Rap music as protest: A rhetorical analysis of Public Enemy's lyrics

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RAP MUSIC AS PROTEST: A RHETORICAL
ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC ENEMY'S
LYRICS

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Communication Studies

Greenspun School of Communication
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May 1996
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ABSTRACT

Rap music has been one of the most popular and controversial forms of entertainment in the 1990's. Rap music serves as a form of social protest used by Blacks who feel oppressed. This study defines rap music as protest rhetoric, provides a history of rap music as an extension of Black African and American oral traditions, and analyzes the lyrics of Public Enemy, one of the most powerful protest rap artists. Although Public Enemy's music does not function in a social movement as previous protest songs, a comparison of Public Enemy's lyrics to conclusions drawn by previous researchers will show that Public Enemy's discourse is a form of social protest without serving as part of a social movement.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I would like to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who makes everything possible. I also thank my committee members Dr. Richard Jensen, Dr. Lawrence Mullen, Dr. Erika Engstrom, and Dr. David Dickens for taking time to guide me through this project. A special thanks goes to my fellow graduate students, most notably Marie Curkan-Flanigan and Maryann Andрадae, who took the phrase "cooperate to graduate" to the max! Lastly, I want to thank my family who always encouraged me to chase my dreams.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Rap music is the latest addition to the unique musical forms which originated in the United States (Aldridge and Carlin, 1993, p.102). Rap is unique because it is music about power, communication, and culture (Merina, 1993, p.18). Rap music is a persuasive force in popular culture, informing not only America's musical tastes, but its fashion trends and vernacular as well (Whitaker, 1990, p.34). With its music and image, rap music breaks down cultural barriers and sends a positive message to the young (Merina, 1993, p.18). Rap is also blamed for having negative influences on today's youth due to its harsh, explicit language, promotion of sex and violence, negative attitudes towards women, and the sociopathic lifestyles of the rappers themselves (Pressley, 1992, p.93).

Although rap music has received a lot of negative attention (albeit some is justified) there has not been much scholarly research done on rap. While some of rap's lyrics are raunchy and thematically violent, there are lyrics that cry out the frustrations of Blacks and other youth. Rap music reaches young people in ways not approached by other music, authority figures, role models, or parents through the use of humor, sexism, defiance, obscenity and hostility (McDonnell, 1992, p.99). Since some young people are not able to separate rap's negative images from rap's positive messages (McDonnell, 1992, p.99), rap should be studied in order to separate the negative from the positive. Understanding rap music's messages would help society understand young people.

This study defines rap music as protest rhetoric, provides a history of rap as an extension of Black rhetorical traditions in Africa and the United States, and explores the
lyrics of one of rap music's most vocal and controversial groups, Public Enemy. Studying rap music from a protest perspective will enable critics of this genre of popular culture to understand that rap music does more than exploit violence, drugs, and women. Rather, rap provides a conduit through which Blacks and the young cry out frustrations while at the same time unifies races.

This study also contends that protest music does not necessarily have to be part of a social movement. Protest music can also be an element of a particular subculture while not being part of a movement. Showing that contemporary rap lyrics relate to music lyrics from previous social movements will reinforce the fact that protest music grows from elements outside of specific social movements, such as Black and youth subcultures.

Definition of Rap

Rap entails talking (rapping) to a rhythmic musical background (Powell, 1991, p.245). A vocalist (or vocalists, called emcee(s) tells a story while a disc jockey (DJ) provides the rhythm with either a drum machine or turntables. The DJ entertains by "scratching" the record (rapidly moving the record back and forth under the needle). Primarily, rap music concentrates on the urban African-American experience and the music is aimed primarily, but not exclusively, at African American youth (Powell, 1991, p.245). Rap grew out of the hip-hop culture in New York in the 1970's. The hip-hop culture's characteristics include graffiti, breakdancing, and clothing styles, the most recent being oversized baggy jeans, shorts, and tee shirts.

Rap lyrics evolved from the giddy, cartoonist vocals of the Sugarhill Gang in 1979 to the controversial "gangsta" rap lyrics of the late 1980's and early 1990's that epitomized feelings from the inner city (Wurtzel, 1992, p.112). In terms of rap music as protest rhetoric, McDonnell (1992) defines rap as:
...a form of communication and empowerment for a socially and politically voiceless segment of American society. In a manner more contentious than its musical predecessors, using symbols more glaring, rap is critical of a white dominated society that is silently watching or ignoring the demise of the young Black male. At the same time, rap communicates the methods by which young Blacks an combat social dislocations (p.91).

Rap also gives voice to the problems of the inner city (Aldridge and Carlin, 1993, p.104) including economic and social frustrations (Blair, 1992, p.27). The demise of the inner city brings a sense of hopelessness to the black youth who live in the ghetto (Aldridge and Carlin, 1993, p.104). Rap music provides a platform for the people in the inner city who feel they have no other political voice (Ehrlich, 1992, p.62). Many people in the ghetto feel they have no voice with which to vent their frustrations other than violence or rap music. For Blacks, rap music provides its youth a powerful force for identity, solidarity, and emotional reinforcement (Powell, 1991, p.245).

Rap is a fundamental component of what may be the strongest politically and culturally offensive gesture among African-Americans today (Zook, 1992, p.256). Many rappers create songs that argue that Blacks experience life as a perpetual crisis. Explaining hardships identifies rappers as part of a community and testifies to the ability of Blacks to survive virtually impossible conditions (Pressley, 1992, p.93). Rap music reflects views of today's youth. It is a form of social commentary that is not different from cultural expressions that come from other generations of Black people (Whitaker, 1990, p.39). Therefore, rap music, in terms of lyrics, can be defined as a form of musical entertainment using rhythms, rhyme, fashion, and culture to explain the point of view of Blacks and the young.

Some critics deny the fact that rap is a cultural phenomenon. Samules (1991) offers an opposing viewpoint of rap:

Rap and hip-hop are not subversive musical forms at all. Rather, they are geared more toward middle and upper class white listeners whose stereotypes of
"Blackness" and Black street culture are reaffirmed rather than subverted by rap (p. 24).

No matter how one defines rap music, there is no doubt that it has affected society throughout the 1990's beginning with the First Amendment trial of 2 Live Crew in 1991 and continuing with the controversial "gangsta" rap lyrics. In the mid-1990s, rap continues to shock and entertain.

Why Study Rap Music?

Before analyzing rap lyrics, it is necessary to understand the rationale behind studying music. Music is important to study because it is part of American folklore, culture, and part of vernacular discourse within American culture. Levine (1977) emphasized the need for studying folklore:

The historical use of folklore helps us to recapture the joys as well as the pains, to gain some sense of a peoples' angle of vision and world view, to better understand the inner dynamics of the group and the attitudes its members had toward each other was well as toward the outside world, to comprehend the mechanics of the group erected to guard their values, maintain their sense of worth and retain their sanity (p.455).

Lovell (1972) argues that studying music helps to understand diverse cultures, especially in the United States, which is the home of many different cultures:

Music is very important in getting people to investigate other cultures. Britain and America have a great responsibility in this area because they are the only real cosmopolitan places in terms of people migrating there, and in terms of culture and art going out there internationally (p.331).

Studying music lyrics not only leads people to investigate other cultures, but also helps people to study communication in other cultures. Ono and Sloop (1995) explain the need to study vernacular discourse in American culture:
Vernacular discourse, such as African-American cultural theory that theorizes the specific experiences of African-Americans, needs to be criticized. Unless critical attention is given to vernacular discourse, no new concepts of how community relations are interwoven and how communities are contingent is possible (p.21).

Ono and Sloop purpose that an analysis of contemporary rap music is an example of how to critique American vernacular discourse (p. 23) because rap borrows from elements of rock and jazz to create a vernacular community that merits critical study (p.24).

Whitiker (1990) states that rap not only persuades and informs America's musical tastes, but America's fashion trends as well (p.34). Baggy clothes, goatee mustaches, and basketball sneakers are examples of rap music's impact on American youth fashion.

Method of Study

In order to critically frame vernacular discourse, Ono and Sloop (1995) divided the vernacular into two characteristics: cultural syncretism and pastiche (pp.21-22). Cultural syncretism, in terms of rap music, implies that rap is not only counter-hegemonic, but articulates a sense of Black community that does not function only to oppose dominant ideologies (p.22). For example, Public Enemy does not gear all of its music toward the establishment, but also aims for Black unity.

Pastiche implies that vernacular discourse may borrow from, without mimicking, popular culture (Ono and Sloop, 1995, P.23). Rap music uses the technology of sampling bits of popular music or parts of speeches by famous Black rhetors like Malcolm X and editing the sample into a rap, creating a new song (Ono and Sloop, 1995, p.23). Public Enemy has used sampling in almost all of its songs.

Since rap music functions as a form of vernacular that serves as protest and Black unity by using other elements of popular culture, rap music can be rhetorically studied.
The author will use the cluster method developed by Burke to analyze the lyrics as rhetoric. The cluster method helps rhetorical critics discover a rhetor's world view and help identify motive (Foss, 1989, p. 367). In terms of studying Public Enemy's lyrics, a rhetorical method best explains and generates a better understanding of Public Enemy, which leads to a better appreciation of Public Enemy and rap music in general. Using the cluster method will enable the author to chart the lyrics that cluster around the key lyrics in the music (Foss, 1989, p. 367). There are four steps in cluster analysis: identification of the key terms; charting of terms that cluster around the key terms; discovery of patterns in the clusters around the key terms; and naming of the rhetor's motive on the basis of the meanings of the key terms (Foss, 1989, pp. 367-368). Analyzing Public Enemy's lyrics will show that Public Enemy uses rap as a means of protest, just as musicians in the past used other forms of music as protest.

Music as Protest Rhetoric

Studies of music in a rhetorical perspective have been neglected in recent years. In the early 1970s, scholars recognized the need of studying music as rhetoric (Bloodworth, 1975, p. 305). Bloodworth explained that the recognition of music as rhetoric had evolved slowly due to "the establishment's frequent rejection of the youth culture and the fact that the present members of the establishment did not grow up in a generation that communicated its values through music" (Bloodworth, 1975, p. 309). The same holds true twenty years later. The current generation uses rap music to communicate youth values of the 1990's. Instead of neglecting rap, rhetoricians should analyze rap music and the hip-hop culture in order to understand how and why today's young people are so frustrated with the government, police, and society in general.

Not only have scholars neglected the rhetorical aspects of music, they have neglected the importance of music in youth subcultures. This study focuses on rap, a part
of the hip-hop youth subculture born in the 1970s. Other genres such as grunge rock and punk have their subcultures as well and are worthy of study because youth values are structured and reinforced by their music (Bloodworth, 1975, p.309). In order to understand youth, adults must understand the values and music of the young.

Popular music is the music of young people (Frith, 1981, p.181). Since the youth culture has no vote in the political system until the age of 18, members of that culture must use alternative methods of expression. Beginning in the 1960s, young people used protest music as a vehicle of communication of their attitudes and values (Bloodworth, 1975, p. 305). Protest rap music, along with music videos, contain the same elements for today's young.

Previous Studies on Protest Music

Although several studies have been done on protest music, few have focused on rap. Knupp (1981) studied protest songs from the Labor Movement and the anti-war movement of the 1960s. One of Knupp's conclusions was that rhetorical patterns suggest that protest songs are too negative and ambiguous to be directly attractive to anyone other than movement members or sympathizers (p. 388). What Knupp failed to realize was that protest songs do not necessarily have to come out of a specific social movement. Protest songs can come out of a subculture, like the hip-hop subculture, and appeal to people inside (and outside) of the subculture who are not specifically part of a social movement.

Stewart (1991) studied protest songs from the perspective that all protest songs belong to some movement. Stewart analyzed songs coming from movements ranging from the Anti-Slavery movement to the Antinuclear power movement. Stewart then classified themes in protest songs into 5 categories (p.241).

1. Innocent victim versus wicked victimizer
2. Powerful and brave versus weak and cowardly
3. United and together versus separate and divided
4. Important and valuable versus unimportant and worthless
5. Virtuous and moral versus sinful and immoral

Stewart concluded that these contrasts were more often "implicit" than "explicit" in the lyrics (p250). A study of protest rap songs, in particular those of Public Enemy, shows that contrasts are more explicit.

One of the limitations with Stewart's study is that he failed to use rap lyrics in his study. Perhaps Stewart felt that rap music did not merit study. Since rap does contain protest in some lyrics, rap can not be ignored in analyzing protest songs.

Ellison (1989) focused on words: what the lyrics actually said and how the music reinforced the impact of the words (p.1). Ellison emphasized Black music that was popular in the Western world, but placed little emphasis on rap music. Ellison claimed that "the coupling of Black music with protest is a natural alliance" (p.1).

