Does Music’s Song Lyrics have Negative Effects?

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I. Do song lyrics have a negative effect on adolescent behavior?

A. If children are becoming more violent in behavior, then one of the causes is from violent messages in song lyrics that adolescents now have access too.
B. Many studies have proven that violent song lyrics play a role in adolescent behavior.
   i. Studies have proven that media violence can lead to aggressive behavior in children.
   ii. Rock and rap has been blamed for mob violence, increased drug taking and even teenage suicide.

II. Major Arguments
A. Do song lyrics cause violence in adolescent behavior?
   i. Pro Evidence regarding this argument
      a) 3 “The report was conducted in response to a request from President Clinton on June 1, 1999, as well as similar requests from Members of Congress, to answer two questions about the marketing of violent entertainment material: Do the industries promote products they themselves acknowledge warrant parental caution in venues where children make up a substantial percentage of the audience? And are these advertisements intended to attract children and teenagers? The report found that “for all three segments of the entertainment industry, the answers and plainly ‘yes.’” “In response to these findings, the Commission recommends additional action by the industry to enhance their self-regulatory efforts.” “According to FTC Chairman Robert Pitofsky, the report illustrates clear shortcomings in industry efforts to limit access to age-inappropriate material to children.” “Of the 55 music recordings with explicit content labels the Commission selected for its reviews, the Commission found that all were targeted to children under 17. Marketing plans for 15, or 27 percent, expressly identifies children under 17 as part of their target audience. The documents for the remaining 40 explicit-content labeled recordings did not expressly state the age of the target audience, but detailed plans indicating they were targeting that age group, including placing advertising in media that would reach a majority or substantial percentage of children under 17.” The industry was required to: establish or expand codes that prohibit target marketing to children and impose sanctions for violations, Increase compliance at the retail level, Increase parental understanding of the ratings and labels.”
b) 2 “The Commission’s review of ad placements by the music industry, however, found that it has continued to advertise explicit content recordings in most popular teen venues in all media, although there were improvements in the music industry’s disclosure of parental advisory label information in its advertising.” “Marketing documents for 13 explicit-content labeled recordings included plans for extensive advertising in the most popular teen venues- television, radio, print, and online. In the music industry’s view, advertising targeted to all ages is consistent with its parental advisory labeling program which, unlike the rating programs for movies and electronic games, does not specifically designate an age for which labeled music may be inappropriate.”

c) 1 “Media violence can lead to aggressive behavior in children. Over 1,000 studies confirm this link.” “Media violence affects children by: Increasing aggressiveness and anti-social behavior, Increasing their fear of becoming victims, Making them less sensitive to violence and to victims of violence, Increasing their appetite for more violence in entertainment and in real life.” “Parents can reduce the effect media violence has on children by: Monitoring the music videos and films children see, as well as the music children listen to, for violent themes.”

d) 4 “The Parents Music Resource Center reports that American teenagers listen to an estimated 10,500 hours of rock music between the 7th and 12th grades alone – just 500 hours less than they spend in school over twelve years.” Entertainment Monitor reported that only 10 of the top 40 popular CDs on sale during the 1995 holiday season were free of profanity, or lyrics dealing with drugs, violence and sex.” A recent survey by the Recording Industry Association of America found that many parents do not know what lyrics are contained in the popular music their children listen to.” In September 1995, Warner Music group bowed to public pressure and announced it was severing its 50% stake in Interscope Records home to Nine Inch Nails and controversial rap artists Snoop Doggy Dog and Dr. Dre. Rap artists simply turned to a different distribution network and their DCs continue to hit the stores with lyrics which glorify guns, rape, and murder.”

e) “Parents Music Resource Center” (Beginning)

f) 5 “Music is prominent in adolescent lives: teenagers spend between 4 and 5 hours a day listening to music and watching music videos.” “Forty-eight percent of Americans say that violence in popular music should be more heavily regulated and 59% would like to restrict violence in music.” “Studies show that the preference for heavy metal music may be a significant indicator for alienation, substance abuse, psychiatric
disorders, suicide risks, sex-role stereotyping, or risk-taking behaviors during adolescence, but music is not the cause of these behaviors. It is hypothesized that teenagers already struggling with those issues may be attracted to heavy metal music, because the lyrics express their own troubled feelings.” “In addition, several major rap artists have been charged with violent crimes in real life, and many worry that their actions seemingly condone the violent messages in their music. Their celebrity status also serves to glamorize their violent behavior.”

g) “Studies on Heavy Metal Music Section”

i. Con Evidence regarding this argument

a) “Rock and rap has been blamed for mob violence, increased drug taking and even teenage suicide – with links cited between deaths and subscriptions to heavy metal magazines.” “By saying that a song might make you kill yourself, you guide a young listener to think of it in such a way – and create the song as a force for self-harm.” He said campaigners should instead draw listeners’ attention to how the song might help them work through their problems, making the song into a force for good.” “In short, the best way of eradicating ‘problem’ music is not to censor musicians, but instead to stop protest groups from labeling songs as suicide-inducing.”

b) “Television, the radio, video games, and movies supposedly cause people to commit violence. I think we are the cause of all the violence. Self-hatred and the hatred of other is our society’s problem. Hate is one of the strongest emotions that people can feel. Hate is just anger that is built up inside of someone, and once it explodes, people better watch out. Therefore we need to teach our children from the beginning the difference between right and wrong and reality and fiction. We can’t expect them to know the difference between reality and fantasy until we have taught them. Instead of blaming the media we should take a step back and look at the real cause of the problem, ourselves.”

c) “I Anti-Hate Campaign Contradictory to MTV?”

d) “Misplaced Blame”

e) “Essay on Rock and Roll Lyrics”

B. Do artists have the right to record music with any song lyrics that they want?

i. Pro Evidence regarding this argument

a) “Should the freedom of speech of musical artists be upheld at any cost? Or is it more a case of common sense, where your right to free speech does not cover yelling, “Fire!” in a crowded theater? Who determines what can or cannot be recorded, played on radio, or sold in stores? Can unrestricted musical expression be damaging to society?” “Despite the vulnerability of some teenagers to the music they hear, many
Americans believe that it is far more dangerous to try and censor musicians.” “The Parental Advisory Label program is voluntary; it is up to the record company to decide whether or not to place a Parental Advisory Label on an album.”
b) “Free Speech and Music”
c) **11** “Despite their concern about sex and violence in entertainment, nearly twice as many people felt the possibility of government imposed restrictions on the entertainment industry posed a greater danger (53%) than the industry’s production of harmful material (29%).”
d) **12** “Another reason why censorship is wrong is that although some forms of speech are clearly abusive and destructive, there may be a time in one’s life when one needs to exercise and breech the censors standard to receive or transmit information without government restraint and retribution.” “How are children and teenagers impacted...”

ii. Con Evidence regarding this argument

a) **10** While Americans believe in and value freedom of speech and self-expression, it’s hard to not recognize that the content of this expression and speech can sometimes be negative – and perhaps even harmful.” “freedom of speech is protected in the United States under the First Amendment. However, there is nothing that requires a store to sell a controversial CD or a radio station to play a song.”
b) “Free Speech and Music”
c) **13** “There is an appropriate time and place for all types of speech and expression, and these forums must be respected and protected at all cost.”
Resources:


Greig, B. (April 28,2002). “Leader; If Only the Young could see the Popular Music Industry for what it is”. Express Newspapers- Sunday Express. p. 39


Maybe???


12 and 13 Essay on Rock and Roll Music