

# Essay on rap music essay



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Rap is a popular type of music in today's society, but it didn't just come to be. In the 1970's rap emerged from other types of music to become what it is today. Rap is influenced and inspired by other types of music. Its influences are closely related to each other. Rap music has derived from various types of music. In a world in which people are constantly confronted with violent acts such as rape, assault, murder, school shootings and other violence's, society is eager and anxious to find and remove all causes of these cultural ills.

All the blame can not be put on one particular thing but a heavier degree of blame can be put on one thing. Some of the violent acts listed above are expressed through music. Gangster rap, which followed rap music, developed in the 1980's. Though the immaturity and lack of teaching morals has an impact on how we view and take in things, the context of gangster rap presents a negative image for people in society. Rap music has derived from other music categories. " Rap is an integral part of this subculture that did not evolve or exist in isolation from its other major components" (qtd. in Rhodes).

One of the first musical influences on rap music is hip hop. Hip hop is comprised of graffiti, break dancing, attitude and the dress of the people who listened to it. The start of hip hop, along with rap, can be located in the Bronx of New York. There were three major events that occurred in the Bronx that contributed to the hip hop subculture. The first event was the building of an expressway through the Bronx. This plan was carried out by the 1959 Parks Commissioner, Rober Moses. This expressway ran through the heart of the Bronx. Italians, Germans, Irish and Jews disappeared from the Bronx.

They were replaced by poor blacks and Hispanics. As a result, crime, drug addiction, and unemployment sky rocketed. Rober Moses continued to put out projects that slowly changed the Bronx as it was previously known. He built a 15, 382 unit apartment complex in 1968. This event took away from the majority of the middle class that was left in the Bronx. These apartment complexes brought high vacancies and landlords began selling out to professional slumlords. They were built on the north edge of the Bronx near the newly built expressway. Because of high vacancies in these ew apartments, old, occupied buildings on the Bronx deteriorated. The last major event also brought the graffiti aspect of hip hop into light. We can write a custom essay on Rap for you! A group of seven teenage boys terrorized Bronxdale Project in New York. “ This may not seem important, but this group of teenagers laid the groundwork for a surge of street gang activity that would overwhelm the Bronx for the next six years” (qtd. in Rhodes). This group of boys was called the Savage Seven but later changed to the Black Spades. At night, street gangs were found on many street corners.

Many rappers in the hip hop were gang members at some point. Afrika Bambaataa (whose real name is Kevin Donovan), became a member of the Black Spades. The name he gave himself meant “ affectionate leader”. He later became a musician but left his gang days behind him and built a positive youth group called the Zulu Nation, which is still in effect today. Gangs in New York reached a peak in 1973. They declined because of drugs, other rival gangs or people just losing interest. Women involved in gangs left them to have kids and start families. Times were beginning to change.

People became more involved in the dancing club scene. They wanted to dance and have fun. This interest of dancing and getting involved in music contributed to the hip hop culture. Another important aspect of hip hop is graffiti. Graffiti dated back to World War II. Someone wrote, “” Kilroy was here” during the war in many different places throughout the country (qtd. in Rhodes). In the 1950? s, street gangs used graffiti for self promoting, territory boundaries and intimidation. Graffiti writing was used with spray paint until the 60’s when magic markers were invented.

This act was strictly limited to artists only at first. Style and originality were important in writing. Graffiti writing wasn’t just an act of fun. It was taken very seriously. By the late 1970’s graffiti writing could be found on subway cars, trains, buildings and any other large objects that would allow it to be widely visible. Jamaican music and hip hop can be referred to as cousins. One style of Jamaican music is called toasting. “ At first Jamaican toasting began when DJs would “ toast” over the music they played with simple slogans to encourage the dancers.

Some of these simple slogans were “ Work it, Work it” and “ Move it up” (qtd in Rhodes). The term toast meant words or slogans that a DJ would say over the music to encourage dancers. These words spoken over music were related to words spoken over music in rap. Unlike these simple words and slogans that Jamaicans used, the words used over music in rap are more developed. Jamaican disc jockeys talked over the music they played. Music in Jamaica was played at blues dances. Blues dances took place in large halls or slum yards. As toasting popularity increased, so did the lengths of toasts.

Shortly after toasting came dubbing. DJs that dubbed cut back and forth between vocal and instrumental tracks while adjusting bass and treble. Rap and toasting both rely on pre recorded sounds. You need a strong beat rapped and a strong beat toasted. Rap relies more on a hard funk strong beat while Jamaican's relied on beat from Jamaican rhythms. In both of these types of music there is a rapper (or toaster) that speaks in time with the rhythm. The content of raps and toasts were also similar. When you look back on hip hop and Jamaican music, they are greatly similar to rap and you can understand how rap came to be.

Granted they had their own styles, speeds and sounds of there music but the general ideas of Jamaican, hip hop and rap are the same. As mentioned and enforced above, rap has had musical impacts on it to make it what it is today. In the late 1980's rap took another step into gangster rap. Gangster rap today differs greatly from the rap that first came out. As rap first entered the mainstream of the music world, it was less violent. Pop rap for example appealed to mainstream America. It sold quite a few albums. These artists consisted of Will Smith, M. C.

