

Gloablization assignment



The Globalization of Misconstrued African American Beauty and HIP-HOP

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university[(#)]Gus. Du Abstract From news coverage to entertainment, the media shapes, reflects, reinforces and defines the world in which we live. In publishing, theatre, films, television and popular music-industries largely controlled by white men-Blacks continually struggle for both a voice and representation. Many scholars write about the stereotyping of Blacks in the media (Meyers, 1999: Davis, 1989).

Light skinned Black women with classic European features predominate in beauty pageants, music videos, and in the world of modeling. It is with respect to the world of modeling and music that this discussion will examine the globalization and communication of Black female beauty. I will examine the historical creation of Black beauty In the United States and Europe and how theses misconstrued Images play out globally. Image Is what colonizes the mind John Hendricks Clarke Introduction A number of writers discuss the adverse effects of this false definition of Black beauty e. G.

Kathy Russell, 1992; Alice Walker, 1982; Maroon Meyers, 1999). These writers show clear links between this offensively constructed definition of Black beauty and the negative self -view It Imposes Researchers expose how the erroneous characterization of Black beauty/culture has created and reinforced this destructive definition of Black beauty/culture that is based on an American/European ideal. Investigating these historically racist systems leads us to ask four serious questions: How are misrepresentations of Black beauty/culture played out in the modeling industry, cosmetic corporations?

How does the media contribute to the global transmission of these Images? What are the negative consequences of transmission of these misrepresentations? Finally, are there any positives that come from the global transmissions of African American beauty/and culture? An exploration of African American Hip-Hop sub-culture will expose how younger generations of people are defining themselves outside of the commodities, globalizes mainstream Ideal of beauty and culture. Modeling and Televising ' Black' Beauty and Culture in The united States and Europe

The media portrayal of images that support the ideal that “white is right” and “white is beautiful,” has created and maintained the American / European beauty ideal; pale to fair skin, long straight hair (preferably blond) light eyes (preferably blue), slim nose and skinny. Unfortunately, this does not embrace the diasporas of Blackness, the many shades, shapes and colors of African American women. After much struggle a were able to break the color barrier did so only because of their likeness to the “beauty ideal” Jackson et al. (1979, Green 1991, Ferguson 2002).

These women were students of slaves who though tragically created, were given the label mulatto and oftentimes passed for white or a close enough likeness to be accepted by mainstream society. In the U. S. Specifically, many Black women were faced with a beauty ideal that did not resemble the reflection in the mirror. Many entrepreneurs began and sustained successful businesses based on selling the white ideal to the Black woman. Skin lightening became a common practice in the Black community (Russell 1992). There are still remnants of this practice visible at your local Walgreen.

In 1991 The New York Department of Consumer Affairs' survey of over 1, 000 ads in 27 magazines and of 22, 000 pictures in 157 catalogues found that while African American women comprised 12% of America and 11% of the readers of magazines, only 3% of all models in magazines ads were Black. The pattern is similar with Latino and Asians. The few minority figures that did appear in these advertisements were overwhelmingly cast in stereotypical roles: athlete, musician, menial worker, object of charity, or child (Green 1991).

The range of " acceptable" images was narrow and the depictions of women were particularly debased: a maid or housekeeper. If in print, she represented the woman selling feminine hygiene products. Not until later in history did the Resurrection vision of Black beauty infiltrate America media. During the late ass's Diane Carroll an African American model and actress was portrayed as a middle-class widowed single mother with one child. The Diane Carroll Show portrayed a slim fair skinned, docile nurse typifying the American ' ideal' of African American family, that of the single mother, beautiful which equaled lighter skin and assimilated.

During the ass and ass there were very few African American leading males or females. The ass and ass saw a few more leading men come along. After Bill Cowboys The Cubby Show - more Black women were seen in commercials - yet, for Black women, the roles were as predictable-the housewife, the overweight cleaning expert, sweet grandma, and soda-drinking teenagers-as they were few. This visual disparagement is not an oversight. What we see or don't see affects how we think and feel about others and ourselves.

