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Theoretical Approaches to Quotation in Hip-Hop Recordings

Justin A. Williams

Intertextuality is pervasive in multiple forms of popular music, but is arguably most overtly presented in hip-hop music and culture. While much academic work has focused on linking practices of quotation, reference, allusion and Signifyin(g) in hip-hop to earlier forms of African-American music, the main purpose of this article is to outline and illustrate the variety of ways that one can borrow from a source text or trope and ways that audiences identify and respond to them. Distinctions between allosonic and autosonic quotations (Lacasse), 'intention' versus sociohistorically situated interpretations (Nattiez), as well as 'textually signalled' and 'textually unsignalled' intertextuality (Dyer), help create a more detailed taxonomy within the genre. These and other distinctions, which transcend narrow discourses that only focus on 'sampling' (digital sampling), provide a toolkit that sets a context for more nuanced discussions of borrowing practices and offers broader implications for intertextuality within and outside of hip-hop culture. By drawing from a range of examples (e.g. The Pharcyde, Dr Dre, Xzibit), this article demonstrates that a thorough investigation of musical borrowing in hip-hop requires attention to the texts (hip-hop recordings), their reception and wider cultural contexts.

Keywords: Hip-Hop; Popular Music; Intertextuality; Switched on Bach; Xzibit

Introduction

This article establishes a number of analytical approaches for studying quotation and other forms of intertextuality in recordings of hip-hop music. Hip-hop, as a broad and varied genre of popular music, has existed for over 30 years on record and is firmly part of the wider culture of the same name that originated in New York City over 40 years ago. It is safe to say that hip-hop is one of the most culturally relevant and influential forms of popular music today and one of the most salient aspects for academic study is the fact that it openly celebrates its connections with the past, creating a vast intertextual network from myriad elements within and outside of hip-hop culture.

Rap music is a subsection of hip-hop music and culture, and consists of two macro-elements: the 'beat' (sonic complement/accompaniment) and the 'flow' (the text of the rap and its delivery). Debates have taken place over the standard compositional process regarding 'text'/flow and 'beat'/music (what comes first?). Although such a process varies between artists/groups, the beat/flow dichotomy does provide a useful way in which to analyse this music.[1] It is important to note that the 'beat' encompasses not only percussive elements of a rap song, but the entire complement to the rapper's 'flow' (i.e. delivery of lyrics).[2] Schloss defines hip-hop sample-based 'beats' as 'musical collages composed of brief segments of recorded sound' (2004, p. 2), although they do not necessarily need to sound collage-like. I will also extend this definition to encompass all sounds that are not the 'flow', including non-sample-based material as well. This is also to foreground the study of sounds in hip-hop, mediated by their sociohistorically situated interpretations, while concurrently recognizing that music can also act a mediator (Krims, 2007, p. xxxvi). I hesitate to call the lyrics in rap 'the text' (as Kyle Adams does), as I do not want to confuse it with the study of recorded texts, that is, hip-hop recordings. And to use a recording as a text for study will encompass what one might call the 'music itself', quoting Krims, as not 'as some contemporary musicology would have it, a mystification but rather a crucial, highly planned, and controlled social object' (2007, p. xvi).

In the analysis of hip-hop music, there often exists what I call the 'basic beat', a structural layer or core layers of the musical complement that change little for a significant duration of the song. And while musicological transcriptions of rap music have been controversial, they are useful in highlighting harmonic and melodic layers involved in the basic beat. Of course, rap music's layers will more often than not fluctuate throughout a given song, with sonic additions and subtractions, manipulations of digital samples and even sharp changes in aspects of the 'basic beat',[3] but the looped nature that defines much of hip-hop music lends itself to having a structural layer that does not change. Though I do not go as far as to locate an Ursatz in a given hip-hop song (indeed, many would argue that Schenker's theories are ill-suited to African-based musics), layering forms an important structural component in hip-hop. Furthermore, the function and qualities of these layers are crucial to the aesthetics and reception of the music.[4] As Krims writes in his groundbreaking *Rap music and the poetics of identity*, 'the sonic organization of rap music—both the rapping itself and the musical tracks that accompany it—is directly and profoundly implicated in rap's cultural workings (resistant or otherwise), especially in the formation of identities' (2000, p. 2). I take this argument further to embrace sampling and other borrowing practices as crucial to these sonic organizations and their reception.

The other purpose of this article is to emphasize the difference between digitally sampled sounds and other 'borrowed' sounds, employing the useful distinction between 'autosonic quotation' and 'allosonic quotation' from Serge Lacasse: 'Autosonic quotation' is quotation of a recording by digitally sampling it, as opposed to 'allosonic quotation', which quotes the previous material by way of re-recording or performing the quotation in live performance (see Lacasse, 2000, pp. 35–58). To

take jazz as an example, the distinction would be between digitally sampling a Charlie Parker solo phrase (or 'lick') for Gang Starr's 'Jazz Thing' (1990) (autosonic) versus a recording of a jazz musician in live performance quoting a similar phrase (allosonic).

Furthermore, rarely detailed in academic writings on sampling are the variations found in 'sequencing': the act of putting samples in some sort of sequential order. Gillespie makes the distinction between 'syntagmatic sequencing' and 'morphemic sequencing', where the latter samples short sounds (such as a snare hit), and the former utilizes longer musical phrases and passages (2006, p. 98). For example, The Bomb Squad's early-1990s' output demonstrates morphemic sequencing, whereas Puff Daddy or Eminem (such as the construction of 'Crazy in Love') often uses longer loops in his productions. A comparison can be made with Richard Middleton's work on popular music repetition and the difference between 'musematic' (shorter, riff-based) repetition and longer phrases ('discursive repetition', i.e. repetition at 8-bars such as AABA form). Middleton's distinction, then, forms a basis for thinking about repetition in popular music, but in a hip-hop context, we can also begin to think about the length of samples employed and how they function within the popular recorded text.

