Hip-Hop and Feminine Space

Name

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**Introduction**

Music is regarded as an influential mode of communication, which the society uses to instill values and beliefs in the younger generation. However, it is important to consider that there are different genres and forms of music, and while some songs may be educative, others are simply misleading. In fact, some societies have demonstrated their concerns over music, which erodes the values, norms, and beliefs they consider as their foundation. Gender distribution in various forms of music genres is a key aspect, which helps demonstrate the role and influence of both men and women in the society. With particular regard to hip-hop music, the representation of females is limited compared to that of males who have dominated for years. Scholars have addressed this issue in an attempt to learn about the scope of women in rap music, and what challenges they face.

**Hip-Hop and Feminism**

In an article, Durham, Cooper, and Morris (2013) acknowledge that hip-hop and feminism are two distinct topics. However, they took on an approach which focuses on hip-hop feminism and the resulting concerns about representation, as well as providing other models of critical engagement. This means that a merger of feminism and hip-hop has led to establishment of a new phenomenon, which presents an opportunity to assess the role of women in the society. Thus, primary focus is to identify the tensions and challenges that females face in relation to hip-hop; and how an understanding of these issues could help lay a stable foundation for aspiring females.

Notably, the experiences that colored populations had while in the US, had a major effect on the role and space of women all over the world. The hip-hop generation suffered greatly following the increasing racial wealth gap, the slashing of the welfare state, the discontinuation of social programs, and banning of affirmative action (Durham, Cooper, & Morris, 2013). The resulting effect of these experiences was a society characteristic of nontraditional family arrangements as well as non-nuclear families. In truth, these outcomes affected women more than they affected women, thereby leading to disproportionate experiences, which were gender specific. This has been a major problem for females wishing to venture into rap music. An organization, the Crunk Feminist Collective, acknowledges that, "the tension between competing and often contradictory political and cultural projects like hip-hop and feminism is percussive in that it is both disruptive and generative" (Durham, Cooper, & Morris, 2013). In fact, the perception of feminism and hip-hop as two entirely different phenomena has led to numerous challenges for women who would want to establish themselves as hip-hop artists. However, this can be achieved through adopting a different approach towards the two aspects; and see hip-hop from a unified perspective that can be considered as hip-hop feminism.

In another article, "Black Women and Black Men in Hip Hop Music: Misogyny, Violence and the Negotiation of (White-Owned) Space", Rebollo-Gil and Moras (2012) shed light on the interaction between black men and women in hip-hop. The authors identify female rap music as a way in which they communicate or enter a dialogue with male rappers. They work within and against the domineering male culture in hip-hop music. Nevertheless, it is important to consider that there is no sufficient representation of females in hip-hop music (Rebollo-Gil & Moras, 2012). A possible explanation for this could be that rap music has, for the longest time, been regarded as "truculent male speech". As an example, Rebollo-Gil and Moras (2012) noted that rap records are used to promote heart-felt and passionate narratives of the manner in which rap music "rescued" and "saved" black male rappers from challenging situations. This has also led to a perception that rap is God-sent and that it brings black male rappers fame and money, therefore it should not be misused (Rebollo-Gil & Moras, 2012). In essence, the purity associated with rap music has provided a rather limited window for already existing as well as potential female rappers who would like to demonstrate their skills and prowess in the field.

Another key aspect to consider, and which presents itself in the article, is that rap is mostly based on women. In short, black male rappers spend their energy, "trying to either keep women quiet or getting them to shut up," (Rebollo-Gil & Moras, 2012). This provides a completely different approach towards the involvement of women in hip-hop music. Possibly, their role is to act as the objects, which black male rappers rap about, but not to venture into creating hip-hop music themselves. This information presents a situation where male patriarchy is dominant and prevents penetration of a gender-sensitive culture, whereby both men and women share in the creation of hip-hop music. The few female rappers that exist have gone through numerous and difficult challenges before they could be allowed to make rap music.

**Conclusion**

Evidently, there are a number of barriers, which females face when it comes to their potential role in creating and promoting hip-hop music. As noted earlier, the concepts of hip-hop and feminism have been politicized, thereby making it difficult to address the main issue at hand, which is hip-hop feminism. On the other hand, another major barrier is the domination of black male rappers and continuity of the belief that rap is pure and solely meant for them and not for women. These are the key issues, which limit females when it comes to exerting their influence in hip-hop music.

References

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