



Hip Hop's Representation of Social and Political Issues in Inner City Communities.

by

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ABSTRACT

This research will be analysing and evaluating different hip hop music videos and films that looks into social and political issues surrounding inner city communities in America with the help from supporting and contradictory evidence from numerous sources.

INTRODUCTION

Hip Hop is a “musical style incorporating rhythmic and/or rhyming speech that became the movement’s most lasting and influential art form” (Light A, Tate G. 2019).

With political and social awareness lyrics and visual poetic music videos such as; Grandmaster Flash’s the Message (1982), Public Enemy’s Fight the Power, hip hop begins to have a voice and stand for positivity and social change in the community. Conscious rap and Political Hip hop became more prominent, film directors start to infuse these style and culture into their films to give an accurate depiction and emphasis the social and political issues within these communities. Films such as; Do the Right Thing (Lee S, 1989), Menace II Society (Hughes Brothers 1989), Boyz n the Hood (Singleton J, 1991) and Baby Boy (Singleton J, 2001) manifest hip hop ideologies by creating awareness and imparting knowledge on the audience.

Conscious Rap fuels hip hop culture to inspire social and political changes within the society. Music videos such as I (Kendrick Lamar 2014), Express Yourself (N.W.A 1988), Everything is Everything (Lauryn Hill 1998) and Changes (Tupac 1998) encourages community spirit, unity and individuality which empowers the audience by delivering uplifting positive message over smooth, ear grabbing beats” (Adaso H, 2018) infused with surrealist and experimental techniques of filming and editing, which allows the artist to “express emotions, ideas, concepts, and literally anything else through literal or abstract imagery, through juxtaposition editing, through creative use of sound design” (Hardy R 2013). They begin to disregard the norm and focus on the message that the music video should be representing.

This research will be focusing on three aspects of Hip Hop music and music videos. The one chapter will be looking at how authority figures such as the police and government are represented in Hip Hop music video. By exploring songs such as the Message (1982) by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, Fight the Power (1989) by Public Enemy and Straight Outta Compton (1989) by NWA, this chapter gives an in-depth view of how hip-hop artist spoke up against authority figures- politicians and law enforcement. The second chapter will be deconstruct and analysis Hip Hop in films such as Do the Right Thing (Lee S, 1989), Menace II Society (Hughes Brothers 1989), Boyz n the Hood (Singleton J, 1991) and Baby Boy (Singleton J, 2001), giving an in-depth understanding to social issues in inner city communities. The third chapter will be evaluate the way women are represented in Hip Hop music videos such as Me so Horny (2 Live Crew 1989), Ladies First (Queen Latifah ft Monie Lovle, 1989), Dear Mama (Tupac Shakur, 1995), Lemonade (Beyoncé ft Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 2015) and Doo Wop (That Thing) (Lauryn Hill, 1998) and how the impact it has on them.

This research will overall shine a light into the growing industry of Hip Hop and the way Hip Hop music video depicts the social and political issues in inner city communities especially black neighbour hoods.

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CHAPTERS

CHAPTER ONE

THE REPRESENTATION OF AUTHORITY FIGURES, SUCH AS THE POLICE, POLITICIANS, IN HIP HOP VIDEOS.

‘Society cannot share a common communication system so long as it is split into warring classes’ (Brecht, A Short Organum for the Theatre).

This chapter will explore the use of visual representations in hip hop music videos to inform and influence how marginalized groups especially the black communities, view authority figures such as the police. Music videos such as; The Message 1982, Fight the power 1989 and Straight Outta Compton 1988, goes in-depth into the racial bias and social neglect such communities go through. At first, it will showcase the importance of these songs in the black communities, before progressing to deconstruct and connecting meaning within the filming and editing used in each music video and the society the artists are referencing.

1.1: Hip Hop Gets a Voice

“During the mid-1960s, a new strategy and philosophy to improve black lives grew out of the civil rights movement. The Black Power Movement, espoused by organizations like SNCC and the Black Panther Party, began to advocate and rally in favour of black pride, black liberation, and revolutionary determinism” (American Achieve ‘undated’).

