Influence Of Hip-Hop Essay, Research Paper

Influence of Hip-Hop

Controversy has always been a prominent characteristic of popular music throughout the twentieth century. Whether it be the controversy surrounding Elvis’ swinging hips, the Doors’ suggestive lyrics, or Alice Cooper’s stage antics, this controversy always seems to be followed by undue criticism from the media. One form of musical expression that has been in the news recently because of its negative attention is hip-hop. Rap, a relatively new form of musical exposition, has been criticized for its so-called anti-women lyrics. Some have even said that these types of lyrics are “veering toward rape music” (Faludi 267). This is just simply not true.

Once thought of as a passing fad, rap has been able to fabricate many facets of popular culture. Due to their raw and insouciant lyrics, many artists have met opposition by conservative groups that believe rap spreads an anti-women message. These groups argue that the lyrics in many rap songs degrade women by calling them bitches, hoes, and tricks. These words, however, do little more than sell records. It is the image that rap artists represent as a whole that the youth of America buy. Although these terms may sound degrading, these lyrics have no real influence on America’s image of women. These words are just a tool of the musicians that helps give them an appearance of being

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gangsters, pimps, or dealers. It is these types of people that represent power and control to some or a glimpse into an unknown world to others. Either way, this image is what makes money.

Further proof that rap artists are selling an image and not real life is that many rap artists are happily married men with wives and children that they truly care about. Dr. Dre, one of the forefathers of hardcore rap, in an interview with MTV, readily admitted that what he sells in his music is not a life that he himself wishes to live. He, like many other rap artists, does not view women as derogatory sex objects as they are depicted in his lyrics (MTV 3). Songs such as “Bitchez [sic] ain’t Shit” and “Bridget” in which women are referred to as hoes do not really represent how Dr. Dre and many other rap artists feel about women. Dre said, “people buy the type of music that I make. As long as people keep buying it, I will keep making it” (MTV 2).

Linda Tuzynski, a mother of six and housewife, sees no problem with rap music. “It’s just a image. No one really thinks of their mothers, wives, girlfriends, or daughters as bitches or hoes.” She says the only issue she has with rap music is young children listening to it. But, she says, as long as parents monitor what their children listen to when they are too young, it is not a problem.

Society has always been able to move on and eventually accept different ways of expressing oneself, and hip-hop should be no different. Although the message may not be the best one, each musician has the right to say whatever he or she feels. Rap music has no real influence on the image America has of women. In this age of enlightenment

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toward the images and ideas the media present, the only real image America should have of women is the image that women themselves furnish. These groups that bash rap music and tell people to avoid it because of its negative reflection on woman are missing the big picture. All musicians have a right to say whatever they want in their music, no matter how offending it might be to some people. It is protected under their constitutional rights as Americans. The bottom line is, if you do not like something, do not listen to it.

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