

Escola das Artes da Universidade Católica Portuguesa
Mestrado em Som e Imagem



“YouTube Killed the MTV Star”

Did Hip-Hop music videos become the blueprint
for other genres of music videos in the digital age?

Cinema e Audiovisual 2014 / 2015

João Pascoal

Advisor: Sahra Kunz

September 2015

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Dedication

To Frank, for the idea.

To my Father, for the cinema.

To my Mother, for the music.

Acknowledgments

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents a deeper look in to Hip-Hop music videos. Starting with a chronological timeline, where we focus in the most relevant music videos that show an evolution in the genre's aesthetics throughout the years, we build up to the present decade (from 2010 to the present year of 2015), where we intend to find out how much have Hip-Hop music videos evolved, and what elements from past decades have been incorporated in that same evolution.

We will also present an in-depth look on the present decade as far as music videos are concerned, and what impact the digital age has in musical culture. Have audiences' habits changed? What are the main goals of an artist when making a music video and do they match with the record label's goals? Has the role of music video changed?

By constructing both of these studies, we also intend to answer a question that becomes more and more frequent as we see today's music videos: did Hip-Hop music videos become the blueprint for other genres of music videos? In a world where things can no longer be presented in "black or white" statements and the internet has brought cultures together in an unprecedented way, exchanging cultural influences and learning from each other, one can argue that Hip-Hop, and particularly Rap music, has had a significant influence in the way we produce music videos nowadays. This dissertation intends to be a reflexion on these questions and we have tried our best to obtain a cohesive conclusion, leaving the door open to a future study regarding the role of aesthetics in directing a music video, and whether or not it plays a role as (or even more) important as the narrative beneath the video.

Key Words: Hip-Hop, Music, Videos, Aesthetics, Digital, Art

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1. Introduction

1.1 The author

As a young adult, it came to my attention in interaction with my peers that I was blessed for knowing exactly what I wanted to do since I was 12/13 years old. Ever since I watched "Reservoir Dogs", strictly forbidden by my mother, I knew I wanted to be a filmmaker. Since that moment, ten years have passed and my search for movies' knowledge as led me here: writing a dissertation about Hip-Hop music videos in the present decade (what could be called "the 2010's"). How did I get here?

Since my teenage years I listen to "Rap" music. As I started to become more and more a fan of the genre, I also went deeper in the overall culture of Hip-Hop. I have entered the so-called "circles", interacting with all sorts of people involved in the Hip-Hop "movement", from break-dancers, to DJs, to MCs and even got myself interested in writing and performing my own rap music. My rapper name from those days, Dúbio, is still very present in my life, as I merged it with my first name initial to create the name with which I sign all of my works: J. Dúbio.

As far as music videos are concerned, I have always maintained a certain interest in them, following the latest trends, viewing the latest "viral" videos, etc. But it was only when I got familiar with David Fyncher's filmography that I really started to focus on the music video genre itself. Director of known blockbuster and cult hits such as "Seven" (1995), "Fight Club" (1999) or "Gone Girl" (2014), Fincher began his career as a music video's director, gradually evolving to a motion picture's director. My surprise with that discovery made me consider in directing music videos as a path to eventually directing motion pictures.

Having some acquaintances in the music world, thanks to my "Hip-Hop days", I began working in some music video productions, ending up directing some - in fact, most of my portfolio consists in music videos. This, aligned with considering music video directing as a career move in order to reach my ultimate goal, gave me an extra motivation to learn more about music videos, which led me up to this point.

1.2 Presenting the Case Study and the respective projects associated

This dissertation intends to be an approach to "Hip-Hop" music videos produced between 2010 and the current year of 2015, and to their influence in the digital age.

By "Hip-Hop", we mean musical styles and genres outside of "rap music", which meet stylish, rhythmical, sound and artistic elements of "Hip-Hop" culture, such as Rhythm n' Blues, Soul, Brazilian Funk, House Music, Pop and Jazz.

The study objective is to investigate a link between Hip-Hop music videos and the modern day "digital age", where fast access to a wide amount of content may (or may not) influence the way the public views, receives and ultimately consumes music videos. In doing so, the study tries to identify Hip-Hop music videos as a "blueprint" for the music video industry nowadays, setting several patterns that can relate to the online public.

In order to better understand Hip-Hop music videos in this present era, we also set ourselves to approach their evolution throughout the decades, from Hip-Hop's inception in the '70s until today. We will present a comparison between the music videos produced then and now and try to establish if there is a possible link that confirms some sort of cycle in which the aesthetics of music videos, like fashion trends, come and go and can recycle certain aspects of past work into modern work.

1.3 Presenting the Question

As the present decade meets its "half-point", it is becoming more evident the growing blend between different cultures, nations and identities, as the Internet breaks more and more physical barriers. Consumerism has been facilitated, creating a world where you can obtain a certain good with easier access than the one you would twenty years ago. Faster access to higher quantities of information, data and content has also contributed to this phenomenon and music is an area where this "culture blending" is more visible. From Amy Winehouse, a British white singer, recording music resembling something you would associate with a female African American voice like Aretha Franklin to a French rapper named Stromae making a Pop, House, Rap mixture, with a Soul chorus, in a song that topped the Euro music

charts in 2014 (“Papaoutai”¹), the blending of musical DNA is evident.

Keeping this thought in mind, as we log on our YouTube accounts and start scrolling down our feeds, we see more and more music videos and we are quick to conclude that internet, alongside with cheaper equipment, has provided a way for independent artists to launch their careers and has propelled the number of music video productions worldwide. Another trace we are also quick to spot is the collaborations between artists whose backgrounds are seemingly very different. Former country star, turned Pop star, Taylor Swift debuts a music video for a single with a guest feature of rapper Kendrick Lamar (titled “Bad Blood”), rapper Kanye West and R’n’B singer Rihanna join Rock Royalty, Sir Paul McCartney in the song “FourFiveSeconds” and even known rapper Lil Wayne launched a full Rock album titled “Rebirth”. So, after witnessing such a high level of blending between influences, styles, music and visual forms, is it safe to assume that music videos reflect such a mix? Do music videos paint a portrait of this present decade and if so, is Hip-Hop culture in the forefront of it all? With Rap music finding its way in other genres of music, is it safe to assume that Hip-Hop has a big influence in the music world of today? If so, did Hip-Hop music videos become the blueprint for other genres of music videos, in the digital age?

1.4 Research Methodology

Besides the consulted bibliography, this study’s research will be based on the viewing and analysis of a number of music videos eligible for this case, as well as a study of data regarding the digital public and their ways of consuming music content.

The criteria for the selection of music videos are:

- They must all be music-videos released between 2010 and 2015² ;
- The musical genres must belong to this study’s definition of Hip-Hop culture.

¹ In English: “Daddy Where Are You?” a Pop danceable tune that tackles the hard, heavy subject of a child growing without a father, “Papaoutai” is a good example for the state of culture in the 010’s: everything has a bit of everything.

² The exceptions are the music videos from past decades we will study in order to establish a chronologic analysis of Hip Hop’s evolution as a genre and culture (as stated in the Case Study point).

1.5 Order and Structure

This dissertation is separated in two main chapters, one regarding the chronological evolution of Hip-Hop music videos and the other regarding the co-relation between the research for this study and the master's degree final project.

The chapter regarding the chronological evolution of Hip-Hop music videos is divided in four sub-chapters, each on crucial in its own way. First, we take a look at the chronological evolution of Hip-Hop music videos throughout the past three decades, spanning a time frame between the late '70s, all the way to the late 2000's. Secondly, we take a closer look at this present decade and approach not only the evolution in music videos aesthetics, but also the overall effect of the digital age on the production, supply and demand of both music videos and the music business as a whole [in the third chapter we look at the influence of the Fine Arts world in Hip-Hop music videos, looking in more depth to the fusion between the two worlds (Fine Arts and Hip-Hop)] and we will try to answer to the proposed question of this dissertation in the fourth and final sub-chapter.