With the release of Hip Hop’s first political song The Message (*Grand Master Flash and The Furious Five, 1982*) it became a medium to depict the way life was in the ghettos of Brooklyn, New York. The music video gave a more in-depth visual representation to the lyrical rhythms of Melle Mel as it was edited to bring every word he said to life. The audience can see as Mel raps ‘Broken glass everywhere’, a video of a glass shattering comes on screen making the audience visually aware of the words spoken. The music video uses a tonal montage to represent the divide between of upper state New York- good infrastructures such as skyscrapers and the Ghettos in Brooklyn- burnt down abandoned buildings. This editing method gives a powerful emotional impact to the video as it illustrates the songs message to the audience. With every shoot there is a visual cue to represent the neglect that the projects are going through such as: the homeless woman sat on the streets, and a group of elderly men playing checkers by an alcohol shop. All these signifies the ‘jungle’- which is the state of mind, the artist finds himself in as he walks around the streets New York. Robert Hilburn wrote in the Los Angeles Times, “A revolutionary seven-minute record that is a brilliantly compact chronicle of the tension and despair of ghetto life that rips at the innocence of the American Dream”.

This music video is accompanied with a relaxed tempo which highlights Melle Mel's gritty rap about the neglect of ghetto poverty, struggles and violence, with its cut-throat chorus "It's like a jungle sometimes / It makes me wonder how I keep from going under", along-side a music video that documents the reality, injustices and indignities of marginalized communities in New York.

Rolling Stone. The magazine said it was the first track, "to tell, with hip-hop's rhythmic and vocal force, the truth about modern inner-city life in America" (Songfacts, Undated).

1.2: Unifying Anthem of the 80's

Young black people started getting more mentally aware of the societal and political issue that were over-looked by the government, using Hip Hop as a tool to voice their opinions and speak up about the injustice.

In 1989, Hip Hop political group Public Enemy releases a song called Fight the Power. This song created a unifying anthem for not just African Americans, but every ethnicity to get behind. "Fight the Power" focused on getting the audience to participate in politics and speak up against the corrupt government and authorities: "...*What we need is awareness, we can't get careless...
...Make everybody see, in order to fight the powers that be...*"

The music video starts off with the famous Washington Civil Right March documented news broadcast in 1963, to end racial inequality in America which transitioned into a 1989 organized protest by Spike Lee, with Public Enemy- Chuck D addressing the audience "...the march in 63 is a bit of nonsense. We ain't rolling like that no more...". It could be suggested that director Lee uses the opening scene to usher in the new generation of civil right activists placing the artists "in the streets amidst the likenesses of Black power fighters..." (Jeff Chang 1989) as the crowd hold up posters of previous civil right activist; such as Chuck Berry, Martin Luther King Jr and so on. "Fight the Power is not about fighting authority. It's about fighting abuse of power" (Hardgroove, 1989).

The video was filmed with people from the community, which elevated the message of the song as they brought authenticity, enthusiasm and realism to the music video. The community came together to celebrate and contribute to the message of the song. They can be seen, screaming and chanting their name (Public Enemy) and chorus "Fight the Power". This song created an anthem for the streets and a voice for the unprivileged. As Chuck D was rapping and gesturing towards the camera, it could be suggested that he was connecting specifically to the audience encouraging them to revolt against corrupt politicians, police officials and authorities, that are oppressing and marginalizing their communities.

This song was used in a memorable fashion in Spike Lee's Do the Right Thing 1989 during the opening sequence which was edited in a rhythmic style to match the dancer's energetic moves to the moving of the set, lighting and costume changes. "*Setting the pace of an edit is vital to the storytelling aspect, and for establishing the general stylistic feel of a film.*" (Dulaimy, 2018). This open sequence laid the ground works for the message of the film which highlights the racial tension of the 80's by recreating an explosiveness that makes an impact to the likeness depicted in Public Enemy's Fight the Power.

1.3: Hip Hop and Controversy

Hip hop music videos start to influence and bring to light the neglect and mistreatment that has been going on in inner city communities. N.W.A a group from Compton, Los Angeles took Public Enemy's message a set further and coining the subgenre of Gangsta Rap with singles like Gangsta Gangsta, Fuck Da Police and Straight Outta Compton.

