

ANTHRO 106 2018

HIP HOP and RAP- Weeks 9 & 10

- Early Days
 - Rap goes pop
 - Gangster Rap
 - Bootstrap Capitalism
 - Women MC's
 - Protest Music
 - Southern Rap
 - Global hip hop
-
- "Rap music is a form of rhymed story telling accompanied by highly rhythmic, electronically based music . . . Rap music has articulated the pleasures and problems of black urban life in contemporary America" (Rose 1994: 2)
 - "It is a number of different ideas, lifestyles, subjectivities gathered together around a shared concept of the possibilities of communication through the African art of rhyming over beats" (Cross 1993:63)
 - Rap is a form of profound musical, cultural, and social creativity. It expresses the desire of young black people to reclaim their history, reactivate forms of black radicalism, and contest the powers of despair and economic depression that presently besiege the black community. Besides being the most powerful form of black music expression today, rap projects a style of self into the world that generates forms of cultural resistance and transforms the ugly terrain of the ghetto existence into a searing portrait of life as it must be lived by millions of voiceless people. For that reason alone, rap deserves attention and should be taken seriously; and for its productive and healthy moment, it should be promoted as a worthy form of artistic expression and cultural projection and an enabling source of black juvenile and communal solidarity (Dyson 1993:15).
 - Hip hop culture originated during the mid-1970's as an integrated series of live community-based practices. It remained a function of live practice and congregation for a number of years, exclusive to those who gathered together along NYC blocks, in parks, and in select clubs such as the now famous Harlem world or T-Connection. Early MC's (or 'rappers') and DJs, graffiti artists and breakdancers, forged a 'scene' entirely dependant upon face-to-face social contact and interaction (Dimitriadis 1996).
 - Afrika Bambaataa doesn't believe that Hip Hop heads should just have knowledge of Hip Hop. He promotes and proves that Hip Hop can be used as a vehicle for teaching awareness, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, freedom, justice, equality, peace, unity, love, respect, responsibility and recreation, overcoming challenges, economics, mathematics. science, life, truth, facts and faith.
 - When we made Hip Hop, we made it hoping it would be about peace, love, unity and having fun so that people could get away from the negativity that was plaguing our streets (gang violence, drug abuse, self hate, violence among those of African and Latino descent). Even though this negativity still happens here and there, as the culture progresses, we play a big role in conflict resolution and enforcing positivity." - Afrika Bambaataa
 - **Soul Sonic Force – "Planet Rock"**
-
- ✂ Graffiti Art
 - ✂ B-Boys-
 - Breakdancing, or breaking
 - originated in the South Bronx during the early 1970s.
 - Up rocking

- challenge rival gangs to battle with dance routines in lieu of guns and knives.
- groundwork involving stylized leg movements
- "Rock Steady Crew"
- hand-gliding, back-spinning, windmilling, and head-spinning moves.
- The dance gained in worldwide popularity during the '80s and '90s.

✂ DJ Kool Herc

- Born in Kingston, Jamaica, West Indies, moving to New York in 1967. Kool Herc owns the rights to the accolade "first Hip Hop D.J. Illustrating the connections between reggae and rap, Herc brought his sound system to block parties in the Bronx from 1969 onwards. By 1975 he was playing the brief rhythmic sections of records which would come to be termed "breaks" at venues like the Hevalo in the Bronx. His influence was pivotal with Grandmaster Flash building on his innovations to customised the modern Hip Hop DJ approach.
- Hip-Hop, the whole chemistry of that came from Jamaica, cause I'm West Indian. I was born in Jamaica. I was listening to American music in Jamaica and my favorite artist was James Brown. That's who inspired me. A lot of the records I played were by James Brown. When I came over here I just had to put it in the American style and a drum and bass. So what I did here was go right to the "yoke". I cut off all anticipation and played the beats. I'd find out where the break in the record was at and prolong it and people would love it. So I was giving them their own taste and beat percussion wise. Cause my music is all about heavy bass.

✂ MC's

- DJs emerged at a rapid rate to supply music to the growing demand of b-boys and young eager "hip-hoppers." It was the DJ who supplied the sound system (usually plugged into a lamppost or donated electricity from an apartment) and decided when the first MCs would use their catchy phrases. The DJ decided when the name of the DJ and crew would be announced. The DJ was responsible for any break in the flow of music. The MC was there to put a little extra on it. The main job and function of the MCs were to blow up the DJ and big up the crew.
- Cold Crush Crew
- By 1977 the MC had become a fixture in every hip-hop crew. As the number of MCs continued to increase, competition rose. Just as the DJs had battled and raised the standards of excellence, turning their hobby into an art form, so began the MC craft. The game was to be the best.