We do feel necessary, however, to mention that, although we try as best as we can to provide the most information regarding each music video production (such as the year of the production and the music video director), the music video world, regarding official credits from credible sources, tends to remain fairly anonymous. Sometimes it's just practically impossible to find who directed certain music video, especially if they are not very successful or rare.

Quotes relevant to the study will be inserted in the text, accordingly. Quotes and sources necessary to back-up certain statements will be inserted in footnote. The author will translate non-English text freely.

Due to the visual nature of the dissertation, we had to rely on a high number of images and frames, in order to analyse and better understand the nature of the music videos studied.

2. Chronological Evolution Stages of Hip-Hop

2.1 The '70s - The Embryonic Stages of Hip-Hop

"The insurgence of the Last Poets dates back to the late 60's (May 19th 1968 – Malcom X's birthday), in Harlem, NY, a group of young black man who express their anger with rhymes and drums is born." – Contador, A.C. e Ferreira, E.L. *"Ritmo & Poesia – Os Caminhos do Rap"*, Assírio & Alvim, 1997, page 21.

Historically, the beginnings Hip-Hop culture can be traced as far back as 1968, with the formation of the spoken-word group known as *The Last Poets*, who are generally considered the grand-fathers of Rap music.

However, Hip-Hop as a culture only started developing in 1973, by the legendary DJ *Kool DJ Herc* and the parties hosted by him, the now famous *Block Parties*.³

The decade of the '70s is very obscure in Hip-Hop's chronology, almost like a pre-historic period. Even so, there is one hit single that stood the test of time: "Rapper's Delight", by the band *Sugarhill Gang*, which was the first Hip-Hop single to break in the Billboard charts in the U.S. and also the first known Hip-Hop music video ever made.

The music video for "Rapper's Delight" is more of a recorded live act performance than a creative video interpretation of a single but none of the less, still a music video.

The video's dynamic can be considered "one-dimensional", as it is very basic in its concept: 3 MCs on stage performing, while the audience gets engaged in the music and dances to its rhythm. By its very generic nature, we can conclude that the music video's sole purpose was to promote the single and not to further develop its message or to make any kind of particular artistic statement. This decision was probably taken due to the assumption that Hip-Hop was just a "trend" in the music business, with no realistic longevity sales wise and a low budget of the production company behind the video at the time.

³ "Block Parties" are local parties held in urban neighbourhood areas by local residents. Originated in the poorer areas of New York, in the 70's, the "Block Parties" are associated with the beginning of Hip Hop culture.



Fig. 1 – *Sugar Hill Gang*, “Rapper’s Delight” – Sugar Hill Records (1979)

2.2 The ‘80s - The Socially Conscious Message Era

As Hip-Hop’s popularity began to expand, society acknowledge it not only as a cultural movement, but more and more like a mirrored reflexion of the poorer classes’ struggle in a country torn apart racially. One can argue that Rap music, having its inception in the late ‘60s with groups like The Last Poets, was a musical reflexion of the Civil Rights Movement, even though some would feel it had come too late (almost a decade after).

Even so, as artists became influenced by their surroundings, a strong conscious voice was starting to echo in the streets of New York (NY), particularly in the ghettos of Harlem, Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx.

Arguably, the first manifestation of that voice in Rap music was the single “The Message”, by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, regarded today as one of Hip-Hop’s biggest classics.

Filmed with a very low budget, the main focus of the video was not to showcase the artists, like in “Rapper’s Delight”, but instead it focuses on the backgrounds of the action, the slum streets of NY, that end up painting a faithful portrait of what “The Message” is all about. Some of the shots are clearly a visual representation of the song’s lyrics, which adds a tremendous reality charge on the single as a whole, making it way more powerful when heard and seen at the same time, instead of only listening to. One could say the video itself reminds the viewer and listener that, despite its funky melody and catchy tune, there is still a very harsh reality being talked about in the song.

*"It's like a jungle sometimes
It makes me wonder
How I keep from going under
It's like a jungle sometimes it makes me wonder
How I keep from going under
Broken glass everywhere
People pissing on the stairs, you know they just don't care
I can't take the smell, I can't take the noise no more
Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice
Rats in the front room, cockroaches in the back
Junkie's in the alley with a baseball bat
I tried to get away, but I couldn't get far
'Cause a man with a tow-truck repossessed my car..."*

- Quote from "The Message", by Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five



Fig. 2 – Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five, "The Message" (1982)

Another act to come out around 1982 was the legendary Afrika Bambaataa & The Soul Sonic Force. We can almost say it was complementary to "The Message's" new direction of Hip-Hop, when it came to its electronic approach.

"This definitive turn comes with the release of Afrika Bambaataa & The Soul Sonic Force's "Planet Rock" (Tommy Boy, 1982), thus beginning the electro-rap era. (...) "Planet

Rock” deliberately renounces the traditional funk sound in favour of a colder and harder one.” - Contador, A.C. e Ferreira, E.L. “Ritmo & Poesia – Os Caminhos do Rap”, Assírio & Alvim, 1997, page 63.

Let’s take a look at the music video for the lead single off the “Planet Rock” album, the title-track “Planet Rock”.

Keep in mind that this is, lyrically, quite the opposite of “The Message”. It is a party record (it begins with the famous line *“Party people... Party people... hey yo, get funky!”*) and as such, it serves more as a dancing tune than a socially conscious one. The instrumental, though, is a step-up of the electronic sound used in “The Message” and its video serves as a portrait not of the streets, but of Hip-Hop culture as a whole, with the 4 key-elements: the DJ, the MC, the Graffiti and the Break dancers. “Planet Rock” is the first video to do so.

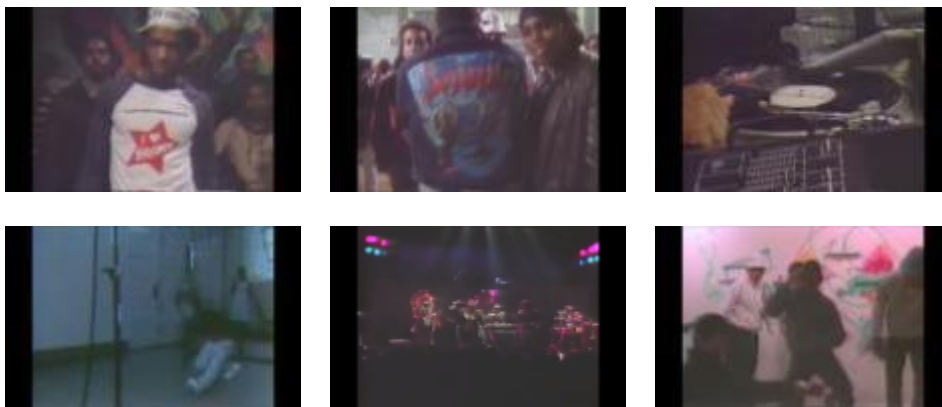


Fig. 3 – Afrika Bambaataa & The Soul Sonic Force, “Planet Rock” – Tommy Boy Records, 1982

We can even make an argument that the music video for “Planet Rock” is a mix between “The Message” and “Rapper’s Delight”, at least when it comes to how the main act is portrayed (the main act being Bambaataa and the Soul Sonic Force band).

