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“I GOT SHOT FIVE TIMES AND I GOT CRUCIFIED TO THE MEDIA”

TUPAC AMARU SHAKUR — MORAL PANIC, MEDIA CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION

by

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Bachelor of Arts in English
University of Washington
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the

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Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies
Greenspun College of Urban Affairs
The Graduate College

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May 2014

ABSTRACT

"I Got Shot Five Times and I Got Crucified to the Media"
Tupac Amaru Shakur — Moral Panic, Media Crucifixion and Resurrection

by

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This thesis looks at why the media had and continues to have a fascination with the late rap artist Tupac Amaru Shakur. A content analysis of coverage from twelve newspaper publications was used to better understand the nature of the coverage on Shakur. Analysis of coverage after Shakur's death determines the tone of coverage varied from the coverage when the rapper was alive. The concept of moral panic explains media attitude.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> *It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat. - Theodore Roosevelt*

Eruption in Mecca

"I warned you all about harming those babies. Keep it up and I'll murder all you mother-fuckers!" (Joseph, 2006, p. 43) Twenty-three-year-old Tupac Amaru Shakur proclaimed to antagonizing gang members amidst an otherwise shocked sell-out crowd at Mecca Arena in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. According to Raymond Boyd, a music journalist who attended the concert, Shakur had halted the music in the middle of his second song for a "moment of silence" over the violent deaths of a thirteen-year-old girl and eleven-year-old boy, which occurred the previous day on the streets of Milwaukee. Gang

members who shouted an expletive at Shakur and flashed gang signs broke the silence. Shakur became enraged, threatened the gang members, and asked them to come on stage and fight him. Coins were thrown in Shakur's direction. Shakur then offered two-hundred dollars for someone to bring the offender to the stage. "He may get you paid, but he will die tonight" (Joseph, 2006, p. 44), Shakur proclaimed. A scuffle broke out near the stage between Shakur's posse and the gang members. The audience dispersed.

The Milwaukee incident of 1994 was not widely covered by the media. *The Philadelphia Tribune*, an African American newspaper, published an article from the Associated Press based in Milwaukee on what occurred at the Mecca Arena. If one were to have read solely the AP version, the reader would have been left to assume Shakur was hostile without reason. The AP article quotes two individuals as to what happened at the concert– Kim Walsh of Walsh Entertainment and police Lt. Ronald Quickenbash. Both Walsh and Quickenbash asserted that Shakur incited the crowd, without stating what Shakur actually said or why he was upset. Near the end of the AP piece, the article notes that three juveniles were arrested for disorderly conduct, but none of the performers were arrested. Up until the last few statements of the article, one could have believed Shakur was the one who was arrested (or, should have been).

The fact that Shakur was not arrested and members from the crowd at Mecca Arena were gives Boyd's account credence. The AP article makes no reference to gang signs being flashed or how Shakur was upset over children being murdered. The fact that the article came from the AP based in Milwaukee could explain the discrepancy between the two accounts. Shakur was upset about a tragic, violent event that occurred in Milwaukee; plus, a group in the crowd flashed gang signs and threw coins, so an

assumption could be made that the writer or editor of the article decided not to mention such factors to avoid damaging the city's reputation by revealing a gang problem. Another potential explanation for the discrepancy is the media's attitude toward Shakur. A preexisting negative viewpoint of Shakur could skew the perception of the writer of the AP article. Thus, when the writer gathered two statements from the manager of the event and a policeman, the negative connotations held by the writer in regards to Shakur superseded the opportunity to discover the full context of what happened. The motivations behind articles, such as how they are framed or the point of view they represent helps clarify the ideas presented by the data (content of examined articles). For instance, the tone of an article and how an article identified Shakur will be studied to identify salient concepts that can be applied to the data.

Thematic Statement

Tupac Amaru Shakur began receiving considerable attention from the media in 1992 when a Houston teenager shot and killed a Texas police officer after allegedly listening to a song by Shakur. A First Amendment argument subsequently arose in the media over Shakur's music and gangsta rap, an argument primarily propagated by three political figures, Dan Quayle, Bob Dole, and DeLores Tucker. Shakur not only found himself at the center of First Amendment debates regarding his music, but also found himself in trouble with the legal system. Having been arrested dozens of times after his rap career began, Shakur's life as a celebrity became marked with a degree of criminality that seemingly validated the stereotype of the hardcore gangsta rapper. After Shakur's

murder in Las Vegas on September 13, 1996, media attention continued, partly due to the release of seven posthumous albums.

This thesis aims to analyze and compare the media treatment of the living Tupac Shakur and that of the deceased Shakur in both African American newspaper coverage and nationwide newspaper coverage. This thesis also aims to determine if moral panic can help account for changes in the coverage over time.

Background

Tupac Amaru Shakur made music that embodied a struggle; a struggle with society and a struggle within. His violent lyrics drew condemnation from certain politicians, and ended up representing his own life and death. Shakur was a man who was arrested over thirty-five times in his lifetime, charged with the attempted murder of two police officers, assaulting a movie director, and controversially convicted of third-degree sex abuse (forcefully touching the buttocks of a fan) that led him to serve eight months in prison. Tupac Amaru Shakur was also a man who visited terminally ill children whose dying wish was to meet their favorite star, made plans to reform the educational system, and gave money to the needy. His short, controversial life has sparked debate concerning his personality and the message he stressed. On one hand, there was the sensitive, intelligent, and thoughtful Shakur who spoke out against social injustices and violence, calling for more respect of women and peace in the black community. On the other hand, there was the tattooed, “strapped” gangster, who demeaned women with derogatory names, threatened to murder his enemies, promoted violence, and committed violence.

Tupac Amaru Shakur was born on June 16, 1971, in East Harlem; the branches of his family tree were filled with political activists who were not hesitant in using extreme measures to carry out their goals. Shakur's mother, Afeni Shakur, was released from prison a few months before her son's birth on charges of conspiring to blow up public spaces across New York City (Joseph, 2006). Afeni Shakur, a passionate Black Panther, raised Shakur primarily on her own. Tupac Shakur's aunt, Assata Shakur, a former Black Panther and member of the Black Liberation Army, was involved in a shootout that led to the death of a police officer in the 1970s (Sullivan, 1973). She escaped from the Clinton Correctional Facility for Women in 1979, and since 1984, she has lived in Cuba in political asylum. In 2013, she was the first woman ever to be named to the FBI's most wanted list (Porter, 2013). Tupac Shakur's stepfather Mutulu Shakur, also a Black Panther, has been in prison since his capture in 1986 after he conspired to rob 1.6 million dollars from a Brinks armored truck (Joseph, 2006). Tupac Shakur's godfather, Geronimo Pratt, a prominent Black Panther, spent twenty-seven years in prison for kidnapping and murder, including eight years in solitary confinement. Pratt's conviction was vacated in 1999 after it was found the prosecution concealed evidence that could have affected the jury's verdict (Joseph, 2006).

Enrolling in the Baltimore School of Arts as a young teen, Shakur's first love and his first talent was not rapping; it was acting. Starring in plays such as *A Raisin in the Sun*, Shakur was a promising actor as a teenager (Joseph, 2006).

By age 19, Shakur's attention had turned to a career in music (though, he still starred in several movies until his death). Tupac Shakur's family could be the reason why Shakur chose to take part in what the media would dub gangsta rap. According to

Michael Eric Dyson (2001), a sociology professor at Georgetown University, gangsta rap can be an effective tool for exposing sociopolitical issues: "Gangsta rap … draws attention to complex dimensions of ghetto life ignored by most Americans …. Indeed, gangsta rap's in-your-face style may do more to force America to confront crucial social problems than a million sermons or political speeches" (p. 57). Gangsta rap did not begin with Shakur, but became synonymous with Shakur's music. Ice T and Sister Soulja were other prominent rappers during the time period who would be attributed as belonging to the genre of gangsta rap. Shakur, however, was considered the most prominent of the genre (Sims, 1993). Shakur's politically charged rap reflected many of the struggles in the poor black community. According to Mark Anthony Neal, a professor of English at the State University of New York at Buffalo, Shakur was an "organic intellectual" who expressed the concerns of a larger group (Neal, 2003). Neal's use of "organic intellectual" to describe Shakur likely has to do with the fact that Shakur did not have extensive formal education, but was naturally perceptive with a strong intellect.

Shakur's aggressive lyrics would cause commotion from political figures, such as conservative politicians Dan Quayle and Bob Dole. Shakur's first album, titled *2pacalypse Now* (1991), contained sociopolitical narratives and commentary about the police brutality, oppression, and degradation that Shakur felt have always existed in America. In the song "Words of Wisdom," for instance, Shakur charged America with "400 years of rape and murder." Shakur mentioned the names of his mother, his aunt Assata Shakur, Mutulu Shakur, and Geronimo Pratt, praising them and calling them "political prisoners." In this song, Shakur also introduced himself and his Black Panther family as the "American nightmare." This album was cited as having "no place in

society" by Dan Quayle, and a First Amendment debate arose in the media over Shakur's music when a Houston teenager shot and killed a Texas police officer after allegedly listening to Shakur's first album (Phillips, 1992).

In April 1992, Ronald Howard was driving a stolen automobile in Jackson County, Texas when he was pulled over. High on cocaine and cannabis, Howard fatally shot Officer Bill Davidson. Davidson stopped Howard on U.S. Highway 59 about five miles south of Edna, Texas in a 1986 GMC Jimmy, due to a broken headlight. When Officer Davidson approached the driver-side window of the stolen car, Howard shot Davidson in the neck. Howard fled the incident, but was later found and arrested. A nine mm pistol was discovered on Howard's person. Three days later, Davidson succumbed to his injuries. At the time of the shooting, Howard was allegedly listening to an audio cassette of *2pacalypse Now* (Talerman, 1994).

Davidson's wife, Linda Davidson, would sue Time Warner, Interscope Records, and Tupac Shakur, arguing that *2Pacalypse Now* did not merit First Amendment protection (Linneman, 2000). The plaintiff alleged the music was obscene, contained "fighting words," defamed officers like Officer Davidson, and incited imminent illegal conduct in individuals like Howard. The plaintiff alleged Shakur's music ultimately led to her husband's demise.

Judge Rainey would eventually dismiss the Davidson lawsuit against Shakur, ruling that the detriment caused by policing recordings, such as recordings by Shakur, would result in the legal distribution of "only the most bland, least controversial music" (Linneman, 2000, p. 178). Ronald Ray Howard would be executed by the state of Texas in 2005.

In December of 1994, Shakur was entering a recording studio in New York. Shakur was ambushed, robbed, and shot five times at point-blank range. Shakur managed to survive, and blamed the attack partially on rappers Notorious B.I.G. and Puff Daddy, friends of Shakur. Shakur was also facing charges of rape and sodomy by a former sexual partner at the time. Shakur would be convicted of 3rd-degree sex abuse, but would be granted appeal and released on bail after serving eight months in Clinton Correctional Facility in New York State.

On September 7, 1996, less than a year after Shakur was released from the Clinton Correctional Facility in New York State, Shakur attended a Mike Tyson fight at the MGM Grand Casino in Las Vegas. Following the fight, Shakur got into an altercation with a man named Orlando Anderson, a reported gang member of the South Side Crips. Approximately three hours later, an SUV pulled up to the passenger's side of the BMW Shakur was riding in. A rapid fire of gunshots were fired into the BMW. On September 13, after suffering cardiac arrest, Shakur was pronounced dead.

Shakur recorded a significant amount of music that had not been released at the time of his death. His mother, Afeni Shakur, made efforts to release his work and promote her son's legacy. By the year 2003, six posthumous albums had been released, and a biographical documentary narrated by Shakur titled *Resurrection* was nominated for an Academy Award (Joseph, 2006).

Who Is Pulling the Strings?

There is an argument that Shakur's life, his death, and all the controversy, ridicule, and glory was as orchestrated as a Shakespearean play. Certainly, Shakur's posthumous artist life has been orchestrated.

After Julius Caesar's murder, a feud was instigated over control of Caesar's legacy. Octavius, Caesar's great-nephew, used his influence and manipulation to become Caesar's heir. Octavius raised a temple in Caesar's name, elevating Caesar to god status. After Shakur's death, legal disputes ensued, primarily between Shakur's mother, Afeni Shakur, and Death Row Records owner Suge Knight, over who had control of Shakur's music and if Knight was fraudulent in not paying the Shakur estate for his first posthumous album, which was the last contract album Shakur had with Death Row Records. Suge Knight and Death Row Records would eventually settle the case with Afeni Shakur.

With control of Shakur's music, Afeni Shakur began to ensure her son's legacy would continue. Because of her, Shakur is the first rapper with an estate and legacy that is "carefully, even obsessively, maintained and marketed" (Strauss, 2011, para. 4). Afeni Shakur is also in charge of the Tupac Amaru Shakur Foundation, the Tupac Amaru Shakur Performing Arts and Cultural Center, and Amaru Records. Shakur's mother stated that her responsibility was making sure people knew her son was important. "People can like him or not like him individually. But I need for them to know that he was a person of substance, and he was worthy, and he was a good son and a good brother and a good participant in the community" (Strauss, 2011, para. 13). Afeni Shakur also has control of representations of her son in such mediums as movies and plays.

In “Up Against the Wind,” a play about Shakur’s life, the script had to be approved by Shakur’s family. Nothing in the play was allegedly censored but changes were made at the suggestion of Afeni Shakur that she said were factual (Roberts, 2003). The play itself portrayed Shakur as a victim of celebrity, media vilification, the record business, his family, his own bad decisions, and his destiny. “The Tupac in my play is a guy who wanted to do something good,” Michael Winn, director of the play, said. “What he wanted to do was to change the public’s opinion of who he was and where he came from. I think he wanted to change the way he felt about himself in the process. But he was dealing with a lot of pain. His mother prepared him for a different time. The commercialization of our society doesn’t allow for revolutionaries who can’t back a product” (Strauss, 2001, para. 6).

At the same time, there have been critics of Afeni Shakur and others accused of having exploited artists. Journalist David Samuels (2002) wrote of the exploitation of Kurt Cobain’s final song, titled “You Know You’re Right.” Samuels points out that the song had actually existed for years, but was strategically released after his death along with an extravagant Kurt Cobain diary also published at the same time of the official song release to make as much money as possible: “his last recording would be released eight years too late — so that his wife, his bandmates, and his record label could make millions off the crass merchandizing of his ugly, disturbing suicide” (p. 200).

There have been similar criticisms of Afeni Shakur and producers of Shakur’s posthumous music. Renee Graham of the *Boston Globe,* while praising Shakur’s fifth posthumous release “Until the End of Time,” notes that many songs are so overproduced that they “take the artist out of the art.” Graham also states that posthumous releases have

everything to do with "commerce, and precious little to do with creativity… This latest act of plucking gold from the mouths of corpses will line pockets with cash, but it won't add much to Shakur's already-substantial legacy" (2001, para. 18).

