

**DR. JIA**

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**Scholar**

**Speaker**

**MSNBC contributor**

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“Writers write,  
teachers teach,  
activists act ...  
but a good scholar  
does all of the above.”

- dr. james peterson

# Dr. James Peterson

Scholar • Speaker • MSNBC Contributor

**J**ames Peterson (Duke '93, UPENN '03) is the Director of Africana Studies and Associate Professor of English at Lehigh University. He is also the founder of Hip-Hop Scholars, LLC, an association of Hip-Hop generational scholars dedicated to researching and developing the cultural and educational potential of Hip-Hop, urban, and youth cultures. Whether composing interdisciplinary curricula or discussing the latest topic du jour as an increasingly important media presence, Dr. Peterson reveals an acute understanding of both our contemporary American culture and the highly-charged political climate with a progressive mindset.

An adamant proponent of educational reform, Dr. Peterson is a strong advocate of integrating youth culture into classrooms as a way of transgressing the historically divergent

borders between lived experiences and the formal educational system. He has trained teachers for the greater part of a decade, working with them to incorporate innovative methods for teaching students from all backgrounds and particularly from minority groups. Drawing from the four elements of Hip-Hop culture—djing, mc-ing/rapping, breakdancing/bboying, and graffiti art—Dr. Peterson conceived “The Fifth Element of Hip-Hop” where he argues that knowledge is an additional element.



Regularly appearing on MSNBC's *The Ed Show* and *The Martin Bashir Show*, as well as *Al Jazeera English* and *NPR* with *Marty Moss Coane*, Dr. Peterson aptly utilizes his incredible breadth of knowledge to tackle everything from politics to race relations, cultural debates about the greater social implication of entertainers like Beyoncé, and the integration



of non-traditional approaches to academics. He is also an official contributor for The Daily Beast, TheGrio.com, MSNBC's official black online presence, BET.com, and blogs for The Huffington Post, generally applying his journalistic and ethnographic skill sets toward groundbreaking academic inquiry.

Often working in collaboration with others, Dr. Peterson has also brought in fresh perspectives on continually evolving debates on CNN, Fox News, CBS News, MSNBC, ABC News, ESPN, and HLN, and has been involved with BET and Bet.com, The Michael Eric Dyson Show, Hot 97's "Street Soldiers," The Michael Baisden Show, and the award-winning PBS documentary, Beyond Beats and Rhymes. Additionally, Dr. Peterson regularly contributes to The Fresh Outlook on Ebru TV, a family-oriented, international cable network that features educational programs, sitcoms, and news segments.

Diving into the realm of magazines and

newspapers, Dr. Peterson has made his way into an array of publications as both a voice of reason and a scholar, including Vibe Magazine, The Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia Weekly, The Miami Herald, The Wall Street Journals, Callaloo, Criticism, Black Arts Quarterly, XXL, and African American Review. Beyond offering his opinions through media appearances, academics, and blogging, Dr. Peterson uses his variegated insights for crossing into the limelight of celebrity entertainment, interviewing the likes of Gil Scott Heron, Dr. Manning Marable, Sistah Souljah, Snoop Dogg, Dead Prez, DJ Jazzy Jeff, Nas, and Lupe Fiasco.

Much as his academic focus is derived from an interdisciplinary mindset, Dr. Peterson projects the same flexible, hands-on approach in all his endeavors, inspiring positive change in the world around him. Dr. Peterson is currently working on his first academic book, aimed to predominantly focus on mortality and commercial culture in Hip-Hop culture.

### Rap's Rape Culture: Ashley Judd Had a Point

Hip-hop is too often the scapegoat for society's ills, but you'd have to be blind – or deaf – to think there's no truth to the actress's controversial comments.

By: James Braxton Peterson | Posted: April 12, 2011 at 2:04 PM

Ashley Judd's new, highly publicized memoir, *All That Is Bitter & Sweet*, has been in stores for a week, and the actress is already making waves for some harsh judgments she made about rap music in the book. Judd wrote that she was upset when she saw that Snoop and Diddy were performing at the MTV World AIDS Day concert because "most rap and hip-hop music – with its rape culture ... is the contemporary soundtrack of misogyny."

While many of us who follow, love and consider ourselves cultural constituents of hip-hop might concede that some rap music is undeniably misogynistic, we also stand up for it when we feel it's being unfairly attacked. I have regularly defended hip-hop culture from its detractors, and upon hearing Judd's sweeping

Mike Coppola/Getty Images



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## Graphic Black Nationalism Visualizing Political Narratives in the Graphic Novel

JAMES BRAXTON PETERSON

Classical Black Nationalism is defined in a global sense as "an ideology whose goal was the creation of an autonomous Black nation-state, with definite geographical boundaries—usually in Africa," or in a national sense "to the effect of African Americans to create a sovereign nation-state and formulate an ideological basis for a concept of a national culture" (Miano). In this chapter I employ theories of comics and narrative in order to excavate on his nationalist engagement with Black Nationalist themes in *Book Miller's Give Me Liberty*, featuring Martha Washington, Anna McGruder, Reginald Hadden and Kyle Baker's *Birth of a Nation: Kyle Baker's Not Here*, and Reginald Hadden's *Black Panther*. Martha Washington, Fred Fredericks (protagonist of *Birth of a Nation*), Nat Turner and T'Challa/Black Panther are all Black Nationalist figures with specific and at times historically resonant relations with African Diasporic politics.

