

# **Protest Music Video Analysis**

## **1. Dave – Black and White**

This music video has a strong message about race throughout, and Dave pieces together lyrics and visuals perfectly in order to portray this. Firstly, the video starts by introducing the artist name and song name in order to promote him as an artist, and set the scene of the video. The strong, bold white writing stands in front of a moving image of a group of people in ethnic attire, in order to portray the main themes of the song. When the video moves away from this cut, the audience are placed into a setting of a third world country through a tracking shot, perhaps suggesting the oppression and suffering that other ethnicities are facing, that are almost hidden from our view. This already targets Dave's audience, as the audience feel as if they are finally being heard and given a voice, satisfying the identity needs according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Further into the video, we are introduced to Dave himself, looking sad and almost disappointed, furthering the mood of the video. He is having his hair cut, which has a cultural significance because hair for people of his ethnicity plays a large part of their look. This then cuts into a slightly low angle shot of Dave rapping to the audience, directly addressing them. This highlights that he has power and status, therefore making us focus on him and his message. This is a direct contrast to how he feels black people are represented in society, therefore encouraging the audience to take a stand. The direct contrast is presented throughout the video, with tracking shots alternating between Dave's wealth, and struggling third world communities.

In addition, further into the video, a low angle shot with low level lighting addresses a cultural issue prevalent in society today. A policeman is seen taking a black person with him down stairs, and the low angle shot places the policeman above the man, perhaps illustrating inequalities of power, and addressing a social issue. This again satisfies Dave's target audience, who want to be heard among powerful authority figures in society. Furthermore, some of Dave's lyrics mention justice in court cases, linking to this visual, perhaps asking the audience to think about times when there have been injustices – following on from many issues like this in society.

The music video has been very successful, and reached mass audiences around the world, particularly after his Brits performance. This was huge publicity, as it was a large issue presented on prime time TV, meaning that he could portray his message to a huge audience. Dazed Digital described his performance as a 'race history lesson the UK needs'. The Guardian also described it as 'powerful, both angry and celebratory, with some strong lines', demonstrating the broad appeal and the success and traction the song receive. It comes as part of Dave's new successful album – Psychodrama.

## 2. **Eminem – Mosh**

The transition from light to dark during the video could be seen as the transition of hope and freedom of the soldiers, but also the whole population in America. It is clear that Eminem feels as if they are not being heard, and are powerless against the rule of Bush, unless they all stand together – as seen towards the end of the video.

The video starts with a tracking shot, which seems to be a common theme throughout each protest video, to set the scene as being in America. The use of audio of the children's voices pledging allegiance to America could be seen as ironic, considering the viewpoint of Eminem and the way he is presenting America at the time. It could be seen that Eminem has included this as a way of showing his audience that they are being brainwashed from a young age to stand with Bush and the government, when they need to be taking a stand against them, and standing up for their rights. It is clear that the war against Iraq is a common area of focus throughout the video, as during this tracking shot, the audience are shown a plane flying across the city, and crashing – causing huge damage. This could be a visual representation of the downward spiral of America at the time, and the damage to the lives of the civilians. The children's voices could also be seen as a juxtaposition between their innocence and the abused power of the government at the time.

Furthermore, the video progresses to show a long shot of Eminem putting up newspaper articles on the wall – clearly here, he is trying to provide a focus point to join with his lyrics, in order to get the audience to think about what is happening around them. He is drawing with red marker around powerful words such as 'sick', 'wounded', 'death' and 'war' in order to highlight the destruction caused by the war. This long shot then focuses in to a mid shot, and the camera moves with his fists, as he punches the wall out of anger, most likely out of the lack of control he has without people by his side, willing to stand up. This shot is extremely effective, as the audience is likely to feel the same way, satisfying personal relationship needs (according to Maslow's Hierarchy of needs), perhaps causing them to feel a connection with Eminem through a shared feeling of anger. Another point to note is how all of the characters are walking in time to the beat of the rap, perhaps giving a visual representation of the sluggish nature of everyday life during the war with Iraq – possibly also something that the audience would feel connected with.

In addition, the low angle shot of Eminem rapping to a large audience (with an emphasis on diversity), demonstrates the power of a large group of people fighting for change. The low angle shot also gives power to Eminem, and positions him as the protagonist, because of course, as this is a music video it has been created also to promote him as an artist. The diversity of the crowd acts as a symbol of acceptance, and shows how everyone needs to come together, no matter who they are. This perhaps could also be seen as a contrast to the way the government has acted, and

in particular Bush, in relation to the war with Iraq, and the divide between the nations. Eminem clearly here wants everyone to come together as one, and accept each other for who they are, matching also to his lyrics reinforcing the idea of diversity.

