

Black and Brown in Hip Hop: Tenuous-Solidarity

Robert Tinajero, Ph.D.

“...discourse serves as the vehicle for which racial ideals are promulgated and advanced”

-Cornel West-

Race is an important and growing area of study in contemporary rhetorical studies (see Gilyard; Ratcliffe; Villanueva; West), but the terrain of this discussion has not delved much into musical/lyrical rhetoric, especially not that of Hip Hop. Analyzing this “everyday” (Essed)¹ rhetoric, one that is continually expanding, diversifying, and being pumped into the ears of millions of listeners, can add to the landscape of race discussions in rhetorical circles and beyond. Performing this non-traditional rhetorical analysis works towards the shifts Jacqueline Jones Royster has spoken of, which include “shifting where we stand,” “shifting rhetorical subjects,” “shifting the circle of practice,” and “shifting the theoretical frame.” The study of race through Hip Hop Rhetoric, and vice versa, asks scholars to address and enact these important shifts in rhetorical studies.

As integral parts of Hip Hop culture, rap music lyrics, rap music videos, and Hip Hop films, some of which will be discussed later, are in many ways the rhetorical voice of that culture and can teach much about racial interactions within and beyond that culture. With their beginnings in New York African American communities in the 1970s, rap music and Hip Hop culture have catapulted into the American ethos and cannot be ignored when discussing the continual formation of the American identity.

¹ Philomena Essed labels the “everyday” as routine situations in everyday life and connects “everyday racism” to the structural forces of racism. In similar fashion, I connect the everyday aspects of Hip Hop culture (music, video, and film) to the forces of Black and Brown tension and solidarity.

More specifically, because of its popularity, Hip Hop has been incorporated by other racial groups and has created opportunities for physical and rhetorical interaction between those groups and African Americans. One of these groups is the Latino/a American community.

According to 2006 census reports, Hispanics and African Americans each comprised approximately 13-14% of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census), and these numbers continue to grow. As the two largest, and most culturally and politically influential minority groups in the United States, it is important to analyze the rhetorical interactions between Latino/a Americans and African Americans. Hip Hop music lyrics (particularly rap), video, and film, all which can be far reaching and highly influential, provide useful sites of analysis. While academic writings have a limited trickle down influence on youth and society at large, through the filter of academia or popular media, it is in music and film that much larger segments of the population rhetorically interact with the world on a regular basis. Critically analyzing textual and visual rhetorical content from Hip Hop culture should be an important endeavor in rhetorical studies.

This endeavor is new; Hip Hop rhetoric is young in the historical scheme of rhetoric and in studies of human discourse. But its youth is not the only reason Hip Hop rhetoric has been largely ignored in the academic field of rhetoric. This discourse and its community are much different from, and in many ways challenge, the traditional landscape of the discipline. While the realm of rhetorical studies has expanded over the years, more traditional subjects of study continue to dominate the field. Also, those who either do not understand Hip Hop discourse, who fear its influence, or who believe it is inappropriate in the formal study of rhetoric tend to marginalize or ignore it.

Rhetorical scholarship in Hip Hop Rhetoric can strongly add to the intellectual landscape of rhetorical studies, help us add to the diversity of the discipline, and, importantly, shift our understanding of what can/should be deemed valuable in rhetorical studies. One valuable aspect of this work is the discussion of race relations—in this case, the complex relationship between Latino/a Americans and African Americans.

Tenuous-Solidarity

I propose that Latino/a Americans and African Americans—highlighted here through the lens of Hip Hop—are in a constant state of tension *and* solidarity. Here I offer a new term which I feel may capture best this relationship—*tenuous-solidarity*. The two groups interact in a physical, linguistic, and rhetorical borderland (Anzaldua) and co-exist in what LuMing Mao might refer to as a state of “together-in-difference” (434). They “meet, clash, and grapple with each other” (Pratt qtd. in Mao 434) in a brutally beautiful manner that is indicative of many racially (or otherwise) divided people throughout the world. While Pratt and Mao refer more specifically to the relationship between a dominant and subordinate culture, the complexities of competing cultures can be applied to the Latino American/African American situation as they both “compete” against one another *and* against the dominant culture of the United States.

Crucially, the interactions between these two populations in Hip Hop culture must be viewed in a parametric manner—that is, they not only characterize the relationship within the realm of Hip Hop but are reflections of interactions between these two groups in society at large. It is in this tenuous-solidarity, I believe, that these two groups will

continue to struggle within, under, and against hegemonic forces in the United States for years to come.

At the micro level there are certainly points of tension and outright hatred and violence between individuals in the Latino/a American and African American communities. There is also growing tension between large sectors of those two communities. One example of this are fights that broke out between Latino/a American and African American students in Los Angeles schools during the immigration reform protests of 2006 and continued brawls between Latino American and African American students throughout South Central Los Angeles and other cities in the United States (McGrath). I have also heard of clashes and small riots between African American and Latino students at high schools in my home town of El Paso, Texas.

There has also been heated debate between national organizational leaders from the two groups over jobs (Wood), immigration, bilingual education, and political representation (Hutchinson “Black Latino Clash”). While these political clashes are important examples, the tension between the two groups is perhaps most clearly illustrated in gang activity and prison life, both influences on Hip Hop culture. In jails and prisons across America, the Brown-Black divide is exacerbated, as it is in many of the urban communities that produce Hip Hop artists/rhetors. As Joseph Holguin, a Latino gang member, put it, “The whole racial thing [in prison] leaks out into the real world” (Glazer).

And while all these manifestations of tension may not be simply and directly linked only to issues of race (one must consider class, gender, culture, and general situatedness as well), I believe race *is* central to many of these interactions. The hyper-

awareness and hyper-pride in one's Blackness or Brownness, expressed constantly in much of Hip Hop rhetoric, points to this dynamic. Also, both positive and negative individual acts and rhetoric aimed at the other group, as well as social interactions between the two groups in general, are indicative of both specific agents (the micro/individual) and systemic structures (the macro/community)². It would be near-sighted to focus only on individual rappers as autonomous agents and not members of racial and socioeconomic groups as well as it would be far-sighted not to consider specific rap lyrics and images that come from particularized contexts.

A telling quotation that points to this notion of tenuous-solidarity comes from Latino rapper Down A.K.A. Kilo who states, "You could be a Latino, a big gang member, and you could hate black people, but if Snoop Dogg [an African American] comes out with a record, you're still going to buy it. When Ice Cube [an African American] comes out with a record, you're still going to buy it" (Vibe 132). Even more poignantly and violently stated in "To Live and Die in L.A.," by rap icon Tupac Shakur, we hear further discourse that points to both tension and solidarity: "Black love, Brown pride/ We might fight against each other, but I promise you this/ We'll burn this [city] down/ just get us pissed (mad)." Both rappers are keenly aware of the tension (hatred, fighting) and the solidarity (support, connection) between the two groups.