Cooper (1988) listed songs released on the 45 rpm format from 1960-1985 that commented on social, political, and personal concerns (p.53). None of the songs presented were rap songs, probably because rap music had not yet reached the popularity necessary to qualify for Cooper's study.

Kizer (1983) conducted one of the best studies on protest music. She defined protest as "to verbalize a dissatisfaction with the status quo" (p.3). Kizer than gives 5 characteristics of protest songs:

1. Protest songs are expressions of discontent or dissent which imply or assert a need for change.

2. Protest songs may represent attitudes of one individual or a collection of individuals, such as members of a special interest group.

3. Protest songs may be adapted by and utilized as ideological statements of a social movement, whether originally written for that purpose or not, and the original composer no longer dominates as the message source.
4. Protest music may inspire the creation of other rhetorical messages.

5. Protest music may serve to stimulate thought, reinforce, or modify attitudes (p.4).

Denisoff (1983) defines persuasion songs as songs functioning to achieve six primary goals (pp.2-3):

1. To solicit and arouse outside support and sympathy for a social or political movement.

2. To reinforce the value structure of individuals who are active supporters of the social movement or ideology.

3. To create and promote cohesion, solidarity and high morale in an organization or movement supporting its world view.

4. To recruit individuals for a specific social movement.

5. To invoke solutions to real or imagined social phenomena in terms of action to achieve a desired goal.

6. To point to some problem or discontent in the society (usually in emotional terms).

Denisoff did not include rap music in his study because rap was in its infancy at the time of his research.

Stewart, Smith, and Denton (1994) focused on how protest music, through both verbal and nonverbal elements, performed a variety of persuasive functions for American social movements from the Revolution to the 1990s: Transforming perceptions of reality, transforming perception of society, prescribing courses of action, mobilizing for action, and sustaining a movement (p.204). The authors analyzed lyrics of 714 songs created for or adopted by social movements throughout American history and provided a review of literature on the nonverbal aspects of protest music (voice, instrumentation, melody,
rhythm) to show what persuasive functions dominated protest music and how the functions changed during various stages of long-lived social movements (pp.204-205). The result showed that most songs perform two or more of the five major persuasive functions and more songs perform all five major functions than perform a single function (p.22)). Stewart, Smith and Denton noticed that the nonverbal elements of the music complement the verbal (p.221).

Stewart, Smith and Denton did not include rap songs in their study, probably because rap music neither belonged to a particular social movement nor was it popular at the time. However, rap music contains many of the same characteristics of protest songs from previous social movements and merits study. Also, during the time in which most of the previous literature was produced, rap music was in its infancy and not readily available nor was it mainstreamed. Therefore, it is easy to understand why many studies concerning protest music do not include rap music.

This study adds a more current perspective to studies from previous decades. Studying rap music is important because its lyrics have the power to unite people and motivate action (Aldridge and Carlin, 1993, p.106). A major function of protest rhetoric is to unite people who feel oppressed and motivate them to act against oppressors. However, until Blacks take actions similar to those taken in the 1960’s, rap cannot be classified as a social movement.

As Bloodworth explains, the study of music is unique and must be treated with caution (1975, p.305). What makes music unique from traditional rhetoric is that music has a form of communication tie in with a commercial influence upon music as entertainment (Bloodworth, 1975, pp.305-306). Since music carries a commercial aspect, those who study music as rhetoric must decide whether the artist being studied attempted to express a genuine social concern in his/her songwriting or attempted to gain commercial success (Bloodworth, 1975, p. 306). Although rap artists profit from their music, protest rappers (such as Public Enemy) tend to sell fewer records and receive less
radio airplay then mainstream rappers (such as M.C. Hammer). It is beyond the scope of this paper to study sales and airplay trends in detail, but it is safe to say that M.C. Hammer, a mainstream rapper sells more records and is heard more on the radio than Public Enemy. However, since Public Enemy's music is not geared to mainstream radio, Public Enemy is more popular in the streets and sells fewer records than M. C. Hammer.

Public Enemy: The Latest Generation of Protest Music

Rose (1991) stated that "the advent of Public Enemy marked the observance of rap as a political cultural form" (p.276). Public Enemy merits rhetorical study for three other reasons: First, because their lyrics are aimed at casting light on racial injustices against Blacks and educating listeners about there injustices (Powell, 1991, p.250). Second, since Public Enemy's origin, themes in rap lyrics have grown more complex and direct. Third, Public Enemy's success opened the door to more politically and racially explicit material (Rose, 1991, p.276). Due to Public Enemy's impact on popular culture and society, it is useful to study its lyrics in order to find out why Public Enemy became a leader in rap music.

Public Enemy: The Group

Members of Public enemy (PE) hail from Hempstead, Long Island. The group consists of lead rapper Chuck D (Carlton Ridenhour), Flavor-Flave (William Drayton), Terminator X (Norman Roger, the DJ), Security of the First World (Bodyguards, also known as S1W's), Professor Griff (Minister of Information of the security force), and the Bomb Squad (producers), (Powell, 1991, p.250). Public Enemy openly supports Black Nationalist organizations such as the Nation of Islam and the Black Panthers (Powell, 1991, p. 250). Public Enemy encourages a support of Afrocentrism among
Blacks while simultaneously causing uncertainty and dismay brought on by the use of metaphors within Chuck D's lyrics and the military dress of the group on stage (Toop, 1991, p.178). For example, the songs "Miuzi Weighs A Ton" and "Sophisticated Bitch" can be construed by listeners as songs advocating misogyny and violence against women (Toop, 1991, p. 178). Since PE's lyrics can be interpreted many different ways, listeners are skeptical of the meaning behind the lyrics.

Public Enemy, although pro Black, has followers from different ethnic backgrounds. Samules (1991) provides a rationale for Public Enemy's large white following:

The root of Public Enemy's success was a highly charged theater of race in which white listeners became guilty eavesdroppers on the putative private conversations of the inner city that consciously rejected white icons and authority and set up an alternative ethic (p.26).

Public Enemy's album titles include: "Yo! Bum Rush the Show", "It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back", "Fear of a Black Planet", "Apocalypse '91: The Enemy Strikes Black", "Greatest Misses", and "Muse Sick-N-Hour Mess Age".

The group's logo consists of the silhouette of a Black Man, donning a hat, arms folded, standing at the crosshairs of a target scope. A person only needs to read the album cover and the logo to understand what PE is all about. After listening to the music, the listener must conclude for himself / herself which direction PE takes in terms of race, women, and violence.

Public Enemy is famous for the controversies surrounding its music. The incident in which Public Enemy stirred the most controversy occurred in 1989, when Professor Griff allegedly stated in an interview: "The Jews are wicked. And we can prove this....the majority of Jews are responsible for a majority of the wickedness that goes on across the globe" (Pareles, 1989, p. C-19). The interview led to Jewish protests, boycotts, and even a temporary break-up of Public Enemy (Powell, 1991, pp. 250-251). When PE
regrouped, Griff's responsibility as the Last Asiatic Disciple (which was nothing more than a symbolic community liaison assignment) failed, and Chuck D dismissed Griff, saying "The real enemy is the system, not a people... We are'nt anti-Jewish, we aren't anti-anybody. We're pro-Black, pro-Black culture and pro-human race... Professor Griff's new responsibility as Minister of Information was to faithfully transmit those values to everybody, not to sabotage them" (Pareles, 1989, August 11, p.C-3). Today, Public Enemy continues to shout protest lyrics, while Griff has become obsolete in the music industry.

Presentation of Chapters

Prior to analyzing PE's lyrics, the author will present a history of rap music and Public Enemy in Chapter 2. A detailed presentation of previous studies of music as rhetoric will be the focus of Chapter 3. Chapter 4 will provide an analysis of Public Enemy's lyrics using the cluster method, show conclusions and provide future implications of studying rap music.
CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF RAP

Many historical accounts of rap's roots consider rap a direct extension of African American oral, poetic, and protest traditions (Rose, 1994, p.25). Black Americans have developed from West Africa, and later in America, unique and distinct styles of language and music (Anderson, 1993, p.3). Rap is considered the latest type of this language and music. Verbally, rap is an extension of Black rhetorical strategies including signifying, jiving, and dozens, which employ the use of words in verbal competition. These verbal strategies testify to the importance that Blacks assign to verbal art and verbal contests (Powell, 1991, p.246) which is used primarily for survival in the ghetto (Anderson, 1993, p.3).

Rap evolved from toasts (Toop, 1991, p.29). Toasts are narrative poems consisting of rhyming stories, often lengthy, which are told mostly among men. Using violent, obscene, misogynist language, toasts have been used for decades to pass time in situations of enforced boredom, whether prison, armed service, or street corner life (Toop, 1991, p.29).

Protest rap grew from the African oral tradition. Protest, or message, rap lyrics evolved from the African griots (Toop, 1991, p.32). As mentioned in Chapter 1, griots are primarily known as praise singers who might combine appreciation of a rich employer with gossip and satire or turn their vocal expertise into an attack on the politically powerful or the financially stingy (Toop, 1991, p.32).

Although rap evolved from Black oral tradition in Africa and the United States, other factors contributed to the emergence of rap music into popular society: the role of
the postindustrial city in the hip hop culture and the musical elements of rap (Rose, 1994, p.25).

The Postindustrial City

Mollenkopf and Castells (1991) explain how changes occur in big cities when blue collar industry is replaced by white collar corporations:

[The term] postindustrial captures a crucial aspect of how large cities are being transformed: employment has shifted massively away from manufacturing toward corporate, public, and nonprofit services; occupations have similarly shifted from marginal worker to managers, professionals, secretaries, and service workers (p.6).

The postindustrial urban centers in American evolved due to a number of changes: The growth of multinational telecommunications networks, global economic competition, a technological revolution, new divisions of labor, and new migration patterns from Third World industrializing nations have contributed to the economic and social restructuring of urban America (Rose, 1994, p.27). The restructure of the workplace and the job market placed additional economic pressures on local communities and whittled down prospects for social mobility (Rose, 1994, p.27). A significant number of those living in the urban centers were Black. The young people formed neighborhood crews in order to pursue social status. Rap was used as a rhetorical method by urban youth to achieve their status.

Social Service Cuts

In the 1970s, American cities were losing federal funding for social services, industrial factories were replaced by information service corporations, and developers were buying real estate to be converted into luxury housing (Rose, 1994, p.27). The
working class was left with limited affordable housing, a shrinking job market, and limited social services. By the 1980s, the elite widened the gap between themselves and the poor by using local and federal subsidies to rebuild business and tourist zones (Rose, 1994, p.27).

Throughout the 1970s, New York City led other old, industrial metropolitan areas with population and employment decline (Mollenkopf, 1983, p.213). Due to the limitations of jobs and social services, New York City officials looked for federal aid to help the economy survive. In 1975, President Ford vetoed requests for federal aid in order to prevent New York City from filing for bankruptcy. City administrators were eventually able to negotiate a loan, but it was a loan accompanied with service cuts and strict repayment terms (Rose, 1994, p.28). Before the crisis finally ended, 60,000 city workers lost their jobs, and social and public services suffered drastic cuts. The city avoided default on its loan only after the teachers' union allowed its pension fund to become collateral for student loans (Walkowitz, 1990, p.204).

Accompanying the social service cuts was the housing crisis which continued into the 1980's. Between 1978 and 1986, the people in the bottom 20 percent of the income scale experienced a major decline in income, whereas the top 20 percent experienced most of the economic growth. During the same time period, 30 percent of New York's Hispanic household and 25 percent of Black households lived at or below the poverty line (Rose, 1994, p.28). The children born in the time period from 1978 to 1986 make up the current generation of rappers, who continue the urban tradition of using rap music as communication.

**Urban Renewal Projects**

Along with the preindustrial reshaping of New York, urban renewal projects throughout the 1960's and 1970's led by city planner Robert Moses, forced economically
disadvantaged people from different areas of New York City into the South Bronx (Rose 1994, p.30). Moses implemented several public works projects, highways, parks and housing projects that reshaped the profile of New York City (Rose, 1994, p.30). The most vital change made by Moses occurred in 1959, when work began on the Cross Bronx Expressway. The new highway was designed to link New Jersey, Long Island, New York and other areas in order to facilitate commuting into New York City (Rose, 1994, p.31).

Unfortunately, the Expressway was built through the most heavily populated working class areas of the Bronx (Rose, 1994, p.30). The path of the Cross Bronx Expressway required the demolition of hundreds of residential and commercial buildings. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, approximately 60,000 homes were razed, and 170,000 working and lower middle class people were relocated (Rose, 1994, p.31).

