge*; L., Van Deburg William. 2014. *Black Camelot African-American Culture He rose in Their Times, 1960-1980*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[54]Lordi, Emily. 2017. "Post Soul Aesthetics." https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780190221911/obo-9780190221911-0012.xml#obo-9780190221911-0012-bibItem-0054

[55] Schinko, Carsten. "From Soul to Post-Soul: Cultural Discourses beyond the Hermeneutics of Memory?" In *Transitions: Race, Culture, and the Dynamics of Change*. Edited by Hanna Wallinger, 121–138. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006.

[56] Lordi. 2017.

[57] Robinson, Z. 2016. *This aint Chicago: Race, Class and Regional Identity. University of North Carolina Press.*

[58] Kitwana reminds us that the hip-hop generation born (1965-1985) and the post soul generation are one in the same, just the latter denotes the culture beyond hip-hop, yet hip-hop is informed by the post soul.

[59] Deburg, William Van. 2003. "Book Review: Soul Babies: Black Popular Culture and the Post Soul Aesthetic. *African American Review*

[60] Ibid

[61] Wright, M. (2004). *Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the African Diaspora.* Duke University Press.

[62] See Navita James's "When Miss American was Always White" in *Our Voices: Essays in Culture Ethnicity and communication.*

[63] Ashe. 2011.

[64] Obama, B. June 16, 2017. Obama gives Moving Shout-out to Jay-Z". NBC News. *Youtube.com* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwM9ROU5l4U Retrieved June 18, 2017.

[65] Ashe. 2007.

[66] Carter, S. 2009. "What We Talking About" *Blueprint 3* . *Roc Nation Recordings.*

[67] Persley, Nicole Hodges, "An Urban Singer of Tales: The Freestyle Remixing of an Afro-Homeric Tradition. In Bailey, Julius. 2011. *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip Hops Philosopher King.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland.; pp.43-60

[68] Anderson, M. Phillips. Spring 2019. Review: Rhetoric, Humor and the Public Sphere: From Socrates to Stephen Colbert. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs.* Kaylor, BT. 2010. 'Savior, Fool, Demagogue: Burkean Frames surrounding the Ten Commandments Judge. KB Journal.Org. https://www.kbjournal.org/book/export/html/325 ;

[69] Quigley, B. 2009. Identification as the Key Term in Burke's Rhetorical Theory. *American Communication Journal.*http://www.people.okanagan.bc.ca/marellano/communications/Cop_and_Identification_files/Identification%20Quigley.pdf

[70] Karrem, Jamilla. 2015. "The Mogul Ethos and the American Dream in Contemporary Mainstream Rap " in Laura Savu Walker, Joseph Donica, Patrick Crapanzano eds., *The Good Life and the Greater Good: In a global Context.*; Bailey, J. (ed). 2011. *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip Hops Philosopher King.* Naumoff, MH. 2015. The Rhetoric of the Hip-Hop Hustler: Shifting Representations of American Identity. *Wayne State University Dissertations;* Battle, Sha'dawn. 2016. *Moments of Clarity" and Sounds of Resistance: Veiled Literary Subversions and De-Colonial Dialectics in the Art of Jay Z and Kanye West;* Skold, David & Alf Rehn. "Making It, By Keeping It Real: Street Talk, Rap

Music, and the Forgotten Entrepreneurship from 'the Hood.'" Group and Organization Management. 32.1 (2007): 50-78. Print

[71] Burke, K. 1984. "Calling of the tune" Philosophy of Literary Form. University of California Press. Pp221-233.

[72] Kareem, Jamilla. 2015. Greenburg, Zack O'Malley. *Empire State of Mind: How Jay-Z Went from Street Corner to Corner Office/ See songs such as "Izzo"*

[73] Jay-Z. 2010. *Decoded*. New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau.

[74] Jackson, John L. 2005. *Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[75] Rose, Kate. 2015. *Friendship, Love, and Hip Hop: An Ethnography of African American Men in Psychiatric Custody (Culture, Mind, and Society)* Palgrave Macmillan; 1st ed. 2015 edition

[76] Kennedy, Randall. 2009. *Sellout: the Politics of Racial Betrayal*. New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random House, Inc.

[77] Nunley. 2011.

[78] See Tricia Rose's Hip-Hop Wars; Ronald Jackson Scripting Black masculinity; Judy, Ronald. "The question of Nigga Authenticity" in Forman, Murray, and Mark Anthony Neal. 2012. *That's the Joint! the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

[79] Campbell, Kermit Ernest. 2005. *Gettin Our Groove on: Rhetoric, Language, and Literacy for the Hip Hop Generation*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

[80] Neal. 2012.

[81] despite the assumptions of several 90s critics that still stands as scholarship.

[82] Hardy. A. 2012. "Personal Communication with Bushwick Bill at SXSW 2012."

[83] For example, a rapper like Busta Rhymes was just as authentic and sincere as Tupac, different viewpoint and personality but a commitment to his core Black fans, commentary of Black upliftment, and topoi of post soul culture has garnered him a hallowed 20 year career with solid mainstream appeal. Krims explains that Busta demonstrated a shift as he was able to be accepted as true to himself and not chasing trends despite a non gangsta image. Yet even this is a rhetorical performance, and speaks to the ongoing conversation between Black rhetor and audience.

[84] Trilling, Lionel. 1980. *Sincerity and Authenticity*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

[85]. Quoted in *Cesar Casarino's 2008. "Can the Subaltern Confess" in* Ernst Van Halpen's ed., *Rhetorics of Sincerity. Stanford University Press*

[86] Nunley. 2011.

[87] Hall, Stuart. 1973. *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*. Birmingham: Univ. of Birmingham.

[88] Jeffries, Michael P. 2011. *Thug Life: Race, Gender, and the Meaning of Hip-Hop*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

[89] Hess, Mickey. 2012. "The Rap Career". In Murrary Forman and Mark Anthony Neal; eds. *That's the Joint! the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

[90] Trilling, Lionel. 1980. *Sincerity and Authenticity*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

[91] Tempest, K. 2013. AN ETHOS OF SINCERITY: ECHOES OF THE DE REPUBLICA IN CICERO'S PRO MARCELLO * *Greece & Rome,* Second Series, Vol. 60, No. 2 pp. 262-280

[92] Quoted in Tempest

[93] Picket, H. 2017. *Rethinking Sincerity and Authenticity*

[94] Moore, A. 2002. "Authenticity as Authentication" *Popular Music 209-223*

[95] Lubiano. 2003.

[96] Eversley, Shelly. 2015. *The Real Negro: the Question of Authenticity in Twentieth-Century African American Literature*. New York: Routledge.

[97] Neal, Mark Anthony. 2012. No Time for Fake Niggas: Hip-Hop Culture and the Authenticity Debates. Forman, Murray, and Mark Anthony Neal. *That's the Joint! the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. London: Routledge. 52-61. Jackson and Richardson. 2012;

[98] Judy, Ronald. "The question of Nigga Authenticity" in Forman, Murray, and Mark Anthony Neal. 2012. *That's the Joint! the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

[99] Smith, Christopher Holmes. 1997. "Method in the madness: Exploring the boundaries of identity in hip-hop performativity Social identities [1350-4630] Smith yr:1997 vol:3 iss:3 pg:345 -374

[100] Smitherman, Geneva. 2000. *Black Talk: Words and Phrases from the Hood to the Amen Corner*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Smitherman, Geneva. 2006. *Word from the Mother: Language and African Americans*. New York: Routledge. Richardson, Elaine B. 2007. *Hip-hop Literacies*. London: Routledge.

[101] Ibid

[102] Hill, Lamont, Marc. 2008. Toward a pedagogy of the popular: Bourdieu, hip-hop, and out-of-school literacies. In Albright, James, and Allan Luke. *Pierre Bourdieu and Literacy Education*. New York: Routledge.

[103] Mostern, Kenneth. *Autobiography and Black Identity Politics: Racialization in Twentieth-Century America.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

[104] Peterson, J. 2011. "It's Yours: Hip-Hop Worldviews in the lyrics of Nas." In Michael Eric Dyson., and Sohail Daulatzai eds. *Born to Use Mics: Reading Nas's Illmatic*. New York: Basic Civitas Books

[105] Hess, Mickey. 2012. "The Rap Career". In Murrary Forman and Mark Anthony Neal; eds. *That's the Joint! the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

[106] Stokes, M. 1994. *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The musical construction of space.* Southern Illinois Press.
[107] Bradley, Adam. 2017. *Book of Rhymes the Poetics of Hip Hop*. New York: Basic Civitas.

[108] McLeod, Kembrew. 1999. "Authenticity Within Hip-Hop and Other Cultures Threatened with Assimilation." *Journal of Communication* 49 (4): 134–50. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1999.tb02821.x.

[109]Dyson, Michael Eric. *Know What I Mean? Reflections on Hip Hop*. New York: Basic Civitas, 2010

[110] Tate, Greg. 2016. *Flyboy in the Buttermilk: Essays on Contemporary America*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

[111] Hall, S. (1992). What is this 'Black' in Black Popular Culture? *New Ethnicities.*

[112] Gilroy, Paul. 2007. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso.

[113] Gray, Herman. (2005). Cultural *Moves: African Americans and the Politics of Representation.* Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press. Gray, Herman. (1995). Watching *Race: Television and the Struggle for "Blackness*." Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

[114] Taylor-Guthrie, Kathleen. 1994. *Conversations With Toni Morrison.* 123 University Press of Mississippi

[115] Banks and Gilyard. 2018.

[116] Nunley. 2011

[117] Jarrat, S.C. .1998.*Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric refigured.* Southern Illinois University
[118] Kynard, Carmen. 2008. "'The Blues Playingest Dog You Ever Heard Of': (Re)Positioning Literacy Through African American Blues Rhetoric." *Reading Research Quarterly*43 (4): 356–73.

[119] Gates, Henry Louis. & Bentson, Kimberly 2014. "Introduction" *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. New York: Norton.

[120] Gates, Henry Louis. 1989. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

[121] Floyd, S. 1999. Ring Shout Literary Studies: Historical studies and Black Music Inquiry. In Caponi, Gena Dagel. 1999. *Signifyin(g), Sanctifyin, & Slam Dunking.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

[122] Bradley. 2017.; Dyson 2008; Dyson and Daulatzai. 2010. Durham, A. 2015. Pough, Gwendolyn D. 2004. *Check It While I Wreck It: Black Womanhood, Hip-Hop Culture, and the Public Sphere*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

[123] Joseph, Ralina L. 2018. *Postracial Resistance: Black Women, Media, and the Uses of Strategic Ambiguity*. New York: New York University Press.

[124] Kitwana, B. 2011. Zen and the Art of Transcending the Status Quo: The Reach from the Hood to the Suburbs. In Bailey, Julius. 2011. *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip Hops Philosopher King.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland.; Giddings, J. 2011. "The Authentic Cultural Agent". Bailey, Julius. 2011. *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip Hops Philosopher King*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland

[125] Bradley. 2018

[126] Ashe, Betram "Post Soul President: Dreams of my Father and the Post Soul Aesthetic." 103-116. In Harris, Heather E., Kimberly R. Moffitt, and Catherine R. Squires. 2010. *The Obama Effect: Multidisciplinary Renderings of the 2008 Campaign*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

[127] Squires, C. R. 2002. "Rethinking the Black Public Sphere: An Alternative Vocabulary for Multiple Public Spheres." *Communication Theory*12 (4): 446–68. https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/12.4.446.; Cooper, Afua, Rinaldo Walcott, and Lekeisha Hughes. 2018. "Robin D. G. Kelley and Fred Moten in Conversation." *Critical Ethnic Studies*4 (1): 154. https://doi.org/10.5749/jcritethnstud.4.1.0154.

[128] Squires, C. R. 2002. "Rethinking the Black Public Sphere: An Alternative Vocabulary for Multiple Public Spheres." *Communication Theory*12 (4): 446–68. https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/12.4.446.;

[129] Cooper, Afua, Rinaldo Walcott, and Lekeisha Hughes. 2018. "Robin D. G. Kelley and Fred Moten in Conversation." *Critical Ethnic Studies*4 (1): 154. https://doi.org/10.5749/jcritethnstud.4.1.0154.

[130] Scott, Robert Lee. 1979. *The Rhetoric of Black Power*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Pr.

[131] Brummett, B. 2016. The rhetoric of Popular Culture

[132] Anderson, B.2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*

[133]; Ibid

[134] Quoted in Banks and Gilyard . 2018.

[135] Holman-Jones, S. (2007). *Torch Singing: Performing Resistance and Desire from Billie Holliday to Edith Piaf.*

[136] Kelley, Robin D. G. 1996. *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*. New York: The Free Press.

[137] Watts, E.K. 2006. :African American Ethos and Larry Neal's Hermeuntics. In Ethos of Rhetoric. Michael J Hyde. South Carolina Press

[138] Perry, Imani. *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop*. Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2006.; Campbell, Kermit Ernest. 2005. *Gettin Our Groove on: Rhetoric, Language, and Literacy for the Hip Hop Generation*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

[139] Forman, Murray. 2002. *The Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

[140] For example, Outkast mentions the barbershops, churches, and nightclubs of the SWATS (southwest Atlanta), Mobb Deep discuss the everyday life of the 41st side of Queensbridge projects. NWA introduced the world to west coast gang life of Crenshaw Ave in Compton, California. Or rapper Chance the Rapper describes the eclectic South Side Chicago filled with gangs and professors.

[141] Knickerbocker, W.1969 Warm for Maw: Dogma versus Discursiveness in William K. Revert (Ed.). , *Critical Response to Kenneth Burke 1924-1968*. University of Minnesota Press.

[142] Hansen, G. "Kenneth Burke's Rhetorical Theory within the Construction of the Ethnography of Speaking." Folklore Forum 27(1):50-59.; Warwick, Q. 2010. *What we talk about when we talk about talking: Ethos at work in an online community. Iowa State University Dissertations.*
[143] Ibid 52

[144] SCISCO, PETER L., Ph.D. 2014. *Organizing Rhetoric: Situation, Ethos, Identification, and the Institution of Social Form* . UNC-Greensboro Dissertation

[145] Zulick, Margaret D. "The Ethos of Invention: The Dialogue of Ethics and Aesthetics in Kenneth Burke and Mikhail Bakhtin." *The Ethos of Rhetoric*. Ed. Michael J. Hyde. Columbia, SC: U of SC P, 2004. 20–33. Print.

[146] Halloran, S. Michael. 1982. "Aristotle's Concept of Ethos, or If Not His Somebody Else's. "*Rhetoric Review* 1.1 : 58–63.; Warwick, Q. 2010. *What we talk about when we talk about talking: Ethos at work in an online community. Iowa State University Dissertations.*

[147] Quoted in Warnick.2010.

[148] Burke *Rhetoric of Motives* 55

[149] Zulick. 2005.

[150] Sellnow, Deanna D. 2018. *The Rhetorical Power of Popular Culture: Considering Mediated Texts*. Los Angeles:

[151] Burke. 1964. ATH

[152] Ibid. 20

[153] Riley, Alexander. 2005. "The Rebirth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Hip Hop: A Cultural Sociology of Gangsta Rap Music." *Journal of Youth Studies*8 (3): 297–311. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676260500261892. Riley writes that: The tragic gangster hero of *rap :*

Embraced a perspective in which the narrator sees clearly his inevitable suffering, or even his own demise, and yet still embraces the terms of the field on which this has been constructed. Such characters are in possession of dreadful knowledge that others lack, and they recognize that this knowledge will ultimately prove fatal choosing affirmation rather than rejection of the hand they have been dealt. (298).

[154] Crable, Bryan. 2012. *Ralph Ellison and Kenneth Burke at the Roots of the Racial Divide*. Charlottesville (Va.): University of Virginia Press.

[155] Eddy, B. 2009. Rites of Identity: The Religious Naturalism and Cultural Criticism of Kenneth Burke and Ralph Ellison. , Crable. 2012

[156] Quoted in Beth Eddy. 2003. *The Rites of Identity: Religious Naturalism and Cultural Criticism of Kenneth Burke and Ralph Ellison.* Princeton University Press.

[157] Banks and Gilyard. 2018. P.11

[158] Gates. 1989

[159] Kimberly A. Powell. 1995. The association of southern women for the prevention of lynching: Strategies of a movement in the comic frame. *Communication Quarterly* 43:1, pages 86-99.

[160] Haggins. 2008

[161] Roberts, John W. 2010. *From Trickster to Baadman The Black Folk Hero in Slavery and Freedom*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

[162] Burke, K. "Attitudes Toward History" pp47-53

[163] In addition, while I do not interrogate gendered aspects of Jay-Z's discourse, I purposefully sample a large cadre of Black female scholarship to aid my analysis.

CHAPTER 2: BLACK MUSIC LITERATURE REVIEW

We got to pick and choose the ancestors who would inspire the world we were going to make for ourselves. That was part of the ***ethos*** of that time and place, and it got built in to the culture we created. Rap took the remnants of a dying society and created something new. Our fathers were gone, usually. . . but we took their old records and used them to build something fresh." –Jay-Z[1]

"Blues did what hip-hop does now: a source of racial identity, permitting forms of boasting for devalued black people suffering from social degradation, allowing commentary on social and personal conditions in censored language -Michael Eric Dyson.[2]

20th Century Black Music Identification

In this brief literature review, I highlight the scholarship on black musicians' relationship with audiences, particularly how certain discursive personas have been employed to mediate the growing separation economically and experientially between black singer and audience. William Van Deburg writes that black music served as a repository for cultural heroes who made 20th century black audiences feel seen, acknowledged and skilled.[3] In other words, they identified with these artists. Guthrie Ramsey details, that as the first form of public expression for blacks, music is a dynamic site for constructions of a black identity in America.[4] Davis posits that black churches were "the first places for black bodies to express and create their identities in song; and this is where the speaker-audience tradition of black music is fostered." Here, the sermonic preacher expressed the interiority of black identity, activating his private emotions and desires to an empathic audience, inviting them to respond to his discourse (amen!) until speaker and audience are one.[5] Hence, Davis centers the call and response modality (blackness) as central to the singer audience relationship beginning with early female blues singers.[6]

Early black music cultivated a communal consciousness and provided an outlet to voice black experiences, by articulating an individual and communal identity with the use of antiphonal musical styles in church songs, work songs and spirituals.[7] The emergence of blues and jazz musicians coincided with the great migration, and a growing American industry of entertainment.[8] This period produced the first black music celebrities ranging from Jelly Roll Morton, to Bessie Smith. Jazz, however; while still popular with black

audiences became increasingly co-opted and embraced by white audiences in the 1920s, while blues music became known as "race music' due to its primarily black audience base. In the next section I specifically discuss blues music, and the personas employed to enact sincerity with black audiences.

According to Albert Murray, "blues music builds community by encouraging the public expression of private emotions of black folk…that are shared and confirmed through communicative rituals of song." The myth of Robert Johnson selling his soul to the devil contributed to the persona of outlaw or baadman, and was integral to the blues singer persona that challenged the status quo and invoked profane takes on black life.[9] Zora Neale Hurston once mused that blues was dedicated to "feelings set to strings," as the blues artist developed a form that spoke of the everyday moods of black audiences.[10] Murray locates blues music as indicative of two Burkean notions: *acceptance frames and equipment for living*, arguing that blues music is "an aesthetic device or vehicle of coming with the ever changing fortunes of human existence," and that blues uses tragic, comic and epic frames of acceptance "while confronting and acknowledging the harsh fact that human existence is awesome and all too often awful."[11] For Murray, the blues musicians personified Burkes' notion of rhetors using acceptance frames as a means of giving audiences equipment for living. In his view, blues singers enacted identification that spoke to the interior lives of their black fans.[12] Thus a *blues ethos of sincerity* was predicated on sharing a "knowledge" of life sometimes tragic, sometimes comedic that aided the struggles of their black listening audience.

Although fictionalized, these boasting outlaw songs were empowering for black listeners[13]. Indeed, Davis notes how singers invoked the rhetorical technique of naming, to "name" and bring light to the "social and psychic afflictions and aspirations" of black women voiceless in their community.[14] The blues singers rhetorical identification, articulated the individual identities of black artists while simultaneously "working out the emotions" of black audiences.[15] Also, blues primarily was consumed by black audiences similar to early hip-hop. An outlaw persona rooted in being antithetical to the status quo even the black respectable status quo, the baadman blues hero is the progenitor of Jay-Z. However, the rise of white patronage and black communal desires for equal access emerged as the *soul singer* identity had to enact identification with black and white audiences.

Soul music merged "the sacred and the profane" featuring an identity that invoked gospel's optimism and the reality focus of the blues. Soul music can be defined as "a transmutation of gospel and rhythm & blues, into a form of funky secular testifying."[16] Neal reminds us that the sacred and profane tenor of soul music spoke to a broader spectrum of community than blues music. The *soul singer* was the emergence of a popular identity of black progress; as the singer's bricolage of gospel, soul and American pop brought the discourse of the black community into the cultural mainstream. The Motown roster became the pop music of America, articulating an ethos rooted in the black community but juxtaposed with respectability laden middle class image geared towards mainstream America.[17] In similar fashion, Patricia Hill Collins wrote of how Aretha Franklin's tonal semantics reflected the pain and hope of the civil rights movement; but also making catchy pop songs for mainstream audiences.[18] Soul music incorporated the communal focus of the southern church and the realities of 1960s in its discourse.

This discourse helped to create a *dwelling space* where black folks could "know-together" about the changing social landscape. Cornell West has argued that soul music, "made a Black space that is both progressive and informed by the past; constituting a diasporic Black consciousness centered on shared struggle and liberation that coincided with the civil rights movement (p.476-477).[19] Hence, soul music created a new ethos-- dwelling place- for black folks to make sense of being black and a soul ethos of sincerity emerged as a focus on lived experiences, black traditions and black solidarity. Later, James Brown would become an avatar for the changing contours of a soul ethos of sincerity in the late 1960s. Brown's "I'm black and I'm proud," a treatise of black pride, alienated his white audience but endeared him to black audiences.[20] Ramsey contends Brown's performance of black identity "deployed the new black consciousness of the black pride…. at the crossroads between the Civil Rights and Black Power movements." Brown would signal a shift, as artists would become more direct in their discussion of black life with black audiences and less ambiguous as say "dancing in the street." The assassinations of Malcolm and Martin in the late 60s, the tumultuous Vietnam War, and the economic decline of the late 60s shifted the tenor and presentation of black sincerity rhetoric in music of the 70s. The rise of the ghetto advocate emerged.

Todd Boyd details that in the 70s the ghetto became the dominant spatial theme in soul music beginning with Marvin Gaye's 1971 album *What's Going On.*[21] In concert, Halbermas, details how soul music began to reflect the militancy and claims of solidarity with the black lower class visible in the rhetoric of the black power movements.[22] Singers such as Curtis Mayfield and Stevie Wonder began to focus on stories of ghetto life and racism, hoping to offer texts that "told the truth" about racial inequality and black pride. Mayfield in particular was viewed as "the voice of the ghetto," with his songs about the crime and drugs that plagued urban ghettos; focusing specifically on the "we" of the black urban ghetto.[23] Sometimes identity discourse and communal ties during this period were invoked via fantasy, such as the music of Parliament-Funkadelic. Parliament spoke of utopian "chocolate cities" to their predominately black audience, dreams of a prosperous black nation within America—"One nation under a groove."[24] Disco music would soon silence the political music of the ghetto advocate in mainstream music, although Gil Scott Heron and the Last Poets would maintain the ghetto advocate in their poetry and spoken word music. Last Poets Hustler's Convention, a mock dramatization of politically charged street drug dealers, would be particularly influential on hip-hop.[25]

For my project, this era is substantial to post-soul hip-hop's discourse and modes of identification. The focus on the ghetto, the emphasis on "speaking for and about your community," and the black pride of late soul music became consistent themes in hip-hop culture. The late 70s and in the 80s would feature black representations of uplift and cultural pluralism in mainstream media----a progressive backlash against the ghetto focus. However, the arbiters of hip-hop would "bring the ghetto back into the American cultural consciousness. (p.6)"[26] In this section on musical personas in past black music, I set out to briefly recognize the scholarly literature about black musical identity. In what follows, I discuss the literature of hip-hop scholarship in relation to musical personas and black audience identification. This section provides context of hip-hop culture's discussion of identity and highlights how Jay-Z is a part of a rhetorical continuum of black expression.

Hip-Hop's Formative Years: Early Modes of Black Sincerity Rhetoric

Several critics explain that the postindustrial conditions of high unemployment, racial relocation, urban blight and social disenfranchisement in 1970 NYC ghettos created the conditions that fostered hip-hop

culture.[27] In her breakthrough scholarship, Tricia Rose emphasized that youth who were confined to urban ghettoes, used cheap spray cans for art, DJ equipment, neighborhood slang and local parks to create a vibrant youth culture: hip-hop. Most critics trace hip-hop origins to the local block parties of the mid 1970s featuring communal DJ's such as Kool Herc and Afrika Bambatta. Geneva Smitherman and musicologist David Toop explain that early hip-hop culture featured a bricolage of black American oral traditions rooted in the ancestral past, such as: the West Indian DJ culture and 70s funk/dance music.[28] Nelson George explained that in hip-hop, black youth "raided the pop culture past" sampling songs, jingles, kung fu movies and other pop culture references, reshaping the material to fit their expression.[29] Hip-hop music articulated a community reaction to social shifts and alienation from the larger political and social base of America.[30] Also similar to blues and soul the common topoi of authenticity, blackness and community are transformed but prevalent as a rhetorical strategy even in hip-hop's early years.

Early rappers sought to gain social status in a locally meaningful way via rap competitions. On a tour of hip-hop's early days in NYC, rap pioneer Grandmaster Caz informed me that rappers had "to represent their community and their crew[31] as an ambassador every time you rapped."[32] Hence, a rappers identity was constituted by articulating our three common topoi of sincerity: one's "true" localized personal experience (authenticity), legitimizing one's talent via cultural boasts (blackness) and representing your locality (community). Ghettoes across NYC became "localized sites of significance" featuring hip-hop parties and competitions.[33] NYC's Sugar Hill Gang's 1979 song, "Rappers Delight" became a national hit and an emergent hip-hop culture spread nationally, spawning early hip-hop music scenes throughout the United States.[34] Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five and their pivotal "The Message" a 1982 song about the conditions of urban ghettos inspired a focus on social consciousness and protest music similar to the soul music of the 70s.[35]

Imani Perry believes 80s hip-hop music became a democratic space that valued open dialogue from a range of perspectives and registers.[36] Similarly, Greg Tate has argued hip-hop was becoming a popular form of "black essaying featuring lyrically creative observations on life, love and the black youth experience across the country (p.129).[37] New dwelling places were emerging as a hip-hop nation expanded. "It aint where you

from but where you at"[38] became the adage of sharing a state of mind in the hip-hop nation regardless of your neighborhood. Hip-hop music became known as "the hip-hop nation" where rappers and audiences across the nation, commiserated on the similarities and differences "of where they were from."[39] Hip-hop music was a hybrid form, traceable to speech and song and traditions of "rhetoric in black America."[40] What makes hip-hop a unique case study of rhetoric; is its hybrid influence from a variety of black expressive rhetorics over the past four centuries. African American rhetorical traditions are carried on in hip-hop's rhetorical practices.[41] The early years of hip-hop featured a burgeoning culture centered on communal discourse, but also the first wave of post-soul artist who wanted to also affirm their individuality. Rappers back then, had to establish a unique individual identity with audiences, yet this identity was always situated in the context of a communal culture. Thus, what many term the golden age of hip-hop in the mid to late 80s, featured a range of individual identities and approaches to identification with audiences. Emery notes rappers displayed a range of diverse identities,[42] all situated in a communal discourse.[43] Pioneering prominent artists such as Run DMC featured a focus on braggadocio, material status and party rap. However, few rappers stuck to one style, instead artists such as Slick Rick and Big Daddy Kane incorporated many different types of personas in their work, vacillating from Casanova, to political activist, to rap competitor.[44] Later groups such as Public Enemy would make socially conscious rap one of hip-hop's most popular subgenres in the late 80s.[45] These artists emphasized black collectivity and a focus on reform and change in the black community. In the 90s' a broad range of rap identities became more clearly defined and categorized, in conjunction with hip-hop's brimming commercial success.[46]

In the underground scene, the pimp of ICE T and the gangsta of Philly's Schooly D would become the dominant persona with the rise of NWA and Scarface. Related, several critics declared that beginning in the early 90s artists began to negotiate two key desires of hip-hop identity: the desire for status and personal success in order to escape poverty and garner social visibility and a desire to speak for their communities rendered voiceless—the dialectical tension between the "self" and the "we."[47] In his book *Decoded,* Jay-Z's discussion of hip-hop as identification aids my analysis, by discussing how the rap audience looks for the

common topoi of black sincerity and seek to identify with the rap rhetor. In addition, Jay-Z's discussion of the emergence of the hustler persona in rap aids my review of late 90s hip-hop personas.

Jay-Z on Rap as Black Sincerity Rhetoric/Identification and the Emergence of the "hustler" persona

In his book *Decoded*, Jay-Z argued that while some believe hip-hop had form and style, in its pre-recording days of the late 70s and early 80s, for young fans such as himself it was not until Run DMC the legendary 80s rap group emerged, that the attitude, the look,[48] the swagger and blueprint of hip-hop was established. For young Shawn Corey Carter (Born 1969), a teenager living in the Bedford-Stuyvesant[49] neighborhood of Brooklyn in Marcy Housing Projects, hearing Hollis, Queens natives Run DMC changed his view of hip-hop as not just fun but an *art form*::

> Their voices were big and they talked slick like my neighborhood hustlers. Run rapped about the good life. Champagne, caviar, Cadillac's. He rapped about a *Caddy not a Seville.* In those few words he painted a picture and gave it life. I completely related to kids in my neighborhood who would rubberneck when an expensive car drove down the block...It's like he was just walking around his neighborhood in Queens, his mom's kitchen . . . but the beat and delivery *of DMC elevated that humble life into something iconic when he screams"* I'm light skinned, I live in Queens/I love chicken and collard greens. [50]

In Jay's recollection, RUN-DMC's ability to reflect the mores and common attitudes of his community was an exemplar of what he felt hip-hop could be; a reflection of black urban creativity and the attitude necessary for urban survival. Jay was also light skinned, loved his momma's chicken and collard greens, and saw that pink caddy in the neighborhood too, but Run made it sound like a movie, he said. The detail of the Caddy not the Seville, connects to listeners' dreams of the good life when witnessing the neighborhood hustlers; accoutrements. For Jay-Z the teenager, it was the light bulb moment, the moment he realized what hip-hop could be: "[Hip-Hop] it was gonna be witty and slick, but raw and aggressive. It was gonna boast, compete, and exaggerate. But it was also gonna care enough to get the details **right**. Right about our aspirations and our crumb snatching struggles, our specific realities and our living color dreamscapes. It was gonna be real (10).[51]For young hip-hop fan Shawn Carter, Run DMC spoke to the commonplaces of community, authenticity and blackness, in the form of neighborhood shout outs, the witty, slick signifying and raw aggressive attitude of the 80s B-Boy, and most importantly the testimonial details of eating soul food, living with your mom and dreams of a better life. Run-DMC's "It's Like That" was one of the first platinum singles

of hip-hop, it resonated as familiar with black audiences nationwide, because it reflected common realities and dreams of black youth, from similar locales and circumstances across the hip-hop nation. It was "real" to Jay and many black youth because the rhyme invited us to fill in the blanks implied by Run (the call and response modality) and add our substance to Run's ode to Queens; to nod along in agreement at the "reality" of the Caddy catching eyes on the block. Here you and the rapper share substance, and you identify with the narrative because it rings true in your reality. Run could easily be discussing my mother's chicken and collard greens—that's a pretty standard southern black meal--- that spreads across the nation due to great migration and shared cultural customs. This is how early hip-hop identification with post soul audiences worked.

As a fan and critic of hip-hop, Jay-Z the writer accurately gives voice to what Haggins claims is the post soul audiences' desire for sincerity and genuine care from black artists.[52] Jay the young rap fan explains that to him as a kid growing up, the details mattered due to an audience need to know the rapper cares about them, if no one else in society does. He contends that audiences want the rapper to "Care enough to get it right, speaking your reality which is similar to my reality, speaking your dreams which are similar to my dreams, and speaking in the way you speak which is similar to how I speak."[53] Indeed, Carter uses the classic definition of identification to demonstrate how one aspect of *BSR as identification* works, you persuade a man insofar as you can talk his language by speech, tonality, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his." Run did this for Jay, as he says above, the similarity created consubstantiality, a sense of communion, a unity between rhetor and audience who share this perspective of hood living. Carter felt Run DMC cared enough to get it right and this ethic of "get the details right" undergirds his rhetorical performance of sincerity. Carter, however; would argue "what was missing in hip-hop's story, was "how did the B-Boy walk over the broken glass in Grandmaster Flash" the Message" and into the Caddy heard on Run DMC?, What was missing was the story of the hustler. . . which is the story of Jay-Z"

In the mid-80s, pioneers Run DMC had made the B-Boy--the prototypical hip-hop fan dressed in the genres fashion and using heavy slang---the key identity of hip-hop. The B-Boy was a reification of the fan and their lifestyle. As hip-hop expanded in the early 90s, rappers across the American diaspora began to witness their environments and the role of crack cocaine in the lives of postindustrial ghetto folk; hip-hop's attitude

and form was forever changed. Before it was hailed as Gangsta rap by media critics, NWA's street narratives about gang life and Public Enemy's critique of drug dealers in Long island were viewed by most black hip-hop fans as in the same category of "reality rap."[54] Both present observation based raps about what goes on in black communities, and both are critical of the conditions, and lack of opportunities... Deburg briefly highlights how the "American dream" of the celluloid 70s hustler is transplanted to the rap generation who views the hustler with empathy for their struggle and praise for their risk.[55] NYC transplant and LA hustler ICE T[56] helped to usher in the gangsta rap movement of the west coast in 1989. Ice-T's "6 in the morning" would predate NWA in the focus on the West coast gangster.

Similar to blues music, the gangsta protagonist in both artists music, rarely wins in early reality rap, and instead witnesses the highs and inevitable lows of the "gangster life".[57] Ice-T explains that "I and a lot of other hustlers were fans of iceberg slim novels, but there was always a lesson that crime wasn't worth it, and that's what I wanted to communicate." Ethan Browne[58] has detailed that the drug hustler was often a prominent figure in hip-hop behind the scenes often funding early artists, most notably Eazy-E' the former drug dealer sponsoring NWA. The group would use Eazy's drug dealer stories as fodder for their street reporting in song such as "Gangsta Gangsta" and "Dopeman." From NWA "Gangsta Gangsta" 1989, to UGK's 1992 "Pocket Full of Stones," the street hustler in rap was framed as an excessive figure with short lived success destined for jail or death. In song, critiques of the government and lack of opportunities were often mentioned as a cause for this devastating path taken by these artists such as Ice Cube and Scarface in the late 80s and throughout the 90s. The repetitive form with rappers signifying on previous tales, "the consistent maintaining of a principle in new guises,"[59] was evidenced in the nuanced portrayals of rappers as street reporters and baadman tragic heroes witnessing the effect of Reagnomics, reversal of many civil rights gains and the vast impact of crack cocaine across the black American diaspora. Every "ghetto" had a story to tell and gangster rap in the early 90 reflected the nihilism, fast money, hedonism and destruction of black ghettos visible due to the crack game. Tricia Rose extended this concept to argue that hip-hop functioned as a new space of the black public sphere where black bodies commiserated over their shared experiences and differences. Chuck D called hip-hop: the black CNN.

1990s Hustler Persona in Hip-Hop: Spokesperson or Sellout

However, hip-hop was probably more ahead of its time MSNBC meets TMZ than CNN, as entertaining, shock value and outlaw identities still often appealed to audiences. Spectacle, hyperbole, and poetic license were prevalent in the midst of authenticity claims of "keepin' it real" and not "poverty pimpin" street stories for success. Boyd notes that Gangsta rap survived sellout claims due to its material and topic selection, stating that gangsta raps non conformity in watering down their rage, or attitude actually made it successful with non-blacks, but still valued by young black audiences who felt rappers hadn't watered down their style for success.[60] I think Nelson George accurately argued, that the commercial rise of gangsta rap in the 90s was a byproduct of the effect of Reagnomics, the rise of crack cocaine and gang culture, a thriving white teenage base turning to black pop culture for sources of cool and rebellion, and a ghettocentric attitude of black youth willing to make money off of their ghetto struggle and play.[61]

In relation, Jay Z once remarked, "no one hired a skywriter to announce the arrival of crack, but its impact was unprecedented."[62] If you were a 80s and early 90s youth in lower class black neighborhoods such as Jay and this author, the effect of crack cocaine when it hit your neighborhood was almost instant. Neighborhood friends all of sudden had a lot more than allowance money and had cars not bikes; working class parents became skeletal and jittery addicts--- feenin' for the next hit, and in Carter's words, "kids my age were serving them, stacking their ones saying fuck a summer job."[63] The social situation of black American ghettoes beset with alarming young black unemployment was often reified in the music, in the form of the hustler turned rapper. As I have argued elsewhere, hip-hop is predominately, a discursive space for black dreams where the dream of autonomy, independence, and power and acknowledgment was found in the dialectic of the hustler turned rapper persona. To paraphrase Ellison, it is a black rhetorical tradition for outlaws on society's margins to often be the voice of transgression, receiving praise from black audiences for transcending the limitations of being black in America.[64] Thus, the hustler rapping about their lifestyle, their fears, and their dreams became a prominent movement in the genre.

In connection, Forman contended that for fellow black artists and audiences, groups like N.W.A, reduced the proximity of space in hip-hop, introducing the term "hood; as shorthand for "a narrowed sense

of place—through which young thugs and their victims moved in tandem and battled for turf, money and notoriety" in the crack era (p.187).[65] The gangsta was the rise of the individual as NWA rapper Eazy-E stated "getting paid was the American way," yet they simultaneously reported the underreported truths of police brutality, redlining and failing schools in their 'hood. Gangsta rap would become hip-hop's most controversial and economically successful performance, as civil rights generation blacks, the political right, and concerned white parents questioned the music's pernicious influence on youth.[66] Dr. Dre and later his *Death row Records* roster became suburban pop darlings with multi-platinum albums and media controversy.[67] In relation, the growth of hip-hop nationwide in the 1990s, helped to construct a new productive and younger wing of the black public sphere, where concerns, ambitions, and values of predominately black youth could be discussed, critiqued or advanced. Around the early-mid 90s white patronage wasn't the main cause for black audience claims of selling out, instead an artist changing their form and sound to match what sold in the mainstream[68] was seen as disingenuous and inauthentic by many black hip-hop fans in the early to mid-90s.[69]

Thus, the concern over sellout rhetoric was a concern over a weakening of hip-hop as a discursive space for black conversation, critique, celebration and community in the 90s. Hence, as Jeffries has argued, the focus on "keepin' it real", in the 90s became increasingly just not about reporting street realities, but verifying a back story that validated your poetic license to tell community narratives. [70]As the late Adam Krims argued, the focus on urban street reality and autobiography heard in reality rap/.gangsta rap of the late 80s and early 90s, created a catalog of hip-hop outlaws "rapping their rap sheet", in first person perspective raps to verify their right to give voice to urban street "realities."[71] Robin D.G. Kelly's analysis posited that this was "survivor blues" as artists made claims of being able to survive the turbulent and violent neighborhoods betwixt hyperbolic braggadocio and black youth fantasies of desire, power, wealth and heterosexual conquests.

When rapper Hammer tried to adopt the popular gangster rap aesthetic fans recoiled at what was seen as sell out pandering.[72] Thus, for rap rhetors of the late 90s and early 00s, sizing up the desire to get paid but not change the identity or character audiences identified with was a key imperative of this rhetorical situation. Savvy artists in the mid-90s began to rhetorically frame their individual success in the mainstream as

a representative of the 'hood and hip-hop gaining mainstream acceptance.[73] As Jamilla Kareem has detailed, a shift from the gangsta to the hustler turned mogul persona emerged in the early aughts.[74] Trickle down hip-hop representation was the claim, as the decade's most successful rappers such as Jay-Z, Puffy, Master P to name a few, claimed their mainstream success, and role as music entrepreneurs who were helping to reinvest jobs and funds into the "'hood," and offering symbolic medicine of ambition, hope and inspiration for their "hoods." Moreover these artists, claimed to be sharing the truth of black life with white audiences, implicitly arguing that they were increasing black cultural acceptance. Jay-Z's rise emerges at this transition from the *keepin' it real* street corner witnessing of the early 90s to the hustler turned mogul upward mobility discourse dominance of the late 90s and early aughts. The gangsta rap of the West informed the hustler identity that emerged in the mid-90s hip-hop of east-coast[75] rap music.[76]

While there were other sub genres in hip-hop, the narrative of the former criminal turned rapper became THE most profitable established and conventional form embraced in hip-hop culture at the time. The Notorious B.I.G., Carter's former classmate, would bring the east coast gangsta to the music forefront. Jay-Z would embrace this lane, but reshape it to his own character. The birthplace of hip-hop, NYC would be inspired by the west coast, as Biggie Smalls, Wu-Tang Clan, Nas, and later Jay-Z would usher in what was called the Mafioso era, a regional response and media invented name to differentiate between the NYC hustlers from the west coast gangster, while capitalizing on the popularity of outlaw identities in pop culture. While gang culture had been around since the 19th century in LA, likewise Mafia culture was a part of NYC origins and popular stories of the mafia had been popular with this generation since The *Godfather.*

A new wave of NYC artists and southern artists would frame themselves as professional and organized criminals, using the Mafioso tropes of family, loyalty, and power as signifiers for their identity.[77] Beginning with Biggie's Frank Sinatra suits and hats and, and referring to his childhood group of friends as "Junior Mafia" in 1995, and his best friend as his Capo. Staten island bred Wu-Tang Clan appropriating the local mob culture of the Gambino families to describe how their collective was taking over the industry on 1995's Raekwon's *Ob4CL,* or Jay-Z referring to his crew as *The commission* after the mythical mob collective mentioned in the Godfather. NYC rappers would detail a sensitive, complex and emotional hustler, who

looked to hip-hop as their salvation from crime, paranoia and poverty[78]. These artists would integrate the hip-hop traditions of braggadocio, storytelling, and neighborhood representing, but in the persona of black mobsters going legit in the mid-90s.[79]

As Riley has argued in his discussion of tragedy in rap, the mafia figures of celluloid were afforded an acceptance, a prestige, a certain level of acceptance for their decisions—that former black criminals—real or fictional were not. More than fame and power, these figures were afforded a humanity that black youth of hip-hop desired and repossessed in their aural world of hip-hop. In relation, these rap rhetors emphasized their "true" experiences and literal rap sheet on the street as poetic license to discuss, witness, and even exaggerate to some degree their experiences but still demonstrate a *care to get the details right* and demonstrate their membership in the community. The east-coast hustler identity offered the paradoxical claim that they were simply giving voice to their communal realities in drug dealing songs and ultimately their rap success would allow them to give back to their communities. The gangsta/hustler rapper of the east coast would garner commercial success and become a staple of hip-hop then and now. Yet, no artist mastered this emphasis on sincerity, testimony, and poetic license more than Jay-Z.[80]

Kermit Campbell links the trickster (comic) and baadman (epic) as two frames inherited directly and used by Jay-Z; arguing that the rapper embodies the values black audiences' love about the blues outlaw: his autonomy, ambition, and willingness to risk it all for the good life often barred to black folk.[81] Indeed, Regina Bradley explains that while not the inventor, few artists would capitalize and alter the rap persona of the hustler turned rapper" and take it to the financial and cultural heights that Jay-Z does.[82] In his 20+ year career I contend Jay-Z moved hip-hops' ethos from the street witnessing of the gangsta to the social mobility and ambition of the hustler turned mogul and eventually turned American hero. This project charts this path.

Conclusion

Although, I recognize many have discussed Jay-Z discography at length, the above literature and critical layout demonstrates a critical lane for discussing how Jay-Z developed and deployed a *black sincerity rhetoric* that his imagined audience identified with from 1996-2007. Moreover, as Jay-Z endures ongoing contemporary critiques about his ethos, from his "my presence is a charity" comments after a Trayvon Martin

rally in 2013[83] or the current 2019 storm of black criticism for his NFL partnership after advocating boycotting for estranged athlete Colin Kapernick,[84] we can chart how he has negotiated the dialectic of being joined but separate from black audiences on his most adored albums and how he might transcend this dialectic in the near future. We can see how his established position as communal spokesman in his music, inform black public critiques of his *ethos of black sincerity*. Thus, we look at how Jay-Z is an exemplar and pioneer of black sincerity rhetoric and how BSR exemplifies how an enduring conversation for black public rhetor and imagined black audience is made possible through the use of an *ethos of sincerity*

In this work I argue that Jay-Z is an exemplar of *Black sincerity rhetoric* in the post soul era. This study frames the rhetorical performances of black rhetors in the post soul era as sites of inquiry for viewing the rhetorical praxis of identification; meaning that rhetoric does something, it makes life livable. And that in these songs we hear symbolic acts, geared to do something for the speaker and the audience--what Nigel Malcolm calls recognition that speaker and audience can share in equipment for living. Or as Jay-Z said "I have a million therapists that allow me to share my fears, dreams and frustrations, I need them more than they need me," highlights the rhetor need for acceptance. In his near two decades, I extend the assertion that Jay-z used song to rhetorically frame himself as a trusted sincere speaker in the post soul era. In this project, I will explain how Jay-Z's use of *topoi of black sincerity* (authenticity, blackness, and community) and his application of acceptance frames to adjust to his audience helped him to develop a post soul ethos of sincerity.

My critical desire is to demonstrate how Burkean poetic theory, hip-hop scholarship, and an ethos as a rhetorical tool help to explain how Jay-Z attempts to transcend the dialectic of being joined yet separate from his audience and offering a black sincerity rhetoric that encourages audiences to size up their post soul situation and "vicariously" find themselves consubstantial with Jay-Z's narrative. In particular, my past work has focused on hip-hop artists' use of ethos and identification to create spaces where black sincerity rhetoric is heard and shared, spaces where the lyrics serve as an invitation to affirm kinship and also advance individuality. For the post soul generation, the myth of black solidarity and essentialism runs up against the myth of a post racial society. The idea of shared black outrage runs up against claims of *playing the race card.*

The rhetoric of *niggas vs. black people*[85] runs up against the post soul charitable tenet of multiple black authenticities. The incongruity of these experiences defines the post soul generation. And thus it inspires a motive to discuss, interrogate, and size up this incongruous situation in post soul media and scholarship.[86]

Arguably no rapper has discussed, challenged, and transformed this particular discourse than Shawn Corey Carter, better known as Jay –Z. Moving into the 21st century, we saw a cultural change from an emphasis on black solidarity to an emphasis on black sincerity--showing that you care and give back to black spaces—even if you no longer are confined to black spaces.[87] Burke's work serves as a critical lens to track the procedure of a rap rhetor establishing a sincere ethos as a mode of identification with post-soul audiences. Along with an expanded view of identification as a focus on maintaining membership in community, the projects discussion of acceptance frames and particularly Jay-Z's employment of comic and epic frames answers rhetorical critics recent assertion of the lack of work on the combination of Burkean frames. In the next chapter I finally discuss Jay-Z's discourse on his debut and how his debut album *Reasonable Doubt* serves as the foundation for his black sincerity rhetoric throughout his career. In this chapter we can see the process of employing topoi of black sincerity and the establishment of an ethos of sincerity to deploy is sincerity rhetoric. .

Endnotes

[1] Carter, S. *Decoded.* 2011. P.114

[2] Dyson. 2012. "The Culture of Rap." In in Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal, ed. 2012. *That's the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge. 60-72

[3] Dyson. 2012. "The Culture of Rap." In in Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal, ed. 2012. *That's the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge. 60-72

[3] L., Van Deburg William. 2014. *Black Camelot African-American Culture Heroes in Their Times, 1960-1980*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[4] Ramsey, Guthrie P. 2004. *Race Music: Black Cultures from Behop to Hip-Hop*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

[5] This is mainly a focus on the prototypical raucous holiness preacher of the south. However not all black churches featured the performative sermonic pose.

[6] Davis Angela. 1999. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*. New York (NY): Vintage

[7] Ramsey. 2004.; Levine, Lawrence W. 2007. *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press. Post emancipation the emergence of the singular identity appears as the choir is replaced by the jazz and blues musician in the early 20th century.

[8] Kelley, Robin D. G. 1996. *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*. New York: The Free Press.

[9] Campbell, Kermit Ernest. 2005. *Gettin Our Groove on: Rhetoric, Language, and Literacy for the Hip Hop Generation*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

[10] Quoted in Zimmerman, Katherine. 2013. *The Sounds of Zora Neale Hurston: Their Eyes were watching God: Blues, rhythm rhyme and repetition* . UNCG Dissertations and Theses. https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/listing.aspx?id=14887

[11] Seymour, G. 2017. What We can Learn from Albert Murrary. *Book Forum Dec/January Issue.* https://www.bookforum.com/print/2304/what-albert-murray-can-teach-us-now-16820. The rest of the quote is from Hawkins, D. 2008. *The Jazz Trope : A theory of African American literary and vernacular culture.* Scarecrow Press: PA. page 124-126.

[12] Hoffman, H. 2010. *Albert Murray's House of Blues* in Baker, B.(ed) 2010. *Albert Murrary and the Aesthetic Imagination of a Nation*. University of Alabama Press. 138-153.

[13] Neal, MA. 2013. *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Popular Culture. 2nd Edition* NYC: Routledge ; Kelley. 1998,; Dyson 2004; Campbell 2005;

[14] Davis 1996

[15] West, C. 2005. "On African American Music: From Bebop to Rap." In The Cornel West Reader.

[16] Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's placard definition of soul music. Cleveland Ohio. Retrieved 2013.

[17] Ward, Brian. 2004. *Just My Soul Responding: Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness and Race Relations*. London: Routledge.

[18] Quoted on page 57 of Neal's *What the Music Said.*

[19] West, C. 2005.

[20] Guralnick, Peter. 2012. *Sweet Soul Music: Rhythm and Blues and the Southern Dream of Freedom*. New York: Back Bay Books/Little, Brown and Co.

[21] Boyd, T. 2004. *The New HNIC*

[22] Haralambas, M. (1985). *Soul Music*
[23] Ramsey. 2004; Neal. 2012.; Boyd 2005

[24] George, N. 1999; Neal 2012; Neal 2006

[25]Campbell, Kermit Ernest. 2005. *Gettin Our Groove on: Rhetoric, Language, and Literacy for the Hip Hop Generation*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

[26] Rose, Tricia. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Cultural Resistance in Contemporary American Popular Culture, 1993;*

[27] Rose, Tricia. 1993; CHANG, JEFF. 2020. *CANT STOP WON'T STOP: a History of the Hip-Hop Generation*. S.l.: PICADOR. ; Toop, David. 1991. *Rap Attack*. London: Serpents Tail

[28] Toop. 1991; Smitherman 1990, 2005, 2004.

[29] George. 1998.

[30] Chang, J. *2020/2005*

[31] Many of the hip-hop crews that emerged were former youth gangs such as the Black Spades. Thus, an emphasis on one's personal crew has been a hallmark of hip-hop culture

[32] Hush Hip-hop Tours. 2007. Personal Communication

[33] In this section I do not mean to gloss over the multicultural exchange in hip-hop music. Flores (2004) and Cepeda (2009) have discussed the erasure of Latino culture from hip-hop scholarship. In particular they discuss the presence of Hispanic break dancers and graffiti artists. However, as rap became popular, black artists became the chief subjects invoking black oral traditions.

[34] Chang 2020.

[35] Rose. 1993

[36] Perry. 2005

[37] Tate, G. 1992. Flyboy in the Buttermilk.

[38] Popular lyric from the Eric B.and Rakim song "In the Ghetto"

[39] Rose. 1993

[40] OMeally and Gates. 2015.

[41] Hess, Mickey. 2007. *Is Hip Hop Dead?: the Past, Present, and Future of Americas Most Wanted Music*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

[42] Krims in his book *Poetics of Identity (2003)* offers an expansive description of the many identities of hip-hop. Krims explains that hip-hop in its infancy featured a range of different rap styles and sub genres featuring varied iterations of identity. Casanova rap, party rap, social commentary, comedy rap, and battle rappers

[43] Emery, Andrew. 2005. *The Book of Hip-Hop Cover art*. NYC: Mitchell Beazley

[44] See Havelock Nelsons *Bring The Noise and Introduction to Hip-Hop artists* (1989) or Brian Coleman Check The Technique (2003)

[45] Some of the earliest scholarship on hip-hop focused on the political music of Public Enemy. Their neo black nationalism tone and image was seen as hip-hop's first serious group. For a thorough discussion of their impact on hip-hop and music in general see Jeff Chang's *Can't Stop Won't Stop: Hip-Hop History* : "Public Enemy and the Post-Civil rights Moment."

[46] See Hess's *Icons of Hip-Hop*

[47] Allen Light . 2012. The Business of Rap. In Forman, Murray, and Mark Anthony Neal. 2012. *That's the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge; McLeod, Kembrew. 1999. "Authenticity Within Hip-Hop and Other Cultures Threatened with Assimilation." Journal of Communication 49 (4): 134–50. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1999.tb02821.x.;

Rodman, G. 2012. Race…and Other Four-Letter Words: Eminem and the Cultural Politics of Authenticity . In Forman, Murray, and Mark Anthony Neal. 2012. *That's the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge; Judy, R.A.T. 2012. "On Nigga Authenticity" in Forman, Murray, and Mark Anthony Neal. 2012. *That's the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge.

[48] Heavily influenced by the disco era, many early groups such as Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, Treacherous Three dressed in flamboyant almost superhero larger than life outfits, similar to parliament Funkadelic as well. Run DMC uniform of lee jeans, cazal shades, and unlaced adidas was the uniform of the average hip-hop fan lessening the distance between audience and rhetor.

[49] Affectionately known as Bed-Stuy by most locals. Probably best known in popular culture as the neighborhood in Spike Lee's Do the Right Thing.

[50] Decoded. 2010. 55

[51] Decoded. 2010. 10

[52] Haggins. 2007.

[53] Decoded. 2010. 8-11

[54] Krims. 2011.

[55] Deburg. 2012.

[56] Named after the Donald Goines Character Iceberg Slim. Who Jay-Z used as a moniker early in his career.

[57] Ramsey. 2004. Dyson. 1995. *Between God and Gangsta Rap*. 181, Campbell. 2005. Hudson, Julius. 1972 "The Hustling Ethic." In Thomas Hockman ed., *Rapping and Styling Out: Communication in Urban Black America*

[58] *Brown, Ethan. 2008. Fat Cat, 50 Cent, and the Rise of the Hip-Hop Hustler. London: Plexus.*

[59] Burke. 1996. Attitudes Toward History

[60] Boyd, Todd. 2004. *The New H.N.I.C. (Head Niggas In Charge): the Death of Civil Rights and the Rise of Hip Hop*. New York: New York University Press.

[61] George. 1998.

[62] Jay-Z. 2010. *Decoded*. New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau. 118

[63] Ibid 118

[64] Ellison, Ralph. 1995. *Going to the Territory*. New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random House.

[65] Forman. 2012.

[66] Dyson. 2012.

[67] Prior to gangsta rap, a name created by the media referring to NWA's discussion of gang life, hip-hop was a marginally successful genre with a couple of albums being pop success. However, gangsta rap grew a 100 million dollar industry into a 500 million dollar industry with street narratives dominating and saving a slow recording industry. See Eric K. Watts; Spectacular consumption of Gangsta rap or the Corporate Annexation of Hip-hop Music in *Communication Monographs* 1998 vol 5, no.2. for further discussion of gangsta raps economic impact

[68] Gosa, Travis L. 2015. "The Fifth Element: Knowledge". *In The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop. Edited by Justin A. Williams*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 56–70.; Ewoodzie, Joseph C., Jr. 2017. *Break Beats in the Bronx: Rediscovering Hip-hop's Early Years.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press

[69] For example when rapper Boss who had emerged on the scene as a hardcore street gangster in 1991, had reports of her attending private school emerge in the media; her tales of ghetto survival at all costs were deemed insincere and labeled Boss a "fake rapper" capitalizing on black pain by fans and media, ending her career.