If we are to concede that many negative interactions between these two communities are race-based (racism), then it seems we must agree with Philomena Essed that racism is perpetuated "through multiple relations and situations...[within] the process of the system" at work (189). Thus, I will argue that some of the textual and

² For discussions of racism at the micro and macro levels read Steve Fenton's "Ethnicity and the Modern World: Historical Trajectories," Omi and Winant's "Racial Formation," and Teun A. van Dijk's *Elite Discourse and Racism*

visual rhetoric coming from Hip Hop is indicative of what Essed defines as “everyday racism” because it is both an expression and an underlying catalyst of racist interactions between Latino/a Americans and African Americans in “everyday” venues—music, music videos, and film. Individual rhetorical moments coming from these media both create a system of racial interaction and are expressions of individual thoughts by persons within those communities. If the *everyday* involves “the direct reproduction of the person embedded in social relations” and belongs to routine and repetitive practices which can be deemed “generalizable and taken for granted” (Essed 186-187), then rap artists and their product, if part of popular culture or the culture of a large segment of society, are integral parts of the formation of racial identities in the minds of those that listen to the music and watch the videos and films on a regular basis. Otherwise said, the rap music being pumped into the ears of people, and the visual rhetoric poured into their eyes, can have an effect on their attitudes and interactions towards another racial group. After all, rhetoric shapes attitude and “attitudes are not purely mental...[one] carries them in [one’s] interactions with others; actions are shaped and formed by attitudes” (Heldke 40).

If rap lyrics, rap music videos, and Hip Hop films at times create and display structures and moments of everyday racism, this media may also create structures and moments of everyday solidarity, which involve cooperation, understanding, and empathy. When Latino/a Americans and African Americans confront similar issues and struggles, their combined rhetoric encourages important moments of understanding and union. This interplay between rhetoric that illustrates togetherness and rhetoric that illustrates difference and tension develops the notion of tenuous-solidarity. If we agree with Teun van Dijk that “discourse is the principle means for the construction and reproduction of

sociocognitive framework[s]” (“Denying” 307), then these discursive messages of tension and solidarity displayed in Hip Hop culture serve as powerful agents in the development of relations between the two groups.

Black and Brown Solidarity

Soldier Imagery/Mentality: Illustrating and Perpetuating an Ethos of Struggle

You got to think like a soldier/
And we gonna organize a people army/
And we gonna get control over our own lives
-Dead Prez-

People worldwide, many of them young, use rap music as a vehicle for voicing their struggles—a quality prevalent in African American rap music since its early beginnings. From France and Latin America to Africa and Palestine, rap artists express the frustration and angst of millions. This expression of angst-filled and socially conscious rhetoric through rap music, which often focuses on social struggle, is also prevalent in the Latino/a American community.

To connect themselves with the notion of struggle, both Latino/a American and African American rap artists continually incorporate the rhetorical metaphor of *soldier* in their lyrics, which is indicative of, and perpetuates, a soldier ethos. As with soldiers in a traditional army, many rappers and individuals that identify with the Hip Hop ethos, identify with the notion of meaningful struggle—struggle that is both for survival and purpose. While the image of the soldier can conjure up a plethora of characteristics, from institutional and social hegemony to unquestioned obedience, I believe Hip Hop rhetoric connects with soldier imagery because of the characteristics of strength, struggle, and survival in the face of adversity.

Often coming from poor and violent neighborhoods, the creators of rap music (and many in their audience) are keenly aware of struggle—struggle to survive physically, emotionally, and rhetorically in a world that continually subjugates the poor (often minorities) and subjects them to oppressive circumstances. But it is important to highlight that the soldier metaphor, one of the reigning metaphors in rap music and Hip Hop culture, is a rhetorically powerful tool of identity and agency—not a metaphor of the weak. This seems indicative of much of Hip Hop culture’s world view—an acceptance of the fact that there *is* struggle, that there *is* the presence of oppressive social forces, but that something *can* be done to combat those forces, as soldiers confront their enemies on the battlefield.

As in the armed forces, struggle is always both individualistic and group-based—for personal *and* group survival and agency. Individuals can battle politically racist and classist hegemonic forces, but that struggle is almost always within and for a group: Latino/a Americans, African Americans, a particular class, community, city, clique, etc. Just as military soldiers are proud of being an “Army of one” (a popular slogan in Army advertisements), rappers and those in their audience many times express their strength as individuals but also as members of a group. Military soldiers have strong connections to their battalion, their arm of the military, and the country they fight for. The same connection to a group, clique, gang, city, and region is present in rappers and many in their audience.

It is no wonder that both Latino/a Americans and African Americans connect with the metaphor of purposeful struggle, come to life in the soldier. The two groups are continually at the bottom of U.S. economic and educational achievement indicators and

in many instances share a distinction as second-class citizens who have been born into the bottom ranks of the social and economic order. Some examples help illustrate this point. Linguistically, both groups battle against the delegitimization of “non-Standard” languages/dialects (African American Vernacular English/Black English, Spanish and Spanglish). In health care, Latino Americans and African Americans continue to be victims of gaps in health insurance and access to the best medicines and doctors (Stein). In technology, these two populations lag behind in access to computers and Internet access and to the best education in turning those technologies into catalysts for social advancement (Banks). Politically, Latino/a Americans and African Americans continue to battle for more representation at the local, state, and federal level. Both are at the bottom of numbers indicating home ownership, wages, net worth, and education (Associated Press). The groups also account for the highest incarceration rates in the United States (Liptak).

These conditions explain why struggle is a central theme in these communities and in their production of Hip Hop rhetoric—a production that highlights, perpetuates, and creates an ethos of struggle. As most contemporary rhetoricians would claim, discourse should be analyzed not only for what it points to, but also for what it creates. Rhetoric is epistemic and thus powerful—powerful not only in an inspirational sense, but also in that it points to power structures inherent in society. Though many would argue that Latino/a and African Americans have the same access to upward mobility and equal levels of cultural capital, a vast amount of Hip Hop rhetoric serves as a constant reminder of the social and racial injustice, and the consequent struggle, involved in the lives of many, especially poor, Blacks and Latinos.

Importantly, the voices of Hip Hop often come from those that are otherwise voiceless, directly or indirectly, especially in academic settings. They may have a strong voice within smaller social networks, but their experiences and discourse are largely ignored in rhetorical studies. Their discussion of struggle and their perpetuation of a struggle mentality is ignored even though Hip Hop rhetoric is readily available in the airwaves and texts around us. This sense of presence but exclusion, socially and rhetorically, adds to the notion of struggle.

While the notion of struggle has been discussed in many ways, the struggle ethos in Hip Hop is habitually personified through the “soldier” by many rappers, and, because rhetoric *is* epistemic, this soldier rhetoric produces a large population of individuals with varying levels of soldier mentality on the streets of this nation and throughout the world.

Some Examples

Throughout their 2000 album *Let's Get Free*, the rap group Dead Prez incorporates soldier imagery. The track “We Want Freedom” states, “we gonna organize a people army,” “would you be ready for civil war?” “train yourself, clean your shottie (shotgun),” and “military formation, anyone’s participation is welcome.” Continued imagery and direct pronouncements of organized, military-like struggle are rampant in this album and in the group’s other releases: *Turn off the Radio Volume 1*, *Turn off the Radio Volume 2: Get Free or Die Tryin’* and *Revolutionary But Gangsta*. One of the group’s icons is the *shi* hexagram (from the *I Ching*), which symbolizes the Army and is part of their logo.