Construction caused so much demolition in the South Bronx that by the late 1960's to the mid 1970s, many landlords sold their properties to professional slumlords while shopkeepers sold their shops and began new businesses elsewhere (Rose, 1994, p.31). The Black and Hispanic residents in the South Bronx were left with scarce city resources and very little political power (Rose, 1994, p.31).

The effects of New York City's policies went unnoticed in the media until 1977, when a power outage blacked out New York, and stores were looted and vandalized. The poorest neighborhoods, including the South Bronx, were depicted by the media as "lawless zones where crime is sanctioned and chaos bubbles just below the surface" (Rose, 1994, p.33).

Although the media's images of the South Bronx were associated with loss and futility, the young people from the area began to build and use their own outlets for expression and identification (Rose, 1994, p.33). Blacks, Jamaicans, and Puerto Ricans reshaped their cultural identities in response to the condemning by city leaders and the press by forming the hip hop culture (Rose, 1994, p.34).
The Hip Hop Culture

The hip hop culture emerged as a source for youth of alternative identity formation and social status in a community whose older local support institutions had been all but demolished along with large sectors of its physical environment (Rose, 1994, p.34). The alternative identities were made by fashion, language, street names, and establishing neighborhood crews (Rose, 1994, p.34).

The crew, or posse, is a local source of identity group affiliation, and support system (Rose, 1994, p.34). Identity in hip hop culture is rooted in the specific, the local experience, and attachment to and status in a local group or alternative family (Rose, 1994, p.34). These crews are families with intercultural bonds that, like gangs, provide support in a complex and unyielding environment and may serve as a basis for new social movements (Rose, 1994, p.34).

Before hip hop, gangs ruled the streets of the Bronx (Fernando, 1994, p.87). Former gang members, such as Afrika Bambaataa, played vital roles in the development of the hip hop culture. Bambaataa explained the transition from gang member to hip hip:

Mostly everybody in the Bronx in the early seventies belonged to gangs. There were more youth in gangs than out of gangs...There were a lot of young ladies who got tired of the gangbanging [gang life] and got down on men who wanted to be a part of the gangs...Then you had the police force cracking down on gang activity. Crews picked up where the gangs left off...(Fernando, 1994, p.87).

Hip hop's self naming, as is the case in other African cultural forms, is a form of reinvention and self definition (Rose, 1994, p.36). Rappers, DJs, graffiti artists, and breakdancers all take on hip hop names and identities that proclaim their role, personal
characteristics, or expertise (Rose, 1994, p.36). DJ names associate with technology mastery and style: Cut Creator, Spinderella, and Terminator X. Rappers have nicknames that suggest street smarts, coolness, power, and supremacy: L.L. Cool J (Ladies Love Cool James), Kool Moe Dee, and EPMD (Eric and Parrish Making Dollars). Taking on new names gives those in hip hop culture some prestige in face of limited access to legitimate forms of status attainment (Rose, 1994, p.36).

Competition was at the heart of hip hop (Toop, 1991, p.14). Not only did it help displace violence and the refuge of drugs, but it also fostered an attitude of creating something from limited materials. The postindustrial city shaped the hip hop culture's cultural terrain, access to space, materials, and education (Rose, 1994, p.34). For example, rappers and DJs recorded their music on tape-dubbing equipment and playing it on portable "ghetto blasters" or "boom boxes". Due to school budget cuts, inner-city students did not have access to traditional forms of musical instruments. Therefore, rappers and DJs relied on recorded sound with which to compose their music.

Some of the early hip hop artists transformed obsolete vocational skills from marginal occupations into the raw materials for creativity and resistance (Rose, 1994, p.35). Many artists were trained for jobs in skills that were obsolete due to computer technology. For example, graffiti writer Futura graduated from a trade school specializing the printing industry (Hagar, 1984, p.24). DJs Red Alert and Kool Herc reviewed blueprints for a drafting company and attended auto mechanic school respectively (Rose, 1994, p.35). Rapper Grandmaster Flash learned how to repair electronic equipment at a vocational high school. Salt N Pepa worked as telemarketers at Sears while contemplating nursing school, while breakdancer Crazy Legs began dancing because his single mother could not afford Little League baseball fees (Rose, 1994, p.35). All of the artists had few resources, but they became entertainers by using the most advanced technologies and cultural forms (Rose, 1994, p.35).
Musical Qualities of Rap

In the earliest stages of rap music, DJs were the central figures. Early DJs would connect their turntables and speakers to any available electrical source, including street lights, turning public parks and streets into impromptu parties and community centers (Rose, 1994, p.51).

Two innovations that have been credited to DJ Kool Herc, a Jamaican immigrant, separated rap music from other popular music and set the stage for further innovation: (1) Kool Herc was known for his huge stereo system speakers (which he called the Herculords); and (2) his practice of extending obscure instrumental breaks that created an endless combination of dance beats called break-beats (Rose, 1994, p.51). Herc's samples of break-beats originated from New Orleans Jazz, Issac Hayes, Bob James, and Rare Earth (Rose, 1994, p.51). A few years later, Afrika Bambaata would use beats from European disco bands, rock, and soul. The break beats inspired breakdancers' moves and sparked a new generation of hip hop DJs (Rose, 1994, p.52).

When Herc played break-beats, he would speak phrases over the microphone like "rock the house" or call out the names of certain people who were at the party, just like the microphone personalities who DJed in Jamaica (Fernando, 1994, p.10). As mixing songs demanded more attention to the DJ, Herc put his friend Coke La Rock on the microphone to coax the dancers and give the party a feel. Vocal entertainment became necessary for crowd control, because people were watching the DJ perform and not dancing. Adding voice to the music soothed any tension that would have led to violence (Fernando, 1994, p.10).

As more DJs emerged, their work was disseminated through local "battles" (Contests), club gigs, and the circulation of tapes on the streets. DJ performances were
recorded, copied, traded, and played on ghetto blasters. Also, Black and Puerto Rican Army recruits sold and traded tapes in military stations throughout the world (Rose, 1994, p.53).

Grandmaster Flash is credited with perfecting and making famous the art of scratching (Rose, 1994, p.53). Scratching involved playing the record back and forth using a hand. Using two turntables, one record is scratched while the other record plays. In addition to scratching, Flash is also famous for creating the backspin, which allowed for the repetition of phrases and beats from a record while rapidly spinning the record backwards. The development of the backspin extended Kool Herc's use of break-beats and served as an impetus for sampling technology (Rose, 1994, p.53).

Flash also added vocal entertainment to his show. Two friends, Cowboy and Melle Mel, performed "boasts" during shows (Rose, 1994, p.54). Hagar (1984) explains Mel's technique:

Relying on an inventive use of slang, the percussive effect of short words, and unexpected internal rhymes, Mel began composing elaborate rap routines, intricately weaving their [Mel's and Cowboy's] voices through a musical track mixed by Flash. They would trade solos, chant, and sing harmony (p. 48).

Rapping forged its way into center stage, while DJ moved to the role of accomplice. Rappers and DJs formed their own crews and "battled for local supremacy in intense verbal and musical duels. Local independent record producers realized that these battles began to draw huge crowds and approached the rappers and DJs about producing records" (Rose, 1994, p.56).

In 1979, "Rappers Delight" by the Sugarhill Gang, became the first release on Sugarhill Records in Englewood, New Jersey (Toop, 1991, p.80). The co-president of Sugarhill Records, Sylvia Robinson recognized that her children liked the rap tapes they received from the streets (music by Grandmaster Flash was on the tapes) (Toop, 1991,
Robinson thought that if her children like rap, children all of the world would like rap. Grandmaster Flash recalls hearing "Rappers Delight":

For three years things were going great, then all of a sudden you hear on the radio, 'to the hip hop, hippedy hop, you don't stop!' I'm saying to myself, "I know of anybody else from here to Queens or Long Island that's doing this. Why don't I know of this group called the Sugarhill who? The Sugarhill Gang. They don't know of me and I don't know them. Who are these people?" They got a record on the radio and that was haunting me because I felt we should have been the first to do it. We were the first group to really do this-someone took our shot (Toop, 1991, p.76).

Within the next 3 years, Grandmaster Flash, Afrika Bambaataa, Kurtis Blow, and the Treacherous Three were all commercially marketed (Rose, 1994, p.56).

One of the reasons rap made its way on the radio airwaves is that disco and format radio during the 1970s replaced rock and Motown on music stations (Morley, 1992, p.xvii). Disco crossed from the dance clubs to the pop charts. As music audiences grew, radio stations owners developed playlists and formats targeting select demographics, thus beginning what Morley (1992) calls "musical apartheid" (p.xviii). After disco lost its popularity, Black radio stations played conservative ballads and up tempo soul acts. By the early 1980s, the Black street experience was not represented on radio: Rap filled a vacuum left by the success of the Urban Contemporary radio format (Morley, 1992, p.xviii).

By the early 1980's, rap became available commercially. Toop (1991) explains how rap grew:

Rap had the double virtue of being romantic and daring yet easily packaged. It packaged itself as a self-contained show with DJs, MCs, graffiti artists, and breakdancing. By 1983 the fad was spread further by films "Wildstyle" and "Flashdance", and in 1984 came the "Breakin", "Beat Street" deluge. Ten years on, hip hop has finally reached the mass international market (p.134).
Even though rap, with the help of Hollywood, increased its popularity, it became more harsh, upfront, and seemingly uncommercial (Toop, 1991, p.158). Two incidents generated a spark into rap: the birth of Def Jam records and the rise of Run-D.M.C. into the popular music mainstream. Russell Simmons, founder of Def Jam (with Rick Rubin) explains that state of rap before Def Jam records and Run D.M.C.:

The most commercial rap records, the ones that radio is so happy to play, don't sell. Most of the rap that is selling is the most rebellious and the loudest (Toop, 1991, p.158).

Simmon's younger brother Joe, along with Darryl McDaniels and DJ Jam Master Jay, formed Run-D.M.C. which bridged the gap between the "confused" rap scene of 1984 and the vibrant renewal of 1985 (Toop, 1991, p.159). Interestingly, Run-D.M.C. hails from Hoollis, Queens and not the "ghetto". Village Voice writer Nelson George explains that middle class youth tend to be intrigued by street culture:

What's always been surprising—at least to me when I attended St. John's University in the late '70s—is how fascinated with street culture the children of Hollis were...I know the ghetto was nothing to romanticize, yet here were kids like Russell who grew up in their own houses, with access to cars, furnished basements, both parents and more cash than my friends ever knew acting (or trying to) as cool as any street kid (Toop, 1994, p.161).

As rap music's commercial status increased throughout the 1980s, groups from ghettos in other major cities including Houston, Miami, and Boston explored rap with more complex themes (Rose, 1994, p.58). Also, groups such as Eric B. And Rakim, L.L. Cool J, and KRS-One emerged. However, by 1987, rap again was faced with a period of transition in sound. Teddy Riley used rap to introduce a new hyperkinetic, swinging soul music called jack swing into R&B (Toop, 1991, p.174).

Rap had a lack of focus in 1987 that can be attributed to a stream of songs containing nothing more than consciousness self-praise/insulting (dissing) lyrics, which
restricted any kind of verbal expansion and blocked a clear view of wider issues in which rap was a player (Toop, 1991, p. 174). One group, Public Enemy, gave rap music a focus.

The rap group chosen for this study, Public Enemy, released "Yo! Bum Rush the Show" on Def Jam. The production team included Bill Stepheny, Hank Shocklee, Eric Sadler, and Carl Ridenhour (Chuck D). "Yo! Bum Rush the Show" moved rap beyond materialism into the recurrent themes of agitation and propaganda (Toop, 1991, pp. 175-176). Public Enemy's debut on the rap scene was five years in the making.

In 1982, Chuck D was a graphic arts major at Adelphi University. During his spare time, Chuck performed as an emcee and made flyers for a group of mobile DJs from Long Island which was run by Shocklee (Fernando, 1994, p. 137). Bill Stepheny, Chuck's radio show partner at Adelphi, sent rap across the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Suffolk County from his radio show (Fernando, 1994, p. 137). When Chuck D, Stephney, and Shocklee merged, Chuck was able to develop his lyrics at live gigs and radio shows while Shocklee created radio mixes that inspired the musical mayhem of PE (Fernando, 1994, p. 137).

By 1986, Stepheny was working in promotions at Def Jam. Meanwhile, Chuck D released a lackluster single on an independent label and fell from the rap scene because he "didn't want to see another of his singles in the 99 cents bin" (Fernando, 1994, p. 167). However, Rick Rubin at Def Jam was excited about the demo tape "Public Enemy #1" (which he received through Stephney) and repeatedly called to persuade Chuck to make a record, but Chuck kept saying no because he was working to support his wife and child (Fernando, 1994, p. 167).