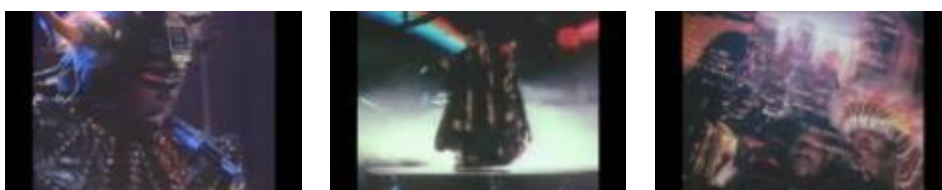




Fig. 4 – Shots from the “Planet Rock” video, featuring Afrika Bambaataa & The Soul Sonic Force

Unlike “The Message”, where the main focus was the visual imagery that symbolized the harsh reality of the ghetto streets, “Planet Rock” has an approach similar to “Rapper’s Delight” in the way it chooses to mainly showcase the band. Even so, the big differences are that there is one figure that stands out and is awarded a lot more screen time than the other band members: Afrika Bambaataa. While The Sugar Hill Gang was an all MC band, the only MC in this video is Bambaataa and he is featured as the star of the video, with flamboyant clothing and lightning visual effects in the background.

This particular aspect of the video for “Planet Rock” is an important detail in how the main focus of Hip-Hop, in the scope of the music industry, changed from the DJ being the main protagonist to the MC taking on that role, as record labels started to see the commercial potential of Rap music. The DJ took the back seat and the MC, whom up until then was merely a “Hype Man” for the DJ, was now the star of the show.

As more Hip-Hop singles started to come out, the music industry started to see some true commercial potential in Rap music. That potential would arise due to Hip-Hop’s first super-group: RUN DMC.



Fig. 5 – RUN DMC: Reverend RUN (on the right), DJ Jam Master Jay (centre) and DMC (on the left). With a career spanning from 1981 to 2002, the band stands tall as one of Hip-Hop’s most successful acts ever.

“Two turntables and a microphone, that’s all it took to change the world (...) There’s three of them, and if you grew up on hip-hop like I did, they are the Beatles.” – Quote from Eminem’s RUN DMC Rock n’ Roll Hall of Fame Induction Speech, in 2009.

We quote Eminem when he inducted RUN DMC on the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame because the Beatles / RUN DMC comparison is actually quite accurate. RUN DMC was the first Hip-Hop act to achieve great commercial, as well as critical, success, worldwide. They became Hip-Hop's first big reference to future acts and helped settle Hip-Hop's place in the music world. Another fact that makes the Beatles comparison legit is RUN DMC's fusion with Rock Music.

Sonically, this fusion would be crowned in RUN DMC's 1986 single "Walk this way!", featuring Steven Tyler and Joe Perry from the rock band Aerosmith, from the album "Raising Hell"; but this was always present in the group's overall attitude, way back to their 1984's "King of Rock" album.

We take you back to that 1984 album and its first lead single "It's Like That!". The video's premise is really simple. It shows us a battle between two opposing dance *crews*, one male, and the other female, who settle their differences by having a *dance-off* competition. The battle is passed with some shots of the two MCs rapping on stage, but its main focus is on the action going on the dance floor, presented to us as an abandoned building or a parking lot.

Maybe because it is a lead-single from a major label and it had more sophistication put in to it, "It's Like That" was another landmark for Hip-Hop music videos. It is the first music video to show some sort of a built-in narrative, by telling us a simple story; it is also the first one to have a rehearsed choreography. While "Party Rock"'s video did have B-boys and B-girls dancing to the sound of the music, it was more documental in a way, because it was shot during one of Bambaataa's shows, spontaneously (or so it seems). These dancers are not professional dancers, they are characters of the video. This video also serves the purpose of perpetuating and showing Hip-Hop more as a culture rather than a trend, by showcasing its four original elements: Breaking, MC'ing, DJ'ing and Graffiti art, though the main focus of the video is on the Breaking element.

By this point, it has become evident that Hip-Hop has evolved as a culture and now it is easier not only to find its own identity, but also to explain it. Hip-Hop, in its true nature, is a non-violent form of competition, where the aggressive attitude goes from violence to art, where gangs are replaced with *crews*, in order to stop the violence in the poor urban areas. "It's Like That" is a clear-cut evidence of that.

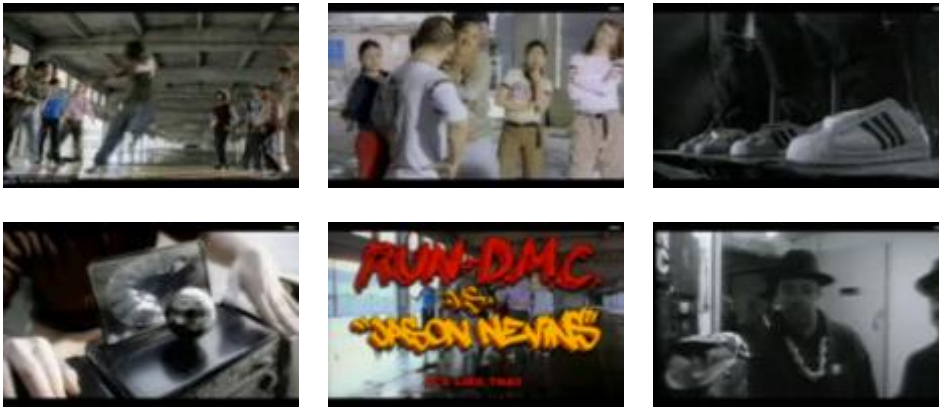


Fig. 6 – Frames from the “It’s Like That” music video, performed by RUN DMC.

In Figure 6, we can see the 4 elements of Hip-Hop represented: Breaking (1st frame), DJ’ing (simulated on a radio instead of a turn-table in the 4th frame), Graffiti writing (the title lettering of the music video is written in Graffiti, in the 5th frame) and MC’ing (represented by the showing of the MC’s, in the 6th frame). There is a sense of competition present, by the poses taken by the dancers (the so called “B-Boy stands”), as we can see in the 2nd frame and the RUN DMCs trademark Adidas sneakers make their presence in the video in the 3rd frame. The Adidas sneakers are not only a trademark and a legendary symbol of RUN DMC, but serve also, most likely, as a sponsor of some sorts. One can also assume “It’s Like That” was the first Hip-Hop music video to feature *product placement* and *endorsement* by a worldwide brand.

As a side note, after analysing the “It’s Like That!” music video, I would also like to make note of a video clip that had assumed, in a way, Hip-Hop culture and its competitive nature that replaces violence with art. “Beat It”, one of Michael Jackson’s biggest singles and most memorable videos, shows us just that: gang members who engage in dancing as a way to settle their score, instead of using violence amongst them. This video served as a ground-breaking catalyst from the movements to stop the violence, and was also the first taste of Hip-Hop to the mainstream MTV audience.





Fig. 7 – In “Beat It” video, we see gang members getting ready to a knife fight, when they get separated by Michael Jackson, who involves them in his dancing, breaking the fight and showing that peace is possible.

We can’t wrap up the ‘80s chapter without talking about one of the most influential rap music acts in history: Public Enemy. Quite possibly Hip-Hop’s most political band, Public Enemy still stand today as the symbol of the anti-establishment in Hip-Hop culture, influencing future musical acts with a political message and edge, such as N.W.A. (acronym for Ni**az With Attitude) and Rage Against The Machine.

Public Enemy’s legacy is important to help distinguish the overall “vibe”, if we may say so, of the 1980’s and the track of Rap music and Hip-Hop.⁴ Twenty years after the civil rights movement, there was a general consensus that racial problems were still a major issue of U.S. internal policies. Hip-Hop, in the shape of Rap, had a leverage effect for those problems, portraying a new way to speak out and to protest.

