Whose Revolution Is Televised?: Young African Nova Scotian Women Respond To Sexual Politics in Hip Hop Culture & Everyday Life

by

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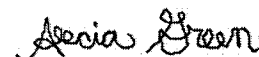
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ABSTRACT:

This qualitative research study explores young African Nova Scotian women's responses to images of Black female bodies depicted in three popular hip hop music videos. Taking a Black socio-feminist theoretical perspective, the project elicits the views of five young women in their first or second year of university, using an open-ended and semi-structured individual interview format. Research findings indicate that the participants are media literate and that they critically consume depictions of the Black female body in popular culture. Factors such as academic achievement, the importance of divinity, and degree of communal affiliation act as bases for counter-hegemonic viewing of the images. Whereas popular cultural depicts the Black female body as sexually promiscuous, the young women interviewed define Black female beauty as a quality mostly emanating from the inside-out.

(v)

Shout Outs!

Thank you Lord, for making all things in my life possible.

An infinite amount of love goes out to:

My family & Friends:

Dad - Thank you for initiating my love of music.
Mom - Thanks for engaging in this reflective process with me.
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Canadian un(der) recognized hip hop artists

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Introduction & Research Objectives

Academic literature has tended to support the idea that Black female youth have higher self-esteem and more positive bodily self-acceptance than their White female counterparts (Harris & Kuba, 1997; Mandell, 1998; Parker, Nichter, Vuckovic, Slims & Riterbaugh, 1995; Wolf, 1991). Such literature has also tended to focus on the physical, biological, psychological (and often Eurocentric) perspectives of body image[1], often emphasizing issues of weight preoccupation and body dissatisfaction (Brown & Jasper, 1993). Further, research to date has not specifically examined how prevalent, stereotypical, Americanized media images of the Black female body are linked to one's self-conception, or considered the social implications that these Americanized images may have on one's health and well-being in a Canadian context.

This research[2] begins to address these gaps in literature by examining the responses of young African Nova Scotian women to prominent media images and by exploring how these images affect self. More specifically, the research focuses on media images of the Black female body by undertaking an empirical investigation into the relationship between hip hop culture as illustrated by popular, commercialized rap videos and the responses to such images among young Black women.

In essence, the research focuses on the ways in which images of the Black female body are socially constructed and dispersed through three American rap videos by focusing on two major areas of investigation. The first investigates how (non-) assimilation to White, Western culture affects young Black women's notions of self-conception and the connection, if any, to the beauty ideals represented in rap videos and hip hop culture. In this context, the main focus will be the extent to which young African

Nova Scotian women report that they do or do not modify their values and beliefs about images of body in an effort to assimilate to White, Americanized standards of beauty. The second investigates what remains to be done to bring about positive change and advocacy for young African Nova Scotian women concerning images of body, assimilation to Western standards of beauty, and self-conception.

This study begins by identifying the major research findings in the academic literature on the subjects of youth, body image, Black bodies, Black sexual politics, self-esteem, self-identity, commercialized hip hop culture and music. Because the notions of the Black body and hip hop have been discussed in a range of disciplines including feminism, (hooks, 1993, 1994, 2003; Collins, 1990, 1991, 2000, 2004) cultural studies (Boyd, 1994; Gilroy, 1997), psychology (Selekman, 1995; Took & Weiss, 1994), and sociology (Watkins, 1998) from varying contexts, the literature review specifically highlights the academic debates and empirical findings with common trends that relate to this study.

In the first section of the literature review, *"Perspectives On Body Image & Self-Conception,"* I explore mass communication, psychological, and socio-feminist ideologies surrounding the body and self-conception. The next section, *"Hegemonic & Eurocentric Body Ideals"* discusses dominant, Western ideologies regarding standards of beauty. In *"Hip Hop Music Videos, Cultural Capital & the Social Construction of Black Self-Conception,"* I examine: (a) Hip hop music videos characterized as cultural capital, (b) Constructing black female youth conception within the black community, and (c) Constructing black female youth conception within interactions and relationships. The final section of the literature review, explores Black feminism and hip hop feminism has

acted as a place of resistance, countering hegemonic standards of beauty.

Following the literature review, an autobiographical account is provided to express my reflexive connection to the research. A discussion of research methods follows, drawing from an explicitly socio-feminist perspective. Thereafter, research findings are presented, followed by discussion and conclusions that outline the limitations of the study, considerations for further research and the social policy implications.

Channel One

Literature Review

Perspectives on Body Image & Self-Conception

Mass communication perspectives on body image & self-conception. Some communication scholars (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1994) have examined body image from a weight preoccupation perspective, arguing that consistent representations on television create a specific visual rendering of reality, and that frequent coverage of this content leads viewers to perceive these images as justifiable. Because the representations of women's bodies shown on television are so distorted, striving to achieve these standards is believed to lead to decreased body satisfaction, a strong desire to be thinner, and disordered eating behavior among young women (Schooler, Ward, Merriwether, and Caruthers, 2004, p. 38).

Recent communication researchers confirm this association between distorted representations of women's bodies and decreased body dissatisfaction by providing empirical evidence to illustrate that there is a direct relationship between media and body image disturbance and eating disorders (Botta, 2000, p. 145). However, the complexity of the relationship remains unclear, and the published studies mostly involve White women (p.145). Feminists such as Susan Bordo (1993), Kim Chernin (1981), and Susie Orbach (1978, 1985) have argued that researchers should approach body image disturbance from the culture of thinness model, which claims that cultural, economic, and social forces require thinness as an essential defining element of female beauty.

Other researchers have found that African American women do not relate overall

self-worth to physical appearance or feel it is necessary to be thin to be attractive to men (Botta, 2000; Collins, 2000; hooks, 1993, 2003). Some assert that the more African American women reject a Black identity while idealizing and assimilating to White identity (especially, the middle class), the more likely they are to have a drive to be thin, fear being fat, and practice dietary restraint (Botta, 2000; Nichter, 2000).

Psychological perspectives on body image & self-conception. The field of psychology has been influential in generating research about body image, focusing particularly on issues of body weight preoccupation, eating disorders and body dissatisfaction, as well as how these behaviors affect one's self-esteem or self-identity (Jarry & Bernardi, 2004). Whereas the notion of body image has been situated within the confines psychology, defining it as the internal representation of one's own outer appearance (Thompson, Heinberg, Altabe, & Tantleff-Dunn, 1999, p. 4), images of body, namely the Black body, have been associated with the external representation of racial outward appearance (hooks, 1994, 2003; Collins, 2000).

While body image and issues surrounding it are not the main focus of this research, it is worth noting that these particular issues are contextualized by examining the notion of body image disturbance, "which has been referred to as the complex construct of body image" (p.4). Focusing on the notion from a physical appearance stance, Thompson, Heinberg, Altabe, and Tantleff-Dunn (1999, p. 4) note that body image disturbance can take on a variety of forms, including: perceptual, attitudinal, and behavioural dimensions.

The perceptual form refers to size estimation inaccuracies whereby body size is usually overestimated (p.4). The attitudinal form refers to the cognitive, behavioural, and

emotional importance of appearance for self-evaluation (p.4). Finally, the behavioural form entails behaviors such as repetitive checking of perceived imperfections or avoidance of body exposure or of situations where one's body may be visible or featured (Rosen, 1992 and Rosen, 1997).

Psychological theories of identity can also be used to investigate the relationships among the notions of body image, body image disturbance, and self. Erikson's (1968) works regarding the psychosocial theory of personality development has influenced theories regarding ethnic identity in multiethnic samples of adolescents. While Erikson's theory explores how humans attempt to form and re-form identity, Marcia's (1980) theory of identity, an extension of Erikson's theory, proposes that four statuses for identity can occur as a result of conflicts and decision-making. The four identity statuses are: diffused (unexamined identity), fore-closed (achieved identity without searching), moratorium (searching without commitment to an identity), and achieved identity.

Erikson's and Marcia's theories of identity are building-blocks from which other researchers attempted to examine other specific forms of identity such as racial, ethnic, collective identity, and so on (Phinney & Tarver, 1988; Phinney, 1989; Phinney & Chavira, 1992; Bracey, Bámaca & Umaña-Taylor, 2004; Umaña-Taylor, 2004). According to Cash (2002, p. 239), ethnic identity "refers to the degree to which a person has adopted beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are characteristic of that ethnicity." Keeping with this thought, it can be said that social conceptions and perceptions of the Black female body have adopted dominant attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that stereotypically characterize representations of this 'racial' group.

Socio-feminist perspectives on body image & identity. Whereas body image has

been conceptualized by the clinical psychological model with typically White females in mind, sociologists have investigated notions of identity that relate to the body from a broader context by acknowledging the multiplicities of oppression, and how society both shapes and is shaped by them through media.

By focusing on sociological aspects of body image, Brown and Jasper (1993, p. 26-27) draw from the works of Banner (1983), noting that in the 1960s, television eclipsed film as the primary media influence shaping what was considered beauty in North America. Collins (2000, p. 85) echoes Brown and Jasper's findings, further noting that today, the growing influence of television, radio, movies, videos, CDs, and the Internet constitutes new ways of circulating controlling images. In fact, popular culture has become increasingly important in promoting these images, especially with new global technologies that allow U.S. popular culture to be exported throughout the world (p.85).

Within this new corporate structure, misogyny persists in some strands of the music industry, which are owned by multinational conglomerates (Kitwana, 1994; p. 85). All in all, Collins states that while to some extent rap music can act as a place of resistance for Black (predominantly male) youth to respond to various forms of social oppression and hardships, it goes without saying that representations of Black women as sexually available hoochies persist in hip hop music videos (p.85).

For the purpose of this research, I examine Collin's (2000, p. 81; Jewell, 1993) three nexuses of controlling images of Black womanhood[3] that portray African American women as contrary to American notions of beauty, femininity, and womanhood. Specifically, the nexuses of controlling images of Black womanhood are that of the jezebel, whore or hoochie. Collins notes "that because efforts to control Black women's

sexuality lie at the heart of Black women's oppression, historical jezebels and contemporary hoochies represent a deviant Black female sexuality" (p.81). The image of the jezebel originated under slavery when Black women were portrayed as 'sexually aggressive wet nurses' (p.81).

Collins (2000, p. 81-82) also argues that the jezebel construction further served to suppress the nurturing that these enslaved Black women might give their own children to strengthen their Black family networks by forcing enslaved Black women to act as 'wet nurses' for White children, while emotionally nurturing their White owners (p.82). This suppression effectively tied the controlling images of jezebel and mammy[4] as well as the economic exploitation inherent in the organization of slavery (p.82).

Generally speaking, the hoochie can be thought of as a female who participates in a cluster of so-called deviant female sexualities (p.84). Some are associated with materialistic ambitions where she sells sex for money, while others are associated with so-called deviant sexual practices such as sex with other women, as well as oral and anal sex (p. 84).

Brown and Jasper (1993, p. 18) go on to assert "that women's social value has, historically been inseparable from their bodies." That is, a woman's social role and social worth has been identified with and controlled through her body in bearing children, in satisfying men's sexual needs, and in the labor of caring for men's and children's emotional and physical needs (p.18). Historically, the social role of Black women has been identified with and controlled through their bodies in the dominant ideology of the slave era, which fostered the creation of several interrelated, controlling images of Black

womanhood, each reflecting the dominant group's interest in maintaining Black women's subordination (Collins, 2000, p. 72).

Moreover, because body size and shape are crucial to her social value, woman learns to focus on appearance (Brown and Jasper, 1993, p. 19). As a result, policing and controlling appearance becomes essential for achieving both inner satisfaction and social success. While non-Black Western women focus on controlling appearance, Western Black women learn at an early age that their Blackness is considered abnormal and ugly while Whiteness is better (Buchanan, 1993, p. 38-39; hooks, 2003). Arguably, the notion that Black is the antithesis of beauty is even more damaging to Black girls and women because contemporary, Western culture ties women's self-conception so closely to their physical appearance (p.39). Thus, the controlling and policing of Black women's bodies and physical appearance lends itself to dominant media images that re-inscribe Eurocentric beauty ideals. Moreover, even if conforming to these erotic and Eurocentric stereotypes of Blackness becomes a means of social success for some Black women, their feelings of inner satisfaction from the accomplishment must be somewhat lacking. For some Black women, religiosity and spirituality plays a central role in solidifying a sense of inner satisfaction (hooks, 2003).

Buchanan (1993), who writes from an African immigrant perspective, explores the issues of weight preoccupation and dissatisfaction in the lives of Black women in Western society. In her chapter, "Creating Beauty in Blackness," she begins by stating her initial reluctance to talk about matters concerning body image and beauty as it relates to Black women because it seems "individualistic and self-indulgent" given other more urgent social matters that effect Black women and their communities[5] (p.36). But,

matters concerning the images of the Black female body are not individualistic and self-indulgent. In fact, I argue from the perspective a Black Canadian female whose parents are also immigrants, that how the Black female body is portrayed within mainstream media contributes to Black folks' misunderstandings of selves.

Hegemonic & Eurocentric Body Ideals

Bordo (1993, p. 25) argues that mainstream Western media imagery tends to homogenize female beauty by removing racial, ethnic, and sexual differences that "disturb Anglo-Saxon (or Eurocentric), heterosexual expectations and identifications." These beauty ideals become templates against which women measure, judge, and discipline their own bodies. Whereas these models typically represent an unhealthy ideal for women to strive for, they are arguably more oppressive for many women of color, whose body size, shape, and features may differ significantly from mainstream representations of female beauty (Becker, 2002).

As a result, these oppressive models of beauty ideals place visible minority women in compromising situations where they feel that they must diet, groom, and purchase commodities to conform and imitate their White counterparts by using hair straighteners, skin lighteners, or cosmetic surgery to 'Westernize' their eyes, rhinoplasty to alter noses, liposuction to change body shape and torturous high heels to look taller (Mandell, 1998, p. 93). Thus, the looks of women of color are either denigrated or simply erased from mainstream cultural imagery. Although women of color are now more likely to be represented in beauty and fashion magazines, these representations rarely subvert the dominant imagery. Rather, they typically adhere to color caste systems

of stereotyping by featuring women with lighter skin and Eurocentric features and exoticizing and eroticizing racial difference (hooks, 2003).

Because the ideal of thinness for women is a European-American aesthetic preference, women of color, particularly African American and Latina women, have been considered relatively shielded from the development of body dissatisfaction and disordered eating common among White women (Rubin, Fitts, & Becker, 2003, p. 49-50). Contemporary research on women of color, however, has challenged this myth that ethnic minority women in the United States are 'immune' from body dissatisfaction and disordered eating (Root, 1990). Interestingly, within this growing body of research are suggestions that the nature and expression of these concerns may in many cases be distinct from symptom patterns described within the established eating disorders literature (Kuba and Harris, 2001).

In contrast to a rich social science literature on embodiment, clinical research on socio-cultural contributions to disordered eating and body image has produced a literature with a relatively narrow focus on the relationship between body dissatisfaction and culturally-promoted aesthetic body ideals (Rubin, Fitts & Becker, 2003). Clinical research has also been dominated by quantitative methods which exclusively use measures developed and validated among predominantly White, Northern American, and Western European samples, which has limited the understanding of more diverse experiences of eating and embodiment (p. 50; Davis and Yager, 1992).

Rubin and colleagues (2003, p.51) argue that despite the widespread acknowledgment of the importance of cultural factors in the development and expression of body image and eating disturbances, few studies have explicitly explored noteworthy

cultural factors such as the meaning of self-representation, appearance or dieting practices among women of color. As such, they seek to address the limits of mainstream body image research among women of color by investigating relationships among ethnicity, self-representation, and body aesthetic ideals through analysis of focus group discussion (p.51).

Rather than presuming a link between aesthetic ideals and eating practices, their study examines women's broader experience of embodiment and strategies of self-representation to allow a more specific understanding of the complex relationship among culture, self, and body (p.52). Furthermore, their work specifically investigates how ethnic identity, among other relevant identities, plays a key role in the particular strategies used by women to represent the self through the body (p.52).

With this in mind, previous research also suggests important differences in the concepts of body and beauty ideals among both African American and White working-class girls compared to their White middle- and upper-class counterparts (p.52). Mimi Nichter (2000) examines culturally-valued forms of self-presentation, as identified by African American girls, and, in particular, the context in which these forms are exhibited. She found that while White girls in the study maintained a fixed concept of beauty, "a living manifestation of the Barbie doll," (Parker, Nichter, Vuckovic, Slims & Riterbaugh, 1995, p. 106; DuCille, 1994) the African American girls defined beauty through attitude, style, personality, and presence rather than through attaining the 'perfect' look. This finding parallels statements from Collins (1990, p. 89), who argues that while Eurocentric beauty is rigid, Afrocentric beauty is "not based solely on physical criteria."

Parallel to Nichter's (2000) research, participants in Lyn Mikel Brown's (1998)

study of White working-class adolescent girls recognized the 'perfect' look as a culturally constructed fiction, mocking it (even as they admired it), and ultimately identifying qualities such as trust and attitude as valued over physical appearance. Although this work provides a beginning framework for understanding beauty ideals among girls of diverse social backgrounds, further research is needed to explore these concerns among White working-class women and African American women of all classes (Rubin, Fitts & Becker, 2003, p. 53). Beyond aesthetic preferences, cultivation of the body- its size, shape, and appearance- also signifies moral and ethical commitments. However, as evidenced by Collins' (1990) theoretical work and Nichter's (2000) empirical findings, these moral/ aesthetic ideals are by no means universal.

In fact, Collins (2000, p. 100) argues that "the controlling images applied to Black women are so uniformly negative that they almost necessitate resistance." From this vantage point, researchers interested in understanding body image concerns among women of color must take account of cultural representations of marginalized women and understand how popular imagery influences women's strategies of self-representation and self-definition (Rubin, Fitts & Becker, 2003).

The works of bell hooks explore how the concept of self-esteem intersects with issues of race, gender, and sexuality. In hooks' (2003) "Rock My Soul," she examines the issue of self-esteem by utilizing psychologist, Nathaniel Branden's (1994) definition. hooks (2003) and Fausto-Sterling (1995) note that low self-esteem dates back to slavery, illustrating how strategic methods of compliance, passivity, color casting and repression were deployed as a means for survival from scorn of the master's wrath.

hooks (2003) describes the color caste system as the internalization of shame and

self-hatred that has plagued Black folks since slavery. Generally speaking, the color caste system is the idea that there is a social hierarchy with respect to skin color. Within this social hierarchy, lighter-skinned Black folks are thought to be superior to their darker-skinned counterparts. hooks uses the dichotomies of good vs. evil and dark vs. light to illustrate how these biblical misconceptions and misinterpretations were socially constructed to reinforce the internalization of bodily shame and self-hatred for Black folks.

hooks eloquently (2003, p. 37) notes that the most obvious internalization of shame that impacted on the self-esteem of Black folks historically and which continues to the present day is the shame about appearance, skin color, body shape, and hair texture.

