

Christopher Cannon

Conaway

Mediating #3

Hip-hop'n in Time

Music has been called the universal language but after the recent shifts starting with rock and roll it seems some miscommunication may be causing some noise for people of different perspectives.. it can be difficult to find common ground between some drastically opposing views on whether or not to condemn that which is Hip-hop and Rap culture.. There are two sides to every story however outlandish, many people see the culture of Hip-hop as a destructive force encouraging violence, drug use and degrading the value of our women. While others may say that the culture encourages communication, creative expression and conflict resolution, addressing social change..

Beginning in the late 1980's early 1990's hip-hop originated mainly out of the African-American community's in poverty, many were fatherless and members of gangs. This was a good reflection of the times for these youths, many were facing very harsh economic conditions, leading them to engage in drug use and violent behavior. It would seem to come as no surprise to most people that when they received the ability to project and express the nature of their lifestyle, they were very eager to show up people outside of their own community's.. With the ability to manifest fame, fortune and well-being, many of these youths quickly began to transcend the heights and limitations of generations prior.. Many going on to create multi-million dollar industry's as well as their own studios and clothing labels, it is safe to say that hip-hop was and still is much more than just another genre on your playlist, it's a way of life..

However negative some people may see individuals or groups of individuals, surely it can't be all bad.. many of these troubled youths went on to address social change in their own

way, using their self as an example for others to maybe learn from and choose to better themselves and help people around them.. The ability to use self-expression and communication to target certain things in our world that may not be completely fair or right would be one positive thing to come of all this.

The harsh conditions may have been reflected in the music and as the fame and fortune perpetuated, the individual artists may have been stuck either running from past experiences or towards something just out of reach. Furthermore much of the analytical type of thought seems to be way after the original production But at what cost, Is this a quick way out of an unfair condition? Or could there be more at stake for the souls of these people? There seems to be an ever growing counter culture to some of these works, I think which may be able to help people decide where to draw the line. Some christian based values seem to be bleeding over into the music, not necessarily drawing a line but defiantly stirring up the pot, so to speak. Weather or not you believe in angels and demons some of these concepts may have provided the necessary foundation for creating some sort of middle ground on which we all can stand and potentially battle if need be...

One argument against Hip hop culture, not necessarily condemning them, however pointing out an obvious destructive nature that would be the use of hip hop to target and market the consumption of tobacco towards black youths. The article took a fairly accusatory approach though it is from the perspective of anti-tobacco activists, focusing on an instance where tobacco companies may or may not have been taking advantage of the ability to use the media and music to sell some product.

Muhammad wrote for The Chicago Defender; "Here's another effort to target our most vulnerable but precious resource," said Kwesi Ron Harris, the membership chairman of the National African American Tobacco Prevention Network (NAATPN). "We're not against hip hop, and we recognize the right of tobacco companies to market their products. But this is over the top." Harris said the company is using the language "premium priced" to divert criticism that it is

targeting youths who can't afford the price. He also said the new hip hop designs aren't showing up in affluent communities where young white males reside, even though they are major consumers of rap music. "We're saying to the rappers that maybe they just didn't know that they are being co-opted. We're saying, you can't sponsor us and kill us at the same time. All of this is insidious." (Muhammad, 04) Though much of the music seems to include smoking, drug use, as well as violent and sexual behavior, most of the marketing and advertising stuff seems to be after the fact in my opinion.

On another hand, a growing number of peoples seem to have a kind of reverse mentality, by which I mean taking a negative situation and flip it in order to accentuate the positive. Two days after sixth-grader Luis Gerena was shot to death in the Bromley-Heath public housing development in Jamaica Plain this month, Cindy Diggs was on the airwaves at Touch FM. "Take a community that constantly hears negative things; think how it affects them," Clemons said. "So my job is to take my community and do positive things. Peace Boston is a positive movement." "They don't want to hear that their friends are passing away and that there is no hope. ... Peace is possible; that's all I want to say. Peace is possible." They played music by Tupac, Edo G, and James Brown, all while reciting peace prayers, discussing the peace movement and the power of advocacy, and holding a call-in birthday contest to win a Peace Boston T-shirt. (Burke, 07) Many peace promoting people have been grouping together more and more in order to deflect or take away from a lot of the negativity that can build up in certain areas..

By this point it seems to be clear that there are in fact some significant differences opinion on what people are seeing and hearing, how were responding and maybe even some opposing forces at play here in this genre that is Hip hop, But is it at

all possible to find a middle ground? Surely the elasticity of all this will prove stable and both sides will be able to coexist, after all opposite poles are somehow linked to each other i've heard..

Another article titled; "Hip hop is here to stay America" does a good job in showing how significant the genre was and still is to many different cultures. "But, when most people think of hip hop, they tend to look at its dominant voice of expression, rap. However, hip hop also embraces deejaying, artistic graffiti, break dancing, and a certain street style and swagger.

"Hip hop has brought America a new language of rhythm, speech, and movement that has inspired a generation to take a verse to say what was too long unspoken about this nation," writes George. They continue, "Hip hop culture is a collage built upon various other cultures. In the book George notes how hip hop's core element, rap, started out unnoticeably in the middle of two musical eras--at the end of Soul R&B and at the height of disco. It took much from the Jamaican style of "toasting," in which DJs boast about their sexual prowess over "dub" music, to bass-induced beats. Also "the values that underpin so much hip hop i.e. materialism, brand consciousness, gun iconography, anti-intellectualism, are very much by-products of the larger American culture." (Hubbard, 99)

Weather or not there is some common ground here for everyone to stand or sit, I will leave up to you. I'm sure earth would be a good start..lol. One thing is for sure for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Surely both sides of this can use empathy in order to shed light on whether theres any sort of condemning going on here.

Music connects everything, its eternal, beyond time and space the limits are truly
boundless.

Works

- Muhammad, J. G. (2004, Apr 17). Anti-smoking groups attack tobacco giant for 'targeting' hip hop community. *Chicago Defender*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/246984246?accountid=14752>
- Burke, M. M. (2007, Jan 21). From her mike to the young ears of hip-hop: Peace; roxbury. *Boston Globe*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/405045592?accountid=14752>
- Hubbard, L. (1999, Mar 10). Hip hop is here to stay america. *Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/369376104?accountid=14752>

Type to enter text