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Digital Griots: African American Rhetoric in a Multimedia Age (Studies in Writing and Rhetoric)

Adam J. Banks

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Scholar Adam J. Banks offers a mixtape of African American digital rhetoric in his innovative study Digital Griots: African American Rhetoric in a Multimedia Age. Presenting the DJ as a quintessential example of the digital griot-high-tech storyteller-this book shows how African American storytelling traditions and their digital manifestations can help scholars and teachers shape composition studies, thoroughly linking oral, print, and digital production in ways that centralize African American discursive practices as part of a multicultural set of ideas and pedagogical commitments.

DJs are models of rhetorical excellence; canon makers; time binders who link past, present, and future in the groove and mix; and intellectuals continuously interpreting the history and current realities of their communities in real time. Banks uses the DJ's practices of the mix, remix, and mixtape as tropes for reimagining writing instruction and the study of rhetoric. He combines many of the debates and tensions that mark black rhetorical traditions and points to ways for scholars and students to embrace those tensions rather than minimize them. This commitment to both honoring traditions and embracing futuristic visions makes this text unique, as do the sites of study included in the examination: mixtape culture, black theology as an activist movement, everyday narratives, and discussions of community engagement. Banks makes explicit these connections, rarely found in African American rhetoric scholarship, to illustrate how competing ideologies, vernacular and academic writing, sacred and secular texts, and oral, print, and digital literacies all must be brought together in the study of African American rhetoric and in the teaching of culturally relevant writing.

A remarkable addition to the study of African American rhetorical theory and composition studies, Digital Griots: African American Rhetoric in a Multimedia Age will compel scholars and students alike to think about what they know of African American rhetoric in fresh and useful ways.

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