The most unifying sonic thread within hip-hop, I would argue, are the particular drum timbres that have their origins in 1970s' funk. The sparse openness of the late 1960s' and 1970s' funk drum solo breaks (e.g. James Brown's 'The Funky Drummer'), now ubiquitous in hip-hop, allowed producers to sample and borrow from myriad types of music and other sounds, and additionally, permitted a high degree of tempo manipulation. This allowed a breakbeat like the introduction to The Honeydrippers' 'Impeach the President' (1973) to be looped and used with Beethoven's *Für Elise* for Nas's 'I Can' (2003) and also used on the synthesizer-heavy 'Chronic (intro)' (1992) produced by Dr Dre. Both examples fit neatly into the hip-hop music genre, yet utilize strikingly disparate material.[5] Rhythmic structures act as the anchor or structural foundation, leaving seemingly limitless possibilities for sonic organization. The foundational role of the drum and its specific timbres, as in many African-based musics, is what gives hip-hop its identity as a genre. Even when the drums are not present (such as in an *a cappella* rap), I would argue that particular drum sounds are implied as counterpoint to the rapper's delivery. The timbral and rhythmic characteristics of hip-hop music, based in earlier funk drumming, become its primary defining features, and its fundamental sonic core.[6]

'Borrowing' is an appropriate term for such purposes, but one could easily use the word 'appropriation', or even stronger value-laden terms such as 'stealing' or 'theft'. As Lethem has written, '[as] examples accumulate […] it becomes apparent that appropriation, mimicry, quotation, allusion, and sublimated collaboration consist of a kind of sine qua non of the creative act, cutting across all forms and genres in the realm of cultural production' (2008, pp. 28–29).[7]

Of course, the term 'borrowing' is by no means value-free. Quite the opposite. To borrow something implies that it should be returned intact, or that it can be. As will be shown in the following case studies, the use of pre-existing materials and styles

transforms both new and old contexts. The term 'borrowing' is used here because it sidesteps the ethical arguments and negative connotations in favour of more detailed analysis, and places these hip-hop practices within a well-established lineage of musical borrowing in both African- and European-based musics.[8]

Hip-Hop: Musical Borrowing, Digital Sampling and Signifyin(g)

From its very outset hip-hop music was founded on the manipulation of pre-existing material. DJs were borrowing from instrumental excerpts from records (known as 'breaks' or 'breakbeats') to craft their sets, either looping passages with two copies of the same record or stringing passages together from different records. Schloss writes that '[the] looping aesthetic … combined a traditional African-American approach to composition with new technology to create a radically new way of making music' (2004, p. 33). As digital sampling technology improved and became more affordable in the mid-to-late 1980s, many of the hip-hop DJ practices (such as 'crate digging', looping and collage techniques) shifted to that of the 'hip-hop producer'. Digital sampling emerged in hip-hop culture, to align itself with the hip-hop aesthetic: 'Indeed, the story of sampling is a tale of technology catching up with the DJ, of equipment being created that could do faster, more accurately and more easily what a DJ had long been able to' (Brewster & Broughton, 2006, p. 267). Brewster and Broughton argue convincingly that sampling was just a faster, more complex and permanent way of re-creating what the DJs had been doing all along.[9]

In the digital age, using pre-existing material arguably became much easier and enabled composers to engage in what Katz calls 'performative quotation'—'quotation that recreates all the details of timbre and timing that evoke and identify a unique sound event' (2004, pp. 140–141). But even though the practice of digital sampling falls into a tradition of twentieth-century collage and an even longer history of African-American and European artistic practices, the act of taking material from a recording for the financial gain of another now became a legal and ethical issue. A number of high-profile copyright cases in the late 1980s and early 1990s set the precedent for regulating such 'collage style' sampling made famous by The Bomb Squad (Public Enemy, Ice Cube) and The Dust Brothers (Beastie Boys).[10]

Russell Potter, in addition to describing sampling as political and postmodern, discusses the practice as a form of Signifyin(g), a concept theorized by Henry Louis Gates Jr. in African-American literary studies, and adapted to black musics by Samuel A. Floyd Jr. To quote Potter:

> Simply put, Signifyin(g) is repetition with a difference; the same and yet not the same. When, in a jazz riff, a horn player substitutes one arpeggio for a harmony note, or 'cuts up' a well-known solo by altering its tempo, phrasing, or accents, s/he is Signifyin(g) on all previous versions. When a blues singer, like Blind Willie McTell, 'borrows' a cut known as the 'Wabash Rag' and re-cuts it as the 'Georgia Rag', he is Signifyin(g) on a rival's recording. (1995, p. 27)

Like swing, hard bop, bebop, cool, reggae, dub and hip-hop, these musical forms were Signifyin(g) what came before them. Furthermore, musical texts Signify upon one another, troping and revising particular musical ideas. These musical 'conversations' can therefore occur between the present and the past, or synchronically within a particular genre.