This is *Miller's Give Me Liberty*. Martha Washington is named after America's first president's wife, but she emerges as a Black heroine who almost literally pulls herself out of an impoverished inner city hell by the figurative bootstraps of sheer gumption. Fred Fredericks, whose name doubles and signifies Frederick Douglass, one of America's first figure Black heroes, is an indelible civil servant in the recently revealed Blackland, a national renamed East St. Louis in *Birth of a Nation*—a title which itself equates the White supremacist Nationalism depicted in F.W. Griffith's film, *Nat Turner*.

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### 'Fear of a Black Republican'

Why are the Republican candidates struggling to win the support of African American voters?  
 Inside Story US 2012 Last Modified: 28 Mar 2012 09:24

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### 7 Corner-Boy Masculinity: Intersections of Inner-City Manhood

James Braxton Peterson

In *Blues, Meology, and Afro-American Literature*, Houston Baker analyzes the intersecting matrices of lack and desire for the enigmatic bluesman. These crossroads of lack and desire, according to Baker, became a foundational intersection for the formulation of African American identity. Fast forward to the postindustrial economic conditions of the twenty-first-century inner city and this foundational intersection finds an extraordinary consistency with the lack of economic opportunity available to generations of inner-city youth who are (through various media) exposed to many of the most desirable outposts of capitalist society, and the corollary to this desire-producing exposure: an utter absence of the structural and civic resources necessary to transcend abject poverty. The spectacle of this society notwithstanding, various verbal and visual discourses generated in popular media seek to construct original models of masculinity for these generational constituents. In this chapter I engage emerging theoretical conceptions of black masculinity (à la Mark Anthony Neal and others) and juxtapose these ideas with several specific constructions of black masculinity articulated and visualized and exemplified through the characters of *The Wire*. Of significance to this discussion is a collaboration between the rapper Common and the Last Poets, aptly entitled, "The Corner," which brilliantly articulates the urban corner as a master site for the both the

6. Birth of a Nation: Representation, Nationhood, and Graphic Revolution in the Works of D. W. Griffith, DJ Spooky, and Aaron McGruder et al.  
 JAMES BRAXTON PETERSON. . . . .

...he had meant to say was that the president's policies are a quagmire. I do  
s "tar baby" epithet is just the latest in an intermittent string of racialized  
the right, to inject culturally divisive sentiments into an already vitriolic public  
midst of a presidential address to Congress. Mr. Pat Buchanan referred  
v. Al Sharpton on MSNBC. Fox News referred to the president's 50th birthday  
ck) will not pay much attention to these veiled, high-pitched racial insults. A  
bility and progress than this type of trite but not insignificant race baiting  
t we are very much in need of centering race and ethnicity in our public disc  
brown folks back to work (especially if this effort can take the form of job  
employment woes.

...cently it has become trendy for political pundits to pronounce the end of the  
hael Eric Dyson, Bill Maher, the left's Limbaugh, suggested that he had  
current, competency-challenged crop of Republican presidential candidates  
rry presidential administration for four years. In the wake of the Tea Part  
ipulation of our political system, folks would rather not face the ways in whi  
ected at this president, not to mention our willful dismissal of the inherited  
pose the president's administration could and should tell a better story. M  
se.

S&P's own explanation of the credit downgrade of the United States was  
ely the "conciliator-ship" of the president, a decision that has had an exact  
t, the president has shown little understanding of what American  
tinue their minority market share in the political process.



...the bit of chatter that surrounds the credit downgrade to Rep. Lamborn's "tar baby"  
term as a doll cover-up for the president's Br'er Rabbit (that's shorthand  
ular in the pages of the conservative who acknowledged the fact  
erence to Africa. American conservatives who disrespected the c  
an "ignorant racist" for referring to himself as a "tar baby." No one has ve  
ctly inform the full meaning of the word "tar" for black folk in these United  
able of a garden on a plantation that was protected by a tarred fence. En  
or by this fence. They were severely beaten if even a spec of tar was disc  
h as they did the lash." During the heyday of lynching, mobs of white Amer  
lic spectacle and/or communal entertainment. Bernice Mac's "tar baby" bit  
empt to recover the collective humanity of those people who were cast as tar

...p. Boehner, the leader of the House Republicans, bragged that he "got 98  
berations. That being the case, the credit downgrade must assuredly be i

# Media Appearances & Writing

**Mental Health Must Be Part of Gun on  
Face The Nation Roundtable Discussion**

**Institutional Blackface**

**The "Fifth Element" of Hip-Hop, Versus  
Debate**

**Hip Hop Intellectuals at the Aspen Ideas  
Festival**

**Samuel L. Jackson Cusses for Obama  
Campaign: 'Wake the f\*\*k up!'**

**What Rodney King's Death Symbolizes  
for the Black Community**

**Episode 10/27 The Fresh Outlook Job  
Outsourcing**

**Rap's Rape Culture: Ashley Judd Had a  
Point on The Root**

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# “IT’S YOURS”

## HIP-HOP WORLDVIEWS IN THE LYRICS OF NAS

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“An adamant proponent of educational reform, Dr. James Peterson believes educators ought to integrate youth culture into their teaching.”

JAMES PETERSON

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