Rap Origins and Influences

- Gil Scott-Heron and the Last Poets, Pigmeat Markham's "Here come de Judge", Muhammad Ali, street hustler rhymes and Jamaican *patios*, African oral traditions of the dozens (yo mamma) games, black toasts, signifying language games, African griots, word games embedded in Caribbean and West African cultures, black preachers, the oratory of the Nation of Islam, get-down ghetto vernacular, the bragging blues of Bo Diddley, the high-energy inspiration of James Brown, prison toasts, scat, Puerto Rican *decima* and *plena*
- Soon, the role of the MC catapulted to the next level. The MC was now a showman, the leader of a unit, a team. The MCs became writers, composers and arrangers. The DJs became producers.
- **Sugar Hill Gang "Rapper's Delight"**
- **Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five "The Message"**

Grandmaster Flash, one of hip-hop's founding fathers was the first person to change the arrangements of songs by using duplicate copies of records and manually editing/repeating the climatic part (later called the "break") by rubbing the record back and forth. This became known as "cutting", which was later called "scratching".

Flash was the first to debut trick deejaying skills like mixing records behind his back or beneath tables, kicking mixing faders with his feet, and the like.

Flash's 1981 single, "The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash on the Wheels of Steel" was their first record to demonstrate hip-hop deejaying skills and the group's 1982 hit "The Message" was the first serious rap record.

- **"The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash On The Wheels Of Steel"**
- **Eric B. & Rakim – "I aint no joke"**

➤ BEATBOXING

- **Slick Rick & Doug E. Fresh – "La Di Da Di"**

Mid 1980's: Rap crosses over

- **Run-DMC- "Walk this way"**
- **Beastie Boys- "Fight for Your Right (To Party)"**
- **MC Hammer – "U Can't Touch This"**
- **LL Cool J- "I'm bad"**
- **DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince- "Brand new funk" "Parents Just Don't Understand"**
- **Coolio – "Gangster's Paradise"**
- **Tone Loc- "Wild Thing"**
- **Kris Kross – "Warm it Up"**
- **Sisqo - Thong Song**
- **Salt 'n' Pepa- "Push it"**

CONS

- Did hip hop "sell out"?
- Did hip hop lose touch with its original intent?
- Is hip hop still the "voice" of the marginalised?
- White audiences still no closer to understanding "black lives"

PROS

- Wider audience (global)
- Still able to offer alternative messages
- Space for women
- Space for regional hip hop
- Complex recording techniques
- Dominates popular culture (black signification)
- Black cultural capital

Gangster Rap

- **N.W.A. – "Straight Outta Compton"**
- **N.W.A. - "F@#\$ the police"**
- **Ice T – "Original Gangster"**
- **Ice Cube "What Can I Do?"**
- **Tupac – "Me Against The World"**
- **Snopp Dogg - "Nuthin But a G thang"**

- **Tupac “Death around the Corner”**
- **Ice T “Colors”**
- Gangster rap can be understood as merely a means to sell records to an American public which thrives on violence. Conversely, gangster rap can also be seen as radical politics, which presents the gangster rap performers as “non-academic but highly articulate cultural practitioners, they are extraordinarily *public* intellectuals” (De Genova 1995:89).
- Gangster rap, which had its roots in “The Message” and other New York rappers, emerged as a West Coast style which capitalised on the outlaw theme deep in American popular lore, and also featured other American values such as rugged individualism, rampant materialism, violence, determination, and male domination
- Gangster rap is in the complex position of being both inside and outside mainstream culture, popular with both white and black audiences.
- Gangster rap serves up white American’s most cherished gun-slinging mythologies in the form of its worst and blackest nightmares, yet at the same time gangster rap also is able to empower black imaginations to negate the existential terror of ghetto life.
- Gangster rap contains “paranoid self-hatred and futile self-destruction, virulent misogyny and the demobilising chaos of visionless warfare and brutality” Rappers fulfil hegemonic (racist) fantasies about the urban ghetto-space, portraying nihilistic, lawless (oppositional) terror-heroism of proud, unapologetic, self-styled “niggers”.
- The expressions of violence in rap music reflect the actual life circumstances of many black and Latino youth who are caught in a desperate cycle of drugs and gangs. Gangster rap emerged in Los Angeles where thousands of young black men are living in so-called ghetto environments
- rather than as an expression of social pathology, gangster rap’s imaginative empowerment of a nihilistic and ruthless way of life can be better understood as a potentially oppositional consciousness- albeit born of desperation, or even despair.
- Gangster rappers do not necessarily represent the views and ideologies of all African Americans
- There is some evidence of exploitation and exacerbation of these images by a white-dominated media and music industry.
- Gangster rappers do not represent the whole genre of rap
 - **“Bone Thugs N Harmony – Crossroads”**
 - **The Notorious B.I.G. - "Hypnotize"**

Boot Strap Capitalism:

- Ethnic entrepreneurship
- There is a curious disjunction between a burgeoning literature on black popular culture and music, and the literature on ethnic entrepreneurship.
- Whereas the former highlights the centrality of black popular style, music and taste, the literature on entrepreneurship stresses the failure of African Americans to enhance their status and wealth through self-employment, and their under-representation in the ranks of small businessmen.
- in the face of extreme deprivation and few prior capital and symbolic
- resources, African Americans are creating a music industry based
- around networks of entrepreneurs. They are doing so through their ability to monopolize specialized cultural goods. Within the rap industry an entrepreneurial élite has risen from the ranks of micro-enterprises, building on the networks and expertise that these have generated collectively.
- Social and communication networks, willingness to take risks and extend credit, cheap materials and production processes, perceived demand for culturally unique goods, racism,

joblessness, an appreciation of culture as a commodity to be packaged and sold, all combine in these groups to create newly invented cultures of entrepreneurship.