Signifyin(g), as Henry Louis Gates writes, is derived from myths of the African god Esu-Elegbara, later manifested as the trickster figure of the Signifying Monkey in African-American oral tradition (Gates, 1989, pp. 55–56; see also Potter, 1995, p. 83). Gates writes, '[for] the Signifying Monkey exists as the great trope of Afro-American discourse, and the trope of tropes, his language of Signifyin(g), is his verbal sign in the Afro-American tradition' (1989, p. 21).[11] To Signify is to foreground the signifier, to give it importance for its own sake. The language of the monkey is playful yet intelligent, and can be found in the West African poet/musician griots, in hipster talk and radio DJs of the 1950s, comedians such as Redd Foxx, 1970s blaxploitation characters such as Dolemite, and in countless rap lyrics. It should be stated that in addition to Signifying as masterful revision and repetition of tropes, it includes double-voiced or multi-voiced utterances which complicate any simple semiotic interpretation.

The sampling of classic breakbeats, to use but one example, is certainly a foundational instance of musical Signifyin(g) in hip-hop, musically troping on and responding to what has come before.[12] Linked with the concept of Signifyin(g) is Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, as well as that of the multi-vocality of texts, two aspects also related to hip-hop's intertextuality (see Wheeler, 1991, pp. 193–216). While Signifyin(g), dialogism and intertextuality form important academic frameworks in which to understand hip-hop's borrowing practices, this article moves beyond these concepts to investigate the different ways in which hip-hop recordings Signify on earlier material without necessarily using such terminology.

It is worth considering what sets digital sampling apart from other forms of borrowing, as it arguably has radicalized music-making and listening. Cutler provides one definition:

> Digital sampling is a purely electronic digital recording system which takes samples or 'vertical slices' of sound and converts them into binary information, into data, which tells a sound producing system how to reconstruct, rather than reproduce it. Instantly … It is stored rather as discrete data, which act as instructions for the eventual reconstruction of a sound (as a visual object when electronically scanned is translated only into a binary code). (2004, p. 149)

In one of the most engaging studies of digital sampling to date, Katz also explains the process:

> At present, the standard sampling rate is 44,100 Hz, meaning that every second of sound that is sampled is cut into 44,100 slices; typically, each of these slices is given a sixteen-digit binary number, which allows for extremely fine gradations in

measuring the amplitude of a wave. Sampling can therefore be fast and fine enough so that the human ear perceives a continuous and faithfully rendered reproduction … A sample can be a fraction of a waveform, a single note from an instrument or voice, a rhythm, a melody, a harmony, or an entire work or album. Although sampling, particularly when done well, is far from a simple matter, the possibilities it offers are nearly limitless. (2004, p. 139)

Digital sampling, particularly its ability to reproduce sounds or groups of sounds so accurately, has changed the landscape of music in a number of ways.[13] Additionally, one also needs to consider how new technologies extend rather than replace existing musical practices. Katz embraces multiple traditions that predate sampling by considering Public Enemy's 'Fight the Power' as a digital form of Signifyin(g), linking it to African traditions, while at the same time acknowledging sampling as a form of musical borrowing which has long history in Western classical music. As Tricia Rose wrote in *Black Noise*, hip-hop culture is at the intersection of African and African-American artistic cultures and traditions and newer technologies like digital sampling, which allows practitioners to extend older traditions in new and varied ways (see Rose, 2004, p. 64).

Textually Signalled and Unsignalled Borrowing

As stated earlier, hip-hop as a genre presupposes an unconcealed intertextuality which is part and parcel of its aesthetics. Much of this has to do with hip-hop communities' expectations (its 'generic contract'), but this is not meant to imply that all hip-hop musical texts draw attention to their borrowing equally. Richard Dyer points out that pastiche as an imitative artistic form is 'textually signalled' as such; in other words, the text itself draws attention to the fact that it contains imitative material. In the case of pastiche and film adaptation, and in forms like parody and homage, recognizing that these works are referring to something that precedes them is crucial to their identity.

Figure 1, taken from Dyer's study, shows how pastiche as imitation 'fits' into qualitative categories as compared to other forms of imitation: whether it conceals its imitation as plagiarism and forgeries do, whether the text itself draws attention to its imitation (to be 'textually signalled') or not, and whether the imitative form, by its nature, already suggests some sort of pre-conceived evaluative response (as in 'parody').

In the context of hip-hop music, those familiar with a broad range of hip-hop styles will see that the genre does not actually fall neatly into the 'not textually signalled' or 'textually signalled' categorizations. Hip-hop songs can textually signal their borrowing overtly or not do so, and both approaches can be manifested in a number of ways.

Take, for example, two recorded hip-hop tracks from roughly the same era and geographical location (1992–1993, Los Angeles), The Pharcyde's 'Passin Me By' (from *Bizarre Ride II the Pharcyde*) and Dr Dre's production of Snoop Doggy Dogg's 'Who

CONCEALED			UNCONCEALED	
NOT TEXTUALLY SIGNALLED			TEXTUALLY SIGNALLED	
EVALUATIVELY OPEN			EVALUATIVELY PREDETERMINED	
plagiarism	copies	pastiche	emulation homage	
fake forgery hoax	versions		travesty burlesque mock epic	
	genre		parody	

Figure 1 From Richard Dyer, *Pastiche* (2007, p. 24).

Am I (What's My Name?)' (from *Doggystyle*). Both use source material from elsewhere (see Figures 2 and 3), but the vinyl pop and hiss audible in the Pharcyde example draw attention to the fact that the material comes from an earlier source. It is also a trope we might call 'vinyl aesthetics': a signifier of hip-hop authenticity associated with the sounds of vinyl (popping, hiss and scratching to name a few). To invoke the terminology from Lacasse which is useful in the study of recorded music, The Pharcyde

Musical Phrase	Original Source
Opening phrase	The Jimi Hendrix Experience, 'Are You Experienced?' (1967)
Bass figure	Weather Report, '125th Street Congress' (1973)
Drums	Skull Snaps, 'It's a New Day' (1973)
Keyboard	Quincy Jones, 'Summer in the City' (1973)
Saxophone	Eddie Russ, 'Hill Where the Lord Hides' (1974)

Figure 2 The Pharcyde's 'Passin' Me By' (1992): autosonic quotations, textually signalled.

