

GANGSTA-RAP ART FORM DENUDES BLACK INTRARACISTS

by: Achim Rodgers

"Censure the messenger to censor the message" is the current message of the National Black Leadership. "When all else fails, resort to legislative dictatorship to demand that others do as we in power say" and "freedom is a wonderful idea as long as it doesn't conflict with our agenda" are not new ideas. What that National Black Leadership stiffly refuses to espouse is that "Yesterday's cures simply won't solve today's ills." There are active challenges to nearly every tenet previously labeled as a traditional value. The abusive language and promotion of violence found in most Gangsta Rap songs are the reality of our present day society. Americans are mature enough to realize that not talking about something won't cause it to go away. An organized ban on Gangsta Rap music would be futile, it would only serve to promote its sales, which would firmly entrench and tend to legitimize its message.

Gangsta Rap is more like a comet than a wake-up call and for the National Black Leadership to think of it as such is bleakly humorous. Truth isn't negated by its silence. Censorship is an aging yet still basic evil. National Black Leadership's attempts to censor the arts liken it to the last swaggering Dinosaur, unrelizant that Dinosaurs are one false step away from extinction.

Extremism in human behavior is generally the results of an intellectual negligence by individuals in conflict with a society-at-large. In the Gangsta-Rappers, this negligence is a symptom of victimization by economical inequities and trauma. Both physical and emotional. In producing a salable commercial product by rapping about the intolerable conditions they live in Gangsta-Rappers effectively swing the pendulum of their lives into sync with the rest of America. Is this not "true capitalism?" Now and only now, as commercial artifacts depicting the miseries and appalling conditions of ghetto life enters mainstream America's homes, we are offended and grievous! Is it not an abject hypocrisy that Black Leadership fears Gangsta Rap music may do what an invading Army has never been able to do—to shame us before the world for the conditions under which segments of our society live.

The middle-class Bourgeois Black National Leadership's mind-set is that music shall return to what it was. Re-establishing an artistic status-quo will allow them to go back into hibernation to procrastinate over what to do until they become too senile to ponder the issue. Cowardly opposing the forcing hands of Gangsta Rappers,

they've opted to advocate censoring the message-bearers. While the old Guard still fights in its sleep for 1960's-style Civil Rights, when in the 1990's it's Human Rights that needs to be fought with both eyes open and alert. After decades of Civil Rights failures, abuses, festering-neglect, Gangsta Rap is an eleventh-hour outcry of desperation chiming like a death-knell over an entire previous generation.



Above: C. Delores Tucker, testifying against rap music in Pennsylvania. Does C. Delores personally who the author had in mind as an "Intra-racist?" (Photo: E. Payton)

Gangsta Rap, more than a pressure release, is a reflection of the horrendous suffering, pain and frustration of ghetto-life in the Hood. Art reflects life, so why aren't these National Black Leaders more grievous about where the source of this art exists than the work denuding these horrible conditions? Is the strain of honesty so great that these leaders are unempowered to admit their failure? Sadly, publically admitting "we don't have a clue" and then resigning from whatever office is being held is not the way of American Leadership.

One need hardly wonder why, in their visceral anger and frustration, Rappers ragingly demean and promote violence toward their own race and women in the pecking-order of majority oppressing minority; strong oppressing weak; and weak oppressing weaker. Brutality can neutralize the human mind, it can be subjugated, indoctrinated and coerced into hating itself. The effects of the extensive and continuous psychological propeganda campaign of racism in America has deprived and alienated its victims and has caused them to engage in Racial Intravictimization.

We are one people; one humanity. At some point in humankind's evolutionary growth, if we are to continue, we will have to accept that there aren't any painless, bargain-basement cures for decades of Domestic War Crimes, Gross Neglect and Abuse of any one group of people without what we are witnessing today coming to pass. These same injustices will inevitably be visited upon the whole. Instead of censoring the messenger for creating an art form out of "urgent alarm", we need to be up-in-arms in opposition to the conditions this art form is reflecting. Though some of the lyrics in Rap songs are insidiously disgusting, the living conditions in the ghettos where these lyrics originate are abhorrent beyond comparison.

It is moral and spiritual hypocrisy to condemn and vilify the arts for depicting the truths of one's experiences. Rappers speak the truth and need not apologize for this in a Democratic society. Further, Americans should feel a debt is owed to the Gangsta Rappers for an art form which has created a resurgence of urgent consciousness about the plight of inner-city ghettos. Then if one was sincerely concerned, they would work towards changing the conditions which have birthed these lyrics instead of seeking the typical American cosmetic fix of cover-up and silencing the voices which tell of the disadvantaged, discriminated, ignorant and violent. To affect silence in the face of our failures is a far worst crime than the effects of Gangsta Rap music and would stand diametrically in the face of decency and the epitome of cowardice. A bandage over a cancer sore; a finger in the crack of a dam; a new paint job over graffiti—be it black or white, it's still a cover-up.