Strongman (1984) investigated the role of television representations of African Americans and how these representations affect attitudes and social habits. America's lack of investment in minority consumerism only reinforces the view that minorities are seen as second-rate citizens. As a matter of practice, African Americans were shown only in-group pictures. This practice has been defined by Breather (1957) as inoculation, a process in which advertisers or other capitalist consumer systems incorporate small elements of ethnicity into the media.

By including small doses of ethnicity into mainstream media, advertisers reinforce racist ideals of separation, exclusion and acceptance at a "cost". Additionally, advertisers help make certain that there is no significant allegations of their product with Blacks, while creating the hallucination that Blacks are significantly included in advertisements. For the advertising industry, the emergence of the "ethnic" market has not meant that many more minority images are used in general advertising.

Instead, ethnic minorities are used in separate ad campaigns targeted outside the general market, in Black, Latino and Asian media. As reaction to this exclusion, Black models wanted to discard the tired notion that dark brown skin predestined danger, fear, and poverty, and at the same time, sexual power and primitive authenticity. They wanted to dispel as well the outmoded haughtiness that lighter skin signified safety, accomplishment and astuteness, but also instability and yearning.

In Summers' (1998) *Skin Deep: Inside the World of Black Fashion Models*, we see a very different view of Black woman's beauty. The runways of Paris and

Milan served as the stepping-stones of many highly paid Black fashion models. Despite the pervasiveness of racism, many Black models found acceptance in this part of the world. We can trace this acceptance to the life's work of Josephine Baker. Although her story is by far not an exceptionally happy tale she did gain romance and acceptance in Europe long before her popularity began in America. Man, Naomi Campbell and many other African American models Jump started their careers on runways in Europe. One model Carol Labile suggests that she was openly accepted in Europe because she was a beautiful Black woman. Unfortunately, this beauty was and remains for the most part the European ideal of slim, fair skinned, with long straight hair and light eyes. Despite the acceptance of Black models as beautiful in Europe, there are definite racist corollaries between Europe and the United States. Both countries operated on an uneven accounting field.

As noted in *Skin Deep* (Summers 1998), double bookings were performed (a practice of booking a white model and a Black model for the same shoot to target specific print audiences) and Black models received less than half the salary of white models. Another negative consequence that many Black models faced in these Euro-dominant societies was distaste for natural Black hair (kinky, curly, braids, etc...). As long as the unsuspecting public was appeased with the new, beautiful, and still fair skinned faces, the cosmetics companies who sponsored them could breath an uneasy sigh of relief.

As preventatives of a race, Black models always had to answer - by their presence- loaded questions ' e what to do with their hair? The simplistic rhetoric of the ass's equating processed hair with processed minds had left a

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bitter feeling behind. However no subject carried more weight than an age-old issue that mixed the personal and the political with the paycheck: The bottom line is that many Black women conformed to societies ideals of beauty. We were willing to conform. We didn't fight it. If you don't give much thought to your identity you didn't wear it right. You didn't wear it with confidence. You had to feel and accept it. But most of us don't have that type of strength. We just go with the flow. (Summers 1998: 141)" While Black models - and women in general in the developed world-blithely conducted experiments on themselves, they were also being observed and imitated by women in less developed countries.

Top fashion model Elaine Evans comments, " Black people in Africa looked up to African American women for beauty in hair and hair but not fashion, because they think we dress terribly. But for hair and makeup, they know we're the most advanced, so they're following us" (Summers 1998: 142).

Globalizes Beauty Elaine Van's comments on a trip to Africa where she witnessed first hand the effects have taken skin whitening creams to the limit. Vie seen them mix those creams with Colors, and paint it all over their body.

They burn all their skin off, and then put oil on it, suffering all that pain Just to become light. But they're following us" (Summers 1998: 142). Bertha, a barmaid in Dares Saloon, Tanzania, said in the past she used McGregor because " a lighter skin means beauty, and most men go for white women"(Munroe 2001 : 11). The Uganda and Kenya government has taken measures o ban skin lightning concoctions because they caused serious

aliments and even death. This skin lightning process is even popular an India.