[70] Jeffries, Michael P. 2011. *Thug Life: Race, Gender, and the Meaning of Hip-Hop*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

[71] Krims. 2011.

[72] Neal, M.A. 2005. *What the Music Said*

[73] Judy 2012.

[74] Kareem, Jamilla. 2015. The Mogul Ethos and the American Dream in Contemporary Mainstream Rap," in Laura Savu Walker's ed., *The Good Life and the Greater Good in a Global Context*. Lanham: Lexington Books. 145-158

[75] East coast in hip-hop vernacular usually means north east United States.

[76] In addition, the popularity, particularly of west coast narratives about gang and ghetto life extended to notable films such as 1994's *Menace II Society and 1992's Boyz n the Hood*-named after the NWA song, gave these narratives character and gangsters humanity, while reflecting the nihilism and rage of urban communities of this time

[77] Holmes-Smith. 2005

[78] Beginning with Nas's story of street corner hustlers incarcerated and lost childhood in Queensbridge Projects on 1994's *Illmatic,* to Biggie's tales of paranoia, suicide, and stress as a drug dealer looking to rap for a better life on 1994's *Ready to Die* or the reflective regrets of drug life harming your family "and niggas shooting up my mom's crib" and the narrative of getting out of the drug game on 1995's *Only built for Cuban link,*

[79] As a means of differentiating themselves from wild thugs of the 90s, these new street characters identified with Mob narrative of limited opportunities, upper crust taste and uniform, American racism, and not gangs but crime families. In relation, Jhally notes mob movies were especially popular with black audiences who often "rooted for the bad guy" and identified with the immigrant outsider status and transcending laws to transcend their situation."

[80] Kareem. 2015.

[81] Campbell. 2005

[82] Hess. 2012. 13

[83] Wilson, Elliot . July 25th, 2013. . "Rap Radar: Jay-Z interview" *Rapradar.com also see* Stern., Marlow April 1st 2017. "Jay-Z's Charity Problem" *The Daily Beast. www.hedailybeast.com/jay-zs-charity-problem-my-presence-is-charity*

[84] Jones, Bomani, August 15. 2019. "Jay-Z Goes to the NFL" *The Undefeated. https://The.undefeated.cm/features/jay-z-goes-to-the-nfl*

[85] See Chris Rocks infamous stand up segment from *Bring the Pain* 1999.

[86] Lordi, Emily. 2017. Post Soul Aesthetics. https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780190221911/obo-9780190221911-0012.xml#obo-9780190221911-0012-bibItem-0054

[87] In music the early 90s adage of "I'm never leaving the projects", is replaced with moving on up narratives to mansions and MTV cribs episodes advertising their success and habitation outside of the hood as progress for the community

CHAPTER 3: THE BLUEPRINT TO JAY-Z'S ETHOS AND BLACK SINCERITY RHETORIC

The voices and the way they sounded. They were like the people I saw every day. … I saw the same mixture of toughness and tenderness. It was as if the world that I came from, the world that I knew, mattered. As if the people I knew mattered, whatever their flaws were."-Martin Scorsese[1]

Introduction

In this first analysis chapter, I focus on Jay-Z's debut album, *Reasonable Doubt.* Decades later it is hailed as Jay-Z's masterpiece, a hallmark of the American musical canon; in short *"his debut is* the deserving source of his legend".[2] I posit his debut acts as the signing of his rhetorical contract with post-soul audiences in 1996. As Hess and Bradley remind us, the debut album is where a rapper finds an audience and acceptance for their persona and discourse.[3] The rap debut is where an artist develops their formula of identification and the ethos that they will be judged by in their career

RD didn't make Jay a super star but it sets the foundation for his *Black sincerity rhetoric.* Recently, Jay-Z told his fans "this album literally saved my life; I can't thank you all enough." Carter would explain that in 1996 he saw hustling[4] as "his only foreseeable option" if music didn't work; however his story of former drug dealer to recording artists would provide "his escape from the stress and paranoia of being a hustler." RD is where his *ethos of black sincerity* is first established and where his BSR first finds acceptance. In this chapter, I sample hip-hop and Burkean scholarship to discuss how Jay-Z developed an ethos and *BSR* that functioned as a mode of post-soul identification. My work agrees with and extends Halloran's penetrating argument that Burke's concept of identification as rhetoric is a reclaiming of *ethopedia,* or the process of employing ethos as a persuasive strategy.[5]

Ethos is not merely a rhetors projection of self; it is a co-production of meaning between poet and audience—an effective ethos is created via modes of identification. My position draws support from Aristotle's principle that ethos is created during rhetorical encounters and a speaker's awareness of common topics: "With the stable support of social recognition, rhetors and their audiences can identify common interests, attitudes, and approaches."[6] Indeed, Halloran aids my work when he explained, "Burke's concept of identification extends ethos beyond Aristotle's idea to the mechanics of persuasive power inherent in

shared interests and values; Burke features identity as rhetorical construct co-produced by rhetor and audience.[7] [8] Meg Zulick argues Burke's theory of identification is a focus on the active interplay of a speaker's ethos, and the repetition of ethos deployment functions as rhetorical form that invites audiences to share substance with the rhetor[9]

Instead of a view of identification as common ground or political strategy, this project resurrects Burke's view of identification as a poet trying to speak for and to an audience; seen here:

> But should you object to my word "identification" above, try in its stead the word "representation. "The artist, as spokesman, does not merely represent his subject; nor does he merely represents himself; he also represents his readers, in the sense in which a legislator is said to represent his constituents. He speaks for an audience, sometimes sharply demarcated, as in "addressed" writing, sometimes a hypothetical "Audience X," with whom he is identified.[10]

I contend Burke describes the identification challenge of hip-hop artists and particularly the notion of erecting an ethos for a marginalized audience who seeks to be represented in the public sphere. In hip-hop the term *representing* was a popular 90s phrase for representing self and community and not diluting one's character in the process[11]. Thus this chapter and project interrogates how black sincerity rhetoric in post-soul hip-hop functioned as a representative mode of identification. Harlowe reminds us that mid to late 90s rappers saw themselves not as performers, but as community spokespeople giving voice to self, neighborhood and generation. In relation, Scisio analysis of ethos as identification is helpful, as he explains "Ethos as identification is the alignment of the rhetor with community values and the audience's recognition of those values in the person of the rhetor, which results in the audience's granting authority and making the rhetor's case more plausible.[12]" Thus I examine how Jay-Z's discourse sought to reflect the post soul generations values of speaking for self and community and how his BSR sought to enact audience recognition of these values as a sincere alignment with his character.

Hyde reminds us, "to have ethos is to manifest the virtues most valued by the culture to and for which one speaks[13]", thus on his debut we examine how Jay-'s rhetorical discourse sought to demonstrate that he cares, embodies and represents the values and virtues of "the community he claims kinship with"[14] By analyzing the rhetorical strategies of his lyrical discourse, this project features Jay-Z as an exemplar of how black public rhetors employ *BSR* to establish their status with black audiences; with albums serving as

"spaces" for their rhetoric to be accepted as sincere. On his debut you can hear and chart the recipe and the invention of his *ethos of sincerity* that makes acceptance of his rhetoric possible. In hip-hop the debut album and the album promo is the first introduction to imagined black audiences for a rap rhetor. The next section highlights the rhetorical situation that informs Jay-Z's approach on his debut and how he frames his character in early interviews.

1990s Glorious Outlaws and the Importance of the Debut in Hip-hop's BSR

In 1996, urban hustlers turned rappers were nothing new in rap; contemporaries such as Scarface had made survival and tragic narratives of the crack era a part of the hip-hop canon. . While the west coast gangster raged, the southern hustler ruminated and prayed , the east coast Mafioso confessed his desire for the good life and the constraints of "the game" and society. Imani Perry's incisive work surmises the rhetoric of the 90s rap "glorious outlaw" defined by *being and telling narratives* of black life featured on their debut.[15] The former are first person tales of the outlaw/rebel lifestyle and the latter third person narratives of witnessing the actions of the hustler. Both narratives are dependent on the audience "knowing the character from the inside, knowing these beings in actual life in black communities (p.118)." They are predicated on an intersection of topoi of black sincerity.[16] Perry helps this project by demonstrating how rap discourse is geared to appeal to black audiences via common topoi of black sincerity; by highlighting the importance of authentic testimony, black idioms and communal witnessing. On his debut, Jay-Z will first frame his persona as a glorious outlaw thus this configuration is key to his *BSR*. On *Reasonable Doubt* and throughout his musical oeuvre, Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter will combine these two styles, framing his rhetorical position as predicated on a confessional 1st person credibility claim of lived experience, but also the desire to witness "the stories of why we struggle.[17]" In the genre of hip-hop culture, the debut album often establishes the core base and rhetorical styles of rap rhetors. Rhetorician Adam Bradley explains the importance of sincerity and the debut: "Once artists establish realness through the performance of self in their first releases, they must work to remain true to an artist identity that they have successfully negotiated with the audience."[18]

Hence, Carters debut album acts as his campaign announcement [19]that he should be a viewed as a valued speaker to and for the black public sphere. Debut rap albums are a formal attempt to seek

identification with audiences similar to voters, to establish a position in the hip-hop spaces for your narrative to be heard. Moreover, the debut primarily focuses on what Peterson[20] defines as "the come up" the pre-rap life that serves as the source material of your rise. Indeed, *the come up* is what imagined audiences often identify most with on the debut, as they too desire to change their circumstances and find success despite marginalized odds. Peterson views the come up as hip-hop's version of the American Dream heard first on the artists debut work. Come up *testimonials* of the drug dealer in the 90s resonated with black audiences who see few viable paths to the American dream. The come up of the rap hustler was informed by the 70s film hero and 80s drug dealer.[21] Thus, Kermit Campbell is right when he notes many 90s rappers such as Jay-Z, were raised on these images and often acted as real life versions who viewed the hustler as a byproduct of a bad system with few opportunities.[22] In early interviews, Carter explained he wanted to add his "experience and his peoples experiences" to the *critical hip-hop conversation;* claiming that his mission on his debut was to motivate other "hustlers" to see "rap as the new safe but profitable hustle."[23] Rhetorically, Carter must position his come up as an individual hustler as an attempt at the American dream that his audience shared, identified with even if they don't share his criminal past. Anthony Harrison once argued that in hip-hop "your lyrical ethos has to "engender loyalty with black community," and this is achieved through lyrical exercise.[24]"On *RD* he had to select the right grammar, the right eloquence to demonstrate that his ethos is more than self-serving, and that his transition to community poet can be accepted. Interestingly his story started nine years prior to his album release.

The Come up of Jay-Z and the Framing of his Character

Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter once said "your first album is your whole life, you been waiting your whole life to tell your story.[25]" Carter had a story to tell, that began with rap not hustling. Back in 1987[26] , Jay-Z was the rap sidekick to childhood friend Jaz-O[27]. Carter was soon disillusioned by Jaz's bad record deal[28], "Jaz got a shitload of money from Geffen, like three hundred thousand dollars [for his record deal]. But he only saw, like, fifty thousand. That turned me off. I was like, Fuck that. I am not trying to work for anybody, I rather hustle (p.120)."[29] Jay-Z disappeared from the NYC scene in 1991 and hustled in the more profitable upper south of NC and DMV. While hustling, Jay-Z explained he developed a unique talent, "I don't write rhymes

...that comes from being in the streets thinking of rhymes on the corner and memorizing the rest."[30] Jay would frame this preternatural ability to "write in his mind—as a cosmic gift gained through the struggle—and that his desire to rap was something he could not escape; although it would be his escape. In 1992, a federal mass indictment of his hustling colleagues in southern Virginia ended his hustle.[31] From there the *mythography[32] of* Jay-Z goes: Carter saved up his drug money (900k to be exact[33]), made some demos with DJ Clark Kent, had a mental database of rhymes in his head[34], left the "game" and partnered with Harlem show promoter Damon Dash and mysterious partner Kareem "Biggs" Burke to create the label: Roc-A-Fella Records in 1992[35]. Recently Burke has explained that much of the "seed money" of Roc-a-fella, came from his and Jay's "background in the street," but the company was a means for them to go legit[36]. After establishing a name in the DMV area at local HBCU events and local clubs, Jay-Z returned to NYC in 1994. Carter and team built a buzz in NYC by giving DJ's picnic baskets of champagne for airplay and putting up money to battle any rapper, even legend LL Cool.[37]Despite street buzz, Jay-Z was rejected by every label, due to his trenchant focus on the drug game. In 1996 Jay Z explained that he and his friends had cofounded the label "out of frustration" with the music industry and decided "We gonna build our own bridge."[38] Unlike his NYC peers, he was the owner and flagship artist of his label and he made this demarcation significant in his early interviews "no one in the industry gave me nothing, I had to make my own lane "[39] No doubt, Jay-Z will frame his boss skills from the street, as enabling his current skills as a record executive and artist, and this differentiates his version of the hustler from other competing identities in the mid-90s.[40]

Early on Carter emphasized he was primarily a wholesale distributor, "I was never just a worker…And I know it sounds bad but I was really good at it" he tells Terry Gross on *Fresh Air.*[41] This was a form of magnification for his persona to stand out from his peers. Recently rap scholar Regina Bradley[42] has explained *the Hustler persona* is predicated on the framing of the hustler having transferable skills and Jay was not the inventor, but she identifies him as an early pioneer and master of this identity in visibility and rhetorical application. Bradley explains, "*The hustler's* raps often highlight the ability to utilize street smarts and skills and translate them into other corporate arenas and industries outside of the hood." Moreover, I would add that the choice of hustler as nomenclature is not accidental. Hustle is a verb, an act of exerting extra

energy to achieve something it's not just illegal work; Jay rarely calls himself a drug dealer as "hustler" connotes a virtue of black ingenuity to "survive". In relation, Maria Naumoff writes that on his debut, Jay-Z configures the hustler as a role model of ambition and DIY attitude of creating a way in a community hampered by systemic oppression and limited opportunities.[43] The hustler persona in 90s rap is predicated on transcendence, rising above their struggle origins and criminal past to find success; but only by retaining the ambition and attitude of their past. In his first interview, Carter was asked if his debut album was a cautionary tale of the hustle or glamourized his drug dealing life. Jay would argue the former, but was unapologetic about his past: "as we all know it's only two outcomes in this game: dead or in jail. .so I'm giving you that real story… most of my comrades were found dead or locked up behind bars", so I gave [the hustle} up completely in 92 and went back to being a struggling artist."[44] Jay-Z would later explain that his story was a generational narrative albeit from a criminal perspective;

> If you were from that generation, you know I wasn't making this stuff up! "I felt I could share with my generation, a story of our motives and actions, the positive and the negatives ones, without being judgmental. But also I wanted to tell my generation on RD it didn't have to stay this way. . . I saw crack addiction destroy families, it almost destroyed mine, but I sold it too.[45]

Carter offers up here, that his discourse was predicated on his lived experience, but he notes a responsibility to give audiences the "truth of his experience." In spring 1996 he begin his album rollout with the street single "Dead Presidents." As a first single, Jay-Z has to announce to his imagined audience that he is a trusted speaker; thus we see his deployment of topoi of sincerity on this first release.

Jay-Z's Early Singles: Testing out Topoi

The song "Dead Presidents[46]" featuring a sampled hook from NYC rap star Nas and the video featured Notorious B.I.G. as indirect endorsements of Jay-Z. In addition, Adam Bradley[47] writes that on the debut, the rapper must dazzle with words as well as teach his audience how they can "come up". Hence, on the street single "Dead Presidents" Carter sought to share his *come up* and demonstrate his lyrical skill and mastery of black nomoi to build buzz for his album. At the end of his second single "Dead Presidents" he sarcastically regales, "I dabbled in crazy weight.[48] / without rap I was crazy straight/ Shit potna/I'm still spending money from 88/ what!"/I'm out for presidents to represent me, get money (Nas). [49] In this brief

stanza, Carter samples the topos of blackness in the form of nomoi* via trickster sarcasm and indirection to highlight his unique stature as a former "boss not a worker". Only a boss would have funds 7 years later after the height of the crack game is the implicit premise; as well as signifying on Nas's verse, an earlier hip-hop conversation from an established rap peer to foster identification with the same imagined audience. Carter makes authenticity claims of his hustling success pre rap to an imagined audience and then, closes by signifying Nas's quote as a personal mission statement. "I'm out for dead fucking presidents to represent me"[50].

The sampled quote utilizes folk black linguistic personification, which lyrically dramatizes money as "dead presidents;" a synecdoche of American economics reduced to presidential faces. Furthermore it highlights a lack of social representation for black communities without capital to have their views "represented" in a system developed—by dead presidents. It reveals an interior black communal conversation of recognizing systemic oppression and desiring to get paid and be heard, as Carter implies he's out to represent self but also constituents who share his vision of wanting to get paid and be heard.[51] The colloquialism of "what" after his hyperbolic '88 claim, is black indirection at work. Here the "what" means, "what else can I say about my skill? Did you not hear my skill on this verse? This snippet is braggadocio par excellence, a hallmark of rap but also a means for Jay to make audiences praise his ability to be eloquent in his use of black rhetorical traditions and recognition of getting paid is a virtue for his audience. The song caught the attention of BET's Rap City and became a staple on NYC mix shows building his buzz.

Zulick reminds us that form, identification and ethos intersect, as audiences identify the form of the rhetor: authentic testimonial, black wordplay/nomoi and communal *categoria* before they "trust" Jay-Z's ethos. Yet the form invites audiences to want to hear more about his character, his ethos.[52] Thus, Carter rhetorically activates these formal BSR topoi to appeal to his imagined audience early on. In May 1996 Roc-A Fella records released their second single for the album with, "Aint No Nigga," produced by his mentor Jaz-O.[53] The song signified on the Four Tops "Aint no woman" hit of the soul era to make a *ghettocentric* love song about a male hustler and his *ride or die chick, here* an 18 year old Queens native Foxxy Brown. The song soon shot to the top of the Billboard R &B charts the summer of 1996.[54] Jay strategically signifies on this

accepted form of rap duet that his peer "Biggie" had made popular and builds buzz for his album release in fall 1996.

The above section highlights the obstacles that Jay-Z faced and the grassroots groundwork and strategic rhetorical strategies he uses prior to his debut. In NYC rap, Notorious B.I.G.'s *Ready to* Die featured a tragic hustler giving voice to paranoia and depression vs. the optimism of the hustler. Biggie's eloquence and signification on the tragic and epic aspects of black life endeared him to audiences. Jay would signify on this formula. In 1996, as a post soul audience "we"[55] have to believe Jay cares believes he's our homeboy-we are *at home* with his ethos heard in song.[56] Indeed, Hauser [57] reiterates that one "must establish their ethos using the conventions established and upheld by the communities to which they belong." *M*y textual analysis investigates how *black sincerity rhetoric* via ethos was first established for Jay-Z on his debut album. Hence, we examine his early usage of formal common *topoi* of black sincerity: authentic testimony, uses of *black traditional vernacular and black nomoi* and an emphasis on discussing communal issues. The analysis below highlights the rhetorical function of the debut album and most insightfully rhetorical strategies that will color his discourse in years to come. A rappers debut album is about communicating to the audience, "I too was a fan, now I'm a rapper" –as a means of identification.[58] The album is both a forensic argument to make sense of his past identity and a deliberative argument to encourage audiences to accept his current and projected future identity. On his debut, Jay-Z attempted to prove that beyond a reasonable doubt he can garner acceptance as one of hip-hop's valued spokespersons.

Can't Knock the Hustle (Analysis)

On June 25th 1996, Jay-Z's debut album *Reasonable Doubt* was released. The album opens with an interpolation of the film *King of New York* where the business minded gangster Frank White demands to get a cut of the thriving drug trade yet in a south American accent " A nickel bag gets sold in the park, I want in. You guys got fat while everybody starved on the street. Now it's my turn." The unknown speaker is an avatar for Jay-Z the former hustler, who buries his competition and that the rap game is gonna learn that Jay-Z the rapper is not to be *doubted*. Jay-Z is here to symbolically, get a cut of the hip-hop profits, kill the competition and valorize his ability to survive the kamikaze capitalism of the crack era for an imagined black post-soul

audience. Jay-Z is the pen name of the poetic psyche of a dramatized Shawn Carter: the protagonist of *Reasonable Doubt*[59].

Soon after this intro, we hear the beat for "Can't Knock the Hustle " fade in and you soon hear the murmurs of and whispers of Mary J Blige, a bubbly jazz beat and Jay-Z's adlibbing "let's talk about it". In "Can't Knock the Hustle[60]" we can witness Jay-Z employing authenticity, blackness and community as formal topoi that seek to appeal and establish his character as sincere on the opener. This album opener introduces us to Jay-Z/Shawn the former hustler, giving us a fictionalized diary entry of the "come up" and "fall off" of a hustler. Carter is joined by the "Queen of Hip-hop soul" acclaimed singer Mary J Blige which functions a post-soul community "endorsement.[61]" In Burkean terms, the song is "a response that serves to size up a situation[62]" by making a dual lensed plea for former hustler's to not knock his new hustle, and for rap audiences not to criticize his hustler past.[63]

In verse, Jay Z moves from hip-hop's traditional confident braggadocio to a detailed audio blog of his hustler lifestyle heard in the opening verse framed as an invocation of authentic "narrativizing: "Last seen out of state where I drop my slang/I'm deep in the South/ kicking up top game (making moves in the city) */bouncing on the highway/ switching fo lanes/Screaming through the sunroof /money aint a thing….Shopping sprees, coppin three (BMW's)/deuce fever (2 series BMW's) /it's fully loaded..(Laughs) ah yes…. /I got expensive dough and I got expensive hoes (whores) / and I spit fine wine and have a vintage flow/what ya'll don't know?[64]

In relation, Kermit Campbell writes that on CKTH Jay-Z delineates why the hustler holds such sway with rap audiences, his lifestyle is reflective of American excess and success[65]. With his cocksure, conversational sarcastic flow –the rhythm and inflection of his rhyming voice---and a distinct New York drawl, Jay-Z details over the Knobody production, how he was "doing it big" hustling in VA. Carter informs the audience of the lifestyle of a high stakes drug dealer. In relation, Peterson writes how resistance to marginalization and neoliberal desires of luxury lifestyle personify the rap hustler as heroic for his skill in how he "came up" out of poverty. [66]" The outlaw is heroic in his confidence, his aversion to the status quo of black positionality in ghetto environs and his markers of success. Hence, the slang filled talk of purchasing

fully loaded two series BMW and shopping sprees are not just boasts but appeals to the imagined audience communal virtue of praising the "come up" from urban poverty. Jay-Z's eidetic testimony makes you feel like you're riding shotgun in the BMW as his mix of DC slang (lunching: being lazy out to lunch) and hustler hedonism configures him as the glorious outlaw of 90s urban communities.

In relation, Campbell has contended that on this song Jay-Z reifies the adoration of the blues baadman; adored for living beyond the constraints of societal rules:[67] Indeed, Campbell argues that rhetorically such an ethos actually combines the trickster comic attitude and the outlaw baadman, as Carter's use of comic puns and rely on black nomoi and traditions underneath the guise of the outlaw. In the song his use of puns, (I got more at steak/stake than Philly), personification (do dirt like worms), and ironic appropriation (my cup runneth, over with hundreds) highlight a use of comic styling that is akin to the trickster in black folklore. Carter's awareness of his audience's appreciation of *nommo* can be seen in lines that employ personification and signifying in the form of sarcastic indirection as "I spit fine wine and have a vintage flow, what y'all don't know?" This quick couplet employs what Gates terms the master tropes of black signifying.[68] Jigga's rap ability is similar to a fine wine and the rhythmic flow is vintage like a fine wine as he employs (1) irony and (2) metaphor to create a (3) synecdochal association with his rap ability to audiences.

By ending the song, with a sarcastic boast, of "what ya'll' don't know," he indicated that fans better get familiar with his skill and eloquence. This use of irony mines the common topic of blackness and dispenses a rhetorical aid which animates and engenders his ethos as interconnected with black audiences. The rapper writes these lines, hoping that informed black audiences catch or the enthymemes disguised in the topoi; cultural enthymemes that function—as inside jokes or what Gates called "a sideways glance" for those familiar.[69] In this 1st verse, Jay establishes not only his narrative content but we can hear his deployment and application of black linguistic and stylistic traditions. In relation, Burke says eloquence speaks to "word magic", when rhetoric connects with audiences despite distance; and AAR scholars consider *black rhetorical discourse* as grounded in a belief in the magic quality of words to create reality. Thus, Carters eloquent use of common topoi of Black sincerity seeks to affirm a shared appreciation of black word play. Indeed, the first

two verses establish his authentic testimony and use of black *vernacular traditions;* the final verse of the song focuses on the topoi of black communities.

In the final verse, Jay-Z's narrative takes a swift tragic shift, as we hear the hustlers' downfall. Here, the hustler protagonist who in the opening was sipping wine and pushing luxury cars is contrasted with the nadir of the drug hustler: jail. Our protagonist goes from: "Bouncin on the highway switchin FO' lanes/ *Screamin through the sunroof - money ain't a thang.*" To the last verse a desperate hustler pleading , "*At my arraignment, screaming/'all us blacks got is sports and entertainment'*, until we even/Thieving/ as long as I'm breathin/ Can't knock the way a nigga eating[1] - fuck you even!." Notice the use of literary parallelism, eidetic vision and tropes of irony at work, as the scene moves from luxury cars to the courtroom. The ironic contrast of the two extremes of hustling shows Carter larger motive. The hustler goes from gospel screams of joy "that money aint a thang" to blues screams of despair, "all us blacks got is sports, drugs and entertainment!" This incongruous contrast is reflective of what Burke terms *perspective by incongruity*, a phenomenon where a "word belongs by custom to a certain category and by rational planning you wrench it loose and metaphorically apply it to a different category it is designed to remoralize by accurately naming a situation already demoralized."

Banks and Gilyard contend this definition is integral to the fundamental nature of African American rhetoric, which seeks to rename and remoralize the African American situation that has been misnamed and demoralized.[70] Hence, Carter's juxtaposition seeks to *remoralize* the individualistic hustler as a member of a larger community and to highlight systemic problems in 90s Black America. To reclaim humanity for those drug dealers considered "super-predators" and social menaces in the 90s. Indeed *perspective by incongruity* is a hallmark of Burkes' theories; Ellison viewed Burke's concept as similar to oral black trickster traditions--using irony and contrast to critique the powers that be and redefine status quo. Hence, the final verse frames the hustler protagonist as "mistaken and flawed" not criminal"—a Burkean comic attitude. Thus, in Jay's BSR, the hustler is not just the extreme hedonist hustler of the first verse but also a ghetto citizen who desired a better life with limited opportunities in an oppressive society.[71] The dramatized confession of Jay-Z

[1] Can't knock how one provides meals for themselves and family

acts as a defense of hustlers, a rhetorical *categoria* of the systemic faults of America. Carter's verse implicitly critiques the limits of social mobility via a 9-5 as he centers sports and entertainment as the only examples to the young urban youth of a true "come up." The *hood politics* of limited opportunities, quick money, and imprisonment all come to a figurative tipping point near the songs end. Mary J's disjointed chorus of:[72] "I'm not hating/but maybe I'm the one whose crazy/ Baby one day you'll be a star" serves as Jay's dizzying conscience that one day he will be a star—without the judge, the arraignment, and instead through entertainment. On the album's opener, Carter transfers his individual story into a representative story of the black youth hustlers nationwide and the pernicious impact of the judicial system; effectively asking "how can you knock the hustle with no other opportunities?" At this time Jigga bets on the notion that post soul audiences would identify with the hustler's desire for self-worth, pride and survival--- not just his criminal life. Listeners can hear Jay-Z employ awareness and application of commonplaces of black sincerity and Burkean strategies of identification to establish his ethos on this album as rooted in sincerity.

In fact, I agree with Campbell's argument that Carter is not just talking about hustling when he states CKTH "isn't just a song title but the very law America was founded on. And if not the law perhaps the rhetorical principle that drives the ethos of the American dreamer." And that is what Jay-Z hopes the imagined audience identifies with; the dream of a better life. By *narrativizing* his life story he claims his experience gives him poetic license to tell this story of the hustler attempting to achieve the American dream and his tragic but deserved comeuppance instead of a come-up[73]" Thus, rhetorically the "poet" frames his discourse as given voice to a collective community that he has kinship and membership with but is often mistaken as a scapegoat. Interestingly, Jigga shifts from the capitalist desires of the dealer to the proletariat desires for opportunity of the community –joining the two. As Lamont Hill has argued, in verse Jay embodies the tensions of contemporary hip-hop as a vessel of capitalist opportunity but also a "repository for substantive critique that can create emancipatory moments".[74] "CKTH" establishes an early composite of his *BSR*. Authentic testimony about his hustler past, black vernacular traditions imbued in his lyrics, and communal witnessing as rhetorical *praxis* sought to demonstrate that Jigga cares about black audiences. The

next section looks at how this formal use of topoi is expanded, adjusted and deployed his topoi use on other songs to establish his ethos and his rhetoric as sincere with black audiences.

Hustling and Signifying: Authentic Testimony and Black Nommo

On the song, Friend or Foe,' the dark side of hustling is framed though a lens of black comedic traditions such as 'the dozens. Deburg reminds us the hustlers gift of gab and ability to survive are his superpowers not brawn in black film and this song magnifies that motif. In the song, Jay nonchalantly disarms a competing drug dealer at a southern hotel[75]. According to historian Jelani Cobb, here Carter is the smoothest and "most charismatic gangster we had ever heard on wax, (p.115)[76]" delivering sarcastic threats and witty repartee about his status, his tactics, and his skill. The pulsating Blaxploitation horns of DJ Premier's production, accentuates each quip as if you're in a royal court of hustlers. "Friend or Foe" dramatizes the street politics of fighting for turf to distribute, into a comic ode of his hustler status and ethics. In this song, the shakedown of a rival drug dealer concept is employed as dual metaphor for Jay-Z taking over the rap game from rival rappers and an attempt to verify his purported "boss never a worker" testimony. Early on, Jay makes it clear he is confident and dismissive of his current rap and former drug dealing competition via his black tonal semantics and insults. Jay challenges his foe with "if you draw, [your gun]/ better be Picasso/ you know the best/ cause if not so, [audible sigh]…god bless[77]", the implication is that if his opponent is not quick on the draw, he can only wish him divine intervention literally and figuratively. Jay goes into exacting detail of a drug shakedown with a temper that rises and falls quickly and a twitch of NYC neuroses: YOU LEAVE ME CHOICE/ I LEAVE YOU NO VOICE/ (back to a whisper) Trust me I hate to do this/ more than you hate to see it done/now calm the noise." Moreover as Bradley has argued the way he says it, the tone, the emphasis rings true like you're in the room with him.[78] The rhetorical power is in the stylistic use of association and dark blues-like comedy inherent in black rhetorical traditions remixed here. In addition, other rappers talked about hustling but Jay's detail and dramatized firsthand account emphasized his 'authentic' testimony as rooted in real firsthand experience—-the real McCoy of drug narratives.

The sarcastic humor and the double entendre of shaking down the rap game like he did former competing hustlers, aids his claim that the source credibility of his rhetoric was firsthand, while ironically

being a hyperbolic interpolation of such an experience. Yet for post soul fans it was a new take on an old topic, allowing his imagined black audience the vicarious enjoyment of the hustler's power, the comedy of the dozens, and the sobering awareness that this does happen in many communities. To continue his album's campaign for acceptance, Jay-Z is joined by Notorious B.I.G. his former classmate and the King of NYC in sales, visibility and adoration and in many ways the role model for Jay-Z –the Socrates to his Plato he once regaled.[79] Biggie appearing on Jay-Z's album would be a major community endorsement for his attempt to garner post soul acceptance.

Call and Response: Community as topoi of black sincerity in Brooklyn's Finest

As noted earlier, the impact of Biggie was seminal in Jay-Z's rhetorical works, and Big shows his appreciation on the song "Brooklyn's Finest"'. Biggie's approval told his fans "this Jay-Z guy is official." It's the equivalent of a political endorsement from the unofficial NYC mayor of rap. Here the two engage in friendly competition of having the most entertaining verse using the technique of a hip-hop back and forth[2]. The celebratory chorus features what sounds like a male block party choir of the neighborhood, employing a hook that operates as a built in call in response prompt. *AAR* scholars explain that a call *and response modality* is inherent in black rhetoric. According to Asante, the focus on a coproduction of meaning, the speaker operating under the guidance from the audience is what separates *AAR* from the Aristotelian focus on manipulation of terms alone. Yet when applied in song this modality invites the co-production from the listener and imagined BK native to aid in celebrating Biggie their hero and Jigga the new potential rep*

> Audience: Jay-Z and Biggie Smalls nigga shit your draws[80] /DJ Clark Kent: Where You from! Audience: Brooklyn going out for all /Jay Z: Marcy (projects in Bed Stuy neighborhood)/ Audience: You don't stop. Jay & Big: Bed Stuy. /Audience: we won't stop nigga! / Jay-Z Biggie smalls, nigga shit your drawers/.Brooklyn we ***represent yo***u all . . . I'm from Marcy/ I'm varsity/ chump (the competition) your JV.[81]

"Brooklyn's Finest" invoked the emphasis on communal love, loyalty and connection that defines hip-hop's privileging of spaces deemed dysfunctional by the mainstream. Later in the song Jay states "**we represent you all"**, ostensibly invoking his desire to be viewed as a community rep –giving voice to a constituency

[2] where the next rapper finishes your sentence and starts a new rap—a holdover of freestyling on the block and another indicator of authenticity—grounded in hip-hop origins.

larger than former hustlers. Along with *call and response*, the friendly competition of the two rappers employing the dozens*, braggadocio claims of being bosses not just hustlers, and the dual desire to represent for their borough are attempts to unite the rhetors and their imagined audiences. His use of topoi of black sincerity adapts and modulates on each song. Carter furthers this community politician theme on "22 Two's.

Wordplay and Representin': Blackness and Community in "22 twos'

The song "22 Twos" features Jay –Z saying the word "to/two/too" 22 times, to reflect how his style is deadly like a 22 pistol for the competition. Recorded as an open mic performance, the interactive motif tells the audience to pay attention to the strategy and invites them to track the formal use as a vernacular game.[82] Rappers origins matter, thus indicating past haunts and origins of hip-hop such as the live battle affirms authenticity and communal bonds according to Ogbar's work. Thus, Carter begins with an interpolation of 90s legends Tribe's "Can I kick it" a call and response signification on a past hip-hop hit, to further the old-school appeal: "Can I kick it (Yes you can) Can I kick it Yes you can," the audience screams back. The song is interactive—a foundational aspect of black music—Jay-Z explains and invites listeners to count each "two/to/too/ and add up at the end of the verse, 22 twos. In the song, along with a deft use of a word games, Jay would give a call of arms to NYC audiences on a range of topics.

In defense of his NYC community, he claimed they should support local artist not west coast rappers who dominated the game in the early 90s. Then later he shifts to relationship advice, "too many brothers wanna be lovers/don't know what romance is. /too many ladies stuck up /cause of too many male sexual advances/No question/ Jay-z got too many answers." The clever pun of "No question, Jay-Z got to many answers" continues the playful wordplay of what appears to be a stump speech for his acceptance as the community's rapper; trying to appeal to female listeners as well. Near the end of his verse he frames himself as a wise man of the people; arguing for black partnership and a self-coronation of Jay-Z hood politician: "To all my people /it aint too late to come together/ too much black and too much love/equals 4ever/I don't follow any guidelines/ cause too many niggas ride mines /so I which styles every two rhymes! / WHAT THE FUCK! / That's 22 twos for you motherfuckers!! SHALL I CONTINUE?!!" This mix of social commentary and black idioms as formal topoi of black sincerity elevates '22 twos' from a free style into an

impromptu coronation of Jay-Z as a skilled rhetor and potential hip-hop community spokesman. As a rhetor, his offer of advice, frames his identity as caring about his audience and his eloquence with black oral strategies and *nommo* reinforces his ethos as sincere.

Authentic Testimony as Equipment for Living: Topoi and Ethos at work

Elsewhere on the album, Jay-Z is a hedonistic Casanova on "Cashmere Thoughts, a scheming hustler recruiting kids to live his lifestyle on 'Coming of Age' and eliminating his competition on "Bring it on." This is contrasted, however; with self-help suggestions and moments of random reflection that offer Jay-Z's testimony as based on his life but geared to aid his audience. Kenneth Burke tells us that poems offer audiences "strategies for living" or equipment for living, to aid their everyday lives. Robbins extends this idea to popular music contending that Burke's theory demonstrates how a popular song depends on the audience, feeling the song helps them in sizing up life's situations and aids the singer in being accepted as a positive social force.[83] Thus, on songs "Can I live" and "Feelin it" we get lyrics like "We don't lease we buy the whole car as you should." Or now famous aphorisms of teamwork: "If everybody in your crew getting money your clique is rugged, nobody will fall cause everyone will be each other's crutches ,I hope you fools choose to listen I drop jewels ."[84] Here Jay emphasizes that he isn't just bragging but giving "jewels" slang for valuable knowledge his audience can retain and apply to "size up their situations".[85] When Jay said the "streets school us to spend our money foolish and bond with jewelers"[86], he revealed that the street life education can mislead and lead to bad decisions like using your jewelry to make bond.

In relation, Burke views poets as offering the audience something in exchange for their patronage; by helping them size up life situations via their rhetoric—audiences accept the rhetor. Peterson reminds us that this is what makes the hustler heroic, the ability to tell the story with amazing skill but also wisdom of how to "come up" out of your situation.[87] Indeed, the rapper is directly sizing up his situation as survivor of the drug game and offering instruction to his audience; part of his authenticity appeal is grounded in caring about his audience yet sharing his testimony of the hustlers hunger to get paid. Most notably on "Can I live" he states: I rather die enormous than live dormant, that's how we on it." The last phrase is a dark claim of ambition; the hustlers believe it's better to die trying to be *a somebody* than live a dormant regular life. Yet it's an enduring

phrase because it spoke to a post soul desire for a better life beyond the "hood." These aphorisms are suggestions to his black imagined audience that in Burkean terms he has "stylized medicine" to aid his audience—a reason for them to find common substance with his testimony—and the audience offers the rhetor acceptance. Mychal Denzel Smith in his recent memoir has written that these phrases were like advice from an older uncle who miraculously became Jay-Z.[88] Again, the debut album is a campaign in hip-hop and here Jay-Z demonstrates his rhetorical strategy of BSR /identification by showing he has similar community concerns and seeks to share his substance with his folk for their hustle. Elsewhere on the LP, Carter shifts to the classic bluesman sells soul to devil motif of 20th century and remixes it for hip-hop audiences on "D'evils[89].

Signifying on the Blues tradition: D'Evils and Communal Testimony

On "D'Evils," Carter samples from black blues myth of selling one's soul to the devil to achieve the American dream. Ramsey has argued that blues singers of the early 20th century were not likely to be the murderers like Staggo Lee", in their real life.[90] Yet he contends their outlaw songs gave black audiences a sense of pride and inspiration that they could transcend their situation "and in Burkean terms "repossesses the world.[91]" Dyson has long argued that hip-hop inherits this concept of repossession but also adds a tragic awareness of black men who could not transcend their situation[92]. The gangsta descendent of the baadman serves a psychic and social function of vicarious freedom and tragic warning for 90s hip-hop audiences. Again producer DJ Premier is employed and the dark despondent cold beat features vocal samples of Snoop Dogg saying "Dear God I wonder can you save me" from his popular "Murder was the Case" song. Jay-Z felt it was the most crucial song on the album, in terms of giving voice to the internal conflict of former hustlers like him. DJ Premier explains the creation: "Jay Z actually called me and recited the whole rhyme on the phone and gave me the concept of what he wanted it to be. So he already knew it was called 'D'Evils,'". "He said, "I just need the track to sound like that atmosphere. I just need it to sound like the darkness of the lyrics.[93] In the "D'evils" Jay describes how the crack game transformed him and many of his peers into *kamikaze capitalists*, here asking for sympathetic acceptance of his and other hustlers in his communities humanity. Carter contrasts the nomenclature of criminal underworld with the spiritual underworld, as his

dramatized self explains the possessed mindset of the hustler "9-5 is how to survive/I aint trying to survive/ I'm trying to live it to the limit/ and love it a lot/life ills/ poison my body/I used to say fuck mic skills/ I didn't pray to god; /I prayed to Gotti. /that's right it's wicked." Carter admits in his memoir he didn't believe rap would ever work and a 9-5 as a HS dropout seemed like dead end, so "I ignored my god given gift."[94] In the verse the protagonist claims he prayed to NYC mobster John Gotti, not God, to pun on the extent of his descent into the underworld. The tragic knowledge of the hustler in rap is evinced here, as the hustler knows the game is short lived but believes it's better than being a "schmuck.[95]"

Early in the verse Carter explains, "a pleasant guy all my fucking life/ to now I'm down for whatever/ ignoring strife. /Throughout my Junior High years it was all friendly,/but now this 'higher learning' / got the Remy in me[3]/ this liquor /has invaded me kidneys/got me ready to shoot off/*mama forgive me/I can't be held accountable/Da evils beaten me down boo/got me telling lies /hoping they sound true."* Our hero "is possessed by "Da evil[4]" "in the form of money (the root of all evil) and, feels due to poverty "you don't know me but the WHOLE WORLD OWE ME!" Jay-Z raps angrily symbolizing the traumatic psyche of many in his imagined audience. Carter taps into a lack of self-worth as a motive for the hustler's trade. In a fascinating rhetorical turn, Carter asserts the seduction of American capitalism and the denial of opportunities in black inner cities, possess Jay-Z's song protagonist to rob, because the "whole world owes me" for my oppression and self-doubt. Carter explains he wanted audiences to identify with the extent of how evil this crack game could make men, once close friends become murderous enemies. In verse, with banging organs and bells from Premier, Carter tells a story of friends that "as soon as the money grew; soon became black-hearted." In this world, the hustling narrator is possessed to do things he would never do prior, such as kidnapping his former friend; now rivals girlfriend. Here a nostalgic quip turns into a dark confession: "thinking the back to the first time we used rubbers/ he never learned/ so in turn/ I am kidnapping his baby mother/ my hands around a collar/ feeding her cheese/ she said the taste of dollars were shitty/ so I fed her

[3] The line "higher learning got the Remy in me" was a reference to the Michael Rappaport character Remy in the movie Higher learning, who goes from a pleasant undergrad to a neo Nazi extremist.
[4] black dialect for The

fifties. / about his whereabouts I wasn't convinced /so I kept feeding her money/ til her shit started to make sense (cents)"

Discussing the song, Carter admitted, he wanted to convey that the narrator had become more insidious; kidnapping the innocent mother of his friends' child. He feeds her cheese- slang for money to get her to "rat" out her man but even she is complicit in the game-confessing for 50s not ones. Carter uses a series of puns and double meanings to show his vernacular skills but mostly to convey the depth of detachment and greed that "possesses" him to bribe his now rivals baby mother. Carter again uses *perspective by incongruity*- to show the crack era impact, "We went from fighting for building blocks, to fighting over blocks with buildings, to make a killing". In his words "it is the poison of the D'evils" that possessed his cohort to hurt their own communities. The song is a vignette of the real life street violence in black communities nationwide in the 90s. The dual meaning of killing is almost sinister here, as the metaphor for money making personifies the death that came with drug dealing. Carter's aural vision seeks to enact his imagined audiences' cultural memory of the crack wars; sharing a common awareness of those affected and possessed by "the D'evils" of the drug game.[96] Through the use of a known black blues motif, Jay the rhetor sizes up his situation to suggest to the audience again, that the hustler is mistaken—he is corrupted, infected and addicted to the evils of capitalism. On the "D'evils" Carter appears to be making not just a singular testimony, but my analysis of the lyrics demonstrates how the song is geared to give empathy to the "possessed" hustler in black communities nationwide. The psyche of the hustler is further examined on "Politics as Usual."

A Hustler's Ethos: Perspective by Incongruity in 'Politics as Usual'

In "Politics as Usual,"[97] produced by Ski beats, it opens with a first person confession, maintaining the use of the authenticity topoi as a rhetorical appeal: "You can catch me/ skating through ya town/putting it down/ y'all relating?/No waiting/I'll make your block infrared hot/ I'm like Satan/"Y'all feel a nigga's struggle?/ y'all think a nigga love to/ Hustle behind the wheel?/ trying to escape my trouble/Kids stop they greeting me/ I'm talking sweet to keys/Cursing the very God/ that brought this grief to be." *On the album,* Carter's *BSR* tried to enact empathy for the hustler turned rappers' experiences from his imagined post-soul

audience. Jay begins with the retort that you can find him "or a hustler like him" driving through your town or putting it down in the street, remarking "ya'll relating." As mentioned above, Jay frames his *being narratives* as recognized by the African American urban diaspora, the hustler is familiar you see it in your hood; hence "ya'll relating." In the verse above, Carter references making your block hot[5], here referring to himself as the possessed hustler Satan--a revelation of the internalized shame of his identity. Our narrator then shifts to a rhetorical question for his audience: "ya'll feel a nigga struggle? ya'll think a nigga love to hustle?"

In this case, the hustler bragging of his material items on other songs, reveals behind the bravado is a struggle. The allure of the drug game is contrasted with emotional self-abuse. Thus, a more conceptual use of *pxI* that frames the hustler as praised by the kids, yet the hustler is warning his audience "hustling" isn't all *it's cracked up to be*-pun intended. This comic corrective allows Carter to offer a nuanced take on how the dealer, not the user is "addicted to the game." As heard earlier on the album, Carter tries to humanize his past and ask the audience to identify with his emotions. Can you identify with his guilt, paranoia, and regret? Can you share substance with his struggle and story? He is speaking to both the outsider who doesn't understand the hustler and the imagined black audience across the digital diaspora who Jay feels—is familiar with this neighborhood hustler. The beat's pulsating drums are layered by cries and moans of the Stylistics sample: "Hurry up This Way Again." , that stand in for the anxiety of Jay-Z and his clientele operating as a sampled Greek chorus. Actively addressing the polarizing position of the hustler, Jay reifies Major and Billson's sociological argument that 90s hustler was a tastemaker adored by black youth but behind the façade of cool is often an isolated, paranoid and regretful hustler.[98]

In the midst of neighborhood props; however, our narrator is cursing "the very god" that he prayed to for these riches. The gift of modest wealth that the hustler was socialized to covet he has acquired; however, on this song he's pensive, anxious and waking up "in cold sweats" over street nightmares. The alienation of the hustler, allows Jay to use *perspective by incongruity* to frame the 90s hustler as mistaken, and his testimony, his confession to the community is offered as a *comic corrective* for the hustler's sins via his testimonial confession. Jay tells the audience:

[5] he is referencing hot in terms of active criminality,

> "You feel my triumph never/ feel my pain/you lying. /the game changes like/my mind just aint right/We gwon get this dough[6]/ I guess it ain't your night . . . /Sucking me in/ like a vacuum/I remember/Telling my family I would be back soon/That was December/85 when/Jay-z rise then/ten years later/ got me wise/but I feel unable to cut my mind/ of my underworld ties/

The songs protagonist voices his doubts that audiences will ever truly identify with his testimony of pain and regret for the tunnel vision of the hustler. The metaphor of the drug game, sucking him and acting as a form of addiction for the seller is another layer of ironic contrast replete in this song. Carter offers a quick vignette of how the game took not only him, but others from their families dating back to 1985, functioning as lyrical timestamp of the beginning of the urban crack era. This *pxI*—the external luxury items and the internal pain of the hustler, the jazzy bouncy beat contrasted with the languid confessions ask us not only enjoy the outlaw, but feel and "identify with the outlaw." Burke highlights that authors can use this *perspective by incongruity* to push the audience to no longer look at this dialectic as an opposite or a simple binary, but a both/and: the hustler is both profitable and paranoid, regretful and confident. Human and mythical. Sincere and Selfish. "The drug game built me to be filthy, for real" he confesses. "Politics as Usual" finds Carter pondering if the hustle was worth it—for him and others. In his own writings, Carter admits that the inspiration for hustling wasn't just survival or helping out single moms but also the "embarrassment of poverty." Carter explains that living in a capitalist society:

> The burden of poverty isn't just that you don't always have the things you need, it's the feeling of being embarrassed every day of your life, and you'd do anything to lift that burden. As kids we didn't complain about being poor; we talked about how rich we were going to be and made moves to get the lifestyle we aspired to by any means we could. And trust me that's not to diss Malcolm's meaning, but that's what we took it as. (p.20)"[99]

Thus, you realize again that *RD* seeks to be a representative anecdote about black youth of the crack era and the traumatic impact this era had on folks. The impact of American discourse of consumption and the debasement of being poor, motivated many black youth to use crack cocaine commerce and its fast money turnover to attempt to in Burkean terms "repossess their self-worth." Throughout *RD* Carter makes the case for drug dealers and other urban citizens like him to be viewed through a humanized lens. That is often the

[6] We are going to get this money

motive of *BSR in hip-hop,* to share common substance of black humanity in a world that doesn't recognize it. [100] The focus on being mistaken and flawed is sometimes obscured by the albums youthful braggadocio. Yet, this pivotal song demonstrates a key theme found on every Jay-z album: Jay-Z using confession testimonials and perspective by incongruity to garner acceptance and empathy from his imagined audience.

Final Arguments: Community as the principal topoi of his BSR

On the final song "Regrets", the rhetorical framing of the hustler as an emotional witness of the crack era, invokes the formal topoi of black sincerity rhetoric to deploy a narrative that his imagined audience can identify with and closes his argument for acceptance as a rapper. Here the non-hustlers of the community are acknowledged as the worried mothers, siblings, and lost souls affected by the hustler are discussed in more detail by a regretful Jay-Z. The closer contains his holistic use of commonplaces of black sincerity to make a final statement to his imagined audiences. Here, the real life fall of his crew in 1992 is discussed: **"**Coppers was watching us /through nighttime binoculars/This time they got us on tape/ exchanging dope for dollars/Make me wanna, holler/ back at the crib in the sauna/Praying my people bailed out like Time Warner/Awaiting a call, from his kin/ not the coroner." The Marvin Gaye interpolation of "make me wanna holler' from "Inner City Blues" again is a signifying intertextual reference, which connects Jay-z's testimony to black rhetorical traditions of the soul singer. Likewise the contemporary simile to Time warner bailouts is a contemporary contrast and offers a view of his crew as businessmen not criminals.

Throughout the album, Jay raps in a conversational cocky, smooth tone, but here, we hear his voice occasionally cracking with emotion—as he retells the story of his deceased friend and attempts to "talk to his dead spirit'. Carter is left wondering what to say to his friends' mother now that he is dead from the violent drug game. As Sellnow has argued authenticity is not only deemed in veritable biography but in how one performs and delivers their rhetoric—do you sound sincere? And Carter emphasizes his pathos on this track more so than any other section of the album as his voice cracks, sighs and bristles. He later discusses his own mother's struggle having a son involved in the "game": My mom's crying/ because her insides are dying/Her son trying her patience/ keep her heart racing/A million beats a minute/ I know I push you to your limit/But it's this game love/ I'm caught up all in it/They make it so you can't prevent it/Never give it, you gotta take

it/**Can't fake it, I keep it authentic.** It is the framing of this verse as a confessional that speaks to the appeal of authenticity as a common topoi of BSR. Carter literally states he must keep it "authentic" to signal to audiences the truth of his narrative and his upholding of this virtue. On the album, along with the gaudy lifestyle of the hustler, he must show the downfall and a loss of the criminal side to solidify his care for his audience is authentic.

In this verse, he reflects on the realities of the drug game and a capitalist society that he claims force him to not wait for a hand out because for black youth "they" never give it, so he has 'to take it'. It being whatever he wants in life. And in order to do that he leans on his authenticity as a commonplace and virtue that demonstrates his concern and commitment for black communities. I keep it authentic is the promise Jay-Z makes to the post-soul listening audience about his testimony. Yet the authenticity is not in rap sheet alone but in speaking to the interior ontology of 90s black folk affected by the drug game. His categorical "they" refers to the systemic impacts that affect ghetto life; as Carter pivots from confessional to *communal categoria of those in power*. Perry reminds us the "glorious outlaw" gives witness to "the sense of opposition, to norms that unfairly punish black communities or discount the complexity of choices faced by those black and poor in the United States."

Thus the outlaw's rhetoric is centered on a counter-argument to this discounting of humanity, a counter argument to the mainstream values that don't benefit the hood. Near the end of the song, Jay ponders if his former comrades are "in heaven watching over him or in hell cozy," it's at this point in the song you realize this is a communal eulogy as well.[101] For me and many others in his imagined audience, Jay-Z was telling a sincere story about our neighborhoods and family members and their humanity despite being hustlers. In summer 1996, post-soul listeners shared a common substance of losing cousins and friends and a common desire for their lives to be acknowledged. The persona of hustling outlaw functions to not only entertain, but to advocate for the humanity of "non respectable" black folks framed as dysfunctional in mainstream media. Thus, black sincerity rhetoric is an activation of discourse to demonstrate care and concern

Conclusion

Dyson once coined this 90s black youth generational narrative as a *ghettocentric juvenocracy*, to describe how young black people involved in the illegal drug trade were engaged in a fight for opportunity and self-worth.[7] Indeed, I grew up in black neighborhoods in this 90s era, and saw young men become kamikaze capitalists as their neighbors transformed into addicts. 90s hip-hop and crack's societal impact were interrelated forces that generated the gangster/street oriented rap of the era.[102] The ambivalent brew of crack cocaine and the commodified image of hyperwealth and consumption in the pop culture of the 80s and 90s impacted young black folk who sought to hustle to achieve the American dream on their terms.[103] The hustler's dream of success not just his tragic reality was the shared substance Carter offered audiences. Beyond a reasonable doubt ,Carter wants you to believe he cares and 'Regrets' closed the case on him establishing an *ethos of black sincerity* that audiences could identify with and find consubstantial. The album serves as an example of how *BSR* engages black audiences via an activation of ethos and a skillful use of rhetorical strategies. *Reasonable Doubt* wouldn't make Jay a star, but it would endear him to a post soul core east coast audience who found common substance in his hustler testimony.[104] The debut album is mainly speaking to one's peers to establish a base[105]

This chapter demonstrates how the rap debut is a unique artifact of BSR demanding the development of an *ethos of black sincerity* that impresses, assures, and is adaptable to a diverse imagined post soul audience. The sampling of black rhetorical traditions, current communal topics, and of course signifyin on previous songs are integral to understanding how rap debuts function rhetorically. RD is an exemplar of how *black sincerity rhetoric* first deals with establishing a connection with black audiences, the challenges that impact this mode of identification and how using common topics in a formal matter can generate identification with a chosen audience. The form of the glorious hustler Carter inherits, but his use of common topoi in his testimony sets him apart from his peers, as at 26 carter positions himself as a potential role model after confessing his hustler sins.