That attitude of protest and oppression was growing in cinema, in the form of movies like Spike Lee’s “Do The Right Thing” (1989), Alan Parker’s “Mississippi Burning” (1988) or “Malcom X” (1991) – also directed by Lee⁵. Any movie with a strong political and racial message behind it also showcased Public Enemy as the musical act conveying the same message. In addition to shooting Public Enemy in his film, Spike Lee would also use the settings and extras of the scene to shoot the music video for the band’s most famous single: “Fight The Power”, taken from their 1990’s solo album “Fear of a Black Planet”.

“The song and its video express frustration with the pace of the civil rights movement, insisting that in the years since the 1964 US Civil Rights Act was adopted by Congress,

⁴ An important point to address here is the difference between “Rap” and “Hip Hop”. “Rap” is a musical style; “Hip Hop” is a cultural experience. “Rap” is a bi-product of “Hip Hop” and “Hip Hop” uses “Rap” as its voice. However, it is important to stress this distinction, to avoid referring to “Hip Hop” as a musical style. This distinction allows us to explain why certain music videos can be considered “Hip Hop” music videos, even though they don’t have “Rap” music in it, as we will see further along this study.

⁵ All three movies dealt with issues like racism, oppression and segregation in a manner which raises the question of whether or not those issues were handled properly, drawing a parallel between the 60’s and the then-present day, coming to the conclusion that not much had changed.

African Americans had still not achieved full equality with whites." - Marcovitz, Hal. *The History of Music Videos*. Lucent Books, 2012, page 58.

Essentially, the video shows the Civil Rights protests and marches, alternating with the footage shot on set of Public Enemy's own Civil Rights march, joined in by numerous residents of Brooklyn, NY. The video's main objective is to show how little change was achieved since the Civil Rights Act and that it was time to stand up and fight for change.

"Lee's scenes of the crowd show unity among the demonstrators, to be sure, but they also show anger. Indeed, for one brief moment, the camera focuses on Tawana Brawley, who was at the center of a racially charged incident in 1987 when, at the age of fifteen, she claimed to have been raped by six white men, including members of the police force (...)" - Marcovitz, Hal. *The History of Music Videos*. Lucent Books, 2012, page 59.



Fig. 8 – Frames from Public Enemy's "Fight The Power" video.

In Figure 8, we can see: 1) The big rally in protest for Civil Rights; 2) Chuck D, the leader of the band; 3) Elements of the Black Panther Movement, famous for the Civil Rights battle in the 60's; 4) Archive footage of Elvis Presley, showed during the famous line from the song: "Elvis was a hero to most... but he never meant sh*t to me!"; 5) Flavor Flav, the colourful second MC of the group; 6) Public Enemy's influence on the younger and growing generation.

As we turn the corner from the '80s to the '90s, there are two acts that we feel are essential to study before we can close the '80s chapter: Ice-T and N.W.A., the fathers of *Gangsta Rap*.

In 1982, former L.A. drug-dealer/pimp Tracey Morgan adopted his street alias "Ice-T"

as his artistic name and began rapping, gaining notoriety as a party MC in local Hip-Hop clubs, around L.A. But as the dangerous reality of his life began to impact him, so it began influencing his creative process. Instead of happy party rhymes, Ice-T started writing about crime based hard-core stories, based on his peers and his very own experience in criminal activities. In 1986, with his first single “6 in the morning”, *Gangsta Rap* was born and a new era would begin for Rap Music as we approached the ‘90s.

It’s only in his second full-length LP, “Power”, with the music video for the single “I’m Your Pusher” that Ice-T really pushed the boundaries of music industry and helped define the *Gangsta Rap* visual style and imagery.

The song has a strong anti-drug message, although it is delivered in an ironic way. Ice-T raps about dealing music instead of drugs. The music video shows a CD becoming a metaphor for drugs, with a drug transaction between Ice-T and a *junkie*, but instead of a drug fix, Ice-T hands him a CD of his music. There are also other elements of crime in the video, most notoriously an epic police car chase between Ice-T, in a white Ferrari, and a police car. All of this visual innuendo of a glamorous life of crime would become a stamp and trademark of *Gangsta Rap*, with elements of it still being used today. Although most of them are considered “clichés”, we can often see some of these visual elements in today’s Hip-Hop music videos: the fast cars, the beautiful women, the flashy outfits, the criminal activities, and so on.

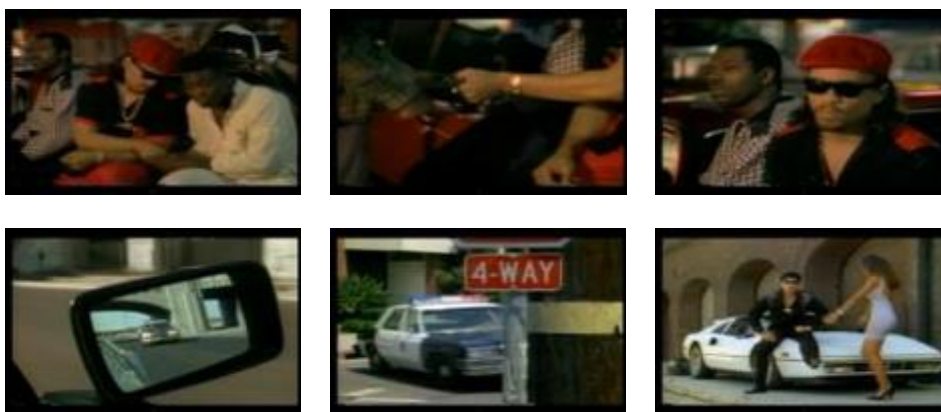


Fig. 9 – Frames from Ice-T’s “I’m Your Pusher” music video. We can spot here all the icons of *Gangsta Rap* music videos: big cars, beautiful girls, criminal activities and flashy clothes.

Even though Ice-T was the creator of *Gangsta Rap*, his lyrics still had a big political and social awareness. But as the ‘80s were coming to an end, social consciousness and

political activism were beginning to merge with hardcore attitudes. As guns, gangs, drugs, violence and police abuse took over the urban and local areas of Los Angeles, a dynamite charged detonator was about to blow up, in the form of one band: N.W.A. The 3 letters that stand for "N*ggas With Attitude" changed the world of Hip-Hop forever. Children of Public Enemy and Ice-T, N.W.A. were the biggest Hip-Hop act since RUN DMC, and their controversial, aggressive and unapologetic approach to the harsh reality of the violence that infested LA urban streets would echoed all over the U.S.

2.3 The '90s – The Hard Core Attitude Era

Of all the decades, perhaps no other sparked such high levels of success in Hip-Hop as the '90s. Legendary names such as 2Pac, The Notorious B.I.G., Snoop Doggy Dogg, The Fugees, Nas, are just a few of the names that make the list of artists sparked by this era, an era where Hip-Hop's evolution as a culture, art form and marketing brand was faster than ever. Therefore, in order to better understand its evolution, we must divide the decade in 3 parts: **early '90s; mid '90s and late '90s.**

2.3.1 Early '90s

From 1990 to 1993 we can see still a very political and social message being carried out through music videos, sometimes with underlined messages or sometimes with clear metaphors. However, with the increasingly commercial success of Rap music, the record labels support growth and, with it, so did the music video's budgets. A clear example of this scenario is N.W.A. video for the second single "Express Yourself" of "Straight Outta Compton".

