THE SECOND OVERSTANDING
THE DEFINITIONS

Peace and much Love. Know this. The term *definition* means “redefined definitions.” This
overstanding deals with the redefining of Hip Hop, Hip Hop’s artistic elements and the Hiphoppa in an effort
to strengthen the methodology of Hip Hop’s actual preservation and lifestyle.

The *Definitions* are not only the Temple of Hip Hop’s collection of Hip Hop cultural terms and codes
designed to organize and raise the self-worth of the Temple Member that teaches Hip Hop for a living, The *Definitions*
equips Temple Members to redefine themselves as Hip Hop above all else.

Here, Hip Hop is not just a music genre or some other kind of art form. Here, Hip Hop is the name and
divine nature of our present lifestyle. Hip Hop is the name of our ritual; it is the utterance of our being.

*Rap fans* are told about the *fathers* and *mothers, Godfathers* and *Godmothers, Pioneers, Teachers* and history
of Hip Hop for the sake of building Hip Hop’s political common Spirit and cultural continuity in the World. Such
knowledge promotes respect for those Hip Hop pioneers that have contributed to Hip Hop’s physical manifestation
and cultural continuity in the World.

However, knowing the history of *Hip Hop* and/or
the names of *Hip Hop’s* pioneers will not defend against
the everyday happenings and temptations of the material
World. For Hip Hop itself to be strong and vibrant,
its practitioners must become strong and vibrant when
practicing the Hip Hop lifestyle. The purchasing of Rap
CDs is NOT the Hip Hop lifestyle.

The Hip Hop lifestyle-prescribed in these writings
establishes the foundations of Health, Love, Awareness and
Wealth in preparation for a life lived in peace, love, unity
and joy while practicing Hip Hop.

Critics of our movement can say whatever they like, however amongst average Hiphoppas who have bills to
pay, families to raise, mouths to feed and goals to achieve, Hip Hop cannot be just about music and dance, beeps and
scandals. What kind of lifestyle is that!

After you’ve reached 20 years of age Hip Hop must
be able to sustain your well-being or you will be forced to
associate with another movement or way of life that can.
And there begins the death of Hip Hop for real! The
inability to enhance the quality of the Hip Hop life can lead
to the death of Hip Hop itself.

For if Hiphoppas cannot sustain their own well-
being with Hip Hop, or if the Hip Hop lifestyle leads to
prison, then sooner or later some of our best minds and the
most-talented of our group will be forced to take up other
lifestyles and careers just to feed and protect themselves. And
even beyond the protecting, feeding, clothing and sheltering
of one’s self, if Hip Hop cannot offer the Hiphoppa peace
then what is it offering?

This teaches has achieved peace through his
ccontentment with Hip Hop, and this is what he teaches.
I really don’t need anything else to be happy. Hip Hop is
total living for me, I would live no other way. Therefore,
by being true to the “love” in my life, GOD is revealed,
my purpose is fulfilled and peace is produced. People can
betray you; family and friends can be unreliable, selfish
and unreasonable. But, GOD, revealed through an attuned
Hip hop lifestyle, is a firm foundation upon which to stand. 
Let GOD be your strength, not people. 

Forty years of living Hip Hop has also revealed to us an order, a plan, a pattern, some sort of divine direction that guides and develops Hip Hop. This knowing produces peace and knowing this produces peace. Knowing for a fact without a doubt that Hip Hop is divinely guided creates peace in the life of the attuned Hiphoppa. Practicing Hip Hop in this way and being content with Hip Hop in this way produces an inner security that satisfies your outer perception, causing a state of peace.

Know this. PEACE PRESERVES HIP HOP. And peace is not attained after one is successful; peace is practiced at the beginning of one’s journey toward success. This is why those who have not mastered their own inner-workings first will find themselves enslaved to their own outer-workings later. And one of the first tasks of one’s inner-work is to live a life that one can be proud of, a life that can be commended before GOD. Such a lifestyle causes peace, and this is why such a lifestyle should begin when you are young; like 15.

Knowledge also causes peace in the sense that being able to accurately and impressively explain what you do as well as who you are produces a sense of inner-security about yourself. Being impressed with yourself, that you are your Self, causes peace. Being satisfied with your Self causes peace.

Mastery of the Refinements presents a professional personality that draws needed opportunity through the curiosity and admiration of those who hear you speak. However, the Refinements have been known to backfire upon those who simply speak the terms and don’t live the life. It is like claiming to be a gangster so that you may impress your ignorant friends. But when your own gangster speech begins to draw gangster situations to you, you are unprepared because you really don’t live a criminal life; you were only speaking about criminal behavior because you thought you needed to do so to be considered cool.

The same can be applied to good and productive situations like when you claim to have something that you don’t really have only to achieve it and have not the hands, the mind, or the space to receive it. Know this. Lifestyles are created by the rituals of one’s tribe which corresponds with the nature of one’s being. Hip Hop is the name of our tribe, and the mastery of one’s own tribal rituals sets up a confident character about one’s self even before one enters the World as an adult or as a professional of some sort.

When one has matured and has completed the ritual “stages” of one’s own tribe, and holds the respect of one’s own group one then earns a certain importance and respect in the World, not for what one has done in the World, but for what one has done for one’s self amongst one’s own people. Such a character invites peace.

The World respects a man whose tribe respects him. The World protects a woman whose tribe protects her. The World feeds and educates the children whose tribe feeds and educates them.

The World is also confident in the leader who is confident in himself, and such confidence comes by way of one’s own mastery of one’s own culture and self-expression. Hip Hop is the name of our tribe, and the way we present ourselves to the World is the way the World shall present itself to our children and their children’s children forever.

For when we finally accept our tribe and commit to it, we see ourselves more clearly because we know what we belong to. The problem with so many of our young people today is that they don’t feel as though they belong to anything and so peace in their adult years is almost impossible because they are not comforted by a satisfying tradition.
Mastery of the Definitions begins one's journey toward contentment and peace as a Hiphoppa because the mastery of the Definitions' language and approach to Hip Hop makes the practicing Hiphoppa sure about the Hip Hop he/she lives and practices. Such surety causes a sense of peace and self-satisfaction well into one's elderly years.

The Definitions make the best parts of Hip Hop a repeatable science—a science that when mastered offers special intellectual and creative abilities unique to the Hip Hop experience. For as long as we stay within the mastery of our own self-expression we shall always possess a special strength in the material world against all challenges, foreign or domestic. The problem is when you doubt the authority and value of your own self-expression, then everyone else must doubt you as well.

Sure, we can all talk about preserving Hip Hop and teaching its true history, but if there is no clearly outlined strategy to actually preserve Hiphoppas themselves, how then shall Hip Hop actually be preserved? What are we actually preserving of Hip Hop?

