

Negative effects of music on the mind



Today many people believe that violent music has aggressive and hostile reactions in children, because those who listen to aggressive music often act aggressively too. Brad Bushman, Professor of Psychology and Communication Studies at the University of Michigan, in his article Media violence and the American public in *American Psychologist* for 2001 says, that "measuring such correlation (between aggressive music and its consequences in real life) in laboratory studies would clearly be unethical, much the same way as experimental studies of smoking and lung cancer would have been unethical." What Bushman means is that not every child is affected by violence in music the same way. And sometimes it is hard to determine whether or not aggressive behavior is caused primarily by harsh music, because there are many other factors that affect youngsters' manners like media, society, family, etc. It is well known that children love to imitate adults. Luckily, there are many well-behaved kids who have reliable parents and thus better models to copy than rap-stars, for instance, who do not care if they teach somebody else's off-springs wrong stuff.

On the other hands, there are children who are already being exposed to violence in their everyday life and what these kids hear and see on stage may play crucial role in their decision-making. Therefore, we cannot ignore that not only can musical lyrics manipulate kid's judgment psychologically, but singer's appearance also negatively influences children's impression about appropriate behavior in public. Many performers use aggressive lyrics in their songs and our children are often exposed to the profanity.

Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine studied the Billboard charts, looking at the entire top 279 songs of 2005. They found that

one third of the list had violence related lyrics. Nearly 80% of rap songs mentioned killing, racism, and alcohol and drug use, followed by 37% of country music lyrics, 20% of R; B/hip hop and 14% of rock songs. It means that a great portion of modern popular songs' lyrics pass violent contents. For example in a song titled " I Kill Children" by rock group Dead Kennedy we hear " I kill children,/ I love to see them die. I kill children/ to make their mothers cry. / I crush them under my car/ And I love to hear them scream. / I feed them poison candy/ And spoil their Halloween. " Can you imagine what would our kids, the most vulnerable and easily impressionable audience, feel about this song? Since children are not always capable to distinguish what happens in song story from real world, some will probably get scared, while other kids may try to repeat what they hear in violent songs later in life.

The news article from rock music website metalhammer. com reports that parents of a 15-year-old girl, who was murdered by three fans of trash metal group Slayer, claim that their daughter died as a direct consequence of Slayer's lyrics and music. Moreover, boys involved have explained later in court that they did it because the victim fit a description of a person in the song " Altar of Sacrifice": " A figure in white unknown by man/ Approaching the altar of death. Of course not every child would go for such radical violence, but those, who were not mentally stable to begin with, may understand such brutal lyrics as an acceptable idea of expressing themselves or just having fun. Adolescent are also being taught that violence is the solution for their problems. Some musicians even suggest suicide as a way out. For example, Oozy Osborne s song, " Suicide Solution" advocates following: " Sick of life it Sucks/ Sick and tired no one cares/ Sick of myself

don't wanna live/ Suicide is the only way out... In this song singer gives up on his own life, chooses easy way and commits suicide, instead of working hard on building self-esteem and deserving respect from other people, which requires a lot of passion, time, and energy. Well, even though intelligent people, who understand things clearly and logically, may smile on me and say: " Who cares what one of these idiots is singing? ", there are people, especially teenagers with psychological issues, like uncertainty about future and not believing in themselves, may hurt or kill themselves under pressure of stress doubled with support of their idol's lyrics.

Performers mesmerize kids to go and insult, beat up, or kill. There are no moral barriers for modern youth any more: if violence is what they need to get through teens will do what ever it takes with no doubt especially if they supported with favorite singers' lyrics. And finally since most of musicians are public people, their lifestyle and performance on stage become a big issue in developing children's morals too. I'm sure you have noticed how hip-hop musicians are dressed on their concerts: not any different from what they wear on the streets.

And the shocking detail of their appearance is pulled down jeans so thousands of viewers can see their underwear. It is hard to get the idea of wearing pants this way, but even if it is just the way of acting against socially accepted standards and rules, the remaining issue is that they threat and disrespect the audience by doing that. In addition, Niko Koppel in his article *Are You Jeans Sagging? Go Directly To Jail*. (The New York Times, Aug. 0th, 2007) informs, that: " Sagging began in prison, where oversized uniforms were issued without belts to prevent suicide and their use as weapons. "

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Thus the roots of baggy style have criminal nature, and when performers wear pants that fall below the waist they promote prison lifestyle, which is violent to begin with. Looking over all the evidence of negative influence of music lyrics and musicians' appearance on children's behavior, a lot of questions are coming up.

For example, why do popular singers, the chosen heroes of modern youths, do not take responsibility for consequences of their aggressive performance? On the other hand, what if the violence in music is just a terrifying reflection of our everyday reality? It is almost like in the question of what comes first: chicken or egg, or in our case aggressive music or real life violence. But, no matter what the nature of brutality on stage is, it has to be regulated on government level somehow, so the new generation of children will be warned and protected from a overvalued violent lifestyle.