In the music video of Straight Outta Compton 1989, it starts off with a medium close-up shoot of Dr Dre crouched behind a white wall addressing the audience about watch they are about to watch, as flames were coming in and out of the shoot and sirens blaring in the background, he says "You are now about to witness the strength of street knowledge..." (Straight Outta Compton 1989). By giving this much intensity to the first four seconds of the song is a warning to the importance and significance the message of the song should be taking, "When Chuck D described rap as the 'black CNN', NWA was the type of music he was talking about" (Knot G, 1989). With a fast-rhythmic edit to the video, the audience can feel the aggression and frustration of the artists. From low angle shoots of burning train to close up shoots of police officers on patrol and police cars reading 'to protect and serve' to hand held follow through shoots of young black men running from the police and getting arrested to medium shoots from inside a police truck through the divider the young men being put behind the police truck, all these different angles help convey the raw captivating story of life in the city of Compton.

Also, the music video keeps linking the visual cues to the artists words, i.e. when Easy E said "...if I ever get caught, I'll make bail...", the audience can see the artist rapping and paying a police officer off as he walks pass him. This shoot raises the issue of police corruption and the reason why the police are not being respected and acknowledge in this community.

The music spoke of gang violence and crime against the police. However, the passion behind the lyrics and the depiction of the song heavily suggests the of the artists mindsets captured through the words "...I'm the motherfuckin villain..." The primal urge to educate is shown through the injustices the artists and the public have felt during their lives. "There are turning points in everyone's life when we have to fight, even if we have to do it by ourselves and in public." (Williams J, undated)

Conclusion

As hip hop start to grow and get more recognised by especially young white suburban teenagers, subgenres like "Gangsta rap forced America to confront the issues in its ghettos" (Kot G, 1989), as they depict the hardship and neglect that marginalised communities goes through, and serve as an advocate on behalf of them to the people in power. In the meantime, music videos such as The Message 1982, Fight the Power 1989 and Straight Outta Compton 1989 are documentations of the realities of race and power in America.

CHAPTER TWO

THE WAY HIP HOP IN FILMS RELATES TO SOCIAL ISSUES IN INNER CITY COMMUNITIES.

“Hip-hop in film calls attention to the movies main drive to depict hip-hop’s way of life and the society it portrays to move towards the themes of the movie” (Watkins, Undated).

This chapter will be deconstructing films that focuses on social issues in inner city communities, such as; racism, sexism, poverty, crime, drugs, job loss, homelessness, lawlessness and gang violence. Films such as *Menace 2 Society* (1989), *Boyz n the Hood* (1992) and *Baby Boy* (2001) infuse hip hop culture and style to capture the entirety of the issues being brought to live by the directors.

2.1: Directors Depict Social Issues in Inner-City Communities

As Lee (*Do the Right Thing* 1989) uses comedic humour to capture the social conflicts between racial groups in an inner-city community, *The Hughes Brothers* explores the aspect of gang violence and drugs in *Menace 2 Society* (1989). This film opens a window into the reality that accompanies the world of gangs, drugs and money. With a childhood of drugs, crime and violence, Caine is thrown into a life of survival which lives him torn between life and death, “when Caine's grandfather asks him if he wants to stay alive, his response is, "I don't know."” (Berardinelli J, 1993). *Menace II Society* focuses on the lives of gangsters, criminals and drug addicts drawing attention to “what life has become for a black man in the inner city, and how the only escape through violence is into the grave” (Berardinelli J, 1993). The film uses different shoot types, transitions and props to bring to live a community that lack morals, displays and excessive the use of fire arms and lawlessness within its youths. “Killing a stranger over a slight means so little to O-Dog that he instantly recontextualizes the crime he just committed as entertainment, and demands not just money, but the videotape of the murder” (Rabin N, 2014). This scene establishes the social issues that plagues this community, which leads to either jail or death.

This film explores each character’s journey by exposing their inner most selves, grasping the audience attention with detailed graphical scenes and well structures storyline whilst giving an insight into wealth, power and prestige in their community. “Structure applies to both the outer journey of achievement, and the inner journey of transformation. In other words, as the hero moves on the visible path toward that finish line, facing ever increasing obstacles, he must also gradually find greater and greater courage to overcome whatever fears have been holding him back and keeping him from finding real fulfilment or self-worth” (Hauge M, 2014).