Current scholars are asking the question why are women doing this to themselves. " After decades of being ruled by the British, haven't we learnt anything about pride in our color? Why are our girls being raised with the notion that if they are ' dark they aren't accepted? In a country of brown people how did looking normal come to be looked down upon (Eagle 2002: MM) According to Sandals through the differential, we find a strategy of contrasting philosophy that operates thorough mobility.

Furthermore, Sandals suggests that the power of the differential can be thought of as not drifting, but rather cinematographic: a kinetic motion that maneuvers, poetically transfigure, and orchestrates while demanding alienation, perversion and reformation in both spectators and practitioners. Unfortunately, the differential may not always be used for positive transformation. The media consistently uses the differential to maintain cultural oppression thru, inoculation, which allows the consumer to believe that difference is acceptable in a narrow spectrum and connected to the dominant perception of ideal beauty.

Berths 1957) This beauty ideal is taken even one step further when the media portrays in a country of bottle shaped women all westernizes movies and commercials that depict the average women as a stick figure that all men want. " M-Net, which shows mostly American movies and TV Shows, chose a skinny 6"2' teenager from Largos, Alcoholic Arguable, who is not considered particularly pretty here but became a hit on the runways"

(Monish 2002). This trend is becoming more popular in Nigeria and other counties in Africa and worldwide. Among young fashionable Nigerian voluptuousness is out and thin is in" (Monish 002). Print media, television, music and specifically music television are large tools in globalization. Through the images that are transmitted globally, women are bombarded with ideals of beauty that are not representative of themselves. It is through these mediums that women are attempting to construct their identities. The pervasiveness and influence of music and television on people is well documented (e. G.

Brown and Campbell 1986; Curtain 1999; and Emerson 2002). Studies say identities are constructed thru popular culture (Hebrides 1979, Labeled 1999). A Very Brief History of Women in Hip-Hop A major pop culture influence globally is that of Hip-Hop. Constraints limit the degree to which this article can discuss the very rich legacy of Hip-Hop culture. However, Hip-Hop culture has been around longer than its antagonists anticipated-? over 25 years, and despite a predominately hostile reception.

Michael Tyson (1994 as quoted the Culture of Hip-Hop" stating that: It is difficult for a society that maintains social arrangements, economic conditions, and political choices [which] create and reproduces poverty, racism, sexism, classics, and violence, to appreciate a music form] that contests and cannibalizes such problems. (1994; 100-101) The development of the music for both male and female artists, the definitions of, and the connection between Hip-Hop and rap are relatively straight forward: they share roots within the African American community and are both forms of resistance against dominant systems of power.

Hip-Hop is a modern, aesthetic cultural characteristic of urban youth within the African American community. Hip-Hop culture consists of the music (rap), baggy but fashionable clothing, the arts (graffiti), the dance (break Nanning), large sound systems, manual mechanical sound effects (cutting and scratching on turntables), Digging (the disc Jockey), Mincing (the microphone controller or master of ceremonies), and the language (I. E. , You, Hippo, a way of life, holly'-? Peace).

Hip-Hop is an extension of the African American culture that includes for instance, the Harlem Renaissance and its music, Jazz, which also had fresh “ forward thinking forms of literature, art and music” that represented expressions and experiences of African Americans (Aziza-Hashish 1999). Hip-Hop is a part of Black music, which in unreal, is a cultural communicative expression, deeply embedded within African American experiences (Epstein & Berry, 1994). Hip-Hop is a dominant force in the music industry, making a formidable impact on popular culture worldwide (Summer 2000).

Vastly different marginalia groups ranging from the Maori have appropriated hip-Hop and Aborigines in New Zealand and Australia, to workingman's whites in post communist Poland. Each of these groups uses Hip-Hop to express their own political resistance against the dominant social structures. In the United state the roots of Hip- Hop are embedded deeply within the struggle of a enervation to resist dominant political and societal expectations and representation.