In the video, the lines between social commentary and visual metaphors are blurred in an exciting new approach. As we watch the video, it becomes clear that N.W.A. were trying "to push the envelope" as far as they could.⁶ It is an extremely controversial music video in the ideas it conveys. It opens with a period scene from the slavery days in America, with three slaves picking cotton, while being supervised by a white overseer. As one of the slaves

⁶ Receiving an angry letter from the F.B.I., being threatened by police all across America and having their singles banned from radio and MTV, N.W.A. unintentionally received wide-spread free publicity due to the intense *media* coverage regarding these events. Thus, controversy increased record sales and motivated the group to be as controversial as possible.

refuses such hard labour, he gets whipped by the white man. The slave picks up a rock to throw at the overseer, he is stopped by his fellow slaves, and the three slaves start running away from the plantation.



Fig. 10 – The opening period scene from the slavery days in N.W.A’s music video for “Express Yourself”.

The opening scene is a great synopsis of the core idea of the music’s video and song. As the black community (represented by the whipped slave) is attacked by the white America (represented by the overseer), the first reaction is to strike back, an action that will prove pointless, since it will only bring more punishment. The key is trying to escape the enslaved environment created by the white man. N.W.A. assume themselves as the fellow slaves who run the path out of slavery, not as the revengeful whipped slave.

The controversy continues: in a scene shot in-studio, we see a young black kid behind bars. The behind bars studio scene will keep re-emerging, with various other characters, such as a white priest, a white business man, a black man and even N.W.A’s own members Dr Dre and Ice Cube. This manages to put the spotlight on other types of crimes that White America chooses not to see, and also to show a very sad but undeniably truthful portrait from the black community: they are locked up since childhood, and grow up in a system designed to keep them in jail.



Fig. 11 – “Behind bars” shots from the “Express Yourself” music video.

The music video’s final act is almost prophetic: it shows America’s fear of black people, by having N.W.A. in the White House, or as it’s called in the video, “The Black House”. It took almost 20 years since this music video for America to see its first African-American president, Barack Obama, but his victory will always symbolise the path of American society, step by step. One can argue Hip-Hop helped to build that path. In the music video, N.W.A. act in a satirical re-enactment of President Kennedy’s assassination, making a strong point by saying that if a black president was elected, he would surely be assassinated.

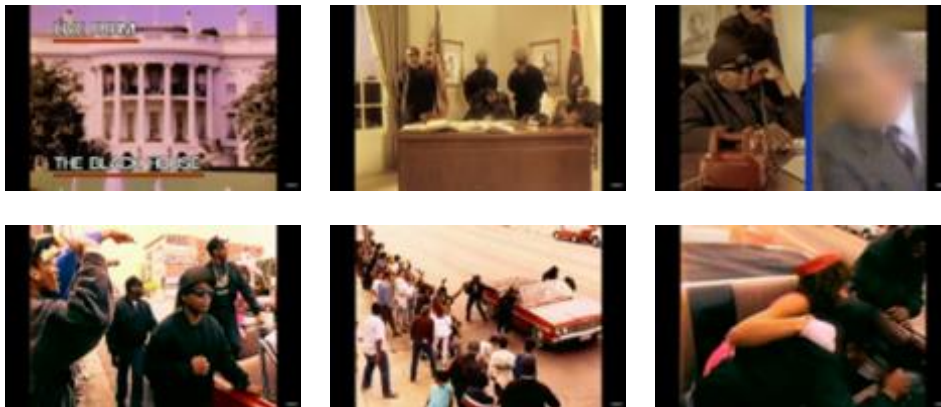


Fig. 12 – The “Black House”⁷ and the re-enactment of Kennedy’s assassination, in N.W.A’s “Express Yourself” music video.

The ending of the music video is morbidly but not gratuitously aggressive. Dr Dre, the main MC in this single (Ice Cube only gets a few rhymes in and the rest of N.W.A’s cast doesn’t even get featured, apart from the video), is sited in an electric chair on Death Row,

⁷ In the 3rd frame of Picture 14, we can see N.W.A’s accusation of a certain politician (who’s face is blurred), possibly commenting on a political scandal of that time.

sentenced to death and executed by the white priest - the incarnation of the police man and, more importantly, of the overseer from the beginning of the video.

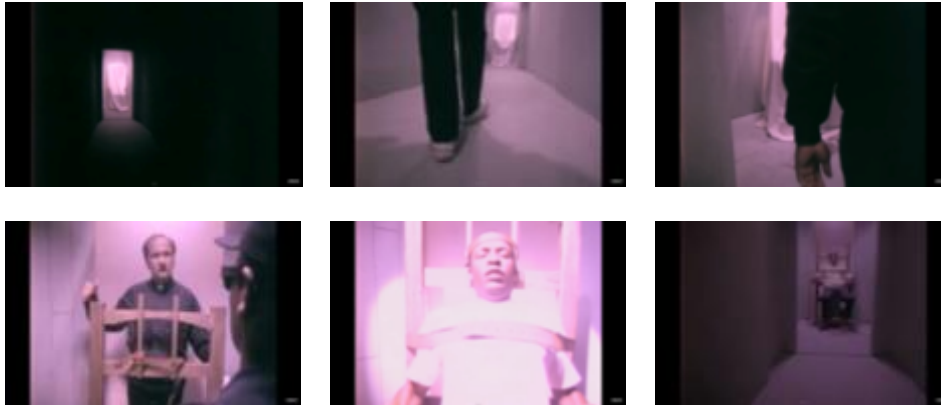


Fig. 13 – The ending of “Express Yourself” music video and the “prelude” of future music label “Death Row”.

For a music video with such a strong message, the end is a very pessimistic note. The black community knows it must stand up for themselves, but they end up believing that it takes nowhere than getting killed. Only two years later, N.W.A. would be dismembered, over contractual disagreements, and Dr Dre, along with his bodyguard Marion “Suge” Knight, would create the first *Gangsta Rap* music label, Death Row Records. The “Express Yourself” music video shows the things to come, not only for the California Rap scene, but for Hip-Hop movement in general. Shot in 1990, this music video is not only a strong political and artistic statement, but it also served as a blueprint for Hip-Hop music videos in the early '90s.

It’s about this time that Rap music takes a huge turn towards worldwide mainstream. With the growing popularity of the genre in the U.S., it was only predictable that it crossed-over to the *Pop* world. Successful groups like RUN DMC, Public Enemy or N.W.A. were still regarded as hard core, political and controversial groups, and rejected by a large majority of mainstream America. That was about to change with two acts in 1990/91: MC Hammer and Vanilla Ice.

Both MCs are very identical, almost like a black/white version of each other. Hammer was the first to burst out onto the scene, with a more positive, friendly *Pop* image, similar to Michael Jackson almost. He always had complex dance choreography and trademark attire, his baggy oversized pants. His single “U Can’t Touch This”, using a sample from Rick James’ best-selling single “Super Freak” (1982), was the highest-selling Rap single to that

date and remains a very popular song to these days, and propelled MC Hammer’s album “Please Hammer Don’t Hurt Them!” to win a *Diamond Award* from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), awarded to albums or singles with sales of ten million units or more.

10.00	COME AWAY WITH ME	JONES, NORAH	BLUE NOTE	26, 2002	15, 2005
10.00	PLEASE HAMMER DON'T HURT 'EM	HAMMER	CAPITOL	FEBRUARY 12, 1990	APRIL 1 1991
10.00	FAITH	MICHAEL,	COLUMBIA	OCTOBER	DECEMBER

Fig. 14 – The album “Please Hammer Don’t Hurt’ Em”, positioned in the list of *Diamond Award* albums awarded, provided by the RIAA’s official website: www.RIAA.com.⁸

Although the music video for “Ice Ice Baby” was considered one of the worst ever by networks like VH1, we can see some similarities with MC Hammer’s “U Can’t Touch This” video. It has certain choreography and a style of its own and it was the confirmation that there was some sort of a “package” being pushed by the record labels, almost like a “formula” of success: women, choreography and a stylized outfit.