Hip Hop's many activist organizations are right to preserve Hip Hop's artistic memorabilia and real history—respect to that. However, the Temple of Hip Hop is more concerned with the preservation of Hiphoppas themselves than with the study and/or glorification of Hip Hop's artifacts and/or possible history.

In fact, Hip Hop does not actually need to be preserved, because nothing real can ever be destroyed. And Hip Hop is real! However, if the Hiphoppa is ignorant of Hip Hop's productive lifestyle then it is the Hiphoppa's participation in Hip Hop that can lead the Hiphoppa to suffering, affecting the very fabric of Hip Hop itself: No, Hip Hop cannot actually be destroyed, but it can be distorted and made to serve interests it was not initially intended for.

This is one of the real challenges facing Hip Hop today, its belief in its own existence.

Many people (mostly Rap fans) are convinced that Hip Hop is just music. They approach Hip Hop as a music genre with no principles or social awareness and then wonder why "hip-hop's" music doesn't offer its consumers anything more than gangsters, bitches, pimps, hoes and niggas. Indeed they got it twisted!

This is why many rappers don't make it past two albums or even 10 minutes live on stage; because talent never got anyone anywhere! It is the way in which you live your life that ensures your success and longevity. Talent does help. Being highly skilled does help. But ultimately, if people don't like you then you are going NOWHERE! If people don't trust you, you are going NOWHERE! If you have no faith, no courage or credibility you are going NOWHERE!

Hip Hop's music alone never got anyone killed or made anyone live any longer. It was always one's own lifestyle or even one's own life decisions that produced such results either way. So, how ya livin'? What principles do you conduct your life by? Do they cause peace, contentment and joy in your life?

Hip Hop reaches far beyond music and lyrics, as we've been learning; Hip Hop is a conscious way to be. But some have suggested that Hip Hop is simply an art form; a genre of music to be compared to other music genres and performing arts. They insist that Hip Hop is no more than music entertainment, as if "Breakin'" and "Graffiti writing" do not exist as Hip Hop as well. As if Hip Hop actually exists outside of GOD!

But is there really a debate here? The real issue is faith. What do YOU believe? If you believe that hip-hop is just music then you shall live with the manifestations of
your own beliefs. And if I believe that Hip Hop is a conscious behavior that produces health, love, awareness, and wealth for the believer then I too shall live with the manifestations of my own beliefs.

30 But, even if we limit Hip Hop’s activity to the realm of just music, many still fail to meditate upon the actual depths of music itself. Even hip-hop journalists, music executives and so-called hip-hop scholars refuse to ask themselves surface questions like: Where does music come from? What is it that inspires the human mind to create music? What is the purpose of music itself? More importantly, what is the purpose of OUR music? What should OUR music inspire OUR listeriors to feel? And, what is art?

31 How many of our critics are really asking these questions? If Hip Hop is just good music, then what is its purpose as “good music?” Not that we should give our music a fake purpose that it did not originally have, but instead shouldn’t we be seeking the Truth and deeper existence of the music that WE are inspired to create?

32 Shouldn’t we be investigating the deeper aspects of our OWN creativity? An inquiry into just Rap music’s existence would reveal to us the true nature of our OWN being. Such an inquiry would explore Hip Hop far beyond DJ-ing, MC-ing and CD sales.

33 If we are truly Hip Hop’s artists (and not just fans) is it not OUR responsibility to seek the deeper meaning to OUR Hip Hop art? Who else is supposed to do this inquiry for us? Who else CAN do this inquiry for us? Even if it is just to get better as artists and master the performances of our own artistic expressions, shouldn’t WE be investigating the deeper meaning to OUR creative activity? And this is if we limit Hip Hop to just “Rap music.”

34 These are just the basic questions of those that truly love Hip Hop. Others (even with lengthy recording contracts and various sales awards) expose themselves as “desperate fans of the music” by never taking the time to investigate the deeper mechanics of their own craft and livelihood. They themselves act as if they are visitors to Hip Hop’s culture and elements simply by their non-caring attitude toward Hip Hop’s preservation.

35 For if they were even true musicians and not “hustlers” hustling or peddling Rap music to a gullible public their greatest joy would be to probe the sacred path of music creation into the very depths of poetry and even sound vibration itself.

36 The young emcee seeking a deeper understanding of hip-hop even as music would ask; “if hip-hop is just good music, then what is music?” The origin of music is not the radio, nor is the origin of art the artist, nor do CD sales equate to artistic excellence.

37 Know this. Music is the art of arranging sounds into harmonious melodies and rhythms. Sound is a vibration that passes through any elastic material and/or medium; either solid, liquid, gas, or other.

38 Music and sound are not the same things. Sound must vibrate at the frequency of 16 to 20,000 hertz (or cycles per second) to be detected by the human ear. The vibration frequency of sound hitting the ear at 20 hertz must be almost 70 dB higher (2000 hertz or 10 million times more energy) to produce human hearing. The ear actually magnifies sound vibrations so that we can hear them.

39 In our time, the frequency range for human beings to hear speech is between 600 to 4,800 hertz. The energy output of the male voice peaks at about 350 hertz and the energy output of the female voice peaks at about 700 hertz, which is then magnified by the eardrum to produce hearing. However, even if there was no eardrum to detect sound in
of Hip Hop available. However, knowing and speaking the language of the Refinitions is a good first start for any Hiphoppa; it opens new doors of opportunity, defense, self-worth and longevity.

Other Hip Hop organizations may practice a different set of elements and terms. However, the Refinitions remain the primary teaching tool of the Temple of Hip Hop. With this body of knowledge we raise our self-worth as Hiphop Kultural Specialists. Like Hip Hop itself, the Refinitions is a social art that offers its practitioners an escape from poverty and purposelessness.

It is this approach to Hip Hop that assisted in our freedom and has delivered our victory over the streets in our time. And it has been our experience that this approach to Hip Hop (the Refininitions) truly preserves Hip Hop because it truly empowers the Hiphoppa.

By learning how to speak and teach the language of the Refinitions, and by performing Hip Hop’s elements in this way, the true Hiphoppa raises her own self-worth and artistic longevity. In addition, the language of the Refinitions raises the value of those that teach Hiphop, Hip Hop and hip-hop for a living.

This begins your intellectual training of Hiphop, Hip Hop and hip-hop, and here your training is directly connected to your doing. Reading about Hip Hop is NOT how one experiences Hiphop. It is in the doing, being and living of Hiphop that one gains the spiritual essence of Hip Hop.

Remember, an athlete was never made by mere instruction, and no soldier was ever trained simply by studying her manual. Both are made by the continuous practice of their drills and exercises. It is not the hearers of Truth, but the doers of Truth that are justified before their God.