John Singleton’s 1991 film *Boyz n the Hood*, “paints a clear image of the problems that happen very often in the African American communities. The movie deals with issues such as: the importance of a father in a young man’s life, the ongoing violence of black on black crime, and how black people are put in situations where they are put to fail and not succeed in life” (Bartleby, 2016). Singleton demonstrates the importance of fathers which can be seen when Furious takes Tre on a fishing trip. When breaking down this scene, the audience can see furious teach Tre about being a responsible black man (*The Black Man’s Tips to Success* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ile4ilOHrXg>). The opening shot is an establishing shot of the location with Furious’ voice asking Tre if he’s a leader or a follower. It can be suggested that this shot was used to set a calming and conversational atmosphere between a father and his son. As this scene progresses, the audience will notice the use of medium shots and medium close- up shots to create a rhythm between the

two characters. Also infusing digest and non-digest sounds, Singleton creates a harmonious scene that emphasizes and encourages the importance of fatherhood in inner-city communities.

As *Boyz n the Hood* explores the social influence of male figures in inner-city households, *Menace II Society* depicts the raw, gritty reality for young men in those communities. They turn to friends, gangs, drug dealing, robbing, and/or addictions to help them survive each day. With an establishing wide shot which gives the location of the scene, Caine is seen sat on his bed counting some money whilst on the phone to his friend bragging about robbing a young man earlier in the day- *Menace II Society* (1989) *Cooking Crack in the hood all day*- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXJuqGCu8vE>. This shot starts to move closer into a medium close-up shot of the character still in the same position. It can be suggested, that this style of filming was used to reveal the emotional and physical state of the character which was . This transitioned to a rhythmic montage of the character buying and cooking up crack with N.W.A.'s remix of *Dope Man* (1989) playing over the scene, leading into a "Scorsese-style voiceover narration could stand to be more vivid, but it does a fine enough job of establishing this milieu as a place of constant violence and retribution, from which no one can find quarter" (Tobias S, 2014).

With all the acts he's committed, even under unforeseen circumstances, "*Menace II Society* explores the necessity for a person to accept the consequences of his actions, and how an apparently- inconsequential event can trigger a disastrous chain-reaction" (Berardinelli J, 1993)- Caine getting gun down by Ilene's cousin.

2.2: Inner-City Politics

In 2016, a documentary by Noisey was centred "around Kendrick Lamar and the friends he grew up with on the West Side of Compton" (Noisey, 2016), showing the losses and hardships that Lamar went through whilst growing up in his community and how this experience has influenced the making of his album "*How to Pimp a Beautiful*" which is a metaphor "to exploit the artist" (Lamar K, 2017). The documentary started with Snoop dogg telling the audience that the best place to find good Hip Hop artist is in Compton, which is the blood side of Compton. Zach Goldbaum the host, explains to the audience the objective of the documentary which is "how Lamar's message and music is making his community re-think gang life" (Goldbaum Z, 2016). Unlike in the making of *Boyz N The Hood* that the director Singleton used the dangers of the neighbourhood- gun shots on set, to get genuine reactions from his cast "with characters running, ducking, and falling over each other" (Singleton J, 1992), Lamar tells to Goldbaum "I am shedding a light on the problems in our community...also I want to spark the idea of positivity in the community, telling my story and others who can't because they are in an environment which they have to adapt into to stay alive" (Lamar K, 2016).

As the documentary looks into different aspects of Lamar's childhood area, the audience starts to get a deeper understanding of the way the social issues are imbedding in these communities and as shown in *Menace II Society*(1989), *Boyz N The Hood* (1992) and other Hip Hop films, "these communities are aware of the effects of gang, drugs and crime however with neglect and struggles which they go through, the younger generation is forced to rebel against the oppression and find a solution to their frustrations" (Grant M, 2016).

2.3: Deconstruction of a Black Man's Mentality

John Singleton's 2001 film, *Baby boy*, reflects the mentality of young black men in inner-city communities. In the opening scene, the 20-year-old protagonist, Jody (Joseph Summer) **is seen** sleeping in his mother's womb as a voice-over explains the theme of the film. This film "hypothesizes that young black men are infantilized by a society that allows them little room to grow. In support of this thesis, the narrator notes that a typical African-American man growing up in a neighbourhood like South Central Los Angeles, where this film is set, refers to his girlfriend as mama, his friends as his boys and his home as his crib" (Scott A.O, 2001).