Musical Phrase	Original Source
Moog bass line	Tom Browne, 'Funkin' for Jamaica' (1981)
Vocal Line 1	George Clinton, 'Atomic Dog' (1982)
Vocal Line 2	Parliament, 'Tear the Roof off the Sucker (Give up the Funk)' (1976)
'Talk box'	Zapp-style (1978–80s funk band)
Low vocal effects And Vocal Line 3	'Atomic Dog' (1982)

Figure 3 Snoop Doggy Dogg's 'Who Am I (What's My Name?)' (1993): allosonic quotations, not textually signalled.

example is autosonic, in that it comes from a digital sample, and the Dr Dre example is allosonic in that its borrowed material has been re-recorded.

Furthermore, the hiss of vinyl heard faintly in the introduction of 'Passin Me By' textually signals that some of the song has its roots elsewhere, that elements have been borrowed. In contrast, 'Who Am I?' contains many elements derived from earlier songs, but was re-recorded in a studio (apart from its two-bar introduction) and does not contain any vinyl popping or hiss characteristic of sample-based hip-hop songs. In other words, the intertextuality of 'Who Am I?' is not textually signalled. Its sources of material are not obvious in themselves, and to a young listener unknowledgeable of 1970s' soul and funk, it can sound strikingly 'original'.[14]

The distinction between textually signalled and textually unsignalled shows that hip-hop recordings can be categorized based on whether or not the borrowing employed draws attention to its past or not. Many times, digitally sampling a well-known lyric or beat is akin to showing part of its 'inner workings', or at least signalling that it has its origins elsewhere. And in other songs, such as in the Dr Dre example, borrowings will be streamlined into sounding new, though their inner parts are taken from songs decades earlier. To include Dyer's bifurcation into the metaphor, textually signalled borrowing in a work is to show some of its working parts, and not to signal its derivations is akin to creating an illusory originality. To consider music in such a way shifts the argument from how original a work actually is to how original it appears to be. At the risk of overgeneralizing major music genres, both rock 'n' roll and rock music's intertextualities have been generally more concealed and textually unsignalled in terms of their intra- and extra-musical discourses than those of hip-hop, though any such statement is always more complicated when scrutinized in detail.

Other instances of 'textually signalled' borrowing in hip-hop music include, but are not limited to:

(1) *In lyrics and 'flow'*

Drawing attention to the source of a quotation, for example, when 50 Cent says in 'Patiently Waiting' (2003) (3:43): 'Snoop said this in '94: "We don't love them hoes"' (from Snoop's 'Gin and Juice' (1994) 0:55). 50 Cent also imitates Snoop's delivery of the line as a true allosonic quotation of the text, as well as attributing the source of his quotation in the lyrics. Another example involves using short snippets of dialogue from television or radio which seem incongruous in relation to the other parts of the song (such as the autosonic quotation 'Meanwhile, deep underground somewhere outside the city' (1:50) on Jurassic 5's 'High Fidelity' (2002)).

(2) *In beat*

Textually signalled borrowing in hip-hop beats includes vinyl hiss and popping, scratching, looped beats, chopped up beats (as producers and rappers may use a sample as an opening phrase, and proceed to chop the phrase for its basic beat, such as Kanye West on his own 'Champion' (2007) and on Talib Kweli's 'In the Mood' (2007)), using breakbeats that fall firmly within the breakbeat canon, heavy collages of sound (The Bomb Squad, DJ Shadow), and sped up samples (such as Kanye West's 'Through the Wire' (2003)). In addition, the sampling could be textually signalled if the borrowed fragment 'doesn't quite fit' with the rest of the material; for example, being slightly out of tune with other elements (the 'de-tuned layers' that Krims discusses) or if the duration of the sample does not fit any 'regular' pattern (i.e. 4- or 8-bar pattern).

These distinctions (textually signalled, allosonic) are important to make in the light of the fact that on an abstract level 'everything is borrowed'—a phrase that I myself borrow from an album title of the UK hip-hop group The Streets. But what is compelling for my purposes is how particular communities incorporate borrowing, celebrate it, conceal it and discuss it.

Xzibit's 'Symphony in X Major' (2002)

To provide a more substantial example by providing a close reading of a recorded hip-hop text, I will now turn to an instance of sampling from the classical music canon. I focus on the elements of the 'beat' or basic beat rather than on the lyrical content in depth, and choose to use the case study as an example of how the concepts explained earlier apply to a single piece of recorded hip-hop. I could have chosen a piece which samples other repertoire or other genres, but analysing classical samples is pragmatic, in that the source material is in the public domain, and there may be some wider implications in the use of pieces which have had relatively long lives (and afterlives) in the public sphere.

'Symphony in X Major' is performed by the rapper Xzibit on his fourth album *Man vs. Machine*. The song is produced by Bay Area-based Rick Rock (active since 1996) and features a verse by accomplished producer Dr Dre (Andre Young). Hip-hop

music production post-mid-1990s is too varied to define comprehensively, but it often includes a mix of technology such as samplers, sequencers, synthesizers, drum machines and more traditionally 'live' instruments. Xzibit, Alvin Nathaniel Joiner (b. 1974), has been a professional rapper since the mid-1990s, often collaborating with other West Coast rap stars including a featured role as guest on Dr Dre's *Chronic 2001* (1999). The presence of Dr Dre on 'Symphony in X Major' is not uncommon for rap at this time as there were often numerous guest artists and multiple producers on a single album.