While Rubin proceeded to call Chuck daily for about six months, Stepheny thought of an idea that would work well with the press and the political times by combining the political level of The Clash, a rock band, and Run-D.M.C. (Fernando, 1994, p. 167). Together with Chuck and Shocklee, Stepheny further developed the
concept and took the name Public Enemy from the demo tape (Fernando, 1994, p. 168). "Yo! Bum Rush the Show" was assembled for about $17,000, and launched the career of one of the most influential groups in rap (Fernando, 1994, p.168). Tate (1990) discusses how PE became so influential:

Since we are not only dealing with regenerated sound here but regenerated meaning. What was heard 20 years ago as an expression has now become rhetorical device, a trope. Making old records talk via scratching and sampling is fundamental to hip hop. But while we've heard more grooves recycled for paradoic effect or shock value ad nauseum...PE manages something more sublime...(p.124).

The release of "Yo! Bum Rush the Show" began a trend in rap toward political lyrics. Public Enemy made issues such as racism, education, drugs, and Black Pride fashionable in the realm of rap music.

With rap's focus on "message" lyrics, artists on the West Coast broke through with a style commonly known as "gangsta rap", which portrays the lives of gang members. Although Philadelphia's Schooly D and the Bronx's Boogie Down Productions are credited as being the first hip hop gangstas, Los Angeles and its surrounding areas are known mostly for gangsta rap (Cross, 1993, p.24).

Due to the availability of inexpensive technology, rap went through a dramatic sound change in the late 1980s (Toop, 1991, p.191). Digital samplers with expanded memories could run multiple loops of long and short sections of music simultaneously, along with drum sound samples and other noises, which could then be saved on a floppy disk to be kept by a producer (Toop, 1991, p. 191). The new technology rendered the DJ obsolete, and shifted rap's focus to the producer, which explains why rappers such as Dr. Dre produce their own music as well as other artists' music.

By 1992, hip hop expanded to such an enormous degree that comments by Sister Soljah became an issue during the Presidential campaign; Oliver North, Charlton Heston,
Jesse Helms, Presidents Bush and Clinton have all spoken out against rap. In addition there have been several controversial court cases involving rappers. These cases included the 2 Live Crew obscenity charges challenging First Amendment Rights, the sampling cases against the Beastie boys; Biz Markie and De La Soul and finally the murder trial of Snoop Doggy Dogg. Adding to these controversies The Police Association attempted to lobby the shareholders of Warner Records to force Ice T to remove "Cop Killer" from the "Body Count" album (Cross, 1993, p.58), a situation which eventually forced Ice T to sever his ties with Warner and create his own record label.

Public Enemy, no stranger to controversy, found some in 1992 with its "By the Time I Get to Arizona" music video. The song (and video) condemns politicians in the state of Arizona for not observing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. The video shows scenes depicting the assassinations of politicians. The song and video created a paradox between the violent imagery in the song and video and Dr. King's nonviolent legacy (Mydans, 1992, January 11, p.6).

Because of controversies stirred by Public Enemy, Ice T, and other rappers such as Snoop Doggy Dogg and Tupac Shakur, boycotts of rap music by radio stations such as KACE in Los Angeles in 1993 and entertainment industry giant Time Warner, Inc. in 1995 raise questions on where rap will be in the 21st century. Ice T provides the first answer:

These special interest groups won't stop the music. Rap and hip hop will still be around long after the presidential race is over, long after the politicians crawl back into their holes (Philips, 1995, September 28, p. A13).

Rap Music and Society

Rap music seems to have become a factor in American popular culture due to its lyrical themes, argot, and clothing styles, so it is useful to explore the effects of rap on
society (positive and negative) as well as the music itself in order to decide if the negative criticism of rap is valid and to gain insight into the effect of rap music on American youth and American morals. The following section discusses speculations of how rap affects race relations and young people.

Before discussing rap music's effects on society, it is important to note that most negative criticism of rap music points to "hard-core" rap, which includes gangsta rap as well as activist rap such as Public Enemy and sexually explicit rap such as 2 Live Crew. Hard-core rap is distinguished by explicit, violent and sexual lyrics. Mainstream rap such as M.C. Hammer receive much less criticism by the media, politicians, and the government, and is not included in this analysis.

Rap and Race Relations

It should come as no surprise that rap is popular among Whites because White people have been embracing African-American styles since the blackface minstrel shows of the nineteenth century (Leland, 1992, p.51). Since the 1800s' race has been "the great counundrum at the core of American Music" (Leland, 1992, p.51).

During periods of integration, the common ground shared by Black and White music listeners was rock and roll, the term itself a euphemism for the sex act (Leland, 1992, p.52). Now, as the races pull apart, the racial insecurities focus more on violence, the shared ground is often the violence of rap. Music, which once drew people together now mediates between them, providing a metaphor for the separation (Leland, 1992, p.52). The White listener's attraction to the hard-core rap may be due to the fact that rap is the most extreme measure of the division between the races (Leland, 1992, p.52).

Critics of rap have expressed their concern that rap music promotes racism in its lyrics. Samules (1991) voiced the acceptance of racism in the United States through rap:
Gangster and racist rap foster a voyeurism and tolerance of racism in which Black and White are both compliant, particularly when Whites treat gangster rap as a window into ghetto life (p.24).

According to Pareles (1992), rap sounds like a young Black man shouting about how angry he is and how he's going to hurt people:

Rap's internal troubles reflect the poverty, violence, lack of education, frustration, and rage of the ghetto. Hating rap can be a synonym for hating and fearing young Black men who are also the stars of rap (p.1).

Public Enemy, using terms like "cracker", "other man", and "jack" in its lyrics, have received criticism for "racist" lyrics. Chuck D answered those who claim that Public Enemy promotes racism:

You can't talk about attacking racism and be racist. We're not racists, we're nationalists, people who have pride and want to build a sense of unity amongst our own (Newman, 1989, p.87).

Not all critics believe rap has a negative effect on race relations. Lusane (1993) defined the positive role of rap music on different races:

More than any other political movement or leadership segment in the Black community, in the current period, the hip hop culture has resisted the racial and class backlashes unleashed in recent years by Reaganism, the war on drugs, and family values. While much of Black leadership has surrendered or made a tactical retreat, the rappers have move to the frontlines of the struggle and, in return, have become more threatening than ever to those who hold power. The more conscious rappers are trying to deconstruct and destroy racist images of Black youth while at the same time construct a new humanity and new society that is more egalitarian and just than the one in which they live and function (p. 49).

The question of whether Public Enemy and other rap artists promote racism in their lyrics is not as important as searching for the answer of how to resolve race tensions.
in the United States. Rap music certainly has the ability and power to help ease racial
tensions, but should not be a scapegoat for a problem in American society that not only
was here before rap, but served as an impetus for rap's creation.

Rap Music's Negative Influence on Society

One of the negative aspects of rap is the lifestyles of rappers outside of the
recording studio. Snoop Doggy Dogg was recently acquitted of murder, while 2 Pac
(Tupac Shakur), Flavor Flave, Slick Rick, and Dr. Dre have both police records and gold
records. One reason for the real-life violent tendencies of some rappers stems from rap's
origin, where street level authenticity has always been the pride of rap, causing some
rappers to feel compelled to act like roughnecks in everyday life instead of solely in the

Leland (1993) believed that the arrests of star rappers such as Shakur, Flavor
Flave, and Snoop Doggy Dogg demonstrate how little power rap actually has in the real
world (p64). Rappers should be, according to Leland, "Classic American success stories;
young men of humble origins who through sheer talent and hard work rose to the
mansion on the hill" (p.64). However, no matter how successful they become, rappers
feel threatened by the dangers of the poorest communities in Black America (Leland,
1993, p.64). The music, the industry, and the audiences all push the performers back
toward their roots and reward them for staying close. The rappers are not villains says
Leland, but "just unwitting accomplices" (p.64).

The race issue and the lifestyles of the rappers are not the only controversial
aspects of rap music. The current debate on how much American children are affected by
popular culture has focused on rap music, particularly in the government, government
agencies, and the major corporations who sell the music. Gary Bauer, president of the
Family Research Council, argued that rap music is bad for society's youth:
If you expose children to uplifting and noble material, you're more likely to have noble citizens. If children are walling in sexual images and violence, that is bound to have an impact on those who are most vulnerable (Lacayo, 1995, p.27).

Children who are most vulnerable to the sexual images and violence portrayed in rap (as well as other elements of popular culture) are those who are unable to separate reality from the fantasies in the music and think its okay to do just about anything (Chapp, 1995, p.26).

Some representatives of the record and movie industries believe that entertainment has a significant impact on children. Martin Davis, former chairman of Paramount admitted that "sometimes you have to have corporate responsibility and remember the [music's] impact on children" (Lacayo, 1995, p.28). Other critics believe that music has become X-rated because some record industry executives and artists have refused to take responsibility for the influence their music has on young people (Chapp, 1995, p.26).

David Geffen, film and record producer, supports the music industry by stating that there isn't much that companies can do to restrain artists from recording "X-rated" material once record companies have the artists on their rosters: "Artists make records, not record companies...no record company tells them [the artists] what to record". However, record companies have told artists to either remix (re-word) the lyrics or record new songs when music appears that is questionable to record executives (Lacayo, 1995, pp28-29).

Other music executives insist that raunchy songs sell because the music is a reflection of today's society and see nothing wrong with selling obscene music because of First Amendment rights (Chapp, 1995, p.26). C. Delores Tucer, Chair of the National Political Congress of Black Women, opposed the music executives:
Our kids have adapted the gangsta culture as a direct result of the music. We have kids killing kids, little boys raping little girls and both boys and girls memorizing every word of those violent and pornographic songs. Why can't rap songs talk about a Black man doing to work downtown in his three-piece suit? (Chapp, 1995, p.26)

Another way rappers reach American youth is through advertisements. Rappers, most notably Ice Cube, have marketed malt liquor, a product common in Black neighborhoods (as portrayed by Public Enemy in "1 Million Bottlebags"). A New York City teen-ager expressed his concern about the effects of rappers who promote alcohol on children:

The first time I hears a St. Ides [malt liquor] commercial, I heard a whole slew of rappers. When it played again, I realized it couldn't have been later than 9 O'clock, so there were still little kids listening. When you have big-name rappers like Ice Cube and all his cronies talking about 'get your girl in the mood quicker and get your jimmy thicker'- little kids believe whatever they hear. And, in most stores, if you want St. Ides and you're 13 years old, if you have the money, they [the store clerks] don't care. It's bad (Leland, 1993, p.51).

The bottom line is that rap music, as well as other forms of popular culture, has an impact on America's young people. Not only are rappers entertainers, but they are also heroes and teachers to the young, and it is important for our youth and its parents to pay attention to what the rap artists teach and to call them on it if and when they teach violence, hat or misogyny (Leo, 1992, p.19).

Positive Elements of Rap Music

Some critics of rap feel that there is so much emphasis on the negative aspects of rap that the positive qualities of rap are overlooked. Rose (1994) suggested that many attacks on rap music "offer profoundly shallow readings of its use of violent and sexist
imagery and rely on a handful of provocative and clearly troubling songs” without
describing rap “in ways that encompass the rage of passionate, horrifying, and powerful
storytelling in rap and gangsta rap” (p.36). Rose added that the complexity of some rap
lyrics is overlooked in criticism due to “genuine ignorance and in part because exploring
the facets of rap’s lure would damage the process of creating easily identifiable villains”
(Rose, 1994, p.36). In other words, many critics emphasize the negative in rap in order to
provide rap as a sacrificial lamb for society’s problems. Rose continued her thoughts on
how the disproportionate negative criticism of rap affects Blacks and the rest of the
general public:

Hip hop culture and rap music have become the cultural emblem for America’s
young Black city kids, only a small percentage of which participate in street
crimes. The more public opinion, political leaders, and policy makers criminalize
hip hop as the cultural example of a criminal way of thinking, the more imaginary
Black monsters will surface. In this fearful fantasy, hip hop style becomes a code
for criminal behavior, and censoring the music begins to look more and more like
fighting crime (p.36).

One way in which critics can learn not to criminalize rap music is to understand
the reasoning behind the themes and lyrics of rap, which express a need for social,
cultural, and political action (Krohn and Suazo, 1995, p.152). Only by understanding rap
and knowing the meanings of the argot articulated in Black lyrics will society be able to
each a general understanding of the needs of an exploited community (Krohn and Suazo,
1995, p.152)

Rappers have also stood up for their music. Public Enemy’s Chuck D has been one
of the more vocal artists outside of the recording studio who justifies the messages in rap:

The average rap fan respects [rappers] far more than they do Quayle, Clinton, and
Bush. Rap asks many questions that these politicians can’t answer and provides
insight and alternative to the mainstream opinion. It brings common sense to the
table in a time when sense is not common (Philips, 1992, p.A-13).
Rap artists bring their common sense to their fans by acting as media representatives for the inner city. B-Real from Cypress Hill claimed that "we're journalists...I'll take an experience that involves on of us [in the group] or a friend, and I'll explain what happened and why" (Goldsmith, 1992, p.52). Chuck D defines rap music as "Black America's TV station...Black life doesn't get the total spectrum of information from anything else" (Goldsmith, 1992, p.52).

