

Free argumentative essay about how bet has failed the african american community

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The role of the media is to inform, educate and entertain its viewers; however Black Television Network (BET) only does the entertaining, and the wrong kind of entertaining. It mainly broadcasts hip-hop music videos that have vulgar language, are sexist, feature drug use and scantily dressed women, it is type of programming that makes me agree with critics that BET perpetuates negative images of black people, anti- intellectualism and has greatly failed the black community.

Rap music has never been more popular or profitable than it is today; this is mostly because of aggressive promotion by television stations like BET which is " available in more than 60 million of the 75 million homes that have cable television," (Hubbard, 1) these videos are strewn with half naked women dancing raunchily, the rappers are mostly smoking marijuana and they have flashy cars and jewelry. These are the images that are broadcast to African American youth and these rappers are their role models seeing as most African American families are single mother families and these young men do not have a father figure or role model. BET has a responsibility towards these young people and it is failing them.

In 2007 BET premiered a series called ' Hot Ghetto Mess' which mainly featured black people " in outrageous, often degrading situations and clothing."(Braxton, 1) it is such programs that perpetuate racist stereotypes that black people are violent and vulgar. The impact on the African American youth is that these images show them that that is how black people should behave and actually makes them violent as young people idolize the stars in these programs and act like them.

Hubbard talks about how the shows on BET portray images of black people,

mostly rappers living fabulous lives in big mansions and driving big cars, this tells the young people that a flashy lifestyle is the epitome of success for a black man. (1)The surprising thing is that there are no shows on successful black professionals, just rappers and entertainers most of whom do not even have a high school diploma. What does this say to the youth? That one does not need education to succeed, in fact the rules of the real world do not apply, especially the law and that is why most of these rappers have done time in jail and they rap about it proudly. This promotes anti- intellectualism among black youth as success is portrayed to be bling and a flashy lifestyle and education is just not a recipe for it.

Watkins reveals that BET does this for financial gain and so as to get high ratings, the more controversial the show the higher the ratings and that's all the BET cares about. (1) BET has failed the black community in the sense that instead of acting for the good of the community seeing as it is the first all-black cable station it only cares about the bottom lines and ratings.

What does BET have to say about this criticism? Hubbard reports that BET has thrown the blame back to the black community seeing as it is black people that write this vulgar music and star in these raunchy videos furthermore BET says that it is not the only station that plays such music, so does VH1 and MTV and finds the critics as being unfair. (1)

What BET does not understand is that it has a responsibility towards the black community and the society at large as they are its main viewers. They should be showing stories of successful black people, who have gone against all odds to succeed, mentor black youth on the importance of education and

the effects of engaging in crime, simply be the voice of the black people and be part of the solution, not the problem.

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