

Common Intentions of an Unlikely Comparison

What could Hip Hop samples of propaganda media share with girls taking selfies on Instagram possibly have in common?

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"No matter what I do, I'm labelled as a bad character"

As it goes, their similarity begins with a shared ambition to reclaim a twisted image of their identity.

Hip Hop and 'Anti' Propaganda

Labels, stereotypes and discrimination have all been thrown towards the sub-culture since forever it would seem.

Drug use, violence and misogyny are not light claims, yet mainstream medias regularly churn out propaganda to discredit and immobilise the subculture.

Hip Hop composes alter-ego performances accompanying the use of samples, accepting the stereotypes and labelling. However, instead of adhering to misinformation of violence and delinquency, these samples are weaponised and aimed straight back towards the fabricators.

By comically living up to the expectations and assumptions set, artists can criticise the generalisations and discredit them.



They embrace stereotypes, not accepting them but acknowledging them, whilst using satire to illuminate the absurdity of the claims.

Whether it's *Hock Tu Down's* usage of anti-cannabis propaganda, *Lee Scott's* sampling of Liverpool's Pro-Urban Beautification news coverage, or the more direct News claims of Hip Hop's incitement of violence, used regularly by *Quasimoto* and *Madlib*.

The intro to Quasimoto's album '*The Unseen*' to be a clarifying example.

'Welcome to Violence' - Quasimoto

The intro is entirely made up of a sample of anti-violence propaganda. The subjects of the propaganda's message are more so the concern of my focus.

"This new breed... grows both alone and in packs, operating at any level, any time, anywhere and with anyone... Who are they? Who are they? who are they?"

Quasimoto is a duo consisting of *Madlib* and his alter-ego '*Mad Quas*'. The use of the sample intends to suggest the widespread discrimination against both the Hip Hop community, and Black communities in America.

The following track is called '*Bad Character*'. *Lord Quas* determines:

"No matter what I do, I'm labelled as a bad character'

'I warned you Folks, I'm the new bad character".

The two introducing tracks compliment each other in their intentions:

First, they identify assumptions and negative stereotyping, and later satirically meet the expectations set.

But far from embracing the stereotypes, *Madlib's* use of his alter-ego counterpart is to comically imply that these assumptions are widely misleading and unjust.

Subcultural suppression is not unusual, and if you consider the mainstream's rigorous need to impose its ideology and values on all divergent groups, it is quite unsurprising.

Subcultures are excluded from the inner circle of hegemonic society, and due to socio-economic and geographical factors, they have polarised views to the status-quo.

Your specific environment manufactures your values.

Hip Hop's sampling of anti- 'other' propaganda projects to its audiences that Hip Hop is ideologically targeted by dominant forces who suppress and discriminate its members, as well as wider communities.

A classic example of distortion-resistance is located under the title '*Self-Destruction*'; A song featuring KRS One amongst other rappers, highlighting the misrepresentation of Hip Hop as violence-inducing. The song was produced in response to an outbreak of violent events at Hip Hop concerts in the late 80's, unveiling the movement's community as mobilised, self-disciplining, conscious and mature, far from the depictions painting by the media.

Hip Hop does not condone this behaviour and publicises these injustices through adopting the stereotypes in performances.

So, where does this tie in with female selfies on Instagram?

The stolen and manipulated image of Hip Hop by dominant cultural forces is a tactic utilised by the Patriarch, to impose a certain image and sexualise the female image.

Mainstream media's portrayals of Females; how they should act and dress, largely encouraging a subservience towards a masculinised Society, stretches even further in duration than anti-Hip Hop propaganda.

The sexualisation of the female body has left women, young and old, detached from their own image, and their own reality.

Now, the act of a female taking a sexually suggestive image and posting it on her Social Medias is far from adherence to Patriarchal structures.

Instead, they are notifying the dominant forces that they are reclaiming an image which has been warped and distorted.

They repurpose the deterritorialization, all the while, reinvesting their identity into the image and publicising it as their own, through their own platform.

From rapper, to female and far beyond in numerous different examples, the stigmatisation of simply being is a tactical display of distaste by those in control of common perception.

Taking an image or idea and constructing alternative symbolism around it, is an action intended to either claim it or purposefully misconstrue the origins.

See the connection?

In both cases, an acknowledgement of the inauthentic image is made, and through an adoption and reclamation, both Hip Hop groups and females retrieve their displaced identity.

It could be argued that people live up to the expectations set in stone through varying cultural, social and economic codes.

These are both testaments to this, although they exceed adherence, instead protesting expectations and turning the focus on those responsible for disseminating and enforcing these deep-rooted stereotypes.