

Girl's Power: Analysis of Feminist Expression in the Hip-hop Garment's Culture

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Abstract: The issue of gender has become increasingly socially sensitive in recent years. There is a high level of conversation about feminism, and discussions of feminism are beginning to emerge in hip-hop culture, where, for example, female performers express their feminist attitudes through their dress code. The female performers of today typically wear two types of clothing: sexy and baggy. In this study, each of these styles is discussed separately to determine why these two outfits are the most representative feminist symbols in hip-hop culture. Additionally, how do these two outfits convey the importance of feminism and gender equality? The purpose of this study is to convey the efforts of female rappers to change the current patriarchy in hip-hop culture. Furthermore, hip-hop clothing can be used to create a sense of self-awareness in others and break stereotypes. It is the purpose of this study to integrate the gender elements contained in hip-hop music to ultimately contribute to the achievement of gender equality in society.

Keywords: Hip-hop clothing, gender equality, feminism

1. Introduction

Niche cultures are gaining ground as a result of the rapid spread and development of the Internet. Hip-hop culture, for example, is gradually transitioning from a subculture to a mainstream market. A shopping site called Taobao, for example, sells more than 10,000 pieces of pants with hip-hop in the name each month. Several luxury brands have also begun to draw inspiration from hip-hop in recent years.

During the mid-1970s, hip-hop emerged from the African-American community. A wide variety of people have begun participating in rap because of the popularity of this new form of music. And the male-dominated rap culture was rightfully influenced by the patriarchy of the time. This resulted in its clothing being stylized more in a male fashion. Female performers have, however, increased in number over the past two years. Since female performers are not treated equally in a rap culture that emphasizes freedom. Clothing has evolved into a tool for defending the rights of women in the quest for gender equality. Whether it is clothing that displays curves or unisex clothing that blurs the distinction between men and women, it sends a message around the world that women are

increasingly seeking equality, independence, and freedom. To remove and break the illusion that women wear clothing under the male gaze, as much as possible should be done. As a result, unisex clothing tends to weaken the differences between men and women. Women are emphasized for their heroic qualities, while men are less emphasized for their masculine qualities. Both emphasize the importance of being self-sufficient and not relying on others for support. As a result, feminist activism receives a fresh injection of energy. In fact, feminism itself has become stylish and youthfully hip from the 21 century [1].

The study of hip-hop culture has previously focused on male dressing characteristics and neglected the dressing expressions of women. 'Innovative design research in the area of hip-hop style in men's clothing [2]. Cuban chains, which are types of gold necklaces, are a common feature of hip-hop. The majority of these necklaces are more appropriate for men than for women. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring how female performers in hip-hop culture express their feminism through their clothing; to determine whether dress enhances women's status in hip-hop culture, how they communicate their pursuit of gender equality, and how they express their feminism specifically. For female performers, neutral clothing and sexy clothing are typical styles of dressing. A case study methodology is employed in this study. Utilizing these two major dressing characteristics of the present, it specifically examines how they reflect the dilemmas women face in hip-hop culture and how to overcome them. This study provides some new perspectives and understandings for feminist-related studies from a subcultural perspective, as it is the first study to focus on women's dress in hip-hop culture. Providing women with a strategic reference for pursuing gender equality and advancing their status through dress expressions/symbols is of practical significance.

2. Case Description

There are two main types of female outfits. The first costume is a sexy one that highlights the attractive curves of their bodies, while the second is a unisex costume that is looser than the other.

Originally, hip-hop clothing was inspired by the streets of the time. "Oversized" clothing was characterized by parents from poorer areas who bought their children oversized clothing to avoid having to purchase new clothing regularly. The style evolved into one that was rebellious and cynical over time. However, this is not a firm commitment. It is possible to find some very unique clothing in this hip-hop style. Despite this, women are often not given a proper name in hip-hop culture. There are still stereotypes about women. The most common negative way to refer to women in rap was as sexual objects, followed by songs that used derogatory terms to describe them. Approximately 20% of songs mentioned the legalization of violence against women and 18% mentioned the glorification of prostitution.

In addition, they are reinforced through the use of clothing in music videos. The fact remains that women still struggle to wear the clothes they desire, although women are portrayed in such a negative light. Neutral clothing can be worn by both men and women. It was born out of various gender-based liberation movements. Approaching the 1980s. In recent years, as the gender elements in clothing have been brought closer together, the authentic self has become increasingly important. The popularity of Unisex accessories among young people began much earlier than that of clothing. There have been reports that nearly half of men who purchased hip-hop accessories in 2017 were women, according to a survey conducted by a Chinese app called "Youhuo". While people are still unfamiliar with the term unisex, the conditions for swapping gender purchases have begun to gradually take shape. As far as clothing is concerned, some women in hip-hop culture have attempted to break stereotypes. Unisex clothing includes bell bottoms. The flared pants that were invented were originally intended for use by the Navy and by men. Gradually, as time progressed, there was a move towards unisex clothing. In terms of dressing and a sense of autonomy, women were able to rely upon themselves for their productive, developmental, and aesthetic needs.