Lyrically, the song relays the tropes of the hyper-masculine bragging and boasting traditions of rap and of earlier African-based traditions. Xzibit's chorus states, 'We're the shit' and verse two from Dr Dre consists of the producer boasting about his prowess as a 'hit maker' for other artists. The music video, directed by Linkin Park's DJ Joe Hahn, features Xzibit as the protagonist of an action film-style robbery and fight scene (complete with Hummer getaway car), again emphasizing his toughness in visual form.

Unlike the Dr Dre early-1990s' production mentioned earlier ('Who Am I'), 'Symphony in X Major' relies more heavily on overt autosonic quotation, and textually signals the source of the sample. The samples are the most prominent aspect of the basic beat, although there is the presence of simple and unobtrusive programmed rhythmic percussion with emphasis on beats one (kick drum) and three (clap/snare). The percussive additions are minimal, but transform the sample into a track characteristic of the hip-hop genre. The song consists of two samples both taken from the same source: Wendy Carlos's *Switched on Bach* (1968) version of J. S. Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3* (first movement) (see Figures 4 and 5). The excerpt is from the middle section of the movement, when the theme transitions into the relative minor key. It is significant that he uses the transition to the minor key of the movement, which becomes useful in reinforcing the menacing tone of the hip-hop track. I will call the two pieces of sampled material Sample A (Figure 4) and Sample B (Figure 5) (bars 70–71 and 68–69 of Bach's concerto respectively):[15]

'Symphony in X Major' follows a contrasting verse-chorus structure, in that the harmonic material of the chorus differs from the verse, as shown in Figure 6. The chorus consists of the two-bar Sample A repeated once to create a 4-bar phrase in total. The chorus includes both male and female voices singing pseudo-operatically over the primary 'violin' melody of the sample. The verse consists of the two-bar Sample B repeated eight times. The verse with rapped material followed by the chorus with sung material reflects a transition in hip-hop song form from free rhyming verse over a repeated riff ('Rapper's Delight' (1979)) to rap songs with sung choruses (in part, ushered in by Dr Dre's G-Funk era (1992–1996), such as 'Let Me Ride' (1992) and 'Nuthin but a "G" Thang' (1992)).

The contrasting verse-chorus form is common for hip-hop at the time as is the musematic (or riff-based) repetition in the verse (Sample B) with longer (discursive) phrases on the chorus (Sample A). Sample B contains a dominant seventh chord (F#7) which loops and provides no resolution. In contrast, the two bars of Sample A resolve

Figure 4 Sample A (bars 70–71) from J. S. Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3*, first movement.

the dominant seventh to B minor with the first bar of Sample A in B minor and the second bar of Sample A leading to the dominant (F#). Sample A therefore has much more harmonic motion as a loop in itself than Sample B (though the chorus resolves the static dominant of the verse). Form, harmony and repetition styles help give the song's chorus its 'hook' effect.

Figure 5 Sample B (bars 68–69) from J. S. Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3*, first movement.

To use Dyer's distinction, there are two primary elements which suggest that the recorded text signals the autosonic quotations rather than unsignalling them. The first eight bars of the song consist of two iterations of Sample A, and one can hear a rupture between bars 2 and 3 as the sample begins to loop again. There is no attempt to cover this up with flow in the first instance. Furthermore, verse 4 is an instrumental which is the same loop of Sample B found in the previous verses and

Intro	Verse 1 (Xzibit)	Chorus	Verse 2 (Dre)	Chorus	Trans.	Verse 3 (Xzibit)	Chorus	Verse 4	Fade
2+2	2x8	2+2	2x8	2+2	2x2	2x8	2+2	2+2	2+2
A	B	A	B	A	B	B	A	B	B

Figure 6 The form of 'Symphony in X Major' (section, function, number of bars and sample used).

transition section (repeated in the instrumental verse 4 four times). The exposure of the sample, as seen in the form of the track, demonstrates that it celebrates its sample origins. In a general sense, we can analyse this particular hip-hop track as characteristic of its era: Sample-based (sampling the same track rather than multiple tracks), with a level of synthesized reinforcement (in this instance, drum sounds), with a contrasting verse-chorus form, autosonic quotations in verse and chorus, allosonic quotations of the Bach melody in the form of the sung chorus, and overall, the basic beat textually signals where its primary source comes from. By virtue of the musical material sampled, the verse includes musematic repetition as compared to the chorus material of Sample A, which suggests more discursive repetition. While there is a high degree of flow located in the rap track, the fact that both Sample A and Sample B have instrumental sections without flow or singing demonstrates that these samples are placed prominently in order to be heard.