So let us perfect ourselves in this way. Let us work in our own sphere and with what GOD has provided to us. Let us perfect ourselves before seeking the ways of those outside of ourselves and our experiences. The more we are sustained by internal strength, the less we demand of life around us. Each must keep his own happiness in his own name. No man is so rich or powerful that he can hire another to sleep for him or to eat for him. Each must perform the essential requirements of survival, and this is true of the inner-life as well. To depend for strength upon that which is not ourselves is folly. (Manly P. Hall, The Mystical Christ)

A perfected Self, meaning a life purpose fulfilled, inherits the intellectual ability to know anything. Focus now upon the perfection of your Self-expression. Be not envious of the blessings and skills that GOD has given to others, ignoring the blessings and skills that GOD has given to you. Take a moment now to review and reflect upon our list of Hip Hop elements, terms and codes.

---

**BREAKIN:** (The study and application of street dance forms.) Originally called the Go-Off, Burnin’ and/or Boy Yong Yong, Breakin is commonly called Break Dancing or b-boying today—and it now includes the once independent dance forms Up-Rockin, Poppin and Lockin, Jailhouse or Slap-Boxing, Double Dutch, Electric Boogie and Capoeira martial arts. It is also commonly referred to as freestyle street dancing. The practitioners of traditional Breakin are called b-boys, b-girls and Breakers.

**Breakin** moves are also used in aerobics and other exercises that refine the body and relieve stress. Dance and other rhythmic body movements appear at the genesis of human awareness and remain the center of good health.

**Breakin** gets our hearts pumping at about 120
beats per minute, and if we can break or dance at least three
times a week for only 20 minutes we will have enhanced
our physical health and prolonged our very lives by years.
Like letters, dance is also a form of communication. In fact,
Poppin’, Lockin’, and Electric Boogie are all body symbols;
even body letters.

Dance is often used as a form of self-expression;
it is like a language (body language). It is also a form of
healing and rejuvenation: 'Break-dancing': acrobatic style of
street dancing.

While breakdancing (a term disowned by all b-boys)
began with crews like the Niggga Twins, the Zulu Kings, the
Salsoul Crew, the City Boys, Freeze Force, Starchild La
Rock, the Disco Kids, and the KC Crew, the most influential
was undoubtedly the Rock Steady Crew. Formed in 1977 by
Jojo Torres, Jimmy Lee, Mongo Rock, Spy, and Jimmy Dee,
the Rock Steady Crew gathered together the best of the second
wave of Latino b-boys who had come to dominate the field since
it migrated out of the Bronx in the early 70s.

The RSC main innovation was to make b-buying more
athletic, more gymnastic. Many of these moves were pioneered
by the two b-boys who are generally considered the greatest:
Richie 'Crazy Legs' Colon and Ken 'Swift' Gabbritt. Moves
like the windmill, the whip, the 1900, the chair and the spider
are credited to Crazy Legs and Ken Swift, who helped the
RSC become the dominant crew in legendary battles against
the Dynamic Breakers, the Floor Masters and the New York
City Breakers.

Meanwhile, in Los Angeles, a kid called Don Campbell
invented Locking (freezing in between moves). The dance
became so popular that he formed his own troupe in 1973, the
Campbellock Dancers, which included such minor celebs as
Fred 'Rerun' Berry, Toni Basil and 'Shabba-Doo' Quinones.
The style was expanded by The Electric Boogaloos ('Boogaloo
Sam' Solomon, Timothy 'Poppin' Pete Solomon, Skeeter Rabbit, Twist-O-Flex Don, Creepin' Cid and Tickin' Will),
who invented moves like poppin', boogaloo, tickin', twist-flex
and the old man while dancing to Zapp records. (Peter Shapiro,
The Rough Guide to Hip-Hop)

In a letter written to the Temple of Hip Hop,
b-boy historian Mickey Ice explains how the dance style
of Poppin' was created in Fresno, California sometime
around 1977 by a man named Boogaloo Sam dancing to
Roger Troutman and Zapp records. He explains in this letter
The group was called the Electric Boogaloos, a group of
young Black kids from Edison High School on the West Side
of Fresno...My uncle was hyped by the whole movement, this
was around 1977 until 1984, Poppin got exposure to the world,
then came Oakland etc.

Mickey Ice continues, Just like the Bronx, this style
of dancing was only going on here (Fresno, CA), nowhere else in
California, not even Los Angeles, except Lockin' which was
Don Campbell. He was Lockin' at Compton Community College,
then came Rerun. Big ups to the Rock Steady Crew for taking
it across the oceans! But there was some nasty brothas before
the Rock Steady Crew like the Nicholas Brothers, Sammy
Davis Jr., and Sandman. I got some footage of Black folks on
the cotton plantation with the illest footwork and Up-Rocking
before Hip Hop.

Popularized by: James Brown, Don Campbell and
the Campbellock Dancers, the Niggga Twinks, Poppin' Pete;
Dennis Vasquez—the Rubber Band Man, Rock Steady
Crew, Pec-Wee Dance, the New York City Breakers, the
Los Angeles Breakers, Boogaloo Shrimp, "Shabba-Doo"
Quinones, Demons of the Mind, the Breeze Team, Michael
Jackson, and others.

EMCEEIN; (The study and application of rhythmic
Emcees (different from MCs) seek the mastery of the spoken word. For in the mastering of emcee we also express our inherit understanding of rhythm, linguistics, physics, mathematics, memory, logical reasoning and high communication skills. Emcee expresses a total integration of right and left brain coordination:

Know this. A talented emcee almost always becomes a respected rapper. But a talented rapper usually never becomes a respected emcee.

The emcee expresses through rhyme what is already on your mind, whereas the rapper tells you all about his or her self. True HipHoppas are encouraged to study both styles for maximum success.

Popularized by: Cab Calloway, Coke La Rock, Peeble Poo, Sha Rock, Chief Rocker Busy Bee, Keith Cowboy, Melle Mel, Grandmaster Caz, Rakim, Queen Lisa Lee, Slick Rick, Big Daddy Kane, MC Lyte, Roxanne Shanté, Muhammad Ali, and others.

GRAFFITI ART: (The study and application of street calligraphy, art and handwriting.) Commonly called Aerosol Art, Writing, Piecing, Burning, Graff and Urban Murals. Other forms of this art include Bombin’ and Taggin’. Its practitioners are known as Writers, Bombers, Graffiti writers, Aerosol artists, Graffitiists and Graffiti artists.

Also at the genesis of human awareness, writing on walls; trees, stones, clothing, etc. plays an important part in the development of human intelligence and self-expression. Most urban children instinctively begin learning to write by writing on walls.

Ancient humans of prehistoric times would put certain berry juice in their mouths and blow or spit their images onto cave walls sometimes in total darkness just as the modern graffiti writers of the 1970s and 1980s would do.
with their aerosol spray cans on the sides of subway trains.

Today, Graffiti artists seek to be masters of handwriting and art. Graffiti writing is mostly about letters. It's about actualizing one's artistic style and expression through letters. Graffiti artists rate themselves on their letter styles, characters and ability to write and/or draw a good story. Many writers have become graphic artists, fashion designers, photographers and motion picture directors.