She asserts:

> We will never know when enslaved Black folks began to understand fully that the more they imitated the mores of their White colonizers the better they might be treated. We will never recall that exact moment in time when a significant number of dark-skinned enslaved Africans began to see lighter skin as better.... It may have been as simple a transition as slaves observing that White folks treated lighter-skinned people better, and ultimately this began to establish a new standard of aesthetics based primarily on the longing to be treated with less brutality. Significantly, biblical metaphors of color that likened darkness to evil and fairness to good were a prime source of brainwashing legitimizing color caste. Religious teachings, preferential treatment given to fair-skinned Black folks, the ease with which one could comb and attend to straightened hair over kinky hair, all were factors that together induced passive acceptance of a color caste hierarchy (p. 38).

Patricia Hill Collins echoes hooks' views regarding the sexual politics of Black women and their bodies. With respect to women in hip hop music videos, Collins' (2000, p. 281) notes that linking views of the body, social constructions of race and gender, pornography's profitability, and conceptualizations of sexuality that inform Black women's treatment as pornographic objects has significant implications for how society assesses contemporary hip hop videos. For Black women and female youth, lending themselves to control over definitions of their sexualities upholds multiple oppressions.

This is because all systems of oppression rely, in part, on harnessing the power of the erotic (p.150).

Hip Hop Music Videos, Cultural Capital & the Social Construction of Black Self-Conception

In recent years there has been increased scholarly interest in the body as a site of cultural production. In Western culture, media imagery and cultural representations promote the notion that identity is created and manipulated through one's appearance, thereby encouraging women in particular to view their bodies as commodities or texts from which their values can be read (Rubin et al, 2003, p. 52). Thus, theorists in the humanities and social sciences have concluded that the production of culture determines social meaning and how it is exchanged between producers and consumers (Gottdiener, 1985; Hall, 1997). In examining the degree to which images of the Black female body within hip hop music videos are internalized, one must begin by considering the hip hop music videos themselves. What follows is a discussion of Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural capital with a more detailed discussion of hip hop music videos as characterizing Bourdieu's (1986) notion of cultural capital.

In his essay "The Forms of Capital," Pierre Bourdieu (1986) discusses the significance of capital in the creation of individual and group identity. Capital[6] acts as a social relation within a system of exchange, consisting of goods (i.e. bodies as physical labour power) that are valued through distinctions achieved through prestigious aesthetic taste (Barker, 2004; Shilling, 1993, p. 73). According to Barker (2004, p. 37), cultural capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange that includes the accumulated cultural knowledge that confers power and status.

According to Bourdieu (1986, p. 243), cultural capital exists in three forms:

> (a) The *embodied* state- the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; (b) the *objectified* state- the form of cultural goods (i.e. pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, [music] etc....) and (c) the *institutionalized* state, where original properties are conferred on the cultural capital which institutions are presumed to guarantee.

Therefore, cultural capital differs from other forms of capital, such as economic and social, in that it functions as symbolic capital, or one whose acquisition is disguised, making it difficult to determine how one acquired it (Bourdieu, 1984; Clay, 2003, p. 1349). Furthermore, cultural capital is used to position people in a particular status hierarchy among their peers (p.1349).

In its fundamental state, cultural capital is linked to the body and presupposes embodiment. The accumulation of cultural capital in the embodied state/ physical capital form of cultural capital, (i.e. in the form of what is called culture, cultivation, *Bildung*,) presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation, which, insofar as it implies a labor of inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 244). Cultural capital, in the objectified state, has a number of properties that are defined only in the relation to cultural capital in its embodied form. The cultural capital objectified in material objects and media, such as writings, paintings, monuments, instruments, etc., is transmissible in its materiality (p. 245).

Hip hop music videos characterized as cultural capital. For the purpose of this research, hip hop music videos can be characterized as a series of images that represent cultural capital in three states. The first, embodied state/ Physical capital refers to the disposition of Black female bodies and minds. Next, the objectified state refers to forms of Black cultural goods (i.e. music; music video; products such as cell phones, clothes; Black female bodies as labour power). Finally, in the institutionalized state, a hip hop

artist's level of financial success (economic capital) depends on the marketing strategies used to sell the objectified state. Thus, a hip hop artist's economic capital confers on his symbolic capital. That is to say, a hip hop artist is bestowed power and prestige once he has achieved financial success. The use of hip hop music videos as a marketing strategy is one method that is employed to achieve such success.

In the discussion to follow, the first two states of cultural capital, as described by Bourdieu, that of the embodied state/ physical capital and the objectified states, are expanded. In contrast, the institutionalized state is discussed only minimally, given the subject of the research.

Characterizing the black female body as a state of embodied/physical & objectified capital. Shilling (1993; 2003, p. 111) provides an excellent interpretation and elaboration of Bourdieu's analysis of the body, focusing specifically on the embodied state of cultural capital, which he calls physical capital. Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction, he says, has at its very center a concern with the body as a bearer of value (p.111). More specifically, the body is an unfinished entity that develops in conjunction with various social forces and is integral to the maintenance of social inequalities within the underpinnings of one's social class. That is, the body is a fluid unit that shapes and is shaped in relation to one's social location.

Recall that historically, Black female bodies have been the bearers of objectified and symbolic devalue (hooks 2003, Collins 2000, 2004). Applied to this research, it can be said that the Black female body is developed and exploited within the medium of hip hop music videos, and that its presence is integral to perpetuating visual representations of gender inequalities and domination. In other words, the projection of the Black female

body as an object plays an important role in maintaining the status quo of the representation of the Black male body (i.e. hip hop artist) within hip hop music videos.

With that being said, Bourdieu's analysis of the body involves an examination of the multiple ways in which the body has become commoditized in modern societies (p.111). This refers not only to the body's role in the buying and selling of labour power, but to the methods by which the body has become a more comprehensive form of physical capital; a possessor of power, status and distinctive symbolic forms which are integral to the accumulation of various resources (p.111). The production of physical capital refers to the development of bodies in ways that are recognized as possessing value in social fields, while the conversion of physical capital refers to expending bodily participation into work, leisure and other social venues into different forms of capital (p.111). Shilling also notes that physical capital is most usually converted into economic capital (i.e. money), cultural capital (i.e. music), and social capital (i.e. social networks, such as the music industry, which enable reciprocal calls to be made on the goods and services of its members, such as the producers, artists, video directors, the video women and other products for sale) (p.111).

In terms of the social formation of bodies, Bourdieu recognizes that acts of labor are required to transform the bodies into social entities and influence people how to develop, present and hold the physical shape of their bodies through styles of walk, talk and dress (Goffman, 1959; p.112). Far from being natural, these represent highly skilled and socially differentiated accomplishments, which start to be socialized early in childhood (p.112).

Shilling notes that although Bourdieu does not provide a detailed account of

gendered orientations to the body, it can be suggested that women tend to be encouraged more than men to develop their bodies as objects of perception for others (p.116). Nevertheless, Bourdieu does clearly show how different social classes[7] produce distinct bodily forms (p.116). This is important to his theory of social reproduction, as there are substantial inequalities in the values accorded to particular bodily forms (p.116). The instrumental relation commonly adapted to the body does not mean that dominated groups' bodies are without value (p.116). However, the overall character of dominated groups' bodies is not generally valued as highly as are the bodily forms produced by others in more dominant social locations. The dominant classes are more willing and most able to produce the bodily forms of highest value, as their formation requires investments of spare time and money (p.116).

In fact, Shilling astutely notes that Bourdieu's treatment of social class makes it challenging to focus on cross-class factors of importance to the formation of bodies and the conversion of physical capital (p.128). For example, in Bourdieu's work it is challenging to find a methodological justification for focusing on the bodies of women or ethnic minorities as they are affected by a society that is patriarchal and/ or racist, as well as capitalist, in its central features (p.128). In other words, Bourdieu's notion of class is very broad and it becomes a 'metaphor for the total set of social determinants' (Brubaker, 1985; p.128).

There are noteworthy limitations to Bourdieu's analysis of the body that Shilling identifies. Race and ethnicity are absent from his analysis and, while Bourdieu has much to say, for example, about the situation of working and middle class women [dominated women] and the physical capital which can be converted by working in or making use of

the beauty industry, they are analysed in terms of belonging to class categories without the consideration of Otherness. This means that Bourdieu tends to underestimate the extent to which strictly gendered processes affect bodily orientations, and his theory is relatively weak when it comes to analyzing the different forms of physical capital that can be acquired by women versus men (p.128).

Despite the varied groups that make up a class, Bourdieu's conceptualization of social class also makes it challenging to identify features of gender oppression that influence orientations to the body and confront women to some extent across class categories (p.128). There are also a number of gender specific issues surrounding the convertibility of valued bodies into other resources (p.128). Irrespective of their class location, many women have far fewer opportunities than men to turn any participation they may have in physical activities into social, cultural or economic capital (p.128). Moreover, this conversion carries its own costs in patriarchal society (p.128).

Similar points can be made with reference to the experiences of people belonging to ethnic minorities (p.128). Individual prejudices and institutionalized racism means that the colour of an individual's skin enters into the value placed on her body (p.129). For example, in contemporary American society racism has effects across class categories and influences the ability of individuals to produce valued bodily forms, thereby showing that capital accumulation is far more difficult for some groups than others (p.129).

To illustrate this point further, Verna Keith and Cedric Herring (1991, p. 760) conducted research analyzing skin tone variations and stratification of Black folks from various socioeconomic factors and locations using the National Survey of Black

Americans (NSBA). Citing several studies which suggest that, in past generations, higher status Blacks tended to have lighter skin tones than lower status Blacks, they assert that complexion continues to have significant net effects on stratification. They further note that skin complexion is also a more striking determinant of stratification outcomes such as occupation and income than such background as parents' socioeconomic status (p.760). Clearly, Keith and Herring's (1991) analysis concurs with bell hooks' (2003) arguments concerning the color caste system.

Despite these limitations, Bourdieu's analysis of the body provides enriching perspectives. More specifically, his analysis of the physical bases of social inequalities provides us with a view of the body as an unfinished phenomenon which is in a constant process of becoming while living within society (p.129). His work also has much to reveal about the growing importance of the body to individuals in high modernity[8] (p.129). Bourdieu suggests that there has been a multiple commodification of the body in modernity (p.129). For Bourdieu, the body has become a bearer of value to the degree that it constantly enters into cultural and social markets that bestow value on prestigious bodily forms irrespective of whether people are engaged in formal work (p.129).

With respect to the physical bases of social inequalities, Bourdieu also notes that the value attached to specific bodily forms is changeable (p.121). He also uses his notion of a social field to explain this changeability. According to Shilling (p.121), a social field refers to a set of dynamic organizing principles, ultimately maintained by social groups, which identify and structure particular categories of social practices (be they concerned with gender, ethnicity, sexuality, identity, music... etc.) In other words, a social field is a social arena where individuals compete for resources within structural system of social

positions.

For example, hip hop artists compete for resources within the music industry's structural system of positions. Hip hop artists move through this system of social positions through their marketing strategies. Using the Black female body in their music videos serves as a marketing strategy that pleases male audiences. Coming up with new and improved ways to captivate their male audience often reflects the social values attached to Black female body form. Thus, hip hop's excessive use of explicit and pornographic imagery of the Black female body as an objectified state (Collins, 2000) - be it through women dancing or aiding in product promotion (i.e. clothing) in generating economic capital - illustrates audiovisual remnants of the historical devalue of the Black female body.

When social fields bestow value directly on a specific bodily form, activity and/ or performance, they are effectively creating a category of physical capital (Shilling, 2003, p. 121). So, when the music industry places value on the Black female body and its performance in the videos, a category of physical capital and an objectified state of cultural capital is created. Having recognized a particular form of physical capital, though, the dynamic principles that constitute a social field are subject to change (p.121). Changes in a field can be exemplified by the creation of music videos.

Within the field of music, the birth of MTV gave rise to rock videos of the 1980s, which served as the templates from which hip hop has modeled its production of music videos. Among its dynamic principles are cars and sexualized, scantily clad White women in the background, which are pleasing to the male gaze (Gow, 1996). Hip hop music videos slightly modified these dynamic principles by recruiting Black women and

other women of color who adhere to White-aesthetic appeal. Such recruitments became the standard in hip hop music videos, perpetuating the color caste system, eurocentricism and exoticism found within the images of the Black female body (as well as other women of color). These women evoked images of sexual meaning and re-inscribed multiple forms of oppression (Collins, 2004, p. 27).

Bodily forms which are regarded as valuable and the precise values attached to them by the dominant group are also likely to change because of social constructions that exist regarding the variation in the human body (Shilling, 2003, p. 121). For example, changes in the music video arena may dictate the value of certain styles of dress and talk, and products marketed in the videos, as well as the overall portrayal and lack of counter-hegemonic images of Black females within hip hop videos. This means that the initial production of a valued bodily form among a group does not guarantee its continued exchange value (p.121). The value attached to particular bodies changes over time. Just as social arenas change, so too do the forms of physical capital they reward (p.121).

In applying this to hip hop, record sales predict, reflect, and determine success in the music industry. As long as the current target demographic continues to attach value to the images and messages portrayed in hip hop (particularly as it relates to the Black female body), structural systems of social position with the music industry (i.e. record labels and music producers) will not effect change or the forms of physical and economic capital they are awarded. It is the possibility of change in cultural and economic capital that Black feminists argue in favour of and why they continue to argue that resistance against hegemony is imperative (Collins, 2000, 2004; hooks, 1993, 2003).

Characterizing commodities as forms of institutionalized capital. Because of their greater access to and possession of cultural and social capital, the dominant groups in society are more likely than the dominated to be in occupational or social fields invested with the power of bestowing value on bodily forms and body implicating activities (p.122). This ideology rings true in hip hop music videos, where Black males (i.e. artists, producers, video directors) typically have greater access to and possession of (their own as well as other's) cultural and social capital by creating record labels that allow them to invest and exert their power and privilege of artistic freedoms. Illustrations of such freedoms are made apparent in their lyrical and video content, particularly, in terms of images of devalue bestowed on the Black female body.

Nowhere are examples of the dominant group's ability to occupy social and occupational fields invested in such patriarchal and sexist activities more evident than in the business ventures of Snoop Dogg, Nelly, and 50 Cent. It is worth noting that all three hip hop artists have their own clothing lines which cater to and perpetuate their perceptions of what the ideal woman should look like: (1) Snoop Dogg Clothing (street wear[9]), (2) Nelly's Apple Bottom clothing brand (women's wear), and (3) 50 Cent's G-Unit Clothing Line. As well, all three of the mentioned hip hop artists have been either directly or indirectly linked to the adult entertainment industry in some capacity (Edlund, 2004; Kitwana, 2002, p. 213). In fact, the involvement of hip hop artists, generally speaking, in the adult entertainment industry has created a new and attractive market for the porn industry to profit from hip hop's annual billion dollar industry (Edlund, 2004; Kitwana, 2002, p. 213).

Constructing black female youth conception within the black community. Of particular importance in the dialogue concerning the body as a site of cultural production are the ways that consumers and producers use meanings in relation to the construction of identity and community (Clay, 2003, p. 1348). Debates within the hip hop community have indicated that there is an ongoing identity struggle within the Black community centering on identifying who is 'authentic' and who is a 'sellout' (Binder, 1999; Collins, 1990; Rose, 1994). The purpose of this struggle is to construct a cohesive identity, which in turn, defines the community (p.1348). Hip hop, as Lipsitz (1994, p. 36) as quoted by Clay (2003, p. 1348-9) suggests, "brings a community into being through performance, and it maps out real and imagined relations between people that speak to the realities of displacement, disillusion, and despair."

Conquergood (1992, p.3) notes that urban youth are inscribed by stigmatizing images of social pathology in the official discourse of the media and the legal system, as well as in a communal sense through social welfare and public policy institutions. The image of youth, especially urban Black youth, as prone to violence and crime continues to persist with frequent references to the negative influences of popular culture, such as rap music and hip hop culture, as partial evidence of "the problem" (Dyson, 1996; Koza, 1994; Mahiri, 2000; McLaren, 2000; Rose 1994). This "evidence" is highly visible in electronic media despite the fact that commercialized hip hop is not representative of the entire genre (Mahiri & Conner, 2003, p. 122).

Mahiri and Conner (2003, p. 123) note that recent scholarship on the subject of rap music also reveals many of its problematic aspects in local, national, and international contexts usually focusing on gangsta rap. While Mahiri and Conner do not define

gangsta rap, an explanation of its origins may be beneficial. Rose (1994, p. 59) notes that during the late 1980s, Los Angeles rappers from Compton and Watts, two areas severely paralyzed by the postindustrial economic redistribution, developed a West Coast style of rap that narrates experiences and fantasies specific to life as a poor young, black, male subject in Los Angeles. She further notes that Ice Cube, Dr. Dre, Ice-T, Eazy-E, Compton's Most Wanted, W.C. and the MAAD Circle, Snoop Doggy Dog (now Snoop Dogg), South Central Cartel, and others have defined the gangsta rap style (p.59). The purpose of citing Mahiri and Conner is not to focus on gangsta rap but rather, more generally, to use their discussion surrounding media, rap music, hip hop culture, and Black youth identity to strengthen and align with the discussions of other critical thinkers mentioned throughout this research (i.e. hooks, Collins).

The core narratives of gangsta rap are extremely troubling in their glamorization of violence, material consumption, misogyny, and sexual transgression (Mahiri et al., 2003, p. 123). Yet, as Dyson (1996; Mahiri et al., 2003) argues, the vulgar rhetorical traditions and practices expressed in gangsta rap are intricately linked to dominant cultural constructions of "the other" and market-driven strategies for rampant economic and human exploitation. Thus, Dyson (1996, p. 178) notes that the debate about gangsta rap should be situated in a much broader critique of how these narratives essentially mirror ancient stereotypes of Black identity and sexual proclivity through the society's circulation of "brutal images of Black men as sexual outlaws[10] and Black females as hoes."

