



Foreword

Cassandra D. Chaney

In 2017, Professor Cassandra Chaney at Louisiana State University (LSU) had an idea to do a special issue on Hip Hop and Religion. She spoke with Doctoral Candidate, Travis Harris and Dr. Daniel Hodge to “set off” the tremendous amount of work to start this process. With a growing appreciation for Hip Hop, as it relates to discourses associated with Black romance (Chaney, 2010) and Black motherhood (Chaney and Brown, 2016; Chaney and Brown, 2015), Chaney began to realize that over the past several decades, an increasing number of Hip Hop artists have become more vocal about how they perceive God, religion, spirituality, and heaven. Sometimes these artists support a traditional (Western) religiosity in which believing in God and/or a Higher Power, bible reading, prayer, and song are intrinsic cornerstones. At other times, these artists reject traditional religiosity in favor of a more global manifestation through which they connect with and allow God and/or a Higher Power or their higher moral (spiritual) selves to guide how they interact with and react to others. Still at other times, these artists promote an amalgamation of religious practices and spiritual mindfulness that balances frustration with society and hope for positive change.

In light of her scholarship regarding how religiosity and spirituality influence the historical and contemporary experiences of Blacks in the United States (Chaney, 2014; 2010; 2008; Chaney, Marks, Sasser, and Hopkins, 2010; Chaney, Shirisia, and Skogrand, 2016; Marks and Chaney, 2006), there is an important reason Professor Chaney wanted to do this special issue. Essentially, Professor Chaney’s vision for this special issue is that it be a timely conduit for individuals to understand the historical, cultural, and social salience of religio-spirituality through the uniquely expressive lens of Hip Hop. Her amazing work, contacting and securing additional reviewers, namely Dr. Derrick Aldridge, Dr. Nishawn T. Battle, Dr. Stephan Bradley, Dr. Joy Davis, Dr. Juan Barthelemy, Dr. Keith Edmonds, Dr. Kenny Fasching-Varner, Dr. Stephen C. Finley, Dr. Daniel White Hodge, Dr. Carlos Lee, Dr. Laurie Nsiah-Jefferson, Dr. Kimberly Jones, Dr. Charlotte Marshall, Dr. Ray Robertson, Dr. Matthew Taylor, and Professor Itibari M. Zulu, coordinating and organizing contributed to the success and implementation of “Religion and Hip Hop *And*.”