During the early sass, the typically male-dominated venues were located in poor streets of the South Bronx, New York, where rap and Hip-Hop

originated. In the late sass Hip-Hop finally opened to include female artists (Epstein & Berry, 1994). Early music videos showcased “ tough Black women who served as a female version of the typical male rap and Hip-Hop artist. Female rappers wore the dress code of the streets: designer urban street wear, baggy denim Jeans or overalls and name-brand nines shoes (Bender, 2002, Summer, 2000 Epstein and Berry, 1994).

When African American female Hip-Hop and rap artists such as Queen Latifah and Salt ‘ N’ Pepper finally did emerge from the shadows of their male counterparts, they were a bit sexier in lyrical style that followed the vein of Billie Holiday and Retreat Franklin incorporating a bluesy sexiness that expanded the genre of Hip-Hop beyond where the male artists had developed. By the late sass, a new model of women in music television videos began to emerge. The images were very progressive and sometimes shocking when compared to the earlier milder music videos.

In earlier videos a fully clothed Queen Latifah sang about self-awareness and promoted the message that all Black women are queens in “ Ladies First”. Today, artists like Lil’ Kim showing a lot of skin, and the “ nasty girl of Hip-Hop” Foxy Brown sing such lyrics as mina’ pitches sucking’ disproportionately negative images shown on Music Television (MTV), Video Hits I(VII), and Black Entertainment. Unfortunately, these images, despite the overwhelming availability of more politically and diversified images negative images, are the ones that get airtime and notoriety by the mainstream.

Despite this Hip-Hop entities to resist stereotypes, gender assignments and political execution, through music and clothing that are detached from

mainstream ideals. Globalizes and Commodities “ Hip-Hop” Culture Like television and other forms of media, music today is commodities, subject to a global economy. Hip-Hop as a term includes dance, dress and style. These things considered Hip-Hop has been primed for cross over first into white America and subsequently into the global market. Hip-Hop has been marshaled to the promotion of clothing, soft drinks, and other items appealing to youth.

Despite the attempts by reparations to remodel the sub culture of Hip-Hop by suppressing many of its resistance signifying codes and reproducing them globally, Hip-Hop roots are resistance, and lovers of Hip-Hop do not miss the embedded messages. Introduced through MET, movies and commercials, Hip-Hop culture can be found in Japan England, France and Germany. Youth in each region adapt African American culture to their demographics. In Japan the influence of Hip-Hop culture is overwhelming (Summer 2000: 3).

Additionally, Cortez suggests that the acceptance of Hip-Hop style signifies a transnational identity, whereby particular groups of people from efferent cultural, religious, ethnic, social, moral background and/or experiences can freely participate. Hip-Hop traditionally is an all-inclusive phenomenon. This inclusively is appealing because of its propensity for racial and gender identification revolution. “ In Japan, female Hip-Hoppers use the genre to defy gender restrictions for women” (Summer 2000: 3).

By reconfiguring Hip-Hop and thus “ Blackness as desirable” provides greater opportunities for interactive dialogue between groups that otherwise would maintain and reinforce old racist controlling ideals. Instead, we e

groups of youths engaging Hip-Hop as a mechanism worldwide to speak up and out about the injustices that they face. In the Japanese reproduction of Hip-Hop, the origins may be elided but most notably they are not whitened. According to Cortez (1994) these youth choose to use Hip-Hop as a rebellion against adult mainstream society. In London marginalia East Indian youth blend Indian melodies and Hindi with English rap as a street form of protest. In Paris, poor Jewish, Middle Eastern and West African youth coming out of the projects use Hip-Hop styles and rap to talk about their poverty and police brutality' (Summer 2000: 3). Conclusion: Breaking Down The Politics As we look at Hip-Hop we see an ever-changing cultural apparatus, one that is inclusive of many faces and voices. There are still battles to be fought in this artistic/ social genre but currently this subculture has demonstrated the capacity to change the world, as we know it.