All in all, these Black intellectuals note that while certain facets of hip hop culture and music are problematic, rap music does articulate and draw attention to complex

dimensions of urban life (Collins, 2000; p.123). In fact, it often exposes, according to Dyson (1996, p. 177), "harmful beliefs and practices that are often maintained with deceptive civility in much of mainstream society, including many Black communities." Mahiri (2000, p. 382) notes that rap has also emerged as a powerful discourse that is able to effectively critique other discourses, including dominant ones. With respect to urban youth, he also argues that this capacity to critique offers possibilities for counter-hegemonic perspectives and even subversive actors in the social worlds of urban youth (p.382). He further suggests that elements of hip hop culture and rap music constitute a kind of "pop culture pedagogy" that extends, offers alternatives to, or challenges the pedagogy of schools (p.382).

Clay (2003, p. 1348) and Rose (1994) add to Mahiri's previous point by noting that it was rap music and particularly rappers' abilities to write stories from personal experience that helped capture their target audience - Black youth. In fact, Gilroy (1997, p. 85) astutely asserts that hip hop is "the very *blackest culture* - one that provides the scale on which all others can be evaluated." Clay (2003, p. 1348) notes, then, that if hip hop is the blackest culture to date, it is important to determine the significance and/ or usefulness of hip hop for the Black community and identity.

Constructing black female youth within interactions and relationships. Clay (2003) explores how African American youth use hip hop as a form of cultural capital in everyday settings. By focusing on how Black youth interact with one another at a City Youth Centre, Clay examines how this particular form of cultural capital may be used to authenticate a Black identity. She also examines how the authentication of Black identity is based on traditional gender roles in her investigation of how Black youth construct

legitimate racial boundaries in predominately Black settings. Her intention is to provide an extension of Bourdieu's theory by examining how Black youth identity is both formed and informed by everyday interactions with other Black youth, particularly, how it is mediated through hip hop culture.

Salient to this discussion of cultural capital is feminist cultural studies scholar Judith Butler's (1990) claim that individuals engage in performance to fulfill these socially prescribed identities/ roles. Clay (2003, p. 1350-1) defines performance as the manipulation of language, gestures, fashion, and music to express a Black identity to other youth. Further, she uses this definition in conjunction with Goffman's (1959) understanding of performance as part of everyday life to explain Black youth's performance of hip hop, Black culture, and racial/ ethnic identity (p.1350). Her definition of performance concurs with Goffman's (1959, p. 24) explanation of the front stage performance which includes "clothing, sex, age, and racial characteristics, size and looks as well as posture, speech patterns, facial expressions, bodily gestures and the like" (p.1350).

Clay conducted her field research as a volunteer and participatory observer at a Youth Centre. She notes that most of the youth engaged in the performance of hip hop through the manipulation of fashion, gestures, language, and music at some level on a regular basis. In terms of gender performance, she generally asserts that the boys performed and received more attention from a larger audience more often than the girls and that Black youth performed more than any other racial group (p.1353).

Clay (2003) focuses specifically on two youth observed at the Youth Centre, Dewayne and Tiffany, discussing and analyzing the gender differences associated with

their performances of hip hop. She notes that Dewayne's physical attractiveness, sense of hip hop fashion-dictated style, popularity with the staff and with other youth members, as well as the attention he gained from the girls was a recipe for success in his performance of hip hop. Tiffany's performance, on the other hand, did not attain success and popularity until she modified her style of dress in a manner that was more appealing to a male audience. That is, in emulating the dominant image of Black femininity depicted in hip hop culture, her performance of a sexualized and feminine gender identity was necessary for her success, evoking a historical legacy that constructs the Black female's identity in relation to others (p.1354). Clearly, in order for Black females to be accepted or given attention in the Youth Centre, they have to perform a particular gendered identity that is Black, female, and ultimately a reflection of that portrayed in hip hop culture (p.1354; Kitwana, 2003).

Striving to Resist Hegemonic & Eurocentric Body Ideals

   Black feminism as a site of resistance. Black feminism appeals to women of color because it strives to resist hegemony by giving voice to and echoing a growing interest in the examination of how cultural representations oppress individuals (Joyappa 1996; Rubin et al., 2003)[11]. Black feminist theorists Patricia Hill Collins (1990, 2000) and bell hooks (1994) have argued that the identification and promulgation of aesthetic ideals as White in popular culture simultaneously identifies women of color as other- a framing of tastes and values that fundamentally oppresses non-white women. Indeed, the suffering experienced by women of color as they internalize and respond to these messages has been a core theme of Black feminist theory. Clearly, marginalized women need to

actively resist the primacy of Eurocentric aesthetic ideals in order to maintain positive feelings about themselves (Harris and Kuba 1997; hooks 1994).

Further, hooks (2003), Roberts (1997), and Collins (2004) discuss issues of slavery and colonization to illustrate how these historically horrific moments shape the Black body in terms of racial/ ethnic authenticity, the color caste system, preferential treatment, display, procreation, and significance. These critical thinkers explain how stereotypical images of the Black body socially transpire within mass media, and how they reinforce notions of the color caste system.

hooks (2003), for example, engages in thorough discussion about how color casting was used by the master to inflict pain and shame for Black folks. According to her, the color caste system existed in the minds of White colonizers long before the systematic rape of Black women caused them to produce children with mixed skin color. Roberts (1997, p. 24) examines Black women's bodies from a reproductive, procreative perspective, noting that the essence of Black women's experience during slavery was the brutal denial of autonomy over reproduction. Black female slaves were commercially valuable to their masters not only for their labour, but also for their reproductive ability to produce more slaves (p.24).

In terms of self-hatred and the internalization of shame of the Black (female) body, hooks (2003, p. 221) notes that many contemporary Black folks, especially the young, are amongst the first to surrender their capacity to care for their souls by surrendering their ability to feel. While it is worth noting that the commodification of blackness within a White patriarchal, capitalist-dominated music industry that was once thought of as distinct Black culture became one of the ways that the deeper spiritual

aspects of soul music become obscured (p. 222). Soul music, once thought of as a form of metaphysics that enhanced the self-esteem of Black folks who strived to empower themselves with the strength to engage in the struggle for social justice, to practice love, is now threatening to the forces of domination (p.222).

Hip hop feminism as a site of resistance: counter-hegemonic visual & lyrical content. Historically and even still presently, music has undergone inter-generational struggles to define what constitutes legitimate taste, all the while trying to dodge political attempts to ban subversive influences on youth (Shilling, 2005, p. 146). With respect to hip hop music, hip hop feminists (Rose, 1994, p. 146; Kelley, 1994; Morgan 1999) are integral to generation X's and Y's continued struggle, acting as resistant voices and vision in rap music and video by sustaining an ongoing dialogue and discourse with their audiences and with male rappers about issues of Black motherhood, sexual promiscuity, emotional commitment, infidelity, the drug trade, racial politics, and Black cultural history (p.146).

Several hip hop feminists note that by paying close attention to the female rappers, we can gain some insight into how young African-American [-Canadian] women provide for themselves a relatively safe arena where they creatively address questions of sexual power and sexuality, the reality of abridged economic opportunity, and the pain of racism and sexism within rap music and video (Rose, 1994, p. 146; Kelley, 1994; Morgan 1999).

Channel Guide

This Channel highlighted the academic debates concerning issues of the Black female body, body image, Black youth, self, and hip hop culture. From this, it is apparent that

mass communication and psychological perspectives typically examine the issue of body image from a White, Westernized stance which emphasizes weight preoccupation and body dissatisfaction. In contrast, Black feminist discourse, often derived from and influenced by sociological discourse, provides a more persuasive perspective from which to examine representations of the Black female body in relation to hip hop music videos and women's perceptions of them.

In examining the degree to which the representations of Black women within hip hop videos impact young African Nova Scotian women's own bodily behaviours, I characterize hip hop as a form of cultural capital as developed by Bourdieu (1986) which consists of three states. The first two, embodied/ physical and objectified states manifest themselves as the Black female body and Black cultural goods. Finally, the objectified state is discussed in relation to the labour power of the Black female body and its role in aiding in the attainment of the male hip hop artist's economic and symbolic capital. Finally, this Channel discussed attempts within Black feminism to act as a site of resistance against the pervasiveness of these controlling images within hip hop music videos.

The next Channel describes and discusses the data gathering methods that shaped this research project.

Channel Two

Research Methods & Methodology

Arguably, what makes research 'feminist' is not the methods that are used but the particular ways in which they are implemented and the frameworks in which they are located (Letherby, 2003, p. 87). Feminist theorists and researchers have also situated reflexivity[12] as being primary to feminist research and methodology (Pillow, 2003, p. 178). In addressing whether or not this research begins from a woman's perspective, I begin this section by sharing my own lived experiences in relation to my self-location, noting how the interconnections among my own personal experiences, academic influences, and occupational experiences inspire this work.

Notes on Self-Location

When I was about 6 years old, a White male with light brown curly hair, brown eyes and glasses tried to grab me by the arm from behind as I walked to school. I remember breaking my arm free and kicking him as he tried to lunge towards me. He tried to grab me again but I kicked him in the groin until he fell to the ground in pain. For what seemed like minutes but in actuality were probably seconds, I stood there trying to get a look at him. He lay there panting in pain. My eyes locked with his. I recall shouting for help, and as I did so, my attacker, scared by my god-given strength and what felt like an elusive show of confidence, ran away.

In addition to this experience of violence, I have also had the experience of seeing violence against women in another way. It has made me perceptive to the barrage of controlling and violent images of Black women littered throughout popular culture and

more specifically hip hop videos. First, I have experienced violence against women through a child's eyes, i.e. a child's sensosomatic perspective. I had a playmate whose father was both verbally and physically abusive to her mother. I remember hearing yelling and feeling uncomfortable. I remember the uncomfortable silence after an argument had occurred. I remember both my playmate and her mother not wanting me to go home, in fear that the verbal abuse would escalate into physical abuse once there were no outside witnesses.

I remember once seeing her mother with a bruised eye. I felt a little guilty that I was there; there to act as a child gate-keeper, protecting my playmate's mother from violence and there as a source of distraction. As a child, I was aware that the adult world had socialized me how to think and to know that there is a time and a place for everything, even domestic violence. So, as long as I played child gate-keeper and eliminated the possibility of physical violence, there would be 'no time' for it in my presence. I also realized the physical, sociological, and psychological aftermath of both the 'hands' and the 'words' of violence to my playmate and to her family.

A second witnessed instance of domestic violence occurred during my teenage years. A pregnant woman and her (now, ex-)husband had been arguing for some time. I remember the day she told me that he did not love her. He was a refugee from Somalia and had merely married her so that he could become a Canadian citizen. While pregnant, she was stabbed in her chest (a few inches from her heart,) by her husband with her two toddler children looking on. I was able to think critically at this time and to understand how this ordeal affected the survivor and her children, how it called on my past experiences as a child witnessing domestic violence, and how it affected me as a

developing young adult who was trying to create and establish healthy, loving relationships. It was through these horrific ordeals that I began to see the world through a gendered lens.

Blatant racism has also played a more direct role in my life. As a child, my experiences of racism have been overtly verbal and physical. I recall one such instance while playing outside. I was riding my bike to the park when a White boy began shouting obscenities to me including "Go home burnt toast; shut up Blackie, Nigger, You're a piece of shit!" In another instance, I was spat on by a group of White kids while walking home. As I have gotten older, my experiences of racism have been more covert, unspoken, and have often occurred in occupational situations. I will forever be reminded of the experience of the 'sticky floor' phenomenon at my first customer sales representative job where I watched many of my often unqualified White counterparts advance while I was short-changed. As a Black female socialized in patriarchal, White, Western culture, having to deal constantly with social ostracization because of my physical, cultural, and spiritual differences, has created a constant and internal daily struggle to resist the social oppressions and confusions that often attempt to rattle my self-conception.

It was not until later when taking an introductory women's studies course in university that I began to acquire the language and conceptual understanding to fully absorb what I had experienced. For me, it was the first time there seemed to be a place for my lived experiences in academia. Seeing the parallels between my family socialization and others intrigued me to explore and understand the 'social patterns' that

contribute to racism, sexism, the feminization of poverty, domestic violence, and on the whole, the multiplicities of oppression.

I have engaged in paid work at a Youth Transitional Facility with predominately marginalized, young females between the ages of 12-16 from various socioeconomic statuses, who are "at-risk" of not living and leading pro-social lives, and who are socially stigmatised. These female youth watch hyper-sexualized images of Black women and other women of colour on Black Entertainment Television (BET) and MuchMusic. The women are scantily clad, gyrating their hips, and engaging in sexually violent acts, arguably catering to the male gaze in hip hop videos. These youth use the videos images as a guide for how to interact in usually heterosexual relationships, and they have admitted to me and other co-workers that they romanticize and engage in these sexual images and acts.

This paid work experience, coupled with my personal experiences of witnessing domestic violence and other forms of violence as a youth much like those I work with, has enabled me to see how televised images of this sort attempt to normalize, romanticize, and hyper-sexualize heterosexual violence. Working at the Youth Transitional Facility[13] has also allowed me to gain some insight into these young women's perceptions of self. In fact, one of the Youth Transitional Facility's explicit primary objectives is to promote programs aimed at fostering self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-control.

I value and respect the perspectives and lives of those researched[14] because the multifaceted issue of Black female sexual politics affects not only them, but me as well. As one trying to aid them into becoming pro-social beings, I see their confusion and

remember my own as a teenager. I recall and still struggle with my own confusion about my self-conception. My hope is that this research will give marginalized Black female youth as well as Black female youth more generally, a voice regarding Black female youth sexual politics.

Research Sample

Several obstacles made it unfeasible to interview the "at-risk" female youth[15] for this research project. The first concerns confidentiality and anonymity. Upon employment, I signed a contract that protects the anonymity and confidentiality of youths that are, were, or will become affiliated with the Youth Transitional Facility. Thus, the organization's name as well as the residents' names, families, and histories are protected. Breach of this contract, can and will result in termination and possibly legal action. The second obstacle concerns the residents' ages. Because these girls are young adolescents it would have been challenging to gain parental and Research Ethics Board approval to conduct the research.

With these obstacles in mind, I selected a more experienced research sample of first and second year African Nova Scotian female University students over the age of nineteen. Although these Black female youth were not currently considered "at-risk" in the traditionally defined sense, it can be said that they too have first-hand and/ or lived experiences similarly to the aforementioned youth, and therefore understand similar challenges regarding self-conception, and how bombardment of stereotypical images of blackness effect their sense of self, as well as that of their peers. Further, as a research sample, this cohort could recount possible parallels and differences between the images

of Black femininity presented with their past and current every day lives[16].

Research Methods

A qualitative research design was adopted to allow for face-to-face dialogue, and to give voice to a demographic that is typically seen and not heard. Using a qualitative approach provided for a deep, thick description and it created room for the women to articulate their own opinions, as free as possible from the researcher's pre-constructed question categories.

As such, qualitative research approaches attempt to derive theory from categories that emerge from the research, as opposed to quantitative research strategies, which are traditionally said to be 'deductive' and to engage in hypothesis-testing (Rose, 2001A, p. 6). That is to say, quantitative methodologies are often regarded as 'structured' because the techniques used will predetermine which aspects of the phenomenon will be studied and analyzed (p.6). In my research, a structured approach would have deterred me from its theoretical/conceptual essence, though quantitative research strategies involving deduction may prove useful for further or future research as it pertains to the research topic.

In "Learning From the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," Collins (1991, p. 35) discusses the notion of the outsider within, noting that this status has provided a special standpoint on self, family, and society for African-Americans, [-Canadians,] and by inference Black female youth and women. Scholars (Collins, 1991, p. 35; Joyappa, 1996) further assert that as outsiders within, Black feminist scholars may be one of the many distinct groups of marginal intellectuals

whose standpoints promise to enrich contemporary sociological discourse. That is, Black female scholars' marginality (whereby they have worked for and/ or contributed to White elite academia,) constitutes their outsider within status. Thus, by taking advantage of this outsider within status, Black feminist scholars are able to create works that address the needs of Black women (and men); females (and males). It is for all of these reasons that the complexities of power in the researcher-researched relationship are recognized.

Reflexively speaking, I am an outsider within. As a Black female, I create an academic space that speaks for me and other Black female youth. Despite cultural differences and beliefs, there are arguably issues concerning the construction of Black femininity and body that resonate with all Black Canadian females and with other females of color, which have been influenced or socialized by Americanized, televised media. As an outsider within, I also acted as both participant observer and observed to encourage participants to take part in the research.

Data Gathering Methods

A pre-testing of questions was carried out with one respondent, followed by in-depth, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. The interviewing continued to data category saturation, which is to say until the point where the same response themes kept emerging and no additional themes appeared. Pre-testing refers to the practice of having one or two participants complete an interview to settle on the final wordings of the questions (Jackson, 1998, p. 370-71). The goal is to fine-tune the wording of questions and to minimize variations in respondents' understandings of each question (p.371). Although this is arguably impossible to achieve fully, the goal is to have all respondents

understand each and every question in an identical manner (p.371). After pre-testing, subsequent interviewees answered the list of interview questions in response to each video (see Appendix A)[17]. Interviewees were told that the questions merely served as guides in identifying and generating thoughts/ ideas regarding the issues.

Various parts of this research (i.e. my two areas of investigation and my questionnaire as a guide,) serve to indicate how my epistemological and ontological perspectives may influence my understanding of those being researched. Given my awareness of such perspectives, striking a balance between researcher subjectivity and objectivity was challenging for me. On the one hand, feminist theorists have discussed the importance of researcher self-disclosure and attempts to strike a balance between researcher-researched subjectivity/objectivity as means of mutual identification and understanding (MacDonald, 2003, p. 85). On the other, they have also noted the disadvantages of researcher self-disclosure, noting that the researcher's own experiences may bias the research process or results (p.86). With that being said, to create balance between the two, my intent as a researcher was to inform the researched of my biases but to strongly encourage them to express their own opinions during the separate interviews. It was also important to remind the participants that it was their input that was of paramount interest and to refrain from offering any more of my thoughts than what was already hinted at in my 'questionnaire for guidance.'

According to Damaris Rose (2001B, p. 2) an interview should be structured so as to maximize homogeneity with respect to the factors that the researcher believes to affect the attitudes expressed or types of experiences recounted (factors such as gender, age, social class, and ethnicity.) As opposed to focus groups, one-on-one interviews alleviate

the possibility of reactivity/ participant bias occurring. Reactivity refers to the influence that an observer has on the behaviour [thought process, or role in possible group conformity,] under observation (Shaughnessy, 2000, p. 116). Further, it was easier for these youth to discuss issues of self-conception in a one-on-one setting because it is more personal and self-reflexive.