In “I’m a Soldier,” rapper 50 Cent claims, as he directly or indirectly does in numerous songs, “I’m a soldier, I done told ya, don’t make me f**k you up,” and ends

the song with the marching commands of “left, right, left, right.” On the same track fellow rapper Lloyd Banks expresses, “everyday’s war.” In a remix of “I’m a Soldier,” 50 Cent orders the audience to “Salute me.” These are clear references to the soldier metaphor typical of Hip Hop rhetoric.

While some in Hip Hop focus on a more politically-charged message of struggle (e.g. Dead Prez), most Hip Hop discourse that puts forth soldier imagery views struggle as an everyday reality (e.g. 50 Cent). Most individuals creating and affected by the soldier ethos of Hip Hop are not calling for a deconstruction or dismantling of the social order, as is Dead Prez, but are more focused on expressing the fact that social inequity exists and that one must live as a soldier to survive. In a sense, societal conditions create the Hip Hop soldier who creates rhetoric about being a soldier, which in turn enhances the existence of soldier imagery in this segment of the population. Other Hip Hop rhetoricians, like Tupac Shakur, Cypress Hill, Silencer, South Park Mexican, and rap label No Limit Soldiers, have been involved in the dissemination of this soldier rhetoric and point to the presence of such rhetoric in Black and Latino Hip Hop.

Rap label No Limit Soldiers is an example of an independent recording label that saw huge success in the late 1990s while making explicit connections to soldier life and the soldier ethos. Born from the rugged streets of New Orleans, No Limit Soldiers produced numerous albums that were sold on the streets, and later through more corporate venues, to thousands of youth who connected with the soldier rhetoric. No Limit artist Master P made numerous references to the “soldier life” in song’s such as “Soulja,” “No Limit Soldiers II,” and “Is There a Heaven for a Gangsta?”

Tupac Shakur, one of Hip Hop's icons, makes several references to living as a soldier. In "Soulja's Story," he raps:

They cuttin' off welfare..
They think crime is risin' now
You got whites killin' blacks,
cops killin' blacks, and blacks killin' blacks
Shit just gon' get worse
They just gon' become souljas
Straight souljas

In "Soulja's Revenge":

Real niggaz don't fold, straight souljah!
Can't find peace on the streets

In "Ballad of a Dead Soulja":

If you play the game, you play to win..
(this is the ballad of a dead soldier)...

...The situation's critical
Nothin' is colder - than to hear the ballad of a dead soldier...

...[to]All the niggaz that put it down, all the soldiers
All the niggaz that go through that day to day struggle
This is the ballad of a dead soldier!...

In "Soldier (Return of the Souldja)":

Tryin' to keep a nigga down, but ya failed
Before I let ya take me, I told ya
Fuck being trapped, I'm a soulja

These few examples are reminiscent of countless references in rap music to the notion that one's identity is analogous to the life of a soldier, who is in a situation of purposeful struggle. As can be seen by these examples, rap music is a vehicle for the telling of these critical stories of perseverance in the face of crime and social warfare.

As Shakur illustrates, soldier/struggle-ethos is connected to a day-to-day reality and is in opposition/warfare with the social ills "trapping" one's existence. The presence of crime and the reduction of welfare, coupled with the lack of "peace on the streets," are seen by Shakur as direct reasons for the creation of "souljas." The statement that "real" soldiers don't fold once again

highlights the fact that many Hip Hop rhetoricians connect with the strong image of the soldier and not that of a weak or defeated victim. Some soldiers may die, as alluded to in Shakur's ballad, but if a soldier is to die it is as a fighter. Finally, Shakur understands that the situation on the streets is just as important as that in other circles of society ("the situation's critical").

While specific examples of soldier imagery coming from African American Hip Hop have been discussed, Latino/a Hip Hop also provides examples to add to the discussion of soldier imagery and to the rhetorical landscape. Latino rap artists Cypress Hill, in "Worldwide," ask listeners to "Remember me now, Cypress Hill soldier," and in "Tú No Ajuanta" (You Can't Handle), they rap, "listo, preparado, como un soldado" (ready, prepared, like a soldier)³. On their official Website, the group calls their latest tour biography "Soldier Stories." In "You Don't Want to F**k With Us," Latino American rapper Silencer refers to himself as "the one of a kind soldado." Houston's South Park Mexican (SPM), one of the most popular Latino rap artists, in "Who's Over There," states "soldier, I sleep with one eye open" and in "Suckaz N Hataz" makes reference to his rap label by calling himself a "Dopehouse soldier." These references continue in Spanish as well, as in "Illegal Amigos" where SPM refers to one of his friends in stating, "You always have my back, my number one soldado." In "I Wanna Know Her Name," he makes reference to his identity as an immigrant and a soldier: "I swam across the bayou/ a mojado (wetback)/...a soldado." These references point to the complex nuances present in the Hip Hop soldier ethos— reflecting individual struggle, clique struggle (Dopehouse Records), and racial/cultural struggle (immigrant/"wetback").

³ These are the author's translations. Though "ajuanta" is grammatically incorrect, this is how it appears in a number of sources. "Tú No Ajuanta" could also be "you can't take it" or "you don't last."

Another telling example comes from the rap group Souldado, which mixes the Spanish word for “soldier” (soldado) with “soul” to create its name. In an interview with BrownPride.com, one of the group’s frontmen states:

We chose it (groups name) because that’s who our group is really repping (representing) for...the souldados! Whether being a soldier for your hood, your country, or your family... We’re repping for the people in the trenches, not the Generals, not the Captains, not the so called Leaders but the people who get their hands dirty... (Danny/LaUnion)

As is evident in the Latino rapper’s commentary, he and his group feel directly connected to the struggle of those marginalized in society, not those in power but those who “get their hands dirty.” This rhetoric is common among Latino/a rap artists and represents a strong point of solidarity and connectedness between African American Hip Hop artists and Latino/a Hip Hop artists and those in their audience, of whom there are many, who subscribe to the understanding that struggle is a central characteristic for many in these two communities.

Part of the struggle for the Latino/a American rappers is fitting into a system and a culture that many times does not embrace them. Latino/a Americans, as stated earlier, are marginalized in a number of ways in the United States, and within Hip Hop itself, a culture dominated by African Americans, they remain a marginalized group. In many ways Latinos and African Americans struggle against and under dominant cultural forces in the United States and understand that while they are Americans, even profitable with their craft at times, they remain victims of the normative lens in areas such as language/discourse/rhetoric, culture, dress, customs, etc. But within, and because of, this

struggle, many Latino and African American rappers and followers of Hip Hop continue to embrace the soldier ethos.