Studies have shown after an artist dies, sales of the artist's work increase significantly (Radford and Bloch, 2011). Other studies have shown that after someone dies, the recollection of that person tends to focus on the positive attributes of that person when they were living (Kinner, 1994). These findings are certainly true with artists like Shakur, Kurt Cobain, Elvis Presley, and Marilyn Monroe. The findings also reveal how social tensions around the artist (which this thesis identifies as moral panic) becomes abated with a sudden unexpected event like death. But only Shakur can be said to have actually self-crafted his posthumous image. Shock G, a musician and friend of Shakur, stated that Shakur made music specifically if he died in certain manners: "Pac was thinking if I die this way, you should put out this, but if I die this way, you should put out this" (Spirer, 2002). This is unprecedented with modern-day artists.

In Shakur's posthumous hit song "Hail Mary" (1996), Shakur, under a new artist alias Makaveli raps of his enemies coming to kill him, but that he's a "ghost in these killing fields." The music video of the song depicts a cracked grave that reads "Makaveli: 1971-1996." The Earth shakes, causing the ground to open up. What follows in the music video is an indeterminable entity (assumable to be the representation of the ghost of Makaveli/Tupac Shakur) murdering a group of men via electrocution and vehicular homicide. At the end of the video, a group of graveyard workers is fixing the cracked grave. They sound out the name Makaveli, and then realizing what they read, they laugh as if the realization was a colossal joke.

Tupac Shakur proclaims at the end of a posthumous single, “Expect me like you expect Jesus to come back. Expect me. I’m comin’.” The song, titled “Untouchable,” was released in 2006. The verse containing the biblical reference toward the resurrection of Jesus Christ (and himself) was also played in a scene near the end of Quentin Tarantino’s critically acclaimed film *Django Unchained* (2012).

At the Coachella Music Festival in 2012, a projection known as the “Tupac Hologram” showcased a “resurrected” Tupac Shakur on the stage alongside alive rappers Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg. The Tupac projection at Coachella was immediately a YouTube sensation, garnering over twenty-eight million views. The Coachella hologram revealed not just Shakur’s popularity seventeen years after his death, but also how innovations in media are being used to excite fans by virtually resurrecting their favorite artists.

There is a crux in this issue of artist resurrection that is perhaps unique to Shakur. While artists like Cobain, Monroe, and Presley did nothing to ensure their legendary status or intentionally lead fans to question their death, a fatalistic Tupac Shakur made certain he would achieve legendary status if he died young. To ensure remembrance after death, Shakur made music specifically for after his self-predicted early demise. Five albums were released when Shakur was alive, while nine albums, filled with eerie, posthumous rhetoric, have been released after his death. In Shakur’s posthumous hit “Thug’s Mansion” (2002), Shakur tells his mother not to worry because he is in heaven. Such rhetoric has led many fans to believe Shakur faked his death (Hart, 2013). Shakur’s “spinning from the grave” allowed Shakur to live on musically without the additional legal baggage that often followed him when he was alive. In turn, Shakur became immortalized.

Media and Labeling

When Shakur was alive, however, he was keenly aware of the media's prodding eye. At the age of 22, Shakur thanked the press for ruining his life. Whether or not the media did in fact directly influence Shakur's behavior is debatable, but the idea that a person's psyche (and subsequent behavior) can be affected by strong outside forces has been theorized. Labeling theory, for instance, postulates that an individual's behavior and actions are directly influenced by what others think of the individual. Given that people tend to be aware of the projections others give them, the theory argues that those projections play a powerful role in constructing the person's identity to resemble the projection. George Herbert Mead's *Mind, Self, and Society* (1934) deliberates on the idea that who one is and becomes is dependent on the perceived projections of themselves by those around them. The inference is that as Shakur grew older and more famous, the media's publicity of Shakur grew, and Shakur's perception became more and more susceptible to the ideas the media was putting forth, such as being labeled a gangster and a criminal. Thus, the media could be seen as a strong cause in shaping Shakur's behavior since Shakur thought a certain exterior force (the media) thought of him as a menace. Mead's work stands out from other literature on the subject of labeling theory because Mead gives direct insight into how a person's self-image can constantly shift if that self-image is constantly being scrutinized and perceived differently by different groups (the media's perceived perception versus the fans', for instance).

Another factor in constructing self-image and establishing identity is what the individual desires to be. Shakur made statements on multiple occasions of tailoring his

image to what the public wants him to be. In a 1995 interview with Chuck Phillips, Shakur discussed how he was not being appreciated for his sensitivity, "The thing that bothers me is that it seems like all the sensitive stuff I write just goes unnoticed . . . . The media doesn't get who I am at all. Or maybe they just can't accept it" (Phillips, 1995, para. 7). Here, Shakur is pointing out how the media was failing to acknowledge a certain identity of Shakur as a sensitive individual. Later in the interview Shakur stated how he was fed up, and was going to give the media and DeLores Tucker something to "really sweat about," "I'm not doing it (writing sensitive songs) no more because they are going unnoticed. Now I'm going to put out an album full of just anger" (para. 6). In the tradition of an audience-oriented rhetor, also corresponding to an individual being labeled by the external forces of society to change internally, Shakur is expressing how the media is influencing his identity through labeling.

Definition of Thug

Dyson (2006) discusses how Shakur used his political rap to coincide with his self-ascribed identity as a "thug." Thug is an important term when discussing the music and media treatment of Tupac Shakur. For him, a thug was synonymous with being an American nightmare, a consequence of the affliction placed upon him by what he perceived as the oppressive institutions of America. Shakur's mantra "Thug Life," for instance, was an acronym for "The Hate U Give Little Infants Fucks Everyone." Shakur also had the acronym tattooed across his torso, and made a collaborative album titled *Thug Life.* Shakur molded "Thug Life" into a social movement with the help of former Black Panthers (Joseph, 2006). By living the "thug life," which Shakur often stated he

was doing, Shakur identified himself as an effect of sociopolitical and economic strife. In other words, Thug Life acted as an alternative political lifestyle, a representation of an oppressed minority population seeking to bestow power in said population.

The term "thug" caused confusion amongst the media, as the term is traditionally used to describe a violent, scandalous villain. This confusion, along with Shakur's combative narratives, made it acceptable for some to call Shakur a criminal before he was ever charged with a crime. Dyson (2001) explains that Shakur's version of thug was not a criminal or a gangster. Rather, Shakur's version of a thug represented "an individual suggestive of an illicit economy, an underground economy …. A thug was a person who had nothing to lose, a thug was a person, who as a result of mistreatment by the American government … had risen to become its worst nightmare, and becoming its worst nightmare was intelligent about the ways in which it resisted the forces of oppression. So he believed that something positive was going on when he talked about being a thug" (Dyson, 2001). Dyson's analysis of gangsta rap and Shakur's "thug" are important in understanding media treatment of Shakur because they lend context to his motives as a rap artist.

The sociological version of thug proposed by Dyson became more complicated when Shakur began running into legal trouble. Shakur was arrested dozens of times after his rap career began and was convicted of various forms of assault. As such, Shakur's crimes vindicated the criticism from public figures in the media, and gave credence to the idea that Shakur embodied the traditional, stereotypical version of a "thug." Shakur's subversive lyrics, his subversive image as a "thug," and the concerns from public figures that his music could cause violence, particularly against police officers, incited a

heightened state known as moral panic. Moral panic is defined as an intense feeling expressed by a group when an issue is perceived to be of threat to the existing social order (Jones, 1999, p. 7).

The Globalization and Legacy of Tupac Shakur and Thug Life

Kenneth Johnson (2004) discusses the globalization of Thug Life in the 21st century, writing, "The use of new media, communications technologies, and new methods and systems of influence, psychographic marketing, etc. has packaged, disseminated and globalized Thug Life as an alternative and oppositional cultural system that has morphed into a way of life that has some of the characteristics of a religio-cultural system with its own weltanschauung" (p. 202).

In a 2013 NPR interview, Khaled M argued that Shakur and his Thug Life movement encouraged the Arab Spring, "I mean, visually, you see it everywhere. You see graffiti, RIP Tupac. Just riding around in the streets, you still see people playing his music from the '90s to this day. ... He's still the premier hip-hop artist in Libya" (Martin, 2013). Paul Rogers of *LA Weekly* (2011) writes that rebels fighting Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi's regime also took inspiration from Tupac Shakur. One young rebel fighter told a British journalist: "I only listen to 2Pac before going to shoot Gaddafi boys" (Rogers, 2011).

Similarly, a 2003 Woodrow Wilson Report notes how soldiers in Sierra Leone's late 1990s civil war rallied around Shakur's music, adopting Thug Life's values and Tupac as their "patron saint:" "The rebels wrote Tupac's lyrics on the side of their vehicles" during the Freetown invasion, one Sierra Leonean refugee later recalled. "They

wrote ‘Death Row,’ ‘Missing in Action,’ ‘Hit them Up,’ ‘Only God Can Judge,’ and ‘Thug Life’ on them … the rebels “favored Tupac T-shirts and fancy haircuts” (Jacobs, 2003). This was also the case in the civil wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo and most recently Cote d’Ivoire and Libya (Jacobs, 2003).

In America, Shakur also has a tremendous impact. Seth Campbell (2011) of the *Daily Beacon* writes how Shakur’s lyrics dealt with worldwide issues. Shakur represented a voice for positive change and rebuilding, particularly concerning the African American community, “Even after his death, Tupac still has an immense impact. ... It is incredibly rare when an artist is able to sell millions of albums and tackle countrywide issues” (para. 6).

Significance of Thesis

The role media plays in society and how it affects individuals and communities is important to explore. For years, research has looked at how the media and musicians are emblematic of two different representations of society (Macek, 2006). Research has looked at how the media and musicians attempted to either spur societal change or were instrumental in maintaining societal norms (Wright, 2000). Research has also looked at how society can come to accept musicians and music that were once taboo (Stout, 2012). However, research has been less focused in terms of how the media and the musician affect each other, and how celebrity death plays a role in the alteration of celebrity image. As such, there is a lack of available research in regards to how the mainstream media can affect a musician’s media (music), and how a musician can affect media coverage before and after death. Thus, this thesis is contributing to the scholarly literature by looking at

how a specific artist, Tupac Shakur, altered media behavior through his own form of media (music) or his artistic identity.

The relationship between media coverage and celebrities, particularly musicians, has at times been a tumultuous affair. Scholars have studied the power music has and how music can ignite a heightened, panicked state in society (Goode, 1994; Attali, 1985). The dissection of such issues in regards to late rap artist Tupac Shakur will be a focus in this thesis. Like some short-lived artists, Shakur's fame grew significantly after his demise. How Shakur was treated by the media before and after he died, and reasons for such treatment, is a question that has yet to be addressed in depth. This is an important question because the answers could reveal the degree of power that individuals have over how the public views them, and if the media can manipulate the identity of a celebrity. The question of how Shakur was treated by the media may also reveal a deeper understanding of the relationship between race and the media.

Methodology

This thesis conducted a content analysis of newspaper coverage from the years 1992-2012. Six nationwide newspaper publications and six African American newspaper publications were analyzed and compared. The unit of analysis was mentions of Tupac Shakur per article through the search database ProQuest. Research questions, such as the genesis and end of moral panic concerning Shakur will be of focus, along with the testing of two hypotheses.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review has four sections. The first section will explore the concept of moral panic, specifically in relation to the Black Panther Party and the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The second section will concentrate on media portrayal of African Americans, particularly Black males. The third section will discuss the media and political relationship with particular kinds of music and musicians. The fourth section will examine how the death of celebrities allows a rebirth of status, elevating some deceased celebrities into figures of worship.

Moral Panic

Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) cite heightened societal states as moral panic, or the expression of strong anxiety regarding the potential disruption of social order. The strong anxiety generally originates from a dominant group when a new, "questionable" group (e.g., a new form of music or a subversive musician) threatens to alter the social norm. There are five characteristics of moral panic: Concern, hostility, consensus, disproportionality, and volatility. The characteristic of concern implies that there must be a subjective awareness or belief from the dominant group (e.g., politicians) that the group in question (e.g., a new form of music or a subversive musician) is likely to have a negative effect on society. Hostility, the second characteristic, increases toward the questionable group, and the group in question become a "they" or "folk devils" (Goode,

Ben-Yehuda, 1994). Consensus, the third characteristic, is the importance of the dominant group agreeing to be vocal (i.e., through the media) in making the questionable group seem dangerous, disorganized, and illegitimate. The fourth characteristic, disproportionality, synonymous with exaggeration, is the action taken by the dominant group to exaggerate the threat the questionable group poses. The fifth and final characteristic, volatility, refers to the nature of moral panic and how it has a tendency to dissipate in public interest or the media changing topics. Good and Ben-Yehuda's moral panic offers a framework for how dominant groups through the media can represent, create, or intensify a state of panic in society over a questionable group, such as a new form of music. The irony of moral panic over the questionable group is that the attention received from the dominant group could increase the questionable group's power.

In relation to the merits of this thesis and the concept of moral panic, the civil rights movement that began in the 1950s and peaked in the 1960s is important to examine because of the tension between a dominant group and a group that sought to overthrow the established order of society (moral panic). The civil rights movement is also important because Shakur was a product of a subset of the movement with most of his family being active participants as Black Panthers.

The civil rights movement along with the public outcry over the Vietnam War led to a national situation of turmoil. James Farmer (1998) in his autobiography discusses the chaos that was present in the 1960s and how civil disobedience underscored factions in the country. Farmer tells of run-ins with the police when he was with non-violent Freedom Riders, "We were called niggers and black bastards and threatened with billy clubs" (p. 15). Eldridge Cleaver (1980) furthers Farmer's allegations, painting a picture

of true black liberation as a fairytale aspiration that could only occur if revolutionaries of all races in American are able to unite to form a functional machinery to eliminate corruption of the government.

The Black Panther Party was a black revolutionary socialist movement from 1966-1982, founded in Oakland, California, by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton. The organization was initially created not under strict political philosophies, but to protect local black neighborhoods from police brutality. Quickly, however, Newton and Seale enacted socialist and Marxist principles. The Black Nationalist persona of the party spurred a diverse membership, and the party began to grow rapidly.

The Black Panther Party reached over ten-thousand members by 1969, publishing a newspaper that was distributed to hundreds of thousands across the country under the editorial leadership of Cleaver. The Black Panthers became a prominent factor in the counterculture of the 1960s. As a form of counterculture, their movement could be construed as a subversive group in the concept of moral panic since they were in contrast with the dominant social hierarchal norm.

Assata Shakur (2001) notes in her autobiography how the Panthers sought to overthrow the system that brainwashed civilians with "amerikanism." She notes the importance of Blacks getting control of their school systems, "The schools we go to are reflections of the society that created them. Nobody is going to give you the education you need to overthrow them" (p. 181). But the only way to get control of the institutions in the Black community of America, Assata Shakur notes, is through revolution.

The Black Panthers represented such revolutionary methodology, calling for improvements to housing, education, the justice system, along with the conscription of

black males, among other issues. The group's positive endeavors, such as starting a free food program for hungry children, were often overshadowed by the perception by many, including the national media, that a large number of Black Panthers were criminals due to incidents of brandishing of weapons and aggressive behavior toward police officers. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover called the Black Panther Party "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country" ("NPR," 2002).