The song created a lot of buzz with his audience and the wider music community, as it was originally staged as a 'leak'. Large names such as the Rolling Stone magazine, as well as the Guardian, BBC, NBC, Metro Times and Scoop wrote about his new song and the strong messages throughout. Rolling Stone took role of explaining the backstory of the song, and how Eminem was affected, and what caused lots of his feelings, in particular linking to his strong lyrics of the song. For example, they mentioned that he registered to vote for the first time at the age of 32, suggesting that he is not normally affected by voting and hasn't seen the need to do it until now. This demonstrates how strongly he objects the operation of the world around him. Metro Times even described how 'Eminem has history of attacking sitting presidents', reinforcing his image of an artist and fuelling audiences to do the same. The Guardian compared Eminem to the style of Martin Luther King, perhaps suggesting that Eminem modelled some of his lyrics and actions in the video based on the courage and strength of MLK.

### **3. Black Eyed Peas – Where is the love?**

Based during the post 9/11 world, the video starts with a lengthy close up shot of a screwed up piece of paper with a question mark on it. This immediately makes the audience begin to question the world around them, and the political unjust and inequality they live with on a daily basis.

This then switches into a tracking shot of people running with the question mark paper in their hand, perhaps acting as a metaphor for movement towards love and change. This question mark became a cultural icon, and influenced people around the world to also put up the pictures as done in the video, to make people change their actions and do good, and spread love. Furthermore, the use of the close up of Will.i.am singing into a microphone in a van makes the audience feel as if they have a bond with him, and influences them to follow his message. This paired with the strong lyrics illustrating the damaged world around them, as well as the rough footage make it seem personal, whilst also focussing the audience's attention to the lyrics of the song – a starting point for the message throughout the video.

During the chorus, the close up of a variety of children's faces of all backgrounds acts as a metaphor of innocence, and highlights the destruction the world is doing to these children's future. This makes the lyrics and message more emotive, as it is being put against an image of children with tears in their eyes. It also causes the audience to think about the actions of others in society and puts a very serious mood

to the video, as it is paired with the lyrics 'children dying'. In addition, the long shot of Will.i.am standing in front of a large mural positions the audience into a viewpoint that the Black Eyed Peas feel that everyone should adopt. The mural features a black man with the writing 'we are not a minority', reflecting on the issue of racism, an issue that their audience may be affected by. This also demonstrates Will.i.am as strong and powerful through his facial expression and body position, showing a direct contrast between the viewpoint of people at the time, and his confidence as he stands up to racism. This empowers the audience to do the same as he did, as well as influencing them to 'find the love', and accept everyone no matter who they are.

Furthermore, the low angle shot of an old man preaching to the sky and praying acts as a beacon of hope for the future. On the other hand, it could also be seen as the man losing his faith as he is holding a Bible with the question mark on it – perhaps he is asking God if he is still there? Either way, the white imagery in his clothing represents innocence and hope, as well as purity – which could be seen as features that the Black Eyed Peas feel that we have lost, and have to find in us again. This would have had a large effect on their audience, who maybe feel like this man, but feel isolated against their 'wallpaper of destruction' around them. This could be seen as satisfying their identity needs, as they feel as if their voice is being heard, and that the Black Eyed Peas are bringing everyone who feels this way together. The shot of the man looking up at the sky is repeated throughout the video but with lots of different people, illustrating that we should all be united by looking 'forwards' and finding hope and desire for a better future.

The use of cultural references such as the shot of the man being restrained by police officers, brings light to topics that all audiences would have been aware of, therefore bringing focus points to issues that the Black Eyed Peas feel are the most dominant. This image represents the injustice and inequality present in the legal system at the time, and brings light to this issue that may not have been entirely present in the media at the time. Audiences would have been satisfied by this, as the issue would have gained traction in such a large audience as the Black Eyed Peas have.

The video attracted mass audiences around the world, and currently has over 550 million views. It made number 1 in the charts, demonstrating what an effect it had on the world, hopefully addressing audiences to think about how they want the world to be. The Telegraph wrote an article on how the single was made, and the inspiration that Will.i.am had when writing it, allowing audiences to further their knowledge and understanding of the song, emphasising the message. They describe the song as 'combining heart-felt rapped verses with a swooning chorus', and described how it granted international recognition when the band was fairly unknown. Rolling Stone Magazine used the headline 'Black Eyed Peas Tackle Gun Control, Social Justice on New Song', illustrating the issues that are focussed on

during the video and in the song. The song was so highly acclaimed that it was remastered reproduced in 2016 as per audience demand.