Beyond these Black and Latino/a rap artists, there is the hugely popular R&B trio, Destiny's Child, who scored a hit with their 2005 song "Soldier" in which they state that they need a "soldier" to take care of them: "I need a soldier who'll stand up for me." While they are not a rap group, their music video for the song integrates Hip Hop culture as it involves popular rapper Lil' Wayne and several young men dressed in Hip Hop attire. This reference, along with others by popular female R&B artists like Keyshia Cole, Mariah Carey, Erykah Badu, and others, reinforces not only the presence of a soldier mentality, especially among Black males, but also the acceptance and glorification of it in some circles.

It is also worth noting that rap artist 4th25, made up of soldiers who served in the Iraqi war (2003) and who recorded their debut album *Live From Iraq* in a makeshift studio in Iraq, lashed out against rap artists who use the soldier metaphor to describe themselves. On "Reality Check" the group directs rap artists to stop using the soldier metaphor because they are disillusioned to believe that their struggles are comparable to the struggles of "real" soldiers in the Iraqi conflict. And while much could be debated and analyzed in this context, the main point to take from this is an admission by these rap artists that the soldier imagery is so prevalent in rap music that they felt they had to address it. So much so that 4th25 focuses much of their debut album in confronting the oft-used metaphor and rapping about the realities of warfare and the experiences of American soldiers in the Iraqi conflict.

So while some rap artists use surface level analogies to soldier life (e.g. 50 Cent and SPM), and others incorporate deep levels of the soldier ethos (e.g. Dead Prez, No Limit Soldiers, and Public Enemy), both are clear indications that the purposeful struggle of the soldier and the soldier mentality are central to much of rap music and the overall Hip Hop culture, both in the African American community and Latino/a American community.

Why the Soldier Mentality?

The answer to why the soldier/struggle ethos is such a major part of Black and Latino/a rap music and culture is both simple and complex. As minorities in the United States, Latino/a Americans and African Americans, especially those among the poor, are living within and under hegemonic forces—forces that devalue Black and Latino/a language/discourse and culture. Some may point out that Black and Latino/a culture has permeated American popular culture (e.g. music, language), but this is not the same as to say that this culture is valued in cultural, professional, and academic circles.

These underlying, systematic forces were not too long ago openly direct forces that constituted periods of racial dictatorship and racial democracy, from slavery to Jim Crow (Omi and Winant). That is, White middle and upper-class sensibilities have dominated American culture, first in a dictatorial manner where Black and Brown culture/existence was openly denigrated and devalued, to a “racial democracy” in which the numerical and representational minority status of Blacks and Browns left them marginalized in the arenas of culture, politics, and academia. But now, Latino/a and African American discourse/language and culture are suppressed, attacked, devalued, and ignored by many.

The notions of racial dictatorship and racial democracy have been written about by Michael Omi and Howard Winant, who argue that the United States was a racial dictatorship “from 1607-1865...[when] most nonwhites were firmly eliminated from the sphere of politics.” This period was then followed by nearly a century of racial democracy that included “legally sanctioned segregation and denial of the vote, nearly absolute in the South and much of the Southwest...” (129). These eras are connected not only directly to political power, but also to education, economics, and social “norms” as established at times in the arts.

While strong arguments can be made to categorize the contemporary United States as sustaining a state of racial democracy, in which one racial group dominates through quasi-democratic processes, there is no doubt that openly racist notions and laws have been supplanted by a more vague system of structures and ideology that indirectly place White middle and upper class notions as the “norm.” This normalizing of middle and upper-class Whiteness, along with what Omi and Winant characterize as the “negation of racialized ‘otherness’—at first largely African and indigenous, later Latin American and Asian as well” (129), firmly places the contemporary United States in a state of racial hegemony. In this state, characterized by Antonio Gramsci’s notions of coercion and consent, the dominant culture continues its dominance by incorporating some of the culture of non-dominant groups, possibly even popularizing aspects of those cultures, which gives the illusion of equality, while the dominant group maintains critical control of culture, economics, and social “norms.” This aspect of hegemony plays out in the case of Hip Hop rhetoric, which has reached high levels of popularity, but which remains marginalized by many who deem it less important, less valuable, and more low

brow when compared to “high” culture, language, literature, discourse, and rhetoric. Hip Hop rhetoric becomes supplanted by the gaze of seemingly erudite taste, culture, and sensibilities. This, along with the very real presence of poverty and social inequality (including even the power structure in the music industry) makes the presence of a soldier ethos unsurprising in Hip Hop rhetoric.

The normative gaze of middle-class Whiteness is imposed upon African Americans and Latinos in general, and the Hip Hop community in particular, as they are labeled inferior, a phenomenon that has roots in the genealogical history of Western racism (West). If Omi and Winant go a long way in helping us understand the current racial state of the United States, Cornel West illuminates a connection between the socio-racial history of the West and modern racism (which includes racial democracy and racial hegemony). In his “Genealogy of Modern Racism,” West traces Western racism from the crowning of scientific authority in the 1600s, through the revival of Greek “classics” (where West emphasizes the 14th-19th centuries but which could easily include the 20th century in the field of rhetoric), to the development of pseudo-sciences such as phrenology and physiognomy that devalued non-White physicality and intellect, to the racist ideologies of Enlightenment thinkers like Kant, Hume, and Voltaire (90-112). This genealogy extends into contemporary circles where “the idea of [non-white] equality in beauty, culture, and intellectual capacity remains problematic and controversial within prestigious halls of learning and sophisticated intellectual circles” (90). Directly connected to this is the marginalized status of Latino/a and African American Hip Hop rhetoric in the academic field of rhetorical studies, and the normative gaze placed upon non-traditional rhetoric.

This normative gaze, along with real-life conditions, which fuels soldier imagery in Hip Hop, is steeped in issues of history, economics, politics, and ideology. This is indicative of what Stuart Hall refers to as “articulation,” or the joining of complex forces which attempt to explain social structures of oppression and racism. The complex realities which are detrimental to Latino/a American and African American quasi-citizens are not always easily seen because hegemony creates a promise of the possibility for upward mobility when in fact that mobility is often more illusory than truly accessible.

The pervasive presence of soldier imagery by many African American and Latino/a Hip Hop artists speaks volumes to the presence of poor Black and Brown angst in the United States. This angst, directly connected to struggle, is directed at other races and cultures, the educational system, police departments, the economic system, and the perceived White-controlled social system, which are set up as the direct causes of struggle among many within these two groups. The reality excavated here is the presence of a strong psychological connection between Black and Latino/a Hip Hop artists (and many in their audience) and a soldier ethos—a psychology perpetuated through their rhetoric and connected to real-life *and* perceived social conditions.