Know this. Graffiti as art is not vandalism! Graffiti Art is the revolutionary control of public space. Graffiti Art does to letters what emcee does to language. Traditionally, the word Graffiti originated from the Italian term Graffito, meaning a scratch—thus its connection with deejayin (Graffiti writing—visual deejayin).

Graffiti was a term given to Hip Hop’s graphic art animation when it appeared legally and illegally on public and private properties as an act of social protest (especially on subway trains).

Similar to the way Emceen was labeled Rap and Breakin was labeled break dancing, so it became with wrintin', bombin', piecin', burnin' and taggin', which have all come to be labeled graffiti.

Graffiti—writing or drawing that is scribbled, scratched, or sprayed onto a surface.

Popularized by: Cornbread, Taki 183, Phase 2, Cay 161, Barbara 62 and Eve 62, Lady Pink, Stay High 149, Kase 2, Lee, Chico, Cope 2, TATS CRU, Presweet, Iz the Wiz, Seen, Quik, O.E., Revolt, Dondi, Papo 184, Zephyr, Futura 2000, and others.

DEEJAYIN: (The study and application of Rap music production, cuttin', mixin' and scratchin' as well as on-air radio broadcasting.) Commonly refers to the work of a disc jockey. However, Hip Hop’s disc jockey doesn’t just play vinyl records, tapes and compact discs. Hip Hop’s DJ interacts artistically with the performance of a recorded song by cuttin', mixin', and scratchin' the song in all of its recorded formats.

Originally presented by two turntables, first designed by Edward P. Casey of the Bronx in 1955, and connected to a mixer with a “cross-fader” first designed by Grandmaster Flash in 1976, Hip Hop’s DJ used the turntable and mixer as instruments that manipulated the playing of vinyl records.

Deejayin, different from “DJ-ing,” includes speaking, even rapping while presenting recorded music. Caribbean people still use the term deejayin to describe the vocal performances of rhythmic speech over music.

Deejayin is also about knowing the moods that certain music can put an audience in. Deejayin detects and orchestrates the mood of music-presentations. Deejayin explores the relationship between music melodies, song production, and their effects upon the moods of people.

Even beyond music and other forms of entertainment, Deejayin as a conscious awareness not only inspires our style of musical instrumentation, it also expresses the desire and ability to create, modify and/or transform music technology.

Its practitioners are known as turntablist, deejays, mixologists, grandmasters, jammasters, and funkmasters. Disc Jockey—presenter of recorded music.


BEAT BOXIN: (The study and application of body
music and body language.) Commonly refers to the act
of creating rhythmic sounds and language with various
parts of the body; particularly the throat, mouth and
hands. Its practitioners are known as Human Beat Boxes
or Human Orchestras.

Beat Boxin is about seeing and using the body
as an instrument. Earlier versions of this expression
included Hand bone or Hambone. However, modern Beat
Boxin originates from the act of imitating early electronic
rum machines.

The early electronic drum machines were some
of the original beat boxes; and to skillfully imitate them
was called Beat Boxin. However, ancient Beat Boxin was
the ability to imitate the sounds of Nature with one's own
body parts.

Not only is Beat Boxin a form of communication; it
is Hip Hop's actual language. Beat Boxin is also found at the
genesis of human awareness. In fact, imitating the sounds of
Nature (or one's natural environment) to communicate ideas
and feelings is at the very beginning of human awareness,
knowledge and survival:

Popularized by: Doug E. Fresh, Biz Markie,
the Fat Boyz, (the original) DMX, Greg Nice, Bobby
McFerrin, Emanon, Click Tha Supah Latin, K Love,
Rahzel, and others.

Street Fashion refers to the clothing
trends of urban centers. However, Street Fashion deals with
all trends and styles of Hip Hop's culture—what's in and
what's out, regardless of the expression. Its practitioners
are known as Hiphoppas.

Self-expression through Street Fashion is an
important way to present Hip Hop's unique identity to the

World. Street Fashion represents the prominence of all Hip
Hop cultural codes, forms and customs.

Not only is fashion a very ancient form of
communication, but our expressed consciousness was (and
still is) also represented in the way in which we adorned,
colored and dressed ourselves.

Popularized by: the Black Spades, the Black
Panthers, the Crips, the Bloods, the Jew Man, Ron 125th,
Dapper Dan, Shirt Kings, Lugz, FUBU, Karl Kani, Sean
John, Wu Wear, Fat Joe 560, Phat Farm and others.

Street Language: (The study and application
of street communication.) Commonly referred to as Black
English, Urban Slang and Ebonics. It is Hip Hop's urban
language and linguistic codes—the verbal communication
of the streets.

Advanced Street Language includes the correct
pronunciation of one's native and national language as
it pertains to urban life. In addition, advanced Street
Language deals with one's communication skills even
beyond what one says.

Street Language is not always spoken words. Hip
Hop's Street Language includes Beat Boxin and certain
street codes that may not be communicated in words at all.

Still, Street Language (as it pertains to the spoken
word) is Hip Hop's effort to free itself from the confinement
of standard language and standardized views of reality.

English (for example) does not have enough words
or definitions to describe how we (Hiphoppas) feel about
the World. This is what makes our Street (slang) Language
so important to our state of freedom.

Our speech publishes to others the thoughts
and perceptions of OUR minds. Street Language helps
Hiphoppas interpret THEIR World THEIR way. Its
practitioners are known as Hip hoppas.

Popularized by: Richard Pryor, Martin Lawrence, the Last Poets, Chris Rock, the Watts Prophets, James Brown, Gil Scott-Heron, E-40, DJ Hollywood, Lovebug Starski, Nas, Fab 5 Freddy, Frankie Crocker and others.

STREET KNOWLEDGE: (The study and application of ancestral wisdom.) Commonly refers to the basic common sense and accumulated wisdom of urban families. It consists of techniques, phrases, codes and terms used to survive within the inner cities.

It involves the ability to reason soundly with or without the ideas or validation of the traditional academic mainstream. Street Knowledge is the accumulation of Hip Hop's cultural self-awareness.

Its practitioners are known as Hip hoppas as well as sisters, brothers, goddesses, gods, mothers, fathers, teachers, queens, kings, princesses, princes, lords and divine.

Contrary to the myth that knowledge is only accumulated in quiet, ordered, academic environments, much of Hip Hop's communal knowledge can be found with its comedians, poets and authors. Hip hoppas learn and transfer knowledge through laughter and having fun. Streetwise—knowing how to survive modern urban life.

Popularized by: Malcolm X, Dr. Cornel West, Martin Lawrence, Afrika Bambaataa, Clarence 13X, Minister Louis Farrakhan, Kwame Ture, Chuck D, Nas, Dick Gregory, Chris Rock, Tupac Shakur, the Wayans Brothers, Wise Intelligent and others.