This research used in-depth, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews to examine women's perception of three commercialized, American hip hop videos. The videos were: 50 Cent's "Candy Shop," Snoop Dogg's "Drop It Like It's Hot" and Nelly's "Tip Drill[18]." In questioning 'whose revolution is televised,' the decision to examine these specific videos stemmed from their popularity[19] in the hip hop genre, their use of product endorsements throughout the videos, as well as their explicit and implicit audiovisual and lyric content. The hip hop artists are also renowned for their controversial actions, which spark charges of misogyny and sexism, as well as for their legal entanglements (i.e. allegations of sexual assault) that would lead fans, critics, and critical thinkers to evaluate how much their work reflects and dictates their realities[20] (Johnson, 1992; Hikes, 2004; Nelson, 2004).

Sampling and Recruitment

Recruitment began by putting up posters and contacting major African Nova Scotian organizations within the community to obtain the desired research sample (See Appendix C). In accordance with each University's regulations, posters were placed on the bulletin boards of three campuses and the project was advertised at each campus for a month. A contact list with the names of key organizations to aid in recruitment was also

developed (See Appendix D). Snowball sampling was another recruitment method utilized, whereby the recruited participant encouraged and recruited more participants. All interested candidates initially contacted me via email. From there, they confirmed their contact information. To combat any physical or psychological harm that may have arose from viewing the explicit rap videos, participants were directed to their home institution's counseling service centre (See Appendix B).

Five, young African Nova Scotian women[21] were interviewed in this study. To assure that the participants remained unidentifiable, I did not inquire about any detailed information concerning them. I can, however, provide very brief demographic information about them. Daniella, a mid-twenty something, was in her second year of university. She has a daughter who is in preschool. Heliotrope[22], a thirty something, was also in her second year of university. She is a single mom and also has a daughter who is in preschool. Erika, a twenty-something, was in first year of university. Melissa, in her late teens, was in her first year of university. Tamara, in her early twenties, was in also in her first year of university.

Each participant received two copies of the consent form: (1) a white copy for the participant's own records (See Appendix B); and (2) a yellow copy signed by the participant. The latter are stored by my thesis advisor's office. Each participant also filled out an address slip, in the event that she wished to receive a summary of the research findings.

All interviews occurred in the following sequence:

1. The participant and I read over and discussed the consent form.

2. I informed the participant that she could fill out an address slip if she wished to receive a summary of the research findings.

3. The participant and I then proceeded to watch consecutively: (a) Snoop Dogg's "Drop It Like It's Hot"; (b) 50 Cent's "Candy Shop"; and then (c) Nelly's "Tip Drill." After viewing the three videos, we examined and discussed the Questionnaire for Guidance (See Appendix A).

4. The participants were informed that the questionnaire was meant to serve as a guide and that we could deviate, if necessary, from the questions list. Several participants skipped questions that they felt were similar. Any additional questions generated were usually asked by me in order to probe (i.e. getting clarification on something that the participant may have said)[23]. Each interview was audiotaped with the permission of the interviewee.

Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed by making sure no names appeared on the tapes, the transcribed interviews or on any published or unpublished work emerging from the research. Participants gave informed consent (See Appendix B). I then transcribed each interview, and upon completion of the data analysis, the audiotapes and transcriptions were handed over to my thesis supervisor to be stored in her office for a period of three years as stipulated by the Research Ethics Board at Saint Mary's University. Interviewees were given the choice of choosing their own pseudonym or having one assigned. Only one participant, Heliotrope, chose her pseudonym.

Channel Guide

This Channel outlined the methodological approach taken, beginning with reflections of my self-location to provide a reflexive account of my experiences and epistemologies in relation to Black female sexual politics. It noted how my lived experiences of violence, sexism and racism in my youth, in academia, and in my employment experiences have shaped my own concerns about Black female sexual politics in everyday life and in hip hop culture more specifically. Out of this discussion, my role as a researcher with the status of "outsider within" is made clear. This status not only creates room for the researcher and researched to establish a comfortable rapport, it keeps one conscious of the importance of striving to maintain a balance between objectivity and subjectivity.

In short, the research utilized a qualitative research design to elicit responses to three hip-hop videos from five self-defined young African Nova Scotian women in their first or second years of university. In the Channel to follow, presentation and analysis of the prevalent themes that emerge from the research data are discussed.

Channel Three

Presentation & Analysis of Data

Analysis of the data began by examining the emerging themes. From there, the questions created in the "Questionnaire for Guidance" were later collapsed by theme into 16 new questions (See Appendix A). A chart was created entitled "A Summation of Responses to Questions" to create a quick checklist of the participants' responses to the 16 categories. The data categories corresponded to 12 prevalent themes that were used to interpret the findings.

This Channel begins by defining prevalent themes of the data categories[24]. Next, the prevalent themes are analyzed in relation to the interview responses and connection to the literature review. In other words, the selection and creation of these prevalent themes occurred by analyzing the degree to which, if any, the research findings meshed with the findings and/ or ideas presented in the literature review.

Definitions

1. **Black Male Subjection:** the observation that women in the videos serve as a backdrop for male action and as objects of pleasure for the male gaze. That is to say, women in these videos rarely receive any front and/ or center stage attention in the videos.

2. **Racial Stereotypes of Black Female Sexuality & Their Social Consequences:** a two-fold theme, entailing (a) the degree to which Black females' (and males') bodies are perceived as sexualized and the meaning of these depictions to notions of Black femininity (and masculinity); and (b) the degree to

which depictions of Black femininity (and masculinity) create and perpetuate unrealistic, biased, and slanderous perceptions of all Black people.

3.   **The Re-inscription of Controlling Images of Black Womanhood:** the degree to which participants have reinscribed racial stereotypes of Black female sexuality in relation to themselves, their responses to images of the video women, and/ or others in their communities.

4.   **Prevalence of Eurocentric Standards of Female Beauty:** the degree to which interviewees identify the physical features of the women depicted such as body weight measurements and outward appearances as being more characteristic of White, Western women.

5.   **Parallels Between Lyrical Content & Images Depicted:** the degree to which lyrical content correlates with the images depicted in the videos.

6.   **Commodification & Product Placement:** recalled awareness of the products shown such as the clothing worn by the women and men, the bling (jewellery) worn, the shoes sported, the cigarettes/ cigars/ weed depicted, the alcohol depicted, the cell phones, the cars and so on.

7.   **Internalization of Video Images:** the degree to which participants' note images and interactions between men and women in the videos that influence the interactions of participants with the opposite sex in everyday life.

8.   **Communal Socialization & Assimilation of Attire:** the degree to which participants note that community or communal socialization influence them as indicated by: (a) the replication or emulation of the images in the videos, or (b)

the rejection of the attire and outward appearances portrayed in the videos viewed.

9.   **Acknowledgement of the Color Caste System:** acknowledgement of the preferential treatment afforded to those whose skin color, skin complexion, and hair textures more closely comply to White standards.

10.   **Religiosity/ Spirituality:** recognition of one's spirituality and/ or religiosity as influencing and informing self-conception.

11.   **Choices:** discussion concerning whether these women in the videos are: (a) choosing to participate in the videos, and/ or (b) selecting the style of clothing for the videos.

12.   **Black Motherhood:** refers to the participants' experiences of motherhood and their perspectives concerning children's exposure to the images or song lyrics in hip hop videos and music.

Analysis of Prevalent Themes

Black male subjection. Three of the five participants noted that women in the videos serve to please the male gaze, rarely receiving any front and/ or center stage attention in their videos. Further, the three participants noted that the hip hop videos portrayed the Black male as superior to the Black female. This is salient to Shilling's (2003, p. 112) discussion about the valuing and categorizing of different forms of physical capital, whereby the three hip hop artists (i.e. Snoop, 50 Cent, and Nelly) constitute the dominant group who define their bodies and portray their lifestyle as superior, worthy of reward. This is in opposition to the Black females depicted in the videos, who pose as the dominated group, inferior, and devalued.

For example, when asked about what message Tamara felt the hip hop artists are sending to females, she noted that:

> ....They're not putting us [Black females] in the forefront. We [Black women cannot] can't have any lines or anything. They're just there to dance and that's it.... Uhm, I don't know. *It's just not a good image.* It just shows [a] one side [-sided view of the kind talents that Black females are capable of doing]. (Italicized for emphasis)

Similarly, Erika notes that:

> ..in 50 cent's video, for example, Olivia's actually singing. So, at least it shows that she has some potential besides [solely] for dancing. So, that's [50 cent's video is] probably the best video out of all three. 'Cause at least she's [Olivia's] able to display her singing talent without just having the bump [bumping] and grinding of the dancing. The others- Nelly's... Snoop's, they're [the video women are] just dancing so, of course, that shows no image at all. Like, the females are just there to show off with their bodies.

When asked what purpose the video women served, Heliotrope notes:

> ....well in Snoop's video when they [the director] had them [the women] all in the back [in a straight line in the background,] there was like four of them, I think? And it [the scene] was like [shot in] Black and White but they [the director] made sure the women had Black shorts on with white tags so that when they shake [shook] their behind you can [could] see it. That's [was] the focal point.

Two of the five participants felt that there needed to be fewer women in the videos because they detracted from the artists. This is best expressed by Heliotrope, who states:

> [Nelly's music video] Tip Drill... That was just ATROCIOUS. I mean, they had women just everywhere... So, they [Nelly and the St. Lunatics... and guest appearances] didn't even need to be in the video. 'Cause, you weren't looking at them; you were looking at all [of the women]... You know, you have behind shaking on both sides, up on top, legs in the air... So, I mean, those stuck out and I just... I don't know, it's just uhmm... I don't know, they're not... We're talking about purpose right? Their purpose was to highlight what people in the video are putting out there as being an asset which is their behind. It has nothing to do with brains or commonsense or how you treat other people. It's simply looking at your bum, and your physical traits. And, your worth is being measured by how you look physically, with disregard for everything else.

Thus, most interviewees felt that the images portrayed in the three hip hop videos emphasized Black male superiority and subjection insofar as the women depicted did not

receive any camera time that allowed them to showcase any meaningful or positive talents or skills. The video images and scenes either had: (a) too many women, serving as distraction from the artists or (b) the video far removed from center stage. The commonality in the discrepancy along this continuum is that the video women's bodies serve to please both the artists and male viewers by controlling images of Black femininity (Collins, 2000).

Racial stereotypes of black female sexuality & their social consequences. Four of the five participants identified and discussed the degree to which Black females and males are sexualized in the videos. Some also brought up the point that there are virtually no 'countercultural', non-stereotypical messages that are equally as powerful within hip hop. hooks (2003, p. 222) echoes this point in *In Rock My Soul: Black People and Self-Esteem*, where she examines how the internalization of self-hatred has plagued African American [Canadian] youth using mass media to perpetuate these images, noting that:

> ...So much of the assault on the soulfulness of African American [Canadian] people has come from a White patriarchal, capitalist-dominated music industry, which essentially uses, with their consent and collusion, Black bodies and voices to be the messengers of doom and death....The tragedy is not that this music exists, that it makes lots of money, but that there is no countercultural message [within mainstream media] that is equally powerful, that can capture the hearts and imaginations of young Black folks who want to live, and live soulfully.

Her point can also lend itself to findings of the prevalent theme: "Parallels Between Lyrical Content & Images Depicted" which is discussed later on in this section.

Daniella discussed the two-fold components of the theme, "Racial Stereotypes of Black Female Sexuality & Their Consequences" interchangeably. When asked if how these women look is a 'real' representation of how Black women should look, she states:

Is [a] real representation? Uhmm, no. I think it's a stereotypical representation of how women are... Like, I worked with this girl, and uh, she's from Newfoundland, and I work in Mulgrave Park and she assumes that because, you know, the little boy has a gold chain, you know, and uhm, with the baseball hat turned to the side, that he's this big time gangster, you know. And that's the way the videos make them... they embellish the stereotype. They really do. They embellish the stereotype of how, uhm, you know, rappers are. They wear the gold chains, the grills [the gold teeth,] you know. And, and the baseball cap and the baggy clothes and all that, right? You know, that stereotype is already formed of Black people and then... they got the women on there that's half dressed so now they're formin' the stereotype of, of the Black women, you know, flauntin' herself and goin' around [of being sexually promiscuous].

When I asked Tamara what message she felt the hip hop artist was sending to female

viewers, she stated that:

There's a lot [of messages being sent to] for females. Uhm... I don't know. I use to be part of the BET generation but, as I got to university, I kinda got away from it. But, I know that for myself, it was kinda like... you had to have this long straight hair; the weave and stuff or curly hair. Like, most Black females' hair doesn't grow in that way [i.e. straight or wavy]. So, [the videos just perpetuate this ideology that] you have to wear a weave in order to be cute. Basically, they're perpetuating this stereotype that we all [Black women] have this big bum or whatever...

She also asserts that the videos further reinforce the stereotype:

... that we [Black females] all know how to shake it and do all these crazy moves. And, that we can do the splits while we're shakin' it and all that craziness. Uhm, it's fake.

Further, when I asked Tamara if she thought that the images shown in the music

videos affected who or how she is as a Black female, she states:

I think they used [to]... like, back in high school, and even last year, like, I wanted to be like Beyoncé... Especially, when [the CD] 'Crazy in Love' came out and stuff. And now, she's, just, like... the media made her out to be like the hottest Black girl in the world, and that everyone should be like her... She's beautiful and... so that affected me because I wanted have long straight hair, which doesn't grow out of my scalp! And you [I wanted to] wanna accentuate your [my] curves. Black women are suppose to have, like, a tiny waist and big bum and big hips...And, so I wanted to be like that... And, wear a lot of makeup... And, it influenced the way I dressed, like, a lot, like, I started to get into those brand names and everything. Uhm, yeah, and like fake nails and all that foolishness... <Laughs>

When asked about the images that the hip hop artists are sending to females, Melissa notes:

> In each video, the image [images that stood out were those of the video women all wearing] that I noticed is that they're all wearing bikinis or tiny little shorts. Or, the corset type outfits. The message [that] I would say [is sent] is "we [Black males] would prefer you to [be] wearing this instead of that" you know, because they don't actually show the women wearing anything else but, the bikinis.

Further, when asked what types of women are portrayed as desirable in the videos shown, Melissa notes the following:

> Okay. Uhm... Women with a nice shape. Coke bottle shape <giggles>. Uhmm...a big booty; a big chest. Uhm, pretty in the face... Flexible. Uhm, willing and able to do absolutely anything.

Thus, Melissa's response also illustrates her awareness of Eurocentric standards of beauty.

When asked what messages the hip hop artists are sending to the females and males, Heliotrope states:

> Well, I think the message for females is that you're good for sex, and that's about it. And that, if you are a woman, you're suppose to be scantily clad. Don't bother wearing clothes because, if you do, no one's gonna look atcha [going to look at you]...You're gonna become unattractive; you're gonna become an unwanted person. But if you show a lil' [little] bit of tit, you show some behind, wear low riders... you know, [and] leave nothin' to the imagination.... That's a good thing.
>
> But other hand, men are fully dressed. You have jeans that are 16 sizes too big; t-shirts that are 16 sizes too big; hats and do-rags[25], and big ol' [old] sneakers; with big ol' hoods and big ol' hoods with fur. So men, dress like they're up in the artic; while the women are dress like... they're at the gates of hell. Right? They're almost naked. So, those are.... And, that's what you see in the street. It's being reproduced in the people that we see on the streets. The boys AND MEN are dressin' [dressing] like the videos as are the females, and as the weather gets warmer we're gonna see even more skin. (Emphasis courtesy of Heliotrope.)

All in all, most participants' responses indicate that they critically consume the messages perpetuated in the three hip hop videos. They note that the Black female body is more apt to be hyper-sexualized in comparison to the Black male counterpart. All five

participants feel as though the images of this hypersexualization work to maintain gender and racial inequality by re-inscribing slanderous perceptions of all Black people.

These thoughts are best reflected in the responses of Daniella, Tamara, and Heliotrope. When asked if Tamara felt that how these women look is a real representation of how Black women (and other women of color) should look, her response was:

> I think you're doing a disservice to yourself by trying to aspire to that [image] because... you're never gonna get a job dressed like that, and you're never gonna... Like, I don't know... And it's impossible [for all Black women to uphold that image] to look like that.

Tamara further notes how these stereotypical perceptions of Blackness and Black people have affected her and others in her community:

> Like, as I started thinking about it.... in my town, there's a lot of White people that don't necessarily have a lot of contact with Black people- especially in Nova Scotia. Like, coming to university, I've met a lot of people from Scottsdale or Pictou who have never met Black people and so I'm realizing they're watching BET as a representation of all Black people, and all they're seeing is video hoes. And, if this is how they're gonna [going to] base [judge] their image [perception] of Black people; I think that's really sad. So, I think just being really critical of what they're watching and realizing that they're [the images shown on BET are] unrepresentative of [Black people like] me.

Heliotrope adds:

> I watched the BET awards and everybody clapped and said "well, 25 years ago there wouldn't have been a BET." Alright, I can't argue with that. BUT, now that you have BET, you're using your people and exploiting them to make money. What's the difference between you and the slave master? There is no difference because, you are making BILLIONS of dollars on showing... exploitative, denigrating... you know, disrespectful material. And, I don't think that Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Rosa Parks and who ever else that were activists... That's not what they were activating for. So, I think about that, and it bothers me. There's just... there's no need for it. There's other ways in which Black people can be portrayed. And, then you take people that don't know Black people, and they see this? They put us *all* in the same category. (Italicized for Emphasis)

In sum, the participants were mindful about how these images create negative, socially-ingrained impressions. They felt disheartened about these negative impressions because of the long-lasting stigmatization they cause despite the tireless efforts of

activists who strive to dispel and eradicate such myths. The views generated in this research confirm those of Dyson (1996, p. 178), who notes that the debates about rap and hip hop should be located within a much broader discussion of how the images and messages reinforce and re-inscribe stereotypes of Black identity and sexual politics through White patriarchal, capitalist-dominated music industry. The industry serves to perpetuate graphic images of the Black community at large, with Black men as sexual outlaws, and Black females as hoes.

Controlling images of black womanhood. All five interviewees feel the video women are portrayed as hoes, sluts, strippers, or 'easy'. Expressions of these thoughts are best exemplified in the responses of Daniella, Tamara, and Erika, which link both implicitly and explicitly to Collins (2000, p. 81) discussion surrounding the hoochie as the controlling image of Black womanhood. Recall that she notes that the hoochie can be thought of as a female who participates in a cluster of deviant female sexualities (p.84). For Daniella, it is apparent that she has consumed negative social implications of what women in the videos are often socially perceived to be. She offers:

> But there's no doubt that they [hip hop artists and video directors] do portray them [the video women in] that way. And, you know, very... it's almost like they're [the video women are] portrayed like, like they're uh.... Can I use the word 'ho'? <Laughs>..... They're almost portrayed that way. Like, they're lookin' like sluts. They're lookin' [They look] like hoes or whateva [whatever], right?