On *RD* I contend Jay-Z announced that he was a voice to be acknowledged in hip-hop and a sincere caring voice grounded in black rhetorical traditions that can "represent" post soul goals, attitudes and the potential to be what Burke terms a *poet as spokesperson*. Carter explains that, he wanted audiences to feel that, "I give voice to those without a microphone, ghetto people. I just want people to see I'm just like you, I'm telling OUR stories….My first album was for my generation, people who witnessed and saw the effect crack had on us. Whether seeing our peers become rich, the same peers dead and incarcerated, the same peers family addicted, the same cops harassing us, etc…. It was speaking to them.[106]" In his memoir, Carter states how on his debut he wanted to testify and bear witness to the motives of black youth and the rhetorical motives of his work:

> Other rappers had talked about [criminal life] from the curb but I had seen it up close. I wanted to [take] you inside the head of the thirteen year old black kid in the ghetto. Thirteen year old black kids don't wake up one day and say "okay I just wanna sell drugs on my mother stoop. Trust me no one wakes up in the morning and wants to do that. To tell the story of the kid with a gun and not tell the story of the why he has it is to tell a kind of lie. To tell the story of the pain without the rewards is a different kind of evasion. To talk about killing niggas dead without talking about waking up from a dream about the friend you watched die is a lie so deep it is criminal. I owe it to the people who didn't make it to speak from a place of truth. To give voice to those who didn't survive *(p.17-18).*

Carter makes a strident argument about the motives of his rhetoric, a marked desire to "represent" in my terms a "black sincere voice rhetorically informed by black oral traditions, communal experiences and values of the community he feels kinship with.[107] As Ellison writes, the black author must fight against the white sociologist who defines him without understanding 'our culture, while trying to get the story right according to the people of the culture.[108]' Above, Jay-Z stated a responsibility to deliver *BSR* to audiences, rhetoric that demonstrates he cares sincerely about black folk. Because according to him, it is criminal to give false witness about black folk. Carter frames that the proverbial 13 year old black boy that turns to drug dealing as misunderstood and mistaken by mainstream audiences and he views hip-hop as a discursive space where he can combat this misunderstanding of black youth.

Jay-Z would regale in interviews that grown men would come up to him in tears saying *RD* was telling their story or lost friends story and he spoke of having a heavier responsibility to speak for them after releasing RD.[109] Interestingly in 2016, *Vice* magazine spoke to prisoners who lived the life Jay-Z lead and what the album meant to them and their family. Commenting on songs like the D'evils and Regrets, one

commented, "Shit like that speaks to the heart of street niggas because if you've really been in the streets, you know it ain't all gravy. Nigga's gonna take some losses, but you have to "crawl back." I don't know Jay, but I know the game. I lost my life to it. So I know he's either lived it or has been really close to it, because his numbers and accounts all add up." The *Reasonable Doubt* LP changed the game. Jay Z was coming from a hustler's point of view. He was painting pictures with words and nigga's in the streets had never heard it so raw like that." [110] A polysemic listening audience of former hustler's listening to verify and identify with his story, ghetto youth who recognized the narrative, black college students who related to the attitude and ambition of the hustler and his alienation from his past origins, and a hip-hop nation that wanted to hear about black experiential lives in hip-hop.

In the sections above, I specifically analyzed how Jay came to affirm his relationship first with his core black audience. *RD* writes his first rhetorical contract with this audience, in terms of what they expect, desire, and or demand from his rhetoric. This chapter shows how by examining the discourse, the framing of one's character, their formal topoi, use of comic correctives and lyrics in total we can view how *BSR* is developed and offered as a mode of identification. We situate his BSR as a co-production between speaker and audience about communal commitment and kinship not just a means to an end and Jay-Z's ethos on his debut as integral to understanding his rhetoric moving forward. Burke's work gives us a grammar of how these aren't just songs to entertain but poetry to affirm, establish and ultimately for the speaker a means to maintain kinship or consubstantiality with his imagined black audience. My above analysis demonstrates the foundation of Jay-Z's rhetoric and hustler persona as being grounded in first being a witness of his community. Yet as Charity has argued recently, on *Reasonable Doubt* we can see Jay-Z in the early stages of re-creating hip-hop in his image, and the personal ethos of a man who turned his drug-dealing past into the textbook for an MBA in rap.

Charity explains that beginning with RD, Jay-Z encourage his generation to ditch the tragic nihilism of the gangsta era for the hustler optimism of creating and finding the American dream.[111] Hence, in the next section, we focus more on the strategic framing of Jay-Z's ethos and how it adjusts to a changing music landscape and black hip-hop audience at the end of the 20th century. Jay's transformation from beloved

outlaw of black audiences to arguably "the greatest rapper alive" to post soul audiences will occur from 1998-2003. Carter's rhetorical performance is altered to meet new audience demands and desires and new individual desires for Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter. In 1997, his ethos and use of form is questioned by his base audience, and in the next chapter we see how he must answer the audiences tune but also how he stretches his BSR topoi to position his personas as more than a hustler as witness but a spokesman of his community.

Endnotes

[1] Scorsese, M . 2013. "Interview for On the Waterfront" *On the waterfront Criterion Collection Edition. Directed by Elia Kazan. Criterion Studios*

[2] He's Cocky bordering on arrogant, but playful and witty, and detailing his experience on the street with disarming honesty and acrobatic rhymes the likes you've never heard. "-Steve Huey NME Music 1996.

[3] Hess, M. 2008. Icons of Hip-Hop: *An Encyclopedia on the movement, music, and culture*. Volume 2. Sage.

[4]*Carter, S. "Twitter Post". June 25th 2016.* https://twitter.com/S_C_/status/746746669232852993 Retrieved on June 27th 2016

[5] Halloran, S. Michael. "Aristotle's Concept of Ethos, or If Not His Somebody Else's. *"Rhetoric Review* 1.1 (1982): 58–63.

[6] Hartelius, E. Johanna, and Larry D. Browning. "The Application of Rhetorical Theory in Managerial Research: A Literature Review." *Management Communication Quarterly* 22.1 (2008): 13-39. Print.

[7] Halloran, S. Michael. "Aristotle's Concept of Ethos, or If Not His Somebody Else's. *"Rhetoric Review* 1.1 (1982): 58–63.

[8] SCISCO, PETER L., Ph.D. Organizing Rhetoric: Situation, Ethos, Identification, and the Institution of Social Form (2014).

[9] Zulick, Margaret D. "The Ethos of Invention: The Dialogue of Ethics and Aesthetics in Kenneth Burke and Mikhail Bakhtin." *The Ethos of Rhetoric.* Ed. Michael J. Hyde. Columbia, SC: U of SC P, 2004. 20–33. Print.

[10] Burke, K. 2012. "Calling of the Tune" in Burke, Kenneth. 2013. *The Philosophy of Literary Form Studies in Symbolic Action*. New Delhi: Isha Books.pp 221-229

[11] See Holmes- Smith, C. 1997 "Method in the Madness: Exploring the Boundaries of Identity in Hip-Hop Performativity." *Social Identities* 3 (3) 345-374

[12] SCISCO, PETER L., 2014. Ph.D. Organizing Rhetoric: Situation, Ethos, Identification, and the Institution of Social Form . UNC-Greensboro Dissertation

[13] Michael J. Hyde "Introduction". *The Ethos of Rhetoric.* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004).

[14] Kenneth Burke "Calling the tune." *Philosophy of Literary Form. (*University of California Press, 1974).. 221-234.

[15] Perry, Imani. "The Glorious Outlaw" in *Prophets of the Hood.* (Durham: NC, Duke University Press, 2005) 102-117

[16] authentic testimony, black traditions of outlaw narratives (signifying) and communal common topics.

[17] Perry, Imani. "The Glorious Outlaw" in *Prophets of the Hood.* (Durham: NC, Duke University Press, 2005) 102-117

[18] Bradley, Adam. 2017. *Book of Rhymes the Poetics of Hip Hop*. New York: Basic Civitas.

[19] The original title of his debut was *Heir to the Throne* as an allusion to being the eventual king of rap*.

[20] Peterson, James Braxton. "It's yours: Hip-hop Worldviews in the lyrics of Nas". In *Dyson, Michael Eric; Daulatzai, Sohail (eds.). Born To Use Mics: Reading Nas's Illmatic. Basic Civitas Books. (Boston, MA, 2010, pp.75-97)*

[21] Van Deburg William. 2014. *Black Camelot African-American Culture Heroes in Their Times, 1960-1980*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press*73-79*

[22] Bradley, R. 2016.

[23] Ex, Kris. January 9. 1999. "Jay-Z Goes for Broke. *Blaze Magazine*

[24] Harrison, Anthony, and Craig Arthur. "Hip-Hop Ethos." *Humanities* 8, no. 1 (2019): 39. doi:10.3390/h8010039

[25] Carter, S. "RD 20: Making of Reasonable Doubt" *Tidal Media 2015*

[26] Jay was featured in the 1987 video "Hawaiian Sophie" by Jaz-O

[27] Carter name was based on the J to the Z trains that ran across Brooklyn. Oswald, Vanessa. *Jay-Z: Building a Hip-hop Empire*. New York: Lucent Press, 2019.

[28] Hampton, Dream. "The Life: Meet Shawn Carter, Writer, Performer, Ghetto Warden, Ghetto Messiah" *Vibe Magazine. Dec 1998-January 1999. 119-124.*

[29] Ibid. Robin Kelley reminds us that the desire for autonomy from white standards fuels black 90s youth deviance more so than alleged pathology and could be heard in the music

[30]Ex, Kris. "Jayhova's witness" *Vibe Magazine December 2000, 132-135.*

[31] Letterman, D. "Jay-Z" *My Guest needs No Introduction. Netflix Entertainment 2019.* In a 2019 interview, he revealed this happened while he was visiting and performing with BDK in London, effectively ending Jay's hustling career and signaling that maybe music was his way out

[32] inherent in black autobiography (Banks and Gilyard, Neal)

[33] In the song "You don't Know" he explains he came into the game 900 grand strong

[34] Although he had rapped periodically prior to 1992

[35] Rosenthal, Eric & Rosenthal, J. "It's the Real: Roc-a-Fella Episode". Loud Speakers network. Summer 2018.

[36] Roc-a-Fella, was named by a company intern Kyambo Joshua[36], said they needed to let the industry know they could "rock a fella" if needed, but also that they were an example of NYC class , wealth, and excellence like the Rockefeller family. But also a middle finger to the draconian Rockefeller drug laws that affected nyc hustlers. Burke explains, that Jay's luxurious debut video "In my lifetime" was shot at his St. Martin resort home.*

[37] Osse, R. "LL Cool J Interview." *Combat Jack Episode. Loud Speakers Network. 2014* Carter also adjusted his subject matter, Biggs encouraged Jay to rap about his lifestyle more after an infamous freestyle battle with then unsigned DMX. Despite street buzz, Jay-Z was rejected by every label In 1996 Jay Z explained that he and his friends had cofounded the label "out of frustration" with the music industry.

[38] Allen, H. "The SupaJigga on how to be king of the world." Vibe Magazine. December 1999

[39] Evrrything Trill . Posted on April 25th , 2016. Jay-Z 'Before the Fame. Fuck the Labels (rare 1997 interview). *Youtube.Com*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5rUfkkAXh0 Retrieved January 15, 2019.

[40] Bradley, R 2016. "Barbz and Kingz: Explorations of Gender and Sexuality in hip-hop". In Justin Williams , ed. *Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop edited by Justin Williams. Harvard University Press 181-191*

[41] Gross, Terry. June 16, 2017. Jay-Z: The Fresh Air Interview. NPR Radio

[42] Bradley, R. 2016.

[43] Naumoff, MH. 2015. *The Rhetoric of the Hip-Hop Hustler: Shifting Representations of American Identity*. Wayne State University Dissertations

[44] Gonzalez, M. "Who's next" The Source. January 1995

[4545] Jay-Z. 2010. *Decoded. Spiegel & Grau; Stern, H. "Jay-Z interview" 2011.*

[46] Carter, S. , L. Smith & Willis. D. February 20th, 1996. "Dead Presidents(I)." Roca-fella Records/Priority Records

[47] Bradley, A. 2017. *Book of Rhymes. 2nd Edition*

[48] Weight, meaning selling kilos of cocaine as a distributor not a hand to hand salesman

[49] Carter, Smith, Jones and Willis. "Dead Presidents" February 20th 1996

[50] Jones, Nasir . 1994. "The World is Yours. *Illmatic* Columbia Records

[51] Or as Eddie Glaude writes, the metaphor of dead presidents frames the rapper as representing the desire of black men to have wealth in order to have their experiences represented.

[52] Zulick (2005)

[53] a remix of the Four Tops' "Aint no woman" 60s hit.

[54] Carter, S. & Marchand, I. March 28, 1996. "Aint no Nigga." Roc-a-Fella Records/Priority Records

[55] I was a black audience member in 1996

[56] Hyde traces the primordial use of *ethos to* mean abode, thus feeling at home with one's character is how classic Greeks defined ethos

[57] Hauser, Gerard A. *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres.* Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 1999

[58] Hess , Mickey. 2011. "The Rap Career" n *That's the Joint: Hip-Hop Studies Reader. Edited by Michael Eric Dyson, Murrary Forman and Mark Anthony Neal* .

[59] Carter, S. 1996. *Reasonable Doubt. Roc-a-Fella Records/Payday. 1996*

[60]Carter, S., Miller, M, Blige, M. August 27, 1996. "Can't Knock the Hustle (single)". Rocafella/Priority Records

[61] Blige had to be taken off of the single but left on the album version. The late Combat Jack explains the label did not want to have her associated with some unknown 'Jay-Z' rapper dude. In response to my request, MCA/Universal records flat-out ordered Dame to remove any and all types of Mary references from Reasonable Doubt. This was bad, mainly because Dame had spent mad money advertising how the song featured Mary, and there was even a full-page ad out in The Source! "I decided to pull a favor from one of my colleagues that was a top exec at Universal. Granting me a solid, he said they'd allow for Mary to remain on the album—only no singles, no videos, and no advertising. [61] Osse, R. 2015. "25 True stories of the rap game." *Complex Magazine*

[62] Burke, K. *Philosophy of Literary Form. University of California, 1979*

[63]Gross. T. June 16. 2017. Jay-Z NPR Interview.

[64] Carter, S.; Miller, M & Blige, M. 1996.

[65] Campbell. 2005

[66] Peterson (2011)

[67] Campbell.2005 58

[68] based on Burkes theory, metaphor, synecdoche, and irony.

[69] visible in the slang of "BM's", short for Bmw's "Lunching", DC slang for being lazy, "deuce fever" (two hot cars) those mainly black audiences would identify.

[70] Banks and Gilyard. 2018

[71] The juxtaposition is made to transcend the framing of the hustler—and others like him as pathologically criminal. Which was the rhetoric of the culture wars in the mid-90s—in 1994 Hillary Clinton called these "the kinds of kids that are called super predators — no conscience, no empathy."

[72] An interpolation of Melissa Morgan's Fool Paradise.

[73] Moreover, he signifies on the conventional form of detailing hustling heights at the beginning and hustling lows at the end, exemplified by contemporaries UGK in their "Pocket full of Stones.

[74] Hill, Marc Lamont. 2005. "Critical Pedagogy Begins at Halftime" *Born to Use Mics 105-120*

[75] Deburg. 2014. *Black Camelot*

[76] Cobb, Jelani. 2008. "Seven Mc'S" *To The Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip-Hop Aesthetic. NYU Press. 139-153*

[77] Carter, S. & Martin, C. 1996. "Friend or Foe" *Reasonable Doubt*

[78] Bradley. 2017

[79] Jay-Z. 2010. Decoded. Spiegel & Grau

[80] The phrase "shit your drawers," just projects the idea that the intended audience will go crazy , figuratively crapping their underwear, to see this collaboration occur. Also it serves as a missive to the competition to be so scared they shit their drawers at this collaboration. Likewise, the song invites audiences to relate to the love they have for their own community.

[81] Ibid. 1996

[82] Osse, R. 2015. "25 True stories of the rap game." *Complex Magazine* "22 twos" sounds recorded live, an interpolation of an actual open mic "Maria Davis's Mad Wednesdays" , a popular club night in Brooklyn in the mid-90s. Jay-z the struggling artist would frequent the open mic to practice his raps. "22 twos" was an early freestyle he performed at the site, which Maria Davis suggested he add to the album and she later featured on.

[83] Robbins, Michael. 2017. *Equipment for Living: On Poetry and Pop Music 1-13*

[84] Carter, S. Reasonable Doubt. 1996. Roc-A-fella Records/Priority

[85] Ibid 5

[86] Carter, S & Lorenzo, I. "Can I live" *Reasonable Doubt. 1996*

[87]Peterson, James Braxton. 2012. "It's yours: Hip-hop Worldviews in the lyrics of Nas". In *Dyson, Michael Eric; Daulatzai, Sohail (eds.). Born To Use Mics: Reading Nas's Illmatic. Basic Civitas Books. pp.75-97)*

[88] Smith, Denzel M. 2017. *Invisible Man, Got the whole word watching : A young black man's education*

[89] Carter, S. & Martin, C. 2006. "D'evils" *Reasonable Doubt* Rocafella/Priority Records

[90] Ramsey. 2005; 2009.

[91] Burke. 1995. Attitudes Toward History, 308

[92] Dyson. 2004; 2010

[93] Carter. S. 2010. *RD 20. Tidal (Documentary)*

[94] Decoded. 2010. 50

[95] Goodfellas quote

[96] Baker Jr., H. A 1987. *Blues Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory.*

[97] Carter, S. & Willis, D. 1996 "Politics as Usual" *Reasonable Doubt.*

[98] Billson, J. & Major, R. *The Cool Pose*

[99] Jay-Z. 2010. Decoded

[100] Wynter, Sylvia 1994. "No Humans Involved: A letter to my colleagues." Forum NHI Volume 1. No.1.

[101] Listening to Regrets, I remember crying my eyes out as my cousin had been killed execution style in my hometown of Kinston NC, by a drug dealing rival.

[102] as Nelson George famously stated: There is no gangsta rap without crack, this is the music you get when a drug destroys and benefits marginalized hoods

[103] For Carter it is an honest tale of what Kelley tells us the hustle can be: a friend for mobility and a poison to one's peoples and community—those sides of the coin are the optimism and caution the hustler's story has always spoke to—the ability to live beyond the limits of blackness to some degree and often die trying to do such

[104] Greenburg, Zack O'Malley. *Empire State of Mind: How Jay-Z Went from Street Corner to Corner Office.* New York: Penguin, 2011. It also will be the album he is judged on moving forward. Audiences who love the rap debut often want the artist to replicate the same feeling of identification yet not a remake per se. See *Born to Use Mics: Nas Illmatic* edited by Michael Eric Dyson for more on the pressure of the debut years after its release by ones core black audience.

[105] Hess, M. 2014. "The Rap Career" in That's the Joint: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader.

[106] Stern, Howard. 2011. Jay-Z Interview. Transcript.

[107] Hardy, Antoine. 2010. *Loving the Cool.* Fun fact if you are reading the footnotes: I wrote this dissertation from 2011-2021; I had four chairs, 3 committee's, half a pancreas, robbed at gunpoint for my laptop and hard drives with a written dissertation and cloud info erased, a divorce, 6 states, 9 cities, 6 jobs, a chair who repeatedly told me to quit, theres no such thing as African American rhetoric, and this topic isn't robust enough for a dissertation—so my apologies for the length, but it's a strategic middle finger to former chairs. Oh and USF made me pay tuiton twice and on campus fees during the pandemic. Thanks for reading.

[108] Ellison, R. 2005. *Going to the Territory*

[109] Stern. 2012.

[110]Farriya, J. June 30th 2016. "Convicts talk about why Jay-Z's reasonable doubt is still ever hustler's favorite album." https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/mvkjxq/convicts-talk-about-why-jay-zs-reasonable-doubt-is-still-every-hustlers-favorite-album

[111] Kwak, Donnie. "Doubts, Reasonable: How hip-hop media reacted to Jay Z's debut in 1996." The Ringer. June 24, 2016. Accessed May 31, 2019. https://www.theringer.com/2016/6/24/16046580/jay-z-reasonable-doubt-media-reaction-b280f7043c0c.

CHAPTER 4: JAY-Z'S FAILURE & TRIUMPH OF BLACK SINCERITY RHETORIC

"I just want people to really see me as a regular nigga — 'cause I'm their voice. " 'I'm the nigga that speaks to what they go through, the things they feel. When I say it, it's like, 'Oh, you said what I felt.' Because I'm the same nigga. We all from the ghetto"-Jay-Z

A piper who had insisted upon the right to call his own tune became unhappy when everyone began saying to him, "I don't care what tune you play." He discovered that he wanted them to care tremendously — and to make them do so, he even tried outrageous tunes. .[1] Kenneth Burke

Introduction

Jay-Z's transformation from beloved outlaw of NYC a to arguably "the greatest rapper alive" for post soul audiences will occur from the period of 1997-2007. Carter's rhetorical performance is altered to meet new audience demands and new individual desires at this stage in his career; thus new discourses of sincerity. This is the chief dialectic in the next chapter. Carter is a businessman and his individual desires for corporate success and his audience's desires for "equipment for living" are negotiated through his discourse in upcoming albums. As Skold and Rhen argue the dialectic of Making it for self and Doing it for the hood undergirds modern rappers such as Jay-Z.[2] "There was maybe a time when people in hip-hop made music only because they loved to make music," Jay Z writes in *Decoded.* "A lot of people came to hip-hop like that not out of a pure love of music, but as a legit hustle, another path out of the hood."[3]

McLeod and Pugh remind us that audiences at this time questioned if rappers cared about the culture or just getting paid.[4]" Did they care about making music that offers "equipment for living" for black listener or just a new hustle? Or both? In a genre "threatened by assimilation"[5], Jay-Z's sophomore album "In my Lifetime" offers a case study of a rap rhetor's failure to transcend/crossover and maintains the sincere ethos of his debut. Likewise, his comeback album 1998's *Vol.2.Hard Knock Life* demonstrates how Jay-Z reframes himself as a spokesperson and restructures his Black sincerity rhetoric and ethos to transcend the dialectic of doing it for the hood and self. Jamilla Kareem's work reminds us that for rappers in the late 90s "The narratives became rhetorical moves to establish new audience bases and to hold on to followers." Biographer Zach Greenburg accurately notes that while "his first album is still considered one of hip-hop's greatest, he would garner criticism for heading in a pop-oriented direction in subsequent efforts," from his core fan base.

[6] This chapter looks at how Carter failed to establish new audiences and hold on to his fan base on his sophomore effort. How Carter revives this post-soul consubstantiality through rhetorical strategies established on his debut and a reframing of himself as spokesperson on his breakthrough album Vol.2: Hard Knock Life. The next section briefly details the rhetorical situation of 1997 as the deaths of Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smalls change hip-hop and Jay-Z's career trajectory.

1997: Rise of the Mogul and Hip-hop's Rhetorical Situation Post Pac/Biggie

On his debut he was a new artist, sell out questions rarely emerged. Yet with a new Def Jam distribution deal and NYC peers going platinum; the pressure to be more than a gold artist was building. In 1996 Biggie and Tupac had elevated hip-hop to rare economic heights as their material dominated pop and rap charts as two epic versions of the glorious outlaw. Sadly in a 6 month span hip-hop would reify the tragedies of the street and not the survival tales. In September 1996 Tupac Shakur was gunned down and less than six months later Christopher "Biggie" Wallace in March 9th 1997 his rival and former friend Notorious B.I.G. was also murdered. The deaths of Big and Pac brought a halt to the celebration of success in hip-hop and a questioning of the outlaw lifestyle.

In relation Jay-Z said he was devastated by Big's death and struggled to record.[7] The deaths of these two major figures left questions about rappers' connection between streets and music, the responsibility of rappers and their influence, and an existential call for someone to fill vacated roles. Dyson's in depth treatment of both figures highlights how their deaths sadly reflected hip-hop's inability to tether from its environmental dangers but rhetorically their "sincere connection" with audiences elevated them to martyrdom[8]. Surprisingly, after Biggie's death, Bad Boy's CEO Sean Puffy' Combs transitioned from label owner to artist; making the rap exec a more visible archetype in hip-hop. *Elliot* Wilson wrote that Post-soul audiences wanted to party instead of mourn and Puff had hits for the party that crossed over to the mainstream like Motown.[9] In contrast to the tragic deaths, economically 1997 was the year of celebrating economic success of hip-hop; the rapper as mogul became featured on the cover of Forbes as hip-hop became the second best-selling musical genre for the first time.[10] At this time, rap stars were appropriating their street hustler identities into marketable cache. Christopher Holmes Smith work is helpful here , as he

asserts Jay-Z post 1997 in particular signaled the move from the baadman/glorious outlaw ethos of the 90s to the mogul ethos of the late 90s and early aughts tied to the streets and the corporate industry, "the hip-hop mogul [also] symbolizes something new about traditional American corporate culture since he is also typically young (under the age of 50), typically African American, and typically tethered either literally or symbolically to America's disenfranchised inner cities[11].

Thus, the ethos is still tied to common topoi of black sincerity but a different emphasis on economic and social mobility. Smith's above quote lays out the emphasis on "come up" framed in the corporate setting no longer the hood. In relation, Judy's work on raps' changing authenticity appeals, contended hip-hop millionaires announced their pride in ghetto upbringing and refusal to assimilate traditionally in appearance, language or ostensible politics to combat suspicion of selling out or changing their character.[12] Thus, Jay-Z must retain his connection to black nomoi, communities and his form of narrativizing his past and present; whilst asking the audience to look at the hustler in a new light, as an outlaw within the system not on the margins. Puff and others rising music moguls like Master P argued that their financial "come up" was inspired by their hood struggles and that this "come up" was inspiring their generation to aspire for a better life than the inner city.[13] Hence a performance of sincerity became even more necessary to negotiate the existential and economic divide with black audiences. Hip-hop was moving away from the spatial authenticity of declaring "I'm never moving out the projects" to rappers suggesting that they were moving out but taken the ethos of the neighborhood with them as a metaphysical dwelling space they could convene on record. Indeed, Jay-Z and Roc-A-Fella records would frame their business as inspiring black social mobility. Back in 1997, Shawn Carter and his team explained that the debut was just the foundation for their 'takeover.' Carter explains that Roc-A-Fella's success was meant to reverse generational curses in his black community, "The goal is to create a comfortable position for me and everybody around me, Blacks, when we come up, and we don't normally inherit businesses. That's not a common thing for us to have old money, like three or four generations, inheriting our parents' businesses. That's what we workin' on right now. A legacy.[14]" I feature this quote because this will be challenge of Jay-Z and his evolving *ethos of sincerity*. It's the essential identification dialectic: how does he pursue his goals but also speak to black communal desires of the

audience that accepted him? How does he speak for those emotional thugs after retiring from the hustle? Whereas the street reporter of the early 90s focused on the tragic destiny of the streets, Jay-Z would help usher in a focus on social mobility as a transcendent theme.

Womack accurately notes that as hip-hop became big business in 1997, the framing of it as a viable career path informed the "socioeconomic rhetorics" of rappers who positioned themselves as transferring their hustler skills to the boardroom of the rap industry and given voice to voiceless communities.[15] Puff and his acolyte Mase were able to find pop music success with songs sampling the 80s, detailing a decadent lifestyle and inspirational "come up" anthems. Interestingly Jay was the writer behind some of their hits.[16] In 1997, Jay-Z artist/label owner wanted to announce he was on the same level as Puff on album two. In order to achieve this, I posit Jay-Z must master juggling two flows of black consciousness: American individualism via the pop mainstream and African collectivism via the wellspring of the black underground. In hip-hop, flow is the name for the rhythmic deployment of the verse-the cadence the tonality of the rapper, how the rappers voice interacts with the beat. Jay-Z on his debut used variety of flows to endear himself to audiences. An indeed Gregory Baetson[17] is right when he argued that ethos is about speaking in tones that appeal to the audience. Choosing the right flow, is similar to choosing how to deploy one's ethos, which tones appeals the best. Jay-Z on his first album hit audiences with "athletic, fluid flows" as he transitioned from conversational to jazzy to sermonic depending on the beat. Thus, at this stage in his career White [18] argued Jay must merge flows into a unitary character that tells the "truth of his experience" but speaks to the interiority of the post-soul black communal experience. For Carter flow is a metaphor for life, "If the beat is time, flow is what we do with the time, how we live through it."[19] As his career grows and audience expands we can see how strategically these flows merge, diverge and reconnect as a rhetorical appeal of his evolving authenticity.

The next section focuses on his sophomore effort and his attempt to expand his audience almost loses his core audience. In hip-hop the *sophomore jinx* of sports and other areas of pop culture is transposed to albums, as the second release rarely matches the hype of the debut in 90s rap[20]. In the later section of analysis we view his evolving BSR and its efficacy as a means to maintain his position as an accepted spokesperson of a post soul audience. As well as how his mixtape *Streets is Watching* repaired his ethos. The analyses, then

moves to his framing of his hustler persona moving from a glorious street outlaw witnessing to a mogul/community spokesman on the album *HKL*. Burke's notion of the audience "calls the tune" informs the analysis of Carter's failed identification with his desired audience. Burke reminds us that for the poet or artist the "audience always calls the tune", meaning that you must speak to the wants and needs of the audience to find acceptance for your identity. In the last section of this chapter I examine in particular how his use of Burke's comic frame as a corrective are employed as a strategic application to counter criticism of his ethos and affirm kinship with his core audience as a spokesperson not just a rapper. The chapter ends with a discussion of his attempts to maintain acceptance of his ethos by the time of his fourth album

Sophomore Jinx: The Audience calls the tune

Haggins writes that in the late 90s Post soul artists were defined by a desire for mainstream success, acceptance and a desire to speak without restraint about black experiences in the mainstream.[21]. Thus post soul performers were asking black audiences to sympathize with their appeals to white audiences, but maintaining a use of appeals for black audiences. Carter on album two rhetorically asserts that his witnessing for the community and his individual desire to get radio play can coexist—like his friend Biggie. This move to the mainstream would lead to new challenges to his *Black Sincerity Rhetoric* and his e*thos of sincerity*. Burke argues the popular poet risks the *bueacritzation of his imagination*--the commodification of his imagination—as corporate entities like Island Def jam are now invested in the poets' art. Burke argues this moves the poet to a 'compromise of audiences' in his poems—a double voiced discourse for a bifurcated audience.[22] Popular artists are often time just a "spokesman for an industry"; once they become money-makers Burke contends their imagination is compromised by capitalist demands, however he asserts it's the "skilled rhetor who emphasizes sincerity to claim they are an even better spokesperson" for the folk," as their corporate relationships grow[23].

On *Volume 1: In my lifetime* "Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter handles this dialectic, attiring himself in the role of the street hustler turned CEO, positing entrepreneurship (and the closely related concept of hustling) as his primary motive.[24] On the album intro, Carter attempts to show his transition from the street to legitimacy. Instead of invoking the King of New York ethos of survival of his debut, he invoked *Carlito's Way* a film

about a hustler leaving the game to go legit. Elliot Wilson is correct when he states, Carter at 28 wanted hip-hop to mature and to match his aspirations. *In my lifetime* would attempt to capitalize on the popularity of Bad boy 80s sampling craze and simplified dance oriented songs for mass audiences while giving RD fans album tracks of skill, introspection and community. Def Jam was banking on larger profits and pop success, so hitmakers outside of hip-hop like R&B hitmakers Blackstreet and Babyface were featured on the LP. It didn't work.[25] Despite some very revealing heartfelt songs such as "You must love me" where he laments selling his own mother drugs and shooting his brother, or hustler advice on "Imaginary Players", the singles failure dominated the negative album reception. The core audience didn't embrace it enough for it to crossover. The bubbly single and adjoining video, "Sunshine" with Babyface and Foxy Brown was universally panned for its *day glo* visuals and singer Babyface on the hook was seen as pop music pandering. Critics claimed Jay-Z tried too hard to go pop and his flow lacked the conviction of his debut.[26] For example, on his debut critic Charlie Braxton wrote "he flows like he's talking to you at a party or on the street,[27]" but argued the sarcastic, witty and reflective rapper of his debut was replaced with "a going through the motions almost bored artist.[28]

In other words, his performance, his *black sincerity rhetoric* and the tones of his ethos didn't ring true. Writer Yoh31! Recently explained that in rap "as listeners we feel rapper lacked sincerity when we sense that misplaced inflection and tone and we can hear the [sales] strategy" that sounds like the artist not being his authentic self in tone and performance.[29] The formal appeal of his use of BSR topoi on his debut "created a desire" in the audience, which his 2nd album did not attain. While, Biggie had pop singles they didn't seem like an abandonment of form because his early work was geared to dance music. Carter explained he struggled to record while grieving his close friends' death and tried to make songs he thought Big would enjoy. A drastic change; however, in presentation in mid 90s was seen as evidence of a failure of authenticity and not showing you care about the audience enough to be "real." In light of Biggie's passing, many viewed Jay as trying to replace him. *Prior ethos* matters in hip-hop and despite much of Volume 1 containing the substance of his debut, Carter was seen as moving too far to the mainstream flow instead of the street flow that made him a hip-hop star.[30] Burke's adage that poet is not a manipulator of acceptance, and that the "audience calls

the tune', is helpful here[31]. Adjusting ones rhetoric to garner consubstantiality with an audience connects with me as a hip-hop fan and critic who witnessed rappers adjust to audience demands in the late 90s with varying success. Burke reminds us that audiences are not passive and the poet seeks their acceptance. Burke offers this timeless example, "A piper who had insisted upon the right to call his own tune became unhappy when everyone began saying to him, "I don't care what tune you play. He discovered that he wanted them to care tremendously. To the point that he even tried outrageous tunes"[32] Burke aids hip-hop and rhetorical critics, in his analysis of the poet as always "writing for an audience", reinforcing his adage that the poet must operate as a spokesman of an attitude but also be viewed as giving the audience what they want to garner audience consent.

Moreover this notion of identification demonstrates how in rap, ethos is a co-production; as feminist scholars have noted, ethos is not simply an energy within the speaker but a dwelling place of sense making created by speaker and audience to share common substance. And BSR functions as a discursive reaction to maintain this sharing of substance; the rapper is not a spell caster, nor is imagined black audiences simply impressionable youth. By viewing hip-hop as a discursive intracultural conversation instead of just songs, we expand our understanding of rhetoric and hip-hop. Applying Burke's critical lens of the *poet and the audience* highlights the rhetorical dilemma of Jay-Z at this point in his career. He wanted to make songs to be noticed by the mainstream but they didn't care yet, and his core audience felt discarded for pop favor. Burke penetratingly observes that, the modern poet "wants to be seen as a spokesperson of his own corporation and a poet of the people." That quote encompasses 90s Jay-Z and his rhetorical goals, he wants to be the peoples champion like Biggie but unlike biggie the spokesperson of his own corporation Roc-A-Fella. Recognizing what worked about his prior ethos of sincerity and a reframing of his *BSR* will inform his next project *Streets is Watching.* [33] This would be a guerrilla soundtrack and vignettes of videos made into a direct-to-video film. The project sought to repair the pop image of his sophomore album by repurposing the album tracks geared to his core audience as dramatized videos.

Streets is Watching: Remixing the Topoi and Altering the Ethos of Sincerity

On the title track, Carter offers a simultaneous cautionary and optimistic *tabula rasa* of his hustling past and rapping present. It's an update of "Can't knock the hustle." In the verse he explains intrepidly his past hustle, "Got my transporter take it across the border then stop, to set up shop with a quarter of rock" but also why he leaves the streets for a new hustle in a conversational tone:

> Half of my staff had warrants/The other half /in the casket /lay dormant/I felt like life was cheating me/For the first time in my life I was getting money/But it was like my conscience was eating me/Was this a lesson God teaching me? /Was he saying that/I was playing the game straight from Hell /from which few came back . . .? This unstable way of living just, had to stop/Half of my niggaz got time, we done real things/Public apologies to the families of those caught up in my street life/But that's the life for us lost souls brought up in the streets/The life and times of a demonic mind, excited with crime/and the lavish luxuries that just excited my mind/I figured, 'Shit why risk myself I just write it in rhymes/ And let you feel me, and if you don't like it then fine'[34]

Carter mines the common topoi of BSR via his autobiographical confession, black rhetorical traditions in tone and attitude and black communal concern of his debut here. Carter reconstructs the space of RD by using his formal topoi in a new framing. Unlike RD, he offers an accountability and guilt, "was my conscience eating at me" that was merely hinted at from his debut as a new audience appeal. Yet also explains that he wanted to give voice to those "lost souls brought up in the street", while recognizing that he had to give up the devils game. Carter has explained that he believes the story of the hustler can resonate because it's a human story of risk and struggle, and being truthful about it is what he owes his audiences.[35] In telling his story of the lucky hustler who got out, Miles White[36] has argued Jay-Z tells the stories of others "who might be experientially like him in terms of ethnicity, social background and life chances;" thus this demographic identifies with his narrative, they share substance with Jay-Z in this dwelling space. In relation Peterson details that Jay-Z on such songs demonstrates how showing the pitfalls of the hustle is viewed as heroic by black audiences due to its honesty or *sincerity*. In his memoir, Carter jokingly asks "have you ever heard a hustler apologize? In this verse I am trying to demonstrate growth. (122)[37]" The acknowledgment of the pain drug dealers cause and endure, allows for post soul audiences to view Jay's rhetoric as sincere in its transparency and his overly conversational tone. Burke in his discussion of songwriters reminds us that the skilled songwriter who focuses on the humanity of himself and his audience—uses modes of identification to make

the interests of the "piper and tune-caller identical, hence allowing the poet simultaneously to "be himself" and to act as public spokesman for his patrons, or customers.[38]" This quote defines the rhetorical motive of BSR and it encapsulates the motives of Jay-Z that SIW helps repair. Jay-Z is transparent about his personal past but also attempting to give voice to the conditions of voiceless communities in the 90s-being himself and a spokesman. This is how a post-soul public speaker transcends the dialectic of being joined yet separate, making the imagined audience feel represented by the interests of the poet.

Where I'm From: Change in Ethos/ Hustler as Community Spokesperson

Elsewhere on the project the *topoi of black sincerity* and a comic attitude coalesce to feature Jay the urban ethnographer and community spokesman on the song/video "Where I'm from."[39] On "Where I'm from" Carter posits, the other part of his American dream (getting paid) is to be a community spokesman. In a tone akin to Whitman, Carter reveals his upbringing with pride and derision—as he quickly erects vignettes of his Brooklyn environs. In one breath, the hood is "where the beef (violence) is inevitable," but growing up "the summertime's unforgettable/Boosters in abundance, buy a half-price sweater new." The pain of poverty and the joys of the black market are dueling forces he and his imagined audience deal with. Carter also designates the importance of sincerity as a value to the community when he states "*in my hood/Your word was everything, so everything you said you'd do/You did it/ couldn't talk about it/ if you ain't lived it/I'm from where niggas pull your card (jokes)/ and argue all day about/Who's the best MCs/ Biggie, Jay-Z, or Nas?*

The repetitive refrain of "Where I'm from" acts as a blank slate for the audience to fill in their neighborhood, their project building, their public housing, their zone their ward as the details resemble black urban America writ large. Moreover, the comparison to NYC top rappers positioned him as commensurate to their status but also that he was the "people's choice" as his sales and critical acclaim was not commensurate. Community as a topos is deployed here as a part of his ethos by sharing common experiential substance with his imagined black audience and informing those unfamiliar. In relation, Eddie Glaude asserts that rappers in the 90s employed "*lyrical ethnography* in hip-hop", the use of regional specific narratives to connect to a larger black diasporic community and demonstrate commitment to black audiences.[40] Jay-Z demonstrates such here: *"Where the drugs czars evolve/ and/ thugs always are/At each other's*

throats/ for the love of foreign cars/Where cats catch cases/hoping the judge R-*and*-R'*s*[8]*/but most likely find themselves behind bars/that's all/I'm from where they breed rhymers and ball stars, I'm from Marcy son, just thought I would remind ya'll."*

In the song," Carter explains, "I'm the tour guide as well as a storyteller, describing my hometown. It's with both love and resignation that we live like this (p.125)." There is no virtue more important in black culture than "never forget where you come from," and praising your origins was a prime way rappers indicated money had not weaken their concern for black folks.[41] In verse, he makes direct "nods" to his imagined black audience reminding them that his narrative is similar story to his audience --communities united by shared experiences of poverty and culture[42]: "*I'm from the place/Where you can't put your vest away and say you'll wear it tomorrow/Cause the day after we'll be saying, "Damn, I was just with him yesterday"/I'm a block away from hell, not enough shots away from stray shells/you're laughin/you know the place well/where the liquor stores and the base (crack) dwell*"[43]

The aural snapshots are directed at black audiences who "know the place well" and share substance with Jay-Z's slang and observations. The description could be Richmond, Detroit or Brooklyn. His witnessing lyrics connect as authentic via the dark comedy "of damn I was just with him yesterday" reveals how common death could be in the hyperviolent 90s. At songs end Carter prays to God for sincerity and the right to give voice to the ghetto: *"If the shit is lies/god strike me/ and I got a question/ (to God): Are you forgiving guys who live just like me?/ We'll never know/One day I prayed to you/ and I said if I ever blow, I'd let them (the outsiders) know/ the Mistakes and exactly what takes place in the ghetto./ Promise fulfilled, still I feel my job ain't done….cough up a lung /where I'm from/ Marcy son/ aint nothing nice*." Here, he invokes *perspective by incongruity* to cast himself the former Devil of RD, as now a Godsend for the audience due to his ability to be what Ellison called the blues artists, a "hero of witness"[44] Carter asserts his honesty and sincerity and then thanks God for answering his prayer to "give voice "to the ghetto. Here he signs his rhetorical contract with black audiences; he announces it is his prayer to be a community spokesperson on the microphone. Jay claims that the job still isn't done," but asserts his commitment to speak to and for his ancestral home Marcy Projects. In the aftermath of tragic deaths, Jay positions himself as a valued voice for imagined black audiences. Without *Streets is Watching*, it's

[8] Release and Record: A soft sentence from a judge with a quick release and minor marks on one's record

arguable that Jay-Z never recovers from his sophomore failure. Andrew Barber recently explained, "Jay-Z bet on himself and won back his fans."[45] Jay-Z would agree: "I had to listen to the audience. That EP saved my career. I realized what my fans wanted from me was not what was on the radio. I made a lot of mistakes on my second album, I tried to make records I thought radio wanted to here, and I had to learn to bring radio to me. [46] That summer Jay-Z would find pop success with "Money aint a thang" with southern producer Jermaine Dupri yielding his first top ten hit. The hook sampled his CKTH lyric "bouncing on the highway switching four lanes money aint a thang."

While on tour with Puff as an opening act, DJ Kid Capri would play a snippet of the Broadway classic Annie's Hard Knock Life before Jay came out; the audience loved it. Jay saw the potential for his first mainstream hit: a pop remix of "Where I'm from." Jay will take the lessons of getting his core audience back and aim for mainstream stardom with the song "Hard Knock Life" as his next single. In addition, his songwriting will reflect a transition from hustler as witness to more ostensibly former hustler as NYC spokesman. Beginning with this album, we can see traces of his debut but more visibly how he tropes and stretches the uses of formal topoi of sincerity. How he stretches his persona as hustler/community rep into a national spokesman character to size up new situations for himself and the audience. The following section interrogates his novel use of his old techniques on the album: Volume 2: Hard Knock Life

Hard knock life: The Ghetto Anthem and Breakthrough Album

"Hard Knock Life" lifts the chorus of the original song from the play Annie, "instead of kisses we get kicked" to describe the life of black ghetto inhabitants. The song was both one that depicted the harsh realities of black experiences, in the average urban ghetto, but also highlights the humanity, lessons and connection the community provides. HKL utilizes *perspective by incongruity*[47] as a corrective for Jay-Z's negotiated situation as he attempts to locate pop success by talking about his upbringing in NYC. Katherine Hale explains that this tool is the key to challenging an audiences prior thinking, "Perspective by incongruity is a methodology of invention that results in a dramatic vocabulary that amplifies or opens up interpretation—Burke says 'a word belongs by custom to a certain category and by rational planning you wrench it loose and metaphorically apply it to another category. . In doing so the poet calls attention to the

narrowness of the accepted interrelation and encourages critical thinking about other possibilities (p.155).[48]" On this song, Cater invokes *pxI* to resist the culture war view of black inner cities as resource of dysfunction via black signifying as the song juxtaposes saccharine Broadway voices as a fill in for black urban youth along (with his Brooklyn drawl) to repossess hard knock life as the ghetto anthem. Moreover, Carter taps into his use of formal *topoi of black sincerity* on his debut, to reaffirm his relationship with his core audience and simultaneously use Annie as a Trojan horse to pop radio. Jay explains his audience strategy and how he "knew" ghetto people would relate to a British music journalist:

> You know, I knew how people in the ghetto would relate to words like 'Instead of treated we get tricked' and 'Instead of kisses we get kicked'… It's like when we watch movies we're always rooting for the villain or the underdog because that's who we feel we are. It's us against society. And, to me, the way the kids in the chorus are singing 'It's a hard-knock life' is more like they're REJOICING about it. Like they're too strong to let it bring them down. And so that's also the reason why I added the subtitle 'Ghetto Anthem'. But I think everyone can relate to being that underdog you know?[49]

In verse, line for line he vacillates from self to group throughout the opening verse, *"From the dope spot/with the smoke Glock/fleein the murder scene/**you know me well/**from nightmares of a lonely cell/ my only hell…../I'm from the school /of the hard knocks/we must not/let outsiders violate our blocks/ and my plot/ is let's stick up the world and split it fifty/fifty, uh-huh/Let's take the dough and stay real jiggy[9], uh-huh."*[50] The lyrical acrobatics are dialed down as Jay-Z literally slows down to the conversational as he indicates the topos of community and positions himself as a leader with shared origins as his audience. It reminds me of Burke's political identification example of the "I too grew up on a farm/grew up poor" stump speech. Here, City Councilman Carter reminds his flock that "we know him well;" former fans have a relationship with Carter and he is honoring this liaison with activation of his personal testimony and communal concerns to indicate "his sincerity with the community.[51]" This campaigning, finds him positioning himself as an advocate of his community not one who abandoned it. Jay claims he doesn't want to sell out but instead is a concerned citizen "looking out" for his neighborhood. In the above lyrics, "us' is implicit but deliberate---it's not the whole black community--- it's those who relate to the hard knocks of life and particularly ghettoes such as his own currently or in their past. Moreover, Carter merges his individual goals of success with his audience's goals, when he states "let us' stick the world

[9] Well dressed

up and live large. It is a call for the proverbial "good life" here on earth not heaven. Jay-Z's rap hustle is a robin hood –pun intended—theory of the former hustler robbing the industry to aid his folk. . It's an ideological stickup, an economic call for his generation to take the 'system over" and divide the money.

The song depicted the harsh realities of black experiences in the ghetto but also highlights the humane joys and valuable knowledge forms of hoods across the globe. In relation, Kareem contends that Jay-Z observes the tragic realities of "street life" but offers a model of the potential good life and hope for the hood in the song.[52] Likewise, Holmes Smith accurately identifies that Jay-Z recognizes at this stage, he must fashion himself as a community activist not just a witness, "As the poster child of hip hop mogul culture in the twenty-first century, Jay-Z had become "an activist of sorts, an example to others of what they could make of their lives if they would simply seize the right opportunity when the time comes. ... The mogul calibrates the distance between the lowly member of the hoi polloi that he once was and the elite persona to which he can now lay claim."[53] The spokesman is giving "voice to his constituency", by acknowledging the lack of opportunity but the desire for a better life as a communal virtue and topoi. Carter claims *the hood* is both a wellspring of talent and such a hellhole that "the city could have back the projects if they wanted." It's the sharing of such knowledge of this liminality between hellhole and wellspring, that transcends the dialectic of joined yet separate for Jay-Z's black sincerity rhetoric. Julius Bailey[54] explains that Jay-Z's work on *HKL* reflects the struggles of hope versus hopelessness, of 'historical sensibilities and future visions that fuel the life and the vocations of so many of us" black listeners.

In agreement with my thesis, Bailey claims Carter encouraged his audience to embrace their hardships and to turn them into fuel for success. This ironic turn allows his narrative to feel consubstantial; he's made his story our story—if you identify- if you grew up in the hard knocks, he's speaking to the shared desire for "the good life" outside the hood but a staunch awareness of the struggles many in their community endure. My analysis of BSR and this whole project rests on this concept, the rapper isn't just entertaining or identifying to make you buy the album, but attempting to maintain a place in a post soul imagined community by animating the role of spokesperson in this era. *BSR* is not just saying what audiences want to hear but demonstrating bonds of kinship and finding space to be understood; it is a process for speaker and

audience.[55] Again I go back to the Burke's claim that the poet functions as a spokesman to emphasize the connection of identification and community for Jay-Z. In the next couplet the neighborhood spokesman from BK, explains who he raps for—his constituency:

> I flow for all my niggaz/ the ones locked down in the ten by fo/ controllin the house
> I flow for chicks wishin, /they ain't have to strip /to pay tuition/I see you vision mama/ I put my money on the longshots/All my ballers/ that's born to clock/Know Imma be on top/whether I perform or not/I went from lukewarm to hot/sleepin on futons and cots/to King Size, dream machines, the green fives/I've seen pies/ let the thing between my eyes/ analyze life's ills
> Then I put it down type braille./I'm Type real/ to the phony.[56]

Jay-Z flows for his niggas, people like him, people in the ghetto, the scapegoats, the longshots—because he too was a long shot. Jay offers his current success as inspiration to his audience that they can come up from "cots" to green BMW 5 series. Carter's key tool here is his acknowledgment of his audience and his testimony of sharing substance of growing up in the hood' with his audience; the acknowledgment is the dancing of a black sincere attitude. Carter connects the hustlers' aspirational attitude with the common citizen desire for a better life. Carter delineates his core constituency; displaying the internal diversity of the neighborhood and listening audience as he gives the proverbial politician pitch: I share your origins and values. Carter adroitly acknowledges other mistaken black identities besides the hustler, like the prisoner, or the sex worker and then shifts to how he shares substance and experience with these marginalized "underdogs." The slang use of "type braille, is a portmanteau of the black vernacular phrase "you feel me" which means "do you fully empathize, with what I'm saying. Hence, he flips the term "feel me like braille" to demonstrate how his writing seeks to evoke empathy and acceptance via his testimony. The topoi of BSR are employed throughout as authenticity, blackness via rhetorical traditions and community concern interconnect almost line for line to create a comprehensive post soul appeal for his imagined black audience. Jay-Z analyzes life and then writes it in a way his desired audience can *feel the sincerity*. DJ Booth writes that Jay was so matter of fact and calm the tone evinced sincerity for listeners[57] *of Hard Knock Life*. The song reflected the intra-diversity of black neighborhoods and rap imagined audiences that rap rhetors such as Jay address with their BSR. Indeed the *strategic ambiguity* of the chorus and the double voiced nature of the song "gave voice to displaced black youth" but connected with mass white audiences who identified with the underdog anthem.

Skold and Rhen contend on this song Jay-Z juxtaposed the extremes of 'hood living with the aspirations of a corporate CEO" to combat sellout criticism from his sophomore album.[58] This was also a rhetorical strategy for the label, to use this double voice rhetoric to their advantage. Co-owner, Damon Dash stated, "If we can feed the streets but still get the commercial people to understand what he's talking about—the cats that just go to school, go home, and watch MTV. If we can get them to hear Jay, then that'll bring us where we need to be.[59]" In total Jay-Z's stylistic choices, his heroic posture, his commitment to community is a *BSR post-soul* performance. Jay in verse confirms his 'hood allegiance by indicating scenes, found in black communities across America. As Jay-Z crosses over, he brings his base with him by framing his ethos as still sincere and his *come up* as his desired audiences "come up." Indeed, Hauser notes "candidates can always grant that their skillful use of ethos does not mean automatic acquiescence by the electorate to either the character of the candidate. . .then, this meant recognizing and promoting the alchemic opportunity for voters, synecdochically, to make "he" stand for "we[60]". The video for HKL further sent the message of communal reunion, as Jay-Z hits the corner bodega, drives through the neighborhood in a Bentley, plays some b-ball, and has the "hard knock" kids of his Marcy neighborhood sing the tragicomic chorus[61].

In relation, a qualitative study by Ginger Jacobson in Tampa contends the song resonated with young black youth based on the authenticity or descriptors that they found true in their community in the song. One student explained that unlike other artist Jay-Z discusses all parts of his life that you feel like you know him as a person.[62] Another explained that Jay-Z was his favorite because he is relatable to his life and perspective, particularly his daydreams about a better life, "saying that talk about, like stuff that he would like to have. 'Bout what he would like to do and stuff? And relating to like how his life used to be and how your life could be if he had certain things."[10] Jay-Z became what was coined then as a ghetto superstar, a hip-hop millionaire with star status but black cultural credibility.

Volume 2 Impact: Jay-Z the spokesman becomes a star

Jay's man of the people talk was similar to 70s James Brown who was both a visible, vocal capitalist, who bragged about his cars and ostentatious style but he continued to be outspoken about black pride and

black struggle, often indicating his past as a poor boy in Augusta Georgia. Jay would extend this tradition, as he explained the Bentley on the Album cover was a matter of inspiration, "as you see that same Bentley, which is mine not rented, is in the video to show a guy from here can have that type of success.[63]" Historian Deburg reminds us such framing was a cultural tradition of black press, that celebrated and honored black individual success as "good for the community" as long as you don't "forget where you come from" in your presentation.[64] On HKL, Bailey contends "Carter interrogates the intraracial tensions of class, crime, poverty, selling out vs. success, (xiv)"[65] but I would add that as rhetor in the late 90s he effectively framed himself as a spokesman to discuss these tensions heading into the 21st century. As Sherman argued, "Hard Knock Life mark Jay-Z's biggest seller at 5 million worldwide, but also signify his final graduation from underground East Coast playa to bona fide star.[66]" With six hit singles and radio airplay on pop stations, Jay-Z described it as his "Thriller" the album that changed his career forever. On the album itself, he moved away from the dominant model of east coast production. Recognizing the demographic shift of blacks headed back south and the southern black college market, Jay would collaborate with southern artists and shout out their locales to affirm connection with audiences outside of the east coast.

On Vol. 2 Jay-Z works with the most popular rap hitmakers of the time, from the electronic boom bap of Atlanta transplant Swizz Beatz, to the futuristic funky sounds of Virgina's Timberland*. Vol.2 began Jay's reign as the king of NYC and soon rap nationwide. Unlike his sophomore album, Jay-Z's hits from Hard Knock Life expanded on popular styles while not deviating too much from his original formula. Carter expanded his audience to include a wider cross section of post soul listeners not only those in the hood, but those who moved out for "social mobility" like Jigga. As the braggadocio and rodomontade of Jay-Z's success positions him as someone special, and thus, to some extent, removed from the community, the need for reaffirming the connection to his core audience is necessary to upkeep his spokesman role. HKL was a late 90s roadmap for achieving pop success without alienating ones' core rap audience. Burke reminds us that identification is not just about a means to an end-selling records—but the need for the poet to create a space of acceptance and the need of the audience to have someone speak to and about their identity.

This section highlights the maintenance of his ethos; how his BSR was used to establish his career and how his prior ethos impacts his rhetorical decisions. In the coming years, the upwardly mobile hustler must continuously take the spirit of home with him up the social hierarchy to stay connected to hip-hop's ancestral home: the hood. His testament of "if I ever blow I let em know what goes on in the ghetto" previously established his use of formal topoi as a rhetorical contract that his ethos will have to live up to; and Volume 2 was the first evidence of the sincerity of that prayer. In this analysis, we honed in on that two step Tango Ellison calls the relationship between black artist and black audience[67], as Jay-Z's lyrics serve as discursive conversations with his imagined black audience and the mainstream. The changes in the audience and his career moving ahead demonstrate how BSR is not static and the topoi while grounded in tradition modulate and transform as well in their usage. Moving forward, Jay-Z becomes a pop star in the next decade and how he uses topoi and rhetorical framing to maintain audience acceptance and counter claims of selling out is what we interrogate in the following sections. After the massive success of *Hard Knock Life*, grapevine claims of Jay-Z selling out, going pop like his 2nd album, or being obsessed with white patronage, permeated the air.

Moreover, businessman Jay-Z was making major moves. A movie deal with Dimension Films, roc-a wear clothing deal, reebok shoes, and his own vodka saw Jay-Z heading a corporation worth nearly 40 million dollars by 1999[68]. Biggs Burke explained this was the plan all along, to use the record label to expand—we were talking roc-a wear and spirits in 1993.[69] Yet throughout the black public sphere, whispers that Jay cared more about MTV than the streets emerged[70]. Carter almost preemptively released music to combat the sellout critiques of HKL. Thus, demonstrating how an *ethos of sincerity* becomes something to defend via his BSR. In particular, in this next section I examine how a detailed use of the comic frame in his BSR is used to defend Jay-Z against critics and transcend critiques of his ethos.