As is indicative of this angst and soldier ethos, rap lyrics attempt to work as a disruptive force against the oppressive social system. Though many rap artists are partially controlled by White record label executives, who are given un-critical consent by some artists to exploit their talents (hegemony and cultural neo-colonialism at work), they continue to work as social and rhetorical spearheads against the *status quo*. Rap music, particularly that brand which is labeled “gangsta,” unapologetically expresses notions of struggle, rage, Blackness, Brownness, and poverty, in exploiting and mocking

the dominant culture. This supports Homi Bhabha's notion of *menace*, in which subaltern groups move beyond stages of mimicry and mockery to a state where they are capable of challenging the dominant culture and system. And while Hip Hop has been appropriated by many in mainstream society, the hard truths and lives of the poor minorities expressed in much rap music (and other media outlet) continue to be wake-up calls to middle-class, White America. As stated by rapper Chuck D, "Rap is the CNN of the streets." We should listen more closely.

Beyond the Music

Beyond, and along with, the strong connection both Latino/a and African American rappers have with the persona of the soldier, there are other specific examples of solidarity, cinematic and political, between the two groups. In the film *Menace II Society* (1993), a very popular film in Hip Hop circles, solidarity in opposition to white power structures (the police in this case) is evident. Narrated discourse and visual rhetoric bring to life this solidarity in one specific scene. After being beaten by White police officers, two African American characters, Caine and Sharif, are dropped off by the police in an alley in a Latino neighborhood. The police know about the ongoing feud between Latino and African American gang members in the area, so the police believe they are sending the two boys to another beating or death at the hands of Latino gang members. But in a display of solidarity, likely because of the circumstances (two Latinos saw the police throwing the two Blacks from their squad car), the Latinos help the young men. This understanding of solidarity in joint opposition to Whites and the legal system, is echoed by the character Montana in the film *Bound by Honor: Blood in Blood Out* (1993) when he states, "Chicanos killing Chicanos is what they want! Blacks and

Chicanos killing each other is what they want! That's how they run this [prison]. Once we get together, they don't run [anything]." These vivid visual and rhetorical examples highlight the solidarity created between Latino and African Americans and are, not surprisingly, connected to joint-opposition to White power structures—connecting them to the previously visited notion of racial hegemony and solidarity created between two marginalized groups. And while these are cinematic examples, they illustrate and perpetuate solidarity between the two groups in “real-life” situations.

On a more directly political level we have the statement made by Mexican-American rapper Chingo Bling, “Yo, Kanye, [President] Bush don't like Mexicans neither,” on his 2007 album *They Can't Deport Us All*. The Latino rapper refers here to a comment made by African American rapper Kanye West in 2005. During a live fundraising campaign on NBC for victims of hurricane Katrina, the rapper ad-libbed the line, “[President] George Bush doesn't care about Black people.” Many people thought West's rhetoric on live national television was irresponsible, but it expressed a lot of the anger and disenchantment by Black Americans towards the American government and particularly the Bush administration for their lackluster response after hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf region in 2005.

In 2006, the Hip Hop Caucus, a political and civil rights organization founded in 2004 by Jeff Johnson and Reverend Yearwood, stated that one of its goals was to “develop a working relationship with the Hispanic Caucus of the U.S. Congress” (Woodson). The Hip Hop Caucus has already developed a “strategic partnership with the Congressional Black Caucus” (Woodson). This connection is a promising step in the

ongoing development of solidarity between Latinos and African Americans in Hip Hop and beyond.

There is no doubt that textual and visual rhetoric coming from the Hip Hop community points to a growing solidarity between Latinos and African Americans. It does not exist in an atmosphere of total peace and togetherness, as we will see in the following section, but it *does* exist. Those interested in racial harmony, or at least understanding and tolerance, can use Hip Hop Rhetoric as an avenue for this important endeavor. As Hip Hop legend Snoop Dogg states, speaking of Latinos and African Americans,

It's about time we start to fight for each other rather than fighting against each other. I have homies from all cultural backgrounds and love all of my brothers, black and brown. There is nothing that can stop us from creating a better future for ourselves, for our families and generations to come if we all came together.

(Daily)

It may not come from a source most rhetoricians are paying attention to, but this message of understanding and solidarity between Latino and African Americans is clear and important. It also reminds us that the relationship between these two groups is not only discussed and affected by politicians and scholars, but also by Hip Hop rhetoricians who affect millions through their actions and rhetoric.

For those in the field of rhetoric, it is not only the message of Hip Hop that is important, but also the fact that the message is coming from a non-traditional (in an academic sense) arena. A careful look at the discourse of Hip Hop rhetoricians points to Jacqueline Jones Royster's important notion of "shifting the circle of practice." Research and scholarship should not ignore the real and perceived struggles of Black and Latino/a

Americans for these two racial groups continue to grow in numbers, prominence, and influence, and in their interactions with one another. Those interested in deconstructing and articulating race relations in America must have a strong grasp of the relations between these two groups and begin to understand the shared soldier mentality and sense of solidarity among thousands of Blacks and Latinos. Also, rhetoricians interested in expanding and diversifying the rhetorical tradition, should not ignore the influential discourse community of the Hip Hop world, specifically that which comes through the lens of African Americans and Latino/a Americans.

As with rhetors important to the field of rhetorical studies, Victor Villanueva and W.E.B. Du Bois, who could not “just be” but were instead very aware/made aware of their veil of Blackness and Brownness⁴, Hip Hop rhetoricians face and express social struggles. And, like popular Hip Hop rhetoricians, Villanueva and Du Bois represented “Gramsci’s exceptions—those who ‘through chance...[have] had opportunities that the thousand others in reality could not or did not have’—are experiences are in no sense unique but are always analogous to other experiences from among those exceptions” (“Memoria” 15).

With that said, I do not argue that rappers (or those aligned with Hip Hop) are directly concerned with breaking the canonical barriers of the rhetorical tradition (though some are)⁵, but their influential and didactic discourse is an important one that has been largely ignored by a discipline concerned with diversifying the range of rhetorics studied and valued. The reasons for this exclusion may be as benign as not having any exposure to or understanding of Hip Hop culture, or as politically charged as directly or indirectly

⁴ See Villanueva’s *Bootstraps* and Du Bois’ *The Souls of Black Folk*

⁵ See Word, Beats & Life, Inc at www.wblinc.org and the International Association for Hip Hop Education at www.iahhe.org.

representing a continuance of the historical practice of ignoring and devaluing discourse that is seen as too minority, too different, and too dangerous to the status quo. Either way, the rhetoric of Hip Hop presents the opportunity to highlight and value a rhetoric with those qualities and a valuable opportunity for further discussion about the reasons why soldier rhetoric is so prevalent in Black and Latino/a Hip Hop.

By focusing attention on the non-traditional discourse of Hip Hop we are able to glean valuable insight into the lives, experiences, and social relationships of the two largest minority groups in the United States and their real and perceived struggles against culturally dominant forces⁶. And by focusing our attention on the rhetorical output of Hip Hop we can come to a better understanding of the points of solidarity among these two groups in Hip Hop circles and in society at large.

In studying Hip Hop culture in a more serious and complex manner, beyond the typical question of whether Hip Hop is good or bad for society, a stronger understanding of the relationship between these two populations can more completely unfold. At times it unfolds to show us points of solidarity, many of which involve a soldier/struggle mentality, and at times it unfolds to show us friction and the tenuous nature of the relationship.

