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Jonathon Bidelspach AFA 2000 Unit IV Paper Hip-hop music is known as one of the most popularizing and popular genres in our modern society. Most of hip-hop music is considered vulgar, offensive, and meaningless, which can be easily displayed by hip-hop artists such as Soulja Boy and Lil' Wayne. However, who gets lost in translation is the artist who conveys true meaning in their lyrics and sticks with the original roots of the music. For hip-hop's short life, there has been dramatic change in the structure and culture of the music. Most of the well-revered artists of their time like to claim that the music has lost its substance. I have a concurring belief in that if hip-hop wants to rid of its negative stereotype, it should emphasize its roots more often. Two of hip-hop's most respected authors, Bill Brewster and Frank Broughton, agree with this belief by stating, "hip hop today thrives on a sense of its own past" (Williams 133). In order to clarify my belief on this subject, I want to explain hip-hop's origins and its positive impact on our society when it follows its roots. Hip-hop music had very humble beginnings in the city of Bronx, New York. In an area where arson, government neglect, and violence ran rampant, the poor youth needed to find a safe place from this madness (Change 59). Through this, they found the culture of hip-hop. Young kids in the area would pass time by rapping in a Jamaican reggae style over the beats of funky Afro-Latin beats, dancing to wild percussive beats, and spray painting (Chang 61). These innocent ways of leisure for the youth were essentially what embodied the original form of hip-hop music. Shortly after, these elements were put into the mainstream where teenagers threw parties. Not only did hip-hop music become a popular thing for teens to do, but it was also a great way to vent out anger and energy in a positive way (Chang 6). One of the biggest pioneers of the hip-hop genre in the late

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70s was Afrika Bambaattaa. Bambaattaa would throw hip-hop based parties in Bronx, which turned out to be instrumental in popularizing the genre (Chang 62). These parties often had a collectivist feel, where DJs, rappers, and dancers would collaborate to create quality entertainment. This turned out to be a great way to unify communities in this time. The icing on the mainstream cake was when Sugarhill Gang created the first mainstream single, " Rappers Delight" (Chang 63). Looking at the genre of hip-hop, it is clearly one of the most popular around. There is a plethora of styles in hip-hop music now such as club hits to gangster rap. While these styles can often be extremely different, they all have a very wide audience that they pertain to. Hip-hop music has become popular globally as well, so it is quite obvious that the genre has made significant progress in its short time here. Hip-hop music is extremely diverse and has made significant social impacts to our society. For one, the music is an excellent verbal way of expression (McLeod 137). There is a plethora of topics that hip-hop artists have rapped about since the advent of the genre. For example, Tupac has written music about respect for his mother, Mos Def raps against the political machine and stereotypes against blacks in the United States, and Kanye West raps about the United States' obsession with materialism (McLeod 138). These are just a few of the many positive topics that hip-hop music has explored and will continue to explore. Even in our modern society, where most avid listeners of hip-hop music claim is the worst era, we have rappers such as A\$AP Rocky and Mackelmore rapping about topics such as consumerism and gay rights (McLeod 138). The other powerful effect that hip-hop music has had on society is the entertainment and aesthetic impact. Hip-hop's original elements included MCing (rapping), DJing, B-Boying (breakdancing), and

graffiti (Price III 41). Most of these elements are very relevant in our society; new club dances and sampling other music have also been added to give the genre even more versatility. In summary, not only does hip-hop music have significant meaning in social progressivism, but it also adds an exciting entertainment value to our society. Although, to most pundits of hip-hop music, the genre has significantly lost its meaning. I believe it still has retained its meaning, however it has to deliver different messages due to changes in our society. While hip-hop music may have lost some of its roots, there are still plenty of artists who utilize the original elements in the genre (Williams 134). What I hoped to explain in this essay is the origin of hip-hop and how it has made an impact on our society from when it began to now. The contrast between the two is very diverse and has a direct correlation with the changes in society. Overall, I hope this essay helped expand most people's knowledge about hip-hop music and its importance to our society. While hip-hop music has changed in its structure, it has also stuck to its roots and remained relevant to our society. Work Cited It's a Hip-Hop World. Jeff Chang. Foreign Policy , No. 163 (Nov. - Dec., 2007), pp. 58-65 McLeod, K. (1999), Authenticity within hip-hop and other cultures threatened with assimilation. Journal of Communication, 49: 134—150. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.1999.tb02821.x Price III, Emmett G. Hip hop culture. Abc-clio, 2006. Williams, Justin. " Historicizing the Breakbeat: Hip-Hop's Origins and Authenticity." Lied und populäre Kultur/Song and Popular Culture 56 (2011): 133, 167, 222-223. ProQuest. Web. 3 Apr. 2013.