When asked what image the hip hop artist is sending to females, Tamara notes that:

... "As long as you can strip or whatever, you're okay."

Erika's perceptions of negative implications of what video women are, is made apparent during her description of what types of women are portrayed as desirable in each video:

I think it's probably the ones who are necessarily 'easy' to begin with. Because, like I said, these women are being auditioned for these videos so chances are... So, I mean, of course you're gonna [going to] get all these women thinking that they're the one. And, as soon as they're picked, of course, it's gonna go right to their head saying, "I must be sexy; I must be like this... You know, I'm being picked by these artists." So, I think it's giving the wrong message to... I mean, know you're seeing more younger people in these videos. And, it's giving them the wrong impression that, you know, a 16 year old girl could go in this video if she has the right body. You know, depending on who gets picked. So, I don't think it's a good way that way.

In terms of the portrayal of women in the videos viewed, Heliotrope says that:

It's just saying we're [women are] only there for sex. I'm mean it kinda almost border lines on prostitution because, although you're not on stroll... you're still there at the whim of somebody else. [And,] that you don't control what you do. Like, you're there. You're on the video. You're asked to do this and you do it. But, if your daughter called you and said "I'm gonna be in this video; this is what I want to do..." Would you let your child do it? And, they [the hip hop artists] don't think about that?

All in all, the participants felt that the images of video women, in turn, create negative and stereotypical social implications regarding the purpose and function of the Black female body. The degree to which the video women have choices (in terms of what they wear, and what they are directed to do in them) is questionable and should be further explored in other research, as it leads one to consider Black women's complicity in their own sexual objectification as portrayed in hip hop videos.

Finally, two of the participants note that hip hop artists' roles as fathers (some to daughters as is the case with Snoop) indicate that there are contradictions among the parental role, the public images they portray, and the exposure that other young Canadians and, at large, North Americans (and quite possibly, their own children) access. Thus, these hip hop artists contribute to the images of hyper sexuality in popular culture, ridding themselves of having to engage in social role modeling and accountability[26] as celebrities, despite being fathers themselves.

Prevalence of eurocentric standards of female beauty. All five of the young African Nova Scotian women interviewed engaged in discussion concerning Eurocentric body weight measurements vis-à-vis the video women's outward appearance as well as their own. They reflected on the degree to which they mirrored the images depicted in the video. They also reflected on the degree to which they felt (or heard others express that they felt) socially pressured or policed into mirroring the outward appearance of the video women. The remarks of Daniella, Tamara and Heliotrope's best illustrate these views.

When asked how she felt these videos need to change, Daniella explains:

> ...And to [the] stereotype [of] women that you got to be... ya gotta [you must] have this figure, you know what I mean... Ya gotta have this *size five figure* and be half dressed and everything like that. And you have to be like this in order to be recognized in society. And, these videos embellish that, right? They help you... you know, if you see somethin' ... if videos start to change, you know what I mean, and stop portrayin' women in that way, society will stop lookin' at women in that way. And stop, [expecting women to have] havin' they, right? <Grinning> So, I think it should change in that way. Because, I don't agree with havin' women havin' [having] to have that stereotype behind them all the time. That they have to always conform themselves to that stereotype. I don't agree with that. (Emphasized courtesy of Daniella.)

When Tamara was asked if she could identify with the video women's outward appearance, she recalls initially conforming and assimilating to the Westernized, Eurocentric standards of beauty, particularly in terms of hair and hairstyles in high school. However, upon entrance into university, she rejected them. In fact, when asked about what changed her mind in terms of wearing hair weaves and extensions, she replies:

> I kinda [kind of], like, read the history of hair relaxing in Black women's history. And, it just made me sick that we're [Black women are] like always tryin' [trying] to buy into this like European standard of beauty. And these videos like perpetuate this *so...bad*. Because, they make it look like our [Black women's] hair grows out like that. I just wanna [want to] be, like, who I am. (Emphasized courtesy of Tamara.)

In her remarks, Heliotrope demonstrates the interconnection among the themes "Prevalence of Eurocentric Standards of Female Beauty," "Commodification & Product Placement," and "Acknowledgement of the Color Caste System." Moreover, her response illustrates tensions and contradictions in her perception of the Eurocentric aesthetic indicating that she has, to some degree, critically consumed and re-inscribed some of the stereotypical ideology as it relates to images of the Black female body as well as her own body image. More specifically, when Heliotrope was asked about what image the hip hop artists are sending to females (and males), she notes:

> ... I realize that everybody comes in different shapes and sizes and different colors or shades. But, in these videos, these images portrayed, the girl is a 36-24-36. Those are your standard measurements. And, if you're not that; you're not going to be in the video....
>
> .... Eurocentric measurements. And, if you don't have them; you're not going to be in the video. If you don't have a big behind; you're not going to be in the video. If you don't have a super tiny waist; you're not going to be in the video. You're not being valued. You don't fit into the image that people have created as being desirable. So, uhm, for females, you're looking at a whole slew of things that could possibly happen. You know, you have skin bleaching; you have the weaves; you have fake nails; you have all these things that people are tryina [trying to] do to change themselves to look like these people in the videos. But, when they go home at night, do they look like how you saw them in the video? Noooo, they don't. 'Cause [Because], I'm sure they take things off at the end of the day. And, whatever doesn't come off is still not part of their natural being. But, we don't see that.
>
> And, I think it's the same thing for males. Like, men are not big at all. They're still slim, and they're still slender regardless of how big their clothes are. They're not fat, plus size, big boned... whatever you wanna [want to] call it. They're still a slender person that's drowning in these huge clothes. And, that's the image....

All participants mentioned feelings of social pressure to conform to Eurocentric physical measurements and to alter their outward appearance, specifically their hair, to appear more attractive. In terms of whether they actually succumb to these pressures themselves, some women's responses expressed contradiction. For example, while

Daniella and Heliotrope replied that, for the most part, they don't give in to the pressures of conforming to Eurocentric standards of beauty, both women contradict this when they describe their attire for clubbing.

They both note that they like to 'dress nice' or in ways that make them feel 'pretty', but they refrain from wearing outfits that are too revealing. While they didn't elaborate on what 'dressing nice' or 'prettiness' looked like, there were commonalities in their views. Specifically, they both felt that attire should be socially appropriate, that club attire should be worn only occasionally, and that female beauty was not so much based on outward appearance, but rather internal attitudes and values.

Such results echo those of Nichter (2000), who indicates that African American girls define beauty through attitude, style, personality, and presence rather than through attaining the 'perfect' look and those of Bordo (1993) who recognizes the homogeneity and eurocentricity of the non-White body. As well, findings confirm those of Collins (1990, p. 89, 2004) and hooks (1993, 1994, 2003) who argue that Black perspectives on images of body, sexuality, and identity are not based solely on physical criteria, but rather often have elements of spirituality and religiosity tied to them.

Parallels between lyrical content & images depicted. All five of the young African Nova Scotian women initiated discussion on the degree to which the lyrical content parallels the images depicted in the videos. Responses indicate that participants distinguish between the origins and initial essence of rap music and the state of present-day hip hop, particularly in reference to the artists' lyrical content. They also made mention of hip hop artists who are regarded as either socially or politically conscious but

do not receive as much airplay on televised music stations (such as BET or muchmusic,) or support (i.e. from their music label, due to poor marketing, low record sales, or low fan base) as opposed to their counterparts who are played in heavy rotation (such as Snoop, 50 Cent, and Nelly). Daniella, Tamara, Erika and Heliotrope make the most compelling responses to illustrate these points.

When Daniella was asked which music artist was more a 'real' (or realistic) representation of what Black women should look like, she states:

> ....Uhmm... I think she [Erykah Badu] would probably appeal more to a... you know, Black women who don't like to be portrayed that way in videos, right? So, those, those women would definitely, uh... would really want to see more of Erykah Badu and uh her blossom in the music industry but, she didn't really last too long, you know. She didn't really last too long and she really didn't get as much exposure as she should have. Because, she's one of the women that I like, you know... musically.

When Tamara was asked if she could think of images that have been accurate representations of Black women and other women of color, she states:

> Uhm, India.Irie's videos... her's [her videos] are good. I really like her. She has her own style. She's not trying to play into this over-sexedness [idea of selling her sexuality for mass appeal]. But, [then again,] you can see how often she gets play [on music stations] so... Uhm, I don't know, I think the mainstream videos are all pretty nasty.

I note to Tamara:

> It's interesting that you should mention that one... And, it's probably difficult for those women; those few women. I can think of others like: Jill Scott and uh... Angie Stone- they're older women as well- and Erykah Badu is another one who's not getting a lot of airplay. That's very interesting, isn't it? And sort of: what does that say? What do you think that says about these women that are actually showing real [or/ realistic] representations of Black women [and other women of color]?

Tamara replies:

> Honestly, I think it's more of a network decision 'cause, Nelly and Snoop and stuff; they play into this whole 'you can get money easy and stuff' and the kids... they like that idea [that] they can. So, the network is kinda like... they can make more money off these people. Like, they could... I think it's up to them... Like

they could put a little more uplifting stuff [on like gospel music videos] but, I think they choose not [to]. It's just a network decision.... Sadly.

After she defined what she felt was 'the average look' (i.e. Eurocentric ideologies of beauty,) Erika added that only a select, target demographic was chosen to participate in these videos. When I asked her what the implications of this were, she says:

Uhm, I think hip hop has changed a lot from like back in 80s, 70s like, when hip hop was just about the music. It wasn't about what the video looked like; what the artists' looked like. It was just the music and the artist... [It] Didn't have anything to do with anyone in the background dancin' [dancing]. [It] Didn't have anything to do with that. So, I think that a lot of it now is just publicity and how everything looks. I don't think it's based so much on the music. I think that's a lot of it that we [what society has to] have to try and realize, and try to get back. And, I mean, a lot of the hip hop artists now, still have totally great messages but are not portraying them. Or, at least, that's how I feel.

Erika thus makes an important distinction between the importance of the 'music' or lyrics in previous decades and the state of modern-day hip hop music and video, which is now heavily capitalist, business-oriented, and market-driven. This market-driven business has eroded hip hop as art-form and transformed it into cultural capital.

While reflecting on and discussing the portrayal of video women, Heliotrope notes:

... you know, we have a few [conscious artists] that come out of those pockets...
Like John Legend [who] doesn't have these [stereotypical] types of videos.

Other social and politically conscious R&B/ hip hop artists such as Jill Scott, Angie Stone, and Erykah Badu were also mentioned. Heliotrope and I agreed that the images of Blackness that these artists portrayed are more realistic and positive representations of Black females. We further noted issues surrounding airplay and support. Specifically, Heliotrope expresses her feelings about these issues, noting:

Airplay and support and making money. You'll [Hip hop artists will] sell out your [their] own [Black] people to make money. That's how I feel about it...

Most of the participants mentioned similar artists who are considered prominent, politically conscious artists within African American, commercialized hip hop music and culture. Of the female artists mentioned, (i.e. Erykah Badu, Jill Scott, and India.Arie,) all were aligned more so with the musical genre of Rhythm & Blues (R&B). No female rappers were mentioned. A few conscious male artists were also mentioned who are directly aligned with rap/ hip hop music (i.e. Common, and Talib Kweli). None of the participants mentioned the names of any politically conscious Canadian hip hop artists.

Commodification & product placement. Interviewee responses concerning commodity and product placement in the videos point to representations of the Black female body and the modes of dress depicted, connections best illustrated in the remarks of Tamara, Melissa and Heliotrope. When asked why female viewers watch the videos, Tamara demonstrates an awareness of the commodification and the marketing of products depicted in the hip hop videos by saying:

> I guess that it does entertain females as well. Uhm, and it... I don't know... it also gives them a look to aspire to.... Kinda like: 'this is what's hot for females right now.'

To which, I reply:

> So, we're [women are] watching...looking to see what the ladies [in the videos] are wearing?

Tamara responds:

> Yeah... Basically.

While Tamara notes that the video images dictate fashion for some women, Melissa states:

> I definitely say if you [a female had] have a chance to be in that [a] video [that she] you would probably... some people would take on the opportunity because,

> maybe they have the talent but, they just can't show [showcase it as other video women can] it like them so they would take it [the opportunity] to get [exposure] noticed or for the sake of it- I'm pretty sure that for music videos, some of the things are for free. So they'll probably take the opportunity to get free things.

When asked what things the women might get for free, she clarifies:

> Uhm, like clothing. They probably get free clothing.

Heliotrope states, when asked what image the hip hop artists were sending to females (and male) viewers:

> .... And the image is also that you have to wear things a particular way or you're not hip; you're a loser or whatever the situation may be. So, people will go broke tryin' ta [trying to] get white sneakers, you know, Sean John jeans, or Ecko shirts, or Phat Farm... all these things that were created by Black people, that are becoming increasingly more expensive that most people can't afford. And, that just leads into something else...

Thus, in terms of marketing and product placement, the participants generally note that male hip hop artists commodify images of the Black female body through fashion. The implied message is that one's value, as measured by coolness and racial authenticity, depends not only on whether you have the right body but also the right attire (Clay, 2003).

Internalization of video images. Four of the five participants specifically noted that the video images insinuate and perpetuate sexist mores and demeanors that are often used as guidelines for youth in how to interact or engage in a relationship with the opposite sex. This viewpoint is best articulated by Daniella, Tamara, and Melissa.

When Daniella was asked if she felt that the images shown in the music videos affected who or how she was as part of the African Canadian community, she stated that she personally felt unaffected by the images in a communal sense. However, she did

connect the depictions to her observations of female and male interactions within her

academic setting. More specifically, she states:

> At school, at university, a lot of women are dressed like that [the video women].
> You know, the men expect them to be dressed like that you know, because it's
> high fashion, I guess. It's a form of entertainment, I guess, you know, and these
> women expect, you know, when you go to school, they expect [think] that I'm
> [they are] not gonna get noticed unless I'm [they are] dressed like that, right?
> <Slight pause>.... I couldn't give two shits and a flu, if, if, you know, the men
> looked at me like, differently because, ya know what I mean... I ain't there for
> that. I'm there for ta [to] get my work done, you know what I mean? So, but I
> guess there is an expectancy [expectation] for women to be there, and they
> [therefore, the women figure that they are expected] expect themselves to dress a
> certain way. And a man expects [it] themselves .... And it I mean, it is true
> because, you know, I know, uhm, a lot of beautiful girls at school who don't
> dress that way, and they don't get no type of recognition [men do not give them
> any attention]. [Because,] You know, they don't get recognized, they don't get
> [look], you know... inside theirselves [themselves] to find out their [own]
> personality [, sense of self] and everything like that. All they're worryin' about
> [is] if they got the stilettos on or you know what I mean, or they got the high heel
> shoes...

When I asked Tamara if she thought the images effect how she lives her life as a Black

female, she replies:

> I think they influence your interactions with, like, guys and stuff. Like, I think
> it's bad relationship wise. Like, women don't have as much power or whatever
> in the videos, and I think that you [end up] kinda [kind of] step [stepping] back
> and let guys be more in control and stuff.

Along with this theme, Melissa's response also links to the theme "Reinscribing

Controlling Images of Black Womanhood." When I asked her what message she felt the

hip hop artists were sending to females, she notes:

> In the first video, hmm.... In the second video, it's more sexual and not... it's
> more sexual but, and in a dirty [sort of] way in a sort. It's just telling girls that
> it's okay to 'go down on a guy'[27].... it's okay to do this, it's okay to do that. In
> some ways, it's okay but, they need to kinda... a lot of preteens watch these
> music videos and I think the message that they'd probably be getting is, you
> know, it's okay to do this, it's okay to do that. And, it's the music; it's
> something that they listen to for on and on. But, I don't really think that it's a
> good message that he's sending. Uhm, the third one [Nelly's Tip Drill
> video]...<Laughs>...

At this point, I ask Melissa if she knows of actual cases of pre-teens having oral sex that inform her view that the videos promote fellatio among youth. Drawing from her experiences as a mentor, she notes:

> To be honest, there is someone- I'm not dealing with myself personal- but, she's young; she's 14 and she's been through, like, a lot. And, she has a tendency to say lies and like, I can't really tell half the time if she's telling the truth.... [because] she often changes it [her story] and then when you question her, her different story, you kind of end up saying [thinking] well, I don't know either way. But, then I don't know when she's actually doing it.

She also notes:

> .... I do know that a friend of mine told me that at a school that her younger sister goes to... a lot of the teachers never even notice that these kids are actually like, giving [having] oral sex in the classrooms while the teachers are in the rooms. It's just like [... the class will be] watching a movie, the teacher's watching a movie and then... there's like a crowd of kids all around and just like, you know, encouraging them....

When asked what message she felt the hip hop artists were sending to males, Melissa replies:

> Uhmmm.... I don't know if this is like a real answer but: Guys will be guys.

Finally, when asked if she thought that other men find these images of women desirable, she notes:

> I think some men in some relationships want their females to be able to do more with them. So I guess, [when they] probably watch the music video, they're hoping maybe the women are gonna [going to] be more like the women on the television. But, then [again,]... Not all men are like that. Some men just kind of watch just for the sake of watching. I .... would probably say most men do watch the images of women to make it desirable for them [because it is appealing to them]. Uhm, probably something to watch. Something to keep them company. I guess maybe... for the third music video... in a way, it's like watching a porn. Uhm, most men will probably find it thrilling for their testosterone! <Laughs> They probably, I dunno... I think that they just kinda watch it for the sake of either watchin' it or because they want their woman to be like that or just like... the one time thing [something that they'll watch once, and the end up apologizing profusely to you for watching. They will say]... "I promise it won't happen again. It's not like I watch it every single day. It's not a habit. I'm just gonna watch it this one time and I promise never again."

Similar to my findings, Clay's (2003, p. 1354) research indicates that the cultural capital necessary for a female to engage successfully in hip-hop performance requires sexually provocative attire, conventionally feminine attractiveness and a sexually suggestive performance that evokes the same historical legacy that constructs Black femaleness as sexually available. Taken together, these findings suggest that in order for Black female youth to be socially acceptable, they increasingly must conform to a narrowly defined and highly heterosexualized female stereotype.

Thus, the mainstreaming of Black youth culture through hip hop has made misogynist and sexist ideas more universally accepted among young Blacks (Kitwana, 2002, p. 86). The wide acceptance of this portrayal reveals a transition in construction of identity and worldview that sets this generation apart from those previous in terms of guidelines for interpersonal relationships, dating, marriage, sex, love, and gender identity (p.86). It should be noted that there was no reference to same sex interactions or couples in this context.