STREET ENTREPRENEURIALISM: (The study and application of fair trade and Hip Hop business management.) Commonly referred to as street trade, having game, the natural salesman, or the smooth diplomat. It is the readiness to engage in the creation of a business venture that brings about grassroots business practices. Many of Hip Hop's apprenticeships begin here.

Different from entrepreneur-ism which may include the techniques and practices of the entrepreneur, entrepreneurial-ism focuses upon the motivating spirit to be self-employed, inventive, creative and self-educated.

It is this spirit, the spirit of self-creation, the urge to create and sell one's own talents, discoveries and inventions that is encouraged by these teachings. Its practitioners are known as hustlers and self-starters. Entrepreneur—a self-motivated creative person who undertakes a commercial venture.

Popularized by: Madame C.J. Walker, Russell Simmons, Luther Campbell, Sean "Puffy" Combs, Jack the Rapper, Robert Townsend, Eazy-E, Too Short and others.

The Dark Age: (Age of Revolution) 1961–1971. This was a time when every institution in the United States was being questioned and challenged on its authenticity and value. It was during these turbulent times that the first generation of Hip hoppas were born. Our first gatherings were held in our homes as house parties. Later, we moved outside into the public parks. Originality in one's artistic skill was Hip Hop's first cultural status symbol.

The Light Age: (Age of Light) 1971–1981. During this time Hip Hop began to emerge as a distinct and unique urban movement. This was a time when Hip hoppas displayed the sight. As our house parties became over-crowded, we (Hip hoppas) began using electric power from the city streetlights to generate as much energy needed to run huge sound systems in New York City's public parks. Hip Hop was set out in the dark, they use to do it out in the park... (MC Shan). Power from a streetlight made the place dark... (KRS ONE).
Intercepting city power was literally and symbolically one of the ways in which the Hip hop sight was first expressed. The light of the street or the awareness of the street; the street-Light (sight) had some Hiphoppas creating community recreation by unleashing the fire hydrants on hot summer days.

Some wrote their names and other messages on city subway trains and buses, while others danced for money in the downtown areas of their cities. Still others would express new fashion and language trends.

At the close of this age Hip Hop began to slowly influence the American mainstream in a variety of ways. However, the hip-hop community began to want what the mainstream offered as opposed to being satisfied with what it had already accomplished.

This was an age when Hip Hop realized it was unique and self-evident. There were no limits in our sight. By the middle of this age, most of our gatherings were held in public parks, nightclubs and community centers.

Those with loud sound systems and/or boom boxes (large portable radios) were considered important. Self-recorded cassette tapes of Deejayin and Emcein became Hip Hop's industrial and cultural status symbols. It was through the symbolic power of the street-light that we empowered ourselves.

The Golden Age: (Age of Awareness) 1981–1991. This was a time when Hip Hop became self-aware and began to establish itself in the World. This was when most of Hip Hop culture's foundation work was inspired.

Many of Hip Hop's cultural icons emerged during this time. The Hip Hop community was still inexperienced and many Hiphoppas were angry at the mainstream for ignoring them. Kurtis Blow would be the first MC to sign to a major recording corporation (Mercury Records).

During this time, a gold album (500,000 recordings sold) and gold jewelry became the Hip Hop community's industrial and cultural status symbols. Those with a gold album sales award and/or an assortment of gold jewelry were considered large or important.

During this age, some Hiphoppas remained cultural while others chose to be corporate. It was a time of great debate and image-building. It was during this time that many Hiphoppas began to lose the sight.

The Platinum Age: (Age of Power/ Thé Ice Age) 1991–2001. This was an age when the Hip Hop community began to benefit from the techniques set down by those of the Golden Age. This age was influenced by a so-called war on drugs which many said was really a war on families.

Most of the artistic expressions of this era were makeovers, do-overs, remixes, rewrites and samples; very little originated from any of Hip Hop's nine elements during this time. Emphasis was placed upon media ratings, sales chart positions, fame and money which came about through the basic copying and remaking of the already popular songs, dances and street trends of the 1970s and 1980s.

During this time, Rap music became the dominant expression of the inner cities, influencing millions of people from a variety of ethnicities, classes and professional occupations.

It was during the Platinum Age or Ice Age that hip-hop accumulated enough wealth to independently provide for its families. A platinum album (1,000,000 CDs sold) and platinum jewelry became the hip-hop community's status symbols. True Hip Hop went underground.

And even though Hiphoppas cried out for peace and
unity during this age, it was the pursuit of money, power and respect that was called...the key to life!

The Information Age: (Age of Culture) 2001–2011. In this age Hiphop Kulture and all of its elements became common knowledge in the inner cities and within the institutions of the World.

Many Hiphoppas matured during this age, becoming aware of their spiritual natures and higher purpose as Hiphop. Many Hiphoppas raised families in productive Hiphop lifestyles.

This age was influenced by a so-called war on terror. This age also experienced the moral collapse of corporate and religious institutions in America due to widespread greed, lust and corruption. In addition, this age saw some of the worst weather in history! Whole cities and coastlines began to disappear during this age.

During this time, Rap music lost some of its mainstream CD-selling appeal. Many argued that it was the availability of free music over the Internet and bootlegged mixtapes that caused Rap music to lose its ability to sell like it did in its previous ages.

However, another perspective suggests that Rap music lost some of its mainstream appeal and commercial dominance because of the irresponsible, unbalanced and vulgar images hip-hop portrayed daily through mainstream media outlets that were controlled by two or three recording companies, as well as continuously over-priced CDs which lacked any real artistic talent.

Rap music’s original production styles of hard aggressive drums and samples were replaced by a more rhythm-and-blues style of production. With more popularity and money, Rap music became more musical and less confrontational.

With its acceptance into the mainstream, Rap music lost its rebellious street-edge and thus its ability to compete in the corporate world. Diamonds became the hip-hop community’s industrial and cultural status symbols while true Hip Hop became more underground and socially conscious.

But the many cultural campaigns, songs, articles and conferences that were launched by Hip Hop’s conscious organizations against the unbalanced presentations of hip-hop to the World were largely overlooked by the mainstream. These campaigns forced many Hiphoppas to revisit their Hip Hop roots, causing new ways of thinking about one’s self and one’s environment to manifest within the hip-hop community.

In this age, which was also during the completion of this first instrument; attuned Hiphoppas became well-respected political and spiritual forces for social change. Many of the mistakes made in our previous ages were corrected in this age when we became the executives, teachers, writers, politicians, athletes, actors and technicians of mainstream media outlets.

During this time, the Temple of Hip Hop established itself as a legitimate Hip Hop preservation society and Hip Hop ministry.

Never again was there no way out of sickness, hate, ignorance and poverty for our people. Never again did we have to accept the exploitation of the mainstream just to be heard. Those Hiphoppas that stayed committed to Hip Hop’s original principles would be repeatedly honored in this age.