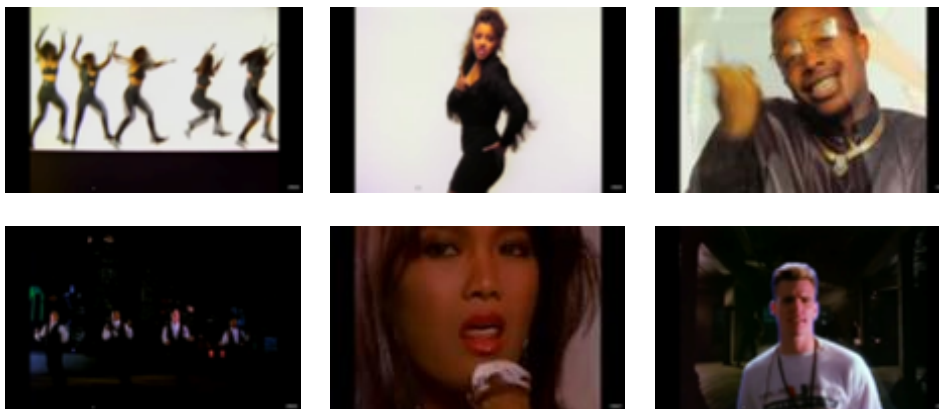


Fig. 15 – The formula of “U Can’t Touch This” and “Ice Ice Baby”: choreography, women and a colourful makeup.

⁸ The link to the list is presented here: https://www.riaa.com/goldandplatinum.php?content_selector=top-diamond-awards

2.3.2 Mid '90s

Trip-Hop

As we turn the page from the early to mid '90s, we must discuss about a new musical branch of Hip-Hop, which originated in Bristol, UK: the Trip-Hop.

"It's insane, scary, trippy, very dope and the most exciting thing to happen to Hip-Hop for years. Dr Dre on magic mushrooms? Sven Vath doing jeep beats? You're getting there." – Andy Pemberton in *Mixmag*, June 1994, from Contador, A.C. e Ferreira, E.L. *"Ritmo & Poesia – Os Caminhos do Rap"*, Assírio & Alvim, 1997, page 149.

Escaping from the heavily "oral-oriented" Rap music genre, Trip-Hop used the *sampling*⁹ technique to insert the widest variety of musical influences possible, creating a sort of hazed musical atmosphere that allowed MCs to experiment with metaphors and more poetic lyricism, in contrast with the very "black and white", fact-oriented narrative of Rap. With the birth of Trip-Hop and its appropriation of a wide range of musical influences, we can say that Hip-Hop was beginning to be taken seriously as a legitimate art form, as proven by so many Trip-Hop music videos. In order to better analyse Trip-Hop, we will take a look at music videos by two of the most influential musical acts of the subgenre: Massive Attack and Tricky.

Massive Attack's break-out single, "Unfished Sympathy", from their debut album "Blue Lines" (1991), showcased a meaningful innovation in the Hip-Hop music video game. A sequence made of one continuous shot composes the video¹⁰, something rare in music videos at the time and a "première" for Hip-Hop music videos. In the video, Massive Attack's vocalist Shara Nelson walks in the streets of LA. The different persons she walks by are as a symbol of the heartbreak she expresses in the song, from a father walking with his young son or a couple kissing passionately. She walks figuratively down memory lane before disappearing in the corner. A simple concept, a great video.

⁹ *Sampling* is a very common practice in Hip Hop musical production, consisting on taking a piece out of an existing record, re-arranging it and creating an instrumental.

¹⁰ Shot in a "steady-cam" system, operated by Dan Kneeece, who was a camera operator in David Lynch's 1986 masterpiece "Blue Velvet".



Fig. 16 – Frames from “Unfinished Sympathy”, 1991.

It was this approach to movies’ style that would settle Trip-Hop’s trademark on the music industry as being the “artistic” version of Hip-Hop. This approach would be later displayed in full power on the music video for the lead-single of their second LP “Protection”, “Karmacoma”, where we can see a large number of Pop culture references such as a Charles Manson impersonator, and recreations of cult movies like Quentin Tarantino’s “Pulp Fiction”, David Lynch’s “Eraserhead” and Stanley Kubrick’s “The Shining”, spread along the halls and rooms of an eerie hotel with a dreamlike vibe¹¹, along with artistically framed surreal shots make this video one of the most bizarre in Hip-Hop’s history.

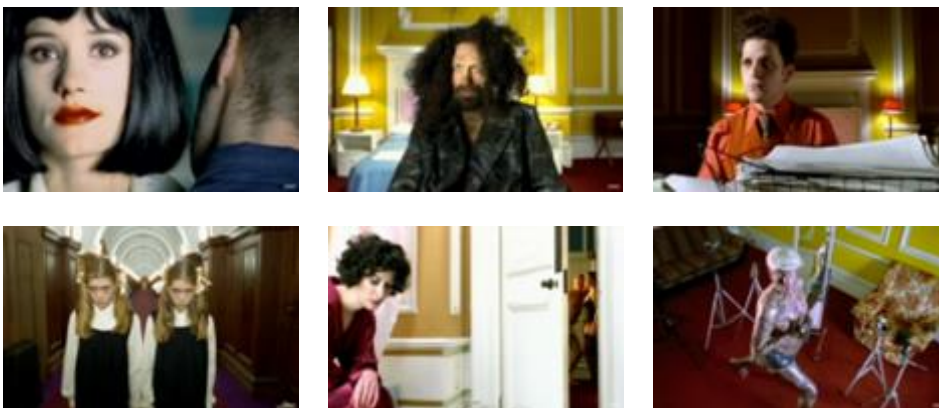


Fig. 17 – Frames from “Karmacoma”, 1995.

Creatively speaking, Tricky was on a whole other level. A former member of Massive Attack, Tricky (Adrian Nicholas M. Thaws) made his solo debut with 1995’s “Maxinquaye.

¹¹ The music video’s director, Jonathan Glazer would later pursue a filmmaking career, directing motion pictures like “Sexy Beast” (2001) and, most recently, “Under The Skin” (2013).

The music videos for Tricky’s singles always have an accute sense of style, artistic flare, and metaphors but in Tricky’s particular case, also abstract and experimental. Two videos that are great examples of that experimentalism are “Hell Is ‘Round The Corner” and “Overcome”.

“Hell Is ‘Round The Corner” has a very simple concept - Tricky is representing a personification of the Devil. It’s the execution of that idea that is intriguing and in some way almost mystical. All the action is set in a room with all the walls painted in red and the camera moves in circles filming Tricky. As Tricky shakes his head, he turns into his often-collaborator (and former girlfriend), the singer Martina Topley-Bird, we believe in a metaphor for possession. This smooth transition (achieved with a simple cross-dissolve) is a perfect example of making a great music video with a simple, creative idea, that doesn’t require any special effects or a very high budget. The music video ends with Tricky slowly walking to an open door that leads to nothing but full red lights, an obvious symbol for Hell.