Some Black Panther members found themselves in legal trouble, particularly incidents that involved violence toward the police. A slew of shootings involving police officers and Black Panther members took place during the late 1960s. Between 1967 and 1969, nine police officers and ten Black Panther members were killed in confrontations (Pearson, 1994).

The Black Panther Party began to deteriorate in the mid-1970s due to legal costs and dissension among leaders regarding the direction of the party. Prominent members such as Huey Newton favored a more unified philosophy among races, only condoning violence in self-defense. Eldridge Cleaver, who would be dismissed from the Party, favored a more confrontational approach (Coleman, 1980).

Despite violent altercations with police, Carter (2013) makes the claim the FBI was working together with national media to demonize the public image of the Black Panther Party. Drawing on media politics scholarship (Rhodes 2007; Gitlin 2003), FBI and law enforcement data on the Black Panther Party, Carter argues that the social climate allowed them to do so, and that the BPP was growing exponentially in numbers and power when the media took part in a "war-like" offensive. The extent to which the media creates moral panic is similar to a trying to put out a fire, but instead of using

water, a liquid is used that spurts the flames until they are uncontainable. This is not to assert the media intentionally provokes moral panic, rather, that the media simply reacts in an impulsive, defensive manner. Using diction such as "Terrorists," "Inciters," "Angry," "Criminal," "Gun-wielding Thugs," and "Militant Anti-Americans," the media was able to frame an image of the Black Panther Party as dangerous, uneducated, and militant; black people whose sole purpose was to kill "upstanding, non-violent White middle-classed Americans" (Carter, 2013, p. 241). The implementation of an image by the media, according to Carter, is not necessarily concerned with the more accurate expression, but the expression that attracts the most attention. Carter draws on Hortense Spillers, a scholar and cultural critic. Spillers (1987) notes the terms used by the media to describe the Black Panther Party "isolate over-determined nominative properties. . . . They are markers so loaded with mythical prepossession that there is no easy way for the agents buried beneath them to come clean" (p. 243). Carter (2013) furthers Spiller's point by suggesting that the media takes part in naming practices to demean and help quell political-cultural uprisings that seek to overthrow a perceived system of oppression and social inequality, or moral panic.

By the 1980s, elite blacks were joing white elites in the cloud of moral of panic. Eldridge Cleaver became a born again Christian and staunch Republican-conservative (Kifner, 1998). It was during this time that a rise in what Michael Eric Dyson would term "black elites" became prominent in the U.S. media and political realm. Dyson (2006) cites this aristocratic tension from black elites as "Afristocracy" in his book *Is Bill Cosby Right? Or Has the Black Middle Class Lost Its Mind?* The Afristocracy, according to Dyson, is the lawyers, physicians, intellectuals, bankers, civil rights leaders, entertainers,

and other professionals who disdain the black poor who make up the "Ghettocracy," the single mothers on welfare, the single and working poor, the incarcerated, and impoverished children (Dyson, 2006). The black middle class, for Dyson, has joined mainstream America in blaming the young and the poor for their troubles, rather than seeking to fix the injustices that lie within a system that is wholly flawed. Dyson (2006) challenges black elite Bill Cosby, stating, "you can't help but believe that a great deal of his consternation with the poor stems from his desire to remove the shame he feels in their presence and about their activity in the world. There's nothing like a formerly poor black multimillionaire bashing poor blacks to lend credence to the ancient assaults they've endured from the dominant culture" (p. 25). Social class does not necessarily determine whether one is elite; however, as Dyson notes, black elites are upper-class blacks who show contempt for lower class blacks. A black lawyer, black intellectual or black celebrity who shows support and compassion for poor blacks would not fit under the label of Dyson's elite since they are not attempting to distance themselves from the social class beneath them. Another implication presented by Dyson is that black elites were attempting to repress the moral panic that the Black Panther Party was a part of. But by repressing that moral panic and neglecting disenfranchised blacks, black elites were also implicitly becoming a part of a dominant society the Black Panther Party fought against.

In "Gangsta Rap Made Me Do It," (2010) Cohen focuses on prominent African Americans, and the mass media distorts reality of the "new media" Shakur and the youth represented. Concerning distortion, Cohen quotes political scientist Martin Gilens, who infers that mass media is an important factor in how the public perceives reality. This is

concerning because the mass media does not always present reality accurately. As such, the public's reality, particularly of the poor and black, is distorted, "distortions of social conditions are therefore likely to result in public misperceptions that reinforce existing biases and stereotypes" (p. 46). Cohen also gives examples of quotes reflecting the attitude from prominent voices of the black community, such as Bill Cosby and Oprah Winfrey, who have often denounced poor, young blacks and in particular, criticized rap music for its glorification of drug use, violence, and degradation of the female gender. These criticisms from the black elite, according to Cohen, are creations of "fact from fiction" and distort reality with half-truths at best, and ignorance and willful misinformation at worst (Cohen, p. 48).

Media Portrayal of "The Black Man"

The negative representation of blacks in the media dates back to the pre- Civil War times. Blacks were characterized as mentally inferior, particularly in minstrel shows and their advertisements in newspapers and on posters. On a cover of *The Celebrated Negro Melodies, as Sung by the Virginia Minstrels* in 1843 blacks are portrayed as beasts covered in fur with awkward limbs and faces of dogs. In an image in the *Harper's Weekly* in 1876, Thomas Nast shows African Americans as ape-like creatures, inferior to Anglo-Saxons. Many labor union advertisements in the early 1900s proudly proclaimed their products being produced by white men. Cigars produced by the Cigar Makers' Association based out of San Francisco, California, were accompanied by the statement "the Cigars herein contained are made by WHITE MEN" (Gregory, 2012).

Examining the Civil Rights era in terms of newspaper coverage is helpful in determining a history of divergence regarding the nature of coverage between African American newspaper publications and nationwide newspaper publications. Craig Flournoy, a Pulitzer Prize- winning Professor of journalism at Southern Methodist University, notes how if a black person picked up a white newspaper, there would be no evidence of their existence. "There was no record of you being born, no record of you graduating from high school much less college, no record of you getting married, no record of your promotion and no record of you dying," Flournoy notes. Black celebrities, however, sometimes would make it into a publication, but more than likely, Flournoy argues that black crime would be the only thing concerning African Americans that would make it into white newspapers. Flournoy also claims that newspaper coverage in the past has been as segregated as black and white churches. "I do believe in fairness meaning you get both sides of a story and on that basis white newspapers failed abysmally," he asserts. "They almost never covered the black side of a story."

Yale Professor Stephen Balkaran (1999) speaks on the racism perpetuated by the American mass media, "The media have played a key role in perpetuating the effects of this historical oppression and in contributing to African Americans' continuing status as second-class citizens. As a result, white America has suffered from a deep uncertainty as to who African Americans really are." Balkaran notes that in order to understand today's relationship between mass media and racism, research on what mass media is and how it operates needs to be explored.

> Media have divided the working class and stereotyped young African American males as gangsters or drug dealers. As a result of such treatment, the media have

> crushed youths' prospects for future employment and advancement. The media have focused on the negative aspects of the black community (e.g., engaging in drug use, criminal activity, welfare abuse) while maintaining the cycle of poverty that the elite wants (Balkaran, 1999, p. 154).

Jesse Jackson, a minister and political activist, ran for president in both the 1984 and 1988 campaigns. And although Jackson did not become President, he garnered much more support than experts initially expected. Bishetta Merrit (1993) ponders how the image of Jesse Jackson as a black man was portrayed in the media. Merrit points out that in American society, particularly in terms of Presidential candidates, image plays an important role. In the 1960 debates, for instance, Kennedy won the election arguably as a result of the "image" he projected during the televised debates rather than what he said about the issues (Gilbert, 1972; Nimmo, 1970; White, 1960). Other research (see Katz and Feldman, 1962) concurs with such arguments, finding that television viewers consistently rated Kennedy the winner, whereas radio listeners rated the performance of the two candidates a draw. According to Merrit, the media, particularly television, is anything but neutral. Merrit asserts that the media uses images and rhetoric not to explore the content of arguments, but to illuminate the confrontation of images. Merrit found that Jesse Jackson was often portrayed as distant, and camera work was angled at Jackson in a certain degree when he spoke. Jackson also had the tendency to look at questioners when answering questions in debates, instead of at the camera. Such factors, according to Merrit, helped represent Jackson as socially and politally undesirable in a society that may have been eager to cast him aside (Merrit, 1993).

The image portrayal in television matched image portrayal in newspapers. JoNina Abron (1993) argues that the national press toward Jesse Jackson was implicitly racist, noting a *Time* magazine article that disrespectfully and repeatedly posed the question "What does Jesse want," insinuating Jackson simply wanted to be TV star because he ran a television program. Abron notes the press typically referred to Jackson as an "opportunist" (p. 178).

Abron also brings up the black rap group 2 Live Crew and former NBA superstar Michael Jordan to construct her claim of unfair media treatment of famous blacks and "black culture." In 1990, 2 Live Crew was put on trial for obscenity in the state of Florida. A portion of the group's music contained sexually explicit lyrics. The case received widespread news coverage. The *Los Angeles Times* wrote extensively on the case and subsequent charges in various states against 2 Live Crew. In Florida, Charles Freeman was tried and convicted of obscenity for selling a record of 2 Live Crew in his record store. Abron argues that the rap music is an expression of black culture, contending that the real issue is not the question of inflammatory lyrics. Rather, black culture, Abron finds, is very much at odds with the national media and a dominant white society. Ascribing 2 Live Crew's music to the same arena as pornography automatically belittles and casts the album as having no place in mainstream society. Abron's point is that it does have a place in black society, and it should not be a greater, dominant white society casting judgment.

Concerning Michael Jordan, Abron analyzes Jordan's decision not to come to the White House after winning an NBA championship. Jordan opted to go on vacation instead. Jordan was deemed "unpatriotic" in the national media. Jay Mariotti of the

Chicago-Sun Times called Jordan's act "bush league," snidely commenting that Jordan must desire to be President, comparing him to Madonna, craving the spotlight (Mariotti, 1992). Mariotti also mentions Jesse Jackson, and that Jackson, between "nursery rhymes," enticed Jordan to do it so that Jackson could be Jordan's running mate in Jordan's quest to take over the White House. Mariotti states that not going to the White House was "the most disturbing, irresponsible and irrational thing Jordan has ever done in public life" (Mariotti, 1992). John Paxson, a white member of the Chicago Bulls, did not show up either, but he had a "good excuse," according to Mariotti, and could not spare an hour since he was out talking to schoolchildren. Jordan's decision to not take part in a ritualistic ceremony with George H.W. Bush magnified the discomfort a dominant American society has with perceived dissent (as witnessed in the *Chicago-Sun Times* article). Yet, that may not have had been the perception Jordan intended. The choice to skip the White House visit and go on vacation is not an immoral, nor is it a criminal act. Yet, as Abron notes, you would have thought that Jordan committed an act of treason, and that white society was being magnanimous in not arresting him.

Helen Page (1998) argues that the dominant, white society's perception of the "black man" comes from the local and national media. Page notes that the Association of Black Anthropologists conducted a study that demonstrated "representations of racialized gender and other media-enhanced instruments of social stratification perform special social functions in the new world order" (99). In other words, the media influences the public through representations of race and class that shape how the public views, and thus operates within society. "Either as violent, uneducated, or dim-witted, blacks are featured in media images that seem to threaten the body politic, including the visible and often

invisible bureaucratic and corporate arenas of cultural manipulation which I call white public space," writes Page (102).

Page highlights Pierre Bourdieu's work (1977), which offers the simple idea that cultural agents "who participate in any established social order can be expected to naturalize their own arbitrary codes of ordinary and specialized behavior" (104). Page argues that the black male imagery extracted for analysis can be viewed as naturalizing arbitrary "black male" examinations of African American men. In other words, Page's objective is theorizing black male imagery that is methodically and professionally manipulated "in a cultural struggle in which the dominant racial group seeks to contain the subjectivity of a competitive nonwhite other through the practice of racialized cultural politics" (Barth, 1989; Moore, 1987). The "white public" space is engaged in warlike enterprises through media imagery, according to Page.

Coover (1998) asserts that race is portrayed in the media in two ways: either through the content of a message (which is constant) or through the race representation of sources in a story. Coover cites previous research (Armstrong, Neuendorf, & Brentar, 1992; Vidmar & Rokeach, 1974) to demonstrate how race representation on TV and in newspaper coverage has a tendency to affirm or even strengthen preexisting racial attitudes. As such, media does not usually challenge racial attitudes. Instead, media reinforce white viewers' preconceptions regarding African Americans. Coover's conclusion is that the media reinforces stereotypes rather than eliminating them.

The Use of Music as Power: Infusing Moral Panic

Some scholars assert that politicians are able to affect mass media to the point of distorting reality, and that reality, in turn, becomes distorted for the masses (see Cohen, 1963; Iyengar, 1990). This is likely a reason politicians would denounce a record made by a 19- year-old is if they thought the music could pose a threat to the existing sociopolitical norm. Kirsten Drotner, in her essay "Modernity and Media Politics" (1992), makes the argument that the youth, as consumers of new media, such as gangsta rap, inherently possess a "cultural power" that threatens "existing social hierarchies." With this threat, the preexisting hierarchies are vehemently protected by the dominant group to reaffirm the status quo of the time (Drotner, 1992, p. 7).

Macek (2006) proposes the claim that mainstream criticism of the woes concerning the urban landscape and the inner city was aroused in a Post-Vietnam era by the mass media. Macek identifies this Post-Vietnam hysteria as moral panic. A part of this moral panic was the musical genre of gangsta rap, a genre synonymous with the strife of the gritty urban landscape. Macek's discussion of moral panic and the media's propensity to "demonize" the poor, urban class as a "savage other" during the 1980s and 1990s is important to highlight since it reveals a conflicting relationship between two groups of American society.

Jacques Attali (1985) looks at the political economy of music, and music's relationship to power. Attali offers two primary observations. First, listening to music is listening to all noise, the "realization that its appropriation and control is power, which makes music political" (p. 7). In other words, music inherently holds power. Such power, its expression, and dissemination of power acts similarly to a politician on the stump,

preaching to the crowd. Second, "music is prophecy … it makes audible the new world that will gradually become visible" (p. 8). Attali (1985) uses these observations to propose that the musician has a revolutionary potential and explains how noise is monopolized: "Everywhere we look, the monopolization of the broadcast of messages, the control of noise, and the institutionalization of the silence of others assure the durability of power" (p. 13). Implicit is the existence of domination, or the current form of noise that suppresses others who may make new noise. This leads to the suggestion of a potential struggle between the preexisting, dominant form of noise and a new, subversive form, "a daily life in which …. those among the exploited who can still use their music to shout their suffering …. For this reason musicians are dangerous, disturbing and subversive" (Attali, 1985, pp. 6–11). Attali's argument is more about the power to silence than it is about noise, since the dominant form of media has a tendency to quell new, genuine ("subversive") tones from the melody. Attali also infers that music is the most original form of political expression, and is cyclical in vying for power with the preexisting sociopolitical status quo. Thus, music is always "new" because it is always expressing something at least slightly different than before.