Women's musical works in the 2000s. While they show unisex clothing, another completely different form of clothing is slowly becoming more widely known. It was fashionable for female performers to wear clothing that displayed their breasts and hips; they wore high heels to demonstrate their sexiness. Cardi B is seen in her song 'Wap' wearing a leopard print dress, which is a good example of this. This dress was designed by Thierry Mugler, a male designer. In some cases, the earrings are adorned with exaggerated jewels and the boots are super high-heeled. A naive smile, blonde curls, and full breasts are described as the keywords. Many hip-hop female musicians and designers are breaking away from this tradition. It is no longer the case that women are the objects of sex, but rather they are the subjects of sex. Women's power is enhanced when they dare to express themselves. It is for this reason that these two styles of dress exist. In general, sexy has played a more significant role in hip-hop culture for a longer period.

3. Analysis

As a result of the male-dominated attributes of the hip-hop culture, female performers are prone to dressing in a sexy manner. As the main audience for rap music has evolved to a point where the majority of listeners are still men, this type of eye-catching attire can draw the attention of the majority of male listeners to the maximum extent. Rappers and mainstream rappers were predominately male, and the discourse of the rap industry and the fame and fortune that were gained from it were primarily in the hands of male performers. In the early days of hip-hop culture, the lyrics focused on wealth and women and were dominated by male gazes. There is a lot of camera imagery in the music videos of famous female rappers Nicki Minaj, Cardi B, Doja Cat, and others focusing primarily on their breasts and hips with the dancers, and their clothing is tight and sexy dress, showing their curves confidently [3]. As a result of the traffic and popularity generated by these sexy-dressed female rappers and video dancers, the songs were able to attract more listeners and the video was viewed more frequently. The clothing choices of female rappers in rap culture are indicative of this trend of displaying curves. On female rappers, crop tops, sports underwear for external wear, and tight leather skirts are frequently seen.

The emergence of genderless dressing is a result of the awakening of female consciousness. The symbols on the body of rappers are always used to express their identity. Through the use of clothing, hairstyles, and accessories, they attempt to place themselves within the "rap community" and construct a community, which is symbolized by loose, casual hoodies, caps, and sunglasses. Rap of China contestants often wear street-style clothing, such as hoodies, ripped jeans, and athletic shoes. In addition, female rap contestants display body symbols that differ from those of mainstream young women, and this helps them to identify themselves and separate themselves from other mainstream women. A study of the feminine gaze and the masculine gaze is presented by John Berg in his book *Ways of Seeing*. According to Ma, the female has two gazes: the inner and self-observer gaze, i.e., the gaze she directs toward herself; and the gaze she directs at herself [4]. In addition to their sense of self-preservation under the male gaze, female rappers and dancers often wear unisex dresses. Women's loose-fitting clothes effectively conceal their sexuality and a thinner physique, reflecting a silent counterattack against sexism.

Furthermore, these looser garments do not have gender-specific dress restrictions, so the wearer does not have to consider how to dress according to their gender [5]. Hip-hop culture is one of the influences on the global trend of gender-neutral clothing. When David Bowie wore eyeshadow, lipstick, and high heels in 1972, a sense of "androgyny" was already on the rise, slowly influencing fashion design and development. Genderless clothing does not deliberately emphasize male or female models. The process begins with the design of the clothing. Lil Nas X wore a tight gold jumpsuit to the Met Gala this year. Due to this trend, a series of mainstream female artists have completely transformed the previously male-dominated rap industry. Their clothes, which reveal their curves, are

a statement of success in the fight against sexism. In hip-hop street dance cultures, we observe more female dancers wearing clothing that blurs their curves, such as a hat worn backward or an oversized hoodie. Thus, they can dance more freely and with greater flexibility without the risk of being exposed, while blurring the physical differences between them and men. Female performers, who undergo long-term physical training, may prefer to wear sports suits when performing hip-hop street dance.

Moreover, due to the long-standing gender inequality in the street dance industry, even today there remains a certain influence on the stereotype of female dancers, leading to their reluctance to expose their female identity and resulting in a degree of inequality within the competition. Increasingly, men and women are choosing genderless clothing and promoting the concept of gender ambiguity, which is reflected not only in the unisex style of clothing but also in society's diversity and inclusiveness. Taking off gender labels and breaking gender stereotypes is only part of the process of creating gender-free clothing, but it also reflects the deep-seated desire of modern people to be self-aware and identify as individuals. According to a study on hip hop feminism in Sweden, female rappers are demonstrated to simultaneously resist and resignify masculine norms as they incorporate elements associated with masculinity but mobilize them in their challenge to what is considered masculine [6]. Not only is it a subversive innovation in the fashion industry, but it should also become a norm, a natural, agreeable, and comfortable state of being.

