The Significance of Pop Culture in the Modern American Society

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Introduction

Pop culture is a social art that has some political ideologies related to it. Since its introduction in the 1970s in the American suburban regions dominated by blacks, it has always played a significant role in how the various ethnic groups in the US relate to each other (Watkins). It can be attributed to divisions between different races, especially between whites and blacks, and at the same time, it can be considered a unifying factor between individuals from the same groups. During the early years of its dominance, the government perceived pop culture to be an art practiced only by gangs comprised of black people in some parts of the US, and those who took part were mainly regarded as criminals engaging in revolutionary movements.

Moreover, racism was at its peak during the time, making it challenging for the whites, except those who considered the culture to be a good thing, to support it (Traber 36). Certain factors always pulled back such individuals from interacting with the art, such as the fear of being criticized by the other whites, or they were scared of being associated with criminals and might be jailed alongside the blacks who openly practiced what they considered best for them. Through perseverance and persistence, pop culture has significantly contributed to the creation of modern American society. The manner in which blacks and whites interact today, compared to the earlier years, not excluding other races in the US, is evidently part of the political impact of this particular art. To help understand pop culture's significance in today's society, this paper examines Kendrick Lamar's video and song "Humble."

Kendrick Lamar –Humble Song and Video Interpretation and Cultural Values

Most of the founders of pop culture were members of the Black Panther Party, which was active from 1966 to 1982 in the US, and its primary objectives were the liberation of blacks, the end of racism and imperialism, and also the promotion of socialism in the country. The song Humble has pop culture ideas, and it's more than just a song. Like the pop culture founders, Kendrick Lamar uses this song to convey different political messages to the people and condemn some cultural practices in society

today. First, in this video, Lamar condemns the media for its role in providing bad information about the African American community (LyricBar). Thus, he starts by saying, “Everyone must realize the truth,” implying that the media have brainwashed people to think of negative things about African Americans. Lamar is saying that every man was created equal and no ethnicity is superior to others since if you do so, you are not a Christian. Therefore, pop culture allows a person to speak out about their experiences and feelings regarding American society. Thus, the song advocates for the truth to avoid stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination within our society. Considering this song and others related to it, it is evident that the situation in America today is different from those days that had no peace since blacks were tagged as thugs by the government and white people. The federal government eventually heard the pleas of the minorities, most of which were conveyed through pop culture. It introduced laws protecting every citizen of the US from discrimination in all sectors of the country, and it is unlawful to practice racism. Through pop culture, there is equity in modern society, which has improved how people interact today.

Second, Lamar targets the media for their preference for money rather than truth and cultural values. In the video, Lamar is seen lying on the money, surrounded by the girls with their faces hidden. The money represents the money the media is making by victimizing individuals and ethnicities in society, while the girls represent Paparazzi (Media), and their hidden faces show that they do this as an undercover thing (LyricBar). Thus, he uses hip-hop music, which is part of pop culture, to encourage the media to tell the story of minorities honestly. As the video continues, Lamar is seen sitting in the salon and is the only one not reading the magazines, signifying that he already knows the truth. Thus, women reading the magazines do not question the information portrayed. Hence, he uses pop culture to tell people to research what is being said in the media. This encourages responsibility in our society today.

Also, as the video progresses, Lamar is seen cycling around, implying that racist people think that someone is going to take their place if all people are seen as equal. These racist people are affecting the dreamers and preventing them from achieving their dreams. The dreamers are seen in the video with their heads on fire since they end up doing nothing. This notion is portrayed well in the video as his sweater is labeled “Dreamer” while the guys on fire (dreamers) will end like the guys behind them.

He continues to rap, “I’m so sick and tired of the Photoshop,” and in the next verse, he mentions Richard Pryor. Richard Pryor was an African American comedian known for his fight against racism. This showed his true intention when he said: “I’m tired of Photoshop.” Therefore, Lamar is saying that he is tired of people hiding their true ethnic backgrounds so that they can be accepted by society. He uses this message to show the difficulties African Americans experience when finding jobs. He raps, “Still will take you down right on your mama’s couch in polo socks.” This implies that due to lack of employment, youth return to their mama’s couch. The video shows two people in a car exchanging things, implying that they’re doing something wrong. Hence, this shows that we are programmed to see this act as unlawful by the media.

Therefore, the song shows how African American people are supposed not to question; hence, they

are supposed to sit down and be humble. Lamar blames the media for the cause of racism in society today (Freenjoy INC). He gives detailed scenes showing how the media do not like to tell the truth; instead, they stereotype the African American community. For instance, when guys exchange things while in a car, the media have programmed society to believe what is done is wrong and unlawful. Hence, the song's purpose is to condemn racism, challenge the media to tell the whole story, and encourage people to research the truth rather than stereotype others.

Pop culture has taken part in developing a society where everyone can enjoy his or her freedom peacefully. People are free from oppression, manipulation, segregation, direct control, and others. Not only did rap art free blacks and other minorities from discrimination, but it also freed whites from being manipulated and controlled by others to do or take part in what they didn't want. Pop culture has positively influenced the social relationships between whites and African Americans to the extent that today the art is not practiced by blacks only, but others have joined to enjoy the fun in it.

Conclusion

In conclusion, through hip-hop music and videos, pop culture significantly played various roles in creating a democratic American society where everyone is equal under the laws that are implemented efficiently in case they are violated (Watkins). Through various rappers such as The Black Eyed Peas, Tupac Shakur, Public Enemy, and now Kendrick Lamar, pop culture was used to liberate blacks from the superiority ideologies of whites, such as racism and imperialism. Art also played a part in improving the social status of modern society without any party having to be superior to the other and where there are multiracial engagements. However, pop culture is also responsible for some crimes that are conducted today, including murder, smuggling, drug abuse, and others, since some individuals perceive that they can use it to engage in unlawful activities without the interference of the government. Hence, the culture has had positive and negative implications for modern American society in equal measure.

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