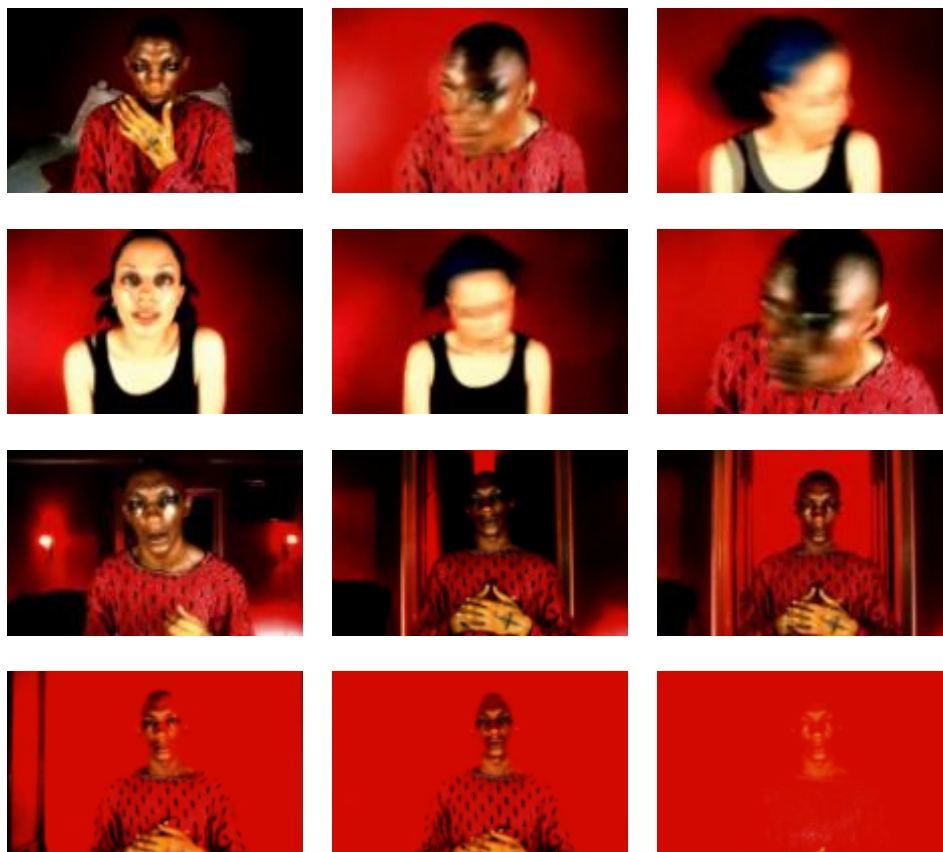


Fig. 18 – Tricky’s “Hell Is Round The Corner” video.

Acid Jazz - Jamiroquai music videos

Aside Trip-Hop, Great Britain also gave birth to an Acid Jazz band named Jamiroquai. Although their music is clearly tuned to jazz, we can consider that their overall style was Hip-Hop based, giving the overall political attitude in their presentations or, in particular their performance attire, especially the lead singer Jay Kay, who frequently appears wearing different types of head ware, like customised hats, comparable to the style of Afrikaa Bambaata in the “Planet Rock” video. Jamiroquai has one of the most diverse music video catalogues available, each one worthy of being studied.

In 1996, Jamiroquai’s second single of their second album “Traveling Without Moving” needed a music video to be filmed. Jonathan Glazer, director of the music video “Karmacoma” for Massive Attack, was hired for the job and the music video for “Virtual Insanity” was born. It’s one of the most interesting music videos analysed in this dissertation.

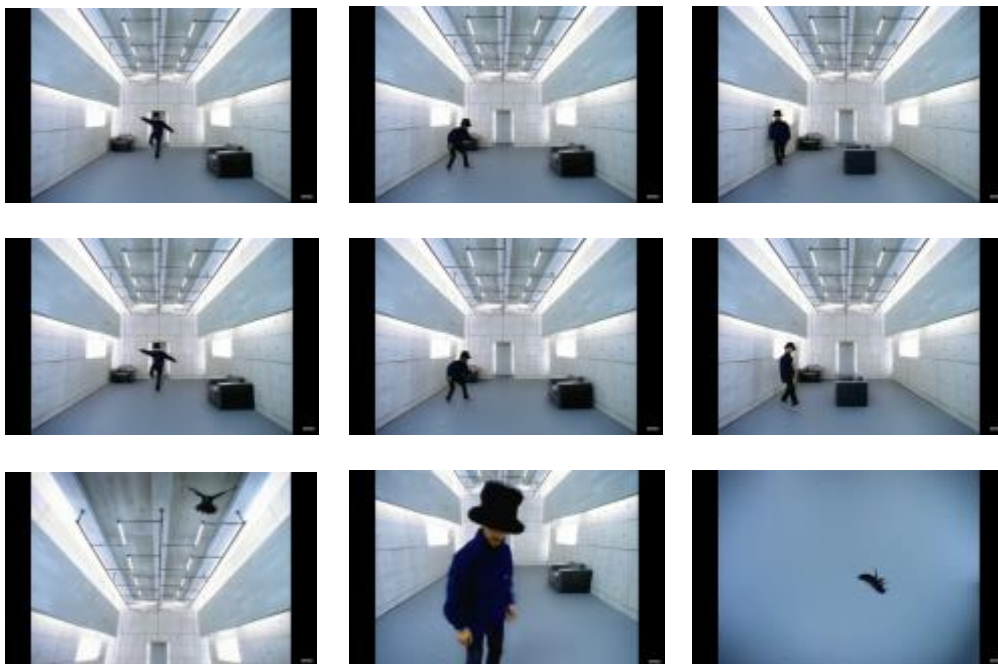


Fig. 19 – Frames from Jamiroquai’s “Virtual Insanity” music video.¹²

This music video is a brilliant exercise of optical illusion, as it shows a dancing Jay Kay, moving along with what appears to be moving floors when, in fact, were the walls who were moving.

¹² In the particular case of the video “Virtual Insanity”, we chose to display the frames in a vertical order to enhance a better understanding of the video’s movement, thanks to a movie-like display, as analogical film frames.

"I had a stupid idea... basically the set was going to be built on hydraulics and (...) everything in the set was going to be able to move independently of everything else (on set)(...) the production designer came with an estimate figure for the build of (...) two hundred and eighty thousands pounds, which is, like, ridiculous (...) so we couldn't do that.

(...) We were days away from filming (...) I had this little car model and I was shuffling it around (...) it was one of the guys on the production team (...) and he said: why don't we just... not move the floor? Why don't we just move the "thing" (the wall structure)? (...) It was a great idea (...) so we built a set on wheels, on a floor with no detail on it (...) everything was self-contained (...) we had (...) a "north", "South", "East", "West" printed on the studio walls. And then we would shout "North! North! North! Stop! South! South! South! Stop!" (...) So it was actually low-tech, really. (...) Simple as that, that's what it was. (...) It was like a day's choreography and a day's shoot." – Excerpt of the interview with director Jonathan Glazer, taken from the "Virtual Insanity" Making Of.¹³

As we can see by Glazer's recollection of the video's filming, the whole idea behind "Virtual Insanity" was to find a low-budget way to develop a creative visual concept. This is an excellent lead to Segway in the topic of money and budgets in the music video industry, which characterized Hip-Hop music videos in the late '90s to early 2000's.

"Woven into the fabric of world entertainment since the launch of MTV in 1981, music videos established a visual style that has dramatically overtaken our nation, and the world. They make and break trends in fashion, make-up, hairstyles, sports, music, movies, video games, and advertising in both television and print. Videos influence how we dance, how we dress, what music we listen to, what jewellery we wear, what kind of car we drive, what sports we play, what foods we eat and what beverages we drink. Music videos represent marketing within marketing, the ultimate promotional machine." – Schwartz, L. M. Making Music Videos – Everything You Need to Know from the Best in the Business. Billboard Books, 2007.

2.3.3 Late '90s

The main term to describe the music videos of the late '90s is money. With a booming

¹³ With a limited TV release and no display online, except a few minutes of footage, there isn't enough information available to find a specific release date for this music video's Making Of.

economy in Clinton administration, consumerism was at an all-time high and Hip-Hop music, particularly *Gangsta Rap*, was hitting its highest grossing era in terms of revenue, a fact backed up by the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) data, that shows us the sales power of names like 2Pac or The Notorious B.I.G, artists awarded with the *Diamond Award*.