The representation of clothing is no longer a constraint on the expression of feminist ideas. The use of sexy dressing styles has also become a method and tool for some female performers to express their feminism. As some have noted, Nicki's performance and lyrics contain sexual innuendo, which appeals to the male gaze perspective. However, more female performers see this as a form of feminist expression, as Nicki has conditioned herself to perform and express herself in this way [7]. Dressing that exposes curves has a cause of this phenomenon. For a relatively small portion of the female audience, this dressing is in line with the popular trend of the post-epidemic era in recent years, with more revealing clothes catering to the mainstream aesthetic to a greater extent, and in addition, catering to the trend-setting role of women. They are brave enough to confront the strong patriarchal gaze in the current environment and embody a fearless spirit that captures the hearts of women and reflects their unique expression of feminism. This is one of the most important reasons to follow their performances. As a result, we can conclude that the dominant aesthetic trends in society are influencing the popular elements of hip-hop culture, which are reflected in the clothes worn by both male and female rappers. Both of these unique symbolic expressions have been used by female rappers to express their defiance and resistance against patriarchy.

4. Suggestions

It is important to realize that feminism in daily life contributes to feminism in hip-hop culture. In recent years, Me Too has become a popular household activity. As part of the "MeToo movement," women who have been sexually assaulted are encouraged to speak out and share their experiences using the hashtag "MeToo." [8]. There are several female rappers as well as some female celebrities who advocate these activities, such as Cardi-B, LadyGaga, etc. These social media platforms may certainly make some noise, and thus 'Me Too' may become a mainstream issue, and rappers may become aware of it. It would be helpful if those female rappers would devote their efforts to feminism. Modern war has entered the era of information war, talent is the key factor to winning the future war, as an important part of the military talent, women are playing a more and more important role in the modern army [9]. The more female politicians that rise, the more advice or criticism that can be offered in support of feminism. Globally, the number of female politicians, including US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton [10]. Since female politicians could play a very important role in public life, they were able to use their "mainstream" status to benefit minority cultures. This is an excellent way for mainstream culture and minority culture to understand and accommodate one another.

Females may be able to follow feminism which will have some positive effects, and even female rappers may be able to make some voices to express their feminism. Despite this, we should still avoid some radical expressions, since we may already have some very radical forms of feminism today. Taking the example of a female rapper Nine One, she may be able to explain that certain people can have some understanding of certain men who can devote their entire attention to their work, thus exerting great economic pressure on them. Several people assumed she was saying that "women should not kidnap men to buy cars and houses" and that she was "anti-women's rights." However, she advocates mutual understanding and does not advocate for the power of men. In South Korea, there is a bloodcurdling organization known as "Megalian". The Korean boys are called "male parasites of Korea," and many women abort male fetuses and post photographs of the abortions on social media. The "Megalian" members rape male children, thought men deserved to die, and posted gory images, even threatening to wipe out all Korean men. Women must fight patriarchy and male gazes with all their strength, but not against all males; some of these organizations have chosen the wrong people to fight.

There is still much work to be done and much development to be made in feminist theory. There is a possibility that the hip-hop style will continue to dominate among those males. For instance, even though the images of the female contestants in the program differ from those of other shows, it is still possible to observe that they cater to the public aesthetic shadow beneath the contestants' unique personalities and clothing. According to the public aesthetic, female contestants in the program are mainly thin. In the program, there are few women with overweight bodies, which is also an attempt by women to appeal to public aesthetics and attract male attention. In a program called "The New Chinese Rap," a female player is in the same situation. Although loose, personality fleece is given priority to the female player, some players prefer bare midriffs, backless types such as clothing, with the body showing through to attract male eyes. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, the male contestants or producers of the show also show the gaze of men toward women. As a result of the performance, some contestants will use words such as "queen" to describe female contestants, with clear gender identification. It's not just in this season's show that MChotdog, a rapper who could be a supervisor in this program, has shown his concern for female contestants on The Rap of China more than once. These are the female contestants on the stage to be stared at. This kind of gaze is not the gaze of the content of the program, but the "gaze" of the woman. From this point of view, women appear to compete and compete with male contestants on the show, but they are actually "stared at" by men as a symbol [4]. And still could have some female rappers want to use their sexy bodies and not their skills to catch somebody's eyes.

5. Conclusions

Generally, women face a great deal of difficulty in society. As women struggle to make their way in a patriarchal society, they are wielding their hands like butterflies. Fashion has always played an important role in changing the fate of women and their families. To break gender inequality, clothing became their weapon. It is permissible for girls to wear whatever they wish without being subjected to gender stereotypes. It is not inappropriate for a woman to wear sexy clothing; similarly, wearing unisex clothing can be interpreted as an expression of her identity. More and more individuals are beginning to understand the importance of leaving the decision to them.

The flaw in this study is the lack of research data exploring feminist elements in the dress. This also contributes to the difficulties that the public and scholars face when trying to understand this topic. When we search for articles or studies on hip-hop, more information tends to focus on men. It's not just women who need to try, people need to get more involved. Also, more talk shows could be designed about women in hip-hop culture. In today's age of diverse personalities and temperaments,

eliminate gender stereotypes and discrimination in dress culture; respect everyone's decisions. This is the direction and goal that society should take in regards to hip-hop culture, clothing, and gender.

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