- Hip hop is an exemplary instance of a wider process which has enabled 'bootstrap capitalism' to found many of
 - the culture industries producing the cultural consumer goods we take for granted in the early twenty first century, and which increasingly shape a global culture, well beyond their humble origins.
-
- **Snoop Dogg "Beautiful" ft. Pharrell Williams**
 - **Jay Z "Dirt Off Your Shoulder"**
 - **Kanye West – "Power"**
 - **The Notorious B.I.G. "Mo Money Mo Problems"**

Women in hip hop

Though often presented as a male dominated genre, women have been part of the rap scene since its inception

Challenging male rappers' predominance, female rappers have created spaces from which to deliver powerful messages from Black female and Black feminist perspectives.

Black women rappers are in dialogue with one another, black men, black women, and dominant American culture as they struggle to define themselves on their own terms.

They use their performances as platforms to refute, deconstruct and reconstruct, alternative visions of their identity.

- Misogyny in hip hop
 - Women in hip hop
 - Black female and Black feminist perspectives
 - Dialogue with dominant American culture
-
- **Queen Latifah – "Ladies First"**
 - **Lauren Hill – "Everything Is Everything"**
 - **Missy Elliot- "I'm Really Hot"**
 - **Cardi B – "Bodak Yellow"**
 - **Nicki Minaj – "No Frauds"**

-

Protest

- Despite rampant co-optation [in adverts, films and art when suited] and romanticising, hip-hop is still largely treated by officialdom as a form of pollution and a public menace. Yet perhaps the most serious threat it represents to the established culture is its example of alternative artistic practice (Guevara 1987:173).
- The commodifying impulses of the music industry have opened a space for selling cultural products, which in their very construction undermine the structure distributing them (Boyd 1995).
- On the one hand, rap is the voice of alienated, frustrated and rebellious black youth who recognize their vulnerability and marginality in post-industrial America. On the other hand, rap is the packaging and marketing of social discontent by some of the most skilled ad agencies and largest record producers in the world. It's ... this duality that has given rap its many dimensions and flavours; its spiralling matrix of empowerment and reaction (Lusane 2004 p.351).

- **Public Enemy “Fight the Power”**
- **Brand Nubian “Wake Up”**
- **Kendrick Lamar “Alright”**
- **G & Nipsey Hussle “FDT”**
- **Joey Bada\$\$ “Land of the Free”**
- **Common “Letter to the Free”**

Dirrty South

- **Outkast (Atlanta) “B. O. B.”**
 - **Ludacris - Southern Hospitality (Illinois to Georgia)**
 - **Flo Rida “Low”**
 - **Migos (Georgia) “Bad and Boujee” ft Lil Uzi Vert (Philadelphia)**
 - **Future “Mask Off”**
- Why or how is the imagined space “Dirrty South” dirty? Meaning attached to the term is not fixed but fluid, shifting in accordance with the needs and preconceptions of those who employ it. Dirt and dirtiness have negative connotations of uncleanness, corruption, unfairness, and sexuality. Dirt can also be a powerful symbol for place and land. The idea of the South and its role in American political and cultural has been a unique and volatile force in the culture of the U.S.

Global Hip Hop

On the one hand, rap is the voice of alienated, frustrated and rebellious black youth who recognize their vulnerability and marginality in post-industrial America. On the other hand, rap is the packaging and marketing of social discontent by some of the most skilled ad agencies and largest record producers in the world. It’s ... this duality that has given rap its many dimensions and flavours; its spiralling matrix of empowerment and reaction (Lusane 2004 p.351).

Hip hop’s connective marginalities are social resonances between black expressive culture within its contextual political history and similar dynamics in other nations. (Osumare 2001)

Freestyles, cypher, b-boys, DJ’s, International competitions

- **Rich Brian – “Dat \$tick”**
- **Rap Monster - “Do You”**
- **Higher Brothers x Famous Dex – “Made In China”**
- **“Shake The Dust” Official Trailer #1 (2013)**

Hip Hop Themes

Explores addiction, toxic masculinity, fear, shame, anxiety, intergenerational trauma

- **Royce da 5'9" - Cocaine**

Reflection Questions

- What were hip hop's core values and aesthetics?
- How have these changes over the decades?
- How have commerce and success changed hip hop?
- What stories does hip hop tell?
- How is rap music related to race and racism?