



Week 10, June 3

First, a bunch of review, starting at the end of lecture 7.

"Today":

1. Trap and Drill
2. Fashion
3. Dance
4. Storytelling revisited
5. SD

At some point today:

Pick one song we've heard, and make a connection to a theme in the history of Hip Hop as we've encountered it. themes like: the dozens, diss tracks, humor, vulgarity, political engagement, relationship to commerce, race, etc. What is the relationship? Why is it interesting?

After 2004

- Full scale collapse of the music industry
 - Napster, suit with RIAA, rise of legal streaming (Spotify)
 - How did the collapse effect Hip Hop, which had, by now, become the dominant popular form?
- Questions about Hip Hop over the last 10 years
 - Have the demographics of music changed?
 - What's the relationship, now, between Hip Hop and mainstream culture?
 - Is the music more politicized now than 10 years ago?

Adjustments in the Hip Hop market in the last 10 years

- Mixtapes
- Shifting relationship to street culture
- The internet
- Local scenes, local dance
- Decline of radio (1996 Telecom Act)
- Increased corporate relationships with high fashion, other mass commodities

Mixtapes

- Originally, promotional tools for DJs
- Became a useful career-building tool for many artists, providing black market revenue, street credibility and exposure
- Also a primary venue for experimentation and dispute: a much faster moving medium than official albums, served the role that live performance might serve in other genres
- Relationship between the music business and mixtape scene has always been complicated.
- Strictly speaking, they're illegal, but the industry usually turns a blind eye, and even uses them as promotional materials sometimes.
- Sometimes hard to distinguish a mixtape from an album, and the distinction is often irrelevant. See, e.g., Chance the Rapper, *Coloring Book*.

Street culture, mythology of the drug Trade

- Crime rates, by the turn of the century, are at historic lows in many American cities.
- Crack epidemic is over, but crack-rap is everywhere.
- The rise of crack as a "genre."
- Still, some ties between rap and gang culture have actually grown more visible.
- E.g. "drill music," from Chicago

Trap and Drill Music

Trap is originally from Atlanta, referring to the "trap," i.e. the place where drug deals take place.

- Monophonic drone sounds, chirpy high hat ride patterns, gritty drug-related lyrics, subdivisions in spurting lyrical delivery.
- Grimes, Tell Me
- TI, Bring em out
- Young Jeezy, Go Crazy (remix feat Jay-Z)

...

Drill Music is a Chicago-derived subgenre of Trap known for its really hard core, nihilistic lyrics

- Fredo Santana, Jealous, feat. Kendrick Lamar

Trap and Drill Sound (important hits)

- Rick Ross, BMF (Blowin Money Fast)
- A former corrections officer and football player.
- Blowin money fast? Or Black Mafia Family?
- The latter is a real drug trafficking organization based in Detroit and LA ("Big Meech" is a real figure)
- The cinematic style of the video and the crisp production make it clear that this is fantasy, not "real."
- Wocka Flocka Flame, Hard in the Paint
- Not a great rapper, but was a popular song, and has the distinctive sound of southern trap.
- Lex Luger production: subdivided high hat, droney creepy stuff happening under the MC
- Migos, Bad and Boujee
 - Migos is Takeoff, Offset and Quavo -- an influential Trap trio from Georgia

Drill

Drill is a sort of midwestern version of Southern Trap

- [Chief Keef, Love Sosa](#)
- [Lil Durk, Dis ain't what you want](#)
- [Chief Keef, I don't like](#)
- Chief Keef re-ignites many of the NWA debates.
- [Is it OK for White Music Critics to like violent rap?](#)
- [Pitchfork Interview with Chief Keef at a shooting range](#)
- WorldstarHipHop produces [The Field](#), a 40-minute documentary on Drill Music
- [Vince Staples, Seniorita](#) -- a track that sort of addresses the controversy raised above, focusing on the fallout rather than the glamour of criminality.

Vince Staples on Trap music in [pitchfork interview](#)

Pitchfork: You've said that you felt like your purpose in music is to make people uncomfortable, what do you mean by that?

Vince Staples: I just feel like that's what music is supposed to be. Like, that's my problem with fucking trap music: People are rapping about killing niggas and selling fucking drugs all day, but it sounds happy—that's bullshit. That shit's *stressful*: You're not going to make no fucking money, somebody's going to end up dead, and you're not going to be able to pay for his funeral because his mom probably don't fuck with him like that, and he don't got health insurance. So now you have to do a fucking car wash to pay for somebody's funeral and bury him in some cheap shit. Where's *that* song?

