

Lost ones



Jermaine Lamarr Cole, better known by his stage name J. Cole, is a rapper, songwriter and producer from Fayetteville, North Carolina. “Lost Ones” is a single from his album *Cole World: The Sideline Story*, which paints a picture of a man and a woman dealing with the prospect of having an abortion of their unborn child. Cole’s father left him and his mother when he was still young, and throughout this song he explores a little about how that situation effects the decisions that he makes.

Throughout the song, a conversation is taking place between the man and the woman, and the tension between the two is evident as they are both clearly approaching the argument with different points of view in regards to the hot political and moral topic of pro choice or pro life. Premature parenthood is becoming more and more common in America. All too often young girls are becoming mothers before they even graduate from High School, resulting in an increasing number of dropouts. J. Cole sums it up with, “Think about it baby me and you we still kids our self/ how we gonna raise a kid by our self” (11-12).

When young people get pregnant, they don’t realize the ripple effect that it will have on their lives nor on the life of their unborn child. Far from being mature enough, or living within stable conditions with a steady income, the strain of young parenting reaches into the family to affect the grandparents and siblings. Like Cole says, how can you raise a child properly if you are, in essence, still a child yourself? Stemming from premature parenthood, child abandonment, or the abandonment of parental duties becomes an issue.

Since neither individual planned for a pregnancy, it’s quite common that the male figure abandons the family. “Did you forget all those conversations we

had way back/ bout your father and you told me that you hate that nigga/ talkin' bout he a coward and you so glad that you aint that nigga/ cause he left your mamma when she had you and he ain't shit" (48-51). This leaves the child without a father figure and the mother without a husband and partner to help raise a well-rounded child.

Missing a parent for this reason, be it the father or mother, tends to lead to animosity within the child and drives them to do the opposite of what was done to them as demonstrated with, " And I'm not with them niggas who be knocking girls up and skate out" (18). Unfortunately in today's society, the media portrays a lot of negative ideas that lead to poor choices in pursuit of a generally unattainable lifestyle that is just a facade. Among these is a portrayal of promiscuity, or multiple sexual partners. For both males and females, this leads to distrust between the two genders. " What if this bitch aint even pregnant dawg/ could she be lying? " (73-74).

Also, the media tends to portray women as gold diggers, which Cole addresses with, " Swear they get pregnant for collateral/ it's like extortion" (79-80), referring to child support as " collateral". As a result of unplanned pregnancies, the issue of pro-life, meaning the absence of abortions, and pro-choice, the freedom to choose whether to keep the baby or not has become more and more prevalent. As shown in the body of this essay, most for pro-choice argue that without the proper planning, unplanned pregnancies can be detrimental to a child due to unstable family conditions and a lack of money.

To me, this lyrical quote can be taken as being directed both to an individual and the government. " This my body nigga so don't think you tryna force

shit” (31). With this, women object to government policy makers by claiming they can't be required by law to do something that is against their will. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the morality of an abortion is contested with religious views, stating that only God has the right to grant life, and take it away.

This is expressed through Cole's lyric, “ Tryna take away a life/ is you God mothafucker? ” (40). Unplanned pregnancies can have a rippling effect, and can be the underlying cause to strained relationships. The overall message of this song is pretty clear: if you are unable to provide for a child, creating one probably isn't the best idea. Through the powerful lyrics of this song, hopefully the message conveyed is heard by young people everywhere, and that prevention, not abortion, is practiced.

The moral dilemma faced too often by teenagers , women especially, can be avoided altogether as long as safe sex is practiced and proper family planning is implemented. Although the moral belief that life is a gift and should not be taken away is politically correct, it is a logical view point to also ensure that a child has a proper upbringing, and not start out on life harder than it already has to be. If the choice of abortion is justified, I do believe that it should be allowed and viewed in good moral standing.