One reason why rap music draws attention by critics, politicians, and the media is the fact that people outside the inner cities are attracted to the genre. Chuck D gave his point of view on how rap sparks the suburbs:

You tell me how a White kid in Indiana is going to pick up a slice of Black life if not from a video or a rap record. Not from the school system, not from the news, not in his household...and he's not going to go into the neighborhood himself to get a face-to-face confrontation with some s--t that could be termed dangerous (Leland, 1993, p.52).

According to some proponent of rap music, rap evolves from self-sufficiency in the Black community. Producer Bill Stephney gave his viewpoint on how rappers positively represent Blacks by being self-sufficient:

[Rap] represents the self determining practices some of these black conservatives always talk about. Here were people who couldn't get their music on the radio, so they said 'screw it, we'll create our own mini radio stations in parks, our own lingo, our own code of behavior and dress'. The schools had all dropped their musical programs, so they invented a music played on turntables. Isn't that the self-sufficiency that Thomas Sowell, Clarence Thomas, and [George] Bush prescribe? (Leland, 1993, p.52).

Despite these positive thrusts, the hip hop culture must confront its contradictions and weaknesses. While calling for revolution, too often rap epitomized the racist, sexist, individualist, and materialist tendencies that it rails against. These reactionary impulses
prevent rap from projecting a liberating and perspective paradigm for the future (Lusane, 1993, p.49).

The public must also be aware of the consequences of immature audiences being exposed to explicit material. Therefore, parents should monitor their children's music purchases and listening (Krohn and Suazo, 1995, p. 152). Rappers must similarly be held responsible for their actions and be mindful that they are influencing millions of youngsters whose prime role models are as close as the nearest television screen (Krohn and Suazo, 1995, p. 152). Unfortunately, not everyone is conscious and knowledgeable about the distinction between fiction and reality (Krohn and Suazo, 1995, p. 153).

Critics of rap music may also fit into the category of not knowing the difference between fiction and reality in terms of public perception of the influence of music on society. While politicians such as Bob Dole blame music along with television and movies for causing a destructive society, the public thinks otherwise. According to a Time Magazine poll conducted in 1995, 55% of the people surveyed agreed that if political candidates want to improve the nation's moral climate, there are more important issues to concentrate on than sex and violence in the entertainment industry (Lacayo, 1995, p.30). However, none of the "more important issues" were revealed by those individuals conducting they survey. If people who feel that the entertainment industry should not be blamed for American moral problems, those people should then offer their opinions on what causes the moral problems in order ease the moral pain in America.
CHAPTER 3

MUSIC AS RHETORIC

Communication scholars have explored many facets in which music and lyrics serve as communication. Previous studies showed that not only do music and its words communicate, but song artists and performers use music as persuasion, especially in social protest. Anti-war songs, labor union songs, and rap music contain elements of communication and persuasion.

Much of the research on music and communication builds itself on previous studies of music and song lyrics. Since previous research on the communication aspect of music bridges other studies of songs as communication, the research is presented in chronological order of publication.

Kozokoff and Charmichael (1970) declared that songs, particularly protest songs, were oral media of persuasion that were largely ignored by those who study persuasion. The authors then questioned whether protest singers such as Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, and Bob Dylan could be considered rhetoricians (p. 295).

In order to test the persuasive intensity of protest songs, Kozokoff and Charmichael (1970) proposed three assumptions about protest songs: 1) Protest songs will produce significant attitude change toward concepts in the direction advocated by the song; 2) Protest speeches, directly adapted from the experimental songs, will be made more effective in producing change in attitude than the protest songs; 3) The combination of protest songs and speeches will significantly effect more attitude change than either songs or speeches alone (p. 298).
The experimenters composed three songs, the lyrics of which advocated, in one case, against Americans fighting in Vietnam, in another against professional boxing, and for 18 year old vote in the third. Each song was recorded with the accompaniment of a banjo. The lyrics were then converted into brief speeches. Ninety-seven undergraduate speech students took the attitude pretest and post test, generating measurements in attitude change (Kozokoff and Charmichael, 1970, pp-298-300).

The results of the experiment showed that: 1) None of the songs only conditions (where the subjects heard the songs but not the speeches) resulted in attitude change that was significant; 2) The speeches that were adapted from the songs were only significantly effective in change of attitude for the boxing speeches and 3) The speech-song combination resulted in significant attitude change for all three concepts (Kozokoff and Charmichael, 1970, p.301).

The study showed that songs can add to attitude change resulting from a speech or social action and concluded that songs of social action had the potential to be used independently from movements and become rhetorical vehicles in themselves (Kozokoff and Charmichael, 1970, pp.301-302). These authors performed one of the earliest experiments on songs in terms of persuasion that not only led to future studies of music, but also allowed scholars to develop methods on how to study music, lyrics and communication.

Irvine and Kirpatrick (1972) felt that traditional forms of criticism and theory were limited (in terms of music) in communication discourse (p.272). Therefore, the authors suggested a possible approach to the development of a theoretical system that accounted for the rhetorical impact of music on contemporary culture and a critical system that displayed a means of analyzing and utilizing music in rhetorical exchange (p.272).

The researchers began by listing assumptions about music as a form of rhetoric: 1) The musical artist is engaged in a rhetorical activity to the extent to which he or she
manipulates a symbol system to react and modify the dominant values of both general and specific audiences; 2) The musical form operating independently is capable of generating rhetorical impact to the extent that the music influences the listener in modifying judgments about philosophical, religious, and aesthetic values; 3) The musical form changes the rhetorical message from its normal discursive state. The transformed message, carried with the musical form, possesses a more diverse and more intense kinesthetic appeal, whereas the traditional discursive form of the message emphasizes intellectual participation on the part of the listener. The musical form necessarily involves and stimulates the body and its capacity for sensation; 4) The credibility of the musical artifact influences the level of interaction between the audience and the message (Irvine and Kirkpatrick, 1972, pp.272-273).

After showing how music serves as persuasion, the authors assert, "...music derives its rhetorical impact from the participatory insight that is developed in the formation of amplificative meaning in both the artist and the listener" (Irvine and Kirpatrick, 1972, p.273). Amplificative meaning, according to the authors, involves the use of metaphor which results from contrasting or complimentary association of various musical forms that are arranged in one of three patterns: 1) Familiar patterns of musical variables with those patterns that are unfamiliar in the mind of the artist and/or the listener; 2) Familiar patterns of musical variables with other familiar patterns; and 3) Unfamiliar patterns of musical variables with still other unfamiliar patterns of variables (Irvine and Kirkpatrick, 1972, pp.273-274).

The patterns function on one of two levels of activity, one in the mind of the artist (act), and one in the mind of the listener (event). An act is described as purposeful, whereas an event is an extension of the original purpose embodied in specific responses (Irvine and Kirpatrick, 1972, p.274). In this study the researchers listed seven variables which have the potential to affect rhetorical transaction in music:
1) The ethical reputation of the source (ethos);
2) The nature of the instrumental source;
3) The lyrical structure of the song;
4) The melodic structure of the song;
5) The nature of the chord structure and progression;
6) The structure of the communicative situation;
7) Rhythm, which 'carries the rhetorical impact and serves as a vehicle of
developing amplificative meaning by physically appealing to the human muscular
system by limiting life rhythms and psychologically appealing by identifying with
a person's sound, space, and order' (pp. 276-277).

Irvine and Kirkpatrick (1972) then created models for amplificative meaning
based on these seven variables, stating that a song artist's intention may either be
rhetorical (to persuade or reinforce) or expressive (self-fulfillment of the artist), (p.277).

The authors created four models (paradigms): Rhetorical/ persuasive;
rhetorical/reinforcive; expressive/persuasive; and expressive/reinforcive. The paradigm
used in song analysis is contingent on the listener's relationship (or potential relationship)
to the variables within the song (p.284).

In the rhetorical/persuasive paradigm, a familiar variable pattern combined with
an unfamiliar variable pattern generates tension between the variables for the listener.
Rhythm causes a resolution and links the unfamiliar variable to the familiar variable
making the amplificative meaning persuasive (Irvine and Kirpatrick, 1972, p.280).

The rhetorical/ reinforcive paradigm contains two variable patterns which are
familiar to the listener. With the rhythm emphasizing the linkage between the variables,
the song generates further support for a listener's attitude, opinion, or belief (Irvine and
Kirkpatrick, 1972, p.281).

Time is a factor in both expressive paradigms since neither of the variables
patterns generates an experiential capacity for the listener. Therefore, time influences the
level of amplificative meaning Irvine and Kirpatrick, 1972, p.282). In other words, as an
event in the variable pattern passes through time, the mind builds, on the basis of the time
experience, "...an experiential capacity which is unique to one or the other, or both of the variable patterns" (Irvin and Kirkpatrick, 1972, p.282).

The resolution factor determines whether an expressive song is persuasive or reinforcive. If, over time, meaning for only one unfamiliar variable pattern brings familiarity to the listener, the song becomes persuasive. However, if, over time, meaning for both patterns of variables develops familiarity, then the song becomes reinforcive (Irvine and Kirkpatrick, 1972, p.287). The researchers concluded by making the following suggestions for future researchers: 1) Develop, through factor analysis, a grammar of the inter-relationship of linguistic and musical variables; 2) Compile a body of criticism examining protest music, including the interaction of lyrical and musical variables; 3) Generate studies correlating rhetorical theory and the body of literature in music and persuasion; and 4) Study how movement-centered music evolves as the social movement progresses and the impact of the music on other rhetoric within the movement (p.284).

Irvine and Kirkpatrick (1972) offered an in-depth, detailed approach to analyzing music. However, for no apparent reason, no other research in this review used Irvine and Kirkpatrick's paradigms. In any case, the study provides a workable framework that can produce different results to different critics since much of the music analysis bases itself on listener experience and each listener has his or her own experience.

Researchers did, however, examine movement-centered songs as recommended by Irvine and Kirkpatrick. Thomas (1974) agreed that analysis of how songs are shaped (or reshaped) in persuasive campaigns provides and effective method of studying the persuasiveness of songs (p.260). The author focused on folk singer Joan Baez as an example of persuasive song in a contemporary movement against the draft, the Vietnam war, and violence in general (p.260).

Baez, in her songs, used magnetic songs of persuasion, which according to Thomas, (1974) "...appeal to the listener for the purpose of attracting the nonparticipant
to a movement or dieology or, for the participants, the purpose of creating social cohesion and evaluating morale" (p.262). Baex constructed her songs of persuasion in two ways: using a familiar tune with new lyrics ("Kumbaya" for example); and by using tradition as a transfer agent (using labor songs to link labor union struggles with contemporary struggles for social change) (Thomas, 1974, pp. 253-264).

Thomas (1974) also noticed that lyrics and music are not the only factors in the persuasiveness of songs, but communication settings (such as Woodstock) and emotional factors (use of songs with a situation-remedy structure such as "Revolution" and "Carry it On" (pp.264, 266). Like Kozokoff and Charmichael, Thomas states that songs as persuasion in social movements are less effective when used alone as compared to use in conjunction with meetings, rallies, and speeches (Thomas, 1974, p.267).

Throughout the first half of the 1970s, much of America (and its scholars) focused on the Vietnam War. However, Mohrmann and Scott (1976) analyzed songs from World War II and claimed that songs from World War II revealed general cultural values, attitudes toward the war, and the role music assigned itself to the war effort (p.145). Also, the authors believed that the rhetorical study of World War II songs could increase the understanding of how society employed the messages of songs in a wartime situation, which would lead to an "...increased awareness and appreciation of the rhetorical potentially the uses of the popular song" (Mohrmann and Scott, 1976, p.145).

The researchers divided the songs from the period of World War II into three clusters determined by the dominant referent in the song: The war in general; the armed forces; and the home front (Mohrmann and Scott, 1976, p.147).

The authors discovered irony in the war in general cluster. Songs about the war were the most militant of the songs analyzed, however, the most popular songs in the cluster were not militant. The less militant songs, according to Mohrmann and Scott, (1976) were closer to what the public expected of the songs (p.150).
When song writers looked to the armed forces for themes, the musical portraits were reassuring by not mentioning what happened on three day passes or nights on the town, but, instead, the songs portrayed the American serviceman as a grown up Boy-Scout and discussed boy-girl relationships within the context of the armed services (Mohrmann and Scott, 1976, p.152).