Robert Wright (2009), in his essay "'I'd Sell You Suicide': Pop Music and Moral panic in the Age of Marilyn Manson," furthers Attali's concept of noise and power. Wright (2009) asserts that moral panic, represented by the political right and socioeconomic status quo, forces musicians to "self-censor." Wright argues that commercial artists like Manson are what Attali would call "prophetic" because they have neither conformed to the right-wing political agenda nor been silenced by the moral panic seeping from that agenda. As such, artists like Manson heighten the moral panic "crisis"

by "painstakingly deconstructing its discursive elements and subverting them with an almost sadistic delight" (Wright, 2009, p. 3).

In the book *Youth, Popular Culture, and Moral Panics: Penny Gaffs to Gangsta-Rap* by John Springhall, sentiments about Manson and rock music along with media history and the musical genre of gangsta rap reconfirm moral panics' existence in the recent generation and throughout modern history. Springhall (1998) argues that moral panics are "ideological safety valves [that serve] to restore social equilibrium" (p. 5). Springhall focuses on a host of pop culture examples to further the idea that "new" forms of media and their youthful consumers possess power that threatens the preexisting, old social hierarchies (Springhall, 1998).

Springhall also briefly deliberates on the concept of taste differentiation as a factor applying to the relationship between moral panic and music. Pierre Bordieu (1984) defines taste differentiation as "an acquired disposition to differentiate and appreciate … to establish and mark differences by a process of distinction" (p. 466). The difference in aesthetic taste regarding gangsta rap between the old and new can be seen as a process of domination and subordination (Springhall, 2006). With the new form of media carrying a new aesthetic flavor, the dominant group vehemently protects the preexisting hierarchies to reaffirm the status quo of the time. When a powerful politician demonizes a gangsta rap album for subversive lyrics, the politician is attempting to reestablish the aesthetic preference of old over the "new" form of media. In this sense, there exists a struggle between tradition and modernity, which is a key insight in a much of the scholarly literature in this study.

In *Holler if You Hear Me: Searching for Tupac Shakur*, Michael Dyson (2001) explains how Tupac Shakur represented the struggle against a right-leaning elite and how Shakur "helped to combat the anti-intellectualism in rap, a force, to be sure, that pervades the entire community" (p. 99). Shakur, argues Dyson, used his intellectuality and street smarts to connect to a generation that saw themselves on the outskirts of America (Dyson, 2001). Representative of disgruntled youth, Shakur sought to overturn the preexisting social hierarchies through his music.

A musician and their music can be considered a new media seeking sociopolitical power (Attali, 1985). As such, a repressive reaction from old media can occur (Goode, Ben-Yehuda, 1994). In 1987, Tipper Gore, the wife Democratic Senator Al Gore, published a book titled *Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society*. The book's inspiration stems from an experience Gore had when she bought a Prince album for her eleven-year-old daughter. One of the songs on the album had sexually explicit lyrics that disturbed Gore greatly. Gore would soon help form the Parents' Music Resource Center, which combated the music industry's policies and Congress's perceived indifference to the issue of "obscene" lyrics. In her book, Gore argues that something has happened in society since the days of "Twist and Shout" and "I Love Lucy." The days of the "old" that Gore praises goes to the recurrent point about tradition vs. modernity and change, which the concept of moral panic is founded upon. Gore states of new music, "I decided to get involved because I began to see the kinds of record lyrics that my children were being exposed to. It shocked me and made me angry. I started looking deeper into the problem, and became even more concerned" (5).

Gore contends that society has become too accepting of demeaning lyrics in rock and rap music. Gore states that she is not for censorship, but desires to alert society to the pervasive vulgarity that to her exists in many lyrics of today's music.

But Gore may very well be mistaken in thinking American society has changed much from her generation of "Twist and Shout" fluff songs. David Whiteis (1993) observes that many blues songs were extremely violent and sexist. Whiteis notes many stereotypes of the blues that are attributed to rap music, "people still stereotype the Blues as nothing more than a primal utterance from the dark midnight of the soul, spontaneous and unrefined, with no meaning beyond the naked truth of the words and the primitive emotionalism of the music" (Whiteis). Blues lyrics by LeRoy Carr and Robert Johnson spoke of murdering and beating women; Denise LaSalle sings of men simply desiring to have "a dick in the house." The point is not whether Blues has ever been a dominant form of musical expression in society. Gore's contention is that society as a whole has become "X-Rated," separate from moral value and self-control, but in making that contention, Gore is ignoring a part of society that embraced a much more provocative musical expression in the 1930s and 1940s than a Prince song. Therefore, a more prudent deduction could be that societies with music have always been partly "X-Rated" (Gore seems to neglect the sexual overtones of Ray Charles, Elvis Presley, and Marvin Gaye).

Blues music also experienced resistances and was shunned by the dominant, white culture and media (Baraka, 1999). Only when white musicians began adopting attributes of Blues music and incorporating them into the more "acceptable" genre of Jazz did African Americans become a part of music that was deemed "American," Baraka writes, "As years went on there was a neglect to see that the more popular mainstream sounds of

swing and Jazz and 'white people's' wartime entertainment was a result from the black-American tradition" (p. 154). In an effort to try to re-create their own sound once more, African Americans evolved their "sounds of the past into a new sound called bebop" (p. 156). Baraka notes how the dominant white culture shaped mainstream music to their liking, and how African American music was used by whites as "wartime entertainment," or music reflective of oppression. Also, rising out of this tension was the creation of new media; a new musical genre, revealing the political and cyclical manner of music (see Attali, 1985).

The counterculture Tupac Shakur represented is something that has been represented by other artists in America's past. For instance, Elvis Presley, Miles Davis, and John Lennon were all condemned for promoting perceived insubordinate philosophies in American society. The image of the parent shielding their child's innocuous eyes from the swinging, shifting hips of Elvis Presley; the recrimination of Marilyn Monroe's promiscuous behavior and diatribe from the conservative housewife of the 1950s; the political activism and uproar John Lennon spoke of and represented during the 1960s — such public figures were political artists, intentionally or not, and their artistry during the time of its creation often met significant backlash from a dominant portion of the public and media alike. We are able to ascertain the times they lived in were different in terms of moral panic because artists like Lennon, Presley, and Monroe are now held up in reverence, their images reconstructed by a media and public eager to view their favorite artist in the most pleasant of countenances. In other words, those who once threatened the status quo have now become revered, essentially becoming a part of the status quo.

When Elvis Presley performed his hit "Hound Dog" in 1956, his fans screamed in frenetic jubilation, but television critics and political conservatives, including the Catholic Church, reacted with great distaste for what they viewed was a "vulgar," animalistic, and a "musically inept performance" (PBS, para. 5). The culture shock that permeated the country caused a panic among a significant group of the nation. The Catholic Church published a piece in a weekly newspaper titled "Beware Elvis Presley" that highlighted concerns about delinquency and an alteration of moral values, particularly in youth (Wendel). After the "Hound Dog" performance, Ed Sullivan denounced Presley, stating he would never hire the superstar to perform for him. Sullivan would eventually back down from the statement, but when Presley was hired to perform for CBS, the cameras would only show Presley from the waist up to avoid uproar due to the provocative nature of his shaking hips when he sang.

Death: The Great Promoter

Maybe it is some form of schadenfreude. People flock to other people's suffering in American society like flies to a wound. Americans want to see what occurred at the fatal plane crash. They rubberneck in their cars, driving past, safely secure behind their unconscious machines of steel and glass. They want to make tragedy into something more than it is. They will build shrines for their favorite dead celebrities. They will make them into martyrs. Career-wise, death is the great moneymaker for dead celebrities. Their status grows and grows, until what actually existed before becomes a mythical palace of worship and glory.

Like Tupac Shakur, media criticism was somewhat prevalent for Kurt Cobain when he was alive, but such criticism dissipated and transformed after he died. Like Shakur, Cobain experienced legal troubles when he was alive. Carpenter (2008) notes how the media and fandom became obsessed with Cobain's death, transforming his life into one of great suffering, his apparent suicide being of sacrifice, "People felt a very strong personal attachment to Kurt, and when he took his own life, some of his fans refused to believe it. It's a kind of mass delusion" (p. 4). Carpenter notes the same delusional thinking toward Shakur, highlighting the fact Shakur's Las Vegas shooting has become glamorized by the media and fans, and that Shakur's premonitory lyrics that seemed to predict his own death have fueled record sales and refusal by fans (and some in the media) to believe Shakur is dead.

The public's insistence on looking for the living amongst the dead, in refusing to believe their favorite artists have actually died, is their means of resurrection, allowing them to rebirth their favorite artist in the most esteemed light. This "rebirthing" process can be witnessed in many different media. Turnbull (2008) brings up the pervasiveness of death and resurrection in American television shows. The consistent presence of death could be mistaken as a glorification of death, according to Turnbull, but the fact that dead characters in cartoons and the newfound zombie show constantly are coming back to life shows that the glorification is not of death, but a fascination with rebirth.

The rebirthing of dead celebrities is constant in American culture. B. Lee Cooper (2004) notes how tribute discs, at various stages after performing artists have died are distributed to preserve the artist's fame. Cooper identifies four stages of a performing artist's career: (1) original music talent; (2) established recording career; (3) major

musical influence; and (4) legacy and icon status. Cooper asserts that posthumous tributes help sustain and increase celebrity status. As this status escalates after death, fame increases, and the celebrity becomes identified as a "deleb."

Other scholars have noted how Elvis continues to have a living career as an artist because his work is constantly being reproduced with tribute albums and a public adoration that has been tied with religious worship. Daniel Stout (2003) notes of Elvis Presley fans, "Since his death, Elvis fandom, also referred to as Elvis worship, has expanded exponentially" (p. 50). There are fans who refuse to believe Presley is actually deceased, elevating Presley to a Christ-like status. Stout identifies four components of religious worship: A belief in a figure's eternal existence, a community of shared feelings, deep feeling or "faith" in the figure, and ritualistic behavior in regards to the figure of "worship."

Caitlin Flanagan (2010) notes how Marilyn Monroe's confusing life and identity can lead people to ask what exactly does her life mean. Flanagan leaves such a subjective inquiry to the reader, instead opting to highlight the public's insistence on revering Monroe's legacy, "that writers keep writing it and readers keep reading it, that studios keep optioning it and adapting it, that magazines keep telling it, while all around the world millions of people do their part to keep it alive — all of this reminds us that the life was not mere, that the scope of the legend is not preposterous" (pg. 3). Flanagan points out a key factor in determining the gravity of a celebrity's legacy — how the public reacts to the memory of that celebrity. If the writers did not write about Monroe, the readers would not read about Monroe; if the studios did not depict her life, no one would get to peer into the imagined window of Monroe's life. If the magazines did not tell her story,

no one would be captured by the mystic lore that is Monroe's legend. And it is the enterprise of record labels, of authors and publishers, of families and estates that make a once-living career transcend death.

The general attitude of the public toward the dead, even the non-famous, can explain why attitudes from the media change from negative to positive; the motto "De mortuis nihil nisi bonum" or "Speak no ill of the dead" may be salient. Kinner (1994) dissects the tendency of the public to turn a blind eye to an individual's imperfections after death. The majority of opinions in obituaries are positive, according to Kinner.

Rosenthal (1998) examines the American public's fascination with celebrity death. Rosenthal notes the outrage of the public toward CBS Evening News when CBS chose to lead with a story on the Panama Canal instead of leading with Elvis Presley's death. Both ABC and NBC led with Presley's death. "Our job is not to respond to public taste," Richard Salant, then head of CBS News, had offered as an explanation of the Panama/Presley call. "Elvis Presley was dead — so he was dead." CBS would run "Remember Elvis" features for the next several years (Rosenthal, 1998, para. 8).

By the time of John Lennon's murder in 1980, Rosenthal points out the media had a major template for covering celebrity death. The template is all encompassing with prominent coverage of celebrity death, specials, and other forms of media remembrances. Such coverage, Rosenthal argues, walks a thin line between "tribute and exploitation." The coverage of the media toward catastrophes is similar. The disasters of Hurricane Katrina and the Haiti earthquake were covered by the media at great length, to the point where political commentators such as Bill Maher accused the media of taking part in "disaster porn" (Edwards).

The fact that Shakur, Monroe, Cobain, Presley, and Lennon all died conceivably before their time is perhaps the most important factor in their posthumous fame and resurrection. Radford and Bloch (2011) examine consumers' responses to the death of a celebrity. The study found that the death of a celebrity appears to increase the celebrity's stature and the value of the celebrity's products (p. 144). The 2009 death of Michael Jackson, for instance, demonstrated how death directly increases interest and sales of products relating to the celebrity. Radford and Bloch note that in today's culture of social networking, the controlled image of the celebrity often offers a mysterious presentation of the celebrity that allows the public to create their own realities of who their favorite celebrities really are. According to Radford and Bloch, this benefits the celebrity image because the public is allowed to construct and add what they want to the celebrity canvas. Death amplifies this controlled mysteriousness, and prices of products increase since demand increases. The continued selling and buying of products of dead celebrities can infuse a deep feeling that the celebrity is still alive (Radford and Bloch, 2011).

In times of moral panic, themes of death become more salient. Robert Bellah (1967) notes how during the Civil War, death, sacrifice, and rebirth became prominent. Bellah asserts that Abraham Lincoln was a martyr and a Christ-like figure for the public because in the public's eyes Lincoln died for their sins (slavery). Bellah also examines speeches made by Abraham Lincoln and President Kennedy in order to illuminate the idea that American society attributes religious concepts to popular public figures, particularly after they have died. Bellah notes that the enjoinment of religious concepts with public figures is a predominantly secular motive, which he terms as civil religion. American religion, according to Bellah, is not concerned as much with tradition or an

inner spirituality as it is with a political adherence to a certain moral structure. Civil religion allows the public to ritualize their beloved leaders who have died before their time and to hold them up in great esteem.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is two-fold: First, to determine how Tupac Shakur was treated in the articles from nationwide newspaper publications and African American newspaper publications; second, to determine if newspaper coverage changed in tone toward Shakur after he died. The focus for this study is to analyze the tone, identity placement, and diction of newspaper articles that focused on Tupac Shakur using content analysis. According to Neuendorf (2002), content analysis is a rapidly expanding technique for quantitative research (p. 1). Neuendorf states that content analysis "may be briefly defined as the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics" (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 1). The technique includes the examination of human interactions and relations; "the analysis of character portrayals in TV commercials, films, and novels; the computer-driven investigation of word usage in news releases and political speeches" (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 1). Content analysis has been utilized for researching a variety of topics. Consalvo (2009) used content analysis to determine if the amount of profanity in video games has an effect on the final rating of the game. Another content analysis study looked at the media's influence on public perceptions of foreign nations. Wanta (2004) examined network newscasts that had an agenda-setting influence. Through utilization of the content analysis, the researchers were able to test whether the media attention of foreign nations in the news influenced the perception and how important the nations are viewed as by the public (Wanta, 2004).