However, the Hip Hop community would still have to outsmart many of the counter-intelligence programs launched against it. However, our victories over such challenges proved our divinity.
It was during this age that *The Hip Hop Declaration of Peace* became common knowledge and Hip Hop was declared an official international culture for peace and prosperity. It is during this age that people begin to approach Hip Hop more seriously. And a new age of peace began...

From the very beginning of modern Hip Hop, around 1973, Hip Hop has struggled for self-determination. Within the development of our identity, character, and intellectual uniqueness, the creation of our own dialect was inevitable.

For many years Hip Hop has communicated with itself by developing a language that relies upon the transformation of already existing languages. The need for an outcast wing of society to create its own system of discourse has always been felt; slave days are a primary example.

Since words were only one of the weapons for early Africans in America, a sophisticated system of code had to be developed that inverted meaning, cloaked irony, and allowed for a free and open exchange of ideas when such free speech was not permissible or, like today, unacceptable.

For years Hip Hop's dialect has been scorned as incorrect, ignorant ghetto talk, and for us to believe this from the same orthodoxy that ignores our intelligence and condescends to our lifestyle is suicidal for us.

To further understand the language of Hip Hop's culture one must avoid condemnation of the unfamiliar. The belief that "Hiphoppas" have no intellectual agency in their self-expression and that the World must be interpreted for us is unfounded.

Similarly, the incredibly prejudiced notion that Hiphoppas are incapable of critical and abstract thinking—

that we excel only at primal expressions like song, dance, and sport (like these too are of lesser importance)—still exists in society, albeit in a much subtler form. Unfortunately, it seems to be natural for society to look down upon offshoots of its language.

People who speak "high" German look down on those who speak "low." Cajun pronunciations of words like "Pontchartrain," "Carondelet," and "Banquet" continue to make French people cringe.

These dialects are clearly breaking the rules, but the idea that a language isn't self-governing, that it needs rules to keep it in check, is absurd. Language comes first, then comes grammar. To say that a language is "wrong" is ethnocentric!

Language is constantly evolving and dictionaries of all sorts constantly change to reflect this evolution. New words are admitted into a variety of dictionaries every year, although it is interesting to note that common Hip Hop phraseology is continually denied entry into many "well-known" dictionaries.

Language is the gateway to culture, and the first step in killing a culture is killing its language. The British paid Irish teachers not to teach Irish Gaelic; Koreans were forced to learn Japanese; Africans, Native Americans—English, etc.

Language serves the *internal* communication of a group; in a social sense it serves the internal communication of the dominant group. It allows a group to share pleasures, pains, dreams, and creative intelligence. It records the history of the group. It is the utterance of the culture. The problem today is not really Rap lyrics; it is actually cultural illiteracy on the part of those who criticize Hip Hop’s artistic expressions and language that is the problem.

As rapper Ludacris pointed out in *The Source*
magazine when asked about Oprah Winfrey’s opinions of him and his lyrical content, They need to understand that every time people in Hip Hop say ‘bitch’ we’re not degrading women... They need to understand that in this language Hip Hop built, some words don’t always mean something negative. What I’m saying is that in Hip Hop, there is a language. I feel like people should understand where we are coming from. We live it, and the people that criticize it so much have never lived it and are just hearing us talk. (The Source, August 2006, 202)

71 Now either you respect Ludacris as an intelligent representative of Hip Hop’s culture, explaining his language and content clearly for all to learn, or your OWN prejudice only sees Ludacris as a foul-mouthed rapper with nothing worthwhile to say or add to society.

71 The problem seems to be that those who criticize Hip Hop’s artistic expressions are simply ignorant of Hip Hop. They don’t know how to interpret what they are seeing and hearing of Hip Hop in mass media. Some do, but most don’t. And the “most” that don’t know of Hip Hop’s true meaning, purpose, intent, and history are those who criticize us and our language today. But there is also an academic silence or passiveness on our (Hip Hop’s) part when it comes to educating Americans as to what is going on with us and our cultural existence. This is why the movement to teach Hip Hop in its OWN private schools is so important.

72 In a 1980 Reader’s Digest book entitled Word Power: The Entertaining Way To Enrich Your Language Skills, one of its contributors, Roderick MacLeish, writes: Today, young white Americans are adopting, wholesale, the language of black America. In the process they are telling us that they identify and sympathize with the struggle of black America to find its deserved place in our society. Meanwhile, some

wonderfully articulate phrases are swirling into our language...
We had no precise word for lively, direct communication until ‘rapping’ appeared.

74 Some of what the public doesn’t understand about language can be explained in elementary linguistics or sociology. But I don’t hear too many scholars speaking publicly on this subject—the subject of language and its role in society. To criticize Hip Hop on the basis of its word usage is again unscholarly on the criticizer’s part. In the same Reader’s Digest book, State Department linguist James Bostain explains, If you can be understood, if you project the social image that you want to, you are speaking correctly.

75 Most scholars are aware that words affect little without definition. All words yield a definition or definitions, which in turn yield a graphic ‘description between the user and the receiver. The challenge seems to be the want of our critics to understand what we are saying, to decipher our coded language. And so, it is not the words in their minds that need to be changed, it is the pictures that certain words create in their minds that need to be updated. They are, attempting to understand the meaning of our coded words with their traditional linguistic images. This is the challenge.

76 Words affect very little without definitions and definitions affect very little unless one can graphically picture it in his mind. Do you “see” what I’m saying? So when Hiphopps say “bitch” or “nigga” whatever image comes to your mind is your business! But if my friend comes to me and says “what’s up my nigga” and the graphic description of his greeting affects my psychology in positive and productive ways, how then is our (Hip Hop) language offensive or even degrading? THIS IS OUR LANGUAGE!
However, it is within our sincere respect and love for our elders that we should consider our language and the terms we use to describe the World. At the end of the day, our most important responsibility (culturally) is to stay in communication with our parents and elders. Therefore, if the use of certain words creates certain graphic images and symbols in their minds we must consider altering our language when communicating with them. They deserve our utmost respect and admiration; if we don’t respect our elders no one else will either.

However, today’s arguments against Rap lyrics by others outside of our community imply that we are not allowed to define “our world” or “the World” for ourselves our way. Such arguments imply that we (Hip Hop) are not allowed to give our own definitions and interpretations of the material World in which we live.

As I listen to the criticisms against Rap lyrics I can’t help but feel that the whole debate over Rap lyrics stems from an emotional base and not from a logical base. Logically, to imply that we are disrespecting ourselves and our heritage as if we are not “ourselves” and “our heritage” stinks with the stench of prejudice and arrogance on the criticizer’s part.

Hip Hop is treated as if it just came out of nowhere! From the very beginnings of Hip Hop in the late 1970s we were always treated like aliens or “outsiders” who had to fend for themselves while being criticized along the way. The sad thing, though, is that “outsiders” are not studied or taken seriously at all—even if they are your children.