Black and Brown Tension

An Extension of Historical Conflict

While there are strong points of solidarity among Latino/a American and African American citizens, illustrated in the struggle ethos of rap artists, there is tension as well.

⁶ Readers may be interested here in Homi Bhabha's discussion of cultural hegemony and his notion of "almost the same but not white" (118).

Those optimistic about relations between Latinos and African Americans can point to rhetoric and action in Hip Hop that highlights solidarity, but that would only be half the story. Although rap music continually points to similar realities in the lives of Latino/a Americans and African Americans, and a sense of together-in-struggle, there is no doubt an on-going struggle between the two as well.

It is important to put tensions between Latino/a Americans and African Americans within a historical context, for the tension between these two populations certainly did not begin with the emergence of rap music and Hip Hop culture; rather rap music and Hip Hop culture serve to illustrate and perpetuate these tensions. A quick look at this relationship shows strong points of division. In the 1800s, “Negro soldiers were used as a battering ram against Native Americans”—direct ancestors of many Latino Americans. In 1916, African American soldiers were even sent into Mexico in search of Pancho Villa, an act which was disliked by many Mexicans (Horne viii-ix). In 1968, as Martin Luther King, Jr. was formulating plans for the Poor People’s March, he was approached by Reies Lopez Tijerina, a Latino American land grant and farmworker activist, who asked to join King in the March and Civil Rights struggle. While King demanded that Latino Americans “play a top role in the March” and walk in lockstep with African Americans, he was “virtually a lone voice calling for such an alliance.” The message from King’s inner circle was that “Latinos and other ethnic groups were at best subservient partners that were welcome as long as they knew their place.” Attitudes like this led to divisions among the two groups and to racial isolation (Hutchinson “United”).

More recently, discussions over illegal immigration (particularly from Mexico) have reinvigorated tensions between African Americans and recent legal and illegal

immigrants from Mexico. As a number of African Americans saw (see) it, illegal immigrants are taking jobs away from Americans, particularly poor African Americans. It did not help matters when in 2005 President Vicente Fox of Mexico stated that Mexicans were going to the United States to do jobs that “not even Blacks want to do.” This statement drew ire from many, including African American leader Jesse Jackson (CNN). Many African Americans felt Fox was disrespecting them and misrepresenting the situation by not appreciating the situation of Black-Americans looking for blue-collar work. There has also been growing tension between Latino/a American and African American high school students in a number of states, most noticeably in South Central Los Angeles (one of rap music’s meccas) where the racial makeup shifted from a majority African American population to a majority Latino American population during the 1990s (McGrath). Numerous small and large scale riots have broken out at schools between these two populations (McGrath). If high school students are our future, then tension is certainly part of that future.

The most vivid example of contemporary tensions between the two populations is in gang and prison life, two significant influences on the Hip Hop scene, especially the brand of Hip Hop music labeled “gangsta” rap. Racial tensions in gang life are evident in cities across the United States, most notably Los Angeles, Denver, Houston, Miami, Kansas City, Albuquerque, and Dallas, and spill in to, and out of, racial tensions present in prisons across the country. These racial tensions in gang and prison life do not exist in a vacuum, but affect those in society at large—having a disproportionate affect on poor and minority communities. An extreme but telling example of the “street” tensions between these two communities in the United States was the much publicized 2006

slaying in Los Angeles of “a black fourteen-year-old named Cheryl Green [which] the U.S. Attorney’s office officially called ‘ethnic cleansing’ and which is linked to a larger movement by Hispanic gang members to claim or reclaim territories held by African American gangs” (Rivera 150). Rap music is connected to much gang culture in Los Angeles and across the United States, and this music continually emphasizes connections to a particular gang, race, “-hood,” city, region, and/or race.

These examples of conflict highlight the tension between Latinos and African Americans and are typical in the discussion of race relations. At present, scholarly discussion of these issues has remained the territory of politics and history. As contemporary rhetors add new venues of scholarship and re-evaluate what counts as important discourse, they may well look to Hip Hop rhetoric as an important area of discourse/language studies and for examples of the relationship between language and power.

Tension in Hip Hop

There are numerous examples from Hip Hop culture which illustrate tensions between Blacks and Latinos and add to the political and historical examples mentioned above. In his music video *Just A Lil Bit*, rapper 50 Cent employs visual rhetoric that illustrates the tension between African Americans and Latino/a Americans. Though the lyrics to the song have nothing to do with these tensions, the storyline of the video is indicative of the separation and ongoing feud between these two groups. In two different scenes, 50 Cent uses African American females to seduce and incapacitate two rich Latino characters, one by tying the Latino to the posts of a bed and the other by drugging. It is alluded to in the video that the rapper is robbing (and probably killing) the two

Latino characters and taking over their money and “space.” 50 Cent calmly smokes a cigar as the two men become aware of the fact that they have been duped and that they will soon meet their demise. This video illustrates, through visual rhetoric, not only the division between the two racial groups, but also the ongoing battle for resources and power.

In the popular Hip Hop movie *Next Friday* (2000), a comedy written by rap icon Ice-Cube, African Americans and Latino Americans are pitted against one another in the suburbs. Young Craig, played by Ice-Cube, has moved to the suburbs to live with his Uncle Elroy and cousin Day-Day, who have become rich through lottery winnings. While moving to the suburbs to escape problems, conflict ensues between the African American characters and their young drug-dealing Latino American neighbors. These neighbors are clearly essentialized as they are portrayed as young “gangstas” with thick accents. They are even referred to as the *eses*, a Spanish slang term used by young African Americans in a number of films to refer to Latino characters (instead of using the more politically correct terms of *Latinos* or *Mexican Americans*). Throughout the film, there are run-ins between the Latino American and African American characters, even between Craig and the neighbor’s dog, Chico, and the film ends with a violent struggle between Craig, his uncle and father, and the Latino “gangstas.” While the movie is intended as a comedy, the distinction and tension between Latino Americans and African Americans is telling, especially considering the movie was written by one of the most influential voices of the Hip Hop community: Ice Cube. This movie is a comedic, hyper-stereotyped illustration of the tenuous relationship between these two groups, but it points to a serious and very real situation in the United States.

These two examples are indicative of numerous instances in rap videos and Hip Hop films (i.e. *Menace II Society*, *Blood In Blood Out*, *Boyz N The Hood*, *American Me*, *Get Rich or Die Trying*) where there are obvious divisions between African Americans and Latino/a Americans. If it is in the “everyday” that divisive and racist notions are conveyed (Essed), then the visual rhetoric coming from these Hip Hop videos and films illustrates and perpetuates underlying tensions between these two groups. By becoming part of the fabric that is Hip Hop culture, these images affect the relations between these two groups and feed the essentialized images of each group. They affect attitudes, and thus actions, of those whose identity is strongly linked to the Hip Hop ethos.