Simple Random Sampling

The sampling technique of this study is simple random sampling. Simple random sampling is a lottery method of randomly picking from the targeted population. For instance, if a thesis is about malnourished students in a school, your sample size is fifty and there are two-hundred malnourished students, put all two-hundred names in a hat and pick out fifty (Anderson, 2009). Since the sample size of this thesis changed by the year, twenty articles were chosen each year (ten nationwide articles, ten African American articles) indiscriminately.

Research

The ProQuest database was used to search newspaper articles for nationwide publications and African American publications. The ProQuest Ethnic NewsWatch database was searched for the six African American newspaper titles (*New York Amsterdam News, Los Angeles Sentinel, Philadelphia Tribune, Afro American, Cleveland Call and Post, Atlanta Daily World*) and the nationwide (Extended) Newspaper database was searched for the six nationwide newspaper titles (*Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, USA Today, New York Times, Wall Street Journal*).

Data was collected from January 1, 1992, to December 31, 2012. This period was chosen because the number of mentions in newspaper articles on Shakur did not begin until 1992, and because a twenty-one year period was deemed sufficient for an accurate, credible analysis. A twenty-one year period was used instead of a twenty-year period

because 2012 was the year of the "Tupac Hologram," an event which will be brought up later in this study.

The unit of analysis for this study was the mention of "Tupac Shakur" as the subject of an article. Articles were chosen only if Shakur was a primary focus of the article. Dependent variables for this study, as will be explained further below, included tone of the mention Tupac Shakur (negative, neutral, positive) and article type (entertainment, editorial, crime, music review, film review, etc). Independent variables included the name of the newspaper publication and the publication type. After searching for mentions of "Tupac Shakur," the search found a population of 3,074 separate articles that contained the unit of analysis (2,297 nationwide articles, 777 African American articles). A random sample of twenty articles per year was chosen.

This study was an analysis of two independent variables, publication type and year published, and eight dependent variables, tone, article type, identity of Shakur in article, issue of free speech in article, criticism or support of lifestyle and lyrics, and source of criticism and support. Positive mentions (or tone of article) included those that portrayed Tupac Shakur as a beneficial artist or a victim. Negative mentions were those that criticized Shakur and portrayed him as guilty of a crime or transgression or lambasted his lyrics. For example, an article describing Shakur's music as "smut" or Shakur as a "hothead misogynist" (Becker, 1995, p. B1) was coded as negative. An article calling Shakur "this generation's hero," and comparing Shakur to African American leaders like Malcolm X (Kitwana, 2005, para. 4) was coded as positive.

Chi-square analysis, Cross-Tabs and Inter-Coder Reliability

SPSS software was used to test each hypothesis. Coding instruments used included the ProQuest database and a coding sheet. For this thesis, two experienced coders, including the primary researcher, participated in coding training sessions. The primary researcher provided the characteristics that were to be looked for when analyzing each news story with the second coder. This was done in order to guarantee that both coders understood the variables to be coded. Once each coder was confident in what to look for when coding, each coder coded newspaper articles outside of the random sample produced for this thesis. The coding scheme that was used for the entire thesis was used during the trial coding session. The coders examined the articles. During the final training session, the coders reached 100% agreement on publication type, newspaper name, story placement, media identity, and source of criticism/support. A 93% agreement was reached for the tone variable.

Next, Holsti's (1969) formula to measure inter-coder reliability was applied to the coding outcomes. The Holsti's (1969) formula for inter-coder reliability explains, 2M/N1+N2, where M is the number of coding decisions the two judges agree on, and N1 and N2, to the number of coding decisions made by each individual coder (Freyenberger, 2013). For this study, Holsti's formula was applied to story, placement, and source of criticism/support variables, (2(30)/30+30), and a perfect agreement was reached. When the Holsti formula was applied to the tone variable, (2(28)/30+30), a .93 agreement coefficient was reached. With the number (3,074) of mentions for the unit of analysis applied, the level of significance for this study was set at .01.

Overview

Issues of identity concerning Shakur have been raised since the early 1990s when he began his rapping career. This study proposes that the perceptions of Shakur in the media depend on two factors: demographics and time. The first part of this study compared six nationwide newspaper publications (*Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, USA Today, New York Times, Wall Street Journal*) with six African American publications (*New York Amsterdam News, Los Angeles Sentinel, Philadelphia Tribune, Afro American, Cleveland Call and Post, Atlanta Daily World*) with Tupac Shakur as the main focus of full-length articles during years 1992 to 1996, the year he died. The six publications of each publication type were selected because statistically, they had published the most articles with Tupac Shakur being mentioned in an article. It was the assumption of this study that the highest number of name occurrences would likely correlate to the highest number of full-length articles centering on Tupac Shakur. The second part of this study looked at posthumous coverage of Tupac Shakur from the years 1997-2012. The number of articles selected each year remained constant, and the publication selections remained the same. A sub-analysis of deceased rock start Kurt Cobain was also conducted for a comparison with Shakur.

The Variables

Ten variables were utilized in examining articles on Tupac Shakur, including lyrical criticism/support and media identity. These two variables are critical for determining the attitude of media coverage toward Shakur. Lyrical criticism/support

indicates if an article takes a stance regarding Shakur's lyrics. If an article does so, then it will be categorized as critical, supportive, or neutral. A neutral stance is an article that is indeterminable in positive or negative tone. Media identity has a wider range of categories, and helps reflect how the media identifies Shakur. Categories such as "rapper," "actor," "gangsta rapper," and "activist" will be examined to determine if there exist any patterns in how the media identified Shakur.

Variable List with Definitions

Publication Type: This variable codes the newspaper publication as either "nationwide" for nationwide newspapers or "African American" for African American newspapers.

Publication Name: This identifies the specific publication name of the article examined. For instance, if an article were published in the *Los Angeles Times*, then that would be coded.

Date: Dates of articles are coded by the year. If an article was published in 2001, then it would be coded as being published in 2001. The month and day are omitted since such factors are not relevant.

Article Type: Article type or article subject notes the general area of focus of the article. If the article's focus were on a legal matter, then the article would be coded as "Crime." If the article were an opinion article on the part of the journalist writing the article, then the article would be coded as "Editorial." An article coded "Editorial" could include music criticism.

Article Tone: Article tone is the central variable to this content analysis. Article tone is defined as the feeling or perception the totality of the article instills in the reader (coder). Along with a negative focus, an article must present a one-sided negativity to be coded as negative. The same logic would be applied to a positive article. Along with a positive focus, an article must clearly praise something pertaining to Shakur to be coded as positive. If an article is neither clearly positive nor neutral, then the article would be coded as "neutral."

Media Identity: The Media Identity variable concerns how an article identifies Shakur.

Free Speech: The Free Speech variable concerns if there is First Amendment issue raised in the article. The article would be either coded as "Yes" or "No" regarding the Free Speech variable.

Lyrical Criticism/Support: This variable looks at if the article presents criticism of Shakur's lyrics ("Negative"), is supportive of Shakur's lyrics ("Positive"), is neutral about Shakur's lyrics ("Neutral"), or does not address Shakur's lyrics ("NA").

Lifestyle Criticism/Support: This variable looks at if the article presents criticism toward Shakur's lifestyle ("Negative"), is supportive of Shakur's lifestyle ("Positive"), is neutral toward Shakur's lifestyle ("Neutral"), or does not address Shakur's lifestyle ("NA).

Source of Criticism/Support: This variable notes where the criticism or support of Shakur's lyrics and Shakur's lifestyle comes from. In other words, if the article is critical of Shakur's lyrics and the criticism is coming from the journalist of the article, it will be

coded as "CriticismJournalist." If an article is primarily quoting criticisms from a politician, then the article will be coded as "CriticismPolitician."

Hypotheses and Findings

This study makes two proposals considering the newspaper coverage of Tupac Shakur.

Hypothesis 1: Articles published in African American newspapers on Tupac Shakur will have a more positive tone and identify Shakur more positively than articles on Shakur published in nationwide newspapers.

Hypothesis 2: Articles published in both African American newspapers and nationwide newspapers while Shakur was alive will have a significantly greater negative tone and approach toward Shakur's identity than those published after his death.

Summary of Findings

Data showed that there was no significant difference between African American newspaper articles in terms of tone or criticism/support concerning Shakur's music, lifestyle, and identity (when Shakur was alive), as compared to nationwide newspaper articles. In fact, nationwide articles were slightly more positive in tone than African American articles while Shakur was alive. 14% of articles in nationwide newspaper publications were positive in tone during Shakur's life, as opposed to just 10% of articles in African American newspaper articles having a positive tone. Over 50% of the articles of each publication type identified Shakur as a generic rapper with 20.4% of nationwide

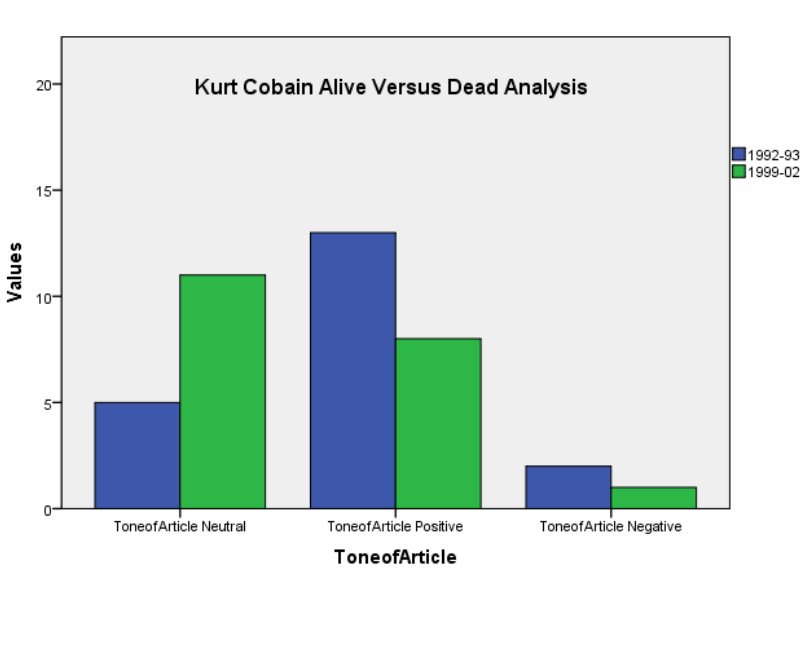
newspaper articles identifying Shakur as a gangsta rapper or criminal/thug and 13.6% of African American newspaper articles identifying Shakur as a gangsta rapper or criminal/thug.

After Shakur died, there was a significant transformation in tone from both nationwide and African American newspaper publications. The tone changed significantly in 1997 with the majority of articles being neutral or positive. In all, 42.7% of the articles after Shakur died were positive with only 2% of articles coded as negative. African American newspapers were slightly more positive after Shakur's death than nationwide newspapers. 47% of African American articles were coded as positive in tone and 36% of nationwide articles were coded as positive in tone.

Deceased rock star Kurt Cobain was coded for comparison with Shakur. Twenty newspaper articles total from the years 1992 and 1993 and twenty newspaper articles total from the years 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 were examined from the six nationwide newspaper publications (used for the Shakur analysis) on Kurt Cobain. Two years of analysis was increased to four in Cobain's analysis because there was not enough articles in 1999 and 2000 to reach twenty random articles for coding.

Thirteen out of the twenty articles from the years 1992 and 1993 were positive in tone and supportive of Cobain's music. Two articles were negative in tone and five were neutral. Eight out of the twenty articles from the years 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 were positive in tone and supportive of Cobain's music. One article was negative in tone and criticized both Cobain's music and lifestyle. Eight articles were coded as neutral in tone.

Figure 1



Findings by Year

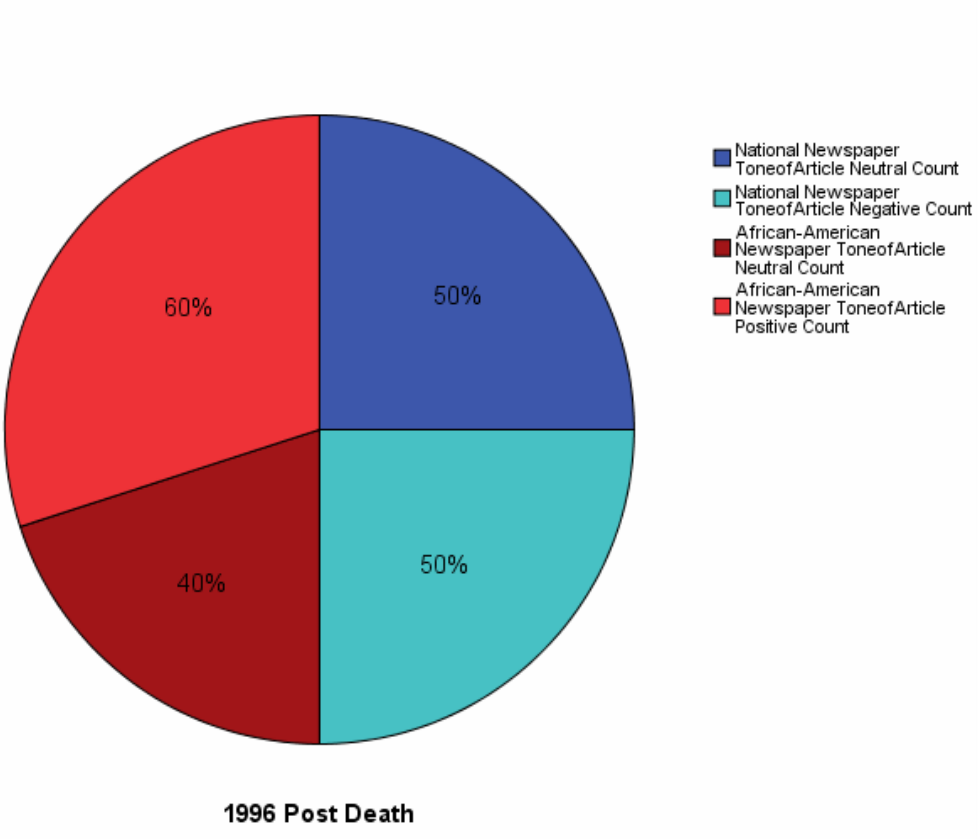
The label of gangsta rapper was used to describe Shakur in two nationwide articles in 1992. The term was not used to describe Shakur in 1992 African American articles. Seven out of the ten African American articles examined in 1992 were movie reviews starring Shakur. The other three were music reviews. There was no mention of the shooting involving Ronald Howard and Officer Davidson in the African American articles coded. In 1993, negative tone and criticism continued in national newspaper articles, while criticism and negativity for Shakur was still absent in African American newspaper articles. Three articles negative in tone were analyzed in 1993 nationwide newspaper articles. All of the nationwide articles in 1993 either focused on Shakur's "violent" lyrics and the First Amendment debate instigated by Quayle, or on an incident in 1993 when Shakur was charged with the attempted murder of two off-duty Atlanta police officers. For the second consecutive year in 1993, no African American newspaper

articles were coded as negative in tone. One African American newspaper article identified Shakur as a gangsta rapper, while two nationwide articles identified Shakur as a gangsta rapper. Four nationwide articles in 1993 identified Shakur as a criminal ("cop killer," "thug," "villain," "public menace"). These same four articles were critical of Shakur's lifestyle and his lyrics. One more article was critical of Shakur's lifestyle.