Songs from the homefront cluster tended to be either sentimental or novelty numbers. Instead of emphasizing patriotism, songs about the homefront urged a promised loyalty and determination (Mohrmann and Scott, 1976, p.154).

The authors concluded that: 1) The songs of World War II did not become a vehicle of propaganda, but functioned as moral builders; and 2) a song is just a song, an "...unsuitable medium for complex persuasive appeals...the effective range of communication [in songs] seems limited and confined to the reinforcement of existing predisposition's" (Mohrmann and Scott, 1976, p.155). Their conclusions contradict those of Irvine and Kirkpatrick, who claimed that songs have the ability to not only reinforce existing values, but also serve as persuasive tools, especially in movement-centered situations.

Scholars have realized that music and lyrics are not only used as persuasion and reinforcement. Both (1976) analyzed song lyrics in terms of oral poetry (p. 243). The mode of oral poetry, like song lyrics, is an "extemporaneous manipulation" of formulas which facilitates the burden of the poet (songwriter) who has to keep adding lines to the narrative and accommodate the audience, which is always hearing something it knows and keeps attention to the words (Booth, 1976, p.243).

One unit of a song formula, according to the author, is redundancy, which entails borrowing a line from another well known song. Borrowing is most effective when the line borrowed is known to the specific audience of the song. Redundancy can also take place by repetition of song words, antithesis, alliteration and double entendre, where a
word has two justifications because it makes two kinds of sense (Booth, 1976, pp.245-246).

In order to appreciate how an audience experiences what song says, the listener must consider the vocal performance of a song, which gives the listener an impulse to perceive the sung words as if the words were spoken words, spoken to the listener in particular (Booth, 1976, p.246). The listener's perception that the lyrics serve as a mode of conversation fosters a sense of identification between the singer and the audience that the singer is singing for the listener in that the singer sings something that is in extension by the listener, drawing the listener into the self offered in the song (Booth, 1976, p. 246).

In terms of narrative songs, the listener does not identify with a character in the song, but, according to Booth, with the teller and his/her implicit attitudes or implicit state. For example, sad narrative songs give the listener the experience not only of the suffering character but of the sympathizing teller (Booth, 1976, p.247). In a song where the singer addresses a second person (I love you, for example) the audience identifies with the speaking voice, not of the person spoken to (Booth, 1976, p.247)

The author concluded that accumulations of effects of songs may proceed beyond the first experience of the song, and that a song must be recognizable or familiar on surface to its audience. The song may offer modification (not radical change) and enrichment to the audience that is willing to listen to the song (Booth, 1976, p.249).

An interesting aspect about Booth's conclusion is the claim that a song must, on the surface, be recognizable or familiar to an audience. If, however, a listener encounters an unrecognizable or unfamiliar song by a familiar or recognizable performer or songwriter, the song may have some sort of effect on the listener.

In the 1980's, scholars geared song communication research away from theory and toward music and lyric analysis ranging from country music and southern Dixie to film songs and music by Bob Dylan.
Carter (1980) examined the role of songs in the Industrial Workers of the World's (IWW) rhetoric to determine how the songs were used and to explore the rhetorical functions of the lyrics (p.365). Songs were sung on the picket lines, in jail, at trail and defense meetings, at free speech demonstrations, at membership rallies, and in the union hall (p.371).

The language in the songs were simplistic, but the message of the songs contributed to the solidification of the IWW membership; the polarization of the IWW from the mainstream of public opinion; giving the worker courage to organize, fight and hope by focusing on the enemy and a prospect for brighter future for the worker (Carter, 1980, pp.373-374).

Song rhetoric not only appeals to social movements and labor unions, but specific regions of America as well. Smith (1980) contended that country music, an integral part of the national music media with national audience, maintained a distinctively southern rhetoric (p. 165). In order to determine the geographical influences of country music, the author analyzed lyrics of approximately 2300 country songs in search for references to geo-political units or regional designations (Smith, 1980, p. 165).

The first stage of the analysis revealed 110 songs that contained at least one reference to a specific geographical location or region, with 75% of those references aiming at the south or southern states (Smith, 1980, p. 166). Further analysis of the songs identified 46 songs containing attitudinal statements of southerners about specific locations: dissatisfaction, a northern odyssey, and a desire to return home (Smith, 1980, p.166).

Analysis of the 110 songs also showed that 21 non-southern states were not mentioned at all, however, the 17 non-southern states that were mentioned were portrayed as cold, overcrowded, hurried, stressful, dirty, impersonal, or all of the above (Smith, 1980, p. 170). The south, on the other hand, was viewed in the songs as a region of strong family ties and close personal relationships, with a sense of place and community, good
food, improving race relations, and a prospect for future economic growth (Smith, 1980, p.17)). The author concluded that the persuasive strategies of country music shapes the nation's perception of the south and the south's own self-image (Smith, 1980, p.172).

Folk songs, along with country music, serves as mode of communication. (Roth (1981) investigated the lyrics of folk songs sung by characters in films directed by John Ford. Ford used songs to employ development of character and theme while simultaneously facilitating audience identification, which is important in establishing a common view of motives with members of a large, differentiated audience (pp. 390-391).

Of the 112 films Ford directed, the researcher chose eight, including "The Grapes of Wrath", "Tobacco Road", and "The Last Hurrah". Roth selected the films based on the type of film, the collaborators of the film, the years of the film, and availability of the film. The analysis intended to suggest the characteristics of all 112 of Ford's movies (Roth, 1981, p.391).

The results of the analysis showed that: 1) Ford employed song lyrics to communicate characterization and ideas (affirmation of community and nature for example); 2) Ford relied on familiar folk songs instead of less recognizable songs, witch suggests a foundation for interaction between actors and movie watchers. If the songs facilitate shared emotional responses, the viewers are able to participate in Ford's communal rituals (Wroth, 1981, p. 396; Booth).

Focus on song communication research shifted to popular music when Gonzalez and Makay (1983) analyzed the potential rhetorical form of songs performed by Bob Dylan, one of the most striking figures on the contemporary scene due to his stature as a poet, song writer, performer, and advocate (p.1). Dylan's rhetoric are "...significant messages which mirror the thoughts and the feelings of people around the world (p.2)

The researchers focused on rhetorical ascription and the first gospel songs Dylan performed on stage. Ascription intended to show "...the listeners ability to associate their lyrical and musical features with Dylan's pre-conversion songs" (Gonzalez and Makay,
In other words, using amplificative meaning (Irvine and Kirpatrick and redundancy (Booth), the authors determined an ascriptive value of Dylan's gospel songs by determining an association of the gospel songs by Dylan's secular songs to Dylan's pre-gospel music which assesses the rhetorical potentiality of Dylan's Christian advocacy (Gonzalez and Makay, 1983, p.2).

In terms of songs, the authors claimed that words of low ascriptive value pertained to an aspect of a song which is unfamiliar and/or unattractive to the audience. A high ascriptive value indicated familiarity, association, and feelings of attraction (Gonzalez and Makay, 1983, p.5).

The researchers divided redundancy into two categories: intrinsic redundancy (borrowing from self) and extrinsic redundancy (borrowing from other themes) and showed how Dylan used both in his gospel songs (Gonzalez and Makay, 1983, p.5).

Gonzalez and Makay (1983) concluded that: 1) Dylan's musical sound has represented the anger, protest, and the contradictions of intense passion that, by the use of instruments, may achieve powerful symbolic significance; 2) The high ascriptive value of Dylan's Gospel music works not only to create interest in the music, but to clarify and emphasize the messages and ideas which compose Dylan's artistic depiction of Christian salvation (Gonzalez and Makay, 1983, p.13).

In order to shed more light on the communicative qualities of popular music, Chesebro, et al. (1985) explored answers to four questions generated about communication in popular songs: 1) What patterns, types, or kinds of human relationships are portrayed in popular music?; 2) How are human problems and difficulties resolved in popular music?; 3) What values are portrayed in popular music?; 4) How has popular music changed from 1955 to 1982? (p.116). The researchers answered their questions by first defining the nature of popular music and its target audience. They defined popular music (using theories compiled by Irvine Arvin and Kirpatrick (1972), Booth (1976) as a repetitive form, restating principles by borrowing
lines or phrases from other recognized forms and by the use of clichés, rhyme, antithesis, alliteration, punning and double entendre. Music persuades by associating familiar musical patterns with the familiar, unfamiliar, or immediate experiences (Chesebro et al., 1985, p.117).

Next, the authors stated that popular music is unique in its emphasis on the nondiscursive, meaning that when popular music exerts its influence, the human body itself must be immediately and directly affected (Chesebro et al., 1985, p.117). The authors add, elements of music are physiological and touch our bodies in a greater variety and succession of different ways than the spoken word (p.117). A third component of the nature of popular music, according to the authors, is that music resides in the artistic rather than the scientific domain by involving a collection and paternation of personal experience that, when the listener hears the song, he or she may ascribe his or her own personal experiences to the music. By using melody, rhythm, etc. music is designed to involve the emotional state, state of consciousness, or mental state as it is experienced within the self and others (Chesebro et al., 1985, pp.117-118).

The researchers noted that popular music is aimed at a target audience of record buyers, 80% of whom are people under 30 and 75% of whom are between the ages of 12 and 20 (p.118). In addition, the authors assert that music listeners are selective about their listening habits. Rather than accepting all forms of music, the audience is composed of multiple subgroups, which are unified by their preference of a type of music and are stable and relatively predictable (p.118).

The method employed by the researchers consisted of dramatistic origins, holding that theater and its cluster of terms function as metaphor for examining rhetoric (Chesebro et al., 1985, p.119). Each communication system is conceived as either a dramatic or social construction by members of that system. The constructions then involve a mutual decision to endorse, reset, or ignore certain situations. roles, values.
beliefs, attitudes and purposes (p. 119). The dramatistic perspective of communication shares the choices controlling the examination of music (p.119).

The songs examined were compiled from the 15 best selling songs as determined by Billboard magazine for each year between 1955 and 1982. In all, 392 songs were analyzed (Chesebro et al., 1985, p.119). The researchers then generated five communication systems: ironic, mimetic, leader centered, romantic and mythical. Each system defined the central characters apparent intelligence compared to that of the audience and the central character's ability to control circumstances compared to that of the audience (p.119).

After compiling the communication system, the authors operationilzed the behaviors which distinguished each individual system using Burke's four stages of dramatistic process: 1) pollution (norm violation); 2) guilt (responsibility for pollution); 3) purification (action taken to eliminate guilt); and 4) redemption (Type of system created as a result of the three stages) (p.120).

After analyzing the songs, the researchers produced their results in terms of overall thematic context, four decades, five musical eras, and future trends and cycles. The results showed that popular music is a reflection of young America's changing attitudes which have displayed an increasingly ironic perspective of human relationships (p.115). For example, tensions exist in human relationships, such as employer-employee relationships in songs like "9-5", but the relationships must be retained (p.131).

Most analysis of song communication focused on either an artist or a sample of songs. Holmberg (1985) was the first to analyze the rhetorical power of music in one particular song (p.71). "Dixie" had an instant and lasting impact in bolstering sectional and regional desire because of its music as much as its original lyrics. "Dixie" has also made its way into American psyches today as a commonplace for the "southern" way of life (Holmberg, 1985, p.72). Lastly, "Dixie" is used extensively to tell a story, sell an
idea, or promote a product. The popularity of "Dixie" with various lyrics suggests that much of its impact stems as much from the music as much as the lyrics (p.72).

The author analyzed the music of "Dixie" in terms of its melodic structure (intervals), chord progressions, harmonic fluctuation, rhythm, and instrumentation (Holmberg, 1985, p.80). Holmberg concluded that "Dixie", because of its musical craftiness, touches the spirit and is a convincing rhetorical artifact which causes the body to dance, sing, or march. Also, the identification of "Dixie" with the south occurred as much from its musical effect as for its lyrical appeal (p.80).

For no apparent reason, rhetorical studies of music declined during the second half of the 1980s. During that time, however, rap music emerged into the mainstream and presented communication researchers with a different genre of music to analyze in the 1990s.

Aldridge and Carlin (1993) analyzed the lyrics of rapper KRS-One and gave four justifications for rhetorically studying rap music: 1) the emphasis on lyrics in rap; 2) rap's ability to move audiences to action; 3) the similarities between rap themes and themes of Malcolm X; and 4) the themes in rap music (such as self-help) focus on reclaiming values of the African American community (p.105).