Comic Frame and Defense of Ethos of Sincerity

Kenneth Burke tells us that transcendence is "the adoption of another point of view from which they cease to be opposites (336-337)." Moreover, he insists that *perspective by incongruity* and other comic correctives can be employed to achieve transcendence for a speaker. Rising above claims of selling out is the goal of the

rap rhetor since the early 90s. Thus, after the success of Volume 2, Jay-Z will have to transcend the criticism of selling out or the fear of becoming so popular with white audiences he loses acceptance from "his culture." On the soundtrack song, "This life forever,"[71] Jay-Z asserts his commitment to his base post-soul audience again:

> They place me in the ghetto/tender age of nine/my tender mind/had surrendered to crime/ Wouldn't wish it on nobody life/ to have one like mine/Had to hustle/ in a world of trouble /trapped in/ claustrophobic/ the only way out/ was rap-ping/America don't understand it/ the demographics I tapped in/I'm the truest nigga to do this / and anything else is foolish/Like those who stay high, under God's grey skies/My lyrics is like the Bible, made to save lives.

We hear Carter addressing the critics or outsiders who don't understand his rhetoric or his community. HKL brought criticism of his hustler image as derivative and promoting materialism, misogyny & massive drug distribution. In the song, Jay-Z reasserts that his hustler image is one of inspiration—a comic reframing using spirituality and juxtaposition, two of the three modern techniques of the comic frame according to Powell. Powell[72] writes that within a cultural group Burke's comic frame can use references to spirituality to highlight the humanity of one mistaken. Hence, Carter uses biblical terms to demonstrate a spiritual unity between him and his black audience—it transcends above claims of just testifying for self. In Burkean language he transcends upward: he's not a hustler, he's not even a rapper—Jay-Z is a preacher with a street testimony on "This life forever."

In the next passage he employs *repudiation* or "refuting myths about oneself and increasing one's own value in the process by proposing a correction" (222).[73] For example, Powell notes how debunking black feminine myths united black women in a shared consciousness and built up their sense of self-worth in suffrage movements.[74] Likewise, Jay-Z debunks critics claims of why black audiences identify with rap and details it is his sincerity, skill and advice that audiences identify with not just his 'rap sheet". This functions as a *comic apologia* using irony and indirection to defend his character. Moreover, Powell details this comic reframing helps to rebuild the self-esteem and worth in the audience who identifies with the mischaracterization. Indeed, Carter repudiates culture war critiques of black pathology and replaces it with a discourse about uplifting his audience via his lyrics and their shared experiences; quickly detailing how postindustrial NYC placed former working class people in ghettoes. Carter reiterates that hustlers like him

"surrendered" to the life of crime they didn't seek it out and that to his audience he wouldn't wish the hustling life on them—Jigga cares he claims. The *categoria* of RD is visible as he is directly challenging repeated premises against his work and his audience. When Jay-Z states "in the midst of all your misery nigga, stay fly, never let em see you frown, even smile when you down, Shit I floss on my off days fuck what they all say", he is sizing up the situation for post soul listeners and demonstrating why audiences turn to him.

First he acknowledges their misery, as Hyde notes acknowledgement is an attribute of an effective ethos within a community, it allows the audience to feel understood before Jigga doles out his self-esteem advice.[75] Next Carter as spokesperson says I know society views you as a statistic of the ghetto, but even in the misery of oppression/frustration, Jigga encourages his audience to smile and dress well for themselves not respectability. In one verse, Jay-Z announces he successful but still a sincere voice in tune with the community he claims. He repudiates claims against his community by invoking his authentic experience and a Meta conversation about his relationship with the audience. The comic frame, Ellison notes is akin to the African trickster tradition thus he uses this tradition as topoi (blackness) of reframing his rhetoric and most notably acknowledging and valorizing communal virtues. Thus we see how topoi appeals are always at work in rap rhetoric is, but a zoom in on the framing of him and his audience comically, offers critics a more varied image of post soul BSR. As Hale reminds us frames help negotiate conflict. The spokesman embodies these topoi and the comic framing help validate his ethos as sincere and his BSR as successful The comic frame allowed Carter to repudiate, transcend spiritually and in the end re-affirm consubstantiality with his imagined audience via his use of a comic acceptance frame.

For those that question the social efficacy of his work, Jigga claims that for those who must stay intoxicated just to get by, his music is a therapeutic opiate not a detrimental drug. For his audience Jay-Z claims he is giving *equipment for* living a means of sizing up their lives. His comic frame asks his audience to also see themselves as mistaken but capable of winning on their own terms. Related to music, Robbins expands contends that in pop music equipment for living is expressed as an attitude via artist persona; as Jay-Z's hustler attitude is the equipment audiences can don to feel confident they can survive and succeed despite the being in the midst of misery. In relation, Albert Murray samples Burke's concept of *equipment of living* to

describe Black music as survival technology that affirms black emotions and offers ways of sizing up one's life-this is the relationship between singer and the black listener.[76] Jay-Z's comic attitude in total is a means to combat criticism, motivate his base to survive on their terms and affirm his ethos as sincere after his mainstream success. On this song, Jay-Z embraces the position of voice of community, as his poetry seeks to "represent" a segment of his desired community, and valorizes his ability to witness and share substance with his audience.

Indeed, Maria Naumaoff is right when she contends that Jay-Z at this stage deploys the hustler as an alternative role model whose work ethic and confidence are dispensed as shared values of the community he can give voice to[77]. Rhetorically, Carter claims his *ethos of sincerity* is understood by his core audience due to the skill of his *black sincerity rhetoric.* In short, Smitherman notes this is what makes the rapper valorized in the community the skill to entertain, inspire and educate. Carter's blasphemous comparison is extreme but is a clever metaphor about his relationship with audiences and his use of identification. When he claims that he is *the truest nigga out*, he reiterates that his audience can trust that he will be sincere and cares. It's his claim that his mode of identification is beneficial for rhetor and audience—that black rhetorical performances by Jay-Z "does something" for his audience and the rhetor—makes their experiences feel affirmed and identified with through this shared post soul ethos. The use of the comic frame to repudiate and transcend will be a dominant strategy for Jay-Z's *BSR* moving forward. On *HKL* we heard a *BSR* seeking to appeal and affirm his solidarity and acceptance by an imagined black hip-hop audience. Negotiating his desire to keep it real with his audience and make it in the corporate music world became his challenge after the success of HKL[78]. Indeed, the tale of drug kingpin turned mogul became the dominant archetype of hip-hop. Maintaining his ethos of sincerity as something unique became the focus of his Black sincerity rhetoric.

So Ghetto and Do it Again: Maintaining one's Ethos on Volume 3

As Kennedy tells us in *Sellout, for* black audiences fear of selling out is often a fear that their culture and cultural stars will be sold away, watered down and divorced from their origins as has been the case with jazz and rock and roll. Late 90s mainstream Rappers attempted to deploy an ethos that was upwardly mobile but connected to the people. Jay would be the exemplar of this on *Volume 3 his* successful follow-up. The

song "So Ghetto" opens the album with music by DJ Premier as a nostalgic appeal to audiences that Jigga hadn't changed since RD. Here Jay-Z announces he is not going to change after going 6 times platinum globally. On the song, Carter fictionalizes a date with a bougie[11] broad who looks down on ghetto black people; even criticizing Jigga's commitment to black hair care in this vignette: *So I'm cruising in the car with this bougie broad/She said, "Jigga-Man you rich, take the doo-rag off"/Hit a U-turn, "Ma I'm dropping you back off"/Front of the club, "Jigga why you do that for?"/Thug nigga til the end, tell a friend bitch/won't change for no paper/ plus I been rich."* Jay-z uses the fictional woman as a foil to address him possibly selling out; when she implies that he is rich now he doesn't have to dress in ghetto fashion attire. In resistance to this cultural affront and call to assimilate, he literally drops her back off. "Thug nigga to the end", again translates as "the spirit of the hustler" is always in me, even in my fashion I refuse to change my identity for assimilation standards he opines. It's a defiance activated for his black audience. The hustling corporate hero can sell 5 million records but still a rebel who refuses to assimilate or *bureaucratize their imagination*. He calibrates his distance from the *hoi polloi* by highlighting his fidelity to ghetto fashion, slang, and tonalities; blackness as topoi aids him in reminding audiences his ethos is not compromised. Carter offers a rallying cry in the form of patriarchal insult to show audiences his commitment to not assimilate. The line *won't change for no paper* is a corrective to the idea that money will corrupt or alter the "crabs that got out the barrel." This use of the comic tool of juxtaposition again emphasizes that Jay was mistaken; he is no sell out. It is a call to his audience that they too can have such a stance and maintain sincerity.[79] Jay-Z's motives to be viewed as the spokesman of black hip-hop America and a translator for white America fuels this stage of his career as he told British magazine *Blues and Soul:*

> At this point, primarily I see myself as so much more than a rapper. I really believe I'm the voice for a lot of people who don't have that microphone or who can't rap. So I wanted to represent and tell the story of everybody who's been through what I've been through, or know somebody that has. I also wanted to speak about our lifestyle to people who - though they may live, say, in the suburbs and not be part of that world - still want to know about it and understand it.[80]

[11] Black slang for stuck up or haughty

However, reviewers would notice a shift, relaying that "Jay-Z has mainly ditched his original intentions of getting deep and political he has hinted at (aside for the assertive 'NYMP'), and is up for settling recent scores instead.[81]" This seems to be the focus of this album; solidifying his spot not sharing medicine with audiences. By 1999, his entrepreneurship elevates him above rapping peers yet he still reiterates his desire to give voice to his community and he is proposing that he wants to be hip-hop's national representative not just the best in NYC. *On Vol. 3: Life and times of S. Carter*, Miles Marshall Lewis contends "his form became formula."[82] Jay-Z had mastered his form at this point, effortlessly moving from RD like street fare, to down south club hits, to vulnerable confession to record label posse cut. "Do it again" was his first single on the album that crossed over while maintaining a use of specific black nomoi. The chorus detailed a night out in late 90s club scene with specificity to southern audiences, "12 am hit the waffle house,"[83] as Carter attempted to expand his audience. The single continued Jay-Z's pop success, until his first scandal emerged, weeks before the album's release. Jay-Z allegedly stabbed a former colleague Lance Rivera[84] for illegally selling his unreleased album at rapper Q-Tip's album release party. This led to criticism of his business acumen, maturity but also his content. Unlike the outlaw of the early 90s, Carter was seen as failing his audience by reverting back to the streets, it countered his claims of taking hip-hop in a new path.[85] His use of repudiation as *apologi*a-defense of his character attempts to aid his *BSR*. Apologia here offered a different goal than appealing to your audience, but making sure your sincerity endures. On this album he transforms his hustler apologia to black spokesman *apologia*.[86]

On the track "Dopeman" Jay-Z again uses a common trope for him: the critics have his character mistaken and his audience. He is a man who sells *dopeness* (slang for quality content) not just a former "dopeman". Dopeman picks up where "this life forever" ended. The chorus of "they call me dope man! Dope man/ I are what hope floats man/ ghetto spokesman", references NWA's ode to the neighborhood drug dealer but transmutes it into the optimistic ***ghetto spokesman***. When Jay-Z is on trial—his imagined black audience is also on trial is how Carter frames it, but here the mistaken outlaw, is a spokesman. Thus, the outlaw Jay-Z who just committed a crime because the "bootlegger" violated his values, attempts to transcends criminality by framing himself as a "ghetto spokesman" who is criticized for speaking to and for

his people. The hustler from RD is now a million dollar business men, but feels he and his culture are "penalized" for "their" past, thus allowing him license to "speak" for his "constituency." In the song he details how 'critics" were putting him on trial for his albums, discussing his drug dealer past but he directs the critics to his origins for an ironic rebuttal ": *A-hem, I'm a prisoner of circumstance/Frail nigga/ I couldn't much work with my hands/But my mind was strong,/ I grew where you hold your blacks up/Trap us/ expect us not to pick gats up/Where you drop your cracks off by the Mack trucks/Destroy our dreams of lawyers and actors/Keep us spiraling, goin backwards*." Jay-Z embraces the role of spokesman ostensibly, as he frames himself as a stand in for not just the hustler, but the citizens of the ghetto him repped on past songs.

Jigga uses his trickster skills of pxI and repudiation to frame the real kingpin as the system of white supremacy that "traps us." Pastor Jay invokes the sermonic tone of black orators past and uses it to testify on behalf of himself and his imagined citizens.[87] His *categoria—exposing of an enemy's wickedness* is focused on his ability to survive despite the wicked systemic barriers he and his audience faces; here he reframes the government as the true dopeman that injured black communities. In public view he asserts the real villain is white supremacy and systemic racism and as Nunley argues black speakers are revered for this exposing of the "real." In hip-hop, Marc Lamont Hill reminds us that hip-hop scholars often equate financial success with a lack of care or "critical pedagogy", framing rappers like Jay-z as only capitalists, but ignore the critical advocacy of their lyrics such as Dopeman. Indeed, Naumoff argued "By detailing for his readers all of the ways in which it was impossible for him to succeed by legal means, Jay-Z demonstrates that many of the tenets undergirding the affective structure of American identity are deceptive, if not an outright lie (145).[88] Hence, his transition to spokesman is rooted in the black rhetorical political tradition of speaking truth to power while also trying to repair his image. The reformed hustler speaks for post soul fans that identify with the tragic realities of racial barriers.

In this stage of his career Jay-Z not only discussed the mainstream criticism of his work, but also the resentment of his success within his real life Brooklyn community—intraracial tensions are key topics in hip-hop. In relation, the proverbial crabs in a barrel come into the equation on the album. Infamously, Burke once argued that due to the "crabs in a barrel" philosophy of racial solidarity, black audiences will not support

black artists that have garnered white patronage. Yet as Ellison wrote in a letter, the crabs pull you back in because they fear how whites will treat "you" outside the barrel and that it is possible to transcend this divide if you take "home with you"[89]. A hero to some, the successful hustler reminds others of their failure. In 1998 Carter explained how the neighborhood acted different with his success: "I been having chains on," Jay-Z said[90], "I have been going through this place since I was a kid. For people to say that [imma rob you] you around your own way, Holmes[12], you ain't been scheming on me. You ain't been doing nothing to me. What makes you think that after I sold five million records that you can do something to me?" The album featured this fearful awareness that his audience may have him mistaking and we see the more explicit acts of defense of character-*apologia* as seen here*: I aint crossover I brought the suburbs to the hood /made em relate to your struggle/told em bout your hustle/Went on MTV with doo-rags, I made them love you/I expected to hear, "Jay if it wasn't for you," /the funny thing is, I represent ya'll every time I spit a verse and that's the shit that hurts.*

In one breath, Jay is defending himself against claims of selling out or changing his style to appeal to white audiences, stating that he didn't assimilate he infiltrated the mainstream. In the next breath , Jay-Z takes credit for not only creating a lane for former hustlers to rap, but says his raps help society understand the struggles of black folk ; reiterating his role as the poet as spokesman. In hip-hop the term "haters' is a catchall for critics, but in intra-racial discussion it demarcates someone jealous of another black persons' "come up," as Jay speaks to an imagined aggrieved listener. Jay pleads, *"I was expecting Jigga if it wasn't for you, I represent ya'll every time I spit a verse. And that's the shit that really hurts."* Carter admits the importance of acceptance from his *imagined community*; which is fascinating to hear firsthand. The line "I represent y'all every time I spit a verse," illuminates Jay-Z's vision of self as a spokesman and awareness that his ethos was being questioned by audiences. Carter is at the height of his success but bothered by the idea that some people in his old neighborhood "aint feeling him." Ellison reminds us that the black writer may seek the mainstream but wants the love of their people, foremost[91].

Conclusion

From 1997-2000, Jay- announced he was the cultures spokesman and his vision of social mobility and negotiating audiences would inform the next decade of hip-hop discourse. [92] Moving from street testimonials to rap mogul politicking. The album displayed all aspects of Jay-Z's rhetorical performance: a businessman, a former drug dealer but also a strange brew of preacher, politician, and poet that invites the audience to "share vicariously in his roles of leader and spokesman." You may not be a million dollar rapper, but felt the envy of your neighbors when you tried to change or improve just like Jigga; this is the substance Carter hoped his post-soul audiences shared.[93] At this time, first generation black college enrollment continued to skyrocket a trend that began in the early 90s.[94] Jay-Z was a voice that spoke to the alienation and envy of displaced black youth from their community. Jay-Z spoke to the upward mobility of a growing post soul middle class and the hustling ambition of a working class recovering from the crack era and culture wars. Yet Jay-Z fatigue seemed to build for segments of his black audiences and a shift in Jay-Z's rhetoric to being more defensive of his character will increase. After 3 no.1 albums in a row, Jay-Z had replaced Biggie as the most successful artist from NYC. However, several other former hustlers turned community spokespersons populated 2000s hip-hop and often criticized Jay-Z in the competitive landscape of hip-hop. Music executive, Noah Callahan Bever explains, "His talent and audacity established a template for a whole generation of hustler turned rappers. But you wouldn't know it as they regurgitated Jigga's vernacular and insights so often that many of his narratives became hip-hop cliché's."

In the above sections I highlighted how Jay-Z transitioned from an outlaw testifying for his hood and NYC on his debut, to a national spokesman of his imagined black audience by 2000. For rhetorical critics the section illuminates how rap rhetors adjust and adapt their rhetorical techniques to an audience that "calls the tune" and sets the parameters for identification. Moreover this stage demonstrates how ethos is both a space, a character and a tool for rap rhetors as his early album run created a space to commiserate the near past crack era and the contemporary bush era with post-soul songs that acknowledge oppression but offered self-value and success as an inspirational salve for "his culture." Here I wanted to demonstrate how along with BSR topoi: comic framing and techniques such as *apologia* aid a rhetor's *BSR*. That is, Carter's ability to

recognize and adjust his *BSR* highlights how rhetorical strategy was integral to post-soul hip-hop discourses. The analysis demonstrates how Burkean rhetorical strategies are uniquely fitted for hip-hop discourse concerning allegiance with one's community and it centers rhetoric as endemic to hip-hop discourse by one of its most valorized rhetors. The above analysis contributes to recent scholarship on Jay-Z and negotiating his distance from his audience and recent scholarship on the multiple uses of Burkean acceptance frames to garner consubstantiality with audiences.

Endnotes

[1] Ex, Kris. January 9. 1999. "Jay-Z Goes for Broke. Blaze Magazine ;Burke, K. "Calling of the Tune" Philosophy of Literary Form. University of California: Berkley 1969

[2] Skold, David & Alf Rehn. "Making It, By Keeping It Real: Street Talk, Rap Music, and the Forgotten Entrepreneurship from 'the Hood.'" Group and Organization Management. 32.1 (2007): 50-78. Print

[3] Jay-Z. 2010. Decoded. 25

[4] McLeod, K. (1999). Authenticity within Hip-Hop and other cultures threatened by assimilation." *Journal of Communication*. 49(4) 134-150; Pough, G. *Check it While I Wreck it: Black Womanhood , Hip-Hop Culture and the Public Sphere*. Boston: Northeastern University Books. 2004.

[5] McLeod, K. (1999). Authenticity within Hip-Hop and other cultures threatened by assimilation." *Journal of Communication*. 49(4) 134-150

[6] Greenburg, Zack O'Malley. *Empire State of Mind: How Jay-Z Went from Street Corner to Corner Office*. New York: Penguin, 2011

[7] Hampton, Dream. "The Life" . *Vibe Magazine*. December 1998-Jan 1999. Vol.6 No.7. pp.44

[8] Dyson *Holler If You Hear Me: Searching for Tupac Shakur*. New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2001.

[9] Wilson, Elliot. 1998. "The best rapper alive." XXL Magazine

[10] Imani, Nikitah Okembe-Ra, and S. Craig Watkins. "Representing: Hip Hop Culture and the Production of Black Cinema." *Contemporary Sociology* 28, no. 5 (1999): 577. doi:10.2307/2655022.

[11] Holmes Smith, Christopher. 2003. "'I Don't Like to Dream about Getting Paid' Representations of Social Mobility and the Emergence of the Hip-Hop Mogul." *Social Text* 21 no. 4 69-97.

[12] Ronald A. T. Judy. 2012. "On the question of Nigga Authenticity ." in Forman, Murray, and Mark Anthony. Neal. *That's the Joint!: The Hip-hop Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge

[13] Smith, Christopher Holmes. "'I Don't Like to Dream about Getting Paid'": Representations of Social Mobility and the Emergence of the Hip-Hop Mogul." Social Text. 77.21.4 (2003): 69-97. Print.

[14] Harry Allen. "You Must love Him" Vibe Magazine April 1998

[15] Womack, Ytasha L. *Post Black: How a New Generation is Redefining African American Identity*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2010.

[16] Ayana Byrd . 1998. "Lyrics to Go" Vibe October 1. 66.

[17] Gregory Bateson *Naven*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. [second edition 1958, with new appendix]

[18] Miles White. *From Jim Crow to Jay-Z: Race, Rap, and the Performance of Masculinity*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011.

[19] Carter, Shawn. *Decoded. 2010*

[20] first coined in the hip-hop magazine The source by Sewlyn Sefu Hiinds former editor

[21] Haggins, Bambi. *2007*

[22] Crusius, T. 1999. Kenneth Burke and the Conversation after Philosophy. Page 210

[23] Burke, Kenneth. "Calling of the tune." *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

[24] Skold, David & Alf Rehn. "Making It, By Keeping It Real: Street Talk, Rap Music, and the Forgotten Entrepreneurship from 'the Hood.'" Group and Organization Management. 32.1 (2007): 50-78. Print

[25] Oswald, Vanessa. 2019 *Jay-Z: Building a Hip-hop Empire*. New York: Lucent Press,.
[26] Greenberg, S. 2011. *Empire State of Mind: Biography of Jay-Z.*

[27] Quoted in Kwak, Donnie. "Doubts, Reasonable: How hip-hop media reacted to Jay Z's debut in 1996." The Ringer. June 24, 2016. Accessed May 31, 2019. https://www.theringer.com/2016/6/24/16046580/jay-z-reasonable-doubt-media-reaction-b280f7043c0c.

[28] Quoted in Kwak, Donnie 2016. . "Doubts, Reasonable" The Ringer.

[29] Staff, DJBooth. "What Does Sincerity Sound Like in Hip-Hop?" DJBooth. April 19, 2019. Accessed May 31, 2019. https://djbooth.net/features/2019-04-19-sincerity-in-hip-hop-jay-z-mac-miller-nipsey-hussle.

[30] In addition, instead of competing with Bad Boy other camps such as Wu-Tang and No Limit embraced a street oriented sound and found pop success

[31] Burke Ibid 1974

[32] Kenneth Burke "Calling of the tune" in Philosophy of Literary Form pp221

[33] Abdul Malik Abott *Streets is Watching*. May 19, 1998. The dvd repurposed songs on Volume 1 as music videos and an EP that audiences didn't hear if they didn't buy the album.

[34] Jay-Z "Streets is Watching" Decoded. 2011

[35] Jay-Z/ 2011. Decoded 115

[36] White 2011

[37] Decoded. 2010. 122-127

[38] Burke ,K. "Calling of the tune" *Philosophy of Literary Form. University of California Press, pp. 221-223. 1972.*

[39] The singles and videos framed the album as a departure from this form, thus this re-release allowed him to reframe his rhetoric for a black public.

[40] Glaude, E. 2011. "Represent": Queensbridge and the Art of Living. In *Born to Use Mics: Reading Nas's Illmatic.*

[41] McLeod 1999.

[42] Mark Anthony Neal coined this term in *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture. Suny Press. 1999.*

[43] Jay-Z. 2011. "Where I'm from" *Decoded.*

[44] Ralph Ellison's concept of the blues artist as hero through witnessing

[45] Barber, A. Twitter Post. 2019.

[46] Shawn Carter, "in my Lifetime" Vibe Magazine. January 2003. 81-84

[47]Burke. Attitudes Towards History 166-179

[48] Hale, Katherine. "The Language of cooperation: Negotiation Frames. *Mediation Quarterly . VOl. 16. No.2 1998. 147-162*

[49] Lewis, Pete. 1998. "Jay-Z a B&S Classic Interview" *Blues and Soul* www.bluesandoul.com/feature/441/jay-z_is_back/ Retrieved July 2016

[50] Carter, S. , Strause, Charles, Charmin , James, M. 2001. "Hard Knock Life" on "Vol.2 …Hard Knock Life" . Def Jam Recordings/Roc-A-Fella Records

[51] Jackson, John L. *Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

[52] Kareem. 2015

[53]Holmes Smith, Christopher. "'I Don't Like to Dream about Getting Paid' Representations of Social Mobility and the Emergence of the Hip-Hop Mogul." *Social Text* 21 no. 4 (2003): 69-97.

[54] Bailey, Julius. "Intro" *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip Hops Philosopher King*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011.

[55] Woodward, G. 2003. *The Idea of Identification. Suny Press*

[56] Carter, S. , Strause, Charles, Charmin , James, M. 2001. "Hard Knock Life" on "Vol.2 …Hard Knock Life" . Def Jam Recordings/Roc-A-Fella Records

[57] DJ Booth. 2019.

[58] Skold, David & Alf Rehn. "Making It, By Keeping It Real: Street Talk, Rap Music, and the Forgotten Entrepreneurship from 'the Hood.'" Group and Organization Management. 32.1 (2007): 50-78. Print

[59] Allen, Harry. 2002. Vibe

[60] Hauser. 2005

[61] In the documentary, *Fade to Black* an audience member stated how the song made them feel proud and not ashamed of the hood but also inspired to get out of it and teach others the same. A decade later my students refer to it as "oh the ghetto anthem " not hard knock life. Hard knock life", affirmed his rhetoric of sincerity, and is still his bestselling single and album

[62] Jacobson, Ginger. 2009. *Realness and Hoodness: Authenticity in hip-hop as discussed by adolescents. USF Dissertations and Theses.*

[63] Byrd. 1998. Vibe

[64] Van Deburg William. 2014. *Black Camelot African-American Culture Heroes in Their Times, 1960-1980*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.. 73

[65] Bailey, Julius. 2011.

[66] Sherman , M. 1998. XXL "Hard knock Life Review."

[67] Ellison, R. 2003 "Going to the Territory" in. The Collected Essays of Ralph Ellison. 493-787.

[68] Greenberg, S. 2011. *Empire State of Mind: Biography of Jay-Z.* Rappers had promoted products in songs for years, but Jay-Z and Wu-tang were some of the first to monetize their influence making their own clothing and media.

[69] Waste of Time with it's the real podcast

[70] Greenburg. 2011.

[71] Carter, S. 2010. "This Life Forever." *Decoded 206-210*

[72] Kimberly A. Powell. (1995) The association of southern women for the prevention of lynching: Strategies of a movement in the comic frame. *Communication Quarterly* 43:1, pages 86-99.

[73] Carlson, Cherri, A. 1988. "Limitations on the comic frame: Some witty American women of the nineteenth century.: Quarterly Journal of Speech.

[74] Powell. 1995.

[H]Hyde, M. 2005. "Introduction" *Ethos of Rhetoric.* University of South Carolina Press

[76] Murrary, A. The Blues Epic

[77]Naumoff, Marylou Renee, "The Rhetoric Of The Hip Hop Hustler: Shifting Representations Of American Identity" (2014).*Wayne State University Dissertations.* Paper 1052.

[78] Skold and Rhen. 2007.

[79] Jay-z offers: "we tote guns to the Grammys, pop bottles on the white house lawn, guess I'm just the same old Shawn." His street cred and ambition are combined and validated by his cool apologia of sincerity—he's defending himself with declarations and examples of his ephermal sincerity.

[80] Lewis, Pete. 1998. "Jay-Z a B&S Classic Interview" www.bluesandoul.com/feature/441/jay-z_is_back/ Retrieved July 2016

[81] Ibid. 1998

[82] Lewis, Miles Marshall. 2000. "Jay-Z Volume 3 review." *Village Voice*

[83] an interpolation of a popular DC go-go song

[84] Lance Un Rivera was a record executive who co-owned the Undeas Label with the late Notorious B.I.G.

[85] Greenburg. 2011.

[86] Campbell, K. 2005.

[87] Jigga asserts the sociological claim that for many black youth in postindustrial America crack selling was seen as a viable means of income, due in part to the social neglect of the government, shift to a postindustrial society, racist laws and high black male unemployment

[88] Naumoff. 2014.

[89] Quoted in Crable, Bryan. 2012. *Ralph Ellison and Kenneth Burke at the Roots of the Racial Divide*. Charlottesville (Va.): University of Virginia Press.

[90] Allen, Harry. 1999.

[91] Ellison, R. *Going to the Territory*

[92] Charity, J. "The Real Blueprint" *The Ringer. June 24th, 2016. Retrieved June 24th 2016. www.theringer.com/2016/6/24/16045286/jay-z-reasonable-doubt-6ba8f8ad0cc5*

[93] Greenburg. 2011

[94] Kimble, Julian. September 2017. "A Different World Took HBCU Life to Primetime. " The Fader.

CHAPTER 5: THIS IS SUPERHERO MUSIC: FAILURE AND TRIUMPH OF THE EPIC HERO

The actions of the African folk hero must be assessed as normative against the backdrop of the heritage and traditions of the group; that is the hero cannot appear out of character with the morals and values of the group. –John Roberts[1]

Jay Z is the gatekeeper [of the streets] and through his lyrics, passion, love, and leadership we can rise above every disaster in our lives and find our true calling.[2]-John Edwards, Brooklyn

Introduction

In 2001 Jay-Z and hip-hop were in a complicated liminal space. Jay-Z is facing 2 criminal charges for stabbing associate Lance Rivera for bootlegging his album, "he's been the target of dissses by peers who say he went soft or was stealing Biggies style for his profit", and is pushed to reaffirm his position in hip-hop and has to look inward to release a personal album that pushes back against his communal critique," Rolling Stone's Neil Strauss wrote.[3] As the most popular solo rapper in the early aughts, Jay-Z was a target of criticism from competitive music peers and fans worried he was going pop. Indeed, as musicologists Jack Hamilton detailed in *The Atlantic*, in 2001 Jay-Z and hip-hop were at a rhetorical crossroads. The heyday of crack selling was distant memory in contemporary NYC and to quote Ta-Neshi Coates[4] Jay-Z's and others, "were selling crack tales past their expiration date." Also at 30, Carter was in unchartered territory, as most rappers turned to acting in their 30s, as the youthful vigor of hip-hop rarely supported long careers. Hence, Roc-a-Fella records signed young artists to maintain their hold on fans. With his young street artists Beanie Siegel and Memphis Bleek carrying the hustler witness flag, Carter was able to give his core fans more of the old hustler Jay-Z and coke game braggadocio that some missed via 2000s *Dynasty* compilation LP. Despite Jay's early claims of raps as caution, on songs like "1-900-Hustler", Jiggaman gives step by step instructions on how to start your drug business and flood the streets with coke. Writer Kris ex joked that "even when describing business deals Jay-Z couldn't help comparing it to flipping kilos of coke and we fans couldn't get enough of it.[5]

Interestingly, label co-owner Dame Dash would lament that "we were selling dysfunction at that time, yeah it was a reality, but we had a group call state property at one time and although I know we were opening up doors and expanding hip-hop I worried about our irresponsibility and honestly Jay did too.[6] While many were inspired to hustle in their own way, Jay also inspired many to drug hustle, as Walter Johnson explains here, "me starting so young in the underworld, at the age of 14, and trying to live up to the likes of Jay Z, I got caught up in the streets. This eventually led me to where I sit today; in a federal maximum-security prison with three life sentences. As the 20th anniversary of *Reasonable Doubt* comes up, I'll remember the great inspiration that Jigga gave me, but it's also a reminder of my downfall." Jay's attempts to flashback to his hustling past and retain his outlaw attitude had complicated his relationship with audiences.

As a fan at this time, Jay-Z's dominance was polarizing for me. I loved his lyrical skill, his testifying and his ambition. I appreciated the duality of his drug tales, but in 2001 I wondered why Jay-Z was still talking about the crack game. Was Jelani Cobb right when he wondered if Jay-Z was "the ultimate hustler, hustling us while he got richer?" Why wasn't he telling us more about his million dollar deals and jobs he created that he mentions in interviews instead of decade old drug deals? On one end, hustler was the persona and form Jay firmly established which I understood as a college student ; but claims of Jay-Z getting selling out and encouraging a generation of criminals could be heard in barbershops across America. Jay-Z in 2001 was presented with a new yet familiar dialectic. Jack Hamilton[7] illuminates how Jay-Z deals with a paradox of identification unique to rap artists whose careers are predicated on ghetto witnessing: How does a burgeoning mogul grow up; when all anyone wants to hear is stories of your past involving crime, poverty and hustling?[8] How does he transcend speaking to his community about shared pain from his past but a community disconnected from his present success? After his successful but mixed critical reception of his compilation album Dynasty, it was time for a new campaign, The *Blueprint.*

The height of Biggie was 2 albums, Jay-Z was about to release his sixth album and his fourth number one album in a row. Randall Kennedy has written that sellout discourse only matters if the black figure wants to be a part of the community and Jay-Z seemingly wants to maintain "membership in a black public and private sphere."[9] Hence, his *post-soul BSR* will again seek to transcend this situation and the move from

"ghetto spokesman" to *hustler as epic hero* is visible on his most acclaimed album *The Blueprint*. As his rise up the hierarchy distances himself from the existential home of hip-hop "the hood," he must transcend downward to his community, to make sure they still see humanity in his epic hustler.

In this chapter, I argue Carter employs both American and African notions of the epic hero. Most notably this scholarship connects with rhetorical work on the combination of comic and epic frames undergirding the theoretical thrust of my argument. Hence, this article contributes to Kaylor's[10] claim that there is a paucity of work that explores rhetors combining Burkean frames of acceptance. This analysis opens new avenues for Burkean research on public discourse, but also hip-hop scholarship that employs literary theories geared to the discourse of hip-hop and most importantly black scholarship that seeks to make sense of the relationship between black rhetor and imagined black audience. Furthermore, this chapter examines how *BSR* combines multgeneric rhetorical approaches in the space of hip-hop. Burke states that epic hero emerges in times of transition and the early 21st century marked a time of transition in hip-hop, a regional shift to the south by black citizens and a burgeoning digital era was reshaping the landscape. How Jay-Z epic frame helps him win and lose with his audience is the focus of this chapter

Transition from Hustler Spokesman to Epic Hero

If you are a fan of Jay-Z, by album number 6, you realize Jay-Z has been giving you a *bildungsroman*: an epic coming of age story about Shawn Carter's life and times. In relation, Burke cites Ellison's *Invisible man* as an example of a black bildungsroman using identification. Interestingly, Burke in a letter to Ellison cites Booker T Washington's claim of blacks being crabs in a barrel and suggested the Negro artist is trapped by solidarity to his people. Yet Burke later amended his thought, arguing that in verse, Ellison functions as a "spokesman" putting the audience through his transformations and uses his epic tale to transcend the dialectic of being joined yet separate from black or white audiences.[11] Interestingly, Jay-Z will try to pull off this transcendence trick with his black audience. As you can see, each album retells the story of Shawn, more personal details with each release. Neal[12] tells us that Jay-Z self-naming is strategic, as S. Carter is the name of his corporate holdings, Jigga his nickname for our nigga—our meaning black hip-hop fans. And with *Blueprin*t the resurrection of the name Jay-Hova: The savior of hip-hop.

Charles Bird in his treatise *Trickster to Baadman* notes how the African epic hero origins are similar to the messianic Hebrew hero, Jehovah. "At the Center of the African heroic epic is the epic hero; this figure bears some astonishing resemblance to the messianic hero of the biblical saga. Like the superhuman messiah of Hebrew Scriptures, the epic hero is himself a superman empowered by the gods to restore the state to its deserved grandeur in the natural order of things."[13] (p.123) for theologist James Evans, the epic hero of Jesus resonated with African Christians because it resembled the African folk hero epics in its use of a humane hero for a people oppressed.[14] Jay-Z, I argue on *The B*lueprint, positions himself as a hero elevating to heights never seen for a rapper but at the duty of his people here to restore order in the hip-hop game. I lean on Roberts's assertion that the modern African American hero is a combination of the comic trickster perspective and African Epic hero. In African culture, Roberts explain the epic tale "is usually a continuously performed extended poem in which the actions of an individual embody the heart and soul of the people. . . Told by a communal griot that is praised for sharing the community story and entertaining (p.122).[15] A great analogy for rap albums. Such a poem is made to embody the heart of the people via the journey of the hero. Carter will ground his heroism in African-American traditions extending the topos of blackness through intertextual signifying. The telling of community stories in the public sphere, makes one an epic storyteller and this extends to black musical tradition according to Smitherman. Furthermore I agree with Sha'Dawn Battle's notion that the name he begins to go by "Jay-Hova endows him with supernatural powers that allow him to escape the challenges of rap battles and a pending gun trial." Jesus is the ultimate epic hero in black culture and Carter while blasphemous resurrects his 1998 usage of the moniker to frame himself as "the savior" for rap, part man and part divine. In relation, Burke has explained that use of the epic frame is "deliberately anachronistic" and nostalgic, suggesting composition at a time of transition, when a new frame was beginning to take hold.[16]

Indeed, Burke in 1969 predicts how Jay-Z will frame himself at this stage in the career: "The hero is a repository for all the virtues the group needs to believe in to survive, yet the epic hero humanizes divinity by his flaws and suffering as much as his heroic exploits."[17] The hustler as spokesman growing into an epic hustler mogul hero; a veteran of war—in this case the crack wars, culture wars and east coast vs. west coast

wars—whose survival his hip-hop nation identifies with. Carter would attempt to rise above his peers by saying his status at the top is an epic win for his post-soul nation. His *BSR* will magnify his greatness, but he will deploy his ethos to also highlight struggles and failures of his come up--merging his comic correctives with an epic framing of persona. BSR in hip-hop was a constant campaigning for a constantly evolving post soul audience. In 2001, Jay-Z submits a national narrative of his origins and experiences: *The Blueprint.*

The Blueprint: BSR and Epic Hero discourse

The album features Carter offering up his human comic flaws of failed relationships and invulnerability (Song Cry, Girls, Girls, Girls), fear of selling out (Never Change), competitiveness (Takeover), and contempt for criticism (Heart of the City), that audiences identify with yet its buttressed with his epic heroic accomplishments as superstar hustler (You Don't Know), rapper (The Rulers Back), and businessman (Izzo). This allows for audiences to "vicariously share in the magnification of the hero."[18] Burke contends the divine characteristics and "humane flaws" of the epic hero invite audiences to share substance of inspiration or engage in "hero worship." (p.94).[19] in relation, Jay explained, "Someone can drop something that makes fan forget you, so I just want to remind them why I am on top, the blueprint for my success. *Blueprint* takes off where *Reasonable Doubt* ended-it's the proper sequel.[20]As an epic hero, his actions are automatically geared to be transcendent for a higher cause, his ethos of sincerity is both/and: magnification for himself and his imagined community. The album's sound was also a throwback to the soulful beats of his debut that core fans lamented he had strayed from. As Sellnow once argued, musicians such as Bob Dylan often tap into past styles and sounds to re-establish a bond with audiences. The promo for the album focused on Jay-Z's heroic skills.

The mythic story of Jay-Z, no pen or pad, making and recording 10 songs during a break from his assault trial spread like urban legend months before the album release. Jay-Z writing rhymes without a pad, has always been a supernatural skill that he has valorized, and the promo of Blueprint focused on it. In the summer of 2001, he dryly informed a MTV interviewer it was more than 10 "I am up to 13, ya'll gotta keep up. Be 15 by Sunday."[21] Carter explained he had a lot on his mind, so "fans are really hearing just what's on my mind at the time, my legacy, my position. . ." Carter explains that due to criticism of his music, his

character, and his personal paranoia of prison, that he wanted audiences to understand, "Why I am the way I am and provide understanding for audiences" and not have them think "Jay was hustling us."[22] Soon after, Jay-Z headlined the annual NYC summer jam concert. His 2001 summer jam performance raised anticipation for his album, as he brought out Michael Jackson a beloved epic hero featured on his album. On stage, Carter replayed his old hits and then previewed a scathing diss with a photo of rapper/opponent Prodigy from Mobb Deep in a child ballerina class on the jumbotron and a warning for rapper Nas, after a building cold war between the two was reaching the tipping point: "Tell Nas he don't want it with Hov!" Anticipation ran high as the album was scheduled for a fourth quarter release but bootleggers got ahold of the album and it was pushed up to Sept. 11, 2001. Unknowingly, this would add more to the mythos of the album. As Minay Oh wrote, "released on the day of the largest American and NYC tragedy, *The Blueprint* and Jay-Z were almost symbolic symbols of NYC resolve."[23] The album begins with an epic framing, a comic critique and black nostalgia as common topoi of Carter's epic heroism.

The Rulers Back

Do remember: epic framing invokes nostalgia and the presence of past heroes as seen with the first song "The rulers back."[24] The album begins with triumphant horns reminiscent of the throne room in *Star Wars* as Jay introduces you to another installment with a use of direct address (call and response modality)"[25]: "*Ladies and Gentleman, H to the izzo! I wanna thank everybody for their purchase. I surely appreciate it-woo!! What you are about to witness is my thoughts, just my thoughts, man. Right or wrong…Just what I was feeling at the time. You ever felt like this, vibe with me. Walk with your nigga man."* Similar to Vol. 3, Jay introduces himself again to audiences, introducing his new nickname Hova aka H to the Izzo.[26] Notice the direct attempt at identification, when he rhetorically asks "You ever felt like this" and invites audience to share substance with him to walk with "your" nigga; signifying a kinship developed over his previous albums. Jay opens the album inviting audiences into the dwelling space of his ethos again to share "these thoughts." The song was named after Slick Rick's 1986 "The rulers back" a rap classic and Jay interpolates and pays homage, announcing that he is the current ruler of hip-hop. The original features Slick ricks call of "Gather 'round party goers as if your still livin'/and get on down to the old Slick rhythm, Jay signifies it into "Gather round hustlers that's if your still living and

get on down to that old Jig rhythm." Jay invokes black signifying and frames his constituency as fellow hustlers—he shares substance with them. More importantly, Carter goes right into reminding audiences why he is the "Ruler" and that he has been their hero: *"Here's a couple of jewels to help you get through your bid in prison/A ribbon in the sky, keep your head high/I, Young 'Vito, voice of the young people/Mouthpiece for hustlers - I'm back, motherfuckers."* Carter states that his raps are *equipment for living* for his audience—not the pop audience—but the black listeners dealing with urban struggle; referencing Stevie wonder's classic song as metaphor for how his raps give audiences hope.[13] Moreover the use of black linguistic transposing with the nick name Hova, gets changed to the Spanish Hovito and then shortened to Vito so Jay-Z can be creative with his moniker. Similar to Vito Corleone, he frames himself as a hustler who cares for *his* people; all the while employing his past form of homophones and double meanings to appeal to nostalgia for his debut. However, unlike his 90s peers Hov departs from the tragic focus on death and oppression. And this is the critical rhetorical turn of Blueprint.

Riley explains, "Much of the music in the genre of gangsta rap embraced a perspective in which the narrator sees clearly his inevitable suffering, or even his own demise. Such characters are in possession of dreadful knowledge that others lack, and they recognize that this knowledge will ultimately prove fatal." [27] Riley details that 2pac and Biggie defined this tragic register as they often delved into mourning rites and rituals of tragedy. Carter post Pac and Big recognized the tragic circumstances of black life, but moves hip-hop culture to his optimistic epic ethos and reminds us of his wins against the odds. In relation, rhetorical critics have written about how Nixon and Obama employed an epic frame to list their wins and remind audiences that they have shared in those wins.[28] Jay-Z exemplifies such on "The Rulers Back." Carter tries to levitate above his peers as he states that he will not have a tragic end and charges can't take him down because of the communal virtues that "raised him up." *"I'm on TV every day, where the fuck could I go to?/Plus - Hov' don't run/Hov' stand and fight/Hov' a soldier, Hov' been fightin' all his life so/What could you do to me? It's not new to me/Sue me? Fuck you, what's a couple dollars to me?/But you will respect me, simple as that."* Referencing his pending trial, Carter pleads that he wasn't guilty and not a flight risk. Yet the lines "Hov don't run Hov stand and

[13] This also an intertextual reference to his 1998 This life forever rap.

fight, Hov been fighting all his life, " in third person Jay-Z explains that it's the ancestral spiritual home of "hood" and his ontology as a black man from meager beginnings, that arms him to defend himself and demand respect from the legal system. As well as indicating the hero's humane "flaw" of growing up in poverty. Jay-Z frames his tragic treatment as due to what he represents, as a spokesman/leader for black folks, he uses his situation as a stand in for his audience as he demands respect.

Jay connects his mistreatment to other epic black speakers who were "punished" for what they represent, "I'm representin' for the seat where Rosa Parks sat/Where Malcolm X was shot, where Martin Luther was popped/so off we go, let the trumpets blow /and hold on/because the driver of the mission is a pro/the rulers back.[29]" In his view, Jay-Z is not a rapper, not even a hustler preacher he's a black American hero now. Shawn "Jay-Z "Carter is representing for "the seat" where Rosa sat out. This specific selection of reality frames the seat as that invisible black person that deserves to be represented; the "seat" that denotes that Jay-Z's mission is to represent that position of oppression.[30] Contrary to civil rights era critics, he is claiming lineage with Malcolm and Martin, claiming that he is using his words to inspire, motivate and in his own words "represent us as best I can."[31] Carter signifies on Malcolm X's criminal past and spiritual conversion as proof he can move from hustler to epic hero and leader of his post soul generation. The album continues with this epic celebratory mode most notably on the Kanye West produced "Izzo." Moreover, the invoking of past epic heroes through sampling and verse continues throughout the album.

HOVA: Hustler of VA as Epic Hero

On 2001's, *The Blueprint** the first single H.O.V.A. (Izzo) Jay-Z takes the narrative of his past to relate to his identity of now, his usual recipe. Jay-Z continues his self-naming with the name Jay-Hova the God MC becoming his go to phrase, the ultimate epic hero. The first single H.O.V.A. (IZZO) showed him combine his comic apologia and his epic hero framing in a song that blogger Jensen Karp called an audio hip-hop 'presidential campaign parade: "Everyone loves the Jackson 5 sample, he's happy and cocky, the video sends it over the top, but the song is a state of the union of Jay-Z--our hip-hop president." [32] It's the flattering rhetoric towards his community similar to HKL, mixed with defense of his character that coalesced on this catchy single. Jay-Z opens up with a direct address as a means of affirming sincerity with his audience, "You

could be anywhere in the world but you here with me, I appreciate that." [33] Then Jay's verse responds to criticisms that he was simply hustling the audience for gain and instead opines on his savior heroics:

> I do this for my culture/To let 'em know what a nigga look like/, when a nigga in a Rossa[34]'/Show 'em how to move in a room full of vultures/Industry shady it need to be taken over/Label owners hate me /I'm raisin the status quo up/I'm overchargin these niggaz for what they did to the Cold Crush/Pay us like you owe us /for all the years that you hoed (hold us)
> We can talk/ but money talks/ so talk mo' bucks (Pay up!)

His opening statement announces his commitment to "his culture," a *strategic ambiguous* term that speaks to both his black culture and hip-hop culture without alerting white audiences that they are the ones eavesdropping. The next line "to let them know what a nigga look like;" however, tells you "them" is the black cultural audience. Young Hov' contends that his identity and success are modes of inspiration for his post-soul audience to aspire for more and to make successful moves in a room full of "vultures'—a personification of those in power seeking to profit off of black death. In this age of hip-hop and black culture being hypercommodified, Carter argued that as a businessman he was infiltrating the corporate ladder and raising the status quo up for hip-hop businessman, garnering the first shoe deal for a rapper and being an owner not just a spokesperson for several brands. Rhetorically, he frames his hustle as reparations for black artists and that he is leading this charge, citing the historical legacy of black musician disenfranchisement from blues to the cold crush brothers, as a legacy his heroism ends. Dyson has detailed how Jay-Z argues he has garnered a seat at the table, but identifies those at the table as Vultures looking to exploit him and his people.[35] Thus, his ethos here focuses on the epic possibilities of his status for the community and self.

If you recall, Bradley tells us that the hustler argues that the streets gave him transferrable skills that he uses in business. And for Jay he revives his metaphor of shaking down hustlers like the rap game on "Friend or Foe," into a more ostensible metaphor that he is hustling the industry now for black audiences not just self. The hustler as trickster is so prolific in outsmarting the whites in power that he has become epic: Jay-Hova. Jay points to the reality of his unprecedented business deals as not selling out but outsmarting the powers that be. Thus, Carter frames his success as his hip-hop inheritance and that he is hustling the industry for mistreating the pioneers of hip-hop. Jay-Z is overcharging in his deals as a form of capitalistic reparations

he contends, thereby arguing his record label were continuing the traditions of hip-hop as a portal for black protest and staking his space as a spokesman

The song contends Jay is a revolutionary not a charlatan, as he configures his business identity as emancipatory; reminding audiences of the legacy of black musicians being railroaded and exploited by bad business deals. In addition, the image of a former hood kid with a legal trade, driving a Ferrari is materialistic but the desire to be acknowledged and shine is also inspirational he claims. The hustler and that proverbial 13-year-old ghetto kid on the stoop are inspired by the same markers of success: cars, power, money ingrained in American exceptionalism. Yet the song infers that he is possibly "sacrificing" artistic complexity for the cultural get back of his profitable black business. The song intimates that his pop singles aren't' activism, but capital to stack for the revolution. His role as communal spokesperson, CEO and artist are conflated into the unique epic hero: Jay-Hova. Interestingly, President Obama explained that one of the biggest contributions of the hip-hop mogul era, was how their ownership served as counter discourse to the historic record label abuse black musicians suffered from; encouraging a new generation to be just as aware of business as art. After addressing critiques of his materialism, Jay-Z offers a clear missive to persistent critiques he was glamorizing drug dealing, "

> Hov is back /life stories told through rap/Niggaz actin like I sold you crack/Like I told you sell drugs, no/**Hov' did that/so hopefully you won't have to go through that**/I was raised in the projects/roaches and rats/Smokers out back/sellin they mama's sofa/Lookouts on the corner/focused on the ave/Ladies in the window, focused on they kinfolk/So you know I seen it all before/I seen hoop dreams deflate like a true fiend's weight[36]

In the context of his discourse of identity and establishing that his ethos of sincerity is intact, this verse is recognition of his responsibility as a sincere hero. The rap hero/mogul must demonstrate that his position aids his community, by declaring his loyalty and his cultural memory as nodes of authenticity and communal topoi. Extending his Christ metaphor, Jay-Hova frames his past as a necessary sacrifice that allows him to tell cautionary tales and inspire his imagined audience to help them size up and find their own hustle. Indeed, Burke contends, "audiences live vicariously in his [epic hero] deeds, his courage and self-sacrifice and thus share in a communion (or community) "both social and cultural. In 2017 interview when asked about the infamous line "Hov did that …"[37] he explained, "I am always trying to tell my people, I been through this

and survived but learn from my mistakes ...I just do it with confidence. I just don't say it with doubt".[38] Persley notes an epic tale only works if the hero endures trials and tribulations and Jay-Z's at this stage of his career details his struggles but ultimately how he overcomes them.[39] Keely in her use of epic frames, writes how MLK epic frame worked with audiences because he framed his trials as vital to his epic triumphs and the audience as integral in sharing both.[40] The line, "you know I seen it all before/I seen a hoop dreams deflate like a true fiends weight' tells the audience in poetic form, that he is still qualified to tell black stories. He may not see it daily, but he's seen the common ghetto stories of failed dreams and concerned mothers "watching after their kinfolk." Moreover, the interconnected imagery of deflating basketballs and deflated dreams demonstrates the poetic double meanings of his first album, again reminding fans of his valued form. Izzo was a speech for his base that Hov still cared but universal enough in its theme of overcoming obstacles like HKL it was another major hit. The album then shifts to the lack of love and acceptance Jay-Hova receives on "Aint no Love."

Ain't no Love: Defending an ethos of sincerity

While IZZO was celebratory, other songs on *Blueprint* found Jay-Z frustrated by the intra-communal criticism of his success and claims that he sold out, chiefly in the song "Aint no love." At 30, with 6 albums Jay-Z was an elder in hip-hop. No rap artists had had a similar run of success, 4 number 1 albums in a row. So again the comic tactic of PxI, and comic repudiation as *apologia* undergirds Jay-Z's work as he seeks to defend his *ethos*. The pulsating Kanye West beat sampling Bobby blue Bland's urgent blues, connotes an epic ambience. Murrary writes that Burke's epic hero is akin to the blues musician because he demands the world to accept black joy and pain.[41] Indeed, Jigga speaks to his imagined audience about the crabs in a barrel, the haters who in his characterization despise his success. The song requests that Carter deserves unconditional love from the community based on his epic wins. Carter begins each verse with an interpolation of Chris Rock's line from the popular black movie *Boomerang,* "First the fat boys break up, now this!" This sampling of comedy popular in the black public sphere(blackness as topos), sets up Jay-Z to then contrast the dark comedy with how communal critiques are bad news that ruins his day *: Every day I wake up /somebody got a problem with Hov'/What's up?/ You niggas all fed up /cause I got a little cheddar/And my record's movin' out the store?/*

young rappers getting at me/My nigga Big predicted the shit exactly/"Mo' Money, Mo' Problems" - gotta move carefully/… Bird-ass niggas I don't mean to ruffle y'all/I know you waiting in the wing but I'm doing my thing[42] Jay-Z in a voice of aggravation, disses his competition for not respecting that he is just "trying to do me", just trying to make a better life for himself, how is that hurting anyone, he implores. The allusion to Big acts as a signifying endorsement of his situation, the claim that jealousy of his success fuels any criticism. Carter uses his requisite puns to chastise his peers for being "bird brains" waiting in the wings for his spot but Carter refuses to step down from his throne.

Carter pleads as the Bobby Blue Bland sample intensifies, "What's all the fussin for/ because I'm grubbing more//niggas pray and pray for my downfall.../ Can I live? I told you in '96/that I came to take this shit and I did/handle my biz… Jigga held you down 6 summers; damn, where's the love?"[43] The framing is key here, as Carter frames himself as being criticized for his success by his peers and as a hero "who held black audiences down" since his debut in 1996. Hip-hop is inherently competitive and one of Jay-Z's greatest skills is setting the parameters for the guidelines of greatness. Carter claims he has delivered as a spokesman and a hero since his first single" Aint no Nigga", he tells his constituency this should make him immune from critiques. In other words he puts his record of BSR and use of topoi of sincerity in his work as evidence that he deserves audience acceptance and belief that his rhetoric is sincere every album.

The sampling of Bobby Blue Bland acts as a guest artist as his soulful refrain of "Aint no love in the heart of the city, aint no love in the heart of town" blasts out as a representation of Hov's frustration as he joins the chorus saying "My nigga where's the love!" Kanye's chop of the blues standard reiterates that Jay-Z is empowered by history —the ancestors of his culture—co-sign his argument. Despite his massive success, the lack of 'love" or acceptance from imagined black audiences, finds Jay chastising his base for questioning his commitment to community. Interestingly, 'Aint no love" is mainly directed at intra-racial tensions within black communities and hip-hop writ large. Jay-Z risks offending some of his audience, but I believe recognized that much of his post soul audience experienced similar intra-racial criticism. While many in the black community are happy for your "come-up", others claim you are abandoning the hood and see your success as alienating you farther away from your core origins. To paraphrase, Ashe contends, the post soul

generation is determined to not be constrained to black spaces or normative jobs, and instead argues that individual trailblazing actually helps the community expand.[44] Post-Soul figures such as Carter believed they could teach others how to navigate this journey from black spaces into the mainstream.