It is at this point where one might be inclined to draw multilayered meaning from the use of this sample. Do we wish to draw meaning from its generic associations, a genre synecdoche of 'classical music' (broadly defined), or perhaps even misread as opera, given the 'operatic' voices on the chorus and transition section. Do we go further and give meaning to the prominence of its composer (J. S. Bach), his afterlife and reception as an important cultural figure and the multiple shades of his personal portrayal over the centuries (the divine genius, the hard working craftsman, the subject of the refined tastes of a serial killer, or the Romantic nineteenth-century choral 're-boots'/revivals of Bach's music)? There are a number of instances where this would be appropriate; in particular, when films utilize his music and character in quite overt ways.[16] But in this particular instance, one might hesitate before placing too much emphasis on the direct Bach link, in the same way that Fink attaches less meaning to Johann Pachelbel in the afterlife of his well-known *Canon in D* (2010). Classical music features in this particular instance, to cite Leydon's use of Ratner for the purposes of sampling, become a stylistic topic in the potential polystylism that hip-hop tracks often express.[17]

But we also need to acknowledge the 'second-degree' nature of the borrowing, in that the producer is not simply sampling Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3* generally,

but is sampling from a specific famous recorded performance of the piece, that of Wendy/Walter Carlos's *Switched on Bach*.[18] In considering the synthesizer timbres, the early synthesizer of Carlos is fused with the contemporary (c. 2002) trend of heavily synthesized hip-hop beats (e.g. Eminem's production on 50 Cent's 'Patiently waiting' from 2003). In this way, the sample may be more aligned to Schloss's (2004) line of argument for sampling artists' motivations, that 'producers sample because it is beautiful', rather than more specific political and resistant ones (as Russell Potter argues, e.g.). It is perhaps this way where the link is most powerful, the preference for vinyl 'crate digging' to find beats may have discovered an early pre-cursor to a hip-hop-based approach to re-appropriation. Carlos, like many hip-hop producers, was Signifyin(g) on earlier material in a tradition of revision (although tell-ingly, the score is preserved for *Switched on Bach*, albeit re-'orchestrated')—but the use of previous material in the context is an issue of degree rather than quality. Past becomes present which then adds to the trend for synthesized hip-hop beats, and perhaps becomes a stylistic topic in itself: representative of mid-2000s' synthesizer-heavy hip-hop of Interscope/Aftermath, Shady Records and G-Unit record labels. Carlos then becomes part of a tradition and genre culture, perhaps more so than J. S. Bach does in this instance. Such is the flexibility of musical signifiers, so heavily dependent on their social contexts.

As Joseph G. Schloss states in *Making Beats* (2004), too much emphasis has been placed on political readings of sampling, which may be linked to a disproportionate amount of emphasis placed on the quasi-nerdy/academic location of specific sample sources. This is a feature of 'hip-hop heads' or enthusiasts in production and fan communities. But I think we also need to allow for these wider significations. For example, sometimes generic signifiers (those of 'jazz', or 'classical', or 'synthesized classical') become more important than the actual identity of the sample. If it 'sounds jazzy', rather than originating from an authentic jazz source, then this should be investigated rather than dismissed as an example of how musical structures travel in various cultural realms (see Williams, 2010b, pp. 435–459). This has been occurring for more than a century with the idiom of Hollywood film music and its Romantic precursors. For example, does the autosonic use of the 'Rex Tremendae' from Mozart's *Requiem* in Missy Elliott's 'Who You Gonna Call?' suggest Mozart or the wider 'gothic choral aesthetic' found in film music (inspired by Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* and the Requiems of Mozart and Verdi) (see Lowe, 2002, pp. 102–119)? This is dependent on the specific interpretative community (see con-clusion below), but it does reinforce Leydon's notion that we are moving towards a focus on sampling 'stylistic topics' rather than detailed information from specific examples. In the case of Xzibit, sampling something that, albeit synthesized, still sounds 'classical' has a range of meanings which means that while we might be in a 'post-canonic era' for classical music, as Fink argues, we are nowhere near a post-genre era for either interpretive communities of music or historical musicology as a discipline (Fink, 1998, pp. 135–179).

Conclusion—Imagined Communities as Interpretative Communities

In studies of borrowing, there is always the question of whether to favour compositional process or cultural reception, or, to invoke Jean-Jacques Nattiez, to place emphasis on the *poietic* or *esthesic* dimension (Nattiez, 1990, pp. 11–15). Christopher Reynolds, in his study of allusion in nineteenth-century German instrumental music, asks whether an allusion needs to be recognized in order to be successful. He suggests that it does not, and writes that '[a]llusions are therefore more important for how music is made than for how it is heard' (Reynolds, 2003, p. 182). Or should the focus be placed on reception? To quote David Metzer's study of quotation in twentieth-century music: 'Recognition then forms a crux for quotation, especially in its role as a cultural agent. Simply put, if a borrowing is not detected then it and its cultural resonances go unheard' (Metzer, 2003, pp. 6–7).[19] In other words, if we do not hear Bach in the 'Symphony in X Major', is it still a worthy topic for the study of quotation and musical borrowing?

If the producer did not intend to allude to Bach or Carlos, we can still relate to Reynolds' statement that it matters how the track is constructed from an analysis of form and content rather than any producer/composer intention specifically. For example, the idea of locating stylistic topics and of the distinction between textually signalled and unsignalled can work together in particularly productive ways, such as in the Xzibit example.

If the latter aesthesic-based method of studying quotation and borrowing from Metzer is preferred, whose reception is it exactly? For Metzer, it is the study of 'cultural agency' in quotation, though he does not always point to which cultures he envisions for his analyses (Metzer, 2003, pp. 6–9). More importantly in this case, how can a study of musical borrowing in hip-hop not simply become the private reflections of an idiosyncratic white middle-class academic, risking the danger of implicitly making spurious claims that these references can generally be heard by 'all'?