Communal socialization & assimilation of attire. All five women noted, in some capacity, that their social upbringing was influential in determining the degree to which they conform and assimilate to the modes of dress depicted in the videos. It is worth noting, however, that there was ambiguity in participants' responses. Some questioned the very definition of what constituted a Black community, while others noted specifically how the images affected themselves as well as others in their communities. When Daniella was asked how she felt the images shown affected who or how she is as part of the African Canadian community, she states:

I think that you seen [one observes] how women are treated in the videos and how the videos are... there's a sense of expectancy [expectation] from society, you know, that they expect you to be like that [act like the images of Blackness portrayed on television], right?

Similarly, Tamara notes:

.... I know in my hometown, there's not a lot of Black female role models... and so basically, girls are watching BET and they're trying to model theirselves [themselves] after that [the images that they see]... So, it's really sad. Like, they don't show anything else but the videos and the video girls.

When Erika was asked if the images shown in the videos affect who or how she is as part of an African Canadian community, she replied that it depended on one's Black community. In this, she demonstrates an awareness of how other youth in her community are conforming to the images perpetuated in the videos by stating:

I guess, because a lot of it's in the videos, a lot [of] younger girls are now dressing beyond crazy [in a much more mature manner] like when we [in comparison to when I] used to go to school. I remember, when I was little. I never even thought about wearing a mini-skirt to my... like up here <points to her thighs>...

... That's just something we didn't do. Like, we wore, like, jeans. We wore like we were playin' outside [We wore appropriate clothing that suited the activity we were doing]...

... But, I mean, now because of all this, and the way that the videos are portrayed, it's making the younger girls see differently that they can't wear jeans.

When asked if the images shown in the music videos affect how she lives her life as a member of the African Canadian community, Melissa stated:

No, 'cause I know... Uhm, the Black communities in Nova Scotia... I would probably say... I don't live in a Black community; I live in a suburban area. But, where I'm from everyone watches music videos.

Therefore, for Melissa, her geographical location and her sense of living in and/ or belonging to the African Canadian community influences how she lives her life and the degree to which she feels effected by the music videos and the stereotypical images of Blackness portrayed in the hip hop videos explored.

When asked about the images shown in the music videos and whether or not they affected who or how she is as part of an African Canadian community, Heliotrope notes:

> Well, I guess it affects me in a good way 'cause I'm a very extroverted person. I [say] speak what I wanna [want to] speak. So, I think that if anything, it makes me someone who's gonna champion against these images because I see it all the time. I have, you know, 8 sisters and they're all younger than me except for one. So, I see how, they see these things and they think that it's okay. But… you know what I mean? But that's just what we [humans] do. But [However,] to trivialize like that is just… it's a problem. So, *I am* the champion AGAINST watching the videos. People don't like me very much because, I'll say: 'Well, why are you dressed like that? Why are you wearing that? or … You know what I mean, like, you're wearing all this stuff that's fake. *What is the point*? Do you know what I mean? *What is the point?* There is NO point. You're tryina be something you can't be because, you don't have the money. Nor do you have the talent <Chuckles sarcastically> to get there. Do you know what I mean? (Capitalized and Italicized to denote Heliotrope's emphasis)

When further asked about the images shown and whether or not that affected how she lives her life as a thirty-something member of an African Canadian community, Heliotrope says:

> I really would have to say 'no' on that because, uhm, I was adopted so, when I actually found my Black family, uhm, I just put importance on different things. I placed importance on family; I placed importance on maintaining relationships. So, I really have to say 'no' it doesn't. I kinda think too, [that the reason why that is,] is that I'm a little bit too old for it to affect me in that way. 'Cause if you asked me fifteen years ago, then yeah… I would have said 'yes' it would but, it doesn't right now.

Finally, when asked why the images needed to change, Heliotrope states:

> They need to change because, they're giving [sending out the wrong message. They're sending out the wrong information to the world. They're creating, hmm…. I don't know… It's like a whole sub-culture of [youth who] 'do whatever it takes to get what they see on the videos.' That can be hustling, that can be drug dealing, it can be pimping, it can be whatever it's gonna be… I'm not saying everybody does that. Some people go to work and they buy their stuff legitimately. But, you know, I see this… *all the time*….

> … Out in the communities, people do what they have to do. I kinda think [it's]… Like Malcolm X said: 'By Any Means Necessary' to get what they want. And, that's what they do. (Italicized to denote Heliotrope's emphasis.)

Thus, each participant's present social location, the character of her communal socialization and the degree to which she is able to reconcile both with her material aspirations and legitimate ways of realizing them shape the ways they internalize the images depicted in popular cultural forms such as hip hop videos.

In recalling Marcia's (1980) theory of ethnic identity, it can be said that all participants exhibit an 'achieved ethnic identity.' All participants attribute various agents of socialization including guardians, academic institutions, and religious/ spiritual institutions as instrumental in shaping their ethnic identity. In particular, aspirations of upward social mobility achieved through academic accomplishment play an influential role in creating a critical awareness of ethnic identity in relation to self-conception among the women interviewed.

Aside from acknowledging definitive differences between White and Black female youth's perception of beauty, as is indicated in Nichter's (2000) research findings regarding White and African American girls' definition of beauty, the academic literature reviewed did not identify one's communal socialization in Black communities as affecting the degree to which they assimilate to Westernized modes of dress and outward physical appearance.

Acknowledgement of the color caste system. Three of the five participants made specific mention of the color caste system in relation to themselves, others, and the video images. These remarks were often intermingled with those concerning Eurocentric standards of beauty, particularly as it relates to general appearance, skin color, body shape and hair texture. Two of the three participants also spoke about the color caste

system in conjunction with other themes. This awareness is best articulated by Tamara. While talking about Black hair and the social challenges of resisting Eurocentric styles and modes of appearance, when Tamara was asked if her parents discouraged her from growing her hair natural, she says:

> Yeah... Well, everybody did. They were like... I remember my Aunt Brenda- she not really my aunt but, that's what we call her- and she's like: "I don't know why God cursed *us* [Black folks] out of everyone on the earth to have this kind of hair" And, like, I finally got the nerve to wash it and let it go in a 'fro [an afro] and after all that time of pressin' it [because, I had typically straightened it with a flat iron], I didn't know how to deal with it. So, I just slapped a headband on it. I was scared to go out of the house. And, I remember, I was thinking about going natural again last summer... and I started to.... And, [But,] then it came to the summer, and the boys started coming around and stuff, and I just didn't think I could be attractive. I think that the videos have a lot to do with it. Like, I didn't think I could be cute with an afro. *Especially, being a dark-skinned Black girl... Like, I thought my sister: 'Oh, she's light-skinned... she could handle it 'cause she's not that Afrocentric. But, me, I'm dark. I can't have an afro.* So, that affected me. (Italicized for emphasis.)

Religiosity/ spirituality. As previously mentioned, this theme was not one identified as relevant in the scholarly works reviewed. For this reason, it is especially important to note. Four of the five young African Nova Scotian women interviewed engaged in discussion concerning their spiritual and/ or religious influences, and how it informed their self-conception in relation to the images of Blackness viewed. Daniella, Tamara, Erika, and Heliotrope illustrate these discussions.

With respect to Religiosity/ Spirituality, when Daniella was asked about how she likes to portray herself and whether or not she can identify with the video women, she hints to her sense of spirituality by stating:

> I [was] raised not to be out there and really be dressin' all slutty... But, you know what? I guess slutty is a really bad word, now that I think about it. Because, like, the definition of a slut... What is a slut?..... They could be makin' money and you know, flauntin' themselves or whatever but we as society get this picture [impression] that: oh you know, she's a 'ho', she's a freak, whatever, right. She

might... I can't really say <giggles> that she might be a Christian person but, you know, 'cause <Laughs> it looks kinda like... It wouldn't look too good if you went to the church the next day, right? And, were doin' that the night before or but... I can't really say that they would be like that, right? But, society forms that impression of women; that that's what they are because, how they're dressed and that's how they are but, they might not be like that.

Similarly, Tamara also indicates her sense of religiosity/ spirituality by noting the degree to which the images shown in the music videos affected who or how she is as a Black female. Specifically, she states:

And it [mainstream hip hop videos] affected what I listened to because, I kinda got away from gospel. I don't know... BET, like one thing [thing's for sure]- they don't show a balanced picture [of Black people]. So, I'd watch [the BET television show] 106 & Park [for all of] those hot videos those were my favorite songs of the week. Thank God, I grew out of it!

When I asked Erika if these images were a 'real' representation of how Black women (and other women of color) look, she notes:

.... I think that Black women...are... how do I say this?... I mean, we are like the spiritual race but, I mean, the typical video doesn't have like, a church-going female. Like, most Black people are a little more religious than other people. I mean, yes, you can try a mix of the two together, you know what I mean? Like, you should try to show a woman that she is more than just what meets the eye; more to a Black woman. A Black woman is capable of more than just singing, dancing , you know? Having different talents...

When asked if the images shown in the music videos affected who or how she is as part of an African Canadian community, part of Heliotrope's response was:

... I think that, uhm, as being part of the [African] Nova Scotian community, that it's important to have somebody who's... not, you know, condoning the behavior or the dress or the words of the behavior. Uhm, you know, I'm a Christian person but I don't come at it from that perspective. It's about *self-respect*. It's about your ancestors fighting. They didn't fight for us to do this. They fought for us to be a better person; a better nation of people. Not to degrade ourselves on a whole other level. You know what I mean? To me, it goes right back to slavery. Women... Black women were raped and were used for their bodies and were mistreated or whatever the situation may be but nobody is looking at the historical context of how this is all coming around. (Italicized to denote Heliotrope's emphasis)

Choices. The degree to which the video women participate in the genre willingly and knowledgably was another theme not identified in the literature review. But, it is certainly important to acknowledge. All five participants engaged in some form of discussion concerning whether or not the video women had made informed choices, specifically in: whether or not they wanted to be in the videos, were paid or simply participated in the videos for exposure or free merchandise, were free to choose what they wore and had some say in how they interacted within the videos. All participants remarked on these issues.

Daniella states:

> .... I understand these women, "ya [you] need to get paid and ya [you] need to get your money" but, there's... I found that there's [there are] so many other things that you can do to get money. You don't need to put yourself on the videos like that. Nobody's [Nobody is] forcing these women [portray themselves like that] to go on the t.v.'s like that, right? They're doin' [doing] that ALLLL ON THEIR OWN. They wanna [want to] <smirks> be in the fancy Snoop Dogg video, hey... you know what I mean? This is what he wants; this is what he told you, you're gonna be doin' [doing]. You could have said yay or nay [yes or no]. And they chose yay.

When Tamara was asked if she felt the women are objectified and if she thought the women were making the choice to be in the videos, she asserts:

> I mean, honesty, I think Nelly's video.... he just picked up any chick off the street that wanted to be in the video. Like, I don't that they were even paid for it 'cause there's so many women... Like, what are they gonna do?.... "K, can I get your name... how many hours [you] were you here?" <Sarcasm> Obviously.... <Starts laughing>... I don't know. I think it's both[28].

When questioned about what message the hip hop artist was sending to females,

Erika replies:

> I really don't think there's any message. It's just ... uhm....Maybe he's saying that they're, like, 'easy' because, I mean, obviously, the artist came and got these women...made them audition and then portray [portrayed them] that way in their videos. So, obviously, it can show [gives viewers the impression] that Black females are easy. And, I mean, that's not necessarily the truth because, chances are these women are being paid. And, that's what a lot of people have to realize.

> They are being paid. Who knows how much. Who knows what they're getting an hour. But, they are getting paid. So, people like us should realize that they're not necessarily there because they want to; they are getting paid for it...

Thus, for Erika, there was a sense that specific kinds of women are recruited for the auditions and that they are motivated mostly by the money. Similarly Heliotrope states:

> ... it's still the same principle. It's all based on sex and exploitation. Uhm, but the other side of that too is I know some of the women in these videos, and they don't look at it that way. They want to go and get the exposure. Most of the videos that they're in are for free; they don't get paid. But, they get the exposure; they get to say, I was in such and such's video. And maybe that'll put them out there for someone else to see them....

> ....I think the women *completely* disrespected themselves without the realization of what they were doing... a lot of women just kinda [kind of] do these things for the money but, you have to kinda [kind of] just realize that you're just disrespecting yourself in the end. (Italicized to illustrate Heliotrope's emphasis)

Melissa also viewed the women's participation in the videos as a form of employment, and when asked if hip hop videos influence the way that she dresses, Melissa further states:

> ... I don't really think that they influence me at all because, I kind of look at it...
> I think "well, she's just kind of doing it for the money." I wouldn't do it for the money if I was given the option!

In taking all of the participants' views into consideration, clearly four of the five Black female youth align in this way closely with contemporary liberal feminist views in that they either implicitly and/ or explicitly perceive Black females' inequities concerning issues of the body as stemming primarily from their inaccessibility to equal rights within existing hierarchal structures; in this case, the hip hop music industry. Liberal feminists also seek female equality with men, and while the women's responses illustrated this, they also acknowledged the ways in which Black males are also hyper-sexualized within hip hop videos. For these participants aligned with liberal feminism, reshaping individual beliefs within existing social structures will create change for all. This is exemplified in

their responses to the recurring theme "Racial Stereotypes of Black Female Sexuality & Their Social Consequences." Recall that the findings indicate that there is acknowledged social stigma surrounding the stereotypes of both Black females and males.

Heliotrope, the one participant whose comments are arguably more closely aligned with contemporary socialist feminism, engages in discussion that expands on traditional Marxism by condemning the capitalist mode of production. This is evident and littered in her responses to the prevalent themes: "Commodification & Product Placement," "Racial Stereotypes of Black Female Sexuality & Their Social Consequences," and "Parallels Between Lyrical Content & Images Depicted." All in all, Heliotrope stresses the belief that resistance and change occur only through praxis and consciousness-raising that seriously challenge existing social structures.

Black motherhood. A final theme that emerged from the data analysis that was not identified in the literature review was that of Black motherhood. Two of the five participants interviewed were mothers of daughters who expressed concern over their children's exposure to the visual and lyrical content of this music. They also emphasized the importance of guardians/ parents and other role models in acknowledging their responsibility to monitor children's exposure to the visual and lyrical content of the hip hop videos.

When Daniella was asked about how she felt about the portrayal of women in the videos, she begins answering by noting:

Well (a) it's definitely not meant for kids... right?

She further asserts:

> Like, as a parent, I wouldn't have my child watchin' [watching] NONE OF IT [these videos]...right? Uhhmmm... and if it's on TV. at, late at night (a) children shouldn't be up late at night, that's number one, right? And, two [b] I don't agree with havin' tvs in children's rooms anyways. So, mine wouldn't be doing it. Mine wouldn't. So, it's [these videos are] definitely made for someone who's an adult, you know, and who's grown and can understand what the whole video is about. Uhmm... so, that's, that's number one. But, I guess, to me it would depend on the person, if you find that it's a form of entertainment or if it's a form of degrading and you know...

> ...I'm a firm believer of, uhm, [teaching your] children [to] do, you know, what, how you raise them [what you tell them to do]. So if I'm raisin' my child properly to know that (a) she ain't suppose to be watchin' these videos in the first place, then miss [Participant's daughter's name] is gonna remove herself from.. that room and ya know, go about her business. Whereas [another] other person might be like, you know, "I can let my child do whatever," then that can... that's... that's on the person. That's... I think that's on how the parent would raise the child. (Emphasized courtesy of Daniella.)

When discussing the impact hip hop videos and song lyrics have on children, Heliotrope states:

> ... You know, you like the beat of a song but, you're not listening to what the lyrics are saying. So, [Well,] you know, what if you're listen to a song and something comes up and, you know, your child is in the backseat singing the song and saying the words... Hello? Whose fault is that? You don't get upset with them. IT'S YOUR FAULT 'cause [because] you let them watch [listen to] it. And, you let them hear it. So, me as a Black woman, I don't like it so, I don't watch it. It's not on in my house; my daughter doesn't see it. Now, I do have family members that let their kids- YOUNG CHILDREN; a year and a half and up... Oldest being almost 8 years old- watch BET. This is the images that you're seeing and the images that they're hearing. And, it's NOT GOOD. (Emphasized courtesy of Heliotrope.)

Thus, findings concur with Collins' (2000) concept of Black motherhood as placing a strong emphasis on protection, either by trying to shield their daughters as long as possible from the penalties attached to their derogated status or by teaching them skills of independence and self-reliance so they will be able to protect themselves (p.176).

Channel Guide

This Channel defines the prevalent analytical themes and explores each as it emerged from the data vis-à-vis the women's responses. Three of the twelve themes - Religiosity/ Spirituality, Choices, and Black motherhood - were not identified as salient in the literature reviewed but arguably proved to be central to how women internalize Black female sexual politics as depicted in popular culture.

Taken together, the research findings from this project are mostly positive. For one thing, findings indicate that all participants exhibit an 'achieved ethnic identity' (Marcia, 1980). Achievement of such an identity is due, in part, to a clear sense of religiosity/ spirituality. In fact, for some, it became evident that religiosity/ spirituality played an influential role in their sense of self, and served as an internal coping mechanism from which to resist negative mainstream messages. This finding is strengthened by Shilling (2003, p. 2), who argues that "those who are not heavily grounded in religious authorities and grand political narratives focus on the body as a means of providing a concrete foundation on which to reconstruct a reliable sense of self in the modern world."

Although findings from this research are not generalizable to the total population, discussing the degree to which young African Nova Scotian women internalize the content of hip hop videos surely begins by noting several points. By interviewing young African Nova Scotian women who were, at one time, marginal to the academic realm but have since transformed into what Collins (2000) calls 'marginal intellectuals' has opened a space where they began to critically consume, conceptualize, challenge, and resist the stereotypical depiction of Black female sexual politics.

In the next Channel, a summary of the findings is presented. Following the Discussion Channel is the Concluding Channel, which addresses the limitations of the research, directions for further study, and the social policy implications of the research findings.

Channel Four

Discussion

This research examines how hip hop videos affect young African Nova Scotian women in terms of self-conception and how such images influence how they function in their everyday lives. Most of the young women interviewed felt that the images depicted in the videos underscored Black male superiority, subjection, and cultural capital while neglecting to depict the women in a manner that indicated any positive talents or skills. Most of the participants also identified and discussed the degree to which Black females and males are sexualized in the videos, noting that there are very few counter-hegemonic messages within hip hop. Such messages are problematic because of the stereotypical images they perpetuate of the Black community at large.