Before the analysis, the authors stated that the study of rap "...presents challenges to the assumptions of traditional rhetorical methodologies" (Aldridge and Carlin, 1993, p.108). First, rap is a unique product of Black culture and the cultural elements of rap are not included in the assumptions of traditional methodologies. Second, rap challenges assumptions about audience and persuasion (p.108). Rhetorical criticism assumes that there is a target audience whom rhetors attempt to persuade by adapting their message to be most persuasive to the target audience (p.109). Rap neither has a single target audience (white youth, Black elite, the media, other rappers, etc.) nor do rappers adapt their lyrics to be persuasive to a specific target audience, but aim lyrics to many audiences within a single rap song (p.109).
To account for the methodology problems concerning the study of rap, the authors relied on an Afrocentric approach created by Molefi Asante. The goal of Afrocentric criticism (Afrocentric being the completeness of the process of coming to know what it is to be Black) is to determine how much a rhetor contributed to the unity of symbols, the elements of chaos, the making of peace among conflicting views, and the creation for an opportunity for harmony and balance (Aldrige and Carlin, 1993, p.108).

The researchers, then, based their criteria of evaluating KRS-One's lyrics on the overall context surrounding the lyrics and the lyrics themselves using Asante's tools of knowing the cultural and historical base of the discourse, understanding the cultural uses of the European language, and having an awareness of the goal of Afrocentric criticism (Aldrige and Carlin, 1993, pp. 108-109). Lyric examination combined Asante's tools in conjunction with theoretical concepts such as praise, blame, identification, division, scapegoating, imagery, narrative, and mythication (Aldrige and Carlin, 1993, pp. 109-110), which are similar to concepts of social movement rhetoric.

Analysis of KRS-One's lyrics showed that KRS-One develops three major themes in his rhetoric on violence: 1) White critics are racist in their criticism which is demonstrated by the hypocrisy in their arguments; 2) The cause of violence is the desire for material goods rather than personal integrity; and 3) Self respect will produce the means for legitimate wealth (Aldridge and Carlin, 1993, p.111).

The authors summarized the analysis by stating that KRS-One's overall response to the issue of violence is ironic in the sense that KRS-One shuns violence, yet accepts violence in self-defense, which explains why some critics claim (before closely examining the lyrics) KRS-One advocates violence in his lyrics (p.113). Implications of KRS-One's rhetoric, assert the authors, may, along with other forms of "activist" rap, constitute a "movement" within the Black community similar to the civil rights movement (p.114). In addition, KRS-One's lyrics are rhetorically important from the
standpoint that the lyrics challenge Black youth to change their behavior in response to life's circumstances instead of simply accepting ghetto life (p. 114).

Chapter 4 adds to the previous studies of music as communication by analyzing the lyrics of Public Enemy. A rhetorical analysis of Public Enemy's lyrics will add to previous research of music by showing that music can serve as protest without directly acting as part of a social movement. Forms of protest, such as music, which function as protest without physically acting as protest (riots, marching, etc.) is defined as symbolic protest. A rhetorical analysis of Public Enemy's lyrics will show that Public Enemy's music serves as symbolic protest but does not serve as part of a social movement.
CHAPTER 4
LYRIC ANALYSIS

The first step in cluster analysis is to select the most important terms used in the rhetorical artifact (Foss, 1989, p. 368). The importance or significance of terms in a rhetorical artifact is determined by the frequency or intensity of the terms (Foss, 1989, p. 368). A word or phrase that is used often by a rhetor is likely to be a key term in the rhetor's thought, therefore, a repeated word or phrase is chosen as a key term. Also, a word may not appear repeatedly in a rhetorical artifact, but the word (such as an obscene word) may be extreme in degree, size, strength, or depth of feeling conveyed (Foss, 1989, p. 368).

In cluster analysis, the selected terms are often classified as god and devil terms (Foss, 1989, p. 368). God terms are terms which describe what is best or perfect for the rhetor while devil terms represent the negative or evil for the rhetor (Foss, 1989, p. 368).

After identifying the key terms, the critic lists the clusters around the key terms in each context in which the key term appears (Foss, 1989, p. 368). Words that cluster around the key terms may appear in close proximity to the key term or may suggest a cause-and-effect relationship between the key term and another word, implying that one term depends on the other or one term is the cause of another term (Foss, 1989, p. 369).

Next, the critic finds patterns or linkages in the charting of the clusters (Foss, 1989, p. 369). For example, if the term "freedom" usually appears with "security", then the critic can speculate that the rhetor's view of freedom is constrained by the notion of security (Foss, 1989, p. 369).
An agon analysis, which allows the critic to interpret the results of the cluster analysis in order to discover how the symbols function for the rhetor (Foss, 1989, p. 374), can be performed to identify "the dramatic alignment or oppositions among key terms" (Avalos, 1989, p. 389). The critic looks for terms that either oppose each other or suggest confusion or ambiguity on the part of the rhetor about the terms (Foss, 1989, p. 369). The critic may also find key terms that oppose other key terms, which presents a conflict or tension in the rhetor's world view (Foss, 1989, p. 369).

The final step in cluster analysis is to use the patterns found in the analysis to identify the rhetor's motive (Foss, 1989, p. 369). The critic develops several possible motives for the rhetoric from the meanings attributed to the key terms and then chooses one for which the best support can be gathered from the data found in the artifact and the analysis (Foss, 1989, p. 369).

The cluster method is the best method to use in this study because the cluster method allows the critic to identify Public Enemy's motive. Similar methods can be utilized in order to identify key terms in Public Enemy's songs, but cluster analysis, because it identifies motive, is the best method for this study.

Four of Public Enemy's albums were used in order to find the key terms in Public Enemy's lyrics: *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*, *Fear of a Black Planet*, *Apocalypse 91: The Enemy Strikes Black*, and *Muse Sick-N- Hour Mess Age*. Analysis of Public Enemy's lyrics in the four albums found four main clusters of themes that emerged throughout its songs: "Government", "Media", "Black", and "White". Within three of the clusters, several sub-clusters of terms were found in order to explain Public Enemy's perceptions of the government, the media, Blacks, and Whites.

**Government**

Public Enemy presented its view of the government by use of icons (images such as the American Flag) showing that the government is authoritative and deceitful. Using
icons, Public Enemy described the government as "Red, White, and Blue", "Star Spangled Banner", "Uncle Sam", "Jackass", and "Elephant". The icons used are metaphors for patriotism and political parties. However, Public Enemy created its own metaphors in "Aintnuttin Buttersong":

```
Uncle Sammy wears the pants  
Tom's his bitch  
When he's swingin a switch  
Rather stick the poor up  
And give it to the rich
```

The implied meaning of the verse is that the government (Uncle Sam) controls certain types of Blacks (Uncle Tom) by keeping the poor Blacks poor and allowing the rich to benefit by getting richer.

Public Enemy later gave its metaphor for the American flag in "Aintnuttin Buttersong":

```
The red is for blood shed  
The blue is for the sad songs  
The stars what we saw when we  
Got our ass beat  
Stripes whip marks on our backs  
White is for the obvious
```

The American flag metaphor, in this case, was used by Public Enemy as a metaphor for the effects of government imposed slavery on Blacks. Public Enemy used another icon in "War At 33 1/3":

```
Can I live my life without 'em treatin  
Every brother like me like we're holdin'  
A knife alright time to smack Uncle Sam
```
The message in this verse is simple: Attack the government for falsely accusing Blacks of being criminals solely because of their being Black.

The second view of the government presented by Public Enemy is authoritative. By using terms such as "White law", "Master", "Majority", and "Organized side", Public Enemy views the government as authoritative and White-dominated. One example is displayed in "So Whatcha Gone Do Now?"

```
The white law set you up raw
When you have his trust in killin us

Slaves to the rhythm of the master
Buck boom buck another
Neighborhood disaster

A gun iz a gun iz
A mother fuckin gun
But an organized side
Keep a sellout niga on the run
```

The message derived from these verses is that the white-dominated law enslaves neighborhood Blacks by allowing, and even forcing Blacks to commit crimes on one another.