Baby boy looks at masculine façade in these community from the perspective of one young black man. By repeating the dream of Jody in the womb, it could be suggested that Singleton uses abstract tools to critically analysis the concept that black men has imbedded a child-like mentality to be able to cope within their community. The audience can notice that the male characters dependant heavily on the women in their lives to take care of the- cook, clean and tender to their needs. This can be seen, when Jody and Yvette finished having sex and he asks her to go clean up the house and make him some food to eat.

It can be suggested that this ideology from men in the community can lead to sexism and domestic violence when the woman questions them. This is evident when Yvette speaks to her friend about standing up to her husband- Chris Takin Shit: *Baby Boy* (2001) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeyjGN_zSR0

Conclusion

Hip hop films use different aspects of inner-city communities such as; location, signs, fashion and style, language and slangs, and personas to create and accurate depiction of the social issues in such communities. *Boyz n the Hood* (1992) which was filmed in South Central LA one of the most notorious place for gang and gun violence, brought to life an area where people are afraid to showcase. In 1993, President Bill Clinton commended the Singleton "While it was very violent, it had no romance about the violence. That is a movie I would've wanted a lot of elementary-age kids in the inner city to see, because there was no romance. It was a mean, ugly, sad, heart-breaking tale of basically good kids who wanted to have a decent life who had it taken away from them". These films break into the foundation of community and reminds their audience on morals, principles and self-love, "Hip Hop's notion of family extends beyond your blood relatives and immediate family into your neighbourhood. Rappers who express Hip Hop culture through their music consider themselves to be the voices and spokesmen and women of the 'hood' that they have grown up in" (Thomas A, 2007).

CHAPTER THREE

FEMALE FIGURES IN HIP HOP MUSIC

“The concept of the simultaneity of oppression is still the crux of a Black feminist understanding of political reality and, I believe, one of the most significant ideological contributions of Black feminist thought.” (Smith, 1983)

This chapter will be analysing the impact of female figures in hip hop music videos. In the history of hip hop, its explicit lyrics and music videos that sexualised and objectified women in the media. Even though, hip hop was used to influence and enlighten the community on fighting racism, drug abuse and crimes in the community, it fails to fight for Black women in their community “ [A]s evidenced by the zombie-like stare in my neighbour’s eyes, the ghetto’s dues for emotional immunity is high” (Morgan J,...). In the meantime, hip hop music continues to degrade, exploited and misrepresented black women with derogatory lyrics and misogynistic music videos that signifies them as trophies or sex objects. *“Sex becomes, in this instance, the instrument of choice—a mechanism that unveils the Achilles heels of men who are “hard” in public, but behind closed doors, succumb to the skilled exploits of women “gifted” to perform sexual fantasies that border on the sadomasochistic and pornographic.” (Henderson C, 2013)*

3.1: Hip Hop’s Misrepresentation of Women

In 1989, 2 Live Crew released an album “As Nasty As They Want To Be”, which had the single Me So Horny. “It stands to this day as arguably the dirtiest record ever laid to tape...” and “...for a period declared “legally obscene.” (BigHans, 2010). The music video is very explicit and derogatory, its openings with Luther Campbell (aka Uncle Luke) sat at home rapping “...Sittin’ at home with my dick on hard. So, I got the black book for a freak to call...”. The first mention of a woman in this song was as a “freak”, which otherwise shows the level of respect that the song had for women. The music video displayed dancing women in G-string bikini bottoms (with rotoscoped black squares placed over the women's buttocks) and sport brassieres as they sang the chorus “Me so Horny, Me love you long time” (Me so Horny 1989). George Will a Newsweek political columnist argued that the song was “misogynistic filth and characterizing their lyrics as a profoundly repugnant “combination of extreme infantilism and menace” that objectified Black women and represented them as legitimate targets for sexual violence”. The way the music video depicts the lyrics, it can be suggested that the visual representation of women in the video is how the artist views women, “The artist is selling more than just a song... they're selling you a lifestyle, presumably the lifestyle the artist lives him or herself” (Pernisco N, 2015).