All the young Black women interviewed felt that the video women were portrayed as sexually promiscuous, which creates negative social implications concerning the value and meaning of the Black female body. In fact, in terms of marketing and product placement, women interviewed felt that male hip hop artists commodify images of the Black female body namely through hip hop fashion, placing value on her based on her style of dress. Moreover, most of the interviewees felt that the video images evoke and reinscribe traditional, sexist customs that youth often used as guidelines in order to determine how to engage in a heterosexual relationship with the opposite sex.

Both Heliotrope and Daniella expressed concern over their children's exposure to the visual and lyrical content of this music. In fact, it was noted that some of the hip hop artists' roles as fathers illustrate that there are tensions and contradictions between the personal roles they assume, and their willingness to act as social role models. To

champion against such tensions and contradictions, both Heliotrope and Daniella emphasized the importance of guardians/ parents and other role models in supervising their children's exposure to audiovisual messages and images.

All five of the young Black women interviewed felt socially pressured to assimilate to eurocentric standards of beauty, choosing to alter their outward appearance, specifically their hair, to appear more attractive. In terms of how much they actually succumb to these pressures themselves, some women's responses were somewhat contradictory. The findings centering on the color caste system also provided explanation about this pressure to comply with eurocentric beauty. Furthermore, each interviewee's social location and the nature of her communal socialization also played a pivotal role in shaping how she both views the images depicted in hip hop videos and is viewed by others as result of such images.

All interviewees note the difference between the origins and initial essence of rap music and the state of present-day hip hop, and engaged in discussion about politically conscious hip hop artists who do not receive as much support on televised music stations as opposed to their commercialized counterparts. None of the participants mentioned the names of any politically conscious Canadian hip hop artists. This cannot go unacknowledged, for it illustrates the pervasiveness and dominance of Americanized popular culture and the submergence of conscious Canadian hip hop artists within Canada.

Finally, the interviewees acknowledged the role of religion/spirituality and academic achievement in assisting them in resisting hegemonic and stereotypical representations of the Black female body.

Despite these many positive findings, there are several limitations of these research findings that should be identified. Further, it is also worth noting that this research suggests several areas of consideration for further study.

Conclusion

There are several key arguments and/ or themes addressed in the research. In essence, my research addressed a gap in the existing literature pertaining to Black youth and hip hop culture by examining the extent to which the audiovisual representations of Black female body found within rap videos affect young African Nova Scotian women's self-conception. More specifically, this research elicited two major areas of investigation. The first investigated how (non-/) assimilation to White, eurocentric, and Americanized culture effects one's sense of self. The final area investigated whether or not anything had been done or remains to be done to effect change. The notion of hip hop was characterized as a being a form of cultural capital. My Discussion Channel outlines further points for researcher to consider and was to influence and address social policy implications for young African Nova Scotian women (as well as Black females, more generally speaking,) about images concerning images of body.

In other words, this research contextualized a Canadian perspective on these images as reported by young African Nova Scotian women. Its primary focus was on Black female sexual politics and the representation of gender within hip hop music videos in an attempt to elicit young women's perceptions of the images illustrated and their relevance to the experiences these youth encounter in everyday life.

The research took a qualitative, Black feminist approach, using: (a) a pre-test designed to ensure that the language and guided questions generated are written in an accessible and a comprehensible manner; and (b) several separate interviews which acts a as forum for the Black female youth to examine three male, commercialized, American hip hop artists. The hip hop artists and videos examined were: (1) 50 Cent's "Candy

Shop," (2) Snoop Dogg's "Drop It Like It's Hot" and (3) Nelly's "Tip Drill." In this context, my hope has been that Black feminist theory will serve to reveal the social processes that construct issues surrounding body image, and self-conception as it pertains to a Black female youth cohort.

This research attempted to demystify, whereby the act of obtaining and transmitting knowledge created the potential for change because the paucity of research about certain groups has accentuated and perpetuated their powerlessness (Rose 2001C, p. 4). I obtained knowledge from the participants, from doing academic research, and from all of the individuals mentioned in my acknowledgements. I intend to transmit knowledge through the very creation of this thesis, and by sending the participants, at their request, a summary of research findings. This acknowledgement was vital to my research, given the marginality of the demographic being researched and the history of their communal and socio-economic needs that have gone unaddressed (Reinharz, 1992, p. 191; Rose 2001D; Este and Bernard 2003). It is in this sense that I hope the research will not merely describe but be oriented toward emancipation. I also hope that my research will influence social services, specifically health care professionals as well as social and health care policymakers. Outsider researchers can then collaborate with people close to the experience of the research, taking direction for the focus and the research questions from the collaborators (Reinharz, 1992; Rose, 2001C, p. 4). Thus, it is in this sense that there is an agency orientation within my research methods.

So, whose revolution is televised? In essence, my findings indicate that it is the male hip hop artists' revolution that is televised. In terms of the two major areas of investigation explored within this research, the findings suggest two things. First, that

most of the young African Nova Scotian women consumed the images to some extent. However, they also resorted to various strategies such as being rooted in their religiosity/ spirituality, and academic achievement - as a means of resisting assimilation to White, western culture. Secondly, most of the participants noted that it seems as though little (if anything) has been done to change these images. Perhaps this is because the pervasiveness of cultural, economic, and symbolic capital is far too appealing for hip hop artists and the music conglomerates they serve to critically assess the ultimate cost of placing an economic value on the objectified state of cultural capital - the Black female body.

True change lies in creating a hierarchal paradigm shift in all parties involved in the production of hip hop music videos. In terms of what can be done to bring about positive change, all participants note that one such small step begins by stating the obvious: Putting clothes on the video women! But, clearly real change occurs from doing more than just clothing the video women. A poignant suggestion by Heliotrope stresses the vital importance of activism.

In terms of advocacy and activism, Collins (2004, p. 307) postulates that Black female (and male) youth should seize agency, produce honest bodies, honest loving relationships, and African American [Canadian] communities based on loving virtues by developing a free mind. In fact, hooks (2003, p. 225) echoes Collins thought that the goal of freely held human agency has historically been a guiding principle in the lives of African-Americans [-Canadians]. Collins (2004) urges Black females (and males) to champion against ideas and practices- especially those concerning Black sexual politics- that are disempowering throughout the entire system because failure to do so will render

Black folks an impoverished future.

So, how do Black female (and male) youth build and solidify their self-esteem and identity? All in all, most participants in this study have been able to resist hegemonic messages that do not pose threats to the status quo by: (a) being and remaining grounded in their religious/ spiritual affiliation, and (b) giving voice to multiple, interlocking systems of oppression as a means of acknowledging and creating self-consciousness/ self-awareness about resisting hegemony. hooks (2003) adds to this thinking by informing us that "knowing that care of the soul is essential for survival and is the inherited wisdom that can provide us the metaphysical foundation on which to create healthy self-esteem" (p.223). Moreover, she also asserts that "the power of soul fosters in us an awareness that we must care for the needs of our spirits and seek an emancipatory spirituality" (p.226). In essence, nourishing one's soul is the first step to surviving and resisting hegemony and self-hatred.

In *Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery*, hooks (1993, p. 167-8) also notes that healing the wounds of the internalized sexism experienced by Black males and other oppressors begins by Black females acknowledging and challenging their own prejudices regarding sexism, as well as acting compassionately and exercising forgiveness toward Black males and perhaps other oppressors as well. For, it is compassion and forgiveness that makes reconciliation possible.

Limitations of this Research

There are four limitations to this study:

1)   **Sample size:** All possible options to recruit participants for this study were explored.   I cannot pinpoint any particular reason as to why so few responses regarding interest in participating in this study were received. Perhaps my name is unfamiliar to some in the African Nova Scotian community or perhaps it is because no financial compensation was provided[29].

Although information on the research project and recruiting posters were disseminated to various outlets and email list serves such as the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs, Black Student Advisory Centres, etc., only five women came forward to be interviewed for this study. Further, it is impossible to determine what proportions of the entire population of eligible women are represented by the five interviewees. The exact number of young African Nova Scotian women enrolled in their first or second year of university cannot be determined because there are no records kept of students' ethnicity or 'race' in Canadian Universities.

2)   **Who Constitutes African Canadian within Nova Scotia? :** From what I gather, the standard definition of who constitutes an "African Canadian" within Nova Scotia is as follows: (a) one must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada whose parent(s) is/ are of African descent (Black); (b) one must be residents of Nova Scotia for three or more years[30]. This limitation may have effected how individuals thought of themselves as ineligible for this study. I did not want to create an alternative definition as my focus was on interviewing Black female youth, who

self-define as Nova Scotian. If they did so, and were in their first or second year of university they were eligible to participate.

3)   **Interviewing the Inspiring Cohort:** Another limitation of this study includes the insurmountable obstacles involved in interviewing the cohort that initially inspired the research. While it proved useful to speak to young Black female youth who were academically motivated and thus had some working knowledge of the challenges that Black females face as it relates to images of Blackness, at times it seemed that this sample gave text-book answers as opposed to authentic, reflexive responses. I suspect that this would not have been the case, had I interviewed the cohort that originally inspired the research topic.

4)   **Interview Sequencing:** In terms of the sequence in which the separate one-on-one interviews were conducted, it probably would have been best to view a video, and then ask the questions, etc... This may be more time consuming for each of the participants but the researcher would receive more thorough responses to some questions. (For example, see question # 5 of the Questionnaire for Guidance).

Further Considerations

The following are nine areas for further consideration that researchers should keep in mind:

1. **Research from a collective perspective:** Future researchers interested in developing this study further should also examine how the notions of social-identity and collective-identity effect Black female youth.

2. **Different sequence of focus groups:** In terms of the sequence in which a focus group or how the collective research could be conducted, it is suggested that they view a video, then ask the questions (excluding the questions about one's self, and using more collective-oriented questions), etc.

3. **Research from a gendered approach:** Taking a more gendered approach to this kind of research is also important. It is important to examine the degree to which African Canadian youth, broadly speaking, and African Nova Scotian youth, more specifically speak of and consume the images of both Black masculinity and femininity. Further, it is important to see how these images affect their sense of self-conception, as well as social- and collective-identity.

4. **Afro-Americanization of White Canadian youth and the 'Inverted' Oreo Effect:** According to Cornel West (1993; Kitwana, 2002, p. 10), the high level of visibility of young Blacks in American popular culture is referred to as the Afro-Americanization of White youth. He further asserts that:

> The Afro-Americanization of White youth has been more a male than female affair given the prominence of male athletes and the cultural weight of male pop artists. This results in White youth- male and female-imitating and emulating Black male (and female) styles of walking, talking, dressing and gesticulating in relations to others. (1993; p.10)

The Afro-Americanization of White youth, as reflected in CD sales, has major implications for how both White youth and White adults perceive Black youth. In 2001, over 89 million hip hop CDs were sold (Cole & Guy-Sheftall, 2003, p. 184). Suburban White youth (more specifically, White middle class males) are now purchasing approximately 60 percent of rap CDs[31]. Custodians of a billion dollar global hip hop music market, multinational conglomerates (Sony, Warner Brothers, EMI, MCA, BMG, and Polygram), only one of which is USA-

owned, are now major players in packaging and distribution of damaging racial/

sexual images, and the overriding goal is profits (p.184; Kitwana, 1994).

Black scholars Cole, Guy-Sheftall and Kitwana note that:

> In fact, often highlighted are those aspects of rap which... do not threaten the status quo, reinforce negative stereotypes about Blacks, and manipulate those stereotypes to increase sales... Countless artists in search of securing record deals report that they are often told that their message is not hard enough, that they are too clean-cut, that "hardcore" is what is selling now...essentially the message is that "gangsta" rap is "in" (p.184; p.23).

Whether or not the three hip hop artists (Snoop, 50 Cent, and Nelly) discussed

throughout this research are some of the 'countless artists' Kitwana is referring to

is unknown.

With all this in mind, a kind of 'inverted oreo effect' (as I like to call it) is

created, where the outside of the cookie contains White male corporate power and

predominately White male consumer power, which dictates how the dominant

African American male hip hop artists in the music industry can produce music.

Further, the same authorities influence which images of the Black female body

within Black (American male) hip hop music videos are perpetuated.

Furthermore, predominately White male consumer power may also aid in

explaining why so few Black conscious hip hop artists receive so little airplay and

(seemingly,) so little support from the dominant consumer-selling demographic.

On a final note, Kitwana (2002, p. 212) states that young White powers that be

within the rap industry could challenge the status quo by creating a unified front

and using their knowledge and privilege to narrow the racial divides that exist

both inside and outside of the industry.

It would be interesting to explore these ideas, especially from a Canadian context. Specifically, it would interesting to explore the notions of the Afro-Americanization of the White Canadian youth and the 'inverted oreo effect,' as these notions have major social implications in terms of how they affect White Canadian youth as well as White Canadian folks' perceptions and relations with Black Canadian female (and male) youth. Recall Tamara's discussion of how images depicted on BET are very impressionable in forming and informing White folks perceptions about her and other Black folks in her community.

5. **Alternative Televised Media:** Social policy can strengthen some of these further considerations by championing for depictions that pose a threat to the status quo in various ways. One such simple change that can occur to combat these stereotypical generalizations of Black folks worldwide is by making major strides within local alternative television programming.

According to omnitv.ca,[32]

OMNI Television which has expanded its broadcasting from Ontario to Manitoba and British Columbia, launched OMNI.1 (CFMT), Canada's first free multilingual/multicultural television system that was licensed in 1979 as Channel 47 in Toronto. Rogers Broadcasting Limited acquired controlling interest of OMNI.1 (CFMT) in 1986. Since its beginnings, OMNI.1 (CFMT) has expanded its viewer base by approximately 90% in the province of Ontario.

As a leading provider of ethnocultural television programming, OMNI.1 (CFMT) broadcasts large portions of their programming in more than 15 languages to communities encompassing more than 18 cultures. Its ongoing

commitment to reflecting the evolving needs of its diverse audience is evident in their regular production schedule that broadcasts more than 22 hours of original multilingual programming produced each week.

Furthermore, as a companion diversity channel to OMNI.1, OMNI.2 provides programming in 20 additional languages for than 22 more ethnocultural groups. OMNI.1 (CFMT-TV) now principally serves the local European, Latino and Caribbean communities, while OMNI.2's programming reflects the local Pan Asian and African population.

Creating and transmitting a "OMNI Television: Nova Scotia" (much like BET,) that is on regular television would be the first step toward providing all homes in the Maritimes with an accurate, insightful, and enriching depiction of issues and entertainment that resonate (specifically,) with African Nova Scotians and Black Canadians (as well as other people of color, at large). This would be a step towards to countercultural messages that hooks (2003) notes are so lacking in Black (American and Canadian) youth culture.

6. **Education:** Parallel to Mahiri's (2000, p. 382) argument about the positive aspects of hip hop culture, education and academia have provided a positive outlet for the participants (and myself) whereby, their upward social mobility has empowered, enlightened, and inspired them to become more knowledgeable and critically engaged as is reflected in their responses during their interviews-with issues they face as Black females. Further, unsung sheroes (and heroes) within the African Nova Scotian communities (as well as African Canadians, at large,) have willingly engaged in controversial debates about Afrocentric teaching,

stressing the importance of its integration into academia in order to help shape the minds of up and coming Black intellectuals and their White colleagues counterparts. This positive outlet also has social policy implications, in that it reinforces debates supporting the *integration* of Afrocentric teachings into educational institutions in Nova Scotia, and cross-provincially (Dei, 1993, 1994).

7. **Negative Impact on Gender Interactions:** Examining how these negative images of hip hop effect how Black male and female youth interact with one another is also an important issue to explore. The findings within this research indicate that some of the participants (i.e. Daniella and Tamara) note that the images depicted within the hip hop videos may instruct youth on how to interact with one another. Furthermore, hip hop's role in shaping a whole generation's worldview, including our ideas about sex, love, friendship, dating and marriage, indicates rap music importance because it is critical to any understanding of the hip hop generation's gender crisis and other social challenges[33] (Kitwana, 2002, p. 87).

8. **Remnants of Controlling, Sexist Ideology:** Kitwana (2002, p. 91) also notes that there seems to be a resurgence among many young Black men of outdated ways of thinking, like keeping women in their place by any means necessary. Clearly, this thinking plays itself out in hip hop videos where the controlling images of the Black female body are made apparent. Hip hop's perpetuation of this outdated thinking has been internalized by Black female youth in a way that has influenced how they feel that they (as well as other females) should conduct themselves.

Such examples can be demonstrated in the participants' responses to the reflecting prevalent theme "Reinscribing Controlling Images of Black Womanhood."

Although feminism has helped to influence society's perceptions of women's bodies, tensions and contradictions still exist within the Black community (stemming largely from Christian religious organizations, often led by male authority figures whose teachings still sermonize semi-traditional, androcentric thinking) about how the Black female body is negatively perceived if it is not contained and/ or controlled (Cole & Guy-Sheftall, 2003). That is, the Black female body is, in essence, valued only when and if it is controlled.

9. **Determinants of Health:** The *Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)*[34] notes that various determinants that can affect one's health and well-being. The determinants applicable to this research are: gender, culture, education, health services, geography and social environment. All these determinants of health impact and are impacted by how these Black female youth female function in the everyday lives. The medium of hip hop music videos is a social force that both influences and is influenced by these determinants of health. Social policy-makers and analysts should use all of the prevalent themes discussed in this research and consider exploring and analyzing the degree to which hip hop music videos as a social force affects health and well-being of youth.

This is because remnants of various social inequities concerning the body are also apparent in our everyday social structures, particularly in our health care system. If controlling and hyper-sexualized images of the Black female body are

regularly consumed by youth, this has implications for how they occupy their own bodies and how others expect them to function in their bodies.

Channel Guide

The concluding Channel addresses the limitations of the research, further considerations, and social policy implications. The following four research limitations: (1) the sample size was small; (2) it was difficult to determine who classified themselves as African Canadian; (3) the inspiring cohort was not used; and (4) the sequencing of the interviews could have been done differently.

I also noted the following nine future considerations: (1) Examine the notion of Black sexual politics and its impact on Black collective-identity; (2) Different sequencing of focus groups; (3) Approach this research with a gendered lens; (4) Examine the impact that African Americanization has on the White youth and folks; (5) Develop and implement alternative televised media; (6) Note education's impact on fostering and implementing critical media literacy and awareness programmes; (7 & 8) Create open dialogue within Black communities about the sexist ideologies that still exist and its impact on youth socialization and interactions; and (9) Examine the degree to which hip hop videos as a social force influences and is influenced by determinants of health that affect Black youth's everyday lives.

