

The role of music in a popular culture

[Art & Culture](#), [Music](#)



Response Paper The role of music is important because it becomes an interactive medium and an effective tool of propaganda influenced millions of people around the world. In spite of changing social roles of women and equal rights movements, many genres of popular culture demean women. Violence becomes a common thing for music used as an integral part of masculinity and social conflict. The stereotype of the man as cruel and aggressive, and women as weak and light-minded is a modern day phenomenon.

Hamerlinck argues that violence against women, 'popularized' by popular music, reflects mass culture and 'horrible reality'. He identifies such genre as 'woman-killing songs' based on 'murder ballads' popular during the 1920s. Physical and emotional violence, supported by slang words and abusive language, was widely used by blues artists. With the development of MTV and video, 'woman killing songs' became a part of video production and clips. Hamerlinck names such well-known groups as The Beatles, singers Jimmi Handrix and Charles Manson who use themes of homicide and infidelity in their lyrics. Hamerlinck underlines that music does not cause violence but reflect tendencies typical for mass culture: " songs are not about love; they are about power and control" (Hamerlinck).

Rap and rock are the main genres which base their lyrics on themes of violence and low social status of woman. They depict women as light-minded and dissolute persons. Also, a special attention is given to body which is too much sexualized. For instance, in " My Humps" the singers stress: " They say they love my ass 'n" or Tryin' a feel my hump, hump. Lookin' at my lump, lump". Paying attention to sexualized body images, this song tends to

promote desire for sex which is aimed to satisfy longing. Using such slang words as "lump" and "hump" describing parts of her body, the singer (a girl) underlines negative attitude towards women and their sexual attractiveness. NWA (Niggaz With Attitude), Dr. Dre, Tupac, Snoop Dogg are also popularize urban violence and depict women as sexual objects only. The policy of aggressiveness towards women is evident in many rap compositions which encouraged lust, sex, suicide, rebellion – against authority, etc.

Wrong social images have a direct influence on males' behavior as they are not passive listeners but active recipients who borrow their social behavior patterns from songs of Limp Bizkit and Eminem. Women in their songs are faced with terror and psychological trauma which reflect modern culture and social identities. For instance in "Eat You Alive" by Limp Bizkit the singer states: "Hey you Mrs I dont know what the fuck your name is". This sentence unveils a very negative attitude towards women, humiliation and insult. In such songs as 'I Love You More', 'Guilty Conscience', "Fack" by Eminem moral and cultural decay is evident through low status of women and wrong social images. For instance, in "Guilty Conscience" Eminem sings: "Fuck this bitch right here on the spot bare". Rape and sexual violence prevails in most of the songs. As the most important, slang words of this song encourage an extremely aggressive behavior towards women. The women are subdued by low social position and secondary roles.

These facts suggest false ideological construction of gender and identity. Also, a special attention is given to privy parts of the male body which help to underline idealized image of masculinity topical for modern cultural images. The main focus of the genres mentioned above is on wealth and

crime, longing and sex. Women are portrayed as objects deprived equal rights with men. This leads to terrible consequences such as humiliation and killing of woman. To some extent, these anxieties and fantasies fostered by modern culture reflect social consciousness. Using slang and pejorative words, singers humiliate women and portray them as corruptive and lecherous creatures.

References

1. Barker, M., Beezer A. eds. Reading into cultural studies. Routledge1, 1992.