Here, Jay filters his ethos as a mode of identification in the form of communal antithesis as the song identifies a common enemy for him and audience: haters. In hip-hop parlance, haters are those who hate that you change or no longer share their situation in class, occupation or activity. It is a broad appeal that spoke to the intraracial tensions of post-soul black America. Carter claims he has maintained his contract unlike his peers, he told us on RD that he was coming to take over the game and later to "let em know "what takes place in the ghetto." The possibility that fans didn't like his recent music nor had fair critiques is dismissed by Jay-Z as it departs from the hero framework. *Blueprint* operates under. *Ain't no love* served as a major moment for Carter as the poet voices his frustrations with a reduction of acceptance and an audience questioning his sincerity. This conversation continues with the song Never Change.

Never change: Black Sincerity Rhetoric as Sell out Defense

On "Never Change," featuring Kanye, Jay-Z again relates that he is not "selling out" despite his economic tax bracket and new environs: "I never change (Jay)/out hustling same clothes for days (Ye)/ I'll never change/ I'm to stuck in my ways/I'll never change/ This is Jay everyday (Jay).[45] Unlike rock music anti-commerce focus, Bradley writes hip-hop embraces making money, the issue for audiences was assimilating to white audiences—for it. Thus, the song acts as an *apologia* towards claims of selling out. The David Ruffin "Common man" sample moves throughout the song as his cries, yelps and regretful sighs punctuate Carter's refrain of "I never change." Carter has grown but his core *character and ethos has not* changed is the nuanced argument here. Paul is still a militant Christian like Saul was a militant tax man, and driven hustler Jay is still a driven hustler CEO; the substance of identity alters but does not transform as Ellison once argued.[46] It's again a resistance to assimilation and the notion that he has not lost himself due to fame and wealth. A restatement of his form(ula): his testimony is genuine; his linguistics---black informed and a declaration of communal commitment. Jay focuses on his "common man' life as a hustler his failures, struggles and attempts to make his dream right, retelling his stories of hustling—with a dash of self-professed hyperbole

"*Lost 92 bricks had to fall back/Knocked a nigga off his feet, but I crawled back/Had A-1 credit, got more crack/From the first to the fifth, gave it all back/If, I'm not a hustler what you call that? This is before rap, this is all fact. I never change*[47]

Jay would admit that losing 92 kilos of coke is unrealistic but it's a little hyperbole to highlight his greatness as a hustler.[48] Carter elevates his hustling past as a gift, a virtue, which explains his epic hero status currently. And if you think he should be ashamed, defensive Jay lashes back in the third verse, seemingly responding to invisible critics to justify his past , "What!/the streets robbed me/wasn't educated properly/fuck ya'll I needed money for Atari." In many ways, the song claims that the hustler of the street still lives in Jay-Z—thus giving him poetic license for life in his view. Similar to *RD,* here he drops aphorisms of advice, "chains are cool to buy but more important is lawyer fees," to remind audiences of his sincerity. The hero notes his losses and failures as sacrifices that justify he has earned this "luck" and epic success; and his advice stems from the lessons of his losses. Indeed, the epic hero cares about his nation. As Roberts has written early new world African Christians believed Jesus was a mediator who cared about them and set to restore order. Jay-Hova positions himself as a mediator and savior that has restored order to hip-hop via his success; the sincerity is in the very act of sharing his story is the rhetorical claim of Jay-Z. Roberts reminds us that the epic African hero, details his heroic actions as symbols of the nation's success. This is most visible in the epic song: "U don't' Know"[49].

U Don't Know: Epic Hero Theme Music

The epic horns of Just Blaze and the sample of "You don't know" from Shirley Bassey serves as writers prompt for Jay-Z to detail how epic his life accomplishments are. In the opening verse, Jay-Z tells us that we are looking at the 100 million dollar boy and how he can't lose, but in the same breath encourages his audience to succeed. It's the double voiced nature of self-praise and communal concern that endears Jay-Z to his imagined audience; you too share his frustration with criticism but maybe you too can beat your peers and scream "I will not lose!" as he does in the song. In verse, Jay-Z explains that he grew up in an environment competitive like the Dow Jones, but the ghetto has consequences that are far dire:

> I'm from the streets where/ the Hood could swallow/ a man,/bullets will follow/ a man/
> There's so much coke that you could run the slalom/And cops comb the shit top to bottom/
> They say that we are prone to violence/ but it's home sweet home/The coke prices up and down like it's Wall Street homes/But this is worse than the Dow Jones /your brains are now blown

> All over that brown Brougham, one slip you are now gone/Welcome to hell where you are welcome to sell/ But when them shells come/ you better return 'em[50]

Carter combines his spokesman and hustler talk, as he consults his past to again defend his generation and the lack of opportunity; declaring that they are not "prone to violence' but adapting to harsh environs. Carter starts with this as a foundation of shared experience, before transitioning to what makes him special. Moreover, he analogizes the cutthroat mentality of Wall Street with the mentality of the hustler employing *pxi to* challenge criticisms of his community. Carter then testifies what separates him from his peers: *Sure I do, I tell you the difference between me and them/They trying to get they ones, I'm tryin' to get them M's/One million, two million, three million, four/In just five years, forty million more/You are now looking at the forty million boy."* Carter outlines that since 1996 he has changed 900k from 'grinding g packs' of coke into being a 40 million dollar music executive. Carter continues to valorize his business hustle and offer inspiration through magnification for his audience:

> Could make 40 off a brick/ but one rhyme could beat that/And if somebody would of told 'em /that Hov' would sell clothing/Heh, not in this lifetime/wasn't in my right mind/That's another difference that's between me and them/Heh, I'm smarten up/ open the market up/One million, two million, three million, four/In eighteen months, eighty million more/Now add that number up with the one I said before/You are now looking at one smart black boy/Momma ain't raised no fool/Put me anywhere on God's green earth/ I'll triple my worth

In the above verse, Carter confesses that music is the superior hustle to the streets and that his smarts have aided his rise; moreover he re-employs a call and response modality of "22 two's" as he asks the audience to literally do the math to calculate his success. Moreover, Carter offers a rejoinder to the culture wars he alludes to in his opening, "they say we are prone to violence" when he designates that his "momma didn't raise no fool", she raised "one smart black boy" that has maximized his hustle in the corporate arena just like those "on Wall Street holmes."[14] The poet frames his individual desire for success as epic, but uses the comic frame to connect with the values of his imagined audience. Moreover, he offers a counter discourse for his male audience; contrary to the culture wars these "super predators" were smart boys, just the wrong path. Carter brags about himself and his community's potential to vicariously share in his wins to transcend the dialectic of being separate from his imagined community. Carter ends with one of his most famous lines, *"I*

sell ice in the winter, I sell fire in hell/I am a hustler baby, I'll sell water to a well/whale." Carter conjures the voice of black folk tales (nomoi) similar to the character "Shine" signifying with supernatural powers of "talking". Carter reiterates his individual aims to get paid but framed as a self-help business presentation. This is the epic theme song of Jay-Z. He is heroic for surviving the "hell" of Marcy Projects and despite a single mother like most in the hood; he was raised to be this successful. It's an espresso shot of self-esteem for him and his audience; they too can repossess their world. The theme of repossession continues on "Renegade."

Renegade: Spokesman meets Epic Hero

Throughout much of the album, Jay-Z reflects on his past, but on the song Renegade, he shifts to the present, defending his ethos and proclaiming his hero status to his audience and deriding outsider critics with the help of hip-hop phenom Eminem. Renegade combines the *apologia* of Vol.3 and earlier songs on Blueprint with the spokesman claims of "Dopeman" White[51] notes how here Jay-Z embodies comic hero Muhammad Ali in his braggadocio and social commentary and epic Jack Johnson in his outlaw attitude and defiance to white criticism. Instead of rapping to hustlers, on 'Renegade' Jay-Z rails against white music critics and the civil rights generation who said he and his AUDIENCE were just materialistic glamorizing street life, or "hurting the race": *Motherfuckers 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/I gave you the news with a twist it's just his ghetto point of view/…Mummy's knocked up cause she wasn't watched over/Knocked down by some clown when child support knocked/No he's not around/I'll bring you through the ghetto without ridin round//I help them see they way through it, not you./Can't step in my pants, can't walk in my shoes*[52]"

Jay-Z once again declares his ethos is for his audience; that his *BSR* is about informing his constituency. Unlike outsiders, he proclaims he understands the black interiority of pain from poverty and neglect and cares enough to voice their experience. In the verse, he is defending himself but also his black imagined audience since 96. Carter often rightfully criticized for his misogyny, offers a quick anecdote of young urban women ignored, who find love in future deadbeat dads-to demonstrate how his raps give voice to many in the community. Carter uses this narrative to speak to a larger truth; one he's been pushing for since 1998 when he says "I help them see their way through it." Hov asserts he's a hero to them, because he

kept his "Where I'm from" promise to let the world know "what takes place in the ghetto." Whereas past rappers were maligned for distancing from the hood, Carter was valorized for his continued conversation with his core audience as he "moves on up." Historian Cobb writes that by 2003 no one in his time had maintained black love and adoration while expanding their white audience.[53] Indeed, Nunley writes that when black public speakers appear to risk success to give voice to their imagined black community it is hailed as a virtue. For these audiences, what makes it heroic is giving voice to the feeling of invisibility and lack of worth. What makes it heroic is that he aligns himself with downtrodden of his past not the wealthy people of his current present. The hero gives "voice" to segments of an imagined post soul audience rarely acknowledged in the public sphere. Writer Mycheal Smith explained, " I learned the value of self-confidence by listening to Jay-Z records, specifically *Blueprint,* Hearing him assert himself as the "best rapper alive" and reveling in his supreme ability not only to rip mics but also to make a couple boatloads of money in the process taught me to fight back against the self-doubt that often plagued me as a black kid."

Authenticity functions rhetorically in hip-hop via the artists 'knowledge of self'.[54] Thus, Jay-Z articulated to audiences both who he was and who he had become. The *Blueprint* bridged and mediated this identification dialectic; he reflects on his past to make sense of his present inviting his audience to do the same. The album again as he noted, takes off where RD ended, and we see him invoke nostalgia as an additive to his authenticity via the soul samples but also replicating topic matter. The tragic half of "Aint no nigga" is in "song cry" a vulnerable confession of Shawn's failed relationships and "My momma loves me" is the updated version of his album closer "Regrets."

Momma Loves Me: Confessional BSR

On "My Momma loves me," Jay-Z is arguably at his most vulnerable retelling his bio in exacting detail. Shawn's mom has been a figure in his music since "Regrets," and hip-hop's matrifocal praise of the single mom is well established. Jay-Z retells the story of his father abandoning his family, his introduction to the drug game, and his rise in rap. Unlike RD, you hear real names like Spanish Jose, his first dealer, the names of his siblings, his comrades as the authenticity topos is dialed up. These details expanded the scope of his testimony as authentic by being more confessional and vulnerable. Jay-Z then flashes to the present

where critics think he is just glamourizing drug life and his frustrations with racist profiling even in his position: *"Unless you was me, how could you judge me?/I was brought up in pain, y'all can't touch me/Police pursued me, chased cuffed and subdued me/Talked to me rudely; cause I'm young rich and I'm black/And livin a movie, not livin by rules/New rap patrol in the city, follow my crew*s." I have witnessed Jay-Z in concert* and when he raps, "talked to me rudely," the crowd unprompted exclaimed: "CAUSE I'M YUNG RICH AND I'M BLACK AND LIVING A MOVIE NOT LIVING BY RULES." The defiance, the resistance, and the experience of police harassment make this line transcend upward-the common substance here is BSR at its best.

Still an epic hero mogul but still a black kid racially profiled. Jay in one line speaks to the interior feeling of being black and under constant surveillance. And regardless of critiques, his momma loves him so he will be all right is a virtue shared by his imagined audience. Jay-Z reminds listeners, success does not prevent the pain of police harassment and racial anxiety—instead it can accelerate it. Jay-z is a millionaire, a CEO, rap epic hero but his flaw is that he is still black in a white controlled world just like his imagined audience. Hence, the visceral reaction from the audience during the live concert. *Blueprint* would be the most critically acclaimed Jay-Z album and garnered his first Grammy. Hero of his generation, Jay-Z boycotted the awards as rap categories were not part of the live airing as he "demanded respect" a move celebrated by black media. Jay-Z would contend his rap peers gave voice to voiceless communities and Grammy's shouldn't ignore such. Jay-Z was hip-hop's unofficial president and Blueprint solidified his ethos with a post soul audience. The album recently was honored as one of the best musical recordings by the Library of Congress in March 2019. Jay-Z framed his story as a post soul Horatio Alger narrative of an epic hero from meager beginnings. He was a hero, but he came from the same substance –black culture, black community, and black treatment as his imagined audience. Burke is right when he tells us the epic hero is predicated on the audience identifying common substance and vicariously sharing in the triumphs of the hero as their own.[55]

Carter on *The Blueprint* fashioned himself as someone to look up to, as Naumoff argues he fashions the hustler turned mogul as a role model.[56] Indeed, the hustler persona is a part of his introduction and on this album he stretches his hustler ethos, beyond being a spokesman or even a hustler/mogul, but an epic hero. An epic hero who "knew how to move in a room full of vultures," and made his own lane, turned

900k into a nearly half a billion dollar business known as Roc-A fella, and most importantly for his BSR claims to "never change" the core values and virtues he learned from his community. The epic hero of rap claims he is heroic because he cannot forget the single mothers, the lost souls without a voice—he claims to elevate their story through his magnification. Burke reminds us that, "there is an important balance between humility and self-glorification in identification with the epic hero. An epic hero mediates between the divine and the human. The divine tends to be humanized by the presence of some flaw in the hero. Through magnification of the persona, "the process of identification acts as an invitation to seek the flaw in oneself promotes in the end an attitude of resignation.[57]" In other words, Jay-Z details his past struggles as flaws that his audience shares but his wins as aspirational goals they can strive for. You can't be God or Hova but Hova like. Jay-Z glorifies his ability to overcome these flaws in epic fashion. This epic magnification serves two purposes: it lends dignity to the necessities of existence, advertising courage and individual sacrifice and it enables the humble man to share the worth of the hero by the process of identification.

Indeed, Kitwana is right when he explains Blueprint is a metaphor for the "come up" for Jay's post soul generation audience.[58] "The blueprint album is a shift. It's laden with double meaning, it's a metaphor. This is how you come up. His political outlook of black uplift is underneath the braggadocio." On the album, Carter takes the come up narrative and makes it an epic bildungsroman of his life that he offers to audiences to follow. Indeed, *Blueprint* would demonstrate how future post soul rhetors such as Obama and Kanye would transcend criticism by citing a higher cause and a rare gift—comic transcendence to complement epic hero claims of self. In 2002, Jay-Z would fight to maintain his epic hero status, but similar to his own predictions, fans can fall out of love with an artist. Especially when their epic hero focuses solely on his epic wins for self and not the inspirational aspect of his Black sincerity rhetoric.

Heroes Eventually Die: Blueprint 2 and Failure of BSR with epic heroism

In the winter of 2001 rapper Nas's response to Jay's diss, "Ether," poked holes in the hero's armor and raised questions about his epic claims. Nas effectively argued that there was no "singular hero" or blueprint in hip-hop and that Jay had borrowed from other pioneers including lyrics from Biggie, styles from himself and legends like Big Daddy Kane to find his success. Vibe editor William Ketchum explained to me,

"Nas portrayed Jay-Z as a fan, and reminded the world that Jay-Z was a former sidekick, that he made hits with Biggie lyrics, and that Jay-Z first success was a hook with Nas's voice.[59]" Writer Keith Murphy explained in the conversation, that Nas presented the epic hero Jay as rap student who got lucky and similar to several critics harangued Jay-Z's misogynistic lyrics on songs such as "Big Pimpin". Murphy declared that "The savage brilliance" of ether is the claim that there is no Jay-Z without Nas.[60] Indeed, Jay sampled his conversational rap style on his debut and the song "ether" did what's key for any debate: Create a reasonable doubt about your opponent. If Blueprint was his re-election campaign, ether was the primary debate that cast doubt on the final election. Yet in hip-hop the winner is somewhat subjective. Nas had a comeback album *and Blueprint* sold very well but in barbershops, on online message boards, and polls on local radio shows Nas won the battle of NYC titans.[61] Jay-Z returned with a song "Super ugly" on December 6 2001. The song detailed him and other celebrities sleeping with Nas's baby mother --reiterating Nas's claims of misogyny plaguing Jay-Z. Even for hip-hop it was considered in poor taste, and so crass that Jay-Z's mom chastised him and demanded Shawn apologize. Jay-Z the hero sounded embarrassed and defeated as he apologized on Hot 97 radio. Jay-Z years later would say "ether" tested his strength.[62] In 2002, Carter decided to double down on the epic hero talk and claims Nas and his peers were actually below him; he's only competing with legends like Pac and Biggie. Roc-a-Fella engineer Young Guru would explain it was his idea to release a double album, "I felt the greats had double albums. And if Jay wanted to be in that trinity and I felt Jay was killing and I wanted him to have one because Biggie and Pac had one."[63] *The Blueprint 2: The gift and the curse* would be another negotiation between Jay-Z and imagined black audiences with the Gift CD featuring his pop songs for the mainstream and the Curse his street songs for his core audience.[64] However *Blueprint 2* would be received similar to his sophomore effort. I posit the focus on a place in history alienates his Black sincerity rhetoric from his audience. There are limits to an epic frame we find. Albert Murray amongst others reminds us that while the black music tradition is rooted in epic tales it's the comic attitude of humility and being mistaken that makes it relatable to the black listener.[65] Jay-Z mentioned in an interview prior to BP2 release that he was fighting with the ghosts of Pac and Biggie[66] , to be one of the best to ever do it, so the album opens with "A Dream."

Blueprint 2: A Dream and Epic Heroism

In the song, Jay-Z argues he is living his American dream and inspired by the "dream" Biggie was not able to see; hence the epic hero is endowed with the power of the past legends. [67] Roberts tells us that griots connect their speech to past praised figures to endow their speech with heroism. Moreover, the idea of being the favorite of the ancestors is common means of framing ones narrative as epic.[68] Moreover, it is Jay reminding audiences that his "come up" is the American dream.[69] Thus, he begins the album similar to *Blueprint* by summoning the approval of the genres hallowed ancestors. In this aural rap séance, he explains that Biggie speaks to him from beyond to warn Jay-Z that his critics are jealous and jealousy kills, "mo money more problems better believe it, careful what you wish for you might receive it he said". Jay responds, "I see I said Jealousy I said; got the whole industry mad at me I said." Building off of "aint no love", Jay-Z metonymizes the hip-hop media, critics and peers as "the industry" to denote a contingent jealous of Jay-Z's dominance and accepting of Nas's diss. The whole industry is mad at someone who sells millions of records doesn't seem logical, but in this epic framing they are jealous of the hero, the hero who has survived the 90s wars and lived to tell the tale. Biggie's widow Faith Evans sings the hook, giving her "blessing" to Jay as the inheritor of Biggie not a plagiarizer of his art as Nas accused.

Whereas on Bp1 fans were framed as forgetful and fellow rappers not appreciating the doors he opened, here outright jealousy is the alleged culprit. The issue is that rhetorically this deviates from his usual comic defense of his character approach. His past formal use of topoi configured him as mistaken or his audience as mistaken in their read; here he claims jealousy is the only reason for fans criticism. In this hip-hop Hamlet scene, Jay says Big told him "Hov, remind yourself nobody built like you, you designed yourself," I agree 'I Said, my one of a kind self, is getting stoned everyday like Jesus did." Jay-Hova the savior is guided by the rap Gods to embrace his epic heroism is the claim here, yet they persecute the son of the gods: Jay-Hova. Although the epic hero Jesus wasn't stoned out of jealousy, the savior Jay-Z is now the victim in this case. So much of his *BSR* on previous albums has been how he rises above being a victim by fulfilling his "duty" to give voice to his community. The song announces the focus of the album is Jay-Z rising above the haters, but there are few nods or allusion to his audience dealing with their haters or how his dream connects to the

community; it's just grounds to declare he should still be our epic hero. While the album features the epic attributes of *Blueprint*, I argue the community focus and a comic attitude towards his critics seen on prior works is missing from the album as cosmopolitan Hov attempts to elevate even higher from his peers. On songs such as 'Hovi Babi'[70] Jay brings back the triumphant horns of *Blueprint* to valorize his epic success. The rapper Jay-Z again is greater than any rapper alive as he states "only two resting in heaven can be mentioned in the same breath as him" Instead of "me and we", like past works, the focus on his mythography dominates, there's little mention of the single mother from Renegade and Momma loves me, or the street stockbrokers of "U don't know" or the chicks saving up tuition on HKL. In response to selling out accusations he makes "The Bounce" featuring Kanye West, a song where he attempts to transcend but ends up looking down on the audience.

The Bounce: A Sincere Sellout?

On "The Bounce", featuring Kanye West, Jay-Z attempts again to employ transcendence again as a comic corrective to communal criticism of his watered down singles and being more focused on self than 'hood[71]:

> For those that think Hov' is just bling bling'n/Either haven't heard the album or they don't know English*/They only know what the single is, and singled that out/ To be the meaning of what he is about/But no dummy, that's the shit I'm sprinkling The album with/ to keep the registers ringin/. . . Business mind of a Ross Perot, but never lost my soul/Crossed the line, I bought pop across the row. . .back to the hood/ Oh, he's good, no **he would never sell out he's so hood**[72]

In the first line, Jay claims similar to "Renegade" that "haters" aren't actually listening to his lyrics if they think he is just selling materialism in his songs. Yet the past tone of cocky pride, is replaced by an incredulous tone of "how dare you" in verse. In response to criticism of "selling out" he admits his singles are watered downed for mainstream audience—that's just for the white folks and the girls who like to dance is the implied premise. This is eye opening, because years prior Jay-Z claimed he was educating white fans on black struggle and conjuring empathy in white suburbia for the proverbial hood citizen; now he admits he is a trickster using his pop singles to trick suburbia to buy. Ever the politician however, Carter, instructs his imagined black audience to listen to the album tracks to hear that common substance, equipment for living and sincerity they seek; not his mainstream hits. His *black sincerity rhetoric* here presents an identification compromise that black

audiences often deal with when artist's crossover.[73] After the HKL album, Jay was no longer just speaking to his generation but the globe. The topoi recipe of sincerity is still intact, but used strategically and often ambiguously in pop singles were blatant references to racial experiences were muted. Haggins reminds us that the post soul celebrity asks audiences to meet us halfway—to compromise—that sometimes they aren't talking to us; for Jay-Z fans this is a complex compromise.

Carter asks audience to accept that he doesn't use his voice to always speak for and to black folk but they should be ok because most of the time he is. He's not a sellout; he's selling out the stores! We should be inspired he intimates. Jay-Z maintains he has always been an upfront capitalist seeking to maximize his earnings so he eschews the critique of selling out. Jay-Z's concern with legacy renders his rhetoric in question with audiences who just praised jay-z's heroism on Blueprint for never changing "for pop radio." Also, despite great deeds, no audiences like to be called dumb and "the bounce" didn't elevate the hero with his audience. Transcendence works when speakers can rise above tensions such as doing for self and folk, but Carter lacks the connection to the audience here. Ethos again is often about tones as Baetson once wrote and *the Bounce* did not strike the right tone to embolden his epic status; it didn't invite fans to cheer Jay on; it exposed his disconnection. Jay-Z did tell us "I am a hustler baby I will sell water to a well/whale," but seem to think his black audience cared about him getting rich more than him providing equipment for living.

In addition, Carter also admits for the first time to Jay-Z being a somewhat constructed persona, "*In real life, I'm much more distinguished/I'm like a bloke from London, England/jeah you jingling baby see I got right back and I Ringling em baby."* Jay-Z notes how his real life persona is far more understated than the epic hero Jay-Z, but praises his ability to make the dumb entertaining—like Ringling Bros. But who all were being "fooled" Was it the white audience? How about black fans that like those silly singles? Is it the black audience who hero worships him at this point of his career*? Moreover, who is the real Jay? The song raised questions of his sincerity not ease criticism. When he exclaims 'he is so good he is so hood', he is stating he can't sell out; ontologically it is impossible. Jay-Z can't sell out, for the hood is forever apart of him, is the pitch of sincerity. Jay announces that despite the cash registers ringing he vows "to never sell out", as the hood serves as his spiritual home. The irony of course is the very song sounds like his dumbed down singles with its

playful approach but for some fans that identified with the testimony of Jay-Z, the epic hero who never changed, it was an admission of insincerity.

Conclusion: Failed Transcendence

On the original BP1 we see *apologia* become a more dominant tool of his *BSR* as he defends self but also his audience on songs like "momma loves me," but by *BP2,* defending one's character so much can communicate insecurity more than heroism. And his comic corrective of using perspective by incongruity is absent and in its place a more ego based *apologia*. The song "Blueprint 2,[74] encapsulates this shift. Carter relates that while Nas made inspiring songs, Shawn the CEO actually makes enough money to give money to Columbine and 9/11 families. This is what black theology scholars call a *deed Christian*, Carter reverts to spirituality to make an epic claim that his acts of service are more worthy than Nas's and other rappers words:

> When the Twin Towers dropped, I was the first in line/Donating proceeds off every ticket sold/When I was out on the road, that's how you judge Hov, no?/Ain't I supposed to be absorbed in myself?/Every time there's a tragedy, I'm the first one to help/They call me this misogynist, but they don't call me the dude/To take his dollars to give gifts at the projects/And y'all buy the shit, caught up in the hype/Cause the nigga wear a kufi, it don't mean that he bright/Cause you don't understand him, it don't mean that he nice[75]

Carter orates that because of his actual wealth, he can help instead of just inspirational rhymes that Nas offers. Yet his charity talk is soaked in resentment for Nas's inspirational words. Carter claims that audiences critique his lyrics as demeaning and sexist but want his help to give gifts; which is a false equivalency but demonstrates his view of being unfairly judged. Nas may have the look of revolutionary or use big words he claims, but Jay-Z actually has the capital to help. A deed Christian in the black church often highlights their "good works" to obscure other transgressions, but deeds don't absolve sins or shield one from any artistic criticism. What's fascinating rhetorically is that Carter shifts from his symbolic arguments of the past 6 years for a pragmatic one.

Up to this point, Jay made the claim that his lyrics were just as valuable as any outreach or philanthropy (See This life forever). The epic hero was a rhetorical hero, not a social one but here he shifts his epic framing to his philanthropy arguing that his "selling out" is ultimately to aid the community—a risky transcendence to sell. Carter is angered and offended that fans and peers would attack his character as the

cool of Jay on BP thaws into bitter *apologia, "I blew breath for you midgets/ I gave life to the game/It's only right I got the right to be king/Niggaz that got life really like what I sing/Cause they know what he's really like, niggaz feel my pain/!"* [76] Carter finally brings in the community, as he mentions that his raps speak to men who have long prison sentences because they share substance with him; but feeling the pain of a multimillionaire is asking a lot of his audience. On the rare track, Carter reiterates how he survived the game and rap is his redemption from genocide "*It was clear I was out there sellin' hope for despair, but stop there/I swear, I only make good from my mouth to God's ears/Had to get out the hood/And I can't justify genocide/But I was born in the city where the skinny niggaz die. /*[77] It is the rare reference to his audience on the album. Also *kairos* matters in BSR. Calling yourself king and your peers midgets, takes away from the president Hov unifying theme of Blueprint. As Roberts notes in the epigram opening this chapter, "the [African epic] hero cannot appear out of character with the morals and values of the group."[78] In relation, Burke asserts the poet has to make the audience feel connected to the epic hero's humanity.[79] Furthermore, audiences have heard you regale of your unprecedented success so identification with Jay as the victim has its limits. While the album featured the epic attributes of *Blueprint*, his ethos was "out of character" with his imagined post soul audience. On *Blueprint 2*, the desire for an epic legacy finds Carter defending his ethos of sincerity more than relating that ethos as sincere to his post soul audience. Jay-Z on *Blueprint 2* he magnified his epic frame to the maximum heights, but in the process, his form lost shape and his *BSR* failed as his humane flaw is obscured.

In her examination of epic frames in political ads, Caibb argues that the epic frame can go overboard when claims seem too self-serving.[80] In looking at Eisenhower, they detail that the epic frame was helpful at reminding audiences of Eisenhower's wins but at times elevated him too high for the audience. *Black sincerity rhetoric* must appeal to the community in some form to be effective and BP2 was detached. Jay-Z would admit the album was bloated and too many songs were redundant. It sold worse than BP1.[81] After 9 albums in 6 years, it's arguable that audiences and Jay-Z were fatigued. Yet, it's also likely that in 2002 music was shifting again as personal albums from Eminem, Nas and rising super stars in the south flourished in 2002. In this period, Jay-z seems torn between just speaking for himself and establishing his legacy, and reminding audiences that they should appreciate his sincerity over the years. The changing landscape of hip-hop would

ask if the rap game "still needs Jay-Z" at the age of 33, a rarity in rap music. The cool of Jay-Z is paramount to his character construction and on BP II Jay didn't sound cool he sounded aggravated and bothered despite being wildly successful. The epic frame can endow acceptance with audiences when the topoi applied and the framing speak to the imagined audience. Many related to the intra-communal hate or envy of peers however Jay-Z use of comic techniques in the past allowed for Jay to appear to be a trickster that became epic not an aggravated King concerned with legacy. On the blueprint, Jay-Z demonstrated how one could transcend the dialectic of being joined yet separate from imagined black audiences; whereas BP2 demonstrates how transcendence and epic heroism can fail to connect with audiences. BP sold less than Blueprint despite being a double album. His next project would attempt to negotiate these divergent themes in his black sincerity rhetoric, with the aptly titled *The Black Album.*

Endnotes

[1] Roberts, John. *From Trickster to Baadman: The Black Folk Hero in Slavery and Freedom.* University of Pennsylvania Press. 1990

[2] Ferrani, Seth. June 25, 2016. Convicts Talk About Why Jay Z's 'Reasonable Doubt' Is Still Every Hustler's Favorite Album https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/mvkjxq/convicts-talk-about-why-jay-zs-reasonable-doubt-is-still-every-hustlers-favorite-album

[3] Strauss, Neil ,"The Blueprint" *Rolling Stone. October 4, 2001.*

[4] Coates, Ta-Neishi "Keepin it Unreal" *Village Voice*. June 4, 2003.

[5] Ex, Kris, "Jay-Z , VOl.3 Life and Times of S. Carter" Rolling Stone, February 3, 2000

[6] Osse, Reggie and A. King. "Damon Dash Episode" Combat Jack Show [audio podcast]. March 2014.

[7] Hamilton, Jack. "The Day Rap Grew up". *The Atlantic* . Sept. 9th 2011.\

[88] Ibid

[9] Kennedy, Randall. *Politics of Racial Betrayal. Vintage Books. 2008*

[10] Kaylor, Brian "Savior, Fool or Demagogue: Burkean Frames Surrounding the Ten Commandments Judge." KBJournal.org https://www.kbjournal.org/book/export/html/325

[11] Crable, Bryan. 2014.

[12] Neal, Mark Anthony. "My Passport says Shawn: Toward a Hip-Hop Cosmopolitan. In *Looking for Leroy: Illegible Black Masculinities.* 2013

[13]Quoted in John Roberts "From Trickster to Baadman: The Black Folk Hero in Slavery and Freedom. University of Penn. 2010. Bird, Charles, "Heroic Song of the Mande Hunters" in Africana Folklore, ed. Richard M Dorson. 1972.

[14] Evans, James . *We have Been Believers: An African American Systematic Theology. Fortress Press. 1993.*

[15] Roberts, J. 2010. *From Trickster to Baadman: The Black folk Hero in Slavery and Freedom.*

[16] Burke, Kenneth "Poetic Categories" in *Attitudes Toward History*. University of California. 1969

[17] Burke Ibid. 1969

[18] Ibid

[19] Burke,K. "Attitudes Towards History" 265 . Quoted in Ross Wolin's The Rhetorical Imagination of Burke. P. 94

[20] Hampton, Dream. "Jay-Z Blueprint" Vibe Magazine. 2001.

[21] Mtv.com "Jay-Z's busy summer." MTV Networks. Summer 2001

[22] IBID

[23] Oh, Minya September 12, 2001. "The Blueprint" *Rolling Stone*

[24] Carter, S. Walters, R., Bink. "The Rulers Back" *The Blueprint. DefJam Recordings/Roc-a-Fella Records. 2001*

[25] Kynard, C. 2005.

[26] H to the izzo was a play on California slang of E40 and popularized by Snoop that inserted zz's in language. The Hova also stood for Hustler of VA.

[27] Riley, Alexander . The Rebirth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Hip-Hop: A cultural Sociology of Gangsta Rap Music. Journal of Youth Studies. Volume 8. 2005

[28] Keeley, B. 2008. "I may not get there with you: I've been to the mountain top as epic discourse. Southern *Communication Journal* Vol. 73, No. 4, October–December 2008, pp. 280–294

[29] Carter, S. Walters, R., Bink. "The Rulers Back" *The Blueprint. DefJam Recordings/Roc-a-Fella Records. 2001*

[30] Serrano, Shea. *The Rap Yearbook: The Most important Rap song from Every Year since 1979. Random House. 2015*

[31] Wilson, E. "Rap Radar: Jay-Z" 2012.

[32] Karp, Jensen and Eric Rosenthal. "Waste of Time: Jay-Z stories" 2014.

[33] Kynard, 2005.

[34] Ferrari Tessarossa

[35] Quoted in Kareem. 2015.

[36] I must admit, as a Jay-z fan the first line always made me laugh at its absurdity on face value. I doubt that Jay-Z was thinking "man I don't want my future fans to hustle" when he was selling drugs, in fact it sounds like he was pretty busy and paranoid so this wouldn't be top priority

[37] Hov did that so hopefully you don't have to go through that, became a catch phrase in itself then and endures to this day on social media.

[38] Wilson, E. and Thomas, B. "Jay-Z episode" *Rap Radar. Tidal Media. 2017.*

[39] Persley 2011.

[40] Keeley, B. 2008. "I may not get there with you: I've been to the mountain top as epic discourse. Southern Communication Journal Vol. 73, No. 4, October–December 2008, pp. 280–294

[41] Russell, D. 2015. "The Craft of Ralph Ellison "*Black Genius: Inspirational Portraits of African American Leaders 35-58.*

[42] Carter, S. & West, K. 2001. "Aint no Love" *The Blueprint. Def Jam*

[43] Ibid. The Pray for my downfall is an allusion to Biggies posthumously album *Life After Death*

[44] Ashe, Bertram D. winter 2007**. "**Theorizing the Post-Soul Aesthetic: An Introduction." *African American Review* 41.4 609–623.

[45] Carter, S., West, K. & Ruffin, D. 2001. Never Change. *The Blueprint. Kanye and Jay-Z alternate on the chorus*

[46] Eddy, 2011

[47] Ibid

[48]Naumoff, Marylou Renee, "The Rhetoric Of The Hip Hop Hustler: Shifting Representations Of American Identity" (2014).*Wayne State University Dissertations.* Paper 1052.

[49] Smith, Justin & Carter, S. 2001. "U don't Know" *The Blueprint. Def Jam Recordings/Roc-A-Fella Records*

[50] Ibid. 2001

[51]White, Miles.2011. *From Jim Crow to Jay-Z: Race, Rap and the performance of masculinity. Indiana University Press.*

[52] Jay-Z. 2011. "Renegade" *Decoded*

[53] Cobb. 2001.

[54]See Gosa. 2012.

[55] Burke, K. 1994. "Poetic Categories" *Attitudes Towards History*. 34-37

[56] Naumoff, Marylou Renee. 2014, "The Rhetoric Of The Hip Hop Hustler: Shifting Representations Of American Identity" .*Wayne State University Dissertations.* Paper 1052.

[57] Ibid

[58] Kitwana, Bakari . "Zen and the art of transcending the Status Quo: The reach from the hood to the suburbs." In Julius Bailey ed., *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip-Hop's Philosopher King.* McFarland and Co. Pp.75-93. 2012

[59] Ketchum, William III (Vibe magazine editor). June 24th 2019. Twitter Conversation about Jay-Z and Nas's Ether" including Keith Murphy and Antoine Hardy. Retrieved June 24th 2019 https://twitter.comweketchum/status/11431591090

[60] Ibid. 2019

[61] See Serrano, Shea, "2001" *The Rap Yearbook. New York, NY. Abrams Image. 2015*

[62] Serrano, Shea, "2001" *The Rap Yearbook. New York, NY. Abrams Image. 2015*

[63] Young Guru. Twitter post. June 2016, 3:53. https://twitter.com/young_guru/status/963221982736089088

[64] Despite the ether battle, Jay-Z Blueprint was prolific as well as his collabo album with R. Kelly at the time.

[65] Holley, Eugene. (2013). "What Albert Murray Taught us about Jazz." *A blog supreme. Npr radio. Retrieved February 2019. www.npr.org/sections/ablogsupreme/2013/08/24/214831904/what-albert-murrary-taught-us-about-jazz*

[66] Jay-Z. Decoded. 2010

[67] Carter, Shawn, West, Kanye, Evans, Faith, Wallace, Christopher. "The Dream". *Blueprint 2: The Gift and the Curse. 2002. Def Jam Recordings/Roc-A-Fella Records.*

[68] Roberts, John W. 2010. *From Trickster to Baadman The Black Folk Hero in Slavery and Freedom.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

[69] Kitwana, Bakari . "Zen and the art of transcending the Status Quo: The reach from the hood to the suburbs." In *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip-Hop's Philosopher King.* McFarland and Co. Pp.75-93. 2012

[70] Carter, S., Smith, J., Watkins, T., Lopes, L. "Hovie Baby" *Blueprint 2: The Gift and the Curse. 2002. Def Jam Recordings/Roc-a-Fella Records*

[71] Carter, S, West, K. "The Bounce" *Blueprint 2: The Gift and the Curse. 2002. Def Jam Recordings/Roc-a-Fella Records*

[72] Carter, S. West, K., & Mosley, T. 2004. "The Bounce". *Blueprint2* Def Jam Records/Roc-a-Fella

[73] See Ralph Wiley's work

[74] Carter, S. & Smith Justin "Blueprint 2" *The blueprint 2: The Gift and the Curse 2002. Def Jam Recordings/Roc-a-Fella Records*

[75] Carter, S. & Smith ,J . 2004. "Blueprint 2" Blueprint 2. Def Jam Records/Roc-a-Fella

[76] Ibid.

[77] Carter, S. & West, K. 2004. "Blueprint 2". Def Jam Recordings/Roc-a-Fella.

[78] Roberts, John. *From Trickster to Baadman: The Black Folk Hero in Slavery and Freedom.* University of Pennsylvania Press. 1990

[79] Burke, K. 1994. "Poetic Categories" *Attitudes Towards History.* 34-37

[80] Biocca, F. "Television and Political Advertising: Volume II: Signs, Codes, and Images. 2015

[81] Carter would try to remedy the failure by releasing Blueprint 2.1 a shorter version of the album.

CHAPTER 6: THE BLACK ALBUM AND EPIC HERO HOMECOMING

> I know that my life story can give a real perspective on my generation, the **epic times** we faced and the choices we made. I also hope that my story can inspire the next Shawn Carter, locked in a hot tiny apartment in some project building, with dreams WAY bigger than his windows.-Jay-Z, 2004.[1]

Introduction

Following the 'failure' of *BP2,* Jay-Z went back to the streets similar to his sophomore failure.[2] With the release of his Reebok sneaker[3], he released a free mixtape to promote it: *The S. Carter Collection.*[4] Released in April of 2003, Jay-Z tried to erase the bad taste of his latest release with free material that restored his *epic hero* status. Conjuring the past as a form of signifying similar to "The Rulers Back" , Jay-Z raps over his past mentor Big Daddy Kane's 'Young gifted and Black" beat and hints at retirement. As Genius contends the song offered "a detailed description of "the hoods" around the country. Interestingly, the communal topoi are centered in his BSR on this release. The song starts with a Farrakhan quote, "The lord has written it in our nature. We call an individual into existence and when that individual comes..," as a segue to Jay-Z, Jay-Hova, the god-send of rap. Named after Nina Simone's classic, Carter announces this is for his black audience from line one; "**I'm America's worst nightmare/I'm young, black and** holding my nuts like yeah**."**

In one couplet, Carter tries to connect back with shared communal experiences of being black and being viewed as a "problem" as opposed to the ego focus of BP2. Carter is appealing to a *specific shared experiential*[5] feeling of being America's scapegoat as a young black person to conjure consubstantiality with his imagined audience. Jay is talking to skeptical post soul members of his imagined audience who yearned for communal discourse in his work. Instead, the griot transforms the nightmare into the heroic, making an ontological call for black listeners to repossess their confidence and "hold their nuts like yeah!" Interestingly, in contrast to "The Bounce," and its strategic pandering, Carter quickly goes into a mock conversation with white fans about their ignorance of black audiences:

> Ya'll was in the club having a light beer/ I was in the club having a fight there/Ya'll can go home/husband and wife there/My momma at work/ trying to buy me the right gear/ 9 years old uncle lost his life there/.how can I get a real job /china white right there/ right in front of my sight like here, yeah/ there's your ticket out the ghetto /take flight right here/sell me/ you go bye-bye here/ yeah you need a gun/ niggas might drive by here/ you're having fun racing all your hot rods there /downloading all our music on your iPods there[6]

In his memoir, Jay-Z explained he felt white listeners did not recognize their privilege, so he admits to using "white class stereotypes to get his message across" in this particular song.[7] He employs a series of ironic contrasts (pxI) to make his point, embracing the comic techniques of his pre BP2 albums. It's an interesting reversal from his 1999 gripes of "making the suburbs" understand us. In 2003, graduate school me was well aware that suburban Jay-Z fans took on the role of Jay-Z, not a sympathetic ear to black pain. Jay-Z at this juncture shows his fidelity to black audiences by challenging his white shareholders, to *sincerely* care about black people. Jay contrasts the leisure of white middle class life with the struggle for respect in the 'hood. Unlike "The Bounce" he instructs his white listeners to not just listen to these Black stories as fantasy or escape; and instead be educated by his witnessing of black life. Jay-Z is trying to make clear to his black audience that he recognizes a responsibility to witness not just "cash out the registers," and it is a clear attempt at debunking criticism of his past effort; by reviving an *ethos* that displays authenticity, blackness, but most importantly consubstantial communal experiences.

Moreover, the line "my momma at work, trying to buy me the right gear," always struck me. Carter explains his mom was working trying to make him look good so he wasn't embarrassed for being poor. Yet, her absence due to work influenced his latter criminal life. Like Jay, I and many black 90s teenagers shared this latch key experience of moms working double shifts to maintain our sense of self-worth through gifts like other American kids.[8] Jay is having a conversation with his core base, as he reverts back to his spokesman framing of his 1997 discourse to reaffirm a connection with audiences. The punning of hear/here is stretched throughout as the word magic and games of RD pops up on the *S. Carter Collection.* Rhetorically the repetition and assonance drives the point home that Jay-Z the epic hero, is still concerned with what audiences "hear" and his lyrics as a way to "finding a better way here" in the ghetto for his listeners. When he states "ya'll act like ya'll don't hear" he is talking to his white hip-hop fans who don't "hear all the screams

from the ghetto, all the teens ducking metal," rap music isn't just vicarious entertainment for white consumers to "bounce to" he intimates. Similar to 1997, Carter prays to the lord for help as the hood is "real close to the devil here. When Hova is "trying to take us to a whole different level here." The repetition of "here" organizes the songs form, as rhythmically you anticipate the next rhyme but drives home he is talking about a space, a place, where things aren't right but its "home."

In this digital dwelling space Jay-Z frames himself as an inspiration to those young, gifted, black men and women who listen to him and articulates that he still feels compelled to speak to and for them. On 'Young Gifted and Black', Jay reminded black imagined audiences, that he cares and suggests that audiences will miss his sincerity and that they trust his ethos. I remember 23rd year old me having doubts he could restore the feeling of his earlier efforts and listening to the mixtape left me wondering why longtime black fans couldn't hear more of this since Jay-Z was his own "boss." Carter explained the collection was for his "day 1 fans" that have been on this journey since 1995. On an interlude, Russell Simmons explains that Jay-Z heroism is in his sincerity to add to the hagiography of the project: "His integrity sells. What sells is his honesty he is never been untrue to himself. He's always spoken to the heart of his environment; he has traveled the world and seen new things. . . So that honesty and integrity is what gives him his range."[9] Moreover, while he warns his white audience of their privilege, the lasting message to his black audience is that if Jay- can become Americas worst nightmare "young rich black ", his black constituents can too.

In total Russell Simmons, Beyoncé, and a posthumous Biggie Smalls all make guest appearances to offer words of acclaim for Jay-Z as one of the greats. Its savvy to have others praise you instead of a double album of constant self-praise like BP2. Carter announces on the mixtape that his next album will be his last and that he hopes to give audiences one more dose of Jay-Z *the Black album*. . Kenneth Burke details that the epic hero is often killed in battle and elevated to herodom through physical sacrifice; Shawn Carter will kill off Jay-Z with *The Black album*. *In a creative epic frame move* Jay-Z announces he is sacrificing his "gift" of rap, to help aid his "culture" as a full time record executive. Indeed, Burke reminds us again that the "audience calls the tune." As discussed with his sophomore album failure Jay-Z had to adjust his rhetoric find acceptance with the audience. This is a key maxim of Black Sincerity rhetoric; I am not speaking from the 20th century

great speaker or even early Burkean view of the rhetor as a spell caster skilled at tricking the audience per se. Instead, what this chapter highlights is how, the black audience standards change, alter, becomes more fragmented and diverse in 2003 thus new demands on Jay-Z's BSR. Indeed, Jay demonstrates that black rhetorical performances are a co-production of meaning as the surrounding discourse about the song and reaction serves as a response to his call for making a comeback after BP2. Along with topoi, the use of acceptance frames in particular will aid Jay-Z's BSR. Epic and comic frames allow the rhetor to reflect the audience's desires for heroism, voice, and in the case of Jay-Z success on one's seemingly own terms.

Acceptance Frames and Maintaining Sincerity

For Burke, frames are lenses which influence the way we approach persuasion and consider our history, and for *The Black Album* the epic frame is a lens employed to influence his imagined post soul audience to accept him as the ultimate post-soul hero on his finale. Jay-Z's pending retirement cast his rhetoric in a different light. This rhetorical situation impacts the selections of reality on his "last" album and the imagined black audiences' engagement. Meaning that in attempt to identify with his audience and maintain acceptance as a voice in his desired community. Carter, I posit selects specific framing and topoi to speak to his "day 1 fans" meaning his core base audience. Thus unlike past albums framing as mainstream pop monsters, The Black album was ostensibly a present day greatest hits album for Jay-Z fans.

The Black *Album* was metaphorical in the lack of "showy promotion"; but it is an album about blackness. Indeed, Carter signifies on his past discourse at this point as after BP2 I contend, he was trying to convince audiences his form still satisfied their appetites that his **BSR** still spoke to black audiences. The poet needs acceptance as much as the audience needs words to size up their situation to paraphrase Ellison. Jay-Z once remarked that he was fighting ghosts of Big and Pac but also fighting hip-hop history; rappers rarely retire on their own terms. Similar to his past failures, a mixtape outside of the traditional music system revived his damaged ethos with a post soul audience who hailed *S.Carter Collection* as a masterpiece and return of form. Therefore, this chapter interrogates how *The Black Album* demonstrates his ability to adapt his proven rhetorical formula to find not only current acceptance but how his use of epic framing allows his BSR to elevate and solidify his legacy. The title is not accidental, as Biggie alluded to an album geared towards

black audiences' not pop crossover in his final interview.[10] Originally, the concept of *The Black Album* was no traditional promotion or single sent to radio. 12 tracks, and 12 producers for one last run as it was Biggie's private desire to release such a record and Jay-Z was completing the dream to end his career.[11]

In 2003, Carter admitted he was "bored with rap" but would take a two year break unless inspired.[12] Burke reminds us that identification is ultimately about sociality, "one's participation in the collective, "and balancing "love for self' and "duty" to one's nation.[13] In relation, post soul historian Deburg argues the heroic hustler must make sacrifice or duty to community integral to his transformation into a hero[14]; hence, Jay-Z decides to sacrifice his epic rap career to elevate his persona to the hallowed martyrdom of Pac and Big. The epic hero would have one last victory lap for fans to adore and announce their acceptance. In 7 years, Jay-Z established himself as an adored artist with ten Grammy's, a business portfolio worth 300 million and seven no. 1 albums.[15]

A focus on legacy dominates and haunts the work of Jay-Z since 2003. His last two albums laid the groundwork for his heroism. The album attempted to solidify the argument that he was THE rap hero of his generation and uplift Jay to Valhalla of black rhetorical heroes. Jon Carmanica wrote "it was an album about Jay-Z's place in rap history and a version of his greatest hits."[16] Undeniably, Jay signifies on his own prior forms: his revision of his origin story and motives to hustle, his popular sound from RD to Blueprint, his club hits about dating, his braggadocio /motivational pep talks and his ability to make his specific heroic tale and his wins feel like wins for his audience.[17] Moreover, as Burke has opined, the epic hero emerges in a time of transition and 2003 signaled the emergence of the digital era in hip-hop.[18]

The epic frame seeks to accomplish two goals: 1) it builds courage (for audience and speaker) and promotes individual sacrifice for group advantage (p. 35); 2) it makes the humble feel good: the hero "risks himself that others may be vicariously heroic" (p. 36).[19] On the album, I contend Jay-Z invokes the epic hero in black music as being heroic for telling the story of self and community "confronting and overcoming struggle and obstacles".[20] We saw the limits of an epic frame on BP 2; thus this chapter interrogates how he adapts the epic frame to a farewell narrative. Moreover, how his use of comic correctives such as *perspective by incongruity* in combination with the epic frame allow him to transcend the criticism of being too individualistic

on his last album and to maintain his ethos as sincere with his imagined post-soul audience. On the farewell, I contend he will offer a comic transparency of his flaws and struggles to relate to his audience and complement it with his epic claims of success, which are framed as communal wins. Burke reminds us that speakers can use these dual strategies to frame their acts as done for oneself and one's nation.[21]

Genesis of the Black Album: African and American Heroic

In 2004, Jay explained that while working on his book *Decoded,* he interviewed his mother and found new details about his life. Carter opined that he wanted his last 12 songs to be his most personal, "like an autobiography," as he felt he owed the truth to his fans. Thus this farewell album finds his past personas all invoked to emphasize his love for his imagined audience. Rutledge's epic trickster scholarship tells us that the hero doesn't have to die in the heroic frame, but it provides an opportunity to be honored; hence *The Black Album* is a celebratory funeral—what the black penacostal church calls a joyous homecoming.[22] In many ways the album puts a bookend on raps transition from 90s authenticity to 2000s negotiation of sincerity. Carter declared in a 2004 interview, that in his heart he has always been a businessman and now was the time to pursue that and help hip-hop culture as Def Jam's new president.[23] Jay –Z the character must die for Shawn Carter the businessman to grow was the enthymeme of his final album announcement

The African and American attributes of his rhetoric have always been at work as previous chapters note but it's a tighter more structured approach here. The *African epics* focus on strange birth, communalism, deeds of the warrior and the matrifocal focus of the family are commensurate and contrasted with the Burke's American epic focus on the supernatural skill of the hero, the heroic actions in the name of community and humility at the end of the narrative. Thus in this section I organize the songs based on the traits of the epic hero in African and American literature:

Trait 1: A Noble Birth. ...-December 4th
Trait 2: National Heroism-Encore & Dirt off your Shoulder
Trait 3: Capable of deeds of great strength and courage-What More Can I Say
Trait 4: Great Warrior.-Lucifer, 99 Problems, PSA
Trait 5: Humility. ...Moment of Clarity, Allure, First Song[24]

Hence, my analysis is based on this mélange of epic framing and how it aids Carter's identification with his imagined post soul audience on his farewell album.[25] These epic hero traits inform *The Black album* as we go from Jay-Z birth, retelling of his deeds, his travels, his hip-hop nation heroism and his humility help guide my analysis of his BSR at the "end" of his career. Recently, Jay-Z briefly discussed the albums' structure and that it had to be like a movie with the birth to the end of Jay-Z, what makes him everyone's "hero," and that guides the album.[26] Thus, my analysis follows that order to highlight how for black rhetors *BSR involves* not only an established *ethos of sincerity*, a use of topoi and acceptance frames but also a stretching of these frames and topoi to accommodate new situations. That knowing the tunes the audiences want to hear is just as vital in black rhetorical performances as the skill applied. That the rhetor sizes up his situation and his audience to maximize identification on his tenth album. The epic frame for the Blueprint was a re-election run, for black album it's a hall of fame lobbying. The album begins with his "strange birth" on December 4th.

December 4th: Noble birth and Confessional Testimony

December 4th[27] opens the album as the moving violins and celebratory horns of a Just Blaze track create a dramatic backdrop for Carter to discuss his origins. Signifying on 2Pac's "Dear Mama,"[28] the song features Gloria Carter, Shawn's mother giving commentary on Jay-Z's youth. In the song, she acts as a verifying agent of his credibility and sincere ethos. The song is a story about Jay-Z's life before rap again, but a deeper look into the psyche of the proverbial 13 year old mama's boy who chose to hustle drugs. Jay said he wanted people to understand him and his generation after hearing it. The lost urban youth leitmotif is the string that binds Jay-Z past and present stories. Hip-hop allows for serial stories that extend and pick up on previous songs as a rhetorical intertextuality and signifying on one's own work allows the informed Jay-Z listener to have a prior familiarity with the topic. The song opens with Gloria who "unprompted" magnifies her sons heroic status from birth: "Shawn Carter was born December 4th. Weighing in at 10 pounds 8 ounces; he was the last of my four children. The only one who didn't give me any pain when I gave birth to him/and that's how I knew that he was a special child." It's a strange noble birth that heroes have in Judeo-Christian literature. In relation, Roberts and Harris Thompson argue that in African folklore great speakers are also

usually distinguished by an unusual birth and threatened in their youth by hardships.[29] December 4th extends these epic origins motifs rather accurately. The last of her children and painless birth, the Jehovah/Jay-Hova metaphor is invoked for this 'special child'. Gloria later notes in between verses about the epic hero's early supernatural skills, "He was into sports. And a funny story is, at four he taught his self how to ride a bike. A two wheeler at that. Isn't that special? /But, I noticed a change in him when me and my husband broke up."

Her voiced soaked in pride, Gloria Reeves-Carter expresses optimism and almost blind faith that her son was special. Dr. Donda West has detailed that that black single mothers often had to pump their children up with confidence; because the world tries to beat out of him[30]. Indeed, Jawara Giddings[31] explains that in rap adored black cultural agents invoke oral storytelling, communal values and often a matrifocal—a motherly focus--- to maintain identification with black audiences. Despite entrenched sexism and widespread misogyny in rap, the black mother is the most praised figure in song outside of one's crew. Thus, this verse is aimed at a generation often raised by single mothers. Indeed Robin Boylorn's recent work, highlights how the performance of black masculinity in hip-hop and hip-hop informed films frame black single moms as heroes.[32]

Carter features his mother as his first epic hero and by extension his imagined black communities' first hero. Thus, Carter opens the album with the black communal epic hero that his audience can connect with. A *matrifocal* focus is inherent in black rhetorical traditions, as Carter uses this as a common topic of blackness and community to prepare his audience for his *BSR* on this project.[33] We hear Gloria Carter regale about his love of rap and giving Jay a rhyming dictionary "to keep him close to me and out of the street."[34] Soon after, we hear his mother ponder the effect of her marriage failing had on her son's life of crime and her failed attempts to bridge that gap. Thus as a post soul listener you realize "December 4th," isn't just about young Shawn , the scope situates "December 4th" as an epic story about a post-soul generation largely raised by single mothers. Thus, Carters BSR on "December 4th," like past works are presented as a counter-discourse to mainstream stereotypes of his imagined audience. Jay-Z's verse contrasts his mothers' praise with his current pessimism over a lack of praise; stating with irritation "they never really miss you til you dead

or gone so on that note I am leaving after this song, so you aint got to feel no way about Jay so at least let me tell you why I'm this way hold on."