Without studying our culture and language you cannot critique our culture and language. I’m sure the whole material World is offensive and threatening to those who remain ignorant of it. But that doesn’t mean that one must remain ignorant. Those who don’t know, criticize because they don’t know. Those who know don’t need to criticize—they know.

So for those who don’t know, or for those who act like they don’t know, allow me to say explicitly: HIP HOP ITSELF IS NOT A VIOLENT MUSIC GENRE THAT DEGRADES WOMEN AND PROMOTES ILLEGAL ACTIVITY! These events are the products and effects of corporate marketing in an entertainment arena.

However, it is still interesting to note how other music genres get to enjoy a certain immunity from the “fantasy” of their poetry no matter how graphic, while rappers are held accountable for the “fantasy” of their poetry. Everyone agrees and understands that other music genres are simply telling a story using metaphors and symbols when telling their graphic tales, even when those tales are true, but Hip Hop doesn’t seem to enjoy such an understanding.

If a Rhythm and Blues (R&B) singer sings a song that implies adultery, betrayal and deceit between husband and wife (as an example), the R&B singer is not questioned about the content of her lyrics. It is basically understood that the R&B singer is “performing” and the lyrics to the song as well as the performance of the song may not be real—it’s an act, it’s entertainment.

An R&B singer can sing about cheating on his wife (as an example) and then be seen at the supermarket with his wife and children and no one will associate that R&B singer’s lyrical content with the actual character of the man that sings that song.

But anything a rapper says, she is expected to actually live. And this “rule” is even understood amongst Hiphoppers; this is what separates hip-hop from every other major music genre on Earth. It’s a bit unfair, but such unfairness has its advantages.
One of which is the ability to become anything you desire through the mastery of one or more of Hip-Hop's nine elements. Imagine, through the mastery of an artistic performance you can attract the resources and support to become that which you rap about.

Different from every other music genre on Earth, Hip-Hop's magical elements actually actualize the character and intentions of the performance. This is why we are also burdened with the biased opinion that our lyrics have real effects on people and environments while other styles of entertainment simply do not—and there is some truth to this.

However, to label Hip Hop "violent" or "misogynistic" is again one-sided and unscholarly because the very criticism against Hip Hop should operate in two ways. On one hand if Hip Hop's violent, graphic, "gangsta" performances transform the performer into a violent, graphic Hip Hop gangsta in the eyes of the public, then Hip Hop's enlightened, revolutionary, "conscious" performances should transform those same performers into enlightened, revolutionary, "conscious" Hip Hop leaders in the eyes of that same public, but this is not the case.

We are acknowledged publicly for our negative influences but our positive influences go unnoticed, unacknowledged and unappreciated by our critics. That's why the core of the Hip Hop populace doesn't care what these "outsiders" have to say about a cultural movement they don't know and care little about. For the first time in a long time, a social movement (Hip Hop) has emerged that side-steps the conventional methods and means of achieving social success, prestige and mainstream access, and such a movement does it in its own unapologetic way. This is the real problem. This is the real threat.

In the past one had to attend college, or military service, or borrow money to start up a business, or work up the corporate ladder until retirement if one was going to make it out of one's lot in life. It was through America's major social institutions that opportunity was found and when those institutions began to deteriorate, the needs of the People fell upon Hip Hop's artistic upsurge in the 1980s and 1990s.

Hip Hop may have remained just a great music genre if the people participating in Hip Hop's artistic elements didn't need it to also fulfill their cultural, spiritual and financial needs. So, is Hip Hop violent for real? Of course not. Is Hip Hop itself misogynistic toward women? I can't be.

The last time I checked, the term "misogyny" meant "the hatred of women by men." HIP HOP IS NOT MISOGYNISTIC TOWARD WOMEN. Hip Hop does not hate women; I can't! Hip Hop is made up of women. It was women who taught us (men) how to be the men that we are. In fact, male Hip Hoppas may actually blindly love and wildly lust after Hip Hop's women a bit too much. Hate? No. Lust? Yes. Respect? Always.

Hiphoppas know that as men, the disrespecting of women is unnatural to our being. Hip Hop is an urban behavior that has saved millions of urban people from the collapse of America's social institutions and the corruption prevalent throughout America's corporate communities. We (Hiphoppas) are trying to survive and escape the collapse of America's institutions just like everyone else.

As Dr. Cornel West has pointed out, The basic aims of hip-hop music are threefold—to provide playful entertainment and serious art for the rituals of young people, to forge new ways of escaping social misery, and to explore novel responses for meaning and feeling in a market-driven world.

When I hear people complain about Rap music's
lyrical content I tend to ask them, so what rappers do you like? Most people can't go into it that far because if you could compare and critique rappers with a knowledge of their history and style, nothing one rapper says would offend you; you would know how to critique the Hip Hop event happening before you.

The problem is that mainstream America is ignorant of Hip Hop because when it first emerged, mainstream America only sought to exploit hip-hop not understand it. To "understand" Hip Hop you would have had to respect the people you were engaging, not use them as products—and the same rings true today.

The last time I checked, the term "violence" meant deadly physical force. Violence: behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something. Legally, "violence" is the unlawful exercise of physical force or intimidation by the exhibition of such force. In most social circles "violence" has to do with "physical force." So are Rap lyrics violent? Can they be? Can a lyric that is said in an entertainment setting and/or over an entertainment medium actually be violent? Lyrics are not physical. Or are they?

I always thought that art and poetry were exactly the arenas where ideas and images controversial to mainstream society were expressed. Art and poetry in my mind are exactly the arenas to explore the otherwise inexpressible regions of human thought and activity. The term “nigger,” for example, should have its existence in art, education and poetry and not in politics, religion or trade. If violence and obscenity are not explored in art and/or education, where should they be explored?

Violence and obscene behavior are simply American entertainment, and in many ways they should remain American "entertainment." Violence and/or obscenity shouldn't be anywhere in the public arena. We should lessen violence and obscenity in public life and enjoy more freedom to explore violence and obscenity in artistic life. In my observation, art is where extreme ideas should be expressed.

Turning to Bob Colacello’s book, Ronnie and Nancy: Their Path to the White House—1911–1980, Mr. Colacello points out while writing about Harry Warner being called before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Moving Picture Propaganda in 1941 that Ronald Reagan’s films showed one fight per every 1,000 feet of film.

I bring this up not to pass the buck by saying "See; look at da Prezadant, he vylen too." Not at all; I won’t even bring up “the Governor” Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the violent content in most of his early motion picture work, many times shooting police officers and destroying government property—not at all.

I bring this point up to shed light on the true nature of the argument. It is not violent lyrical content that threatens America, nor is it over-sensitized images of sex acts and foreplay throughout mass media. None of this actually threatens America’s social order and economic structure. In fact, in many ways such images and acts actually strengthen America’s social order and economic structure.

