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## The Influence of Hip-Hop Music on the Social Justice Movement from 1990-2020: An Annotated Bibliography

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# The Influence of Hip-Hop Music on the Social Justice Movement from 1990-2020

## An Annotated Bibliography

### Dictionary/Encyclopedia Articles

Nicholls, Tracey. "Music and Social Justice." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.  
<https://iep.utm.edu/music-sj/>.

This article in the Internet of Encyclopedia of Philosophy has a section on Post-Industrial Musical Contestation: Disco, Punk, and Hip-Hop. The author, Tracey Nicholls is a senior lecturer in the Politics and International Relations program at Massey University's School of People, Environment and Planning in Aotearoa New Zealand (Auckland). Her doctoral dissertation focused on the connection between improvised music, social justice and human rights. This section of Ms. Nicholls' article references some of the authors which I have selected for my bibliography, including Tricia Rose, and her article entitled, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*. This information affirms what many of the other authors in this annotated bibliography describe as the early days of Hip-Hop music as a response to the blighted conditions of urban living and how those experiences combined with technology, economics and culture formed the Hip-Hop genre that we know today.

### Dissertations and Theses

Hall, Marcella Runell, "Education in a Hip-Hop Nation: Our Identity, Politics & Pedagogy" (EdD diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2011). *Open Access Dissertations*.  
[https://scholarworks.umass.edu/open\\_access\\_dissertations/391](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/open_access_dissertations/391).

This resource is a dissertation written by Dr. Marcella Runell Hall, the Vice President for Student Life, Dean of Students and Lecturer in Religion at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Dr. Hall was trained in the field of social justice education and has authored several books and articles on popular culture, race, spirituality and critical pedagogy. This resource chronicles the history of Rap music, as the genre, and its impact on the culture of Hip-Hop using resource materials of some of Hip-Hop's scholars such as: David Troop (1984); Tricia Rose (1994); Nelson George (1998); Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal (2004); Craig Watkins (2005) and Jeff Chang (2005). The author discusses how Hip-Hop culture lends itself to social justice pedagogy and how it impacts the educational and political systems. This resource juxtaposes the correlation between the influence of Hip-Hop on educational learning and how this later informs our political climate and awareness of social justice issues and activism.

### Essays in Collections:

Byrd, Daniel C. and Denise L. Levy. "Exploring Social Justice Through Music." *Association for Psychological Science - APS*, April 1, 2013, <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/exploring-social-justice-through-music>.

The authors, whose professional backgrounds are in social work and in academia, have both taught courses where music was used to help social work students understand social justice as an aid in developing cultural competence. This essay shows the correlation of learning about social justice issues with the pedagogy of learning music. They constructed educational modules which gave teachers the ability to introduce Hip-Hop music as a social commentary to students at various educational levels. This demonstrates the impact of music on bringing awareness of societal issues to young students to develop analytical thinking surrounding issues of justice, oppression and marginalization.

### Journal Articles

Chang, Jeff. "Fight the Power: A New Movement for Civil Rights." *Mother Jones* 32 (6): 67–94 (2007). [Can hip-hop get past the thug life and back to its radical roots?](https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2007/10/fight-power-new-movement-civil-rights/) <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2007/10/fight-power-new-movement-civil-rights/>

This article by Jeff Chang, an American historian, author and Hip-Hop music critic, highlights the beginning of rap music as a response to the White flight of the more affluent residents and the crumbling housing market in the New York City borough of the Bronx. At the start of Rap music, which later became known as Hip-Hop because of its cultural influence on dance, fashion and urban trends, there was a perception that Hip-Hop music provided social commentary on the increasingly depressed conditions of urban youth, particularly in the fractured Bronx community. Later, Hip-Hop developed a 'thug' culture which portrayed African American men as dangerous, predatory criminals destined for a life of incarceration as a rite of passage. The author believes that the criminal perception has diluted the historically revolutionary posture of Hip-Hop as this protest music was always intended to be. This article will serve as a resource for researchers to bolster the premise that Hip-Hop music continues to influence the social justice movement, despite its mass marketing and commercialization.

Durham, Aisha, Brittney C. Cooper, and Susana M. Morris. "The Stage Hip-Hop Feminism Built: A New Directions Essay." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, v. 38, no.3 (Spring 2013): 721-37. <https://doi.org/10.1086/668843>.

This article is a collaborative effort by several college professors who are experts in the study of Hip-Hop feminism: Aisha Durham from the University of South Florida; Brittney C. Cooper from Rutgers University; and Susana M. Morris from Auburn University. It considers the intersectionality of intellectual Hip-Hop feminist work with the feminist movement in general, and the hyper-masculinity of traditional Hip-Hop as it wrestles with issues of representation, identity politics and social justice. This article examines alternative models for critical engagement; and much of the information shows

that the nuanced feminist movement within Hip-Hop is a response to issues of social injustice in the form of misogyny and gender bias.

Lindsey, Treva B. "Let Me Blow Your Mind: Hip Hop Feminist Futures in Theory and Praxis." *Urban Education* 50, no. 1 (January 2015): 52–77.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085914563184>.