The answer lies within the imagined community of hip-hop. Most crucially, this imagined community is also as an 'interpretive community', to make reference to Stanley Fish and reader-response theory. Fish writes:

> Indeed, it is interpretive communities, rather than either the text or the reader, that produce meanings and are responsible for the emergence of formal features. Interpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies for not reading but for writing texts, for constituting their properties. In other words these strategies exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read rather than, as is usually assumed, the other way around. (1980, p. 14)

In any given reference in a rap song, some listeners will understand the reference, and some will not to varying degrees. This is not to suggest there are one or more fixed meanings, nor a dialectic between 'past' and 'present', or necessarily between a hip-hop song and its 'source' sample, but multiple imagined 'sources', based on the previous knowledge of specific songs, artists, or genres. It is the reading and misreading

of these sources, as reflected by constantly shifting and negotiating interpretations within hip-hop's imagined communities, that form its foundations. These hip-hop interpretative communities bring their experiences to the understanding of hip-hop texts, shaping and inflecting that text through the interaction involved in the listening and interpreting experience.

Despite variations inevitable with a group's interpretation of any given utterance, I would argue that there exists an audience expectation that hip-hop is a vast intertextual network that helps to form and inform the generic contract between audiences and hip-hop groups and artists. And in many cases, hip-hop practitioners overtly celebrate their peers, ancestors and musical pasts, though reasons why this is so may diverge, and how references and sources are textually signalled (or not) varies on an imaginary spectrum that roughly corresponds to a timeline of traditions and technical innovations. Whereas certain rock or 'new music'/contemporary classical ideologies that borrow from Romantic notions of musical genius attempt to demonstrate an illusionary originality, hip-hop takes pride in appropriating and celebrating other sounds and ideas. It is reflective of a long lineage of African-American and Pre-Romantic-Western music-making which has embraced the collective in different ways.[20]

Musical codes can work on a number of levels in borrowing, and not simply along the lines of signalled and unsignalled, or autosonic versus allosonic borrowings. Such codes can exist on the level of genre recognition (in the case of 'jazz' or 'classical', in terms of stylistic topics, or that of a recognizable artist voice (such as Dr Dre's flow on 'Symphony in X Major', Eminem's flow on The Game's 'We Ain't' (2005), or his 'sonic signature' in the track's production). In other words, listeners do not have to have knowledge of the *exact* song being borrowed for it to communicate meaning. And again, this will vary among listeners: some will know the exact song, some will recognize a genre, and some will realize that it could reference a number of elements, as hip-hop is often a multi-vocal discourse. Two examples will suffice.

Ingrid Monson, discussing Signifyin(g) in jazz, uses the example of John Coltrane's 'My Favorite Things' as an example of ironic Signification, troping on a Broadway song and transforming it into a song with new meanings (see Monson, 1994, p. 291; also Gates, 1989, p. 63). The hip-hop group OutKast also covers 'My Favorite Things' on *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below* (2003) with a prominent 'drum and bass' feel, and includes a soprano saxophone, characteristic of Coltrane. In analysing the OutKast version, are we to consider this a two-way relationship between the OutKast and Coltrane version because of the soprano saxophone, or can we also include the original *Sound of music* version in the analysis? Borrowing in hip-hop is highly multi-vocal, and there may be more than one 'source', as in the case of the Bach–Carlos–Xzibit example. Such a lineage complicates any sort of dialectical reading between 'old' and 'new' texts.[21]

A second example involves how best to theorize the relationship of James Brown to hip-hop culture. Wheeler, in her study of the dialogic nature of sampling, states that 'quoting James Brown is always an act of homage' (1991, p. 200). But it may be worth asking this rhetorical question in the light of the framework of this thesis: at

what moment does 'homage to James Brown' become a more general (or generic) homage to hip-hop? Or is it now always double-voiced; that is, is it demonstrating a quasi-DuBoisian double-consciousness, at once representing both hip-hop and funk? Wheeler's comment was in 1991, only 11 years after the first hip-hop on record. But now well over 20 years after Wheeler's article at the time of this writing, perhaps rather than homage to James Brown *and* funk music, it has become homage to hip-hop as its own self-conscious genre. The possibility is open that the racial, political and other associations attached to James Brown stay intact, and that a James Brown reference now represents both hip-hop culture and James Brown as one of its forefathers. These meanings depend on who is interpreting the samples (as James Brown's voice and breakbeats are normally sampled rather than borrowed), but treating James Brown as hip-hop signifier potentially shows that academic discourse on hip-hop can engage thoughtfully with references from within its own genre, in addition to the vast amount of previous academic discussion on sampling's link to pre-hip-hop forms.[22]

Analogous to hip-hop in multiple ways, Monson has provided a useful explanation of the varied ways that borrowing can be utilized and interpreted within jazz culture:

> The reference may be as specific as a melodic quotation from a particular piece or as diffuse as a timbre or style of groove. It might be from within or without mainstream jazz repertory. The important point is that a chain of associations may be set off that engage the listener and unite her or him with a community of other individuals who share a similar musical point of view. Quotations are only the most obvious examples of the thick web of intertextual and intermusical associations to which knowledgeable performers and listeners react. Theoretically almost any musical detail or composite thereof could convey a reference, so long as a community of interprets can recognize the continuity. The key here is 'community of interpreters' (which includes both performers and audience), for a sonic detail becomes sonically meaningful and actionable only in an at least partially shared context of use. (1994, pp. 303, 305)

Monson locates a jazz community that will understand the web of intertextual references, similar to the kind of interpretations and communications from the hip-hop communities in the following chapters.

As a number of multiple styles and genres do, the hip-hop world includes a high degree of intertextuality within its aesthetics and that hip-hop cultures form an interpretive community that recognize a number of these references. With the premise that hip-hop music largely adheres to this unconcealed borrowing aesthetic, an emphasis on the collective that features in many genres of the African diaspora, there exist a few initial levels to consider in hip-hop borrowing analysis:

(1) Allosonic versus autosonic quotation;
(2) textually signalled versus unsignalled (adaptation versus non-adaption; does it *sound* digitally sampled or does it draw attention to the fact that it is borrowed?);

(3) recognition of borrowed song or artist/group;
(4) recognition of borrowed genre (or 'stylistic topic');
(5) intra-generic borrowing versus inter-generic borrowing;
(6) the interpretive community.