Endnotes

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[1] Images of Body: Many of the notions of body image discovered upon reviewing the literature, have examined the notion from a psychological perspective, focusing primarily on issues of weight preoccupation, degree of body dissatisfaction and body mass index. The research aligns itself with Black American feminist discourse, which discusses the notion of the Black body by examining how images within popular culture shape Black people and culture. While it can be said that there are interconnections between the two notions, my focus within this study is on images of Black body.

[2] The title of this thesis was originally, *Whose Revolution Is Televised?: A Debunking of Black Nova Scotian Female Youth's Sexual Politics In Hip Hop Culture & Everyday Life*. The title change occurred because I initially had different areas of investigation that I set out to examine. However, modifications to these areas of investigation changed the context of what I was focusing on in my thesis, making it important to change the title. Much thanks and respect is extended to Talib Kweli, Sarah Jones, and Gil Scott-Heron for helping to inspire the title. Particular props are extended to Scott-Heron who wrote a poem entitled "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised," as a form of commentary in response to the socio-political events that were taking place in America during the 1960s and 1970s. Other conscious artists have drawn from Scott-Heron's works. Such examples are Jones and Kweli. Hip hop feminist, Sarah Jones, wrote the song "Your Revolution." The song acted as feminist commentary in response to misogyny laden within mainstream hip hop music. Talib Kweli has been well-renown within the underground/ alternative hip hop scene for his musical consciousness. His track entitled "Beautiful Struggle" makes reference to Scott-Heron's poem.

[3] In Collins (2000, p. 72-84) chapter entitled "Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images" she discusses three controlling images of Black womanhood: (1) The Mammy; (2) Welfare Queen; and (3) the jezebel, whore or 'hoochie'.

[4] Jewell (1993, p. 37) notes that "the evolution of mammy can be largely attributed to some female slaves being assigned the arduous responsibility of performing domestic duties for the family of the slave owner." See Jewell's Chapter 3 "Cultural images as symbols of African American Womanhood" in *From mammy to Miss America and beyond: cultural images and the shaping of US social policy* for examples of more nexuses of controlling images of Black womanhood.

[5] One such example of an urgent social matter mentioned by Buchanan (1993) that stood out to me in reading was "the miseducation of ourselves and our children" (p. 36). She does not elaborate on what is meant by this. Scholar, Carl James (2003) how can provide better understanding of this urgent social matter. In *Seeing ourselves: Exploring race, ethnicity and culture*, he engages in discussion centering around how individuals come to learn and know about identity, diversity and difference. For James (2003) generating discussion about identity, diversity and difference began in the classroom where he would ask students to introduce themselves, first by name and program, and then by ethnic background, 'race', nationality, and their self-identified cultural group. In conducting this exercise, he found that "many Black Caribbean participants... particularly those under twenty-two years of age and late adults, often insisted on identifying their ethnicity as West Indian, Caribbean, Jamaican, Trinidadian, and so on, rather than African. For those Caribbean Africans, the presentation of negative images and their miseducation made them want to disassociate themselves from Africa." Such miseducation is problematic because it weakens group solidarity within Black racial groups. Furthermore, this miseducation is thought to occur because of the lack of afrocentric teaching that takes place within existing educational institutions within Canada.

[6] Wikepedia.org, provides an excellent summary of Bourdieu's forms of capital. In *The Forms of Capital* (1986), Bourdieu distinguishes between three types of capital: (1) Economic capital: command over economic resources (cash, assets); (2) Social capital: resources based on group membership, relationships, networks of influence and support; and (3) Cultural capital: forms of knowledge; skill; education; any advantages a person has which give them a higher status in society, including high expectations. Later, in his *Distinction*, he coined the term symbolic capital: which can be referred to as the amount of honor and prestige possessed by a person with regards to acting structures. Although there is mention of others, the form of capital of focus in this research is explicitly cultural capital. Sources: (1) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_capital#Relation_to_other_types_of_capital, (2) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolic_capital

[7] Specifically, Bourdieu discusses two types of social class and their social location: (1) The working classes tend to develop an instrumental relation to their body as they have little time free from necessity;

the body is a means to an end (Shilling, 2003, p. 114). (2) In contrast, the dominant classes have the time and resources to treat the body as a project " with variants according to whether the emphasis is placed on the intrinsic functioning of the body as an organism, which leads to the macrobiotic cult of health, or on the appearance as a perceptible configurations" (p.115). That is, the dominant classes tend not to be overly concerned with producing a large, strong body, but with a slim body better "suited to a world in which economic practice is constituted more strongly by the presentation of the self" (p.115).

[8] According to Shilling, (1993; 2003, p. 2) Anthony Gidden uses the term 'high modernity' to describe the radicalization of modern trends in the late twentieth century. Examples of such radical modern trends are: (a) the facilitation of the increase in the degree of control that nation states in general, and medical professions in particular, have been able to exert over the bodies of their citizens; and (b) reduction in the power of religious authorities to define and regulate bodies. He further notes that with the decline of formal religious frameworks in the West which constructed and sustained existential and ontological certainties residing outside the individual, and the massive rise of the body in consumer culture as a bearer of symbolic value, there is a tendency for people in high modernity to place even more importance on the body as constitutive of the self (p.2). For those who have lost their faith in religious authorities and grand political narratives, and are no longer provided with a clear world view or self-identity by these trans-personal meaning structures, at least the body initially appears to provide a firm foundation on which to reconstruct a reliable sense of self in the modern world (p.2).

[9] According to Encarta Online, Street wear: is "fashionable clothing for young people: fashionable casual clothing worn by young people in urban areas." Retrieved October 17, 2006, from: http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_/street%2520wear.html

[10] Neither Dyson (1996), nor Mahiri and Conner (2003) define what is meant by the term 'sexual outlaws.' It is my thought that the implications of the use of the term is that Black men are "sexually habitual criminals." Source: *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.* Collins (2004, p. 151) helps to explain this ideology of criminality when she asserts that "as is the case for controlling images of Black femininity, representations of Black masculinity reflect a similar pattern of highlighting certain ideas, in this case, the sexuality; uncivilized sexuality and violence that crystallizes in the new racism."

[11] Though I draw from the theoretical perspectives of various academic disciplines, my work is most heavily influenced by African American feminist theory.

[12] For the purposes of this research, reflexivity is best defined in relation to standpoint feminism. A feminist standpoint is grounded in the experience of women who are reflexively engaged in a struggle or confusion, and knowledge arises from this intellectual and political engagement (Letherby, 2003, p. 45). Thus, reflexivity within research is not a problem but a scientific resource, and the use of reflexivity leads to strong objectivity (Letherby, 2003, p. 45).

[13] The Youth Transitional Facility is a pseudonym.

[14] I use the terms "researched," "participant," and "interviewee" as opposed to "subject" to imply that as a researcher, I acknowledge that the individuals involved in this study are being researched and voluntarily choose to engage in it. Further, this shows that the researcher acknowledges her role of power and is responsible for ensuring that the research is undertaken in a non-exploitative manner. "Subject" implies exploitation and that the individuals involved in the study are used.

[15] These are the "at-risk" female youth living in residential facilities (similar to my place of employment). I use the term "at-risk" loosely because, technically, one can argue that all youth are "at-risk." I acknowledge that this term is problematic because it has traditionally been used by researchers to refer to youth from marginalized, low socioeconomic status backgrounds who engage in 'risky' behaviors. This, however, is not always the case.

[16] One peer reviewer posed the following question: If this is your population why begin your section identifying another group? The alternative cohort is chosen because they can share both direct and indirect experiences of living in or knowing relatives and/ or friends who live in these settings and conditions. I discovered this phenomenon in working and becoming familiar with the African Nova Scotian community. More informally speaking, Black female youth at the age of nineteen and over are still heavily influenced by hyper-sexualized images of blackness everyday. In essence, the "at-risk" youth from the Youth Transitional Facility serve to inform the reader that they (as well as my personal experiences) have *inspired* this research topic.

[17] Use of the term 'real' was modified, and [realistic] was added in brackets within Appendices A and B so as to emphasize that the use of the term 'realistic' implies that it is an accurate representation of women and not an idealization. Use of the term 'real' could be interpreted as implying a verifiable, factual, and/ or essentialist representation of women.

[18] While the former two videos are likely to be viewed on BET's regular daytime programming, the latter is viewed on BET's uncut in the early hours of the morning. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BET:_Uncut at Wikipedia for further description. Despite its airing time, youth can and still have access to this material, particularly through other means (such as the internet).

[19] See Billboard. 2005. "Top R&B/ Hip Hop Albums" 117(11): 25 as well as other weekly Billboard sales information in 2005 for further details.

[20] I had initially wanted to compare female hip hop music videos to those of males but have not seen a single solo female hip hop artist with a hit single since I started watching and examining BET in September 2004. The reasoning behind the possible use of the female hip hop artist was to compare how females are portrayed in men's videos versus the portrayal of a female artist (and possibly other females) in their videos.

[21] See limitation in the Discussion section for further details.

[22] Heliotrope was the only one to choose her pseudonym. According to her, it means 'purple' which is her favorite color. All other participants did not choose a pseudonym. I chose them at random and whim.

[23] The videos were downloaded online and saved on a CDRW disc. No piracy or copyright infringements were violated because the videos are considered public domain. With that being said, the videos were used *solely* for the purposes outlined in this research: for the participants to view and discuss during the interviews.

[24] A few individuals have commented on the number of prevalent themes explored. Although they are by no means mutually exclusive, I have decided to refrain from collapsing them any further because doing so would detract the reader from the impact that these themes have on Black folks and their ability to navigate through their everyday lives. For example, one might question why the theme 'Acknowledgement of the Color Caste System' was not collapsed with 'Racial Stereotypes of Black Female Sexuality & Their Social Consequences'? There are distinctions between the notions of 'racial stereotypes' and 'color caste system'. The former notion is an oversimplified *conception* (understanding) of Black folks as a group (Encarta.com). The latter notion is founded on a *belief* that is socially re-enacted and re-inscribed in dominant culture by using assimilation to eurocentric standards of beauty as means of exchanging preferential treatment.

[25] A do-rag, also spelled doo-rag or durag or dheauwrog is a simple piece of cloth tied at the back, used to cover the head. Courtesy of reference.com. Retrieved on November 6, 2006, from http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/Do-rag.

[26] See Collins' (2004) chapter 5: Booty Call: Sex, Violence, and Images of Black Masculinity in *Black Sexual Politics*. Pp. 152-166.

[27] To "go down on a guy"- refers to giving/ performing oral sex on a male (i.e. fellatio).

[28] 'Both' meaning that they're being objectified while making the choice to be in the videos.

[29] Jane Hebert questioned me about this. She was informed that while I could not offer financial compensation to the participants their participation was for their own benefit as they would given an opportunity express their questions and concerns about their own sexual politics.

[30] This is according to the African Canadian Services and Dalhousie University's websites. See http://www.registrar.dal.ca and http://acs.ednet.ns.ca for further details.

[31] It is important to note that these numbers are based on American record sales.

[32] See "About OMNI Television" at their website: http://www.omnitv.ca/ontario/info/

[33] Kitwana uses the term gender crisis to refer to the gender divide that has been created due to the universalization and normalization of hip hop artists' misogynist ideologies that have been played out in their lyrical and video content. See Kitwana's Chapter 4. i.e. "Where Did Our Love Go?" in *The Hip Hop Generation* (2002) for further details.

[34] PHAC also notes other determinants of health not list here. However, the six focused on in this research are defined as follows: (1) Education-Health status improves with each level of education. Education increases opportunities for income and job security, and gives people a sense of control over life circumstances - key factors that influence health; (2) Social Environments- Social stability and strong communities can help reduce health risks. Studies have shown a link between low availability of emotional

support, low social participation, and mortality (whatever the cause); (3) Geography- Whether people live in remote, rural communities or urban centres can have an impact on their health; (4) Health Services - Health services, particularly those designed to maintain and promote health, to prevent disease, and to restore health and function, contribute to the population's health; (5) Gender- Women are more vulnerable to sexual or physical violence, low income, single parenthood, and health risks such as accidents, STDs, suicide, smoking and physical inactivity. Measures to address gender inequality within and beyond the health system improve population health; and (6) Culture- Belonging to a particular race or ethnic or cultural group influences population health. The health of members of certain cultural groups (e.g. First Nations, visible minorities, and recent immigrants) can be more vulnerable because of their cultural differences and the risks to which they are jointly exposed.

Please see Public Health Agency of Canada's Website at: http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/media/nr-rp/2006/2006_06bk2_e.html#7 for further information about "Determinants of Health."

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Guidance:

Thank you for taking the time beforehand to review these questions and making sure that you understand them.

I also wish thank you for participating in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to view three music videos: 50 Cent's "Candy Shop," Snoop Dogg's "Drop It Like It's Hot," and Nelly's "Tip Drill" and then to answer/ discussed questions. The questions will be answered/ discussed immediately after viewing each video.

Please be advised that it is not required that you answer any or all of the following questions. The questions are provided to serve as a guide to help generate thoughts about the videos and particular chosen scenes. Should you have any other questions, thoughts, comments or concerns regarding these music videos you are encouraged to share them. This should take approximately 30-45 minutes of your time.

The questions for each video are as follows:

1. How do you feel about the portrayal of women in this video?
2. What *message* do you think the hip hop artist is sending to females? Males?
3. What *image* do you think the hip hop artist is sending to females? Males?
4. Do you think that other men find these images of women desirable? Why or why not?
5. What types of women are portrayed as desirable in this video? What do they look like?
6. In terms of looks and how you like to portray yourself, can you identify with these women?
7. Would you say you model the way that you look, dress, and act like the women in these videos? If so, how and why? If not, how and why?
8. What purpose do you think the women serve?
9. Do you feel that how these women look is a 'real' [or/ realistic] representation of how Black women (and other women of color) should look?
10. What purpose do you think the women serve in this scene? How were they portrayed in this scene? Why do you think they were portrayed in this way?
11. What does this image say about how women are to treat Black men's bodies?
12. Generally speaking, what do all of the images in these videos say about how women are to treat Black men's bodies?
13. What does this image say about how men are to treat Black women's bodies?
14. Generally speaking, what do all of the images in these videos say about how men are to treat Black women's bodies?
15. Do you think that the images shown in this music video affect who or how you are as a Black female? As a Black Canadian Community?
16. Do you think that the images shown in this music video effect how you live your life as a Black female? As a Black Canadian Community?
17. Would you say that the images that are portrayed in these videos need to change?

Why or why not? (a) If "yes," why? If "no," why not? (b) If "yes," how? If "no," why not?

For analysis purposes, the initial questions created in the "Questionnaire for Guidance" above, were then collapsed into 16 new questions.

The new questions for each video are as follows:

1. How do you feel about the portrayal of women in this video?

2. What *message* do you think the hip hop artist is sending to females? Males?

3. What *image* do you think the hip hop artist is sending to females? Males?

4. Do you think that other men find these images of women desirable? Why or why not?

5. What types of women are portrayed as desirable in this video? What do they look like?

6. In terms of looks and how you like to portray yourself, can you identify with these women? Would you say you model the way that you look, dress, and act like the women in these videos? If so, how and why? If not, how and why?

7. What purpose do you think the women serve? What purpose do you think the women serve in this scene? How were they portrayed in this scene? Why do you think they were portrayed in this way?

8. Do you feel that how these women look is a real [or/ realistic] representation of how Black women (and other women of color) should look?

9. What does this image say about how women are to treat Black men's bodies? Generally speaking, what do all of the images in these videos say about how women are to treat Black men's bodies?

10. What does this image say about how men are to treat Black women's bodies? Generally speaking, what do all of the images in these videos say about how men are to treat Black women's bodies?

11. Do you think that the images shown in this music video affect who or how you are as a Black female?

12. Do you think that the images shown in this music video affect who or how you are as being part of a Black Canadian Community?

13. Do you think that the images shown in this music video effect how you live your life as a Black female?

14. Do you think that the images shown in this music video effect how you live your life as being part of a Black Canadian Community?

15. Would you say that the images that are portrayed in these videos need to change? (a) If "yes," why? If "no," why not?

16. (b) If "yes," how? If "no," why not?

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Dear participant:

Images within Hip Hop culture and rap videos are an important issue in Black youth and youth culture. Though there has been extensive research focusing on body image and media, little is known about how it effects Black female youth. I am a graduate women's studies student at Saint Mary's University conducting this research as part of my thesis under the supervision of Dr. Audrey MacNevin of the Department of Sociology and Criminology/ Women's Studies.

The study involves: (1) examining (and possibly revising) a list of questions that look at how Black women are portrayed in rap videos; and (2) watching three hip hop videos and then answering/ discussing a short questionnaire designed to access your opinion about how Black women are portrayed in rap videos. It is important to note that you may find some of the images sexually explicit. Viewer discretion is advised. Should you suffer any emotional distress as a result of such viewings, please allow me to direct you to the counseling services of your home academic institution:

A.   _____ Counselling Services are located in the __ floor of the _____ Centre and can be contacted via phone at _____ to make an appointment.

B.   _____ Counseling Services are located in the __ floor of the _____ Building and can be contacted via phone at _____ to make an appointment.

C.   _____ Counselling and Psychological Services are located in _____ Building, Room __ and can be contacted via phone at _____ to make an appointment.

For our records there is no need to provide your name, although we would like some details such as your age, academic major and your year of study at university. The responses generated from the interview will be kept under my control, and only my thesis advisor, Dr. Audrey MacNevin, and I will have access to the data. The general results of the study may be published, but individual details will not be included in such publications, and you are assured of anonymity. You are NOT required to provide your name or any contact details. Please note that your participation is entirely voluntary. Because your responses are voluntary, I cannot ensure that you can withdraw your input and participation from the interview at a later time, since I cannot identify any particular participant's responses. You may of course decide not to answer any of the questions.

This questionnaire takes about 30 minutes to complete. If you wish to have a report of the results of the study, please complete the enclosed address slip, place it in the envelope marked "Request for results", and include it in the envelope containing the questionnaire. This request will be separated from your questionnaire, so that there is no connection between your responses, and your request for a report of results. Or, it can be provided to you in person by contacting me. If you have any comments regarding this research, please contact:

Lovin' Hip Hop But Wondering If Hip Hop Loves Us?

I am currently conducting a study that explores images of Hip Hop culture and music videos. I am seeking University Students who are: Black, Nova Scotian, Female, At least 19 years of age, and either in their 1st or 2nd year of university.

Interested and Eligible candidates are asked to contact Alecia Green,

Research Ethics Board Certificate Notice

The Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board has issued an REB certificate related to this thesis. The certificate number is: O6-032

A copy of the certificate is on file at: O6-032

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For more information on the issuing of REB certificates, you can contact the Research Ethics Board at

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