An epic narrative must have a period of struggle and its audible here. Young Hov explains prior to hustling, he got good grades and even a doting English teacher would give him extra books to read; however his father leaving in the songs words "ended his world." Shawn Carter the child wonders if being the last was too much of a burden for his parents; blaming himself for the divorce like many youth. Here Jay-Z is speaking of his unique experience but it easily speaks to any child of divorce or separation. Moreover, to his black audience it speaks to the interiority of their experience, to identify with Jay-Z the rich mogul that shares that common substance of parent abandonment. Jay-Z deploys his *BSR* here as empathetic and joined with his imagined audience due to these hardships. In short, the epic hero takes off the cape and shares his flaws to render him human thus worthy of audience's grace and acceptance. Carter details ironically, giving his mother much pain after his painless birth; due to his criminal life. In stark exposition Carter explains that: "my mother knows my purpose wasn't on purpose I care, but I felt worthless cause my shirts wasn't matching my gear, now I am just scratching the surface cause what's buried under there was a kid torn apart once his pop disappeared." Gloria notes that although she noticed a change in Shawn on the track, she didn't know the depth.

Jay-Z contrasts that loss of his father his other epic hero as the downfall of himself and his family, stating that "teachers couldn't reach me and my momma couldn't beat me hard enough to match the pain of my pop not seeing me." The epic hero gives voice to his post soul generation which as President Obama has mentioned many of us dealt with absent fathers. The mental trauma of that loss inspiring the hustlers' desire for worth is sophisticatedly explained in a manner that belies his earlier work. Magnifying his authenticity topos, Jay name-checks, those that invited him into the world of hustling, "Dehaven introduced me to the game, Spanish Jose introduced me to the cane/I am a hustler now/my gear is in and I'm in the in crowd...all the light skin wavy haired girls are feeling me know/my self-esteem is through the roof." The proverbial 80s urban black teen, Shawn viewed the hustler as a hero, he has money, no 'visible' boss, the respect of his peers and the stereotypical fly girls of the neighborhood. Carter hopes his audience empathizes with this

perspective.[35] The shine of the hustle dims the hurt of paternal abandonment and poverty for Shawn Carter and segments of his audience. Yet, the last verse Carter quickly switches to the horrors of hustling, why he chose rap and ultimately Carter seeking redemption through rap:

> Your blood boils /you in a spot knowing cops could rush/And you in a drop[36]/ you're so easy to touch/No two days are alike/Except the first and fifteenth[37] pretty much/Hustlers we don't sleep we rest one eye up/ . . . And niggas get tied up for product/And little brothers ring fingers get cut up[38]/To show mothers they really got 'em. And this was the stress I live with till I decided/To try this rap shit for a living/ I pray I'm forgiven/For every bad decision I made/Every sister I played/Cause I'm still paranoid to this day.[39]

The first half of the verse contrasts his tragic circumstances of paranoia with his "come up" in the drug game. Thus, the epic hero's "humane flaw" that audiences identify with is again the struggles of the hero and his origins. Carter confesses being still haunted by his non-heroic deeds, but confesses his sins to his audience asking God and implicitly their forgiveness on the last album. At 26 Carter scratched the surface of his pain, paranoia and motives as a hustler. At 34, Carter had spent 5 years in mandatory therapy for his stabbing; and rhetorically he offers his most direct and vulnerable appeal for empathy for himself and other young black listeners. Indeed, Jay-Z is offering his own authentic testimony, but invokes the black tradition of "speaking truth to power" by telling outsiders why black youth turn to crime and confessing how paternal abandonment shaped him and other black men and women.

On the track, Carter centers *his ethos of sincerity*, contending that he not only is authentic but empathizes and understands that feeling of his listening audience whose attitude shifted when their Pops left. Jay asks the audience to identify with his confession, telling the audience at the end "if you can't appreciate that, your whole perspective is wack; maybe you'll love me when I fade to black." In short, Carter contends family trauma and capitalist society are the triggers for the urban hustler, but Hov wants post soul blacks to understand his legacy is not that he glamorized it it's that he survived it and shared the story. Carter wants your acceptance but also reciprocal empathy for his acknowledgment. Michael Hyde argues that a rhetor with an effective ethos, gives life to his audience by acknowledging their situations and making them feel at home[40]—in this space your struggle is seen. The opener sets the stage with the noble birth of the epic hero and then the epic hero details how over a long course of time his perseverance, hardship and determination

and other attributes learned from the community have allowed him to overcome his origins and become the hero: Jay-Z.

Encore and Dirt off ya Shoulder: Identification as Braggadocio

The coronation continues on "Encore" where he leans towards James Brown and the musical heroes of the past to frame his farewell song. On "Encore[41], Kanye West creates what can only be described as ceremonial hip-hop music, as the horn stabs and bubbling drums create a backdrop for Jay-z and fans to show their love for each other. Kanye West and GLC create a mock chorus of fans yelling to create the sense of a concert crowd. Jay-Z thanks the crowd for coming out tonight, and then he starts with the opening hook: "Now can I get an encore, do you want more? /Cookin' raw with the Brooklyn boy/So for one last time I need y'all to roar/Now what the hell are you waiting for (background)/after me, there shall be no more/So for one last time, nigga, make some noise. [42] Invoking blackness via the call and response modality[43], Jay-Z encourages the audience to sing along and celebrate "the Brooklyn boy" because after "young hov" there will not be another like him. Sha'Dawn Battle's work is helpful here as she argues that his use of call and response is multifaceted; moving from master of ceremonies to the person being honored; instructing the audience to give their devotion.[44] Moreover, the call and response dynamic was largely absent on BP2 and this modality central to blackness as topoi, aids his farewell discourse.

The audience is integral to the song and its resonance; it's a celebration of his epic career. Roberts writes that an African epic hero positions himself as national hero whose accomplishments represent the nation as a whole.[45] Indeed, Neal contended that on his farewell album Jay-Z embraces being a cosmopolitan yet national hero who is rooted in being that "Brooklyn boy" but argues he has taken hip-hop to new places thus worthy of this epideictic post soul praise of "Encore."[46] In the verse, he again restates his accomplishments and talents and again warns audiences there is only one Jay-Z to adore, "you cannot imitate him with weak imitations of this generation." His BSR is dependent on the vicarious enjoyment of his success by the audience, a technique Burke claims all great writers employ. The hero worship endures as the song signifies on the old "star time" skits of James Brown. Rapper GLC interpolates a skit to demonstrate the fans love of Hov, "Ow, it's star time/This man is mean, he's killin' all y'all jive turkeys/Do y'all want more of the

Jigga man/Well if y'all want more of the Jigga man/Then I need y'all to help me bring him back to stage/Say Hova, c'mon, say it, are y'all out there, c'mon, louder(Hova)/Yeah, now see that's what I'm talking about/They love you Jigga, they love ya Jigga'[47]

What's most interesting is the last line, "they love you Jigga, and they love you". As an old Jay-Z fan, GLC interestingly uses Jigga which hadn't been used since his 1998 work, and on the song long-time fans give Jay-Z what he wants: the love and acceptance of his constituency. GLC reminds us that music of Jigga created a dwelling space of devoted fans that have identified with Jay-Z's *BSR*. The love and appreciation of his base audience is the priceless gift that inspires the rapper to "care" enough to speak to his core audience one "last time." The crowd noise rises at it yells "Hova-Hova-Hova" and Jay-Z states "hey I like the sound of that." Carter had long been questioned does he love the money or rap and in many ways he always argues he can have both—he loves hip-hop and being wealthy. In 2003 he claimed, he purely does music for the love of the audience, despite pleas of non-retirement.[48] In many ways, the song speaks to all of his fans, but his white fans aren't the ones whose story he's spread to the world. Or the market he opened up for other rappers wasn't for Eminem as he explains in the verse.[49]

In listing his epic wins, he frames them as evidence of black communal talent and that sharing his authentic testimony has trafficked in the mainstream some of "our" story. And we should love him for that. Carter outlines his epic status of "Global Jets, meetings with presidents," to epic historical figure boasts of, "I came I saw I conquered, from record sales to sold out concerts." Jay-Z lists his rise from underdog to star, "Record companies told me I couldn't 'cut it ,Now look at me all-star studded," and revels in his success he literally says " this here is the victory lap." 'Encore' finds a celebratory hero soaking in the love and appreciation as the hip-hop nation's heroic hustler. Indeed, Burke tells us this is "identification that serves as braggadocio "(p267), as the poet invites the audience to indulge in their part in making him great and invites them to see their own greatness.[50] In Burke's words, it makes the modest man feel epic. And that's the tagline for Jay-Z's BSR, you feel like a star if you identify with his discourse, if you accept his appeals and strategies as sincere.

This identification as braggadocio, demonstrates how Jay-Z's BSR can help transcend apparent separation from his audience. The modality of call and response and epic framing are bridging devices that allow speaker and his constituents to be consubstantial. The hit "Dirt off my Shoulder" continues the valorization of Jay. On the Timbaland produced hit, Jay-Z again lists his epic wins and compares himself to past greats. In the songs chorus, Jay-Z in call and response mode, instructs his audience "if you feeling like a pimp/gon brush ya shoulders off/ladies are pimps too gon brush your shoulder off/niggas are crazy baby/ don't forget to/ get/ that /dirt off of ya shoulder" a cultural memory reference of a pimp being so clean in dress he would brush off his shoulder transformed into a slight dance. But here, Jay-Z uses it to frame him and his audience as fellow "pimps" of the system like himself and in particular to frame his female fans as "pimps" who can control and utilize the system as well, and having the power to get "crazy niggas" out of their path. Aware of past misogyny criticisms, cleverly nod to his female audience, using *pxI* to claim they can be pimps in the control not be exploited by men.[51] In the rest of the song, he lists his global reach "from the bottom of bottom to the *Top of the Pops,* London." and how his music appeals to "the ladies that's screaming, the ballers bouncing, the rap peers that are hating and the hustlers who are happy "to see one of us make it." Again braggadocio by identification" asks the audience to share in the joy of "one of us" making it.

After declaring his cosmopolitan attitude, he reiterates that his borough "Brooklyn is back on the map," to situate him as still a hero of his hip-hop nation and borough. The song closes with a meta discourse, as Jay explains "I drop the Black album/ and I back out it/as the best rapper alive/ nigga ask about me/ from brick to billboards/ grams to Grammys/you gotta pardon jay for selling out the garden in a day I 'm like a young Marvin (Gaye) in his day." The genius of Jay-Z is often in just naming and claiming his success, selling out the MSG is rare and he uses it as proof of his epic wins. And voicing that he will be seen as "best rapper alive" harkens back to BP2 obsession with legacy. The next song continues his focus on being remembered as the best and the most sincere of his fellow rap rhetors.

What More Can I Say: Epic Hero Capable of deeds

The next song "What more can I say" continues this focus on justifying his epic hero status. Here he uses braggadocio as a means to defend his career ethos and again invite audiences to share in his wins. It is

Jay-Z listing what makes him epic; what "medicine" the hero provides to audiences. "What more can I say" features a warrior version of the rapper/hero persona as the song samples the movie "*Gladiator"* for an epic soundscape to support Jay-Z's claim that he is the greatest rapper ever. The epic frame is magnified but the relationship with the audience is the focus as he is trying to make a case similar to his debut for acceptance. The oral traditions of black cultural expression according to Ani demands sincerity[52] and Jay-Z on Black album, seeks to accomplish this by amplifying epic notions to his usual *BSR* The movie scores' triumphant horns and strings from the fight scene are transposed to the "warrior hero" narrative of Jay-Z who announces:

> There's never been a nigga/ this good for this long/This hood or this pop/ this hot or this strong/With so many different flows/this one's for this song/The next one I switch up, this one will get bit up/These fucks too lazy to make up shit: they crazy/They don't paint pictures, they just trace me/You know what? Soon they forget where they plucked[53]their whole style from - then try to reverse the outcome/I'm like: "TAA![15]

Shawn 'Jay-Z' Carter begins making his case about how no rapper has been the top rapper for 5 years straight and how many of his peers have copied his style to find success; laying the groundwork. Carter, then offers a quick lists of comic contrasts and implied questions: Rappers have been good, but for this long? Has anyone been loved by the hood and had pop hits? Yet so versatile with different tones, cadences and styles? The competition don't paint like me, they "trace or copy my styles." Thus, the use of *pxI* allows Jigga to challenge critiques he was rapping too long, too pop or too standard by using comic juxtaposition to repudiate criticisms.[16] Carter then details how his music has been influential and has been imitated and replicated by so many rappers that people may forget that he was the origin for many styles. It is like a debate round and Jay-Z is running down his claims. His *BSR* is activated to make a forensic case about his relationship to his desired community, Indeed, whether peers who left this world too soon or peers who could not adapt to raps changing landscape, "What more can I Say" celebrates Jay-Z ability to survive and thrive in rap. After listing his epic accomplishments and how he is on a different level than rap peers, Carter then ends the verse saying

[15] An exclaim of a giggle
[16] As seen in Chapter 2

that no rapper has been truer than Jay-z. Truth and honesty is what he claims are the most important virtues audiences should consider, when deciding who the best is.

In the next stanza, Jay makes a strident statement about the rarity of a black man in his position but also his refusal to assimilate or identify with their culture but instead "takeover" culture: "Now you know your ass is Willie*[17] when they got you in the mag/For like half a Billy[54] and your ass ain't lily-White/That mean that shit you write must be illy[55]/Either that or your flow is silly/. It's both! /I don't mean to boast, but damn, if I don't brag/Them crackers gwon' act like I ain't on they ass." The man, who once bragged about being a 40 million dollar man in 2001, is now reminding you that his testimony is true, check Forbes he is worth more than 500 million by this recording. Yet as Giddings argues, Jay-z asserts the griot orality as supernatural gift --- by claiming that he constantly re-writes history, and here he is claiming his success has changed the image of black people to the world. More importantly, that his flow, his lyrical ability to be creative, insight and relatability got him rich is his claim. When Jay claims 'crackers gwon act like I aint on they ass" it is a controversial message to his black folks that whites don't want him on this list but he gotta brag to alert them that a systemic shift is happening ; he is trying to infiltrate not assimilate—and not scared about offending his white support. Kitwana explains how Jay-Z's comic correctives combine with his epic goals for self and audience to rhetorically appeal: "What more can I say," it's a radical juxtaposition. He claims he has changed and redefined what success in America symbolically looks like. Part of his evidence is that his influence, reach and wealth are on par with white elites. He's not just bragging but informing us that whites can't keep black down. Our inferiority is a myth. We are all heroes."[56]

Thus, saying that a black man made that much money based on what he has written is ill –meaning sick as in cool and silly and deemed impossible in our society. Jay invokes his big money talk as a warning to the white establishment that the hustler is coming for payback. As Bradley argues, "If you think blacks are poor because of lack of skill, he points to him as evidence of the contrary.[57]" Yet unlike his Forbes peers he didn't grow up with wealth to inherit instead his confidence self-belief and willingness to 'hustle' to make a better life is a communal virtue that Jay-Z's frames as sharing with his audience. Jay-Z closes with his final

[17] Big Willie a colloquialism for a rich person

appeal to be regarded as the best. The epic hero lists his heroic deeds, actions and in his view the largest virtue the honesty he has shared with audiences. I look at a breakdown of his epic BSR in one verse here with his implied claims in the parentheses to highlight how his BSR attempts to appeal via a reciting of his wins and gifts. The parentheses reveal the enthymemes at work as seen here:

> /Pound-for-pound, I'm the best to ever come around here **(thesis)**/Excluding nobody, look what I embody:/The soul of a hustler, I really ran the street **(I'm authentic)** /A CEO's mind/ that marketing plan was me **(Smart black boy, I was the record label we have the ability to do for ourselves black people)**/And no I ain't get shot up a whole bunch of times **(I may lack street cred)** /Or make up shit in a whole bunch of lines (**or lie like other rappers**)/And I ain't animated like, say, Busta Rhymes **(and I may be kinda understated**)/But the real shit you get when you bust down my lines **(but the sincerity in my raps when you analyze**)/Add that to the fact I went plat' a bunch of times **(combined with my financial success)**/Times that by my influence on pop culture **(my trendsetting abilities, throwback jerseys, liquor, language, etc.)** I'm supposed to be number one on everybody list **(all these things add up to being number one, I am sincere, consistent and unique)**/we'll see what happens when I no longer exist **(will you love me when I'm gone?)**/Fuck this **(I'm done)**

For Jay-Z, the truth is that he should be regarded as great as Pac and Big, the two regarded as the greatest rappers of his generation. It's self-promotion but also BSR advocating to be accepted as a change agent of hip-hop. His supernatural skill of being an outstanding rhymer, being influential, and his care for community throughout his career, he argued should make him everyone's hero. The African epic hero lists his great deeds and accomplishments as evidence of his love of his community.[58] Indeed, Burke writes that *epic identification* invites vicarious boasting for the audience who views the poet in this light of "epic heroism." That is if you agree with Jay-Z you brag and rap along as if you are the greatest to ever do it—as the ethos enacts such a level of identification fans feel they truly share in the poets wins and played a part in his success.

Lucifer/Justify My Thug/99 Problems: Sacrifice and Advice of the Epic Hero

On "Lucifer" he revives the spiritual terrain of the D'evils but moves beyond his first person subjectivity of "Devils" to tell a story of how "Lucifer" seduces urban men and women with limited options, pleading "Lord forgive him he got them dark forces in him but he also got a righteous cause for sinning." In the song, Jay dramatizes the feeling of loss from the "killing of his best boy, Biggie." A focus on fallen soldiers. Jay imagines getting revenge, quoting Pulp Fiction arguing "if he [Lord] can allow himself to take vengeance then why can't I is the feeling of the person on the street who wants revenge for losing a family

member," Carter explains in his memoir, "The first verse highlights the "why" of inner city violence, as the grieving hustler seeks revenge for his comrade killed, "them a murder me so I gotta murder them first." Carter flashes back to his past to testify he understands the lost souls of the criminal hustle. Jay has explained the cycle is sick and 'you wonder does revenge solve anything or get your soul right, as you hold on to this anger.[59] The song's hook, "Man I gotta get my soul right, I gotta get these devils out my life...fore I'm locked up for my whole life" dramatizes the internal tension of the hustler and hustlers trying to exorcise the demons of his past.

In the final verse, Carter laments the loss of another close friend and imagines holding a gun to the killer; similar to CKTH he questions if hustlers "righteous sinning" can have their sins forgiven. Maintaining his parallelism, Carter prays for his friend to be allowed in heaven and prays that "if you feel in my heart that I long for revenge please blame it on the son of the morning, thanks again." Carter, who once prayed to Gotti, tells God he understands that revenge will not help, but that reminder of a new day makes it hard not to want revenge for his comrades who cannot see the son/sun of the morning. Lucifer is a mature update of "D'evils" that deploys his common topoi of testimony, spirituality as black rhetorical tradition and the communalism focus of dramatized realities being the reality of many in his imagined audience.[60] 'Lucifer' finds the epic hero, in his words recognizing "that evil inside can consume us and hurt our communities more than help" Jay frames himself as a communal griot, an African epic hero of speaking according to Persley[61] on the album.

Elsewhere, on songs like "Justify My thug" and the popular "99 problems" he addresses racist police profiling in black environs and white apathy similar to songs such as Renegade and Dopeman. Gidding writes that on the album Carter had a revived awareness of his community, as "the Brooklyn boy cognizant of the limits of many black communities seems to advocate for his white constituency to pay attention to the squalor of his community." On "Justify my Thug;" Carter invokes his classic comic reveal of the hustler actually being an activist-leader. After detailing his ability to survive, Jay closes with a call for help for his community, "Mr. President , there's drugs in our residence, tell me what you want me to do, come break

bread with us/Mr. Governor I swear there's a cover up every other corner there's a liquor store, the fuck is up?!"

On the hit "99 problems" he makes a 80s rap rock tinged song about how Jay the drug dealer was harassed by cops but like Brer rabbit able to outsmart the powers that be but also how Jay the CEO is still harassed by police.[62] Thus, the individual and communal are always intertwined on the *Black album,* as the hero offers constant references to communal topoi of dealing with police profiling and discrimination that his imagined audience shares regardless of class position. The rhetor as spokesman is now an epic hero and leader as Giddens writes, "Just as congress persons are beholden to their constituencies, Jay-Z is compelled to make frequent homage of his community on his farewell album. (p.25)"[63] The issue of responsibility to his constituency is most visible in the controversial song "Moment of Clarity."

Moment of clarity: Hero takes off his pride

Throughout the album, the epic frame has highlighted his wins and his and his communities struggle, but this song focuses on his dialectic of identification, mediating his individual and audience demands—his love and his duty. It goes back to his comic transcendence focus of previous albums rising above claims of selling out claiming his success was for a higher cause. Here he widens the frame to his business work, using his financial power as a key feature of his ability to comically transcend above critiques. Jay-Z attempted to use the comic correctives and epic frames to configure transcendence—comic in his juxtaposition of terms and epic in his claims of self. "Moment of clarity" picks up where the bounce left off. Here, Jay-Z offers one last defense for the propensity for pop songs over more thought provoking work and goes back to contrasting this defense with a higher cause. He is 'transcending upward' claiming his pop songs are for a higher cause—a win-win for self and community.[64] The BSR is framed as confessional about his "truths" as he calls them in the song." Jay-Z also makes the argument that if you really listen you can still hear his sincerity underneath his strategy. Moment of Clarity is trying to negotiate the demands of two sides of his audience. Jay-Z explains:

> there are almost 2 Jay-z's , the one who can drop a 'I just wanna love you' songs that are intended for wide audiences designed to get them high off the sheer pleasure of the music and then there are the deeper album cuts which are more complicated but that makes an album. I think it's worth it to try to

> find that balance, it's like life sometimes you just want to dumb out in the club other times you want to get real deep.[65]

Thus Shawn the rhetor tries to strategize how to deploy his narrative appeals "to make sure it touches as many people as possible without losing my personal story or integrity." Moreover, the song deals with a tension in music criticism that if, its popular it lacks artistry, which Carter is bothered by. Jay claimed he wanted his music to reach as many "people as possible, the regular people, sisters on their way to work, dudes in their rides, I know there are underground outlets but I like to reach people who get their music from the radio and the club." On the second verse, he addresses his approach and relationship with audiences; listing his album titles as poetic devices to detail the story of his relationship with his imagined audience (Similar to 'What can I say' in the parentheses I list the implied premise and rhetorical aim of his lyrics and ethos):

> Thank God for granting me this moment of clarity **(thank god for this opportunity to share my discourse)**/This moment of honesty - the world will feel my truths **(the world will find my confessions, sincere, and hear a true testimony)** All through my Hard Knock Lifetime, A Gift and a Curse/I gave you Volume after Volume of my work/So you can feel my truths **(each album was means of me sharing my personal truths, my ethos of sincerity, my BSR.)** The Dynasty being one of the realest niggas out/Way beyond a Reasonable Doubt - y'all can't fill my shoes **(my greatness can't be replicated)**/From my Blueprint beginning to that Black Album ending/Listen close you'll hear what I'm about **(if you really listen, I am sharing my character with you through all these albums)** Nigga, feel my truths **(not singular but multiple)**.[66]

The chorus is a reiterated statement, where Carter declares his pending retirement has allowed him to reflect and asserts that he has been sincere on all his albums and no one else can fill his shoes based on this high level use of sincerity. The use of his album titles, reveal he has been telling a *bildungsroman* and his desire to have his "truth" accepted by his core audience. Then, Hova directly speaks to critiques of his work from the *black public sphere,* particularly the dumbing down of his lyricism, and less focus on black topics. Indeed Carter has intimated as much but here he is more direct and challenges critiques:

> Music business hate me cause the industry ain't make me **(I am self-made musician and outsider, roc-a-fella records was denied by all)**/Hustlers and boosters embrace me and the music I be making **(the hustlers and robbers identify with my music, especially my debut)** /I dumbed down for my audience to double my dollars **(but hustlers and boosters is a limited market, I simplified my style and increased my profits**)/They criticized me for it, yet they all yell "holla" **(it worked, I made holla a popular phrase and in turn made myself a profitable artist by dumbing down for the audience.)**

Carter admits, he sacrificed artistry to increase his income and influence but is unapologetic about such. When he states "they criticized me for it but they all yell holla; he is referencing how he was criticized for pop hits but someone was buying these pop hits because his slang "holla at your boy" became commonplace. In his memoir he explains that the idea of the broke or struggling artist is not why he rapped, "I did not come in the music business to enjoy my own rhymes, I came into the music business to reach as many people as possible and get paid." In true trickster fashion, Jay-Z claims his dumbing down is actually a skill; it is hard to write a song that connects to multiple audiences. He explains "a dumbed down" record actually forces you to be smarter and balance authenticity and accessibility with your songwriting. Although he claims hip-hop is "too important to be reduced to a commercial product, I am in the business of selling product."

Jay-Z advocates that artistry matters but he feels his dumbing down have actually benefitted not only him but his community. Kareem explains "Jay believes that as a financially successful rapper part of his duties are to inspire and provide for his community financially, (151)" not just symbolically. Below he explains how his goals are a transcendent cause one that benefits the community and him-he transcends upward to remind audiences he is an epic hero for the 'hood:

> If skills sold, truth be told, I'd probably be Lyrically Talib Kweli/Truthfully I wanna rhyme like Common Sense/But I did 5 mill' - I ain't been rhyming like Common since/When your cents got that much in common And you been hustling since your inception/Fuck perception. Go with what makes sense/Since I know what I'm up against/we as rappers must decide what's most important. And I can't help the poor if I am one of them So I got rich and gave back to me that's the win-win .

Carter explains personally he would love his music to be more like underground rappers Common and Talib, whose focus on skills and black communal made them alternative heroes in hip-hop. He advocates for his trickle-down economics again reverting to his spokesman rhetoric of earlier albums. It appears Jay-Z is not bothered by perception of him watering down, if his success aids his community. The importance of topoi of authenticity is key here, as the rhetor asks us to identify with Jay-Z past testimony as he reminds us he told us on his debut he was a hustler first. Thus in the verse he mentions his goal was "hustling since his inception", so he puns the term "sense" to demonstrate how after RD he stopped rapping complex like conscious rapper Common cause it didn't make sense/cents—money. In contrast, Jay felt instead of rhyming about the struggle all the time, he figured "getting rich" and discussing it would be a bigger help. Kareem notes how the

hustler turned mogul ethos is shaped by claiming his individual aims of hustling and his community aims can co-exist. Kareem argues this reshaped ethos of Jay-Z asserts that he can pursue the good life and 'pull up a seat at the table of capitalistic enterprise on behalf of his community (p.158)".[67] As a fan, Moment of clarity admitted that Jay-Z wasn't always sincere; but offered the belief that his financial success and potential impact raises his success to a transcendent level that inspires his community. But this is a stretching of sincerity that leans towards the selfish.

This revised ethos and use of dual frames, provides Carter with a new means to negotiate the tension of identification. It's an extension of his *Blueprint 2* arguments that he can help the community more by tricking white consumers to support his pop fare. Jay-Z is epic trickster of the mainstream and he encourages his audience to decide what is more important "equipment for living" for audiences or money for causes? It again harkens back to BP2 shift to Carter discounting his own symbolic heroism by claiming he is on a higher level because he is actually changing things for black people as he gets richer. And also a false choice, there is no explanation why he can't do both. Only the implication that he must "sell out" to some degree, to help his community.

Highlighting how polarizing this song was, Dufelmeier has argued, Jay-Z believed that his listeners share his tangible motivation that getting paid and helping your family, is better than exclusively speak to his black community on this song.[68] In song, Jay-Z admits that despite wanting the cash, "he aint just rapping to be platinum" and that he believes in a both/and dynamic that he can uplift his people and his bank account. Yet his bank account literally takes him to new heights and spaces his audience can only aspire to. Despite pop success, much of Jay-Z's empire was built on the black buying base of post soul audiences for his liquor, clothes and footwear. Battle posits, Jay-Z had held the titles of "spokesman and leader of the hustler, proletariats, and the have nots. The single parent moms, the high school dropouts all relied on Shawn Carter to tell their tales."[69] Thus this confession was an admission, that his ascendancy did put him outside of his community and that sometimes he wasn't talking to his core audience—he is joined yet very separate situationally from his listening audience. His elevated status he will not dial down, but he can claim it's in service of his constituents.

Indeed, Keeley writes that an epic frame situates the speaker as above the audience due to their epic skills and triumphs yet connected by shared origins and love for community in civil rights speakers' rhetoric.[70] Jay-Z I contend, invoked this black rhetorical tradition on MOC that situates himself as a potential "leader" who had to compromise as he closes his rap career. Thus the song argues that the epic hero compromised his art for the "greater good" of his community and the song is a confession asking for the goal of identification, "Membership in one's chosen community.[71]" Dyson specifically cites 'Moment of Clarity' as a moment where Jay-Z political philosophy of amassing wealth to help black folk is most visible. Dyson says he signifies the black cultural leadership of Booker T and MLK framing his epic status as a political leader fighting for his constituency while he moves up the social ladder.[72]

Yet Dufelmeir[73] highlights how Carter's pragmatism unknowingly upholds the systemic forces that oppress the community his "reps". That is, the same global companies that benefit from Roc-a-Fella revenue often exploit the same communities Jay-Z raps to. In other words, for all of his rhetorical sincerity Carter's talented tenth trickle-down economics rarely creates lasting change for his core black audience. Symbolically, Jay-Z the hero is inspiring but the tangible impacts are questionable. Daylan details it's similar to NBA athletes whose wealth can inspire and at times aid communities to a minor extent but whose labor benefits the very companies that exploit marginalized folk.[74] In response, Carter claims that few people with his wealth were thinking about black communities, thus Moment of Clarity frames his *strategically ambiguous* pop songs as a worthy sacrifice to' get this bread' for his people. True to black rhetorical traditions, Carter is double-voiced in his speech as he is defending his character, his ethos and advocating that his rhetoric is good for his community. In many ways his stance was a reflection of his post soul audience who also code switched and adapted in Corporate America, often claiming it was for the greater community good.

Jay-Z pop success allowed him and his companies to employ and invest in black graduates, employ college dropouts like Kanye West, and present black project kids as capable and smart enough to be on Forbes. Yet his strategic ambiguity weakened his communal connection with his audience to such a degree that he attempts to repair by maximizing his honesty, pleading "to feel his truth." "Moment of Clarity" is the epic hero betting that they find his "sacrifice" heroic.

Black Album's Closing Credits of Pride, Humility and Reflection

On "PSA"[75] the epic hero takes one last ride to remind that his epic heroism was always about the community despite his neoliberal contradictions. Prior to the album coming out, Carter interviewed with Elizabeth Mendez Perry.[76] Mendez-Perry pondered how Jay-Z balanced wearing the revolutionary Che Guevera shirt with a gaudy diamond encrusted chain feeling it was antithetical to Che and pop artists trying to market revolution. Carter explained he identified with Che and his mission but is not ashamed of his success. The interview bothered Jay-Z and he decided to make a song dedicated to why he can balance the communal mission of Che and the individual mission of Shawn Carter and how this balance makes him hip-hop's hero-once again.[77] PSA begins with a recording geared around this song and album being a piece of history and grounded in sincerity: "Fellow Americans it is with the **upmost pride and sincerity** that I present this recording as a living testament and recollection of history in the making for our generation"[78]

Jay-Z follows this interpolation of civil rights speeches[79] with his most epic opener "Allow me to re-introduce myself, the names Hova! H to the ov!" Jay-Z the epic hero regales about his greatness, how he's dating the hottest woman in music Beyoncé, but used to be moving the rock now running the Roc-a-fella-his now formal use of puns that litters his rhetoric. Again, he is inviting that vicarious boasting of his audience to celebrate the heroic H to the OV who is the music games no.1 supplier of dope…music. In the final verse he address Mendez Berry arguing "I'm che Guevara with bling on I'm complex, I never claimed to have wings on, nigga I get my by any means on." Jay cleverly explains that he is a complex person, as Whitman says a man of multitudes with diverse influences. Thus, he details how he is a cultural leader for his people, not a perfect angel but he like Malcolm X, puts it on the line for his community or for himself when he was hustling. As he says in his memoir, I'm saying 2 things at the same time, by any means on is just the hunger to make it out but also the hunger to put on for [help] my people."[80] Despite his wealth he identifies with Che not the upper crust. Jay-Z argues that his soul hasn't changed despite the money, "I got a hustlers spirit nigga period...no matter where you go you are who you are player and you can try to change but that's just the top layer, man you was who you was fo you got here." This admission is a claim that Jay-Z core character cannot change, only his accomplishments and situations—his sincerity can't fade. Kitwana in defense of Jay argues

PSA shows how Jay-Z embodied the *epic heroism* of hip-hop past and present, "Jay embraces core consumer capitalism and emancipation of the oppressed...he is the post Afrocentric/soul era hip-hop hero: the radicalism of PE, the gangster advocacy of NWA and the business hustle of Russell Simmons. (80)"[81]

Elsewhere, Carter revives the tragic knowledge of 'Regrets' and imagines his life if rap wasn't his hustle on "Allure" which eerily follows the tempo and subject matter of his first song 'In my lifetime." *The Black album* was Jay-Z saying goodbye to the game and closing out his epic narrative. The last two songs were an interesting metaphor for his career Allure and my First song find him reflecting on his criminal past on the former and his first song on the latter—the two paths that he faced in the beginning of his career.[82] Allure finds Jay-Z confessing that yeah he was poor, single mother, but the allure of the hustle, the flash, the freedom is what he was addicted to more than the money and that this occupational psychosis kept him from pursuing music full time early in his career. Moreover, that "the allure of breaking the law does something to his senses" yet naturally he knows how the movie ends he says in the verse as he stated in his 1995 single: dead or in jail. But it's also a metaphor for his music career, as the allure of the love of the audience, the flash, the shine kept pulling him back despite saying RD would be his first and last album.

Drug dealer and Rapper are merged again as warlike hero reflecting on his past hardships in Virginia. The moving violins and gun shot as percussion reflect Jay-Z internal perspective by incongruity as he is torn between the trauma of the streets and the promise of recording in the past. And on this album the shots symbolize the killing of his career—it's a eulogy. The album closes with "My first song." Jay-Z closes out with the ingredients to his heroism: his learning from his failures to create epic wins. Jay-Z explains he had to play with fire and get burned prior to song success, how he was told by teachers he would never gon be shit and how he moved up from a street hustler to a major mover of drugs to now a CEO. Jay closes out with autobiography to bookend his 7 years of narrativizing but tells the audience that he is not dumbing down here, like Moment of Clarity, no he is giving his all.

Jay-Z regales, "The song that I sing to you it's my everything/ treat my first like my last and my last like my first and /this is the same as when I came /it's my joy my tears laugher /my everything." The superhero Jay-Hova lays out that he still cares, cares enough to treat this last song with the same hunger as his

first and that those struggles in small studio rentals and being rejected by labels helped him be the Jay post soul kids all know and love. The song attempts to re-establish, that Jay-Z love for making music was truly his supernatural skill and gift to his generation and that future rappers should follow his path. Barack Obama says the song was the soundtrack for his political runs, as it reminded him to not forget where he came from but also that his past passion would guide him moving forward. Obama notes that song inspired him to want to make his mark.[83] Ultimately that's the function of an epic narrative. Jay-Z made his story feel like our story. BY our, I mean post soul black folk.

Conclusion

The album is called *The Black album* for many reasons, but I think the above analysis demonstrates despite his pop success he is seeking a direct dialogue with his imagined Black audience. The album reflects the call and response modality inherent in African American rhetoric, as Jay-Z album called out to his imagined black audience "Do you still love me" and the response, sold out tour, documentary, and fan discourse online serves as the response to the BSR. Many post soul folks and their children hail this albums lasting effect as the poet answers the call for your life and experiences to be made into art. On the album, Jay-Z deployed his *black sincerity rhetoric* as a flexible mode of identification that can summon his techniques of the past or introduce new strategies to ultimately maintain kinship with his desired community. Albert Murray and his love of Burke aids this discussion, when he writes that black artists find consubstantiality with black audiences by speaking of " idiomatic particulars and process them in a way that gives them universal impact." Murray riffing on Burke explains that black artists "must earn their way as gods and heroes have always had to do," by framing their Black sincerity rhetoric as aiding their audience as "equipment for living." Murrary explains in detail below:

> Black Artists fulfill their obligations and earn their way into the pantheon (of cultural heroes) by tapping into the human experience and realizing the universal implication of specific situations; knowing and engaging all of the" formal artistic traditions through which experience has been stylized into enduring art forms and devising tactics that extend these traditions by contextualizing them within vernacular communication that encompasses the essential nature of experience. (p.146) [84]

In other words, Jay-Z knows and engages the topoi that functions formally, the audience expects and desires his form but also that he employ tactics of black rhetorical tradition to situate his discourse as a generational narrative not just his testimony. The pantheon of black rhetors, Murrary reminds us are heroic for their ability to enact identification with black folks. His listing of accomplishments while bragging also frames the audience as co-sharers in his greatness. The post soul dream of mainstream success and black love, as Cobb argued Jay-Z first decade was an exemplar that it could be done that informed President Obama. *The Black album* was talking to black people about their relationship with Jay-Z and Jay asking for acceptance for his ethos as sincere and helpful to his community. Shawn Setaro has argued, The *Black album* showed "he makes music for people like him; who grew up in his time and tells his story of getting out so maybe they can have the hope to find something in life that carries them out of the hood as well.[85]" *The Black Album* was a testament of BSR as a means of uplifting and maintaining ones prior ethos. The album and supporting documentary *fade to Black* sent Hov out on top trailing only Elvis for most no.1 albums by a solo artist. He was braggadocio boaster, community spokesman and epic hero hustler on *The Black Album*; an epic post-soul sincere hero. Burke again reminds us epic hero and community are interconnected, "Other men live vicariously in his deeds, his courage and self -sacrifice and thus share in a communion or community, both social and religious, of the heroic body." Burke is heavy with the Jesus Trope but it's apt for Jay-Hova aka Hova. The virtues of staying connected to community, telling your authentic story, and not letting the haters stunt your growth are offered as survival virtues to his nuanced post soul audience of young black professionals and college students, ghetto youth, working class hustlers and other black folk that identify.

In his first era, Jay-Z rhetoric magnified the interior lives of black folk as socially acceptable—the hustle was a virtue not the crime. The rhetorical genius of Jay-Z is that for those that identified with his ethos as sincere; we vicariously feel like one "smart black boy", we feel that "we are focused man" on achieving our goals, we feel the naysayers from our neighborhood "hating on our rise", but most importantly we are just as super as he is because we share the "flaw" of being black in America. Jay is/was not my favorite rapper, but in grad school surrounded by rich white kids his black hero talk was inspiring yet comforting as he didn't give up talking to his community despite also being surrounded by white people in his corporate life. I listened to

Jay before every presentation because I vicariously felt confident as a black man in a room full of people who often questioned my humanity. Jay-Z's black sincerity rhetoric was fluid, dynamic and adaptable but transparent in its direct discourse with an imagined audience. We see Carter pull out varied takes on his tried and true techniques to generate a sense of communion and consubstantiality with his audience on this his supposed farewell album.

Notably *Black album* closes out the first act of his career and closes out a period of hip-hop—as the epic hero is slowly replaced with more common secular heroes in hip-hop of the mid and late aughts. With former producer Kanye leading the pack with his best-selling debut months after *The Black Album;* rappers focusing on their flaws more than their epic wins began to reshape hip-hop. The de facto president of hip-hop would become the president of Def Jam records started by his hero Russell Simmons. The move saw Jay-Z dissolve his relationship with longtime partners Burke and Damon Dash, which led to much criticism from many who saw the trio as a scion of black business. Roc a fella records soon dissolved with Jay-Z buying the name and buying his masters. The hero would fade into retirement. For three years. Then Jay-Hova would resurrect on the third year.

Endnotes

[1] Carter, S. "Hova and out". January 2004. *Vibe Magazine. 73-80*

[2] See Chapter 4

[3]Walty, Matt. Dec.4, 2016. "Jay-Z's Reebok Deal Changed the Sneaker industry Forever. *Complex.Com*

[4] Jay-Z. April 18, 2003. *The S.Carter Collection. TIDAL.*

[5] Mitra, A. & Watts, E.K. 2001. Theorizing Voice in Cyberspace.

[6] Jay-Z.2010. "Operation Takeover" Decoded. 184-185

[7] Ibid. 2010. 185

[8] I am aware that many poor working class whites and non-blacks relate as well to this struggle although unintended.

[9] Simmons, R. "Russell Simmons Speaks" . *S. Carter Collection* 2005. Tidal/Roc-Nation.

[10] Clair, J. 1997. "Biggies Last Interview" BET Networks. Bet.Com

[11] Ibid. 2004.

[12] Ibid 2004

[13] Burke 1985.266

[14] L., Van Deburg William. 2014. *Black Camelot African-American Culture Heroes in Their Times, 1960-1980*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[15] Cepeda, R. 2004. "Introduction to Hov Retires". *Vibe Magazine 72.* This includes his compilation and collaboration albums MTV Unplugged and Linkin Park Collision series and his R. Kelly duo albums.

[16] Caramanica, Jon (2004) "Jay-Z". In Christian Hoard (ed.). *The Rolling Stone Album Guide*: 424–425.

[17] Burke, K. 1996. Attitudes Towards History. University of California: Berkley

[18] Ibid, 34

[19] Burke. 1996. ATH 34-37

[20] Deburg. 2014. 79

[21] Burke. 1984.ATH 336

[22] Rutledge, J. 2015. *The Epic Trickster*

[23] Carter, S. "Hova and out". January 2004. *Vibe Magazine. 73-80*

[24] Adapted from Joseph Campbell's The Hero with a thousand faces and James Evans's "We Have Been Believers: An African American Systemic Theology 1992.

[25] Roberts, John W. 2010. *From Trickster to Badman The Black Folk Hero in Slavery and Freedom*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press., Miller, D. 2010. *The Epic Hero*

[26] Charity, Justin. 2019. "Looking back at the black album" *The undefeated*

[27] Carter, S & Carter, M. 2003. "December 4th" *The Black Album. Def Jam Recordings/Roc-a-Fella*

[28] Songs praising black mothers became a trend following 2pac's 1992 "Dear Mama."

[29] Roberts. 2010., Thompson, Robert Farris. 2010. *Flash of Spirit: African and Afro American Art and Philosophy*

[30] West, D. *Raising Kanye: Life Lessons from the Mother of a Hip-Hop Superstar. Gallery Books. 2009*

[31] Giddings, J. 2011. "The authentic cultural agent. Jay-Z: Essays on Hip-Hop's Philosopher King. Pp. 15-28

[32] Boylorn, Robin. "From Boys to Men: Hip-hop, Hood Films, and the performance of contemporary black masculinity." *Black Camera.* Vol. 8. No.2. Spring 2017. Pp.146-164

[33] Giddings. 2011.

[34] Carter, S. & Carter, G. "December 4th 2003.

[35] Wayne, Michael. 2011. Imagining Black America. 163-165, Hardy, Antoine. 2011. *Loving the Cool;* Campbell, Kermit Ernest. 2005. *Gettin Our Groove on: Rhetoric, Language, and Literacy for the Hip Hop Generation.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

[36] Convertible vehicle, no hood, thus an easy target to be shot.

[37] When people get their SSI and EBT funds or pay day for many who are biweekly

[38] Reference to real life murder of drug dealer Harlem 's Rich Porter's little brother in 1987.

[39] Carter, S. & Carter, Gloria. "December 4th" *The Black Album Def Jam Recordings/Roc-A-Fella Records* 2003.

[40] Hyde, Michael J. *The Ethos of Rhetoric. South Carolina Press. 2006.*

[41] Carter, S. & West, K. "Encore" *The Black Album*

[42] Ibid

[43] Banks and Gilyard. 2018. 13

[44] Battle, Sha'dawn. 2011. Shawn Carter: The Self-Reliant Philosopher King." Essays on Hip Hop's Philosopher King. Ed. Julius Bailey. McFarland, 2011.

[45] Roberts. 2010.

[46] Neal, Mark Anthony. 2015. *Illegitimate Black Masculinities*

[47] Carter, S. & West, K. "Encore" *The Black Album*

[48] Carter. 2004. Vibe

[49] The interpolation of James also signals how the song is vague enough to be a mainstream celebration but the details and throwback use of call and response and signifying announce it is a black conversation.

[50] Burke, K. (1984) *Attitudes Towards History*

[51] Most notably, the song and gesture got on national radars when Obama dusted his shoulders off in reference to Hilary Clintons attacks during his campaign.

[52] Quoted in Roberts 2010.

[53] Carter, S. "What More Can I say" *The Black Album*

[54] Half a billion

[55] Ill meaning sick which is slang for good?

[56] Kitwana, B. 2012.

[57] Bradley, A. 2017.

[58] Deme, Mariam *Heroism and the Supernatural in the African Epic.* 2011

[59] Jay-Z. 2010. *Decoded*

[60] Years later the song would strangely be seen as a devil worship evidence by conspiracy theorists

[61] Persley, N. 2011. "An Urban Singer of Tales: The Freestyle Remixing of an AfroHomeric Oral Tradition. In Julius Bailey. 2011. *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip Hops Philosopher King.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland.67-84

[62] Produced by Rick Rubin of Def Jam and Run DMC early production fame. A means of Jay-Z going back to his roots to record with a producer of his time before he was popular enough to have on a record.

[63] Giddings, J. 2011. "The authentic cultural agent. Jay-Z: Essays on Hip-Hop's Philosopher King. Pp. 15-28

[64] Jasinski, J. 2001 "*Sourcebook on Rhetoric. Thousand Oaks: CA; Madhusudanan, Maritqa. 2019. "Transcension through exploring the rhetoric of transcendence. Medium.Com*

[65] Carter.S. Decoded. 145

[66] Carter, S. & Mathers, M. "Moment of Clarity" The Black Album. Roc-a-Fella Records. Def Jam Recordings. 2003.

[67] Kareem, J. 2015. "The Mogul Ethos and the American Dream in Contemporary Rap Music. In Walker, Crapananzo, Donica, J; in *The Good Life and the Greater Good in a Global Context.* 150-158

[68] Dufelmeier, D. "A 40 million dollars Slave's Moment of Clarity" in Julius Bailey (ed.) *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip-Hop's Philosopher King.* Pp.108-117.

[69] Battle. 2011

[70]Keeley, B. October, 15 2008. "I may not get there with you: I've Been to the Mountaintop as Epic Discourse. *Southern Communication Journal.* 280-294

[71] Kareem, J. 2015.

[72] Quoted in Kareem. 2015. 156

[73] Dufelmeier, D. 2011 "A 40 million dollars Slave's Moment of Clarity" in Julius Bailey (ed.) *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip-Hop's Philosopher King.* 108-117.
[74] Dufelmeir, D. 2011.

[75] Interlude is the official title. But it's known as Public Service announcement by most fans.

[76] Berry, Mendez Elizabeth . January 2004. "The Last Hustle" *Village Voice*

[77] Carter was encouraged to make the song by his closest friends although the album was done according to @aintnojigga twitter profile/archive

[78] Smith, J. & Carter, S. 2003. "PSA" *The Black Album*

[79] Producer Just Blaze, wanted it to sound like a sample from an old black panther clip but couldn't get the rights to the video.

[80]Jay-Z. 2011

[81] Kitwana, B. 2011. "The reach from the Hood to the Suburbs" in *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip-Hop's Philosopher King.* 75-93

[82] Allure which producer Pharell argued was the last scene in Carlito's way referencing the opening of Volume 1 with Carlito. See the film *Fade to Black (2004).*

[83] Obama , B. "Obama Honors Jay-Z at Songwriters Hall of Fame: Jay-Z Induction. 2017 www.npr.org/sections/therecod/2017/06/16/533200940/barack-obama-honors-jay-z-at-songwriters-hall-of-fame-gala

[84] Hoffman, H. 2010. Albert Murray's House of Blues in Baker, B.(ed) 2010. *Albert Murray and the Aesthetic Imagination of a Nation*. University of Alabama Press. 138-153

[85] Setaro, Shawn, Summer 2018. "Jay-Z's Best albums" Complex Magazine

FINAL CHAPTER: JAY-HOVA'S RESURRECTION AT THE END OF THE POST SOUL ERA: KINGDOM COME AND AMERICAN GANGSTER

> A rapper's life is like three albums … unless you gon' endure during the times," Jay-Z said. "That's a special case. It's like 3 to 5% of artists who have a successful career. Crazy, right-Jay-Z in 1997[1]

Introduction

Elizabeth Mendez Berry pondered in her now infamous interview that Jay-Z on *The Black Album* seemed to be tired of the character of Jay-Z.[2] Despite the epic work of being preacher, hustler, and motivational speaker throughout the album in interviews he referenced the constraints of rap and how *The Black album* tried to end this conversation, "We as artists are forced with keeping it real and going back to the hood and making the hardcore record so we don't get criticized. Whenever a person tries to go and do different things they condemn it as a sellout attempt. Myself included, we can't be afraid to grow. What's the point if we can't talk about the new things we've seen?[3]" This interview would foreshadow his comeback album *Kingdom Come.* Mendez Berry asked young producer/artist Kanye West "what would happen if Jay-Z talked about all the things he's seen not just the safe dangerous stuff—if he started making music from the pit of his stomach." West paused and responded, "Can you imagine that, I wouldn't have a chance."

In this chapter I first examine the album *Kingdom Come* and Jay-Z's attempt to make a Shawn Carter album, about his contemporary corporate life not his past/present dialectic of previous albums. In particular I chart how a shift in form leads to failure of Jay-Z's *BSR.* In response, I then examine how the album *American Gangster* rehabilitated his damaged ethos and how he signifies on his past forms to revive his kinship with imagined post soul audiences one last time. Nearly a decade after his debut, I examine how Carter has to go back home rhetorically to make audiences feel back at home with his *BSR at the nadir of the post soul era.* My analysis focuses on Carters' combined usage of acceptance frames to repair his ethos. The next section focuses on his post-retirement attempts to transcend the dialectic of joined yet separate, prior to the release of *Kingdom Come*. Jay-Z return campaign would begin on radio. In his lyrical oeuvre Jay-Z has mainly discussed his life before rap and a few contemporary highlights. In the final video for *The Black Album*, Jay-Z

in baggy gear and Yankees cap is shot down; Carter explained later was the killing off of Jay-Z. The epic hero had been sacrificed. Closing out a chapter in his life, he moved to the corporate job of Def Jam President. Post retirement Roc-a-Fella Records sold their remaining 50% of their business to Island Def Jam, yet as President Jay-Z retained control of the label and his master recordings and split with his two partners Damon Dash and Kareem Burke.[18]

The dissolution of Roc-A-Fella led to some criticism for those who saw it as a sign of a black business broken up. Also, as Def Jam president, former peers such as LL Cool J felt Carter focused on youth talent such as Rihanna and Kanye not the established stars at Def Jam.[4] Shawn Carter's corporate ascendancy was in contrast with a shift in rap music in 2003-2004. The 90s hustler who dominated rap was being outsold by down to earth quirksters Outkast and middle-class Black life raps of Kanye. Yet these artists transcended down often relating with audiences about their everyday failures and mistakes and not their epic greatness. However, Jay-Z's is the story of a black rhetorician who, despite epic wins, often fails at identification with his desired audience. This chapter highlights his failure with KC and how his BSR allows him to revive his acceptance with the concept album American Gangster. By highlighting his rhetorical techniques we can see how his BSR in previous chapters is in Burkean terms "stretched to new situations" and mutates and adapts to his view of his desired audience.

In 2006 however, many in the black public sphere lamented popular hip-hop's lack of depth.[5] As Byron Hurts documentary highlighted aspiring black rappers often felt being a hustler was the only persona that was viable as new rappers emphasized their rap sheet trying to be the next Jay-Z.[6]. Jay-Z on a random weekend decided to go to Hot 97 and test out if people wanted the hero to return with his "Grammy family" freestyle, a verse over his protégé Kanye's new beat that reiterated his epic position by referencing Basquiat, Martin, Malcolm, and even Caesar.

[18] Furthermore, producer Kanye West's debut *The College Dropout* would become the bestselling release from the label since *Hard Knock Life* raising the value of the company.

Jay-Z Returns: Grammy Family/Corporate Takeover[7]

Carter once explained that Basquiat "Most kings" painting inspired him, as he felt NYC native Basquiat recognized the greats of black life often "get their heads cut off" way to early, but also seeing himself as a fellow pivotal artist.[8] Carter opens by discussing the criticism of his ethos being insincere and the struggle to meet audience expectations, "Build me up, and break me down to build me up again. They like Hov we need you back so we can kill your ass again/Hov got flow though he's no Big or Pac, but he's close,/How I'm supposed to win when ya'll got me fighting ghosts," he snarkily quips. Carter reveals how the feedback of the audience fuels and frustrates his black sincerity rhetoric; he snarls about unfair expectations but attempts to impress the audience simultaneously. Jay then details how "your own people" will bring you up and then tear you down, citing intra-racial division within his desired audience. Referencing Shakespeare, Carter states, "Same sword they knight you they gon good night you with...don't believe me ask Michael (Jackson or Jordan), See Martin, See Malcolm, You see Biggie and Pac, see success and its outcome, see Jesus, see Judas, See Caesar, See Brutus…see success is like suicide, if you succeed prepare to be crucified."

Three years retired, Jay-Z has resurrected to say he shares substance and identifies with epic heroic figures that were slandered, abused and killed due to jealousy and envy. Despite his cushy corner job and Beyoncé as a fiancée, Carter asks us to identify with the hero as the victim. BY framing black heroes as persecuted or even killed for being great, Carter is asking for audience to accept and relate to his frustration of not receiving unconditional black audience acceptance. Again a comic attitude is visible, as Jay-Z says, "no you're mistaken I the legend am being mistreated;" he wants the charitable benefit of the doubt a comic frame encourages but not abscond his epic status. Elsewhere the rapper, addresses claims of him selling out and leaving his past friends, "everybody look at you strange like you changed, like you work so hard to stay the same." The man, who claimed you are who you are playa in 2003, now admits that he is supposed to grow up and change from 1996 and rejects the idea that growth is synonymous with selling out. Instead Shawn Carter, I argue takes over the third verse and dismisses reviving the old Hov:

> Everybody screaming for the old hov/.everybody wanna hear me talk that money like Phil Rizzutto/ but my mind is on Pluto/ Bills that I do fold/ I invest on/as where I used to have a few hoes/ I am

> just concentrating on making a new hov through sex.. . I have awakened just in time to school those putos[9]/ trying to follow in my shoes with jewels froze/'fo you go broke spending more than you've accrued on silly baguettes, and I know silly begets (pun) silly you'll learn on your own, but at least my conscience is clear, I'm no longer steering you wrong.

Jay-Z would rarely admit to any direct fault. Yet, here he confesses a level of guilt about his shared discourse and regret that he saw rappers as competition not family. What we hear in this moment is Jay-Z telling the audience about who he is today not the origins of his epic status. Carter is transcending again; arguing that he's ascended the hierarchy but sharing his lessons with his people far removed from this space.

In the final verse, he illuminates his unique position since his retirement; he honors himself for having a seat at the table of capitalist enterprises. "I wanted audiences to hear that Jay-Z isn't just the former hustler anymore, I am changing the way we [black people] are respected and seen in corporate offices," he writes in *Decoded*.[10] Jay spits: "gotta be more than the choruses/ they respecting my mind now/ just a matter of time now/ operation takeover/ corporate makeover offices/ then take over/ all of it." Carter demonstrates how BSR is all about adaptation to audience but also introducing old appeals in new outfits. The Jay-Z that said he was taxing the corporate offices in 2001 is now telling audiences "look I infiltrated the boardroom and kept my promise." It's a mix of post soul values inherent in his *BSR* and his use of topoi that allows his discourse to adjust to the audience. Carter explained that in Hip-hop "our goal is to take what we've learned about the world from our lives and apply it in the corporate arena," he says. Thus, Bradley's incisive analysis is again helpful as her work highlights how Jay-Z's hustler is all about having transferrable skills and these skills are actually an asset that aids the survival of the former hustler in the corporate world.[11] The crab is out the barrel but he's safe because if he can survive that barrel, imagine surviving with freedom and wealth is Jay's attitude and plea to his audience.