This essay, written by Treva B. Lindsey, an Assistant Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, looks beyond the normalization of Hip-Hop as exclusively narrated by Black males, and challenges these stereotypical expressions by highlighting the platform created by Black and Brown girls and women who have developed a niche area within Hip-Hop feminist theory into a social justice learning modality which looks at the objectification of and violence perpetrated upon Black and Brown women. Researchers will find that this article dovetails with the Aisha Durham article on "The State Hip-Hop Feminism Built: A New Directions Essay" and shows that there are nuanced issues of injustice within the Hip-Hop artist community as reflected in the larger society.

Lusane, Clarence. "Rap, Race and Politics." *Race & Class* 35, no.1 (July 1993): 41-56.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/030639689303500105>.

This article, written by Clarence Lusane, an African-American author, lecturer, and an activist in national and international anti-racism politics, examines the duality of Rap music with its high-tech marketing and commercial packaging which has influenced culture and music itself as the voice of the marginalized responding to the dehumanizing conditions of Black people in large urban and significantly under-resourced communities. The author cites those who were the early influencers of Rap music such as those who continued the oral tradition of the African griots with spoken word set to music. Nikki Giovanni and Gil Scott Heron and the Last Poets were a few examples of young African American civil rights activists who used cadenced music and syncopated rhythms to accompany their poetry. Researchers will note that the references to these early pioneers show the natural progression of Rap music and its correlative role in the social justice movement.

### Secondary or Tertiary Monographs

Kofsky, Frank. *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music*. New York: Pathfinder, 1970.

Written by Frank Kofsky, a former professor of history at California State University at Sacramento and a frequent lecturer on history and jazz, this book focuses more on the impact of John Coltrane's music and how he re-invented the jazz quartet to provide commentary on social justice issues of his day, eventually serving as the precursor to what would become Hip-Hop music. The author also references the cultural appropriation of jazz music by White artists and Coltrane's modification of his music to avoid cultural

misappropriation in order to maintain the purity and relevance of the musical content to the Black experience.

Rose, Tricia. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994.

The author, Tricia Rose, a cultural critic, sociologist and Professor of Africana Studies at Brown University, explores several aspects of Rap Music: (i) the historical evolution of Rap (used interchangeably with Hip-Hop); (ii) how music and technology interplay in the production of Rap music; (iii) the political commentary regarding community policing and the media's perception of rap and its artists; and (iv) some of the sexual identity politics which embed Rap music, particularly from a feminist perspective of female rappers. This source is most effectively used to explore the divergent views of the efficacy of Rap music and its impact on the evolution of social justice issues throughout 1990-2020.

#### Web News Article

Johnson, Imani K. 2008. "The Really Real: Terms of Authenticity in Rap Music." *H-Net Reviews in the Humanities & Social Sciences*, July 2008. <https://search-ebSCOhost.com.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=34358323&site=ehost-live&scope=site> .

This article was a review by Imani K. Johnson, a professor in the Department of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California, of the book written by Jeffrey Ogbonna Green Ogbar entitled, *Hip Hop Revolution: The Culture and Politics of Rap (2007)*. This review focuses on the dichotomous respect which the book author seems to have for Rap music, but then he engages in long-held stereotypes about the overtly violent nature of Rap music which often does not address Black-on-Black crime, but focuses disproportionately on police brutality in Black communities. The review also emphasizes the existing rivalries in Black and Latino communities, while dismissing the influence of Asian rappers who are also lending their voices to the Hip-Hop protest movement. The information contained within the review shows the different views on the influence of Hip-Hop as well as the negative impact resulting from fractured artist communities who have different life experiences which inform their lyrics, the beats and the music.

Reid-Cleveland, Keith and Greg Whitt "Exploring the Intersection of Hip-Hop and Social Justice." *UPROXX*. November 30, 2016. <https://uproxx.com/music/hip-hop-social-justice-intersection/>.

This article, written by Hip-Hop journalists and critics, Keith Reid-Cleveland and Greg Whitt, discusses the early beginnings of protest music within different genres and how Hip-Hop became a legacy musical genre from the 1970's with Gil Scott Heron and the

Last Poets who performed their poetry to cadenced musical beats. A scholar will be helped by interweaving and comparing information from this article with some of the historical information in the dissertation of Marcella Runell Hall, “Education in a Hip-Hop Nation: Our Identity, Politics and Pedagogy” which will show the beginnings of Hip-Hop music as a response to systemic injustice and marginalization within urban communities in New York City.

Zaru, Deena and Lakeia Brown. “Hip-Hop Has Been Standing Up for Black Lives for Decades: 15 songs and Why They Matter”. July 12, 2020.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/hip-hop-standing-black-lives-decades-15-songs/story?id=71195591>.

This article, written by pop culture and political journalists at ABC News, Deena Zaru and Lakeia Brown, features examples of protest songs, many of which served as the predecessor to the more popular Rap music which is reminiscent of the beginning of the social justice movement. The authors discuss the origins of Rap music born out of the struggling and voiceless populations in the South Bronx who were determined to create artistry which cultivated awareness of the inner-city struggles. Scholars will find relevant references in some of the early music which influenced social justice activism.