

Gender construction in a music video

Psychology



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Gender Construction in a Music Video Critically analyze the gender construction in a music video. How is gender represented? What is normalized (with particular reference to the body and sexuality)?

Without referring to their value in commercial or musical terms, music videos have to be considered as a form of popular media which have played a role in the construction of our present culture. Undoubtedly, television has become a central part of our collective lives and music videos on television become one of the means in which music is consumed by individuals.

Television channels such as MTV, CMT, BET and VH1 offer this product en masse and a variety of other channels also have music videos as a part of one or more of their programs. However, the representation of gender and the things which are normalized in many music videos leaves a lot to be desired.

This is because the music video sells a lifestyle which is greatly influenced by fantasy. A study conducted by Moncrief (2004) analyzed more than 200 videos and the overall results showed that, “ females were depicted as more attractive, decorative, and sexualized than their male counterparts (Moncrief, 2004, Pg. 1)”. This is certainly not a positive feature for society since sexualizing the female body may lead to the construction of ideals which are unreal and impossible to recreate in the world outside the music video.

Ward (2005) considered the impact of viewing stereotypical music videos and non-stereotypical music videos on more than 150 students in high school. It was discovered that, “ more frequent music video viewing was associated with more traditional gender role attitudes and with assigning greater importance to specific stereotypical attributes (Ward, 2005, Pg.

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143)”. Further when music videos are filled with gender stereotypes, they are shown to have led the students towards expressing more traditional views about sexual relationships and gender construction (Ward, 2005). Strangely enough, this situation is not a recent development because as early as 1994, Hurley (1994) had presented a very personal analysis of what she went through after seeing many music videos that were stereotypical and contained sexual images of how women are supposed to be. With regard to analyzing music videos she notes that, “ There has been an abundance of imagery that has exploited female bodies as objects (Hurley, 1994, Pg. 327)”. She further says that, “ The obligatory writhing and pouting, leather-clad ‘ video vixen’ was like the taste of unpleasant medicine that no spoon of sugar could ever erase (Hurley, 1994, Pg. 327)”. Undoubtedly, the construction of gender with regard to a woman in a typical music video leaves little room for seeing a woman as anything other than an object of desire.

In conclusion, it is easy to see that music videos themselves need to be changed since they appear to have quite an impact on the youth of our society. Further, the nature of the music video and the manner in which gender is constructed within it appear to be based on fantastical stereotypes that have little connection to reality. However, this distinction may not be immediately apparent to the young consumers of the music video and that itself is a danger to the youth.

Works Cited

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