The Return of dance

- In the 1990s and 2000s, hip hop had faded as a dance music.
- But there were regional dance styles that survived the decline of radio and the mainstreaming of hip hop that deserve our attention.
- Some of these local dance songs became hits.
- Hip Hop started to draw on club production techniques.
- This took the form of novelty songs like Soulja Boy, Crank Dat and Unk, Walk it Out

Also more serious dance music:

- E 40, Tell Me When to Go
- Documents the Bay Area "Hyphy" style
- E40 has maybe the longest career in Rap, starting in 1986! with The Click
- What is Hyphy?
- Sage the Gemini, Gas Pedal
- The song was a huge hit, with the popularity driven in no small part through Vines and youtube posts of people dancing to it

The fall of lyricism, the rise of timbral manipulation?

- A lot of recent rap has reacted against the traditional (since at least the 1990s) emphasis on lyricism
- So vocal quirks, delivery style, timbre, etc, become more important than lyrical prowess
- This often means manipulating the voice electronically
- From "My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy" (2010), an album conceived largely for internet release, and one of the most expensive albums ever.
- Most important is Nicki Minaj's verse, which trademark shifts in timbre and diction

- Future, March Madness
- Note the electronic manipulation of the voice, which now has pop appeal.
- Kendrick Lamar, Bitch Don't Kill My Vibe
- Migos, T-Shirt
- T-Payne, I'm Sprung
- *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*, 2010 is a made-for-internet album including a short film called *Runaway* -- Kanye West "Monster" w/ Rick Ross, Jay Z, Nicki Minaj
 - Aesthetic is "maximalist"

Connections to High Fashion: ASAP Rocky

Harlem rapper who made much of his impact via his connection to fashion culture.


ASAP Rocky, Peso









 **asaprokywears**
241 posts · 31.9k followers

Fashion: Kanye West

Kanye is another quintessential pop-rapper-entrepreneur: producer, CEO, rapper, etc.

Early successes are in production for, notably, Jay-Z on *The Blueprint*

2003 Debut Single is performed through a wired shut jaw after a serious car accident. Through the Wire released on *College Dropout* 2003

Late Registration, 2005, produced with the versatile Jon Brion. Heard em Say,

Graduation 2007, incorporates electro sounds -- stronger samples daft punk

808s and Heartbeak 2008 uses...the 808! Love Lockdown

...but also a fashion designer, and CEO of DONDA, a sort of design and production company. "Pick up where Steve Jobs left off."





Pop appeal of traditional storytelling

- Hip Hop in the 21st century has become in some ways totally mainstream and in others more niche.
- Resurgence of traditional storytelling style, along with all the techy stuff.
- Resurgence of Politics

Drake, Marvin's Room

- In many ways the quintessential rapper of the 21st century.
- A mainstream pop figure who brings that aesthetic to the rap business, bringing mainstream (sentimental) style to rap.
- Originally an actor.
- This is from *Take Care* (2011), which is sort of an extended heartbroken drunk-dial.
- mixes song and rap, slow tempos, club-style production copying The Weeknd.

Drake, One Dance

- Here Drake embraces an international sound/audience, sampling afrobeat sounds and English club style.

Earl Sweatshirt

- Earl Sweatshirt came to prominence as part of the LA based Odd Future collective while still in high school, on the strength of his complex, mercurial and frequently very violent work.
- Mother is Cherly Harris, a distinguished legal scholar, and father is Keorapetse Kgositsile
- Early Earl is Earl

Yo, I'm a hot and bothered astronaut
Crashing while jacking off
To buffering vids of Asher Roth eating apple sauce

More recent Earl is Grief, which is introspective and confessional, serious.

Kendrick Lamar

Compton rapper widely regarded as one of the greatest of his generation. Distinguished by his ability to rap in more than one style:

Early Kendrick is from *Section 80* (2011), [Hiii Power](#)

Hiii power is a "movement." Definitely "conscious" style.

"A lot of people don't understand. They think it's just a song. It's really a big movement that we've got in L.A. that's spreading like wildfire," he said. "Hiiipower: the three i's represent heart, honor and respect. That's how we carry ourselves in the streets, and just in the world, period. Hiiipower, it basically is the simplest form of representing just being above all the madness, all the bullshit. No matter what the world is going through, you're always going to keep your dignity and carry yourself with this manner that it don't phase you. Whatever you think negative is in your life. Overcoming that and still having that self-respect."

Kendrick con't

from Good Kid, M.A.A.D City (2012), about the scourge of alcoholism: Swimming Pools * GKMC is a long-form concept album (a "short film") tracing his experience in Compton Backseat Freestyle

from *To Pimp a Butterfly*, 2015, about race: Kendrick Lamar, The Blacker the Berry

From *DAMN* 2017, about surviving gang culture: Kendrick Lamar, Fear

The song articulates Fear through snapshots of how things felt at different ages: childhood, late adolescence and then as an adult

Contemporary local SD hip hop

Mitchy Slick, LIP

Blu and Exile, True and livin

Rob Stone, I'm Almost Ready

Odessa Kane, 1994 * tijuana born but local to SD

Orko Eloheim, One Brain Cell