The problem is not Rap lyrics, the problem is that your child likes them and is influenced by them and “you” have no control over such foreign influences. “You” believe that your child’s participation in Hip Hop lowers her self-worth. Because of your own fears “you” want your child to conform to the same success “you” have conformed to; you want your child to “play the game” like you did. But like First Lady Nancy Reagan, it is authentically American to look up to the foul-mouthed, down-to-earth, real people who are most times having the best times of their lives.
We all want to be like “the rebel,” the “outsider,” the “outcast,” “the one not to mess with.” Is this attitude not authentically American? The State of Texas makes it clear in its State motto: DON’T MESS WITH TEXAS!

The issue is that violence was cool when Al Pacino did it. Violence was cool when the “Governator” did it, when John Wayne did it, when the bible depicts it, even when cartoons portray it. But if a rapper even speaks about violence within a poetic entertainment setting we are called the “cause” for the corruption of America’s youth and moral fortitude.

In fact, we are accused of “influencing” America’s youth negatively with our words and imagery, yet none of our critics will ask about the events and people that directly influenced us. But this too is a weak argument. A stronger argument points to our collective power as “Hiphoppas” based upon the criticisms laid before us.

The character and self-expressions of any public figure are indeed “roles” that will be “modeled” by that public figure’s audience, even if that public figure is the President of the United States. This is human nature; we grow and develop through adaptation and imitation. Every responsible “emcee” or DJ recognizes this fact and his influence upon his audience.

We (rappers/DJs) tell the crowd what to say and how to say it. They see what we wear, they drink what we drink, and they watch what we watch on television and elsewhere. Our audiences repeat what we tell them, so how are we (or any other public figure) not to be held accountable for our own self-expression?

However, if we are to be held accountable then let us also seize the power that comes with accountability. If the World’s youth are listening to and following Hip Hop’s culture and arts then why are we not taken more seriously as

the World’s leaders even beyond artistry and entertainment? Sort of like the path of President Ronald Reagan.

If we (Hip Hop) have that much influence over the children of the United States then Hip Hop needs to be advising the President and governing America’s inner cities. If most of the students in the United States are influenced by Hip Hop’s arts and culture why then is Hip Hop not taught in every public school in the United States? If we have the power that the critics claim we have, then respect us for who we are and for what we have accomplished—Hip Hop is a new American institution and Americans would do well to embrace us!

Americans need to know that the real Hip Hop community has never been free to present itself to the World on its own terms. We’ve always had an interpreter, and our early interpreters only sought to exploit our resources at a time when we were simply too young to defend ourselves or even know what was going on.

The Truth is that America’s supposed addiction to porn and violence gives radio and television stations the excuse to put my music aside so that they may play “what the people request.” And of course, what the People “request” is what the radio and television stations have been paid to program all week.

But this is just obvious! Everyone knows this already! Everyone knows why the radio sounds like it does—THEY’RE BEING PAID TO SOUND LIKE THEY DO! The government knows it, they know it, we know it, but still we engage in these bullshit arguments over Rap lyrics when KRS ONE and others struggle to get their music played on a regular basis on any radio station.

In my time, White “girls” seem to “go wild” lifting up their T-shirts and blouses to expose their breasts for the cameras of sexually explicit infomercials and music videos.
Does Hip Hop cause young girls to act this way or are Rap music and rappers brought into the production of the infomercials because Rap music is considered “cool” and/or “attractive” to youth? Why blame Hip Hop for what people are already doing of their own free will? The issue is that America’s foundation, its moral authority and Christian social structure are losing ground; it may even be transforming and growing. Just as Christianity evolved out of Judaism and Paganism, Hip Hop as evolved out of Christianity and Islam. We are the new lights of the World.

In any event, rappers represent the new popular heroes. We have the global trust of the People. We (Hip Hop) are the gunslingin’, rootin’-tootin’ cowboys of this day and age. And if we (Hip Hop) are trusted and respected by the public through the inspiration of our arts, we owe it to those who empower us with their love, trust and respect to assume the responsibilities of leaders in the solving of the World’s social ills.

We are not the problem; Hip Hop and its view of the World are actually the solution. We can see right through the assumptions of our critics who claim that it is Hip Hop that incites and glorifies violence. Yes, we are extreme in our art; our art reflects the violent and unjust conditions in which we live.

And yes, we enjoy gun battles either as entertainment or as self-defense. And yes, our lyrics and graphic art can glorify the power and use of guns, but where are graphic images and forbidden language to be expressed if not within the confounds of art and/or science? Our view is that it is not the gun that is dangerous or irresponsible; it is the person holding the gun that can become dangerous or irresponsible.

But for some reason our critics do not hear nor respond to any of this. They know what the real is! They know the statistics just as we do! But still Hip Hop is blamed for what is already occurring in the World and in our individual communities.

The Truth is so obvious and so accessible to anyone who wants to know that some of us even wear such statistics as designer fashion statements. As the clothing company Scifen has pointed out on the back of one of their popular hoodies worn by many Hiphoppas in my time: Every minute someone is killed by a firearm.

The graphics on the upper back of the pull-over hoodie continue: Each year an estimated 500,000 people will die worldwide from small arms: about 300,000 people in wars, coups d’etat, and other armed conflicts, and another 200,000 people in homicides, suicides, unintentional shootings and shootings by police.

In that same minute in which someone dies from armed violence, 15 new arms are manufactured for sale. There are nearly 640 million small arms in the World today, that’s one for every ten people. The total value of the combined arms sales by the top 100 arms-producing companies in the World is about $236 billion per year.

This total is roughly equal to the combined national output of the 61 lowest-income countries in the World. Of the 100 arms manufacturers, 38 are based in the United States. Do the math. The only groups who win armed struggles are the arms manufacturers.

This and other, similar clothing statements are what many Hiphoppas wear in my time, and this is what is common knowledge in our communities even as our critics blame us for the violence we were born into. We must evolve pass this level of immaturity.

It is now obvious that we must mature past our own self-destruction and assist the World toward peace and
good will toward all. As a specialized social group we must become self-directed. In fact our immaturity, the incapacity to use our own intelligence without the guidance of others, will be the only thing capable of holding us back.

Our very survival depends upon our continued maturity. Sisters, Brothers, Mothers and Fathers, let us begin today writing a new history in the World. Let us tell a new story about ourselves to the World! Our activity today is the origin of Hip Hop's history and heritage tomorrow. Be conscious of this always.

These are the Definitions for the Temple of Hip Hop's committed membership. However, it must be emphasized that Hip Hop is a continuously growing culture so your comprehension of this Overstanding is bound to grow as well. Such terms and codes are designed to organize and raise the self-worth of those who love Hip Hop and may teach Hip Hop for a living. There it is.