

Tupac Shakur and Hip Hop's Gangsta Turn

Michael Eric Dyson ***Holler if You Hear Me***
Chapters 6 and 7

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AFPRL 290: Hip Hop History and Culture

***Juice* Film elements**

- Turn to focus on gangster elements and in culture
- Steel represents “old school” hip hop
- Bishop (Tupac) represents emerging hip hop tendency
- Bomb Squad (of PE fame) production of soundtrack

Hip Hop film Context

- *Tougher Than Leather* (1988). Run DMC
- *Colors* (1988) Ice T
- *New Jack City* (1991).
 - Mario Van Peebles (dir.). Ice T, Queen Latifah, 2 Live Crew
- *Boyz N' The Hood* (1991).
 - John Singleton (dir.). Ice Cube
- *Menace II Society* (1993)
 - Hughes brothers (dir.).
 - (Tupac and N.W.A.'s MC Ren originally cast in film)

General Trends

- Shift to West Coast
- Glorification of gangster/gangster narratives
- Crack epidemic and violence in Black communities
- Collapse of family structure, neighborhood bonds (see above)
- Exacerbation of generational divide
- Exacerbation of social class divisions
- “Nihilism”(?)

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Chapter 6: “Do We Hate Our Women?”

- “the b- word”
- “Femiphobia” (Dyson’s term, 182-183)
 - Centrality of Patriarchy to hip hop
- “the Bitch-Ho nexus” (Dyson, 186-187)
- Generation and class divide (Dyson’s term, 198-99)
 - Tupac’s dispute with C. Delores Tucker; “Wonda Why They Call U”

Patriarchy

A systematic social and structural domination of women by men in a given society.

Both **individual** and **institutional**

Chapter 7: “But Do The Lord Care?”

- Centrality of death
 - Escalation of rivalry with East Coast: Notorious B.I.G.
 - Normalcy of suffering and Black death in the ghetto
- Tupac’s class-based critique of philosophy/spirituality (206-7)
 - Identification with the “lumpen”/ underclass
- Authenticity(Dyson, 210)
 - Glorification of pimp, mack, hustler narratives
 - **Contrast** with prison reality: “Jail killed my spirit” (215)

Authenticity

Is hip hop really the “Black CNN”?

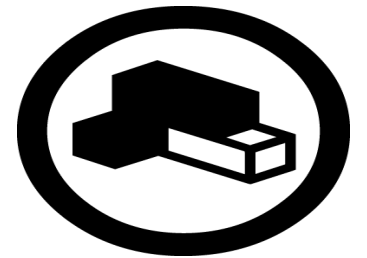
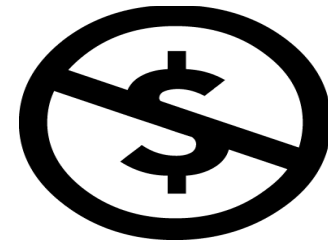
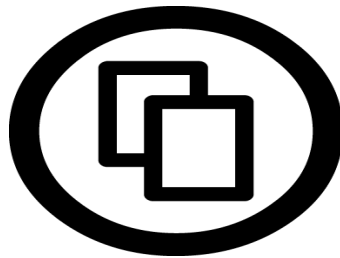
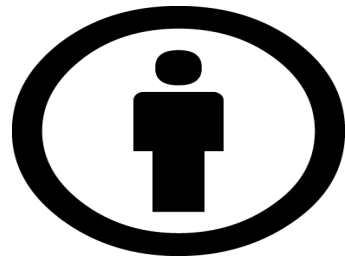
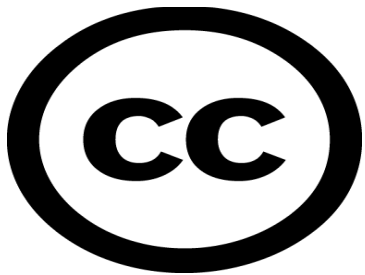
Hip hoppers who address thug life, gang culture, and ghetto existence view themselves as urban poets whose job it is to tell the truth about poor [B]lack life on the streets. Great stock is placed in tales of urban woe that depict in chilling detail the consequences of living outside the law, living beneath the middle class, and without social legitimacy” (Dyson, 210)



Album Tracks:

- “Young Black Male”.
 - “Trapped”
 - “If My Homie Calls”
 - “Brenda’s Got a Baby”
-
- Release Date: November, 1991. Interscope
 - **#64**, *Billboard* 200
 - **#13**, *Billboard* Top R&B albums
 - Certified Gold
 - **Hit Songs** : “Brenda’s Got a Baby”, #23, Hot R&B/ Rap Singles; #3 Hot Rap singles

Revised April, 2014
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