The song paid homage to Stanley Kubrick 1987 Full Metal Jacket, where Vietnamese prostitute, (Papillon Soo Soo) says "Me so horny, me love you long time" to Private Joker (Matthew Modine) and Rafterman (Kevyn Major Howard) as they asked what \$10 could get them. By making the phrase “Me so Horny, Me love you long time...” the chorus of the song, it implies that they support the objectifying and misogynistic views of how women are being treated and viewed around the world. The female character in the video is shown to be willing and eager to please the men by being submissive and obedient to them. “In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously

looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness.” (Mulvey L, 1989).

3.2: Hip Hop Acknowledges Women

As misogynistic view and violence towards women in music videos grows, artists such as Queen Latifah, Lauryn Hill, MC Lyte, TLC and so on tries to make a difference and be the voice for women through Hip Hop music. Strong, motivational songs, such as: Ladies first by Queen Latifa, Everything is Everything by Lauryn Hill, Lemonade by Beyoncé and Dear Mama by Tupac, uses uplifting and inspirational lyrics and music videos to influence change and educate their communities on the way women should be treated- equally to men.

In Latifah’s "Ladies First", she makes it clear that women should be proud and inspired by the power of their gender, "...A woman can bear you, break you, take you..." (Ladies First 1989). Inspired by her heritage and native tongue philosophies, Latifah uses an Afrocentric styling in her music video to educate black women of their heritage and strength as a community. Filled with Afrocentric fashion style, feminist message of equality and respect, military style of choreography and uniforms (Latifah as the leader and making the plans and strategies of war). The video was also infused with historical footages of wars, protests, crimes, deaths, injustice and inequality between gender, race and ethnicity. The video uses an intellectual montage to capture the message of the artists by "few images, but images that are rich in cultural, symbolic, and political history" (Hess J, 2014), which sublimely asserts dominance to women in the community and giving them the respect and dignity that they deserve.

The intended tone of the song which isn't dry or humourless, Queen Latifah gave the song a mix of wild, funk and jazz sound. Even though the song is advocating for equality and respect for women, it also praises and acknowledges the role women play in our society: a mother "...We are the ones that give birth, To the new generation of prophets because it's Ladies First...", a sweet lover "...A sister dope enough to make you holler and scream..." and a literate "...A female rapper with the message to send that Queen Latifah is a perfect specimen...", encourages women to support each other, with the chorus being sang by women "...Ladies First, Ladies First...".

This music video with its powerful words combined with pictures of famous female freedom fighters such as and old documented videos of riots, protests, police brutality, death and fear from the black community, gives a message of pride, strength and courage, a voice for Black women "...Believe me when I say being a woman is great..." and also a message of peace and unity around that world "...The next man, or the next woman, It doesn't make a difference..." (Latifah 1989)

Even though, Ladies First (1989) is aimed to empower and educate the black communities' women are still going misogyny, adversity, economic hardship, incarceration, sexual abuse/objectification, violence and drug abuse. Dear Mama by 2Pac speaks of these struggles from a personal point of view, his mother, Afeni Shakur.

"And even as a crack fiend, mama

*You always was a black queen, mama
I finally understand
For a woman it ain't easy trying to raise a man” Dear Mama by 2Pac.*

This song shows the importance of having a mother. The music video brings his words to life by the depiction in a montage (pictures, graphics and videos) of events (from childhood to him being shoot) that lead up to the making of the song. “I wrote it for my mama because I love her, and I felt I owed her something deep.” – Tupac Shakur, 1995. This music video is a tribute to his mother, as he thanks her for being there for him through life struggles and successes, “...Dear mama| Don't you know I love you?|Dear mama| Place no one above you|(Dear mama) Oh mama, I appreciate you| Although my shadow's gone| I will never leave you...” (Tupac 1995).

In the 90s Hip Hop music tends to go towards the misogynistic and sexualising of women, however with a single such as Dear Mama, Tupac Shakur one of the Hip-Hop's biggest icon exhausted and elevated mothers, especially his mother. This music paved away for Hip Hop artist to see beyond the material endeavours and focus more on their reality and preach more about their communities. Shakir continuously refers his mother and female figures “...Dear momma don't cry, your baby boy's doin' good.” (Thug Mansion 1995) in his music emphasising the teaches and importance of women in the community. He's music goes on to inspire artist such as Kendrick Lamar, Janet Jackson, Jhene Aiko, Tory Lanez and many more.