In 1994, four African American articles were coded as negative in tone. Three of these articles were critical of Shakur's lyrics, and two articles were critical of Shakur's lifestyle. Three nationwide articles were negative in tone. These three articles were critical of Shakur's lifestyle, and two of those three were also critical of Shakur's lyrics. In 1995, four nationwide articles were positive in tone and two articles were negative in tone. Six African American articles in 1995 were negative in tone. One article was positive in tone. Both nationwide articles negative in tone were critical of Shakur's lyrics and lifestyle. Of the six African American titles negative in tone, four were critical of Shakur's lyrics and three were also critical of Shakur's lifestyle. In 1996, one nationwide article was negative in tone and three were positive in tone. The negative nationwide article was critical of Shakur's lyrics. The three positive in tone were positive music reviews. Four African American newspaper articles were negative in tone and one was positive. Three articles were negative of Shakur's lyrics and two were critical of Shakur's lifestyle.

The content analysis of newspaper coverage of Shakur continued with examination of coverage after his death in September of 1996.

Figure 2



The chart above shows the stark difference in the way African American newspaper publications and nationwide newspaper publications reacted to Shakur's death. National newspapers reacted in a much more negative and critical manner to Shakur's death than African American newspapers with five of ten articles being negative. There were no negative articles from African American articles immediately after Shakur died.

In the year 1997, however, the national newspaper tone and criticism began to change significantly. There were a total of two negative articles (one from each publication type) and ten articles positive in tone (four from national newspaper publications and six from African American newspaper publications). All articles positive

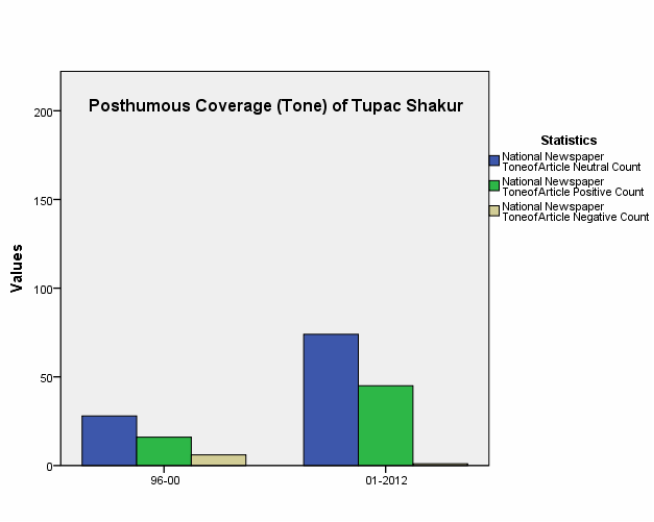
in tone were supportive of Shakur's lyrics, three of which from each publication type defended Shakur's lifestyle.

From the years 1998 through 2001, there were no negative articles in tone in either nationwide newspaper publications or African American newspaper publications. Sixteen nationwide articles were positive in tone from the years 1998 through 2001 and nineteen African American articles were positive in tone during the same period. Two articles in 1999 were critical of Shakur's lifestyle, but were neutral in tone and positive toward Shakur's lyrics.

No negative articles were coded during the years 2002 or 2003. One negative article was coded in 2004 from a nationwide article. From the year 2002 through the year 2004, there were thirteen positive nationwide articles and eleven positive African American articles.

From the years 2005 through 2011, no negative articles were coded from either publication type. Twenty-three articles were coded as positive in nationwide publications. Thirty-one articles were coded as positive in African American publications.

Figure 3



The chart above is emblematic of not only the overall trend of positive articles between the two publication type after Shakur's death, but also the fact that the African American newspaper publications became more positive and less negative toward Shakur after he died compared to nationwide newspapers. Lifestyle criticism and even neutrality became less and less, with support or defense of Shakur's lifestyle choices increasing the further removed from 1996 the years became. This was largely due to the efforts of Afeni Shakur, who spoke at colleges about her son after he died, was instrumental in getting his music released posthumously, and set up an education center in her son's name in Atlanta, Georgia.

In 2012, two articles were coded as positive in nationwide newspapers and six articles were coded as positive in African American newspaper publications. The "Tupac Hologram," a virtual Tupac Shakur that took the stage at a music festival in California, was a focus in every nationwide article. One article wondered if Elvis Presley would be the next dead celebrity to virtually perform (McKinley, 2012, para. 1). Conversely, only

two African American articles mentioned the hologram, instead focusing mainly on Shakur's upcoming biopic directed by John Singleton and a play of Shakur's music being produced for a Broadway musical (Reynolds, 2014, para. 2).

Analysis

The absence of criticism of Shakur in 1992 and 1993 regarding African American newspaper articles was noticeable. The fact that the two African American articles addressing the Texas cop shooting were coded as positive is notable. A *Los Angeles Sentinel* article praised Shakur's lyrical tenacity, stating that Shakur has the potential to become a leader "for a disaffected young generation of youths who believe the system has failed them" (Williams, 1992, A4).

Speaking on how rap music was a product of a failed system, Abina (2002) highlights the fear and paranoia from mainstream America toward minority music (namely rap music) due to the post-Vietnam war escalation in urban violence, marked by the LA riots and Rodney King beating. It is incidents such as these that enable a less powerful group to voice their disdain and protest against the powers that be. What makes a "great, white society" fearful of rappers, Abina contends, is that rappers represent such a radical change and repercussion to the identity of America that politicians such as Dan Quayle feel as if they have to act very rashly. Abina also points out Bill Clinton's denouncement of Souljah Sister's lyrics, a female rap artist, who repeatedly spoke out against a white culture intent on keeping black people below them. In 1992, Bill Clinton cited Souljah Sister's lyrics as "filled with hatred" (Talerman, 1994). This is worth

mentioning because some of Souljah's Sisters lyrics were similar to Shakur's. Clinton's comments reflect the moral panic of the time.

Nationwide newspapers examined in 1992 did not note Clinton's comments, but seven out of the ten articles at least mentioned Dan Quayle's move to have Shakur's album removed from the shelves. Quayle stating that Shakur's first album *2pacalypse Now* had no place in society enabled nationwide newspaper authors to run editorials (there were four in 1992), debating if Shakur's music and music like his should be protected under the First Amendment (one sided with Quayle, two defended Shakur's music under the First Amendment, and one was neutral/could not decide).

An African American newspaper article published in 1993 addressed two legal issues regarding Shakur and it was mostly from the perspective of Shakur's attorney, the defense. The article, titled "Cops Overreacted Says Rapper Tupac Shakur's Attorney: Rapper Held In Shooting of Two Police Officers" by James Bolden, opens with a statement from Shakur's attorney that the police officers were "scared for their lives" and overreacted in the altercation with Shakur (Bolden, 1993, p. A1). The article does note that the reason Shakur was arrested was because a witness claimed to have seen Shakur shoot in the direction of officers who were treated for gunshot wounds and shortly released afterwards at a nearby hospital. The second legal issue the article deliberates on at length is the killing of Officer Davidson by Ronald Ray Howard, who was allegedly listening to a Shakur song at the time of the shooting. The article notes that Shakur was under "criticism from the nation's top leaders," focusing on Quayle's failed attempts to ban Shakur's album from stores. The article concludes with a quote from Shakur, stating that his music is to let citizens know it is OK to "swing back."

No nationwide article in 1993 cited statements from Shakur's point of view. Instead, articles focused on Shakur's three criminal charges (attempted murder, sexual assault, and assault) in connection with his lyrics and the genre of rap music. In a *Washington Post* article titled "For Rap, Some Arresting Developments," Shakur is a main focus. The article makes no mention of Shakur's lyrics other than insinuating that they incite violence against police officers. Instead, the article is focused on Shakur's alleged criminal crimes (Harrington, 1993, p. C7). The article is perfectly within its right to focus on Shakur's legal troubles, but the loose connection the article makes with rap and criminal activity is noteworthy since by doing so a bridge between the two is propagated.

African American newspapers became much more critical between the years 1994-1996, more so than nationwide newspaper articles. This was, in part, due to DeLores Tucker's crusade against Shakur and the genre of gangsta rap Shakur became synonymous with. A 1994 article published in the *Philadelphia Tribune* notes Shakur's music being banned from radio stations. The article mentions how Tucker was moving to get gangsta rap removed from society, claiming that gangsta rappers like Shakur "compromise our dignity and disrespect our females, promote rape, hate and disrespect" (Tucker, 1994, p. A4). Another article written by DeLores Tucker was published in the *Philadelphia Tribune*, in which Tucker criticizes gangsta rap lyrics, such as Shakur's. She asserts that Shakur's lyrics "grossly malign black women, degrade the unthinking young black artists who create [gangsta rap], pander pornography to our innocent young children, hold black people universally up to ridicule and contempt, and corrupt its vast audience of listeners, white and black, throughout the world" (Tucker, 1994, p. A1).

Tucker took her message to shareholder meetings of major corporations to pressure them to divest their holdings in record companies that produce gangsta rap; she also addressed Congress to urge that steps be taken to "curb and control the proliferation of vile, demeaning pornographic and misogynistic music" (Reed, 1995, p. A1).

Nationwide newspapers covered DeLores Tucker's campaign against gangsta rap in connection with Shakur, but not to the same extent they covered Dan Quayle's. For instance, between the years 1994 and 1996, there were four total mentions of DeLores Tucker and Tupac Shakur in nationwide articles, compared to eleven in African American articles. The reasons for this could be that Tucker's attack was more aimed toward gangsta rap in general (although she attempted to sue Shakur several times in court, including after he died). Quayle's comments were directly made toward Shakur's album that Ronald Ray Howard was allegedly listening to. Also, DeLores Tucker, being an African American activist, was more prominently featured in African American publications, writing three articles during the time period of 1994-1996 for the *Philadelphia Tribune*.

Immediately after Shakur died, the criticism did not stop, particularly from nationwide newspaper publications, but a softening, more neutral rhetoric became apparent by 1998. Articles such as Brian Walton's "Tupac Shakur: Victim or Villain" and many others began pondering if Shakur was a victim of the music industry, the public, and the media, "Tupac was simply giving the public what it wanted, an image of a modern-day gangster who cared for no one and about nothing else except money and power. The music industry created the image that 2Pac died trying to live up to. But the industry knows what sells, the American public still pays top dollar for any product with

shock value" (Walton, 1996, pp. D1-2). As noted earlier, Shakur echoed a similar sentiment before he died in an interview with Chuck Phillips of the *Los Angeles Times*, "The thing that bothers me is that all my sensitive stuff goes unnoticed… The media portrayed me as a crazy gangster… I'll show them what a gangster really is. And that's what this album is, just venting my anger" (Phillips, 1994, p. A1). Shonda McClain also wrote after Shakur's death how Shakur was victim of a society that rewarded bad behavior with fame and monetary gain, but that Shakur's ultimate demise was due to his own obsession with death (McClain, 1996, p. A1).

In 2001, five years after Shakur's death, 45.5% of articles in nationwide and African American newspapers identified Shakur as a cultural icon and another 27.3% identified Shakur as a talented artist. Even more noticeable was the tone of the articles. When Shakur was alive, less than a quarter of all articles were positive. In 2001, 60.7% of articles were positive in tone with no articles having a negative tone. After 2001, just one article would be critical of Shakur (Mendev, 2002). The article was immediately met by resistance (Martin, 2002; Strong, 2002).

Limitations

Newspapers were the only form of media used for the content analysis. Future research might include other forms of media such as magazines, news transcripts, or social media websites, such as Twitter. It is important to note that many of the newspaper articles published in the 2000s for this content analysis included print articles and online articles. The ProQuest database was used for this content analysis and had a "full text" search for articles, which was able to identify all articles with the mention "Tupac

Shakur" for the designated newspaper publications. The unit of analysis, "Tupac Shakur," could have been different. For instance, just "Tupac" or "2pac" could also have been used as the unit of analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The content analysis revealed that the genesis of moral panic regarding Tupac Shakur was in 1992 when Ronald Ray Howard claimed he was listening to a song by Shakur while loading a handgun and then proceeding to fire a bullet into Officer Bill Davidson's neck. Critical and negative articles were subsequently published in nationwide publications in 1992 and 1993, many of which quoted politicians who were outraged by Shakur's music (Appendix A). It should be stressed that Tupac Shakur did not solely generate the moral panic around the gangsta rap genre. Ice T's "Cop Killer" released in 1992 and Sister Soulja's lyrics also fueled a climate of tension in the country. All this was amidst the LA riots of 1992, incited by the Rodney King beating. Shakur, however, became the most prominent gangsta rapper, most emblematic of the genre, and in turn, most emblematic of the moral panic during the period.

Immediately after the information was leaked that Howard said he was listening to *2pacalypse Now,* a First Amendment debate was ignited in mainstream media. Politicians portrayed the album as representative of the criminal element. Former Vice President Dan Quayle was particularly critical of *2pacalypse Now,* calling it "irresponsible" and as having "no place in our society" (Phillips, 1992, p. A1).

The song "Soulja's Story," included the lyrics,

"Cops on my tail, so I bail till I dodge them,

They finally pull me over and I laugh,

Remember Rodney King

And I blast his punk ass

Now I got a murder case ...

... What the fuck would you do?

Drop them or let them drop you?

I choose droppin' the cop!"

The above verse would be repeated in various other articles to demonstrate the belligerence of Shakur's music. What these media pieces fail to do is give the song proper context. For instance, the above lyrics rapped by Tupac were spoken in a deep, monotone voice, as Shakur was playing the role of "Soulja," a black male filled with anger toward a perceived oppressive system. Tupac and his natural tone of voice would return in the final verse of the song, which concluded with these lines,

"I caught a bullet in the head, the screams never left my mouth

My brother caught a bullet too

I think he gon' pull through, he deserve to

The fast life ain't everything they told ya

Never get much older, following the tracks of a soulja"

Here, Shakur points out the pitfalls of reacting to injustice in a vigilante manner, and the destruction and death that follows. Thus, the song could be understood as a cautionary tale to prevent violence against cops. Articles, such as the *Los Angeles Times* piece by Chuck Phillips in 1994, fail to divulge the concluding lyrics, thus misrepresenting the entire context of the song (Phillips, 1994).

The content analysis conveyed that arguments over whether Shakur's music should be distributed were common early in Shakur's rap career in nationwide articles

(Appendix B). Seldom were those quoted who defended Shakur and saw Shakur's music as a necessary illumination of social activism. A 1992 *Los Angeles Times* article by Stephen Rodhe, however, did defend Shakur's right to free speech under the First Amendment, highlighting the lack of legal precedent of suing an artist over artistic expression. Rodhe defended Shakur's music under the First Amendment, writing, "A solid body of First Amendment precedent has firmly established that victims of crime cannot sue musicians, movie producers or writers for allegedly "inspiring" or "inciting" those crimes" (Rodhe, 1992, p. A1). Rodhe cited previous court cases with similar suits that were dismissed. Shakur's case, according to Rodhe, was simply a political talking point for "right-wing zealots," who were willfully ignoring the fact that the First Amendment protects those "who choose to portray the darkest workings of society's miscreants and villains" (Rodhe).