Jay-Z brags that he was on *Time Magazine*'s most influential cover, "I wasn't in the artists section had me with the builders and the titans/had me with Rupert Murdoch/the billionaire boys." Reiterating that he has ascended to a new height; yet he recognizes or at least addresses that this ascendancy comes at a cost: the criticism of his sincerity and soul. "The more successful the more stressful/ the more and more I transform into Gordon Gecko/ in the race to a billion got my face to the ceiling/ got me knees on the floor please lord forgive him. He's having heaven on earth will his wings still fit him." Jay-Z individual goals of being a

billionaire*, render him greedy like Gordon Gecko but he reverts back to his rhetorical contract on 1998, "where I'm from" and prays his greed doesn't block his blessings or alter his connection with audiences.

Thus, Carter recognizes he and his BSR must be tethered to his imagined audience as he rises up the ladder, he must expunge his *survivor's guilt* by offering his transcendence as good for the post soul black nation. The epic hero still represents his subjects, as he quips at the end of one verse but the claim is that the hero is infiltrating so his people can inherit the earth. Carter ends with optimism for his audience to "takeover" : "real kings don't die they become martyrs lets toast to them/King Arthur put a robe to em like James Brown/, know the show aint over till/ Rome's ruined /till the republic is overthrowed /till my loyal subjects is over Hov. Long live the king."[12] In merging King Arthur and James Brown, we see the threads of his new framing of his heroic character; Carter is the King of hip-hop but a proud black man who wants to see his people win like James Brown; he wants his people to be "over hov" and as long as he can convince us that he wants us to win like him; his black sincerity rhetoric can be accepted.

Epic Hero returns to Spokesperson: Jay-Z's gets Back to his Roots

Again the move to the comic supports his epic claims, by relating his ultimate goal is revolution for his constituents and for them to be more successful than Jay-Z. Julius Bailey argues that at this stage of his career, the hero as philosopher king is the persona he attempts to get audiences to see him as not the heroic hustler. Bailey explains that Carter is trying to forge a new identity for self and audience, in 2006 "his music serves as a force, particularly for minorities to create a new identity—but also a new rhetoric to augment the identity, a new lingo and new symbols of identity."[13] In relation, Bradley writes that the philosopher king was the archetype of non-hustler rappers, such as Common that blended emotional vulnerability and intellect to challenge white essentialism expand on the complexities of the world around them and their struggle to represent the folk.[14] Carter will associate himself with these rappers accepted as communal voices by his imagined audience to revive interest in his comeback and acceptance for his new version of *BSR*.

Here, Jay-Z aligns himself with militant rap group Dead Prez's black uplift platform and encouraging the creation of black business and criticizing white supremacy.[15] Jay announces, "if you claiming gangsta then bang on the system. And show you ready to ride. Till we get our freedom we got to get over."

The universal we of the 60s and 70s are invoked as Jay claims that real gangsters challenge the status quo like outspoken group Dead Prez. Jay-Z relates how "the first black in the suburbs, you'd think I had ecstasy Percocet and syrup the way the cops converged." Despite his ascendancy to fame the feds still profile him like other Black folk he suggests-serving as a "bridging device" to unify rhetor and audience. In the end, he implores that White parents should care more about the hood than the influence of hood music on their suburban kids. Ending the song with a rally cry: "Hell yeah you fucked up the hood/ nigga right back to you/ hell yeah we tired of starving." The collaboration with "conscious rappers" continued on the Get By remixes with Talib Kweli.

On the track Jay who once lamented not rapping like Talib due to lack of sales, encourages Talib's skill for speaking truth to power and claims he is now more empowered to help his folk as a CEO. Carter rejects sell out claims stating "your folks think Hov just wrote stuff to rhyme, nah I'm a poster for what happened seeing your mom's doing five dollars' worth of work for a dime, why should I listen to system that never listened to me."[16] Reviving his black album discourse, Shawn opens up about his emotional trauma and claims that his hustle is motivated by seeing his mom exploited. Jay-Z announces that "being at the bottom caused him to sell coke and carry a .45 just to get by," but that his inner ambition is what essentially got him success. On the song you hear Mos, Kanye, and Talib, all non-hustlers, praise Jay-Z's influence on them to speak for their communities. It demonstrates the polysemic identification within post soul audiences, as most Jay-Z fans were not motivated to sell coke but instead identified with his desire to represent. But more importantly it shows Jay-Z attempts to aid his acceptance; instead of aligning with Biggie or Nas in 1996, he knows his separation from the audience required a step back into the hip-hop underground.

Sha'Dawn Battle's in depth work situates Jay-Z career from 96-2003 being the Brooklyn Native who was grounded in the streets "the earlier albums gave him the green light to be the moral voice for the various cultures that Macy projects beheld. . . Shawn Carter the modern day griot to retell the tales of ghetto life and aspiration."[17] Yet by 2006, he's not even a rapper/CEO as he says on Kanye's Diamonds, "I'm not a businessman, I am a business MAN." Carter is the owner of one of the most successful black owned businesses in the world in 2006. Indeed, Battle argues his goals and motives are no longer solely informed by

his lack in youth but individual curiosity he hopes black fans share. In 2006, Jay-Z decided to make a comeback album *Kingdom Come,* claiming that hip-hop was missing a hero, in the mist of dull albums and stagnant sales. Originally the album was gonna be released with Shawn Carter being listed as the artist.[18] The topoi of black sincerity, the comic attitude and the epic framing will all be found on this album but used and deployed differently, revealing an ethos of sincerity and BSR unique from previous works. The hustler persona is fully replaced by 30 something music exec; here he asks audiences to accept his "new hustle" similar to his debut.

Carter explained that the mock murder in the 99 problems video was for him "represented the death of Jay-Z" and the rebirth of Shawn Carter.[19] Jay-Z is the dramatized version of Shawn Carter and on this LP, the hustler Jigga is figurative at best and instead the emotions and lifestyle of Shawn corporate employee at 38 dominate. The album was named after the comic about Superman's return, hip-hop superman came back. But what version? In 2006, Jay-Z sought to "call his tune" and persuade audiences to identify with his maturity and insight at 38. Mendez-Berry, once pondered what would Jay sound like if he rapped about his current life. Kingdom Come is that album.

The Prelude: A Message from 90s Jigga

The album opens with "The Prelude" and a sample from the film *Superbly*, which encapsulates Jay's move to the corporate world: "You know, you've got this... fantasy in your head about/getting outta the life and, setting the corporate world on its ear/ What the FUCK you gonna do except hustle?" The ambition of the drug dealer is the same "Cocky motherfucker" in these corporate offices is implied. Jay-Z then explains that his addiction to the love of the fans is what brought him back to rap, positioning his ethos and *BSR* as interconnected with the audience. *BSR* says despite my success I need the love of the imagined black audience, I need this conversation and not just for record sales. And also that black audiences "need my rhetoric." His opening track again serves as a mission statement.

A call to restore order, Carter proclaims in the opening line that the "game is fucked up" because rappers are entertaining but not being sincere and says audiences claimed they want truth and lyrics but currently supported rappers with false testimonies. Carter even addressed the rising role of social media, when

he claims "Being intricate can get you wood[19] critics/ so I would write it if ya'll would get it/ the internet is like you should spit it,/I am like you should buy it /that's good credit." Carter here responds to critics of "Moment of Clarity" that say he shouldn't water down his lyrics but that goes against his base motive of being a hustler. The song reminds audiences of his trinity of topoi, as he effortlessly moves from the authenticity of his past narratives, his punning word play and his claims of epic greatness. Yet a paucity of appeals to community. Carter shifts to explain how the hustler life inspired his business moves currently; detailing his transition from shoebox full of money to luxury car keys to sending 100 million dollars through a bank transfer "hands free." Carter dismisses the "sure he's rich now" critiques, claiming that his experiences then, explain his success now and ends with a defense of rapping at his age.

"Sure he's rich now/ but I saw this shit, all this shit/I used to think rapping at 38 was ill/But last year alone I grossed 38 mill'/I know I ain't quite 38 but still/The flow so Special got a /.38(caliber) feel/The real is back, hehehehe." The sample and lyrical intricacy finds Jigga sampling his own topos of blackness, double meanings and gun metaphors stylistically to reassert his authentic testimony and to state, "I'm back." Reminding audiences of why they accepted him prior. *The real* was that feeling that the intricate, complex and undiluted Jay-Z had returned. It's an invocation of his hip-hop pedigree. Why trust the new product when tried and true Jay-Z is back? Indeed, the first four songs on KC harken to superhero Hova. As "the prelude" is a traditional Jay-Z album wrapped in one song: addressing the haters, devotion to fans and story of the hustler squaring his past with his present. The album early on focuses on reminding audience of his greatness.

Superhero Hova: Epic Skills and Vicarious Braggadocio

On "Show me what you got" and "Oh my god," Carter claims Superman is back and that the game needed him. The epic hero announces on Kingdom Come the song, "he is hip-hop's savior," and the king is ready to come and reclaim his throne. Carter admits on "Oh my God", "I was sick of rap" but now claimed he was more evolved and "showing growth I'm Ceo," then he closes with the ultimate epic hero sign off "just when you thought the world fell apart, I take off the blazer, loosen up the tie step inside the booth superman is alive."[20] Carter opens the album with songs that remind audiences of his epic heroism*, especially when he says*,

[19] Wood as in not platinum or gold selling

the "Bruce Wayne of the game, Flash Gordon of recording, Peter Parker ,spider man all I do is climb the charts." Carter sticks with this topical device of referencing superheroes similar to his civil rights heroes in past songs, but the goal of this BSR is to make black audiences see Jay-Z return as desirable, necessary, and believe he did it with sincere motives to aid their lives. Carter makes his epic framing humane when he mentions that his core audience wants him and needs him to return, "I hear hurry up hov when I am out in public. You be it/ you're of it/ you breathe it/ we need it /bring it back for the hustlers..."

Carter dramatizes the imagined audience seeing him in the street or at events and pleading for his return, thus he's coming back for the audience left without an epic hero is his claim. He mythologizes himself to dramatize that he came back to rap for his constituency. Also he shows us how the rhetor listens and responds to calls from the audience. Indeed, CEO Hov is mistaken; the comic attitude requests you see that he ideally cares about his people more than power. Then the album takes a marked shift, where the bragging of epic framing is reduced to the emotional confessions of Jay-z nee Shawn Carter as a 30 something black man trying to figure out where is home, where does his ethos reside and look like sans the persona of Jay-Z.

Epic Vulnerability: Shawn Carter takes over the Album

The rest of the album displayed a new Jay-Z reflective about his personal life. Although an epic hero, Persley and Burke remind us the hero has to have humane flaws that make him relatable and unlike Blueprint or Black album here he is willing to critique his own flaws. On songs like "Lost One's" he lamented his difficulty at love, bad business deals, miscarriages and the death of his nephews. Elsewhere, Jay-Z is at his most sermonic on "Trouble" and "Dig A hole" criticizing Bush's reign, and his own personal guilt over giving charity money instead of time to victims of Katrina. Or the song "Would You Like to Ride," [21] a letter to Carter's incarcerated ex street partner Emory Jones. Jay expounds on the joys of his 'legal hustle" and how it will provide a life for his friend when he gets parole. The topos of community is invoked as in his own life demonstrates the black axiom: don't forget where you're from and who you came up with.[22] Yet the hustler identification by braggadocio of *the black album* was absent and heartfelt confession in its place.

Fans didn't connect with vulnerable non-heroic Jay. It's widely lauded as his worst album, behind BP2 according to Jay-Z's own rankings.[23] Fans and critics claimed Jay-Z sounded lost not sure of what

persona to use. Indeed, Nathan Rabin comments that *Kingdom Come* offered listeners insight into the surprisingly dull life of a thirty-something hip-hop mogul with nothing to prove. Village Voice's Tom Briehan said, Jay-Z was trapped in "the royal materialistic old-man haze" and the cushy life of success alienated lovers of his street tinged tales. Noted music critic Robert Christagu even argued "it's hard to cling to street cred when you've got shareholders on your mind." The distance between post soul audience and Jay was not bridged by *KC*. Former label mate Beanie Siegel, said that Jay-Z's lifestyle was real and true for him, but detached from his core black audience that grew up with him. Siegel is direct when he points out "Jay-z says I wore the doo rag on MTV, I made them love you; but you talking black cards and good credit, you got the May Bach... it makes my dodge charger look like shit, like you turning your back on the things and people that got you here.[24]" For Siegel, Carter's last two albums highlighted his separation from black communities, in relation; rapper 50 Cent called Jay a *Grey Poupon* rapper-meaning rich and out of touch. A fan and close friend of Jay, Chicago's Lupe fiasco rejected his epic stature, saying in 2006, "I don't want to be Jay-z and worth 400 million, I just want to speak on things that improve people's lives; as opposed to impressing them with a Bentley or some chains."[25]

In the years of his retirement, Jay-Z had found an office job as CEO of Def Jam Records, settled down in a long term relationship with superstar Beyoncé, ditched his baggy jeans for tailored "button-up" shirts, and proclaimed he was a grownup who no longer needs bling. When Carter suggested that these black fans discard street fashion and jewelry—it sounded hypocritical to an audience raised on his axioms of never changing, wearing doo rags to the Grammys'. As Battle argued, invariably Carter demonstrated he was in a different tax bracket all together and the things that were once markers of success were derided by the community's griot."[26] Tom Briehan exhorts that Jay-Z on *KC* sounds as if he is above hip-hop, "dissing" street guys still trying to make it big selling drugs and details his boring life of rich resorts, chauffeurs, and beach chairs[27].

I contend *Kingdom Come* didn't work because it wasn't a Jay-Z album-he tried to call his own tune. *Kingdom come* focused on Clark Kent as, Shawn Carter; the mild mannered alter ego of the super hero but audiences had been trained in the form of Jay-Z the superhero of rap. The superhero of the first few tracks

was the persona and rhetorical ethos audiences recognized. The 30 something with fears and flaws was foreign to an audience who most recently valorized Jay's greatness on *The Black Album*. Thus, audiences had not developed a desire, to feel at home with this shift in ethos and tone. At 38, Carter was antithetical to hip-hop's foundation as a youth culture icon, but also his struggles demonstrated its pains to grow up from its adolescent origins. Jay-Z, as corporate exec extolls the virtues of the upper crust as virtues his audience should embrace more than a focus on shared experiences as seen in the past. The philosopher king seeking to enlighten, looked like an out of touch outsider to his post soul audience.

Indeed, the successfulness of Black Sincerity Rhetoric is not about street credibility, it's about convincing audiences that your prior ethos of sincerity can still be trusted, that your BSR actually demonstrates care for black folks. While on the *Grammy family* freestyle he was able to fashion a double voiced message that invited the community to feel included, the album was unable to strike the same chord. For Jay-Z, the comic attitude was always affixed to the hustler; however, his comic attitudes were always deployed underneath the cool threat of the blues baadman in an epic modern register. Once you leave the cave can you still represent those left in cave, is the conundrum Jay-Z and his audience must negotiate—how much can his ethos represent? Carter wanted to illuminate the truths he's learned on his journey, but on KC the separation appeared vast. Ultimately, *Kingdom Come* betrayed Jay-Z's form and use of frames. According to Jay-Z it was clumsy attempt to keep it real about "my new life and my transition but it was the wrong time for the audience.[28]

Carter pondered, "Maybe it was too sophisticated, I fucked up trying to ask hip-hop to grow up too quick." Shawn carter's authentic life as the multi-millionaire rose him almost too far above his audience. His next album will resurrect the hustler. On his next album *American Gangster*, Carter decides to "dumb down" his post retirement stimulus plan for mature hip-hop, and reclaim his position as hip-hop's King. Jay-Z will go back to the prior ethos of the hustler to regain acceptance for his maturing persona and his updated BSR. This is important because I want to demonstrate how BSR requires a recognition of what has worked in the past, what appeals to audiences currently and what motives guide the discourse of the black rhetor in the

future. On AG we see how an album geared to an imagined audience that has grown with Jay-Z invokes the past but offers new appeals at the nadir of the post soul era for his post soul imagined audience.

This is Superhero Music, Minus the Cape: American Gangster

American Gangster[29] the album based on the Denzel Washington led film about 70s NYC drug dealer Frank Lucas, was released in November of 2007. Jay-Z told frequent interviewer Elliot Wilson, he saw an advance screening of the movie and "The movie awakened memories and experiences of the drug game," and inspired his next album.[30] In 2007 hip-hop's underground was bubbling with the revival of coke rap via the VA group Clipse mixtape and the rise of southern hustlers like Jeezy. Maybe it was time for the OG hustler to return. It would be Jay-Z's 10th solo album in nearly 11 years. Jay-Z would claim he did not want an excuse to just to get back to drug tales, but to use it as a muse for growth "If I don't show the world growth, how are we going to grow? And I represent hip-hop as well, you know, with what I do. What I do is a reflection on hip-hop. And if I don't show growth, then they going to be like: "This guy right here, he's successful. Why is he shooting at people in his raps still?[31]" Indeed, as a rap rhetor how does Jay-Z not look like his pandering to his constituency? How does Jay-Z go back to the cave, knowing he can escape?

That is, how does Jay-Z transcend this past-present/individual/communal dialectic –again? Jay-Z as an individual wants to grow as an artist and discard the "tough guise" of the hustler he employed for survival but isn't conducive to his current life; yet Jay-Z imagined black audience want him to tap into the old hustler Jigga that felt like he was talking to you on the corner, not from the corner office. In this final analysis section, I argue that Jay-Z makes a concept album to transcend this rhetorical dilemma. In particular, the heroic hustler of Jay-Z's childhood cinematic past is reconfigured as an epic hustler in the movie American Gangster; thus inspiring Jay to create his unofficial version of a soundtrack. Indeed, Deburg tells us the heroic hustler of 70s film has three main axioms that are visible on this album and commensurate with *black sincerity rhetoric:*

1. Uphold family and community values,
2. respect the struggles of others,
3. Oppose the enemies of black manhood and survive.[32]

The album is structured like a film, the rise and fall of the gangster; however, for Carter it is a means to use the *American gangster* as a metaphor. Jay-Z is the post soul American dream and the story of the black hustler turned near billionaire he argues is the American Dream. Furthermore, that as a metaphorical gangster he can embody preacher, witness, spokesman and super hero as his *perspective by incongruity* frames gangster as a risk taking, ambitious individual not a pathological criminal. Furthermore, *American Gangster* attempts to close the book on his original 1996 argument that African American drug dealer and his generation were mistaken and framed as cultural scapegoats. In this section, I look at how Carter revives and samples his prior ethos and updates his topoi: authentic testimony about his past and present, signifying attitude of black uplift and rhetorical traditions, and a pronounced focus on the community to connect with his post soul imagined audience after the failure of *KC*. In many interviews about the album, Jay explains that he wanted to also show that that hip-hop was an art and wanted to elevate hip-hop's reputation.

Stating that hip-hop is not just "niggas reading from their journal," but it is poetry to make their life stories works of art. Thus, his artistic legacy is again a key motive to be recognized as not just a rapper but a great artist and for the African American hustler to be given the humanity afforded to white mediated criminal heroes. His BSR is deployed to reaffirm that his ethos and concern for his community is still sincere. In the next section we look at key songs that demonstrate Carter re-creating a dwelling place for Jay-Z fans after the failure of *KC*. Jay wants fans to identify with his ethos of sincerity; by sampling his past rhetorical strategies yet he wants to rehabilitate his legacy and view of his BSR as disconnected from his imagined audience.

The intro narrated by Idris Elba who played Stringer Bell, the corporate hustler on *HBO's The Wire* is another ironic contrast; as Idris uses his real British accent not his characters Maryland patois. Perspective by incongruity is vital on this album, as Carter is attempting to persuade audiences to see the gangster as an epic almost noble tale, the contrast between a dramatized movie on Frank Lucas and a dramatized story of S. Carter. The intro demonstrates how "gangster' became an adjective in hip-hop culture as one's 'gangster' was one's ethics, one's personal code of the streets, one's ethos. Written by Carter, it opens with this redefinition

to orient the audience to his scope on the album here, the perspective on incongruity destabilizes and redefines the meaning of gangster in an almost Foucualdian manner:

> To be a gangster/ Never forget where you came from. (Gangsters, hustlers, republicans, democrats, pimps and hoes.)Conservatives, labor, the seller, the buyer, the product, the producer. The gangster is absorbed and adored by those that don't understand the laws that govern gangsterment/Gangsterment allows you to make up your own laws and create brand new words./ Gangster mentality, an American way created by the white, mastered by the black, and absorbed by the fiends, taxed by the governmentality, charted by Forbes.[33]

The intro interspersed with clips from the film of Frank Lucas rise from country boy to major hustler, highlights the key themes of the album: how the government is the original gangster dominating and exploiting others for profit versus how black folks mastered "gangsterment" to create their own language, their own black market, their own avenues to attain the American dream in spite of the government. Hova in the voice of Idris then contends the gangster mentality that rappers have been accused of valorizing is the American mentality of domination. In other words, blacks didn't create the gangster or gangster mentality but used it for their survival or to attain the American dream in the midst of a daily nightmare. A master's tools argument remixed. Carter then shifts to his persona: "If you believe in Jay-Z then you too can be a gangster. /You too can be a gangster by any means necessary. By any means necessary, by owning that dream/. I mean it's a long walk to freedom but, while "deep, deep, deep inside the bush" The war on terror screams, damn it feels good, damn it feels good to be a gangster.[20] The narrator states that those that believe in Jay-Z share substance with him and can win on his epic level as well. In verse Carter aligns his "gangster" with MLK, Martin and black folklore trickster *Brer rabbit* in the signifying bush. Carter mines these historical black topoi to redefine the gangster as a hero grounded in black rhetorical traditions and concerned with black environments. Carter says that you can follow his "gangster" role model of "owning that dream" and "by any means necessary" making it come true. Jay-Z contrasts believing in Jay-Z with believing in Martin's ethical dream and Malcolm's social imperative—he shares substance with both he asserts. Carter metonymies Malcolm and Martin's message into his own black sincerity rhetoric, the dream of access and the spirit of making away by any means necessary are the ingredients to the black American gangster; which stands in

[20] Scarface song "Damn It feels good to be a gangster. 1987. Rap a lot Records.

opposition to the American gangster: George W. Bush. While giving a sideward glance at the outside, he interpolates the trope of "turning the world upside down," Robin DG Kelley's version of black subversion in rap; by again pointing the finger at the real villain--- the government gangsters who fostered the mentality of the takeover, the mentality of success and power that fueled the gangsters—the real American way[34]. It's how vicarious epic hero rhetoric works in music according to Brummet.[35] If you believe in Jay-Z, you get to be a gangster vicariously: both street hustler and business savvy Shawn Carter. It feels good to be a gangster to not give a fuck, to challenge, to subvert, to emerge from "deep deep in the bush" like the signifying trickster monkey of black folklore to achieve the black American dream in the midst of America's nightmares in the form of oppression. It's a missive for the post soul generation, uniting the contradictions and discontinuities of our heroes: nostalgia for martin and Malcolm, love of audio gangsters, and love for black success stories that did not sell out. The intro extrapolates why post soul black audiences love the outlaw, with odds stacked against him; here it's an act of black revolution for the rapper outlaw to create his own discursive space for discussing the black ontological experience. Speaking truth to power is a black rhetorical tradition that he invokes as common topoi at the outset of the album on "Pray."

Pray: Jay-Z rewrites his Authentic Testimony again

On "Pray" we hear the prayer of a drug hustler recited by his wife Beyoncé "Delivery me from my enemies oh god, Defend me from those that rise up against me" over dramatic and epic wails of a church choir exclaiming "Pray for me" and lighting quick stabs of strings with dramatic emphasis. Here we hear style wise, a hungry, reflective and tense Jay-Z reiterate his drug dealer mythos and allows us to identify with his personal "sentimentality" at the beginning of his opportunistic goals. Then Jay begins with "America, meet the gangster Shawn Corey/Hey young world, wanna hear a story? Close your eyes and you can pretend you're me." This line designates how his mode of identification has always worked, Burke once wrote, "the hero allows us to vicariously walk in his shoes by showing his path to heroism.[36]" And that's the goal of Pray, as Jay-Z again tries to get the story of the 13 year old on the stoop right. In his book *Decoded,* he states the song was something he was trying to get right for years, "the story of the psyche of a Kid seduced by the drug life, but how only through God's grace could I be so lucky to survive."[37]

Thus, in the same way RD began with a story for the hustlers, so does AG although in this case it's the epic hero surrendering to a higher power as he invokes spirituality to bring humanity to his hustler persona. Carter invites audiences to empathize with a young confused teen if they can't empathize with a 40 year old's millionaire's trauma. Carter claims of authentic testimony on previous albums confirm the authenticity, yet the storytelling, specificity and imagery is near cinematic in his retelling .In the first verse, he puts us in the mind's eye of young Shawn Corey surrounded by an environment of "drug needles" and desperation for resources. He asks us to imagine being a young man seeing poverty and struggle, and prestige is around the corner with one drug sell. He marvels at the status of the drug dealer by girls, his fancy cars, his autonomy makes him a neighborhood stars.

Indeed, Warshow's landmark work reminds us that the gangster represents a part of America's humanity: "The gangster speaks for us expressing that part of the human psyche which rejects the limits of modern life, the gangster is a man of the city, and the cities language and knowledge and dishonest skills carry his life in its hand...the gangster is what we want to be and fear we will become in our society (130-131)."[38] He claims "I aint choose this life, the game chose me," to explain the seduction of criminality when poor but later Jay relents that "around here it's just the shit that you do." It was as much poverty, as it was individual desire to want to be that guy in the neighborhood that motivated the hustle. Professor Carter tells the audience: anywhere there are oppression/The drug profession/flourishes like beverages/Refreshing, ahhh! /Sweet taste of sin/everything I seen, made me everything I am/Bad drug dealer or victim, I beg/what came first? /Moving chickens (drug bricks) or the egg?" The song essentially moves from a primary focus on topos of authenticity to the topos of community, as Jay-Z posits that similar to "Can't knock the hustle" as long as blacks are not even, drug dealers will continue to exist. The irony is that the music is the penance for his past, as Carter frames his discourse as a warning to find another hustle besides drugs. Once again Jay-Z asks us to accept his past and present identity, by reminding us unlike *Kingdom Come,* of the 'medicine he offers. It's the same Jay-Z story, but also the story of the crack generation who witnessed many Jay-Z get caught up and Carter is banking on 1996 former kids and 2007 urban kids connecting to the same story. To wit, anthropologist Jacobson's work interviewed local black youth and Jay-Z American Gangster

was a favorite album of the Tampa students she worked with in the late aughts. In particular, one youth explained that what Jay-Z is talking about, is real stuff like I really see that stuff in my neighborhood "I really see hustlers and people hustling, but they want something better, like a better life.' The participant explained that this is what makes Jay-Z real to him is speaking about situation he has been in or could be in, but he is like a teacher or an uncle, giving you advice. [39]

Epic Hero's Equipment for Living: American Dreamin'

In Jacobson's work, a teenager Ronnie discussed hanging out with his friends; dreaming of being successful and having cars like the hustlers in their neighborhood when listening to it. Which Jay-Z intended, "This is where it really begins in room with your dudes, too young to shave, dreaming about the big body Benz you gonna push and obviously for me it's in Marcy projects, but this could be anywhere-a basement in the Midwest, and Oldsmobile down south.[40]" Here he is streamlining his testimony, and framing it as more of communal narrative like Hard Knock Life instead of solely his testimony on KC or BP2, allows 'American dreaming' to find consubstantiality between 37 year old Jay-Z and 15 year old Ronnie in Tampa. In verse, Jay moves from his experience of poverty to the desire for American success in the forms of luxury cars, arguing for a humane view of black youth in the past and present. Similar to past songs, it sounds like Jay-Z is giving advice on how to hustle when he lists the steps of avoiding police and how to partner with distributor; yet here he interrupts his train of thought to update his advice. Jay catches himself and says "survive the droughts,[21] I wish you well. How sick am I? I wish you health, I wish you wealth, and I wish your insight so you can see the signs...when the cops is coming you can read their mind...you could see from behind." Discussing the verse, Jay claims that he is praying for his audience as well that they learn from his mistakes, so they can anticipate life's dangers. Jay-Z explains that the series of "seeing" is meant to demonstrate how impossible wining at the hustle is and how the hustler can't see the downfall thus he is offering his experience as a warning.[41] Moreover, that wishing hustlers "well" as in water to survive a drug drought is bad advice; he should wish them success and vision to navigate out the game. Thus, the hero recognizes in his word "the tragic destiny of the hustler" and acknowledges the motives of the young hustlers across America: they just

[21] Slow or low drug supply

want the American dream. In other words, it is clearer here that the proverbial black kid on the stoop and Jay-Z are joined in being mistaken, misunderstood and coming from feeble origins—here Carter claims he shares substance with the audience people claim he alienated on his last record.

The album revives the celebratory songs of the Roc-a-fella era with, "Roc Boys." Again, Jay revives his comic juxtaposition of crack game = rap game metaphor, as he coyly refers to his hustling past, but lyrics soon reveal he's talking about his rap career. Carter announces his crew "are the dope boys of the year" and how he and his crew at Def Jam are running rap like a massive successful drug cartel—a constant motif in his work. Moreover, the verse ends with him thanking his fellow music game hustlers," but most importantly: You the customers." Carter flashes forward to his current life of rare art, rare cars, but the enduring heroic hustler ethic to survive by any means. Moreover, he celebrates his and his team success, and wishing his post-soul audience success for their shared survival. Roc Boys allowed audience to embrace the "play" and joy of outlaw music[42] but also to bridge his alienation from his audience. He is including the audience in the celebration, inviting the vicarious identification seen on *The Black album* via his *BSR* Furthering this sentiment, Jay-Z revives his spokesman talk of the past to position himself as still a voice of youth black culture despite closing in on 40 years old on "Say Hello."

Return of the Spokesman as Epic Hero: Say Hello

On "Say hello," Jay-Z deviates from his drug dealer arc to outright protest the 2006 criticism of hip-hop lyrics and Black urban youth. His requisite epic horns indicate the heroic tone of the song. The chorus of 'say hello to the bad guy' reveals that Carter still shares substance with his audience as perception of him by whites is rarely businessman or CEO but "problem." Jay-Z recognizes the "bad guy" persona appealed to white audiences as an outlaw; but that his bad guy persona is a matter of perception. In fact, he's a hero to his people for his *parrhesia* or fearless speech is the Foucualdian claim Jay-Z makes on the song. "Say hello to the bad guy they say I am bad guy, I can from the bottom but now I am mad fly, they say I am menace that's the picture they paint they say a lot about me, let me tell you what I ain't."

Bailey is correct in saying that what makes Jay-Z a skilled orator is his ability to state something so personal yet universal, as black academics relate to the misperception on campus as a student or a menace; or

young kids on the stoop relate to being seen as a menace, or stereotypes that plague black women as angry in the workplace. Thus, Bailey argues Jay-Z's BSR attempts to give voice to the black interior pain of being misunderstood; he's not our bad guy, he's a blues hero using music to give voice to and acknowledge what it feels like to be black.[43] In the next breath, Jay-Z can invoke his epic status when he boasts, 'Extraordinary Figures, I am an extraordinary Nigga." Prior to Tarantino's Django, Carter acknowledges his rare status and epic hero attributes but transcends down[44] to explain he shares the same substance as his criticized imagined black audience. In tone, Carter gets sermonic raising his voice and sounded more impassioned than he has in years, stating simply that black youth are not innately criminal or dumb but reacting to decades of oppression:

> We ain't thugs for the sake of just being thugs /nobody do that where we grew at, nigga, DUH! The poverty line, we not above /So out come the mask and glove cause we ain't feelin' the love /We ain't doing crime for the sake of doing crime /We movin' dimes cause we ain't doin' fine /One out of three of us is locked up doing time /You know what that type of shit can do to a nigga mind?[45]

Jay-Z sounds near exasperated as he opines his message for 10 years seems to be lost on mainstream media who continue critiquing raps influence on black youth and not systemic issues. Spokesman Hov emphasizes each line with gravitas and desperation to communicate the lack and then asks the mainstream audience do they even recognize the trauma, PTSD and undiagnosed mental health issues living in such an environment does to black youth. However as a spokesman he situates his platform as epic based on his stature and invites non-black audience to see the humane flaw in him and his "culture." It's just Jay-Z getting on his soapbox and declaring for grace towards his post soul imagined audience and their kids too.

Instead of the self-serving claims of legacy on KC, here Jay-Z frames himself as still a member of a black community concerned for other black folk besides self. The topoi all merge into a hip-hop magpie of identification in the final verse as black generational oppression is framed as fueling generations of reluctant hustlers and Carter attacking the civil rights generations critiques of rap's influence: "Ya'll ain't give me 40 acres and a mule /So I got my Glock 40, now I'm cool /And if Al Sharpton is speaking for me /Somebody get him the word and tell him I don't approve /Tell him I'll remove the curses /If you tell me our schools gon' be perfect When Jena 6 don't exist /Tell him THAT's when I'll stop saying bitch---BIIITCH!" Jay-Z's BSR asks the audience to see him as what Ellison would call a hero *as witness*.

For Ellison the black hero had to recognize the tragedy of black life in order to be viewed as an epic hero as Burke conceived.[46] Carter relates that America still owes the black community for its crimes and that lack of help is why black teens grabbed glock 40 guns to repossess the world that owes them "40 acres and a mule"—punning as always. Yet despite his wealth, he claims he is the witness who can give voice to his imagined audience. To the rapper scapegoated as the blame for kid's drug dealing, Jay-z is arguing my raps are not the impetus; in fact I give them guidance out of that. Just as he said in 2001 remember, "Hov did that so hopefully you won't have to go through that." Furthermore, he rejects Al Sharpton and civil rights generation leadership and situates himself as a spokesman of the post soul generation; referring to the Jena 6 kids as his audience. The Jena 6 kids sentencing was seen as a symbol of America's lingering racial disparities and them listening to rap music should not be used against them as it was in much of the coverage he implies. His ethos and the framing of his BSR is positioned as the trusted spokesman for his generation he speaks to his core base but speaking to a range of demographics intra-racially as he signifies on too short's "BITCH" as a putdown to declare the civil rights generation inadequate to lead his generation. As Obama once argued, the hip-hop generation screams to the civil rights generation that they will make it on their own terms, unconcerned with "impressing" the status quo to succeed.[47] Here the focus on multiple black audiences remains. On "Say Hello" he is able to address multiple intra-demographics of his imagined black audience by deploying a BSR that positioned his ethos as sincerely concerned for his folk's being misunderstood and mistreated. And that's arguably the most universal black American experience there is.

Perspective by Incongruity: Comic Epic Frame in "I Know"

On the song "I Know,"[48] the music takes a U-Turn from the soul of the 70s that dominate the album. Instead a bubbly mélange of synth chords and calypso percussion sounds like a musical seduction. The song is an obvious love song, however not a traditional one; instead the song is an ode to being in love with addiction. The fans addiction to Jay-Z and Jay-Z's inability to retire is the secondary meaning of the song: "She wants that old thing back /Uh- uh- uh- /She want those Heroin tract /tracks /She likes me /She fiends for me nightly /She leans for me /Morning she rush for my touch /This is about LUST." Prior to this first verse we hear the chorus of "I know what you like, everything you love and Carter screaming in the back

ground "you love Hov" preface the come on's of a seductive Lothario 'Hov.' But here the title Hov casts him as the god of addiction, a twisted cupid seeking out music and drug addicts. His victim, the drug fiend/rap fiend is not in love but instead lust, purely hedonistic desire that leaves her "leaning" from the effects and fiending for their next tryst. Jay-Z highlights how drugs are not just addictive due to peer pressure or environment, by framing addiction as a seduction and an emotional attachment. He uses comic metaphor of addiction as an abusive relationship.

In short 'I know' is the rare Jay-Z song where he uses comic juxtaposition to show how the dealer and the user, the rapper and the audience are addicted to sharing substance that makes them feel alive. Jay-Z relates that he is, the fiends "Physician, Prescription and Addiction" which makes it harder for the addict to give up the drug. Jay-Z cleverly uses references to heroin street names of the 80s (9 ½ weeks and China White) to detail the push and pull of the addict trying to leave its abusive lover with his intonation of concern, sly flirting and deadpan clarity: 9 1/2 weeks is better than 12-steps /I keep tryin' to remind you to keep tellin' yourself /Now your conscience is interfering, like "Better yourself!" /Like you better get help /But when that medicine's felt? /we're back together /don't ever leave me /don't ever let 'em tell you that you'll never need me /My China White, 'til we D.O.A." Here we hear the abusive relationship as a dialectic tension between lust and harm, the unnamed addict deals with the dialectic of her conscious and friends telling her to quit which is in tension with her lustful desire for heroin.

In contrast, Hov feels he can't give up his desire to "deliver the hit' to his clientele or their desire to want that "old thing back" that old feeling of his past work hoping the new album satisfies the need. At the songs end, the drug (personified as Jay) pleads for the addict to take him back wondering how could she deny him "so vehemently" and misses the day when she needed the "D' a clever pun of D meaning the drugs and d meaning a euphemism for the male phallus. In an interesting note, Jay-Z argues this song is about all types of addiction, the addiction of the drug dealer, his addiction with rap and harkens back to his assertion that rap artists are like drug dealer as seen here:

> That's what happens with drugs: They don't pound you like that. They talk to you, sweet. That's the allure of it, and it pulls you in. And that's what was happening. The lyrics were harmless — it's like a love song. So it was pulling you in, further and further. Until you realized that now you've become addicted to this drug. That was the whole method behind why [the song] sounded so sweet.[49]

This song and Jay-Z's explanation reveals a comic innovation for his BSR. In this song Jay uses perspective by incongruity to demonstrate how the comic awareness of drugs being similar to a bad relationship transcends the orientation that drug addiction and addiction period has a simple explanation. Instead something as irrational as love, lust and attachment explains addiction. The victim is finally made humane as the hustler's rhetoric has focused on his hustle and psyche and rarely his victims. Jay-Z again invites audiences to see the humanity in the addict, the dealer, the customer; BSR is not just declaring that you are down but demonstrating that your discourse gives voice to the flawed voiceless black folk without a mic The comic frame as a mode of interpretation does not completely debunk or praise—it reframes and reorganizes our orientation

In other words on "I Know" Jay-Z does not simply denounce criticism of drug use nor does he completely praise it, instead he accurately names and confronts the situation as a complex one that stresses a both/and dynamic instead of and either or. All the while, Jay-Z is also making a statement about his relationship with his audience after his brief retirement and failed comeback album. Again, transcendence is defined by Burke as "the adoption of another point of view from which they cease to be opposites (336-337.)"[50] Through this technique Jay-Z enacts an imperative to offer humanity to the addict (drug or music), by offering a comic frame of acceptance for audiences who undoubtedly deal with someone or themselves in terms of addiction. Jay-Z's cousin and Manager Ty-Ty Harris explain "I think it's his best song, he is literally the dope the audience is addicted to. And he wants them as much as they want and feel they need him, just like the hustler and the fiend. It went over most people head."[51] 'I know' was a departure from the albums rise and fall of gangster concept but demonstrates him introducing new methods of deploying *BSR*. Interestingly though, nostalgia and reconciliation define the latter part of the album.

Reflection: Victory Lap of American Gangster

On the albums closer "American Dreaming",[52] the picture Shawn's future goals became clearer. The epic hero Jay announces he wants "the sky" and that all his hustle talk has just been his desire for the American dream and making life easier for his mother. Jay states that his origins again set him up for this life:

> I'm from the 80's/Home of the heroin/Era of the hustlers/The world is my customer/New Rich Porter/The way I flip quarters/Front on all these other rap artists, but my Momma was a mink wearer/Papa ran numbers/So it's plain to see where my whole plan come from/American dream/I'm living the life still

On this last song of the album, Jay brings it back to his generation declaring his origins and how again he used hustling skills to be better than his competition. Jay-Z declares to audience that his motives are for "me and we" as he tries to transcend the dialectic of identification once again: joined yet separate. On this final song, he attempts to again relate that his success should inspire his audience and that his BSR is motivational for them. Throughout this whole album the topoi of his narrative authentic testimony, his revival of his wordplay and puns and his direct commentary of community finds Carter with a rehabilitated ethos, merging the best aspects of his past rhetorics to imbue and inform his present perspective as a hip-hop veteran and business man. Carter demonstrates how black sincerity rhetoric necessitates a flexibility and adaptability of rhetorical strategies, as 10 years later he still is finding new ways to size up his past to make sense of his and by extension his audience's future. Jay's rhetoric again is geared to legacy and to remind audiences the epic hero lives on in his new position as record exec: "I want the sky/The world when I'm done/I'm give it to my sons/Let em live it up, split it up, switch it up/Sixes kit it up/Man I did it up, done/The rest of my belongings belong in the hall of fame/A list of hits next to all my names. I CAME to win!" Carter ends the album with a victory lap but also a restating of his thesis, which being a hustler allowed him the education to be the epic hero who "won." Carter addresses criticism and his own fear of failure in the next line: And the Roc break up, had the people losing hope/Can't lie they had Muhammad Hovi on the ropes/Now I'm back in the go mode, back in the go-go's/Throwing the diamond up, repping the logo/Rose gold rose flow/I'm okay though/What don't kill me makes stronger than before so/I might break but I don't fold till I hold the sky in my hand/Yeah that's my goal. Carter closes the album restating to the audience his individual desires, his epic hero recipe and a toast to himself "here's to the man that refused to give up."

Carter compares himself to another oral black epic hero Ali to associate his legacy as a great black figure and leader. The rhetorical similarities are interesting, as Ali a pioneer of public rhyming was valorized for being outspoken and successful similar to Hova. Again he summons past epic heroes to enact his identification as a black hero. Noting the breakup of his label created doubts but that he still is fighting like

Ali and the attitude of not giving up is what Carter believes audiences identify with similar to Ali. Carter hopes that underneath the gaudy talk, the hustler is the ultimate trickster who won on his terms. When he states "blame Ollie North and Reagan for creating a monster," we see Jay-Z gets the final laugh as ironically the monster is an American businessman. The Regan drug era and draconian Rockefeller laws that led to the mass incarceration of a generation of friends family and fathers of the post soul era, ironically help create the Roc-A-Fella empire and Jay-Z the most successful artist and business man music has ever seen. The *American gangster* is the ultimate American trickster. For 10 years his discourse attempted to reverse the culture wars that deemed post soul blacks dysfunctional and doomed by single parenthood, the crack era and fathers incarcerated and presented he as evidence to the contrary-a counter discourse for his post soul nation. Jay-Z has to go back to the commonplaces of his past rhetoric to regain the imagined acceptance of his desired post soul audience. His prior *BSR* ultimately serves as a blueprint for connecting with his audience.

Conclusion

American Gangster was the true return of Jay-Z to his core audience. Christopher Pieznick writes that the album saw a revived Jay-Z somehow sound as hungry, curious and creative as his debut. Christopher points out that several critics hailed Carter for merging his attitude of the hustler with his contemporary criticism of system of oppressions, contending that Carter takes claim as his generations' leader; owning up to his past but projecting a future of black uplift.[53] As the epigraph above states, he recognized the ethos of our generation was about re-creation, taking the songs, symbols, images of the past and creating our own cultural space of hip-hop. Carter taps back into the last poets' hustler convention and the Blaxploitation hustler along with the mob movie motifs of the 90s to create a post soul bricolage of the black hustler's humanity. And for post soul hip-hop fans, Jay-Z was an amalgamation of this era's successful heroes.

In 2018, current rap artist 24 hours praised Jay and particularly *American Gangster* claiming it "made his Marcy projects story for the world, making the world connect with his experience but he made project kids feel seen "he's like our hip-hop dad," giving us direction. Others such as J.Cole and Meek Mill cite how *American Gangster* solidified his longevity and how his "work as a boss and a mogul was positive for our culture to see.[54]" Atlanta's Cyhi the Prince has argued that Jay was teaching how our generation figured out

manhood without fathers around.[55] Cyhi highlights an interesting thread in Jay-Z's music and insight into the desired audiences' engagement with his discourse. Jay-Z throughout his work has discussed the absence of his father as integral to his life of crime and his cool demeanor, but how his story was a generational one. Barack Obama specified this in the opening of this dissertation that like Jay he grew up without a father. And for many in the post-soul generation, Jay-Z became an avatar, an exemplar a role model for how to be black men in this society. On social media there is a running joke that men of this generation act like Jay-Z is their dad, his messages of success and aphorisms of self-esteem resonated with are well noted here and elsewhere. Yet, in this project I wanted to show how in his discourse about being a husband on "Pray" , reconciling with his estranged father, on American Dreaming, chastising men for not being present with their kids and using his platform to give voice to his community on Say Hello, he reinforced his paternal position with imagined black audiences. As Jay says your father is your first superhero and the masculine register of his BSR rendered him heroic for post soul generations and current artists still view him in heroic light.

Notably Atlanta rapper Young Jeezy claimed the album "was the first album since blueprint that he got back in his bag, to that old Jigga the streets love." Indeed, writer Jay Soul claims that Jay-Z did something he thought impossible, made an album just for his core black audience featuring the intricate rhymes of RD, the clarity of Blueprint and the wisdom of a mogul 10 years later, "Jay-Z shows you can still go home" he wrote.[56] And that's the point of *BSR,* for speaker and audience to feel at home even 10 years after his first "speech." *Black Sincerity Rhetoric* is proving to black people that their acceptance isn't a given. It's showing that it takes work, strategy and empathy to find acceptance with a black audience as a sincere speaker. Jay-Z had numerous albums and success but he is still is up for judgment like any other rhetor. For sure Jay-Z has been adored and hero worship can be found on countless fan pages and twitter hashtags. However, how he does this is not simply what I was told in the 90s, "street cred?" Or black audiences' obsession with gangsters. Or black youth audiences just embracing rebellion. No its skilled strategic rhetors making up arguments that are evaluated, surveyed and analyzed by an audience that verifies its utility, resonance and sincerity with their general experience, values, and traditions. I wanted to demonstrate how appealing to black audiences for 10

years wasn't a simple formula but a constant retesting, revamping, adapting, and listening to find acceptance for one's rhetoric as sincere by imagined black audiences.

In his discography, *American Gangster* demonstrates that prior ethos and rhetoric does matter in hip-hop and black discourse in general, but also that within the genre there is room for maturity and innovation. As a rap fan, I maintain Jay-Z's greatest strength is adapting. There are other rappers I love more, listen to more, and relate to. However, Jay-Z did and continues to do what few have done in hip-hop: remain relevant and in conversation with black audiences. I am not the biggest Jay-Z fan, but I admire his rhetorical ability to take authenticity, blackness and community and shape it into a rhetorical toolkit for his career and a template for other black rhetors: from Obama to Donald Glover.

However, BSR is largely symbolic and it is vital to note that I don't think Jay-Z's words will save the black community or has per se. *Black Sincerity Rhetoric* is about the rhetors attempt to maintain acceptance despite their position often alienating them from most black folk and Jay-Z discography demonstrates core strategies of identification, ethos topoi and framing that can be applied to other black rhetors seeking similar acceptance. Few black speakers have had 20 plus years to address us in music or politics and Jay-Z, in Burkean terms, gives his audience vicarious confidence and vicarious success that they too can have the good life. And while there is no Jay-Z check in the mail and his words won't save us this symbolic impact should be recognized. Indeed, transcendence for black speakers is maintaining faith that we can overcome in a white supremacist world according to Imani Perry, thus this is what Jigga's BSR pulled off for many of us in this post soul generation-faith in our abilities.[22] Ellison writes that black identification is predicated on a sense of communion—or consubstantiality, when he argues that the function of literature is the "seizing from the flux and flow of our daily lives those abiding patterns of experience which help to form our sense of reality and from which emerge or sense of humanity," that is the writer must play on the shared assumptions and appeal to our sense of experience.

Eddie Glaude is helpful and correct here, when he states Ellison is describing hip-hop at its best when the "music rides the rhythm of our daily living" but transcends this position by offering a vision of

[22] He is no way the only one, just the focus of this project

what things are but also what they could be. I would say this also sums up the efficacy of Jay-Z's black sincerity rhetoric; he spoke to the post soul daily awareness of our limitations but the faith and narrative that we could overcome our position. And not lose our blackness in the process. Not have to give up our culture to find success. No pun intended but he provided a blueprint for how to garner mainstream acceptance and black acceptance without being called a sellout til his recent NFL deal in 2019.

Final Words on BSR and Jay-Z

In this chapter I wanted to demonstrate how Jay-Z's discourse has grown from his debut and how his ethos adjusted, adapted and was refashioned to meet the demands of his imagined audience and his own individual goals for legacy and acceptance. I wanted to show how BSR is a unique mode of identification that allows rhetors to use topoi, frames of acceptance and black cultural idioms to develop a variety of appeals for a diverse imagined black audience. The collection of chapters demonstrate why Jay-Z is an exemplar of *Black Sincerity rhetoric* as his discourse and discography is a time capsule of black public address, adaptation, adjustment and alignment in the late 90s and early aughts. *Ag* dropped at the cusp of the Obama election which I surmise was the end of the post soul generation as the dominant culture makers and the emergence of the social media informed "woke era Black tragedy in Obama's tenure via police shootings and racist attacks on Obama himself, woke people up from the haze of post-racial celebration of a "black president." American Gangster would solidify Jay-Z's legacy and inform a rising generation to "say hello" to the powers that be more ostensibly during the Obama terms and now. Jay-Z in 2017 explained, that "I didn't think AG was a classic at first, but the people did the streets. The culture responded. And by then the people truly had a voice (social media), so it almost means more to me. We have to acknowledge how they forced it into the conversation of classic. " As always the audience calls the tune and Jay-Z's awareness of this explains his influence and dominance much more than his marketing plan.

Indeed, Jay-Z 's BSR on *American Gangster* reminded audiences of the original dwelling space his discourse created in 1996 and is often cited as his greatest post retirement album. *American Gangster* restored the feeling of sharing substance with Jay-Z despite the obvious differences from his core audience. Possibly for the last time. Greg Tate has argued, Jay-Z's albums in the 2010's mainly focused on Shawn Carter and his

lifestyle; furthermore the Obama era in many ways signaled the end of the first wave of the post soul as social media and illegal piracy forever changes the hip-hop nation and the post-soul mogul was a figure of the past---besides Jay-Z who released his latest album in spring 2020 with rapper Jay Electronica.

I wanted to study Jay-Z because it's rare that a black man has had a platform for nearly 25 years to discuss his life, his neighborhood, a black nation, and have an ostensible conversation with black people in the mainstream light. Prior to Obama, the social media explosion of "wokeness" and the current corporate embrace of black representation and lifestyle, hip-hop in the late 90s and 2000s was the rare space to hear black imagination, dreams, fears, jokes, language, memories, in the register of the way people talk in that neighborhood similar to blues guitarists from different cities. Black sincerity rhetoric in music is important because despite Barry O's popularity speeches are not the discourse that moves and motivated my generation, as the recent Norton Anthology recognizes it was hip-hop. In the past decade, Jay-Z has continued to adjust his BSR to feign consubstantiality with imagined black audiences. The confessional nature of the social media age and embrace of vulnerability in the work of Drake and Kanye allowed Jay-Z to "kill jay-Z" again on his 2016 album *444* a mediation on work, marriage and fatherhood instead of his hustler persona as Jay-Z revived his 2006 mission of helping hip-hop "grow up." Sometimes he hits the mark and sometimes he tries to call his tune but at age 50 and a new album released this summer 2020 it seems he still is trying to find the right tune for self and audience.

Endnotes

[1] Hampton, Dream. "The Life" . *Vibe Magazine*. December 1998-Jan 1999. Vol.6 No.7. pp.44

[2] Ibid. 2004.

[3] Ibid

[4] Osse, R. 2014. "Combat Jack Show: LL Episode" soundcloud.com/thecombatjackshow/the-ll-cool-j-episode

[5] See Ta-Neishi Coates " Hip Hop Selling Struggle past its expiration date." *In And You Don't Stop: 20 Years of Hip-hop Journalism*. Edited by Raquel Cepeda.

[6] Hurt, Byron . 2006. Beyond Beats and Rhymes. *Documentary*. Carter himself lamented on his *Fade to Black* documentary that America had black youth scared to be themselves, because they had to sell this image of "real" and gangster that his success contributed to

[7] Carter, S. 2010. "Operation Takeover. " in *Decoded 132*

[8] Also that art buying was a good investment for a wealthy man like him

[9] A Nuroyican phrase for male prostitute

[10] Ibid 132

[11] *Bradley, R 2016.* "Barbz and Kingz: Explorations of Gender and Sexuality in hip-hop". In Justin Williams , ed. *Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop edited by Justin Williams. Harvard University Press 181-191*

[12] Ibid. 2016

[13] Bailey, J. 2011. "Introduction." In Jay-Z: Essays on the Philosopher King.

[14]Bradley, A. *Book of Rhymes. 2nd Edition (Civitas Books, 2017).*

[15] Carter, S. 2010. "Hell Yeah" *Revolutionary But Gangster. Featuring Dead Prez. Loud Records* Decoded. *186-189*

[16] Green, T, West, K, Smith, D. & Carter, S. 2005. "Get By Remix" *The Beautiful Struggle. Loud Records*

[17] Battle, Sha'Dawn 2016. *Moments of Clarity and Sounds of Resistance: Veiled Literary Subversions and De-Colonial Dialectics in the Art of Jay-Z and Kanye West.* University of Cincinnati Dissertations

[18] @aintnojigga on Twitter. Personal Communication. 2019.

[19] Decoded. 2011.

[20] Carter, S. & Smith , Justin 2006. "Kingdom Come" and "Oh my god" *Kingdom Come. Def Jam Recordings*

[21]Carter, S. 2016*Kingdom Come*

[22] Ibid.

[23] Dharmic X. Decmeber 4th 2013. "Jay-Z ranks his Own Albums from Best to Worst. Complex. www.complex.com/music/2013/12/jay-s-album-rankings

[24] Battle, Sha'Dawn 2016. *Moments of Clarity and Sounds of Resistance: Veiled Literary Subversions and De-Colonial Dialectics in the Art of Jay-Z and Kanye West.* University of Cincinnati Dissertations

[25] Quoted in Battle

[26] Battle. 2016.

[27] Briehan, T. 2006. "Kingdom Come Review" *Village Voice*

[28] Maybin, A. 2006. Jay-Z interview. Vibe

[29] Carter, S. 2007. *American Gangster. Def Jam Records*

[30] Wilson, E. 2007. "I still Kill" XXL Magazine. Harris Publishing. https://web.archive.org/web/20071206110853/http://www.xxlmag.com/online/?p=15128

[31] Ibid

[32] Deburg, William. 2016. 'Heroic Hustlers and Daring Detectives" in Black Camelot 143-152.

[33] Elba, I, Carter, S., Wood, A. 2007. "Intro" *American Gangster Def Jam*

[34] Kelley, Robin D.G. (1997) *Yo Mama's Disfunktional: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America.* Boston: Beacon Press.

[35] Brummet, B. 2008. *Rhetoric of Style. University of Texas*

[36] Burke, K. 1964. "Poetic Categories" 34-37.

[37] Jay-z. 2011. *Decoded;* Carter, S. & Knowles-Carter, B. 2011. *"Pray" American Gangster* Def Jam/Roc-A-Fella Records

[38] Warshow, R. 2001. "Gangster as Tragic Hero." *The Immediate Experience. Movies, Comics, Theatre and Other Aspects of Popular Culture*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.,127-132

[39] Jacobson, G. 2009. Realness and Hoodness: Authenticity in Hip-Hop as discussed by adolescent fans. Graduate Theses and Dissertations. http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/2027

[40] Ibid

[41] Ibid, 32

[42] See Robin D.G., Kelley and CK Mira Black Joy as Resistance.