3.3: Hip Hop Expresses Self- Love and Unity

Female Hip Hop artist has started using more feminist view in their music. Beyoncé is one of the renounced Feminist Hip Hop artist with her new album Lemonade 2017, she shares her opinions and understanding of equality and self-love. In Flawless, Beyoncé features ‘We Should All Be Feminists’ by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie which talks of Adichie's experience of sexism growing up in Nigeria and how it has affected her life. The speech informs the audience on why we still need feminism and why each person should be a feminist; “Feminist: the person who believes in the social. Political, and economic equality of the sexes.” (Adichie 2014)

The music video combines a black and white fierce and raw video of Beyoncé dancing with a group of youths whilst the voice of Adichie is talking to the audience about loving yourself and not conforming to societal stereotypes. “The song encourages everyone to embrace they unique nature, take pride in it and surround yourselves with love and support” (Dawson M, 2016).

*“Momma taught me good home training
My Daddy taught me how to love my haters
My sister taught me I should speak my mind
My man made me feel so God damn fine” Flawless by Beyoncé 2013*

As Beyoncé teaches her audience to find happiness and love within themselves, Lauryn Hill's song Doo Wop (that thing), advises her audience to pay attention to the people around them instead of the material things that will fade way. This song doesn't just focus on gender but promotes equality in the

black communities (feminism). Hills preaches love, peace and community growth in this song, warning her audience not to let 'that thing' to destroy their lives; their relationships, livelihood, friendships, family and community, which can be seen in the music video (Lauryn Hill Doo Wop (That Thing) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6QKqFPRZSA>).

*"Girls you know you'd better watch out
Some guys, some guys are only about
That thing, that thing, that thing
That thing, that thing, that thing
Guys you know you'd better watch out
Some girls, some girls are only about
That thing, that thing, that thing
That thing, that thing, that thing"* Doo Wop by Lauryn Hill 1998

The music video compares two eras (1967 and 1998) using a split screen, showing the contrast between the way people interacted with one another, dressed, looked and conducted themselves around each other. For example, In the 1967 they were dressed more modest and respectful with men wearing smart clothes such as suits and hats and women wearing long dresses and tied their hairs, while in 1998 they dressed more carefree and relaxed with men wearing jeans and vests/bare chested and women wearing mini-skirts and slim tops/ short dresses. This music is reminding the black communities that "they should remember and hold on to their morals, disciplining and community values, hence the increase in crime, violence, pregnancy and lack of respect" (Gary B, 1999). Hills urges the audience to love and respect each other to better the community. "Lauryn admits that she's been down the same road, which paints her not as a perfect holier-than-thou figure preaching to the choir, but as a human being with flaws like everyone else" (Musical Appreciation, 2015).

Conclusion

Therefore, with the use of misogynistic messages 'becoming the norm within the predominantly Black hip hop culture and clearly reinforce male superiority over women' (Ba A, 2017), feminist artists such as Queen Latifah, Lauryn Hill, Tupac, Beyoncé have sparked a wave of powerful music videos and inspiring lyrics to encourage and educate the community on the values of women. "Film analysis enables us to recognize how filmmakers have their magic on us, how all the constituent elements of the film have combined to create that magic. Rather than rob us of the pleasures of watching films, this approach affords us the even greater pleasure of deep engagement" (Lewis J, 2012).

CONCLUSION

Hip hop has always been a medium to ignite change and education the world on social and political issues especially in lower class communities. In 2018 Childish Gambino's music video, *This is America* (2018) "captures the grim surrealism of being black in America" (Jackson M S, 2018). This 4-minute music video is symbolic to the way these communities had become accustomed to a harsh reality, which has resulted to a lack of growth, success and development either social and/or economically in such communities. The old and young has adapted an anxious and apprehensive behaviour towards each other and outsiders, resulting to an increase in high school drop-outs, drug use, teenage pregnancy, unemployment, crime, violence and gang affiliations.

However, with an increase in social awareness campaigns- black lives matter and black history month, the social and political issues surrounding this marginalised communities are being confronted and challenged by the public. In 2018, Sherrie Silver said, "Childish Gambino's dance moves distracted all of us from the craziness that was happening in the background of the video & that's exactly the point he's trying to make."

Hip hop music videos and films create a visual foundation for change as it advocates for equality between race, sex, gender and classes, and educates the community on positive but firm philosophies that hold the Hip Hop culture together.

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