The deficiency of legal merit regarding the claim that Shakur's lyrics could have been the sole cause for another to commit violence did not stop the criticism of Shakur's music, however. A 1992 article by Chuck Phillips published in the *Washington Post* cited prominent figures who were not as convinced Shakur's music should be protected by the First Amendment. Phillips quotes Linda Davidson's lawyer, Jim Cole, as stating that Shakur's music reads like "pages out of a cop-killing manual." Cole calls Shakur a "seriously dangerous" human being (Phillips, 1992, p. A1). According to Phillips, Cole was also promised assistance by an organization headed by former White House aide Oliver North. North was openly critical of Shakur's music and rap music in general, moving to have Ice T's "Cop Killer" song banned. Headed by North, the Freedom Alliance sought to remove the song from distribution via petition by taking Time Warner

executives to trial for crimes of "sedition and anarchy" (Ehrenreich, 2002, p. 20). The Phillips article also cited Ron DeLord, president of the Combined Law Enforcement Association of Texas, who called Shakur's album "mental pollution," arguing that it should not be allowed to exist in American society, echoing North's and Dan Quayle's sentiments.

These two articles illustrate the tension and moral panic that were prevalent around Shakur's music and gangsta rap in the early 1990s through the issue of the First Amendment ignited after the Howard incident. Talerman (1994) asserts that no other genre of music received as much criticism as the genre of gangsta rap, and that the outrage from political leaders was perceptively threatening to the foundation of the First Amendment (p. 5). Most political leaders thought Shakur's music was harmful, while Shakur and a few others argued that his music was socially relevant and justified. Thus, the genesis of moral panic in regards to Shakur is represented by the First Amendment debate instigated by powerful politicians, who tried (unsuccessfully) to have such music banned in the United States (Ogunnaike, 2003).

What the two articles are also implicitly debating is a theory of media violence. Similar social-media theories, such as the theory of altercasting, have been proposed to convey the idea that certain media can be persuasive enough to essentially overpower another's will (Malone, 2003; Weinstein, 1968). It is undeniable that exposure to various forms of media, such as film or music, will cause a response in an individual, but holding an artist and record company liable for another's actions would be discounting the multitude of the other factors that contribute to an individual's behavior. It is evident concerning individuals such as Howard that their violent behavior had formed over time.

The newspapers did not focus on the fact that Howard was a convicted felon with a history of crime and violence. Howard, a member of a gang, already had a warrant out for his arrest when he was pulled over by Officer Davidson. Howard was already carrying a gun he did not legally own. Howard was already driving a stolen car. The fact that Howard already had committed crimes and was armed suggests that he was ready for a violent, criminal act or confrontation (Linneman, 2000). None of these factors were consistently pointed out by newspaper articles.

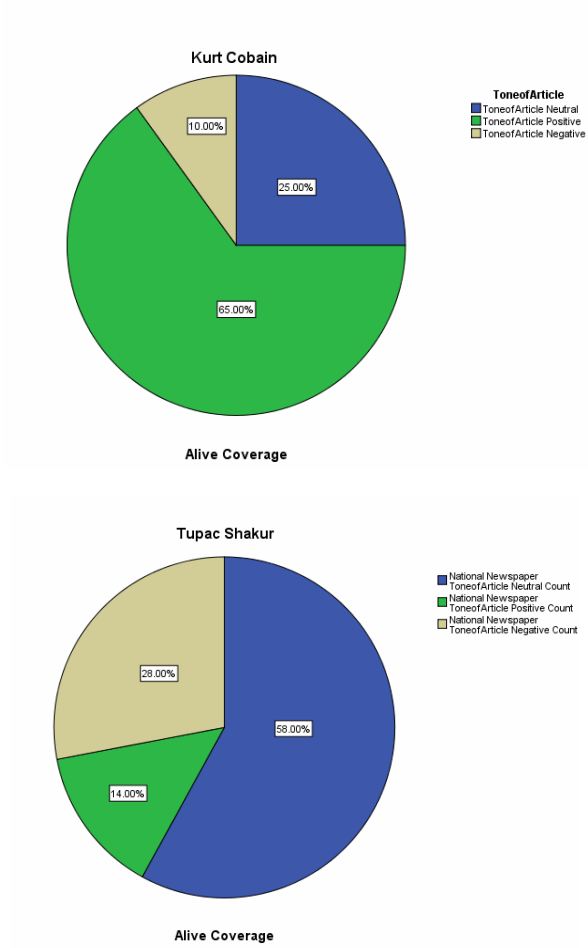
More Panic

DeLores Tucker's attacks against Shakur prolonged the moral panic around Shakur and the gangsta rap genre. Preceding the Davidson shooting in 1994, Tucker began her attack against Shakur and gangsta rap, not just for the violent lyrics, but especially for what Tucker claimed was "misogynistic smut" that degraded African American women and the African American community (Bournea, 1994, p. A6). Shakur would respond to Tucker after he was released from the Clinton Correctional Facility in 1995 with a hit song titled "Wonder Why They Call You Bitch," which was directed at certain females Shakur deemed unscrupulous. Shakur spoke to Tucker directly in the song tauntingly, "Dear Miss Tucker, this is to let you know why we call them hoes bitches" (Shakur, 1995). Tucker would file her own lawsuit against Shakur for the song, but the case would eventually be dismissed.

Guilty or Not Guilty

While not a gangsta rapper, Kurt Cobain, a rock musician and heroin addict, helps illuminate and strengthen the analysis of Shakur because Cobain was a famous artist of the same period of a different and relatively new musical genre. Being a famous artist of a different musical genre allows a frame of reference for Shakur and strengthens the validity of the thesis. Cobain, much like Shakur exemplified the genre of gangsta rap, exemplified the genre of "grunge" rock music. Cobain also had a tumultuous life that ended suddenly and violently. Cobain was arrested in 1993 after attempting to choke to death his wife, Courtney Love. Multiple guns were also found on the premises (Wilson, 1993). This event was not focused on by the media to the degree any of Shakur's transgressions were. The likely reason for this is because there was not a moral panic around Cobain's music like there was Shakur's. Shakur did have legal troubles, but it is a contention of this study that the moral panic around Shakur had already begun before Shakur was in trouble with the law. Shakur's legal problems merely magnified the media's criticism toward Shakur and his music (Figure 4). Dan Quayle began complaining about Shakur's lyrics in 1992, immediately after the Howard shooting. According to the content analysis, DeLores Tucker began complaining about Shakur's music specifically in 1994, though Tucker had criticized gangsta rap since 1992 (Phillips, 1995). By the time Tucker began ridiculing Shakur's music, Shakur was facing attempted murder charges for shooting two police officers in November of 1993 (the case would be dismissed). Quayle's criticism predated any alleged criminal action by Shakur. Instead, Ronald Howard's criminal actions were ascribed by Quayle to Shakur and his music.

Figure 4



The two pie charts represent the difference in national newspaper coverage between Kurt Cobain and Tupac Shakur when they were alive.

Unlike Cobain, Shakur's music had a much stronger political message. Also unlike Cobain, Shakur was arrested dozens of times when he was a rapper, and presumed guilt by the media damaged Shakur's image and reputation. When Shakur was arrested for the attempted murder of two police officers, some of the media assumed guilt. An article published in the *Washington Post* stated, "now it seems Shakur wants to be a cop

killer" (Stevens, 1993, p. A1). Shakur would later be cleared of the charges when it was discovered Shakur intervened after witnessing the two police officers assaulting a black motorist. The two cops shot at Shakur first, and that is when Shakur returned fire, hitting one officer in the stomach and the other in the buttocks.

At the conclusion of Shakur's sex abuse trial of a former sexual partner, the *Los Angeles Times* mistakenly published an article stating Shakur had been convicted of sexual assault, effectively branding Shakur a rapist. The *Los Angeles Times* would eventually run a retraction, admitting their mistake. Shakur was, in fact, cleared of rape and sodomy charges, and was convicted of 3rd degree sex abuse, or touching the buttocks without consent (Phillips, 1995, p. A1). In no way is such a crime a small matter or something to be taken lightly, but the point is that the media's initial assertion of transgressions, even if proven untrue, may hold more weight than when the actual truth is revealed in the future. With the media's fervor, quick labels were attributed to Shakur. Suddenly, Shakur was not only an artist who had made a mistake; he was a bad role model. He was not only guilty of a crime, but responsible for the image of the entire African American community. A 1994 article published in the *Philadelphia Tribune*, for instance, was titled "Tupac Shakur case brings bad image media image to African Americans," implying that how a 23-year-old Shakur is presented in the media affects the entire African American community to a high degree (Reed, 1994, p. A6).

This thesis is not arguing that Shakur was simply misunderstood and his legal troubles should be glossed over as insignificant blemishes, but the content analysis revealed that a high amount of negative attention was directed at Shakur by both nationwide and African American newspaper publications when he was living (compared

to Cobain, for instance). 59% of articles were categorized under "article type" as "crime." This was the highest percentage of article type. The second highest was "movie review" with 17%. Castillo (1998) claims that the media "served to tarnish Tupac's image in the eyes of people, concealing what is the true worth of his work" (para. 2). Castillo points out that the media made the mistake of judging Shakur's rough exterior, leaving the public to see just "another disgruntled young black male filled with prejudice and advocating violence" (para. 4).

Political Cycle and Hypothesis 1

The fact that more African American newspaper articles were critical of Shakur when he was alive, however, suggests that the criticism toward Shakur may not have been racially motivated. An argument could also be made that the criticism from African-American newspapers was a vessel of the black elite (Dyson, 2006). Or, to put it differently, that moral panic engulfs everyone, regardless of race or class.

More criticism from African American articles than nationwide articles when Shakur was alive disproves the first hypothesis of this thesis (Appendix C). What the analysis also revealed was that the criticism toward Shakur came in two forms: Political criticism toward Shakur's music and criticism toward Shakur's lifestyle. The reason why most of the criticism toward Shakur's music is deemed political is because the content analysis did not find an article that criticized Shakur's music from an aesthetic point of view. Some of his lyrics may have been condemned as violent and misogynistic, but these terms attributed to Shakur were usually under the inquiry if his music should be allowed in American society, not whether the music was well made from a musical point of view.

74% of the articles criticizing Shakur's lyrics included quotes from politicians and 83% of those critical articles brought up the issue of free speech in some form (Appendix D).

The criticism of Shakur's music from a political point of view exemplifies a historical cycle in America of moral panic around works of art. Before Elvis's provocative shaking hips, leaving parents to shield their child's eyes from the television, there were comics. Comics in the 1950s offered a window into the world of politics during the paranoid filled McCarthy-era. Like gangsta rap, comics represented a youthful menace and dissent. Many copies were gory, sexually provocative, and filled with excessive violence. Fredric Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954) warned of the danger of comics and that they were likely to cause an increase in juvenile delinquency. Wertham's writing sparked a political outbreak of hostility toward comics, an era sometimes referred to as the Great Comic Book Scare of the 1950s. Hajdu (2008) points out that like communism, "Comstockian" legislators from both sides of the aisle saw an opportunity "to make political hay by demonizing comic books, aligning with the opportunistic Wertham in calling all such work "crime comics" (p. 99). The moral panic in 1950s American society "reached the pages of *Time* magazine, *Newsweek*, and the front pages of the *New York Times"* (p. 103). The United States government also got involved. The Senate Judiciary committee on Juvenile Delinquency forced the comic book industry to water down their content. In 1954, the Comics Magazine Association of America was formed that sought to eliminate what was deemed as overly graphic and horrific comics.

Similarly to how gangsta rap rose after the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War, the Comic Scare of the 1950s came after World War II. This is relevant to note

because it may suggest that after a catastrophic event or preceding a great national turmoil like war, there is a restlessness in society that occurs (Bonn, 2010). The widespread political backlash toward comics in the 1950s and gangsta rap in the 1990s explains the lack of significant discrepancy in media treatment of Shakur between African American newspapers and nationwide newspapers. The lack of significant discrepancy means that it is difficult to discern if race was a factor in regards to the backlash toward gangsta rap, and that the political tension, while possibly racially motivated, was more prevalent. When Shakur was alive, especially when DeLores Tucker began campaigning against Shakur and gangsta rap, there was similar coverage in how negative the two publication types were (Appendix C).

Death Coverage

Immediately after Shakur's death, the content analysis showed that the response from the media was not of tribute or positivity. Instead, there was a mixed range of judgment and confusion (Appendix E). This likely had to do with the violent manner in which Shakur died. One article made the implication that Shakur deserved to die, "I hold Shakur responsible for exploiting the carnage and basking in the mayhem of urban America where young girls are found raped and killed near their high schools or where brothers are murdered standing outside their homes playing catch" (Carroll, 1996, p. A1). Other articles were more tentative, wondering if Shakur was a victim of a vicious music industry and a criminal lifestyle glorified by an excess of commercialization (McClain, 1996). Such articles pondering what Shakur actually stood for signified a shift from

unvaried criticism when Shakur was alive to an exploratory analysis of Shakur immediately after he died.

Similarly, Silvia Dutchevici, a journalist and renowned psychologist, pondered if Marilyn Monroe was a sexual symbol or a sexual victim. Dutchevici (2011) notes Monroe's troubled upbringing that allegedly included sexual abuse. Monroe also stated in an interview having a sexual addiction problem. Yet, the image of sex is what brought Monroe the most fame and is what was idolized by her fans. Conversely, her heightened sexuality is also what brought her a fair amount of criticism from the media.

Shakur's relationship with society was not dissimilar to Monroe's. Shakur too grew up in a harsh environment of drugs and violence. After his rap career began, Shakur was arrested dozens of times. This behavior, as others have noted, was rewarded by the music industry and chastised by another entity, the media, creating a moral panic.

Such behavior stopped with Shakur's death, of course, and the change in media attitude after he died may very well be that Shakur could no longer be accused of committing more crimes. It also cannot go overlooked that Shakur's entire image began being revamped by the media, which either were making him into something he was not or seeing him for what he truly was for the first time. The question of "villain or victim" that immediately followed Shakur's death allowed the inquiry if Shakur was not completely at fault for the way he was portrayed. The question permits the possibility that the media may have branded him and molded him into something he did not intend to be. The content analysis revealed that newspaper coverage when Shakur was alive had a tendency to focus on crime more than any other subject. 59 percent of articles were coded as "crime" during the content analysis of newspaper coverage when Shakur was alive.

Only 1 percent of articles defended or was positive of Shakur's lifestyle when he was living (Appendix F). Such a disproportionate amount of coverage on Shakur's legal predicaments and criticism toward his lifestyle could affect the perceptions of not only the public, but Shakur as well (Mead, 1934).

Crucifixion

Crucified. You could argue that is what the media did to Tupac Shakur. That is what Shakur contended, before and after he died. No, the dead do not have a literal communicative line with the living, but an individual can make one when they are alive with enough fatalism and foresight. Most facing a soon and inevitable demise get life insurance, make sure their debts have been paid, say goodbye to loved ones. Not many speak of their death as if it has already happened. Not many plan for their death to happen in order to receive monetary gain and fame.