Shivers (2000: BE) notes this trend, " When one looks at the scantily clothed women gyrating in front, or in back, of male rapper and the female emcee selling her sexuality to sell hit records. " Although this trend can be seen in Hip-Hop, I would assert that this is not specific to Hip-Hop but to the music industry in general. In fact, current trends in Hip-Hop reveal more women interested in consciousness raising rather than sex. Shivers (2000: BE) suggests that Lauren Hill is perceived as political first and foremost and that her shows are filled with intelligence, exuberance and simple entertainment.

There are many other young women who continue to choose this high path to entertainment and self-representation: Eric Baud, Lauren Hill, Nonchalant, and Jill Scott, to name a few. Fighting resistance from the male dominated music industry, these women choose to stand up for women instead of

succumbing to the pressures of an industry that loud stereotype them as vixens. Through positive images and powerful lyrics consumers are provided with realistic views of society and themselves. These women are the mothers of a Hip-Hop- MET generation where music, fashion, beauty all merge.

Scholars note that in younger generations of women we see the influence of subcultures redefining beauty and the media has had no choice but to follow suit. (Swell, 1983; White, 2001; Winter, 2002) Many advertisers are now using celebrities from the music industry to gain consumer confidence. Additionally, these advertisers are using African American women who are part of the Hip-Hop culture. Advertisement campaigns are now using more Black celebrities such as Abeyance from Destiny's Child for L'Oreal and Eureka Baud in A Gap clothing campaign" (Gordon 2001 : 3).

Dry. Melissa Stevenson notes that the acceptance by younger generations of the " natural you" is a generational change that youth are using to create their own identity without having to conform to the traditional confines of American Society. She like many others credits this self-identity development to the genre of Hip-Hop culture (Mitchell 2001; Minus 2001). If you look at MET on any given day the intermingling of Hip-Hop and beauty is a notable thing articulacy on Fashionably Loud, a program designed to incorporate fashion and music into one entity.

La La and Molly Sims along with co-hosts, Kimono Lee Simmons & DC Clue, present collections from the Spring 2003 urban designer lines. The hottest models and celebrities, including Charlie Baltimore, Loon, and MAC Late, will be wearing the clothes everyone wants to rock. And this is no normal

runway. While Sexy models parade the stage you'll witness series of hot, banging, live performances by some of the biggest names in Hip-Hop music. A few even moonlight as million dollar designers" (MET. Com 2002)!

As an African American woman, I maintain that we are finally at a point when we get to say who we are what we are and to demand that the representation of what is beautiful and cultural no be static but fluid like everything else in the global market. That time has come to recognize and include the voices, faces, desires, opinions and concerns of those considered minorities, is supported by the creation of new cosmetic lines that support the multi-ethnic world we live in. In an interview by Renee White, Caroline Coulombs says: " Women of color are looking for makeup made especially for them...

Thankfully the notion of a woman's beauty is now cosmopolitan and universal, and no longer limited to images of pallid European runway waifs. Here's to racial diversity and color" (White 2001: 19). White also found approach. Fernery asserts: " I believe that women of color are the women of the world- African American, Native American, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Indian, African and Asian. These women live right here in this country. It is time to address the concerns of the invisible consumer" (White 2002: 19).

Many cosmetic companies are following examples set by major firms to broaden their consumer base by adopting or starting with a ultimately approach. " The founders designed a custom skin-care line that can carefully be matched to the skin care needs of individuals in 40 ethnic groups" (Limn 2002: 24). Roger Hall a professor in Media studies asserts that the use of

multi ethnic women in advertising is a signifier of changing times and a change of what is considered beautiful. He credits the influence of the Hip-Hop subculture in the mainstream (Gordon 2001).

As a member of the Hip-Hop subculture, it is good to hear and see more women deciding for themselves who they are and that they are beautiful, no matter what Vogue or MET may say. Admittedly there are still those who are unjustly influenced by the dominant view of what is beautiful and cultured, but with the current trend of Hip-Hop dominated, post-colonial inclusively in full swing they have a greater chance of seeing their natural selves as beautiful. Things are definitely changing; slowly but surely. In times of DSL and high speed Internet access many more voices are heard.