

OPINION

Whines & Gripes

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Pop Music Damaging Kids?

Allison Ridick, Staff Writer

Much debate exists about the effects today's pop culture is having on America's youth. Can popular music hurt adolescents even if they don't understand the mature concepts presented? Many different organizations are now conducting research to see whether children are affected and, if so, in what ways they're affected by today's music.

Michael Foust reported on a study conducted by the Research and Development Corporation in an August 2006 article entitled "Sexually charged music directly impacts teenage sexual habits, new study says." He noted that the RDC study viewed adolescents over a period of three years to judge the effects that rap music (from artists such as Ja Rule and Lil' Kim) had on adolescents aged 12 to 17 years. Over this time, the corporation asked the adolescents what type of music they listened to and compared those answers to their sexual habits. Rap music was the genre of music that most affected these children's views on sexual roles because the terms used to describe sex were the

most explicit.

Adolescents are continuously listening to these value-laden songs and can subconsciously copy these values in their own lives. For example, when men in rap songs are portrayed as "sex-driven" and women are objectified, these lyrics and music videos can cause boys to chase girls in order to act out sexual activity and girls to focus more on their looks to increase their sexual appeal to boys.

Although children are growing and maturing naturally, the music they listen to can speed up this process by being so open about sexuality. Most parents, hearing this, would like to limit the content of the music that their children listen to, but the sheer mass of the music listened to by children limits the parents' ability to do this. So we must not place the responsibility of censoring solely on the parents, but make the children themselves responsible.



image via benjern.com

Meredith Student Wins Fellowship

Reach the World (RTW) congratulates Lauren Nicole Casteen, a Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholar, on her departure to study abroad in Scotland. As a RTW travel correspondent, Lauren is sharing her journey in real-time with a classroom in the United States through online articles and videoconferences. An undergraduate student at Meredith College majoring in history, Lauren is studying Medieval Studies and International Studies in Scotland for the spring 2011 semester.

Originally from North Carolina, Lauren became involved with Reach the World because as future teacher, she thinks that it will be very exciting to be able to work with a classroom of children to get them interested in learning about other places, people and seeing how people from around the world are different or perhaps more importantly how they are similar. ReachtheWorld.org's interactive website allows her to share her study abroad experience with young students back home in the United States. Lauren says, "Some people say that those who can't do, teach. I believe the opposite is true: To be a truly phenomenal and inspiring teacher, you have to have done. I want my students to know that learning isn't just about what's written in textbooks – it's about going out and experiencing things yourself and making your own history."

Through its interactive website, Reach the World (www.reachtheworld.org) enriches the school and after-school curriculum by connecting classrooms to travelers who are studying or exploring around the globe. RTW identifies volunteer travelers, manages web-based educational content posted by these travelers, and delivers technology and curricular support. The National Geographic Education Foundation named RTW a Model Program in Geography Education, one of only six in the nation. Reach the World has already affected more than 15,000 students and 600 teachers. The program serves classrooms and afterschool sites nationwide and is headquartered in New York City.

In 2009, Reach the World began partnering with the Institute of International Education's Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program to engage a select group of its study-abroad scholars as volunteer correspondents for the RTW program. The Gilman Program study abroad awards for U.S. undergraduate students and was established by the International Academic Opportunity Act of 2000.

"Our hope is that one day, every teacher, in every classroom, will consider it a matter of course to enrich their Social Studies, Science and Ge-

ography curricula by connecting to real travelers on exciting journeys around the world," says Heather Halstead, Executive Director of Reach the World.



Lauren Casteen
image via facebook.com

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