It is not surprising to see these two racial minorities in conflict considering that both are economically, rhetorically, and ideologically battling under racially hegemonic circumstances and battling for the same small slice of the social pie allowed to minorities in the United States. As they struggle against historical forces, economic oppression, a gap in health services (Stein), the digital divide (Banks), and violence, Latino/a Americans and African Americans are pitted against one another as they grasp for the next rung on the ladder of social equity. While White upper and middle class Americans continue to hold a strong grip on the social order of the United States, those with fewer opportunities will continue to struggle vertically (against the dominant culture) and horizontally (against other minorities). And while many tensions between the two groups are because of their coexisting status at the economic margins of society, racial and ethnic identity also serve as a strong catalyst for division.

Battles over space (as highlighted by the Los Angeles example), Latino immigration, and political power, directly and indirectly connected to economic and cultural issues, highlight the tension between these two groups. These battles point to the fact that there would continue to be division and struggle between racial groups, including Latino/a Americans and African Americans, even if economic parity were achieved. Clashes over whose cultural capital is most important and prestigious would continue, and issues of language and cultural literacy would take center stage. Questions of whether the descendants of Africa or of Mexico should call the shots (as in the Poor People's March) would ensue.

These tensions are not merely economic, but also social and cultural and thus rhetorical—highlighting a central premise of rhetorical studies that rhetoric/discourse is epistemic and deeply intertwined with all aspects of society. And, these tensions, highlighted in some avenues of Hip Hop culture, seem destined to continue for years to come. African Americans and Latino/a Americans will have to find ways to come together in positive and productive ways and/or, at the very least, find ways to coexist and respect one another culturally and rhetorically. Much of the future of the United States, in respect to politics, economics, culture, language, and racial stability, will be affected by this relationship. Also, just as the cultural capital of White middle and upper class America dominates American society today, Blacks and Latinos should not look to replace it with their own authoritative and hegemonic culture, but work at respecting and incorporating diversity while fighting for a voice. Before, and while, we work at greater racial harmony we must proceed to take a hard look at the tensions between Blacks and Latinos and their combined tension towards Whites. Part of this process can/should

include listening to the voices of Hip Hop, something which will help us understand the climate of some of these underlying tensions.

Finally, studying the rhetorical output of Hip Hop, in relation to Black-Brown tension, can help us move toward a more harmonious, or at least respectful, understanding of the views of each culture and the underlying catalysts for rhetorical and physical attacks—attacks against each group and against the dominant culture. Through the discourse of Hip Hop we are able to highlight racial tensions among those at the “everyday” level and it is through discourse—in music lyrics, discussions, articles, lectures, blogs, publications, and conversations—that racial tensions will be perpetuated and/or diminished.

Towards a Conclusion

The stakes of developing a respectful coalition between Blacks and Latinos is that rank-and-file Blacks who are resentful of Latino’s gains could be brought along if they see them fighting for a common agenda that lifts their own access to opportunity. (Walters)

The textual (particularly rap lyrics) and visual (music videos and film) rhetorics of Hip Hop culture illustrate and perpetuate the tenuous-solidarity between Latino Americans and African Americans. They are indicative of the everyday tension and everyday solidarity between these two populations. While they cannot account for the attitudes and actions of every single individual, they are indicative of the overriding ethos of this relationship, especially among those that strongly identify with Hip Hop culture.

While studying the rhetoric and relations between political and organizational leaders from these two groups has value, analysis and discussion of the discourse and visual rhetoric coming from the didactic and influential world of Hip Hop is just as valuable. It is not only the “what” (race relations) that is important but also the “how”

and “who.” If we only focus our attention on those with political power we will be dismissive of a rhetoric that has a strong influence on millions of Americans. Similarly, focusing only on traditional subjects in rhetorical studies, such as politicians, scholars, academics, preachers, etc., seems counter to the growing call in the field for a more diverse, complex, and inclusive approach to the study and teaching of rhetoric. Rap lyrics and visual rhetoric coming from Hip Hop culture are one of our best avenues to plug in to the tensions and solidarity within racial groups in our country. Studying race relations between Latino/a Americans and African Americans through Hip Hop rhetors, lyrics, websites, popular Hip Hop films, and other media sources, represents a new and important shift in the discipline. It is a shift that will provide scholars, influential media figures, and the public with important fodder for the ever-growing and important discussion of race relations between Latinos and African Americans.

The Racial Project that is Hip Hop

Because of its roots in the African American community and its continued presence within, under, and against hegemonic forces, Hip Hop culture—particularly rap lyrics, music videos, and Hip Hop films—constitutes a “racial project” in which Latino Americans and African Americans express relational attitudes towards each other and the dominant culture. Michael Omi and Howard Winant describe a racial project as “simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics...” (125). Rap music constitutes one of these projects as it not only interprets and illustrates racial dynamics but also represents complex social structures and influences relations among racial groups. The historical realities that are linked to the contemporary situation of Latino Americans and African Americans as oppressed groups come alive in Hip Hop

culture as this culture, to a large extent, was born out of systemic structures that created the need for a new voice among the economically and rhetorically oppressed.

This racial project known as Hip Hop brings to life the situatedness of many Latino/a American and African American quasi-citizens and continues to develop in a racially influenced atmosphere. Within Hip Hop, there is a struggling, tugging, and pulling between Latino/a American and African American forces. But even though these two elements often work against one another, they also form part of a complexly unified force that constantly interacts with and pushes against dominating cultural and economic forces. Together they constitute a cultural hurricane of sorts, whose identity is created mostly in opposition to White, middle-class America and that works under, within, and through the overriding atmosphere of historical Whiteness. The two groups, individually and collectively, challenge some of the dominant modes of being through their use of verbal and visual rhetoric. In so doing, they rearticulate notions of identity and “reverse ‘in part’ colonial appropriation” (Bhabha 117).

Hip Hop is a culture born of the margins that exists as a “community of resistance.” It readily identifies with the empowering image of the soldier and is not a “site of deprivation...[but] a central location for the production of counter-hegemonic discourse” (hooks 149). Hip Hop culture, come to life in rap lyrics, music videos and film, “offers to one the possibility of radical perspective” (149) and reminds us that the margins do continue to exist, and, though pieces of that culture are absorbed into the dominant culture (hegemony at work), Hip Hop largely remains a site of resistance, education and, specifically here, a window into racial relations.

Furthermore, the tenuous-solidarity between Latino/a Americans and African Americans is not merely contained in Hip Hop culture, but is indicative of the relationship between these two groups in the United States at large. It would not be as productive if the analysis of racial relations between Latinos and African Americans were contained only within the world of Hip Hop. The work done in this essay is even more important if one continually remembers that race relations in Hip Hop point to realities in race relations between these two groups, and even towards White America, in society at large. Hip Hop Rhetoric is important in its own right, but extremely important in what it highlights and teaches us about the social order and/or disorder.