Intended as a starting point rather than as a static framework, the study of musical borrowing in hip-hop initiates a discourse that moves beyond surface notions of 'sampling' and deeper into the complex details of musical borrowing in hip-hop music. Only when we carefully analyse the intricacies of borrowing can we observe and appreciate how complex the web of affiliations actually is.

As Shusterman has written, '[a]rtistic appropriation is the historical source of hip-hop music and still remains the core of its technique and a central feature of its aesthetic form and message' (2000, p. 202). This practice fits within a long lineage of other musical genres and cultures, but appropriation in the digital era means that there are even more possibilities that hip-hop practitioners can utilize to create their music. Bounding the hip-hop world as imagined community makes the discussion more productive and the variety of case studies presented is an attempt to approach borrowing from different hermeneutical angles in order to draw the greatest knowledge from the most perspectives. Though these recordings are open to many interpretations, the methodologies employed in this article demonstrate that intertextuality forms a crucial part of hip-hop music's composition and reception. Looking at a range of musics in this way may reveal how intra-musical and extra-musical inform each other in ways productive to the understanding of various musical cultures.

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1] For a discussion of the beat/flow dichotomy and the compositional process, see Adams (2008), Williams (2009) and Adams (2009).
[2] As a rapper is often called the MC ('mic-controller' or 'master of ceremonies') in journalism and other writings, I will use both terms synonymously, as well as the more general term 'artist' (as in 'recording artist') where appropriate.
[3] The concept of a 'basic beat' is strongly indebted to Adam Krims's *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity*; in particular, his discussion of layering and analysis of Ice Cube's 'The Nigga Ya Love to Hate' (see Krims, 2000, pp. 93–122).

[4]   For theorizations approaching such foundational rhythmic structures in popular music, see Robert Fink's concept of the tonic rhythm in the context of Motown's 'four-on-the-floor' patterns (see Fink, 2011, pp. 179–238).

[5]   The Nas version uses primarily the top voice of Für Elise and is rhythmically modified for the new context. An even more ubiquitous breakbeat in hip-hop is James Brown's 'The Funky Drummer' (1969), specifically, the instrumental break from James Brown's drummer Clyde Stubblefield (see Katz, 2004, pp. 137–157).

[6]   Schloss, in the breakdancing context, writes of borrowing as lineage in terms of incorporating 'foundational' moves in contemporary b-boy routines. Borrowing and quotation are arguably just as important to b-boying as it is to rap music. He also adds that 'Graffiti writers, for example, often use specific letter styles as tributes to their teachers, while stylistic lineages are also valued—and can be heard—in hip-hop production' (Schloss, 2009, p. 67).

[7]   Lethem's essay is particularly noteworthy because his endnotes reveal that every sentence from the essay has come from a different source, either directly quoted or paraphrased.

[8]   To quote Katz at length:

> As a form of musical borrowing, the roots of digital sampling reach back more than a millennium. Consider just the Western musical tradition: medieval chants freely incorporated and adapted melodic patterns from earlier chants; dozens of Renaissance masses were based on the melody of the secular song 'L'homme armé'; a similar craze raged centuries later when composers such as Berlioz, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, Saint-Saëns, and Ysaye 'sampled' the chant Dies irae ('The Day of Wrath') in their instrumental works; Bach reworked Vivaldi's music; more than a century later Gounod returned the favor, adding a new melody to Bach's Prelude in C Major and calling it Ave Maria; Mahler cannibalized his own earlier vocal works in several of his symphonies; Ives quoted George M. Cohan's 'Over There' in his song 'Tom Sails Away'; Bartok parodied Shostakovich's Leningrad Symphony in his Concerto for Orchestra; and so on and so on. (2004, pp. 139–140)

[9]   For a more detailed history of sampling, see Davies (1996, pp. 3–11) and Kistner (2006).

[10]   I do not deal with issues of copyright at any great length because its impact is largely tangential to this article's aims, where the focus is on the aesthetics of hip-hop recordings and their reception. I would argue that copyright clearance has been extremely influential, and in many instances limiting, on what can be produced in mainstream hip-hop, but the topic is too large in scope to be included here. For writings in this area, see McLeod (2001, in particular pp. 71–99); also Litman (2001), Demers (2006), Frith and Marshall (2004), Vaidhyanathan (2003), and Lessig (2005).

[11]   Ingrid Monson, David Metzer and Gary Tomlinson use the concept of Signifyin(g) effectively in jazz contexts; see Monson (1994), Metzer (2003, especially pp. 47–68), and Tomlinson (2002). David Brackett uses the concept in his analysis of James Brown's 'Superbad' (see Brackett, 2000).

[12]   For more on dialogism, Signifyin(g) and intertextuality, see Allen (2000), and Bakhtin (1981, especially pp. 259–422).

[13]   Though writing on digital sampling has largely been in the context of hip-hop music, it is important to note that the sampler was first used in rock and pop music, and continued to be used alongside hip-hop production. Wayne Marshall points out that the first 'authentic' hip-hop sample, in that it digitally sampled a funk song, was actually from the progressive rock band Yes, who sampled Kool and the Gang's 'Kool is Back' for 'Owner of a Lonely Heart' in 1984 (see Marshall, 2006, pp. 868–892). Digital samplers were often used for ease

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