Public Enemy, through its lyrics, portrayed the government as deceitful by using terms such as "devils", "liars", "corrupt", and "racist". One example can be found in "Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos".

```
4 of us packed in a cell like slaves-oh well
The same motherfucker got us livin' in his hell
You have to realize-what its a form of slavery
Organized under a swarm of devils
Straight up-word 'em up on the level
The reasons are several, most of them federal
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In this example, Public Enemy compared imprisonment for civil disobedience to institutionalized slavery brought on by the government. It stands to reason, therefore, as seen through these examples, Public Enemy views the government as an icon, a white dominated authority figure, and a deceitful system which promotes racism.

Media

Public Enemy's perception of the media is twofold: First, the media is absurd; second, the media is, like the government, deceitful. Areas included under the umbrella of "media" include critics, writers, newspapers, television, radio, and magazines.

Using terms such as "whack" and "insane", Public Enemy portrayed the media as absurd, especially in "Don't Believe the Hype":

Writers treat me like Coltrane, insane
The meaning of all of that
Some media is the whack
Yo, Chuck, they must be on the pipe, right?

The three verses show Public Enemy perceived the media as insane; so insane that some members of the media are under the influence of drugs while compiling their stories.

Public Enemy not only felt that the media can be absurd, but also deceitful. Words like "liars", "phony", and "slander" show Public Enemy's distrust of the media. "Don't Believe the Hype" provides an example:

You believe its true, it blows me through the roof
Suckers, liars, give me a shovel
Some writers I know are damn devils
For them I Say don't believe the hype
Another example of Public Enemy's lack of trust in the media can be found in "I Stand Accused":

So now I'm speaking out
Against those
That flip the way the way the story goes
One never knows
Who be flippin the script

So many phony smilin faces
Traces of slander
Got em comin outta funny places

According to these verses, Public Enemy not only criticized the writers for being false, but the anonymous editors who rewrite stories as well.

Examples of Public Enemy's anti-media rhetoric show that Public Enemy understands that the media have power to shape public perceptions of reality. Also, according to Public Enemy, the media can manipulate news. Therefore, Public Enemy shows a blatant distrust of the media.

Black

Public Enemy describes Blacks from two perspectives, protagonist and antagonistic. The protagonist perspective shows Black pride and unity. The antagonistic perspective shows how Blacks have been and are mistreated by other Blacks.

Terms used by Public Enemy in order to describe Blacks from a protagonist point of view include "brother", "own", and we". "Bring the Noise" provides an example.

We got to demonstrate, come on now,
They're gonna have to wait
Till we get it right

In "Brothers Gonna Work it Out", Public Enemy again emphasizes Black unity.

United we stand, divided we fall
Together we can stand tall

Public Enemy, in its lyrics, portrays Blacks from an antagonistic perspective by using words such as "nigger" and "brother". "Welcome to the Terrordome" explains how Blacks become their own enemy:

Every brother ain't a brother cause a color
Just as well could be undercover

Every brother ain't a brother
Cause a Black hand
Squeezed on Malcolm X the man
The shootin' of Huey Newton
From the hand of a Nig who pulled the trig

It's weak to speak and blame somebody else
When you destroy yourself

In "1 Million Bottlebags", Public Enemy blamed Black alcoholism for Black hostility toward other Blacks:

Yo niga what's up
Now he's hostile to a brother lookin' out
But I aint mad I know what he about
He's just a slave to the bottle and the can

How many times have you seen
A Black fight a Black
After drinkin' down a bottle

In "So Whatcha Gone Do Now?", Public Enemy condemned gang violence:

Can't understand why a man
Gotta use a trigga
On his own, supposed to act grown
As the lyrics show, Public Enemy gives Blacks some of the blame for their problems. Violence, gangs, and alcohol all contribute to what Public Enemy perceives as Black oppression.

White

In Public Enemy's lyrics, Whites are portrayed as antagonists by use of terms such as "cracker", "sucker", "other man", and "Jack". "Who Stole the Soul?" Provides an example:

Why when the Black move in, Jack move out
Come to stay Jack moves away
Ain't we all people?

The lyrics ask why Whites move out when Blacks move into "White" neighborhoods. In "Can't Truss It", Public Enemy recaptured time on a slave boat:

Dockin' this boat
No hope I'm shackled
Plus gang tackled
By the other man swingin' the rope

Reminding the listener of slave days set the listener up for Public Enemy's argument that today, Blacks are still treated as lesser citizens than Whites. One example is found in "By the Time I Get to Arizona":

Yeah, he appear to be fair
The cracker over there
He try to keep it yesteryear

Pushin' and shakin' the structure
Bringin' down the babylon
Hearin' the sucker
That made it hard for the brown
The above verses provide an example of how Public Enemy used Whites as antagonists in its lyrics. Unlike the previous three clusters, Public Enemy did not give multiple depiction's (sub-clusters) of Whites. Public Enemy, did, however, imply in its lyrics that Whites control the government through icons, authority, and deceit.

Analysis of the clusters found in Public Enemy's lyrics show that Public Enemy aims to: (1) Convey its negative perception of the government and media by portraying them as deceitful; (2) Shed light on the fact that racism is a dominant factor in society by portraying Whites as antagonistic; (3) Alert the Black community that they are as responsible as the government, media, and Whites, for problems in the Black community; and (4) Persuade Blacks to unite and act against injustice brought on by institutionalized racism and self-destruction.

Discussion

Rhetorically analyzing rap music not only adds to previous research on music, but draws similarities and contradictions to earlier studies of music as communication. This section presents how the results of the analysis of Public Enemy's lyrics compare with previous studies performed on music.

While Knupp (1981) concluded that rhetorical patterns in protest songs suggest that protest songs are too negative and ambiguous to be attractive to people outside of a social movement (p. 388), the results of the analysis of Public Enemy's lyrics show that, especially those which show Blacks as protagonistic, are positive and can draw listeners who are not Black but can still relate to problems facing Blacks from the listeners' own experience (Booth, 1976). Also, Public Enemy's songs can be considered protest music even though Public Enemy is not part of a social movement (symbolic protest). However, analysis of Public Enemy's music shows that protest rap may have the ability to
function as a focal point of a social movement and/or serve as the impetus of a social movement.

Stewart (1991) also felt that all protest songs belonged to a social movement. Even though Public Enemy's raps do not belong to a movement, their lyrics fit into two of Stewart's categories of protest songs, innocent victim (Blacks) versus wicked victimizer (government, media, Whites), and important and valuable (government, media) versus unimportant and worthless (Blacks) (p. 241).

Public Enemy's lyrics also fit into Kizer's (1983) characteristics of protest songs. First, Public Enemy expresses discontent and a need for change, especially in terms of government and Black hostility toward Blacks. Second, Public Enemy represents an attitude of one or more individuals. Chuck D, writer or co-writer of Public Enemy's songs, shows his attitude and attitudes of other Blacks by speaking in the first person. Third, Public Enemy's lyrics, as stated earlier, may be used in a social movement, but yet have not. Fourth, music by Public Enemy inspired the creation of other rhetorical messages such as gangsta rap. Fifth, Public Enemy's music has the ability to stimulate thought, reinforce or modify attitudes of not only Blacks, but members of the media and the government who are Public Enemy's scapegoats.

In terms of Denisoff's (1983) six goals of persuasion songs, Public Enemy achieves three. First, in its lyrics Public Enemy promotes cohesion, solidarity, and high morale to Blacks. Second, in songs like "Shut Em Down," "Brothers Gonna Work it Out," and "Don't Believe the Hype," Public Enemy invokes solutions to social phenomena (racism) to achieve a desired goal (equality for Blacks). Third, Public Enemy uses emotion by swearing and name calling to explain its discontent toward racism and Black inequality.

Public Enemy fails to achieve three of Denisoff's goals of persuasion songs: Arouse support for a sympathy for a social or political movement, reinforce the value structure of individuals who are active supporters of the ideology, and recruit individuals
for a specific social movement. Unless and until Public Enemy's music becomes a part of a social movement, the previous three goals will not be achieved. However, persuasion (protest) songs, as shown by the analysis of Public Enemy's rap lyrics, need not be part of a social movement in order to be labeled as protest songs.

In relation to Denisoff's (1983) six goals of persuasion songs, Public Enemy's lyrics fit into three of Stewart, Smith, and Denton's (1994) five persuasive functions of protest songs. First, by portraying the government and media as deceitful ("devils"), Public Enemy transforms perceptions of reality. Before Public Enemy, few, if any, music groups openly challenged the "reality" that the media and the government were truthful. Second, by blaming Blacks as well as Whites for problems in the Black community, Public Enemy transforms perceptions of society. Instead of perceiving problems in society as Black or White, Public Enemy, in its music, defines problems in society as everybody's problem, not just problems of one race. Third, as mentioned earlier, Public Enemy prescribes courses for action in songs like "Shut Em Down," "Brothers Gonna Work it Out," and "Don't Believe the Hype."

Until evidence is found that Public Enemy's music mobilizes people for action or sustains a movement, Public Enemy's music cannot be considered a social movement or part of a social movement. However, Public Enemy's music has the potential to mobilize Blacks and sustain a movement. Whether or not Public Enemy's music becomes part of a social movement or not remains to be seen.

Comparing the results of the analysis of Public Enemy's rap lyrics to previous research performed on protest music suggests that protest music does not need to stem from a social movement. Protest music that is not derived from social movements contains the same elements of persuasion as does music from social movements (expressing a discontent of the status quo and a need for change, providing solutions of social problems, and inspiring other rhetorical messages, for example) and serves as a form of symbolic protest. Therefore, Public Enemy, although not a part of a social
movement, provides persuasive themes in its music identical to Labor Union songs, Anti-War songs, and songs from the civil rights movement. Understanding that protest songs do not need to be part of a social movement can lead to more research on the persuasiveness and messages of protest music and other forms of symbolic protest.

Suggestions for future research

This study focused on the lyrics of rap group Public Enemy in terms of social protest. However, while focusing solely on lyrics and not on the musical qualities of Public Enemy, the analysis "...disregards much of the song's meanings and impacts, which produces only certain kinds of understanding of the songs" (Rein and Springer, 1985, p. 252). Further study of Public Enemy and rap music in general should "...account for musical arrangements, new recording and instrumental technology, and aesthetic conventions of different styles in addition to the lyric content" (Rein and Springer, 1985, p. 253). As mentioned in Chapter 2, advanced technology plays a key role in rap. Therefore, instruments and samples merit consideration in rap analysis which would lead to "more accurate conclusions when researching rap music as communication" (Rein and Springer, 1985, p. 254).

In terms of public opinion on rap music and its effects on society, more surveys and ethnographic studies of youth cultures need to be conducted instead of relying on politicians, industry executives, and the media for opinions on rap music. Furthermore, if the general public feels that rap and other forms of entertainment are not responsible for moral decay, viewpoints on what causes moral problems in American society should be brought forward and analyzed. Although rap music has both positive and negative effects on society, acts such as sexual misogyny and violence were a part of society before rap music and should not be perceived as an effect of rap.

Since many of America's youth (and adults) have problems separating fiction from reality in music and other forms of entertainment, critics should explore the rhetoric in music, television, and film in order to differentiate between the fictions in entertainment
and real life situations. The obvious difficulty arises because some forms of entertainment, such as rap music portrays "real-life" situations. However, listeners need to understand that every situation in life comes with options, and the "correct" option in real life may not be portrayed in the music because the "correct" option may not be entertaining enough to sell a record or receive radio airplay. On the other hand, the "incorrect" option revealed in the music may not be the best option in a real life situation. Songs can be replayed again, but life cannot, and adults need to take time to emphasize that point to today's young people.

Conclusion

One of the goals of this study was to define rap music as protest rhetoric. Rap music is critical of a White dominated society that not only is watching, (or ignoring), the problems of Blacks, but, as seen in analysis of Public Enemy's songs, is a contributing force to problems facing Blacks.

Rap Music serves as a platform for the people in the inner city who feel they have no other voice with which to vent their frustrations. Public Enemy represents the inner city by, in its music, presenting negative attitudes about the government, the media, racism, and Black on Black crimes.

As protest music, rap provides youth with a force for identity, solidarity, and emotional reinforcement. Public Enemy, as Black nationalists, emphasizes Black pride and unity in songs such as "Brothers Gonna Work it Out" and "Power to the People."

While producing songs that argue that Blacks experience life as an on-going crisis, rap testifies that Blacks can survive the most impossible conditions. Public Enemy, in "Welcome to the Terrordome," "Rebel Without a Pause," "Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos," and "Shut Em Down" testifies to the fact that Blacks have the ability to persevere, even under the most extreme hardships.
This study also presented a history of rap music as an extension of Black oral traditions and explained how rap evolved from the hip hop culture in the streets of the South Bronx, one of many urban areas affected by the changes in the job market, social service cuts, and urban renewal projects.

The art of rapping evolved from toasts, which are narrative poems consisting of lengthy rhyming stories. While using violent, obscene misogynist language, toasts were used to pass times of boredom in prison, the armed service, and on the street corner.

Protest rap grew from the African griots. Griots were primarily known as praise singers who used their vocal abilities to attack the politically powerful and the financially rich.

Not only did rap music grow from Black oral traditions in Africa and the United States, the postindustrial city (a city where blue collar industry is replaced by white collar corporations) played a key role in the birth of rap music due to the changes in technology, economic competition, new divisions of labor in the work force, and new migration patterns from Third World nations, which restructured the economic and social patterns of American cities.

In the 1970's cities, most notably New York City, were losing federal funding for social services while industrial factories were replaced by information service corporations. Also, developers were buying real estate in order to build luxury housing. The working class people, especially those in the South Bronx, were left with limited affordable housing, a shrinking job market, and limited social services. In conjunction with the changing job market and the social service cuts, New York City faced a housing crisis which lasted through the 1980s which saw most minorities living below the poverty line.

While preindustrial New York City was evolving, urban renewal projects forced many economically disadvantaged people from different areas of New York City into the
South Bronx. The renewal projects, including the Cross Bronx Expressway, left minorities in the South Bronx with scarce resources and little political power.

Even though people in the South Bronx had few resources, the young people in the area used those resources in order to form their own identity, the hip hop culture. The hip hop culture served as social status and as an alternative identity through fashion, language, street names, and neighborhood crews, who, like gangs, were families with intercultural bonds that provided support in a complex environment.

Due to school budget cuts caused by the reshaping of the South Bronx, inner-city students did not have access to music instruments. The neighborhood crews used turntables, microphones, portable tape recorders, and speakers in order to create rap music.

Using the cluster method, this study analyzed the lyrics of one of rap music's most recognized and controversial groups, Public Enemy. The analysis served to show that rap music does more than exploit violence and misogyny, but serves as a means to shout Black frustrations and unify people. Also, studying lyrics of Public Enemy intended to show that protest music does not have to serve as an impetus to or be part of a social movement, as indicated by previous researchers.

Four main clusters were found in the analysis of Public Enemy: "Government", "Media", "Black", and "White". Within three of the four main clusters (Government, Media, and Black), several subclusters were found in order to demonstrate Public Enemy's attitudes towards the government, the media, Blacks and Whites.

Public Enemy, in songs such as "Aintnuttin Buttersong," "War at 33 1/3," "So Whatcha Gone Do Now?," and "Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos" described the government by use of icons (images), as authoritarian, and as deceitful. Icons used by Public enemy included "Red, White, and Blue" and "Uncle Sam". Authoritarian terms included "Majority" and "Organized Side". Deceitful terms included "devils" and "corrupt".
The media, as described by Public Enemy, is absurd and, like the government, deceitful. Songs "Don't Believe the Hype" and "I Stand Accused" used terms "insane", "liars", and "phony" in its portrayal of the media.

Public Enemy defined Blacks in terms of two perspectives, protagonistic and antagonistic, showing Black unity and the mistreatment of Blacks by other Blacks in society, respectively. In songs "Brothers Gonna Work it Out" and "Bring the Noise," Public Enemy used terms such as "we", "Brother", and "own" to describe Blacks form a protagonist point of view. In "Welcome to the Terrordome," "1 Million Bottlebags," and "So Whatcha Gone Do Now?", Public Enemy used "nigger", and "Brother" to condemn Black on Black violence.

Whites are portrayed as antagonists by Public Enemy in "Who Stole the Soul?", "Can't Truss It," and "By the Time I Get to Arizona" by the use of words such as "sucker", "other man", "cracker", and "jack" to explain hardships on Blacks that were (and are) caused by Whites.

Analysis of the clusters of Public Enemy's lyrics showed that Public Enemy wanted to convey its negative perception of the media and government by portraying them as deceitful, expose the fact that racism is still dominant in American society, give Blacks some responsibility for problems in the Black community, and persuade Blacks to unite and act against racism and self-destruction.

A comparison of the results of the analysis of Public Enemy's lyrics to previous research performed on protest music confirmed that protest music does not need to act as or play a part of a social movement, but may act as a form of symbolic protest. Protest music, such as music performed by Public enemy, that does not belong to a social movement contains the same elements of persuasion as does music from social movements.

Future research on rap music should include the effects of the musical qualities of rap music on the listener, public opinions of rap music (instead of politicians, industry
executives, and media viewpoints), and how to separate the reality from fiction in rap music, movies and television.

Because no previous rhetorical research has been conducted on Public Enemy, this analysis of Public Enemy, in terms of protest music, offers new insight and a foundation for future research on the persuasiveness of rap music as well as other forms of popular music. Understanding that popular music functions as a reflection of youth values, provides an outlet of frustration, and, on occasion, serves as a means of protest can help bridge communication gaps between races, classes, and generations.


Ehrlich, G. Generation X. Pulse!. 62.