Hammer, Young MC, and Puff Daddy. These artists are considered cross over artists because they took rap from strictly rhyming to pop music. " However, these same artists have also been accused of selling out because their music is seen as feel-good music that emphasizes danceability over rhyme skills" (qtd. in Keeley). Rap music took a step in a positive direction by the acts of Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five. These artists were the first group effectively use rap for a social and political message. The type of music they releases expressed Black Nationalist ideologies.

It discussed racism and made reference to Martin Luther King Jr. “ Chuck D is not the only person who believes that some rap songs successfully pass on a social or political message to young, and the more people-black or white-that listen to a song, the greater the possibility someone will hear its political message” (qtd. in Keeley). All rap music does not present a negative image. Some artists use rap powerful means of expression, to express the troubles in the country, was to fix them and their ideas on issues. Political rap is an example of such music.

Political rap is a “ method of conveying political statement and promoting a world view that [isn’t] reflected in the mainstream media” which doesn’t contain explicit, appalling lyrics. Not all rap music can present positive images to society. Listeners to political rap that pay close attention to lyrics can gain something where as, close attention to gangster rap may not be advantageous. Rap music, especially gangster rap, seems to be African American dominate. Through “ Sound-Scan statistics”, it’s shown that white, predominantly suburban male teens purchase a great deal of gangster rap (qtd. n Keeley). Gangster rap originates from the West Coast and started in the late eighties. Ice-T and N. W. A were artists that started this soon to be dominate music. Gangster music uses a great deal of profanity to illustrate the life of poor, downtrodden communities. If everything in society could be perfect, people would live with the right states of mind and know right from wrong. They would be bale to take in everything they learn and hear and be able to dispose of anything destructive from their minds. That would be the ideal society, but it just doesn’t exist.

People, especially adolescents hear things. They really absorb the knowledge they gain and take it as acceptable. Gangster rap today sends out negative messages. " There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that rap music spurs violence" (qtd. in Keeley). This statement was made by John Norton, the Public Safety Commissioner. Rap music isn't the only type of music that has promoted violence, but it is the one that has the most negative feed back. From the 50's rock to present day rap concerts, there have been brawls, shootings and other criminal activities. Violence will exist no matter where you go.

The problem is that, unlike the 50's rock, rap is greatly associated with violence. Even one of the first big rap tours, Run-DMC's " Raising Hell" tour, had to deal with unruly fans. Time Magazine described an incident that occurred on Run-DMC's Long Beach, California tour top where " more than 300 members of black and Hispanic street gangs swarmed through the crowd, attacking everyone around them"(qtd. in Keely 36- 37). Rap videos show the alcohol, violence and sex in their videos but rarely show the potential long term outcomes that these behaviors can produce.

A study of high exposure to rap music videos was composed for young African American female adolescents. " The girls in this study lived in nonurban, lower socioeconomic neighborhoods" (qtd. in NBC11). They researched over 500 females from the ranging ages of 14 to 18. Hitting of teachers, fighting, arrest, alcohol, drugs, multiple sex partners, condom use and possible STDs, were properties they looked for in the females after 12 months. After this study was complete it was showed that people were three times more likely to hit a teacher and 2. times as likely to be arrested if they

were exposed to 14 or more hours of rap per week compared with people that had less exposure to rap music. “ Adolescents who frequently watched rap videos were also twice as likely to have multiple sexual partner and more than 1.5 times as likely to acquire an STD, use drugs and use alcohol during the 12 month study” (qtd. in NBC11). This study showed the negative effects of rap music on the adolescent mind. Adolescents, more than adults, tend to copy and accept as normal what they see. They grow up with these ideas. It becomes a continuing cycle.

In this day in age, rap has changed in so many more ways than one. From the start of rap in the 80’s to its transformation to today, rap has earned a first name; Gangster Rap. It has become a way of life for many fans and can be considered misunderstood. Rap was a means of expressions. Artists could put how they felt out on a record to share it with the world. Positive rap music such as political rap expressed non violent ways. Some rappers are blamed for violence because they praise their gangster way of life. Everyone has the right to express themselves freely. Gangster rappers don’t choose to express themselves in the best way.

They know what they are trying to say and do it the way they feel will be most effective, but rap today is out of control. It is having a negative impact on society. Rap started as a peaceful way of expression. Rap music still results in violence, but that was just a problem within people themselves. From the late 1980’s when rap emerged, to today-2003- rap has changed for the worse. There are still rap artists that preach peaceful expressions. If you turn on a radio, you are most likely to hear gangster rap. It has become very



popular and is constantly on the top of the charts. It is very popular amongst people.

The majority of gangs you see today listen to rap music which shows you where rap is attracted to, low suburban areas. Adolescents exposed to this are exposed to violence, guns, drugs, alcohol and females see women on TV and think this is the way to dress and act. They think this is what they are supposed to look like. If adolescents today grow up listening to rap, learning about violence, guns and drugs, and are exposed to all this, what will they teach their kids? How will we evolve in years to come? Rap and its content is not the only blame for the violence in today's society, but improvements in it can make the difference.