[43] Bailey, J. 2011. "Introduction." Jay-Z Philosopher King

[44] Burke, ATH

[45] Carter, S. and Toomp, D. 2007. "Say Hello" *American Gangster* Def Jam/Roc-A-Fella Records

[46] Eddy, B. (2007). *The Rites of Identity: The religious Naturalism and Cultural Criticism of Kenneth Burke and Ralph Ellison*

[47] Chang, J. Obama . Spring 2008. "Barack Obama Cover Story" Vibe Magazine

[48] Williams, P, Hugo, C. & Carter, S. "I Know" *American Gangster* Def Jam/Roc-A-Fella Records

[49] Reid, S. 2007. American Gangster: MTV Interview. MTV.Com

[50] Burke, K.1984. *Attitudes Towards History. 335-336*

[51] Thompson, D. January 27, 2018. "44 artists & Industry Elite on the Legacy of Jay-Z and His Discography." *Vibe.Com.*

[52] Carter, S. 2007. "American Dreaming." *American Gangster* Def Jam/Roc-A-Fella Records

[53] Pieznick, C. "American Gangster: Redux" .

[54] Thompson, Desire. January 27, 2018. "**44 Artists & Industry Elite On The Legacy Of JAY-Z & His Discography" *Vibe Magazine.***

[55] Thompson, Desire. January 27, 2018.

[56] Soul, Jay. 2007. "Rap Review of the Week: Jay-Z American Gangster." *Rapreviews.com rapreveiws.com/archive/2007_11F_americangangster.html*

DISSERTATION OUTRO: FUTURE RESEARCH AND CLOSING THOUGHTS

> Hip-hop is a vital arts movement created by young working-class men and women of color. Yes, our rhymes can contain violence and hatred. Yes, our songs can detail the drug business and our choruses can bounce with lustful intent. However, those things did not spring from inferior imaginations or deficient morals; these things came from our lives. They came from America. Hip-hop is American. Blackness is American. I am American[1].-Jay-Z

In a 2017 interview legendary singer Prince praised Jay-z and rap because, "he took the language of America and helped create a whole new language and discourse geared to his people, which white people struggled to translate in plain sight." Prince highlights a key motive and claim of this project, Jay-Z wasn't the best rapper of his time per se, but it is his language and discourse geared to his people "throughout his career that makes him an exemplar of *black sincerity rhetoric*. As a hip-hop fan, I apologize for the singular focus of Jay-Z as countless other rappers have been influential and engaged in conversations with post soul audiences. However, I focused on Jay-Z to demonstrate how hip-hop discourse is a conversation with black rhetors and black audiences, one that he has ostensibly engaged in for 20+ years, a conversation mainstream audiences often eavesdrops on. The dialectic of American individualism and African collectivism informed 20th century black cultural productions and Jay-Z synthesized these strands into a coherent discourse for a generation attempting to cultivate a negotiated identity in between these extremes.

Due to COINTELPRO, my generation didn't have noted civil rights leaders. We had rappers who taught us to question authority, be critically skeptical, and that despite your origins; you can beat the odds—theoretically. Jay-Z was truly a repository for many post soul fans dreams and values—Burke's epic hero definition----speaking to our community, celebrating being black and finding individual success without assimilating it appeared. Burke is correct that the music fan vicariously shares in the wins of the musician; but due to the loss of post soul heroes to murder, drugs, or criminal activity and the gains not made after civil rights, Jay-Z wins were that much important for my generation. As Tinsley recently wrote, Jay-Z gave a generation hope that we too could "trick the system." We too could win on an epic scale even if we came from meager origins. Indeed, Burke writes the epic hero is a superman, he possesses characteristics his

followers can only accentuate. But reminds us that the epic actually aids the community by inviting humility and raising new possibilities, as Burke explains the good Christian can't be "as good as Christ" the good post soul citizen can't be as lucky or rich as Jay-Hova, but this frees them to be Christ or Hov like in their own version of hero within human limitations.

We watched Jay-Z grow up, lose friends, reconcile, deal with family trauma, and these changes of identity were framed as humane ingredients of his epic nature and a heightened awareness –a second sight he could share with audiences. And if you have ever argued with a Jay-Z fan you know this vicarious boasting is indicative of the impact of his black sincerity rhetoric; that is as Mychal Denzel Smith says, Jay-Z fans defend and praise him because he is literally like an "uncle or father figure you never had" whose told you for nearly 25 years how to navigate life. This is really the point of this project. When I heard *American Gangster* 12 years ago, I was struck by the fact that Jay-Z still felt the need to talk to "us," black folk and fascinated by how Jay-Z recreated the home he first developed in 1996. Through his rhetorical strategies, techniques and framing Jay-Z cultivated a black interior liaison with post soul audiences, which made many of us; feel at home with his rhetoric, his goals and his ethos of sincerity. Moreover, that presidential candidates, doctoral students and south Florida urban teenagers identified with the black sincerity rhetoric of *AG; his* ethos created this space where we all could know together and size up being black in America.

Ethos as an extension of identification expands discussions of credibility and trust of black rhetors with audiences, and highlights how complex and layered black sincerity rhetoric is and the demands it made on speakers in the post soul era.

When we say ethos functions as a haunt, or an abode, I am arguing that black speakers make us feel at home even with white folk figuratively in the room, and rap has best exemplified this. Jay-Z negotiation of mainstream and black audiences is a particular moment and exemplar of this era. Currently, the decline of MTV, rise of streaming music and re-segregation of pop culture and social spaces, demands a different application of topoi of sincerity than the late 90s and late aughts where crossing over not simply serving your demographic mattered. Hip-hop maybe available to consume, for all but the cultural memory, references, traditions, topics, virtues and traditions employed by Jay and current rappers emanate from the interior lives

of black folk and a desire to have this relationship from the speaker. I wanted to use a close textual analysis and Kenneth Burke to demonstrate just how complex and multifaceted hip-hop is as a rhetorical force.

To quote Barbara Warnick, my aim as a critic was to translate and explain what the rhetor was trying to do for his audience. I do not believe in Shawn Carter's trickle-down economics, but I am more interested in how he attempts to persuade us to identify with his plan. Nor is Jay-Z my favorite rapper, but arguably the most important, most enduring and most dedicated to being a spokesman for black hip-hop fans. Whereas the 21st century has seen fragmentation and re-segregation socially and culturally in our society, Jay-Z was one of the last exemplars of black speakers in popular mass culture yet his lasting rhetoric has been mainly about his relationship with an imagined black audience. And the complexities of this relationship helped to demonstrate the rhetorical rigor of identifying with a diverse changing black listening audience. This intra-racial dialogue expands our understanding and discussion of identification and situates the post soul era as integral to understanding current black rhetoric.

This project reminds us that black sincerity matters and I believe it's the ingredient that has allowed him to be viewed not only as the greatest rapper ever and his lasting rhetorical influence.[2] Jay-Z is the rhetorical hero of my generation; he is quoted like MLK, idolized like Malcolm, and valorized like James Brown and Ali. Jigga made many of us feel seen, yet unashamed in the aftermath of the culture wars. Both the ghetto kids portrayed as dysfunctional and the middle class kids seen as affirmative action charity cases, identified with Jigga saying we were smart and could run our own businesses. I wasn't an impoverished ghetto kid or a black kid in suburbia, but Jay-Z spoke to my liminal position of trying to be socially mobile but not assimilate to the "ivory tower" of academia; of trying to bring my working class experiences with me and try to advocate for those not in my position. Jay-Z spoke to my desire to represent for my folk but also accomplish my personal goals; to occasionally code switch to disarm whites but not lose myself in the process. Jay wasn't the only artists that spoke to this but probably the most prominent and direct about protecting your ethos and striving to be sincere.

Black sincerity matters because black folk want to know that their humanity is acknowledged in the public. Black flaws, black excellence, black joy, black pain. Jay did that so hopefully another generation

doesn't have to go through that, but also American Gangster solidified that despite his success and pop hits, his conversation with black folk about black experiences and black dreams was still a top priority for this business mogul. *American Gangsta* was a favorite of new friend Barack Obama and Carter admits to being surprised he identified with Obama's narrative but found a kinship in their stories. As a presidential candidate, Obama hailed Jay-Zs album as the soundtrack to his campaign detailing how he personally identified with to Carter's story of "hustle", a single mom, concern for community and youth, and his literary skill. Carter related that seeing Barack relate to mass white audiences but still express sincerity with black audiences—made Jay feel that the hip-hop generation had made a major impact on how black people were accepted globally. In his 2018 interview with longtime friend Elliot Wilson, he explains the music is ultimately about his culture, "the albums are about the people. I am just the speaker. But it's about speaking to something they experienced or know or can't speak on in their position. And when they listening, like me when I listen, the thought is "do I believe them, and making audiences believe and make the words resonate with them, is the challenge, it's hard." And that is *black sincerity rhetoric*.

BSR Limits and Liberation

Black sincerity rhetoric has limits. As the Obama administration demonstrated to us all. Indeed, like Jay-Z Obama was inspiring, great speaker who had the ultimate seat at the table for black people. Yet as the Chris Rock Joke goes, 'Black people are still waiting for their Obama check." Obama attempted to negotiate his acceptance with black audiences across generations vacillating from celebrating black culture to finger wagging young black people for rioting. However, his presidency kept black people from falling further down more than uplifting them. Few of his major policies positively impacted Black lives despite the symbolic power of his position. The Obama effect as it was deemed in 2008 didn't create the black media explositoin predicted in fact Get Out was based on this false post racial belief. And the move for diversity was spurred by black people being more outspoken in the Obama era. Likewise, Jay-Z's billionaire status has funded scholarships, employed black graduates and increased the media platforms of black folk. But many of us did not 'get wealthy" from sticking the whole world up with Jay-Z; we made Jay-Z richer while the black buying power weakened with the erasure of government jobs and post industrialization.

A generation of hustlers and black excellence has made inroads but few tangible beneficial ones for black folks as an imagined community. Jay-Z and Barack come from a generation that was taught to infiltrate white spaces and open doors for black people to come through. Sadly Black late millenials in the late 2000s witnessed the limits of tokenism, the isolation of being the rare black person in a company, the re-segregation of schools and the reversal of many of the civil rights gains of the 90s.Following American Gangster, Atlanta had become the home of hip-hop not NYC, with local rapper Gucci Mane announcing "nobody in my hood bump the blueprint 3", Jay-Z's follow up to AG. Fans felt it was a retread of *Kingdom Come* where Jay-Z wealth and status sounds so foreign to his audience; moreover, his protégé Kanye had made himself a star by being the opposite of epic hero, the class clown or the fool.

Likewise, rapper Drake a former Canadian child actor was becoming the face of hip-hop with his mix of cocky Jay-Z and emotional Kanye to be the best of both worlds for a shifting rap audience. As aforementioned his former artist Kanye West non-hustler persona social outlaw motif, would inform the rise of now established stars Drake, Wale, J Cole, Tyler the Creator and Kendrick Lamar. These stars hustled on the internet, posting their music for free and sharing it with others, not saving up drug money and bribing promoters; developing a grassroots following through social media and a new form of identification as the sharing of substance is just not in song but social media discourse. Also, a different demand for sincerity and self-disclosure that belied the Jay-Z of old. The epic hero was replaced by rappers such as Drake, J. Cole, and Kendrick Lamar who positioned themselves as flawed peers, fellow classmates, of 20 something's not above the audience heroes.

In the late 2000s illuminati videos on YouTube attacking Jay-Z were popular in the years after his retirement detailing hidden messages in his music that showed he had sold his soul to the devil. Carter claimed that his success was so foreign to his audience that it spurred rumors he had to have sold his soul to be this rich.[3] Leading him to refute claims on 2015's "Free mason" with Rick Ross, that he had not sold his soul and was dedicated to helping black people. So, while Jay-Z was celebrating moving up the Forbes list and increasing loud online presence hip-hop fans began to question and critique Jay-Z business deals and his

philanthropy. His marketing of Occupy Wall street shirts was seen as a profit grab of a major protest.[23] After bragging about bringing the Brooklyn Nets to Brooklyn as a part owner, the affordable housing he promised never materialized as gentrification took over his old neighborhood and few locals benefitted. Soon after, Carter received criticism for not speaking at a Trayvon Martin rally. When Carter explained that "people just seeing him there would be inspired because his presence is a charity," he was roundly criticized by black rap audiences as out of touch and not using his voice to effect change despite his raps.

Meanwhile, criticism by bell hooks of his wife Beyoncé's capitalist informed feminism trickled to Jay as fans and critics pondered if Jay truly had helped open doors of opportunity for others or just his team. In response Jay seemingly became more outspoken and active in his community work since 2015. Tinsley and others have detailed how Carter expanded his scholarship foundation, funded legal aid for Trayvon Martin[24] and other families affected by police violence, funded bail for Ferguson activists, paying tuition for high school seniors in Florida who are dream defenders. Most recently he started a foundation for mass incarceration advocacy and offered legal aid to rappers such as Lil Wayne trapped in unfair deals. This led to praise from the black public sphere, for his advocacy and new found activism.[4] It will be interesting to see if Jay-Z can move from a symbol of post soul success and ambition to an actual change agent that impacts policies that affect black people. It will be fascinating to see how he uses rhetoric to transcend the growing divides he has with his audience as the first rap billionaire.

News of his recent billionaire status was praised by many who see a black man in 20 years reach unprecedented heights and a role model for black culture; however a progressive black movement has harangued and criticized his philosophy of "a seat at the table" and trickle down black benefits. While Jay-Z frames his billionaire status as "a win for the community" the community is fragmented, diverse, and many segments looking for more than symbolic wins and inspiration when he told us his deeds make him great. His discourse of the past haunts him as audiences look to see what his wealth actually does for others. . While Jay-Z is a lyrical hero to many, the lack of tangible gains for black people during Obama's era cultivated a

[23] Jones, Bomani. 2019. Jay-Z joins the NFL. The Undefeated.
[24] Carter funded legal aid for Sean Bell who was killed by police years prior and hired his family as models for his clothing line.

cynicism that belied the optimism of his campaign or Jay-Z post soul music. 2019 News of his NFL partnership is evidence of this rising criticism. After boycotting the Super Bowl to show solidarity with Colin Kapernicks protest against police brutality and banishment from the NFL, Carter partnered up with the NFL. Carter announced an inspire change campaign using music to spread awareness about police brutality and communal issues. Many see it as Jay making another deal for self and hijacking the social activism of others. Some trust that hero Hov will come through and make the community believe his sincerity again. It will be interesting to see how Jay convinces us to not knock his hustle moving forward.

Interestingly, Jay may have to look to current artists to figure out how to navigate as many of his former students have found acceptance from a fragmented black audience who no longer needs rappers to voice their opinions solely, as social media gives them a platform. In addition, my theory of black sincerity rhetoric can be applied to a variety of discourse including contemporary rappers discourse with black audiences. I purposefully wrote this dissertation like a textbook with units, as students can apply authenticity, blackness and community along with acceptance frames to analyze any black rhetors BSR and strivings to maintain connection with their imagined audience.

For example, J. Cole, Jay-Z's artist signed to his Roc Nation label after his departure from Def Jam has probably maintained sincerity and found success in ways Jay may have never imagined. He's called out radio segmentation, communal issues and ostensibly pushed a Black Nationalist message. Despite little to no pop radio play, the North Carolina native valorized his honesty, desire to be successful and his struggles with confidence to connect with a hip-hop generation who felt intimidated by past rappers' success. Instead of a hustler, he uses the framing of an unemployed college grad with a story to share, and it has worked with millennial audiences. He masters the topoi of black sincerity but also has new marketing; even coming to fans home to play his album for them. Cole has had five critically acclaimed no.1 albums in a row.

In relation, Jay Z's wife Beyoncé has probably cultivated the most devoted black imagined audience: the beyhive. A collection of fans that emerged as Beyoncé embraced an ardent emphasis on black culture in video and song. In particular her work with visuals, offers new opportunities to view black sincerity in visual rhetoric. To paraphrase Morgan Jerkins, Beyoncé Carter Knowles has branded herself as an ostensibly black

feminist woman, featuring mothers of police violence victims in her video, referencing Katrina floods, the Black Panther movement in her super bowl "guest appearance" and her celebrating her epic position as a black woman CEO.[5] Aisha Durham highlights how Beyoncé, despite her singing ability, is a hip-hop icon in presentation and framing. Moreover, how she has used the visual rhetoric of her videos to express a range of black feminities that her audience identify with, challenging the status quo but also trying to replace it.[6] Despite bell hooks accurate critiques of her being a capitalist, Beyoncé has transcended prior criticisms of her being a detached pop star and in recent years has feigned pop success for rabid love from her "beyhive." Whether it's featuring the mothers of children slain by police, or the HBCU band at her Coachella performance, she has mastered the many new forms of media to create a level of identification with black audiences who trust her sincerity.

Elsewhere, rapper Drake the most successful rapper since Jay-Z, embraces success, a fluid hometown reppin and epic wins, but vulnerable confession and cocky confidence is contrasted on almost every song. Drake most notably frames his success as purely an extension of his fans love for him and his connection to them, embracing his television past as the highest form of authenticity. In contrast, Pulitzer Prize winner Kendrick Lamar has dedicated his past two albums to his negotiation of his duty to black audience and duty to self as his albums *To Pimp a Butterfly and Damn* focus on his anxiety trying to negotiate his individual and communal duties. Lamar has explained in many interviews that he makes black music no matter who buys his albums and that he is trying to preserve black culture. Instead of a hero, Kendrick claims he is trying to figure it out like his audience; he shares his fears and anxieties and uses his epic skill to relate. In total this quartet, Drake, Cole, Kendrick and Beyoncé take lessons from Jay-Z and other rappers, but have erected an ethos of sincerity or ethos of wokeness that current black audiences currently support and share substance wit. Kanye, Jay-Z's most successful student has been an exercise in the success of a comic frame in the first part of his career, but recently a poster child for the failure of a post soul ethos of sincerity in the age of social media empowered voices and wokeness. His goodwill and negotiation of individual and communal has been eradicated with his embrace of Donald Trump and he is now trying to transcend upward to a higher cause to win black acceptance; most recently embracing gospel to recover his kinship with black audiences..

In total, I would argue the topoi haven't changed for black rhetors but the epic frame has been ditched in favor for mostly the comic frame in the current landscape. Future research on the role of media fragmentation and the process of digital identification in hip-hop discourse, I think can extend rhetorical theory into the digital arena of rhetoric and highlight how hip-hop audiences are constantly evolving and changing. Also the rise of social media, has amplified female voices long ignored in hip-hop. The rise of Cardi B, Rapsody, Meg the Stallion (all signed to Jay-Z management team Roc Nation) as industry stars signals a move for female rappers to regain the 90s notoriety, but also a different focus and different challenges as female rap rhetors.[7] It is possible the sincerity of female rappers is judged differently or presents novel criteria. Despite being in hip-hop since the inception, hip-hop has been a masculine space in tone, attitude, and policing of what is acceptable quite often. While I believe Jay-Z connects with black folks across genders, an analysis of the challenges women rapping must overcome to enact identification in this social media age is very necessary. As women no longer have to stretch to identify with Jay having their own avatars of sincerity, it is interesting to see how male rappers appeal to female audiences with more varied options. Likewise, LGBTQ artists such as Lil Nas X and Santana have complicated gender discourse in hip-hop and in turn how black sincerity rhetoric will sound moving forward. The community borders have to be expanded for hip-hop to maintain its resonance. In addition, the shift of audiences from the mass appeal of MTV and BET to the niche appeal of pitchfork and twitter has an impact on rhetorical performances and more research on this changing landscape deserves inquiry. Most importantly just rhetorical analysis of the most popular genre in music currently-RAP should be more prominent in rhetorical critical conversations.

The epic hustler or CEO is a remnant of hip-hop past. However, Jay-Z influence and relevance today is undeniable. His decade of claiming to be spokesman and for the people may haunt him however. Much of the backlash from his deal with NFL is due to audiences believing Jay-Z for years and most recently his claim on the song "apeshit" that he didn't need the NFL they needed him and boycotted the Super Bowl as a sign of black solidarity. Thus, he announcing partnering with the NFL without Colin Kapernick led many fans to criticize but also feel let down that Hov's sincerity seemed compromised. Several black news websites have covered the backlash to Jay-Z NFL deal, where Jay-Z's unabashed capitalism was derided by a more

progressive black audience than 2007.[8] I am curious if he will sample from his students to repair his ethos after the resounding criticism of his NFL move in the black public sphere. Will he drop a verse like 'Free Mason" with Rick Ross and counter claims of illuminati? Will he drop a verse like "Get Free" where he claims his business deals are helping the community? Or maybe collab with his wife again? His most recent album 4:44 saw a more vulnerable Jay-Z but also one claiming that black billionaires are good for the community. It will be fascinating to see if Jay-Z can convince us in 2020s, to not "knock his hustle" and that he sincerely cares about us as much as he does about being a black Billionaire. Jay-Z and his sincerity still matters to us it appears, we'll see if black folks acceptance still matters to him in the next decade as I propose he shifts to politics.

Endnotes

[1] Carter, S. "Introduction" *Decoded.* 2011.

[2] I vote for nas but its fine.

[3] Wilson, E. 2017& 2018. "Jay-Z rap Radar Interview Part 1 & 2" *Tidal*

[4] Paraphrased from Tinsley 2019. Tinsley, Justin. June 5th, 2019. "Jay-z's Billionaire status adds up to a lot more than what in his bank account. *TheUndefeated.com.*

[5] Jerkins, M. April 26, 2016. "Lemonade is about Black women healing themselves and each other" Elle.com. www.elle.com/culture/music/a35914/beyonces-lemonade-is-about-black-women-healing-themselves/

[6] Durham, A. 2012. "Check on it : Beyoncé Southern Booty and Black Feminities in Music Video. *Feminist Media Studies. 35-49*

[7] Hardy, Antoine. January 25th 2020. *Personal Interview* with Tatyana Jenene Kemp aka The Hip-Hop Homegirl of FuseTV."

[8] Chandler, Dl. August 15, 2019. "No Kap: Twitter Questions Jay-Z over Nfl Partnership Defense, Ties to Colin Kapernick #JayZ" *Hip-Hop Wired. www.Hiphopwired.com/playlist/colin-kapernick-jay-z-nfl-twitter-reactions/*

REFERENCES

Albright, James, and Allan Luke. 2008. *Pierre Bourdieu and Literacy Education*. New York: Routledge.

Allen. Harry. April 1998. "You Must love Him" *Vibe Magazine*

Allen, H. December 1999 "The SupaJigga on how to be king of the world." Vibe Magazine.

Anderson, Benedict R. OG. 1982. *Imagined Communities*. London.

Ashe, B. (Winter,2007). Theorizing the Post Soul Aesthetic: An Introduction. *African American Review*.

Ashe, Betram. 2010. "Post Soul President: Dreams of my Father and the Post Soul Aesthetic." 103-116. *In* Harris, Heather E., Kimberly R. Moffitt, and Catherine R. Squires eds.*, The Obama Effect: Multidisciplinary Renderings of the 2008 Campaign. Albany: State University of New York Press*

Asante, Molefi Kete. 2006. *The Afrocentric Idea*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Bailey, Julius (editor). 2011. *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip Hops Philosopher King*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

Baker Jr., H. A 1987. *Blues Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory.*

Baldwin, D. 2012. "Black Empires, White Desires: The Spatial Politics of Identity in the Age of Hip-Hop. In Murrary Forman and Mark Anthony Neal eds.,*That's The Joint:The Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge.159-177

Banks, Adam. 2008. What is this African American rhetoric. Website. Retrieved from http://writing.syr.edu:16080/~ajbanks/afamrhetoric.html

Battle, Sha'dawn. 2016. *Moments of Clarity" and Sounds of Resistance: Veiled Literary Subversions and De-Colonial Dialectics in the Art of Jay Z and Kanye West.* University of Cincinnati Dissertation
.

Bennett, A. (2005) Hip-Hop am Main, Rappin on the Tyne: Hip-Hop Culture as a Local Construct in Two European Cites." In *That's The Joint: Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. (Eds) Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal. 177-201

Berry, Mendez Elizabeth . January 2004. "The Last Hustle" *Village Voice*

Biocca, F. 2015 "*Television and Political Advertising: Volume II: Signs, Codes, and Images.*

Booth, DJ. April 19, 2019. "What Does Sincerity Sound Like in Hip-Hop?" *DJBooth.com.* Accessed May 31, 2019. https://djbooth.net/features/2019-04-19-sincerity-in-hip-hop-jay-z-mac-miller-nipsey-hussle

Boyd, T. (1998) *Am I black enough for you: Pop Culture from the hood and beyond.* Indiana University Press.

------. 2004. *The New H.N.I.C. (Head Niggas In Charge): the Death of Civil Rights and the Rise of Hip Hop.* New York: New York University Press.

Boylorn, Robin. Spring 2017. "From Boys to Men: Hip-hop, Hood Films, and the performance of contemporary black masculinity." *Black Camera.* Vol. 8. No.2. 146-164

Bradley, Adam. 2017 *Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip-hop. 2nd edition.* Civitas Books

Bradley, Regina. *2016.* "Barbz and Kingz: Explorations of Gender and Sexuality in hip-hop". In Justin Williams , ed. *Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop edited by Justin Williams. Harvard University Press 181-191*

Briehan, T. 2006. "Kingdom Come Review" *Village Voice*

Brown, Ethan. 2008. *Fat Cat, 50 Cent, and the Rise of the Hip-Hop Hustler.* London: Plexus.

Brummet, B. 2008. *Rhetoric of Style. University of Texas*

Burke, Kenneth. 2013. *The Philosophy of Literary Form Studies in Symbolic Action.* New Delhi: Isha Books.

Burke, Kenneth. 2013. *A Rhetoric of Motives.* Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press.

Burke, Kenneth. A Grammar of Motives New York: Meridian, 1962.

Burke, K.1968. *Counter-Statement* . University of California Press

Burke, K. 1974. *Philosophy of Literary Form.* University of California Press.

Burke, K. 1984a. *Permanaence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose.* University of California Press.

Byrd, Ayana. 1998. "Lyrics to Go" Vibe October 1. 66.

Burke, K. (1984b). *Attitudes Towards history* (*3rd Edition*). University of California Press

Campbell, Kermit Ernest. 2005. *Gettin Our Groove on: Rhetoric, Language, and Literacy for the Hip Hop Generation.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs, Susan Schultz Huxman, and Thomas R. Burkholder. 2015. The *Rhetorical*

Act: Thinking, Speaking, and Writing Critically.

Canfield, David. July 9th 2019. "Exclusive: Michael Eric Dyson to examine Jay-Z's cultural impact in new book" Entertainment Weekly. Retrieved July 10 2019. https://ew.com/books/2019/07/09/michael-eric-dyson-jay-z-book-announcement/

Caponi, Gena Dagel. 1999. *Signifyin(g), Sanctifyin, & Slam Dunking.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Carter, S. 2007. *American Gangster. Def Jam Recordings/Roc-a-Fella Records*

Carter, S. 2006. "The Prelude" *Kingdom Come Def Jam Recordings*

Carter, S. & Smith , Justin 2006. "Kingdom Come" and "Oh my god" *Kingdom Come. Def Jam Recordings*

Carter, S. "Hova and out". January 2004. *Vibe Magazine. 73-80*

Carter, S & Carter, M. 2003. "December 4th" *The Black Album. Def Jam Recordings/Roc-a-Fella*

Carter, S. "What More Can I say" *The Black Album*

Carter, S., West, K. & Gordy, B. 2001. "Izzo". The blueprint. Def Jam Recordings/Roc-a-Fella

Carter, S, West, K. 2002. "The Bounce" *Blueprint 2: The Gift and the Curse. Def Jam Recordings/Roc-a-Fella Records*

Carter, S. & Smith Justin "Blueprint 2" *The blueprint 2: The Gift and the Curse 2002. Def Jam Recordings/Roc-a-Fella Records*

Carter, Shawn, West, Kanye, Evans, Faith, Wallace, Christopher. "The Dream". *Blueprint 2: The Gift and the Curse. 2002. Def Jam Recordings/Roc-A-Fella Records.*

Carter, S., West, K. & Ruffin, D. 2001. Never Change. *The Blueprint.*

Carter, S. & West, K. 2001. "Aint no Love" *The Blueprint. Def Jam*

Carter, S. Walters, R., Bink. "The Rulers Back" *The Blueprint*. DefJam Recordings/Roc-a-Fella Records. 2001

Carter, S. & West, K. "Some people Hate." Blueprint 2. Def Jam Records/Roc-a-Fella

Carter, S. & Martin, C. 2006. "D'evils" *Reasonable Doubt* Rocafella/Priority Records
Carter, S. Reasonable Doubt. Roc-a-Fella Records/Payday. 1996

Carter, S. , L. Smith & Willis. D. February 20th, 1996. "Dead Presidents(I)." Roca-fella Records/Priority Records

Carter, S., Miller, M, Blige, M. August 27, 1996. "Cant Knock the Hustle (single)". Rocafella/Priority Records

Carter, S. & Marchand, I. March 28, 1996. "Aint no Nigga." Roc-a-Fella Records/Priority Records
Carter, S. & Wallace, C. 1996. "Brooklyn's Finest" *Reasonable Doubt* Rocafella/Priority Records

Carter, S. & Martin, C. 1996. "Friend or Foe" *Reasonable Doubt*

Carter, S. & Willis, D. 1996 "Politics as Usual" *Reasonable Doubt*

Caramanica, Jon (2004) "Jay-Z". In Christian Hoard (ed.). *The Rolling Stone Album Guide*: 424–425.

Casarino, Cesar. 2008. "Can the Subaltern Confess" in Ernst Van Halpen's ed., *Rhetorics of Sincerity.* Stanford University Press

CHANG, JEFF. 2020. *CANT STOP WONT STOP: a History of the Hip-Hop Generation*. S.l.: PICADOR.
Cepeda, R. 2004. "Introduction to Hov Retires". *Vibe Magazine 72*

Cobb, Jelani. 2008. "Seven Mc'S" *To The Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip-Hop Aesthetic. NYU Press. 139-153*
Coates, T. June 4, 2003. Keepin' It Unreal**:** $elling the Myth of Blaȼk Male Violenȼe, Long Past Its Expiration Date." *Village Voice.*

Cooper, Afua, Rinaldo Walcott, and Lekeisha Hughes. 2018. "Robin D. G. Kelley and Fred Moten in Conversation." *Critical Ethnic Studies* 4 (1): 154. https://doi.org/10.5749/jcritethnstud.4.1.0154.

Crable, Bryan. 2012. *Ralph Ellison and Kenneth Burke at the Roots of the Racial Divide*. Charlottesville (Va.): University of Virginia Press.

Crowley, Sharon, and Debra Hawhee. 2012. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*. Boston: Pearson

Deme, Mariam *Heroism and the Supernatural in the African Epic*. 2011

Du Bois, W.E.B. October 1926. Criteria of Negro Art *The Crisis* 290-297

Dufelmeier, D. 2011 "A 40 million dollars Slave's Moment of Clarity" in Julius Bailey (ed.) *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip-Hop's Philosopher King*. 108-117.

Durham, Aisha S. 2014. *Home with Hip Hop Feminism. Performances in Communication and Culture.*

Pieterlen: Peter Lang Verlag.;

Durham, A. 2012. "Check on it : Beyonce Southern Booty and Black Feminities in Music Video. *Feminist Media Studies. 35-49*

Dyson, Michael Eric. (1993). The Culture of Hip-Hop. In *Reflecting Black : African American Cultural Criticism.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesotta press. 3-15.

Dyson, Michael Eric. (1996). *Between God and Gangsta Rap: Bearing Witness to Black Culture.* Oxford University Press

Dyson, Michael Eric. (2001). *Holler If you Hear Me: Searching for Tupac Shakur.* New York, NY: Basic Civitas Books

Dyson, Michael Eric. 2004. *The Michael Dyson Reader.* New York, NY: Basic Civitas Books,

Dyson, Michael Eric. Know What I Mean? Reflections on Hip Hop. New York: Basic Civitas, 2010

Eddy, B. 2003. *The Rites of Identity: Religious Naturalism and Cultural Criticism of Kenneth Burke and Ralph Ellison.* Princeton University Press.

Ellison, Ralph. 1995. *Going to the Territory*. New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random House.

Emery, A. 2006. *The Book of Hip-Hop Cover Art.* NYC: NY, MITCH

Evans, James . *We have Been Believers: An African American Systematic Theology. Fortress Press. 1993.*

Eversely, S. 2004. *The Real Negro: The Question of Authenticity in Twentieth-Century African American Literature.* Routledge: New York

Evrrything Trill . Posted on April 25th , 2016. Jay-Z 'Before the Fame. Fuck the Labels (rare 1997 interview). *Youtube.Com.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5rUfkkAXh0 Retrieved January 15, 2019.

Ewoodzie, Joseph C., Jr. 2017. *Break Beats in the Bronx: Rediscovering Hip-hop's Early Years.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press

Ex, Kris. February 3, 2000. "Jay-Z , VOl.3 Life and Times of S. Carter" Rolling Stone

Ex, Kris. 2000. "Jayhova's witness" *Vibe Magazine December 2000, 132-135.*

Favor, J. M. (1999) *Authentic Blackness: the Folk in the New Negro Renaissance.* Durham: NC, Duke University Press. 3-4; 138-140

Ferrani, Seth. June 25, 2016. Convicts Talk About Why Jay Z's 'Reasonable Doubt' Is Still Every Hustler's Favorite Album https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/mvkjxq/convicts-talk-about-why-jay-zs-reasonable-doubt-is-still-every-hustlers-favorite-album

Floyd, S. 1998. *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting its History from Africa to the United States.* Oxford University Press.

Forman, Murray. 2002. *The Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Forman, Murray. 2012. "Hip-Hop, Space, and Place" In *That's The Joint: Hip-Hop Studies Reader.* (Eds) Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal. 155-157

Forman, M. & Hardy, A. (January 23, 2009) Personal Communication. Email.

Forman, Murray, and Mark Anthony Neal. 2012. *Thats the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Foss, Karen A., Sonja K. Foss, and Robert Trapp. 2002. *Readings in Contemporary Rhetoric.* Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press

Fuchs, Cynthia, July 1996 "Reasonable Doubt " *Spin Magazine.*

Garon, Paul. 1996. *Blues and the Poetic Spirit*. San Francisco: City Lights.

Garon, Paul, and Gene Tomko. 2006. *Whats the Use of Walking If Theres a Freight Train Going Your Way?: Black Hoboes & Their Songs*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Pub. Co.

Gates, Henry Louis. 2014. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. New York: Norton.

Gates, Henry Louis. 1989. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism*.New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

George, Nelson. 2005. *Post-Soul Nation: the Explosive, Contradictory, Triumphant, and Tragic 1980s as Experienced by African Americans (Previously Known as Blacks and before That Negroes)*. New York: Penguin Books.

George, Nelson. (1992). *Buppies, B-Boys, Baps, & Bohos: Notes on Post Soul Black Culture.* Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press

Giddings, J. 2011. "The Authentic Cultural Agent". Bailey, Julius. 2011. *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip Hops Philosopher King*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland

Gilroy, Paul. 2007. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso.

Gilyard, Keith, and Adam J. Banks. 2018. "Introduction." *On African-American Rhetoric*, 1–9.

https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315108636-1.

Glaude, E. 2011. "Represent": Queensbridge and the Art of Living. In *Born to Use Mics: Reading Nas's Illmatic.*

Gonzalez, M. "Who's next" The Source. January 1995

Gosa, Travis L. 2016. "The Fifth Element: Knowledge". *In The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop. Edited by Justin A. Williams*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, . 56–70

Gordon, D. 2004. *Black Identity: Rhetoric, Ideology and 19th Century Black Nationalism*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Gray, Herman. 2005. *Cultural Moves: African Americans and the Politics of Representation.* Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Gray, Herman. .1995. *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for "Blackness.*" Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Green, T, West, K, Smith, D. & Carter, S. 2005. "Get By Remix" *The Beautiful Struggle. Loud Records*

Greenburg, Zack O'Malley. 2011 *Empire State of Mind: How Jay-Z Went from Street Corner to Corner Office.* New York: Penguin

Gross, Terry. June 16, 2017. Jay-Z: The Fresh Air Interview. NPR Radio

Guralnick, Peter. 2012. *Sweet Soul Music: Rhythm and Blues and the Southern Dream of Freedom*. New York: Back Bay Books/Little, Brown and Co.

Halloran, S. Michael. 1982. "Aristotle's Concept of Ethos, or If Not His Somebody Else's."*Rhetoric Review* 1.1 : 58–63.

Haggins, Bambi. 2007. *Laughing Mad the Black Comic Persona in Post-Soul America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Hall, Stuart. 1988. "New Ethnicities" in Kobena Mercer, ed, ICA Documents 8, Black Film, British Cinema (London: BFI,) 27031

Hall, S. 1992. What is this 'Black' in Black Popular Culture. NewEthnicities.

Halloran, S. Michael. "Aristotle's Concept of Ethos, or If Not His Somebody Else's." *Rhetoric Review* 1.1 (1982): 58–63.

Hamilton, Jack. "The Day Rap Grew up". *The Atlantic* . Sept. 9th 2011.

Hampton, Dream. "Jay-Z Blueprint" Vibe Magazine. 2001.

Hampton, Dream. January 1999. "The Life: Meet Shawn Carter, Writer, Performer, Ghetto Warden, Ghetto Messiah" *Vibe Magazine. 119-124.*

Hansen, G. "Kenneth Burke's Rhetorical Theory within the Construction of the Ethnography of Speaking." *Folklore Forum* 27(1):50-59

Harris, Heather E., Kimberly R. Moffitt, and Catherine R. Squires. 2010. *The Obama Effect: Multidisciplinary Renderings of the 2008 Campaign*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Hartelius, E. Johanna, and Larry D. Browning. "The Application of Rhetorical Theory in Managerial Research: A Literature Review." *Management Communication Quarterly* 22.1 (2008): 13-39. Print.

Hardy, Antoine. November 8, 2010. *Loving the Cool: A Rhetorical Study of Black Masculinity and Contemporary Hip-Hop Love Songs*. VDM Verlag Dr. Müller .

Harrison, Anthony Kwame. 2009. *Hip Hop Underground: the Integrity and Ethics of Racial Identification*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Hawkins, D. 2008. The Jazz Trope : *A theory of african american literary and vernacular culture*. Scarecrow Press: PA. page 124-126.

Hess, Mickey. 2007. *Is Hip Hop Dead?: the Past, Present, and Future of Americas Most Wanted Music*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Hebdige, D. (1987). Cut n Mix: Culture Identity and Caribbean Music. London: Comedia

Hess, M. (2007). Is Hip-Hop Dead: The Past, Present and Future of America's Most wanted Music. Praeger: NY.

Hess, M. 2008. *Icons of Hip-Hop: An Encyclopedia on the movement, music, and culture. Volume 2*. Sage.

Hess, Mickey. 2012. "The Rap Career". In Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal; eds. *Thats the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

Hill, Marc Lamont. 2011. "Critical Pedagogy Comes At Halftime: Nas As Black Public Intellectual" in Michael Eric Dyson and Sohail Daulatzai in *Born to Use Mics: Reading Nas Illmatic*

Hill, Lamont, Marc. 2008. Toward a pedagogy of the popular: Bourdieu, hip-hop, and out-of-school literacies. In Albright, James, and Allan Luke. *Pierre Bourdieu and Literacy Education*. New York: Routledge.

Hill-Collins, Patricia (2000) *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.

Hoffman, H. 2010. Albert Murray's House of Blues in Baker, B.(ed) 2010. *Albert Murray and the Aesthetic Imagination of a Nation*. University of Alabama Press. 138-153.

Holman-Jones, S. (2007). *Torch Singing: Performing Resistance and Desire from Billie Holliday to Edith Piaf.*

Holmes- Smith, C. 1997 "Method in the Madness: Exploring the Boundaries of Identity in Hip-Hop Performativity." *Social Identities* 3 (3) 345-374

Holmes Smith, Christopher. 2003. "'I Don't Like to Dream about Getting Paid' Representations of Social Mobility and the Emergence of the Hip-Hop Mogul." *Social Text* 21 no. 4 69-97.

Hsu, H (December, 2008). The End of White America?. *The Atlantic*

Hymes, D. (2003). *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach.* Boston: Routledge

Imani, Nikitah Okembe-Ra, and S. Craig Watkins. 1999. "Representing: Hip Hop Culture and the Production of Black Cinema." *Contemporary Sociology* 28, no. 5: 577. doi:10.2307/2655022.

Jackson, Chonticia Y. 2014. "*The Use of Rhetoric in Public Relations: Kenneth Burke's Theory of Identification and Consubstantiality.* Dissertation

Jackson, R. 2006. *Scripting the Black Masculine Body: Identity, Discourse, and racial politics in popular media.* Albany: NY, SUNY Press.

Jackson, John L. 2008. *Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jarrat, S.C. (1998) *Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric refigured.* Southern Illinois University

Jay-Z. 2010. *Decoded*. New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau.

Jeffries, Michael P. 2011. *Thug Life: Race, Gender, and the Meaning of Hip-Hop*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Joseph, Ralina L. 2018. *Postracial Resistance: Black Women, Media, and the Uses of Strategic Ambiguity*. New York: New York University Press.

Jones, Meta Dewu. An Interview with Michael Eric Dyson. Vol. 29, No. 3, *Hip-Hop Music and Culture* Summer, 2012, pp. 786-802

Jones, Nasir . 1994. "The World is Yours. *Illmatic* Columbia Records

Karenga, M. (1998/2006). Nommo, kawaida, and communicative practice: Bringing Good into the world. In Ronald J. Jackson and Elaine B. Richardson (Eds.), *Understanding African American rhetoric: Classical Origins to Contemporary*

Kaylor, BT. 2010. "Savior, Fool, Demagoguge: Burkean Frames surrounding the Ten Commandments Judge. KB Journal.Org. https://www.kbjournal.org/book/export/html/325 ;

Keeley, B. 2008. "I may not get there with you: I've been to the mountain top as epic discourse. *Southern Communication Journal* Vol. 73, No. 4,. 280–294

Karrem, Jamila. 2015. "The Mogul Ethos and the American Dream in Contemporary Mainstream Rap " in Laura Savu Walker, Joseph Donica, Patrick Crapanzano eds., *The Good Life and the Greater Good: In a global Context.*

Kitwana, B. (2005). *The Hip-Hop Generation.* New York, NY: Basic Civitas Books. 2005

Kitwana, B. 2011. Zen and the Art of Transcending the Status Quo: The Reach from the Hood to the Suburbs. In Bailey, Julius. 2011. *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip Hops Philosopher King.* Jefferson, NC

Knickerbocker, W.(1969) Wam for Maw: Dogma versus Discursiveness in William K. Ruekert (Ed.). , *Critical Response to Kenneth Burke 1924-1968*. University of Minnesota Press.

Kelley, Robin D. G. 1996. *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*. New York: The Free Press.

Krims, A. 2001. R*ap Music and the Poetics of Identity.* Cambridge University Press: Boston, MA.

Kwak, Donnie. "Doubts, Reasonable: How hip-hop media reacted to Jay Z's debut in 1996." The Ringer. June 24, 2016. Accessed May 31, 2019. https://www.theringer.com/2016/6/24/16046580/jay-z-reasonable-doubt-media-reaction-b280f7043c0c.

Kynard, Carmen. 2008. ""The Blues Playingest Dog You Ever Heard Of': (Re)Positioning Literacy Through African American Blues Rhetoric." *Reading Research Quarterly* 43 (4): 356–73. https://doi.org/10.1598/rrq.43.4.3.

Light, A. 2012 Hip-Hop: About a Salary or Reality." In *That's The Joint: Hip-Hop Studies Reader.* (Eds) Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal.2nd edition 45-56

L., Jackson II Ronald, and Elaine B. Richardson. 2014. *Understanding African American Rhetoric Classical Origins to Contemporary Innovations*. Florence: Taylor and Francis.

L., Van Deburg William. 2014. *Black Camelot African-American Culture Heroes in Their Times, 1960-1980*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

l. Deburg, Willam Van. 2003. "Book Review : Soul Babies: Black Popular Culture and the Post Soul Aesthetic. *African American Review*

Letterman, D. "Jay-Z" *My Guest needs No Introduction*. Netflix Entertainment 2019

Lewis, Pete. 1998. "Jay-Z a B&S Classic Interview" *Blues and Soul* www.bluesandoul.com/feature/441/jay-z_is_back/ *Retrieved July 2016*

Lewis, Miles Marshall. 2000. "Jay-Z Volume 3 review." *Village Voice*

Levine, Lawrence W. 2007. *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

Lordi, Emily. 2017. "Post Soul Aesthetics." *Oxford Bibliographies* https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780190221911/obo-9780190221911-0012.xml#obo-9780190221911-0012-bibItem-0054

Lubiano, W. 2003. But Compared to What?: Reading Realism, Representation, and Essentialism in School Daze, Do The Right Thing and the Spike Lee Discourse" in Valerie Smith (Ed.), *Representing Blackness: Issues in Film and Video*. Rutgers University Press. 97-123.

Mcallister, Marvin. "Embodied and disembodied satire." In Derek Maus and James Donahue eds., *Post-Soul Satire*. 252.;

McLeod, K. (1999). Authenticity within Hip-Hop and other cultures threatened by assimilation." *Journal of Communication*. 49(4) 134-150

Morgan, Joan. 2017. *When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: a Hip-Hop Feminist Breaks It Down*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.

Moore, A. (2002). Authenticity as Authentication. *Popular Music, 21*(2). 209-223.

Mostern, Kenneth. 1999. *Autobiography and Black Identity Politics: Racialization in Twentieth-Century America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Murray, Albert. 2001. *From the Briarpatch File: on Context, Procedure, and American Identity*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Naumoff, MH. 2015. *The Rhetoric of the Hip-Hop Hustler: Shifting Representations of American Identity.* Wayne State University Dissertations.

Neal, Mark Anthony. 2013. "My Passport says Shawn: Toward a Hip-Hop Cosmopolitan. *In Looking for Leroy: Illegible Black Masculinities.*

Neal, M. A. (1997). Sold out on soul: The corporate annexation of Black popular music. *Popular Music and Society*, 21 (3) 117-136.

Neal, Mark Anthony (1999) Soul for Real: Authentic Black Voices in an Age of Deterioration in *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture* pp. 40-85)

Neal, Mark Anthony. 2002. *Soul Babies: Black Popular Culture and the Post-Soul Aesthetic.* New York, NY: Routledge

Neal, M.A. 2012. "Hip-Hop Culture and the Authenticity Debates. In Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal (Eds) ,*That's The Joint: Hip-Hop Studies Reader*,.57-60

Neal, Mark Anthony. 2006. *The New Black Man.*New York: Routledge.

Nordvquist, R. March 17, 2018. **Definition and Examples of the Topoi in Rhetoric. Thought Co.** https://www.thoughtco.com/topoi-rhetoric-1692553 Retrieved July 15, 2019

Nunley, Vorris. 2011. *Keepin It Hushed: The Barbershop and African American Hush Harbor Rhetoric.* Wayne State University Press.

Nunley, V. 2007. From the Harbor to the Academic Hood: Hush Harbors and African American Rhetorical Tradtion. *African American Rhetoric(s): Interdisciplinary Perspectives.* In Ronald J. Jackson and Elaine B. Richardson (Eds.), (pp. 221-245)

Ogbar, J. (2009). *Hip-Hop Revolution: The Culture and Politics of Rap.* University Press of Kansas

Osse, Reggie and A. King. "Damon Dash Episode" *Combat Jack Show* [audio podcast]. March 2014

Osse, R. 2015. "25 True stories of the rap game." *Complex Magazine*

Oswald, Vanessa. *Jay-Z: Building a Hip-hop Empire.* New York: Lucent Press, 2019.

Perry, Imani. (2004) *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Persley, N. 2011. "An Urban Singer of Tales: The Freestyle Remixing of an AfroHomeric Oral Tradition. In Julius Bailey. 2011. Jay-Z: Essays on Hip Hops Philosopher King. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.67-84

Peterson, James Braxton. 2014. *The Hip-Hop Underground and African American Culture: Beneath The Surface*

Peterson, J. 2011.."It's Yours: Hip-Hop Worldviews in the lyrics of Nas." In Michael Eric Dyson., and Sohail Daulatzai eds.,. *Born to Use Mics: Reading Nas's Illmatic. New York: Basic Civitas Books*

Picket, H. 2017. *Rethinking Sincerity and Authenticity.*

Pope, Amara. 2016. Musical Artists Capitalizing on Hybrid Identities: A Case Study of Drake as Authentic Rapper. *Stream: Culture/Politics/Technology.*Vol 9(1), 3-22 © The http://journals.sfu.ca/stream.

Pough, Gwendolyn D. 2004. *Check It While I Wreck It: Black Womanhood, Hip-Hop Culture, and the Public Sphere*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Potter, R. (1995). Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip-Hop and the Politics of Postmodernism. SUNY Press.

Powell, K. 1995. The association of southern women for the prevention of lynching: Strategies of a movement in the comic frame. *Communication Quarterly* 43:1, pages 86-99.

Rose, Kate. 2015. *Friendship, Love, and Hip Hop: An Ethnography of African American Men in Psychiatric Custody (Culture, Mind, and Society*) Palgrave Macmillan

Quigley, B. 2009. Identification as the Key Term in Burke's Rhetorical Theory. *AmericanCommunicationJournal.*http://www.people.okanagan.bc.ca/marellano/communications/Cop_and_Identification_files/Identification%20Quigley.pdf

Ramsey, Guthrie P. 2004. *Race Music: Black Cultures from Behop to Hip-Hop*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Ramsey, G. Winter, 2002. "Muzing New Hoods, Making New Identities: Film, Hip-Hop Culture and Jazz Music". *Callaloo*

Richardson, Elaine B. 2007. *Hiphop Literacies*. London: Routledge.

Riley, Alexander. 2005. "The Rebirth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Hip Hop: A Cultural Sociology of Gangsta Rap Music." *Journal of Youth Studies* 8 (3): 297–311. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676260500261892.

Roberts, John W. 2010. *From Trickster to Badman The Black Folk Hero in Slavery and Freedom*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Robbins, Michael. 2017. *Equipment for Living: On Poetry and Pop Music 1-13*

Rodman, G. 2012. "Race…and Other Four-Letter Words: Eminem and the Cultural Politics of Authenticity." In Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal eds., 2012. *Thats the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge

Rosenthal E & Rosenthal, Jeff. August, 2nd 2017. "Roc-a-Fella Live: Biggs/Hip-hop/LennyS/Just Blaze/Guru/Freeway/Jim Jones/Young Gunz/Chaka." *A Waste of Time Podcast.*

Rutledge, J. 2015. *The Epic Trickster*

Schawrz, R. (June 9, 2010). "How Jay-Z Became King" *Rolling Stone*

SCISCO, PETER L. 2014. *Organizing Rhetoric: Situation, Ethos, Identification, and the Institution of Social Form . UNC-Greensboro Dissertation*

Scorsese, M . February 2013. "Interview for On the Waterfront" *On the waterfront Criterion Collection Edition. Directed by Elia Kazan. Criterion Studios*

Scott, Robert Lee. 1979. *The Rhetoric of Black Power*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Pr.

Sellnow, Deanna D. 2018. *The Rhetorical Power of Popular Culture: Considering Mediated Texts*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Sellnow, D. (March 22,1999) Music as Persuasion "Refuting Hegemonic masculinity in 'He thinks he'll keep her." *Women Studies in Communication*

Serrano, Shea. 2015. *The Rap Yearbook: The Most important Rap song from Every Year since 1979. Random House.*

Setaro, Shawn, Summer 2018. "Jay-Z's Best albums" Complex Magazine

Seymour, G. 2017. "What We can Learn from Albert Murray". *BookForum Dec/January Issue.*https://www.bookforum.com/print/2304/what-albert-murray-can-teach-us-now-16820

Simmons, R. "Russell Simmons Speaks". *S. Carter Collection* 2005. Tidal/Roc-Nation.

Smith, Valerie. 2003. *Representing Blackness Issues in Film and Video*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press.

Smith, Denzel M. 2017. *Invisible Man, Got the whole word watching : A young black mans education*

Smitherman, Geneva. 2000. *Black Talk: Words and Phrases from the Hood to the Amen Corner*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Smitherman, Geneva. 2006. *Word from the Mother: Language and African Americans*. New York:

Routledge.
Smitherman, G. (1997). "'The Chain Remains the Same': Communicative Practices in the Hip Hop Nation," *Journal of Black Studies*.

Sude, Jury. March 26, 2016. "Respect the Architect: Hip-hop Has Gone Global but its Still Black Culture. Complex.com. https://www.complex.com/music/2015/03/hip-hop-is-black-culture-gone-global

Squires, C. R. 2002. "Rethinking the Black Public Sphere: An Alternative Vocabulary for Multiple Public Spheres." *Communication Theory* 12 (4): 446–68. https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/12.4.446.
Stern, Howard. 2011. Jay-Z Interview. Transcript.

Strauss, Neil . *October 4, 2001*."The Blueprint" *Rolling Stone*.

Stokes, M. (1994). *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The musical construction of space.* Southern Illinois Press.

Swedenburg, Ted. (2005)."Homies in the Hood: Rap's Commodification of Insubordination. In Mark Anthony Neal & Murrary Forman. (Eds.), *That's The Joint: Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. New York, (pp.231-242). NYC: Routledge.

Tate, Greg. 2016. *Flyboy in the Buttermilk: Essays on Contemporary America*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
Taylor-Guthrie, Kathleen. 1994. *Conversations With Toni Morrison*. 123 University Press of Mississippi
Tempest, K. 2013. AN ETHOS OF SINCERITY: ECHOES OF THE DE REPUBLICA IN CICERO'S PRO MARCELLO * *Greece & Rome,* Second Series, Vol. 60, No. 2 pp. 262-280

Thompson, Robert Farris. 2010. *Flash of Spirit: African and Afro American Art and Philosophy*

Toop, David. 1991. *Rap Attack*. London: Serpents Tail.

Walker, Laura Savu. 2015. *The Good Life and the Greater Good in a Global Context*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Ward, Brian. 2004. *Just My Soul Responding: Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness and Race Relations*. London: Routledge.

Warwick, Q. 2010. *What we talk about when we talk about talking: Ethos at work in an online community. Iowa State University Dissertations.*

Watts, Eric K. 1997. "An Exploration of Spectacular Consumption: Gangsta Rap as Cultural Commodity." *Communication Studies* 48 (Spring) 42-58.

Watts, E.K. 2006. African american Ethos and Larry Neal's Hermeuntics. *In Ethos of Rhetoric.*. South Carolina Press

White, Miles. 2011. *From Jim Crow to Jay-Z: Race, Rap, and the Performance of Masculinity*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press

Wilson, E. 2007. "I still Kill" XXL Magazine. Harris Publishing. https://web.archive.org/web/20071206110853/http://www.xxlmag.com/online/?p=15128

Wayne, Michael. 2011. *Imagining Black America*

Womack, Ytasha L. 2010. *Post Black: How a New Generation is Redefining African American Identity*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books

Wright, M. (2004). *Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the African Diaspora.* Duke University Press.

Young Guru. Twitter post. June 2016, 3:53. https://twitter.com/young_guru/status/963221982736089088

Zimmerman, Katherine. 2013. *The Sounds of Zora Neale Hurston: Their Eyes were watching God: Blues, rhythm rhyme and repetition* . UNCG Dissertations and Theses. https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/listing.aspx?id=14887

Zulick, Margaret D. "The Ethos of Invention: The Dialogue of Ethics and Aesthetics in Kenneth Burke and Mikhail Bakhtin." *The Ethos of Rhetoric.* Ed. Michael J. Hyde. Columbia, SC: U of SC P, 2004. 20–33.