It rapes the intellect and strips away dignity to be told once again that blacks are in need of some specific protection against the negative effects of Gangsta Rap music as if the American and, in particular, Afro-American people are a mindless herd of cattle forever in need of set-asides and censorship to insulate their fragile existence. When white leadership complained about Gangsta Rap music it was ignored and discounted as racist. When the Black leadership condemns and advocates censorship of Gangsta Rap music, it is still racists... Afro-American Intra-racism.

Been With *Dream Network* from the Beginning

I'm enclosing a check for renewal of my subscription for the *Dream Network*. I admire your doing a great job in publishing the *Journal*. I remember when I was there when Bill Stimson founded and published it, and when Tom Cowan and Chris Hudson were involved. It was a struggle to keep it alive and I am proud of your efforts to keep it energized and successful.

I'll keep in touch and will continue to promote the *Journal* to my students. All warm wishes.

Virginia Bagliore, Rockaway Point, NY

Questions from a Dreamer in Prison

Between my dreams and my waking moments, I seem to be living two lives. One conscious and one unconscious. I cannot recall a night within the last decade of my imprisonment that I did not experience two to three dream episodes. As a prisoner for the last twelve years, having suffered inestimable deprivation, my unconscious (dream) realities have become much more desirable than my conscious (waking) realities. My dreams have varied in episodes and seemingly in relationship to my intellectual and spiritual growth.

When I was first imprisoned, I experienced a lot of anxiety and fear and coincidentally, my dreams were similarly filled. As I matured and evolved, my dreams have become more responsive to my needs, more positive, constructive and parallel to my conscious visions. Similarly, when I don't regularly engage in auto-eroticism to release my pent-up frustration, I experience vivid dreams of intimacy. I feel as if my dreams are caring for me and attempting to protect me from the harsh realities of my existence in the hell on Earth called prison.

Dreams supplement my life with an alternative, additional life. They have become an integral part of my day-to-night activities and no longer a mere ancillary occurrence to my life. When the abuse to my humanity by my oppressors becomes intolerable and I am exhausted and want to give up, my dreams that night are generally awe-inspiring, with me struggling against insurmountable odds and prevailing.

Occasionally, I enquire of myself "Who is in charge?" Obviously, my dreams babysit and pacify me during my unconscious state.... like watching a videotape.

It is as if I live in two dimensions and if I don't like one, I simply visit the other. There have even been a few times when I didn't like my dream and was able to wake myself at will. I sense a bridge between where I was and where I was able to travel. The power is mine to leave a dream-state and enter the waking state.

Currently, I am focusing on learning how to incubate dreams to receive specific answers to questions and information.

Any suggestions?

Achim Rodgers, P.I.N. #49983

Will's Response

I think the *Responses* column broke the record in the last issue, Vol. 14 No.3, not only in quantity but also in quality! I was intrigued by Iona Miller's mention of Virtual Therapy and tempted, after reading Judith Picone's letter about "lights at the end of a dream period" to put out an inquiry as to whether anyone but me has encountered regular appearances of silvery, chrome-like surfaces in highly lucid dreams.

While I understand the need to print Linda Gaile's letter in response to the *Pro Choice IS Pro Life* poem, I don't think we have any business publishing anything on the abortion issue, unless it's in

the context of a dream.

Also, in response to your Editor's Note after Sally Gadanhorst's letter, asking whether we possess the level of sophistication, etc., to develop a clearinghouse for potentially precognitive dreams, my answer would be NO. My experience with apparent precognition in dreams leads me to believe that dreams come first and foremost for our own edification and enlightenment. I believe it's similar to the Biblical admonition to remove the log from your own eye before attempting to remove the splinter from the eye of another. Only when there are no pressing issues to be resolved in our own lives are our dreams likely to address concerns about people or events outside of our sphere of influence. My concern with attempting to create such a clearinghouse is that it can too easily encourage people to look outside themselves for meaning in their dreams.

Will Phillips, Altamonte Springs, FL

Offers Enthusiastic Support

Thank you so very much for your contribution of back issues of the *Dream Network* to the Alexandria Dream Library project. You very generously included a 2nd set of the *Journal* and I appreciate that so very, very much. It was thrilling to see the set of *Journals* you have published all together! You have done and are doing a magnificent job and I enthusiastically support your endeavor through networking here at the Novato Center for Dreams. I'm very happy that you are at the helm of *Dream Network* and commend you highly.

Thank you again, from my heart. Jill Gregory, Novato, CA

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