Future work in this area can/must also address the presence of Puerto Ricans in Hip Hop. This is important because this group, unlike other minority groups in the United States, has unique connections to the Latino/a and African American cultures while not fitting neatly into the Black-Brown dynamic. A proper discussion of Puerto Ricans *vis a vis* racial relations in Hip Hop and U.S. culture is too extensive to add to this current discussion but is a very fruitful avenue for the discussion of racial tenuous-solidarity. Furthermore, newer examples from Hip Hop, pointing to the tenuous-solidarity discussed in this essay, will emerge as time passes. The examples presented here are undoubtedly important pieces of the history of this racial/ethnic relationship, but are only some of the pieces of the larger fabric of racial relations between Blacks and Latinos in Hip Hop. As new generations of Hip Hop rhetoricians create textual and visual rhetoric that speaks to this tenuous and unified relationship, they will create fodder for future analysis. It is up to those doing scholarship in this area in the future to find

new examples that highlight this complex relationship and to continue to shine a light on racial rhetoric coming from those in the margins of academic rhetorical studies.

Finally, one must not forget that these margins are never a simple, monolithic reality, whether in Hip Hop or not. They are created through complex forces and made up of different groups that interact with the dominant group and each other. As two components of the margins, Latino/a Americans and African Americans continually exist as a united force against hegemony but at the same time as competing entities. This reality is an integral part to the development of this nation.

The continued study of the rhetorical output of Hip Hop culture not only adds to the important discussion of race relations, but also adds to the terrain of rhetorical analysis. This study will develop a new venue to analyze, visualize, teach, and affect race relations *and* display the importance of adding an academically marginalized rhetoric to the fray of “intellectual” race discussion. By adding Hip Hop rhetoric to the rhetorical landscape, something seldom done by scholars in the field, we can add to the understanding of the tenuous-solidarity between Latinos and African Americans which will influence, enhance, and mar this continuing project which is the United States of America.

Works Cited

- Alex-Assensoh and Lawrence Hanks, eds. *Black and Multiracial Politics in America*. New York: NY University Press, 2000.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1999.
- Associated Press. "Census Report: Broad racial disparities persist—difference in income, education, home ownership continue, data finds." MSNBC Online. 13 November 2006. 9 April 2008. <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15704759/>>
- Banks, Adam J. *Race, Rhetoric and Technology*. Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005.
- Bhabha, Homi. "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse." *Race Critical Theories* Ed. Philomena Essed and David Theo Goldberg. Malden: Blackwell, 2002. 117-118.
- Campbell, Kermit. *"gettin' our groove on."* Detroit: Wayne University Press, 2005.
- CNN. "Mexican Leader Criticized for Comment on Blacks." CNN.com. 15 May 2005. <<http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/05/14/fox.jackson/>>
- Du Bois, W.E.B., *The Souls of Black Folk*. Radford: Wilder Publications, 2008.
- Essed, Philomena. "Everyday Racism." *Race Critical Theories* Eds. Philomena Essed And David Theo Goldberg. Malden: Blackwell, 2002. 186-187.
- Fenton, Steve. *Ethnicity: Modernity, Racism, Class and Culture*. "Ethnicity and the Modern World: Historical Trajectories."
- Danny/La Union. "F.I.L.T.H.E.E Immigrants + Second State = SOULdado Brownpride.com. 13 Oct 2008. <<http://www.brownpride.com/articles/article.asp?a=517>>
- Gilyard, Keith. *Race, Rhetoric, and Composition*. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook, 1999.
- Glazer, Andrew. "Some gangs clash on race, not color." The San Diego Union Tribune Online. 13 August 2006. 17 July 2008. <www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20060813/news_1n13gangs.html>
- Hall, Stuart. "Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured by Dominance."

- Race Critical Theories* Ed. Philomena Essed and David Theo Goldberg. Malden: Blackwell, 2002. 38-49.
- Heldke, Linda. *Exotic Appetites: Ruminations of a Food Adventure*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Horne, Gerald. *Black and Brown: African Americans and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920*. New York: NY University Press, 2005.
- Hutchinson, Earl Ofari. "United for Underclass Rights." *Alternet*. 6 April 2006. <<http://www.alternet.org/module/printversion/34578>>.
- . "The Black and Latino Clash." *Blacknews.com*. 17 July 2008. <www.blacknews.com/pr/clash101.html>.
- Kalb, Claudia. "In Our Blood." *Newsweek* 6 February 2006. 47-55.
- Liptak, Adam. "1 in 100 U.S. Adults Behind Bars, New Study Says." *The New York Times Online*. 28 February 2008. 9 April 2008. <www.nytimes.com/2008/02/28/us/28cnd-prison.html?ex=1361941200&en=9f78e91a7de6aabc&ei=5124&partner=permalink&expod=permalink>.
- McGrath, David. "End of the Rainrow: South Central Los Angeles ushers in new era of racial tension—this time between black and Hispanics." *American Conservative*. 19 December 2005. 8 July 2007. <http://www.amconmag.com/2005/2005_12_19/cover.html>.
- Mao, LuMing "Rhetorical Borderlands: Chinese American Rhetoric in the Making" *College Composition and Communication*. 56:3 (Feb 2005).
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. "Racial Formation." *Race Critical Theories* Ed. Philomena Essed and David Theo Goldberg. Malden: Blackwell, 2002. 125-127.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession* 91. New York: MLA, 1991. 33-40.
- Ratcliffe, Krista. *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness*. Southern Illinois UP, 2005.
- Rivera, Geraldo. "His Panic: Why Americans Fear Hispanics in the United States." New York: Celebra, 2008.
- Stein, Rob. "Race Gap Persists in Health Care, Three Studies Say" *Washington Post Online*. 18 August 2005. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/17/AR2005081701437.html>>.

- Trimbur, John. "Literacy and the Discourse of Crisis." *The Politics of Writing Instruction: Postsecondary*. Ed. Richard Bullock, John Trimbur, and Charles Schuster. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991. 277-295.
- U.S. Census Online. "State and County Quickfacts." 3 March 2008. <<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>>.
- Van Dijk, Teun. "Denying Racism: Elite Discourse and Racism." *Race Critical Theories*. Ed. Philomena Essed and David Theo Goldberg. Malden: Blackwell, 2002. 307-324.
- Van Dijk, Teun A. *Elite Discourse and Racism*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE, 1993.
- Vibe Magazine. "Ese Smash: Mexican rap is back, thanks to Down A.K.A. Kilo." December 2007. 132.
- Villanueva, Victor. "Memoria is a Friend of Ours: On the Discourse of Color." College English. Vol. 67, No. 1, Special Issue: Rhetoric from/of Color (Sep., 2004). 9-19.
- West, Cornell. "Genealogy of Racism." *Race Critical Theories*. Ed. Philomena Essed and David Theo Goldberg. Malden: Blackwell, 2002. 90-109.
- Wood, Daniel B. "Rising Black-Latino Clash on Jobs." *The Christian Science Monitor*. 25 May 2006. 17 July 2008. <www.csmonitor.com/2006/0525/p01s03-ussc.html>.
- Woodson, Jay. "Hip Hop's Black Political Activism." 1 June 2006. 4 April 2008. <<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=10365>>.
- Walters, Ron. "A Respectful Black-Latino Coalition." FinalCall.com News. 6 June 2006. 5 April 2008. <www.finalcall.com/artman/...2665.shtml>.