### Historical Perceptions of Hip Hop Genres

(Gangsta Rap to Conscious Rap)

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### Introduction

- Hip-hop is a very popular form of music today, influencing cultures all around the world. There is a genre of rap nationally as well as globally. Hip-hop genres number close to a 100, from alternative hip hop to conscious rap.
- Rap is infamous for its negative connotations expressed in the lyrics, especially in the genres of gangsta rap, hardcore hip-hop, and underground hip-hop.
- We reviewed a) old school hip-hop, b) gangster rap, c) gospel rap (Christian Hip-Hop) and d) conscious Hip-Hop.

### The Roots of Rapping

- Tasso (message) and Kebeutu (first, grounded in Senegal), expressed poetry in a musical way. Villagers used handmade instruments to tell stories about their families and local events.
- This particular style of talking while music is playing is called rap.
- Traditions migrated when Africans were kidnapped and sent to America during the Atlantic Slave Trade.
- Slaves used this form of music and singing as a coping mechanism from the pain of slavery while they worked hard in the fields.

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### Old School Hip-Hop and Gospel Rap

**The Sugarhill Gang, Grandmaster Flash**

- The Sugarhill Gang became very popular with their 1979 song “Rapper’s Delight,” which was considered the first hip-hop record to gain widespread popularity.
- Grandmaster Flash’s “The Message” was a record released in 1982 about his experiences.
- These two records were essential to the true art of rap as they told stories without using offensive language.

**Trip Lee**

- “I literally cringe when I listen to many albums, and watching hip-hop videos is usually a bad idea,” Lee says.
- As a Gospel rapper, Lee has observed the downhill turn hip-hop has taken in recent years. He argues that rap has turned away from story telling and toward the degradation of women and the usage of drugs.
- Lee believes that in ideas that are in the Bible and is currently attending Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

### Gangster Rap

**N.W.A**

- Though Ice-T made gangster rap popular by being the first hip-hop album to receive a parental advisory sticker, N.W.A (N****Z Wit Attitudes) was a group that was known globally known for its lyrics in the late 1980s.
- In the film “Straight Outta Compton,” we see the rude welcoming gangster rap received from the mainstream. That is because they didn’t understand that all they were doing was expressing themselves.
- People have believed that rap and artists are violent.
- People criticize what they don’t understand. The style of music, clothing, and vulgar lyrics are different for listeners who are not aware of what occurred in the hood.

**Tupac Amaru Ahakur (2pac) (1971-1996)**

- Tupac Amaru (Shining Serpent) and thankful to God (Shakur)
- 2Pac’s first song was about gun control
- Tupac’s mother was a Black Panther
- 2Pac dated Madonna
- Me Against the World was #1 while 2Pac was incarcerated
- The biblical scripture, Exodus 18:33, is tattooed on Tupac’s back
- The acronym, THUG/LIFE, means “The Hate U Give Little Infants F***s Everyday.”
- The acronym, N****Z, is “Never Ignorant Getting Goals Accomplished.”
- 2Pac appeared on Forbes’ Top Earning Dead Celebrities three years in a row earning $7 M, $12 M, and $5 M
- Tupac’s ex-wife earned a B.S. degree in Criminal Justice from John Jay College of Criminal Justice

### Conclusions

We should not blindly find mistakes and negativity in hip-hop. We must acknowledge this genre of music for all of the good it represents. Today, conscious rap artists are speaking truth to youth and motivating them!

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### Hip-Hop Today

**The Language of Hip-Hop**

- Ex-rapper Master P (Percy Miller) made a statement to the House Energy Commerce subcommittee that he is now committed to producing clean lyrics and apologized to women for past songs that demeaned them (Abrams, 2007).
- Rapper and producer, David Banner, born Levell Crump, on the other hand, stated at the Capital Hill debate, From Imus to Industry: The Business of Stereotypes and Degrading Images: “If by some stroke of the pen the hip-hop was silenced, the issues would still be present in our communities… Drugs, violence, sexism and the criminal element were around long before hip-hop existed.”
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### References


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