Shakur stated in an interview with *Vibe Magazine* that he was vilified by the media, "I got shot five times and I got crucified to the media. And I walked through with the thorns on and I had shit thrown on me and I had the thief at the top" ("Vibe Magazine," 1996). The media's tendency to obsessively cover negative stories and events has been addressed by several scholars (Grider, 2001; Liebes, 2002; Schwarz, 2012), and gives some credence to Shakur's media crucifixion claim. The concepts often attributed to crucifixion are also arguably what has transformed the media treatment toward Shakur from negative and dismissive to positive and commemorating. On the cover of Shakur's first posthumous album, released less than one month after Shakur's death, Shakur is nailed to a cross. The cover allegedly represents Shakur's media crucifixion (Joseph,

2006). Shakur also had a new artist alias at this point of "Makaveli." Shakur's new posthumous artist name is worth mentioning because it was attributed to Italian philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli, who wrote Shakur's favorite book *The Prince*. This fact added to media speculation after Shakur died since a small portion of the book is dedicated to faking one's death.

An aura of awe and mysteriousness tends to benefit celebrities (Radford and Bloch, 2011). With the unprecedented release of hundreds of original songs after his death, many of which were seemingly made for his demise, attitude toward Shakur became iconic, even biblical for some. Suddenly, the media-crucified Tupac Shakur was resurrected in redemption and glory.

Hypothesis 2

Shakur's crafting of his own posthumous image can be seen as his way of not only ensuring his legacy, but taking control of the media. The second hypothesis proposed by this thesis was proven by the results of the content analysis. The number of articles that were positive or neutral toward Shakur after he died was nearly exclusive with an insignificant amount of negative articles toward Shakur between the years 1997 and 2012 (Appendix G). Many factors could explain this, such as the media not reporting on Shakur's legal troubles anymore. With the absence of legal troubles in conjunction with Shakur, one might assume that the number of articles would significantly decrease after Shakur's death. Instead, the year after Shakur died, 1997, was the year with the most mentions of Shakur of any year of the content analysis. The number of articles with Shakur mentioned per year after 1997 was comparable to when he was living (Appendix H). According to Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994), moral panic abates when the media and

public lose interest. The fact that media attention remained after Shakur's death, but the negativity toward Shakur died out, helps refine the fifth element of moral panic that proposes moral panic relinquishes when interest has waned (Goode, Ben-Yehuda, 1994).

The positivity of media coverage of Shakur after death signifies an abating of moral panic, as Shakur became accepted by society, and in turn, by the media. Terms such as "icon," "hero," and "legend" represent Shakur's new place as a dominant norm of society. Thus, Shakur became a part of the mainstream society he fought against when he was alive.

Still, the fact cannot be ignored that Shakur's last public actions discerned from a security camera in the MGM Grand Hotel on September 6, 1996, were partly emblematic of his tumultuous lifestyle as a rapper. Cathy Scott (2002), a prominent writer on Shakur's shooting, noted that Shakur and his posse spotted a South Side Crip gang member in the lobby of the hotel. The South Side Crips were at odds with the Mob Piru Bloods. The Mob Piru Bloods was the gang Shakur and record label owner, Suge Knight, were allegedly affiliated with. Shakur walked up to Orlando Anderson, asking "You from the south?" Shakur then punched Anderson in the face, knocking him to the ground. Shakur and his entourage proceeded to kick Anderson. Anderson did not press charges, and a few hours later Shakur would be shot multiple times, suffering a punctured lung (Scott, 2002). He would die seven days later in a Las Vegas hospital.

A cynic could encapsulate Shakur's life as a rapper with that fateful night occurring in Las Vegas. A cynic might assert that Shakur brought all the criticism unto himself; that Shakur was arrested dozens of times, served nearly a year of his life in prison, and used his criminal lifestyle as a marketing tool. The criticism revealed by the content analysis when Shakur was alive would seem rational and just, and praise after

Shakur's death, pretentious.

But another could argue that Shakur's life as a human being was grossly misunderstood by those who vilified him. One could argue that his mistakes were forgivable, and that his good deeds far outweighed the bad ones. One might point out that Shakur was bold and courageous in choosing to represent a disenfranchised group of people to the grave. One might also point out that Shakur sought justice and peace, but the media molded Shakur into what they wanted him to be. Thus, the criticism revealed by the content analysis when Shakur was alive would seem irrational and vindictive, and the praise after Shakur's death, absolute. Both the cynic and supporter would likely agree Shakur's life did not have to end the way it did, and if the media crucified Shakur, he may have provided a nail or two to his executioners.

Nonetheless, the relinquishment of moral panic and criticism toward Shakur is undeniable. The content analysis revealed that, after death, Shakur was looked upon very differently than when he was alive. Far right politicians who once ridiculed Shakur's music now praise Shakur's music. Marco Rubio, a Republican senator from Florida and presidential hopeful, stated in 2013 that Shakur "was someone who was trying to inform us about what was going on …. Tupac is someone I listened to growing up, and he was a complicated person. He wasn't perfect, that's for sure. He made a lot of mistakes, but I think he was very honest in his music and gave us insight into a time in our country and really gave a voice to a people in America at that time who were facing different struggles" (Stutz, 2013, para. 2).

The transformation of media treatment the content analysis disclosed from when Shakur was alive to after death is an ironic mirror of how Shakur transformed from a gentle 17-year-old actor to a hardcore 25-year-old-rapper. When Shakur was 17, he was interviewed as a talented actor and political activist. He had not yet decided to make a career in rapping. The interviewer asked who he was. "Tupac Amaru Shakur," the dark skinned young man softly but proudly proclaimed. The young man was asked various questions, including what he would do to make the world a better place. The 17-year-old went on to ridicule the structure of schooling, how people need to take better care of each other, and how the White House has a "cleanliness complex." The young man did not curse; he did not disrespect women with derogatory names or make violent threats against his enemies. He spoke of having pride in the black community, starting campaigns to stop gang violence, and his Black Panther heritage. He was articulate, he was passionate, and he was gentle.

If one were to put a thick steel wall between that 17-year-old Shakur and the 25-year-old gunned down on the streets of Las Vegas in 1996, one might only recognize the charismatic smile, the feminine facial features. Otherwise, one could assert that the 25-year-old was just a man who had a resemblance to the 17-year-old. The tattoos, the violent criminal record, the menacing rhetoric aimed at all those deemed deserving to die, would not seem fitting of a 17-year-old who talked of positivity and hope. One listening to the 25-year-old may not hear the composed thoughts of cultural revolution, the harnessed, honed aggression toward an oppressive government reminiscent of Malcolm X. Instead, one would likely hear the raging pounding of a scarred man trying to reach through a 6-foot steel wall to his former self. For most, that 25-year-old is a lost cause,

too consumed with his own pain. He is not fearful of death. He is fearful of himself, of prisons, because his identity has been crushed, like shard glass being trampled beneath the feet of those who sought to squash the audacious sincerity of a 17-year-old born to die.

APPENDIX A

SourceofCritSupprt * PublicationType * 1992-1993				
1992-1993				Publication Type
				National Newspaper
1.00	SourceofCritSupprt	NA	Count	2
			% within PublicationType	10.0%
		CritJournalist/Author	Count	2
			% within PublicationType	10.00%
		CritPolitician	Count	10
			% within PublicationType	50.00%
		CritBoth	Count	5
			% within PublicationType	25.0%

		SuppJournalist/Author	Count	1
			% within PublicationType	5.0%
	Total		Count	20
			% within PublicationType	100.0%
Total	SourceofCritSupprt	NA	Count	2
			% within PublicationType	10.0%
		CritJournalist/Author	Count	2
			% within PublicationType	10.00%
		CritPolitician	Count	10
			% within PublicationType	50.00%
		CritBoth	Count	5
			% within PublicationType	25.0%

		SuppJournalist/Author	Count	1
			% within PublicationType	5.0%
	Total		Count	20
			% within PublicationType	100.0%

The graph above shows that 75% of nationwide articles between the year 1992 and 1993 were from politicians. The category “CritBoth” represents an article that included criticism from a journalist and a politician.

APPENDIX B

Iss.FreeSpeechInArticle * PublicationType * 1992-1993

Crosstab					
1992-1993				PublicationType	
				National Newspaper	African-American Newspaper
1.00	Iss.FreeSpeechInArticle	No	Count	6	17
			% within PublicationType	30.00%	85.0%
		Yes	Count	14	3
			% within PublicationType	70.00%	15.0%
	Total		Count	20	20
			% within PublicationType	100.0%	100.0%
Total	Iss.FreeSpeechInArticle	No	Count	7	17
			% within PublicationType	30.00%	85.0%

		Yes	Count	13	3
			% within PublicationType	70.00%	15.0%
	Total		Count	20	20
			% within PublicationType	100.0%	100.0%

APPENDIX C

Alive Coverage (Tone)

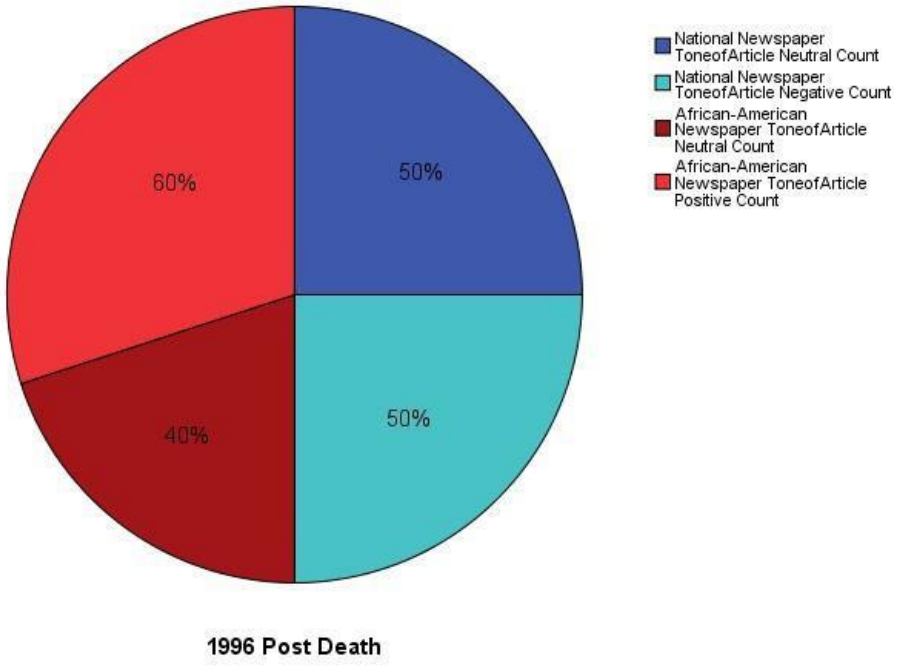
ToneofArticle	*PublicationType*		Total
	National Newspaper	African-American Newspaper	
Neutral	29.00	24.00	53.00
	54.72%	45.28%	100.00%
	58.00%	48.00%	53.00%
	29.00%	24.00%	53.00%
Positive	7.00	5.00	12.00
	58.33%	41.67%	100.00%
	14.00%	10.00%	12.00%
	7.00%	5.00%	12.00%
Negative	14.00	21.00	35.00
	40.00%	60.00%	100.00%
	28.00%	42.00%	35.00%
	14.00%	21.00%	35.00%
Total	50.00	50.00	100.00
	50.00%	50.00%	100.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	50.00%	50.00%	100.00%

APPENDIX D

SourceofCritSupprt * LyricalCritSupprt * Iss.FreeSpeechInArticle Crosstabulation					
Iss.FreeSpeechInArticle				LyricalCritSupprt	
				NA	Critcism	Support
Yes	SourceofCritSupprt	NA	Count	0	1
			% within LyricalCritSupprt	0.0%	33.3%
		CritJournalist/Author	Count	1	0
			% within LyricalCritSupprt	2.9%	0.0%
		CritPolitician	Count	25	0
			% within LyricalCritSupprt	73.5%	0.0%
		CritBoth	Count	8	0
			% within LyricalCritSupprt	23.5%	0.0%
		SuppJournalist/Author	Count	0	2

			% within LyricalCritSupprt		0.0%	66.7%
	Total		Count		34	3

APPENDIX E



1996 Post Death

APPENDIX F

LifestyleCritSupprt * twocatsda Crosstabulation

				twocatsda		Total
				92-96	97-01	
LifestyleCritSupprt	NA	Count		31	0	31
		% within twocatsda		31.0%	0.0%	15.5%
	Criticism	Count		47	15	62
		% within twocatsda		47.0%	15.0%	31.0%
	Support	Count		1	20	21
		% within twocatsda		1.0%	20.0%	10.5%
	Neutral	Count		21	65	86
		% within twocatsda		21.0%	65.0%	43.0%
Total		Count		100	100	200
		% within twocatsda		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

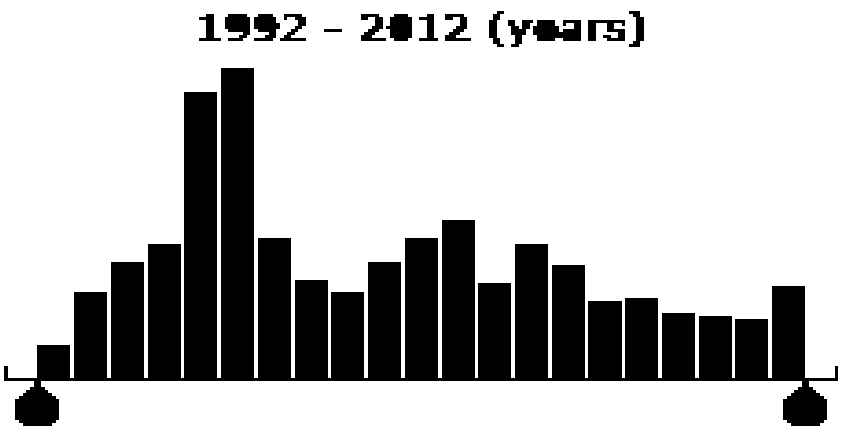
The highlighted row shows that only one journalist was supportive of Shakur's lifestyle.

APPENDIX G

1997-2012 Coverage (Tone)

ToneofArticle	*97-12* 1.00	Total
Neutral	182.00 100.00% 56.88% 56.88%	182.00 100.00% 56.88% 56.88%
Positive	135.00 100.00% 42.19% 42.19%	135.00 100.00% 42.19% 42.19%
Negative	3.00 100.00% .94% .94%	3.00 100.00% .94% .94%
Total	320.00 100.00% 100.00% 100.00%	320.00 100.00% 100.00% 100.00%

APPENDIX H



This is a chart extracted from ProQuest showing the article totals per year with “Tupac Shakur” mentioned in the article. In 1994, there were 169 articles with mention of Tupac Shakur. In 1995, there were 199 mentions. In 2002 there were 208 mentions and in 2003, there were 234 mentions.

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