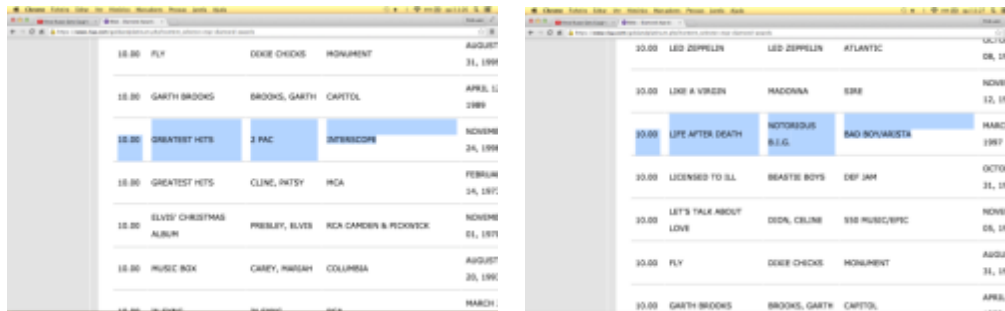


Fig. 20 – List of the artists awarded with the *Diamond Award* from the RIAA¹⁴

With the continuous growth of revenue, budgets for promotional tools grew as well. The music videos began to show bigger and bigger production costs, pretty much thanks to the high marketability of money display. Taking a page from music videos of artists like Ice-T (previously studied in this dissertation), music videos began to display consumerist aesthetic and materialistic values: big houses, luxury cars, expensive clothing, expensive drinks and beautiful models.

The glamorous gangster life portrayed by the music would soon translate into real life. Pushed by personal animosity and seen by some as a way to boost record sales to even higher numbers, a “Rap War” exploded, opposing the two biggest-selling cities in America, concerning *Gangsta Rap*: New York and Los Angeles, in what became known as the “East Coast/West Coast Feud”.

“Rap star Snoop Doggy Dogg of Long Beach and rap mogul Sean “Puffy” Combs of New York came together Wednesday to call for an end to an East Coast-West Coast rivalry that has cast a shadow over hip-hop music for two years. (...)

¹⁴ In Picture 25, the list features artists such as 2Pac (“All eyes on Me” album, Death Row Records / Interscope, 1996) and The Notorious B.I.G. (“Life After Death” album, Bad Boy Records / Arista, 1997) - taken from the RIAA’s official website www.RIAA.com

Combs' Bad Boy Entertainment, whose roster includes Rap star Notorious B.I.G., has traded public insults and threats with Death Row Records since one of Death Row's star artists, the late rapper Tupac Shakur, implicated Combs, B.I.G. and others in a New York ambush in which Shakur was shot by unknown assailants in 1994." - Crowe, J. Quote from February 13th, 1997 L. A. Times article "Rap Artists Call for Truce in Hip-Hop Rivalry".¹⁵

Along with the feud, violence and Mafia imagery inspired in American movies became very much used in music videos, such as 2Pac's "2 Amerikaz Most Wanted" (featuring Snoop Dogg) or The Notorious B.I.G's "Warning". In the first we see 2Pac and Snoop in an ambience resembling the all-time American classic film "The Godfather", while B.I.G's video shows resemblances to Brian De Palma's classic gangster cult film "Scarface".

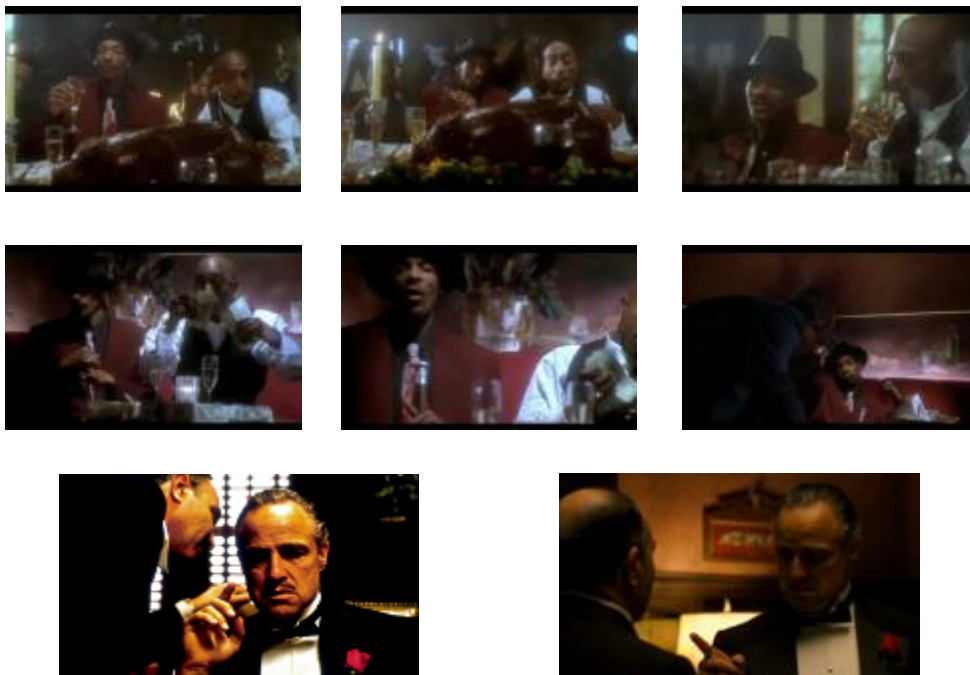


Fig. 21 – Frames from the "2 of Americas Most Wanted" music video (above), compared with frames from "The Godfather" (below).¹⁶

¹⁵ Available in the URL: http://articles.latimes.com/1997-02-13/local/me-28375_1_rap-artists

¹⁶ In Picture 28, the dark shadow tones and the use of red velvet textures serve almost like a tribute to the classic film.



Fig. 22 – Frames from the “Warning” music video, compared with frames from Brian De Palma’s “Scarface”.¹⁷

After the violent murders of both Tupac and Notorious B.I.G., the “East Coast/West Coast Feud” comes to an end. However, prosperity and wealth continued to rise, as can be seen in music videos.

The closer we are to the 2000’s, two characteristics began to be arise in music videos: 1) Hip-Hop music videos started to focus more in aesthetics and iconography as a way to create a successful music video, rather than telling a full narrative - we can almost say that Hip-Hop music videos left cinema and went straight to video art for inspiration. And 2) the cost per footage grew exponentially, reaching the million-dollar mark. Two artists whose videos are a perfect example of this new trend set are Busta Rhymes and Puff Daddy.

The peak of Busta Rhymes’ success came with the 1998 single “Put Your Hands Where My Eyes Can See”, from his album “When Disaster Strikes”. For the music video, Elektra Records - the album’s record label – didn’t restrict the video’s budget. The result was a game changer.

¹⁷ In Picture 29, the influences are clearly present on the sets: B.I.G’s office and the staircase of his mansion are similar to Tony Montana’s office and the staircase of his mansion in the movie.

"I got criticised a lot for the money I spent on videos. (...) my colleagues at other companies used to blame me for raising the price of videos, 'cause now all their artists wanted the same kind of videos. (...) Those days are long gone now but they were amazing days." – Silvia Rhone, Chairman and CEO of Elektra Entertainment Group (1994 – 2004).
Testimony taken from an episode of Complex TV's documentary series "Magnum Opus", dedicated to Busta Rhymes' single "Put Your Hands Where My Eyes Can See".

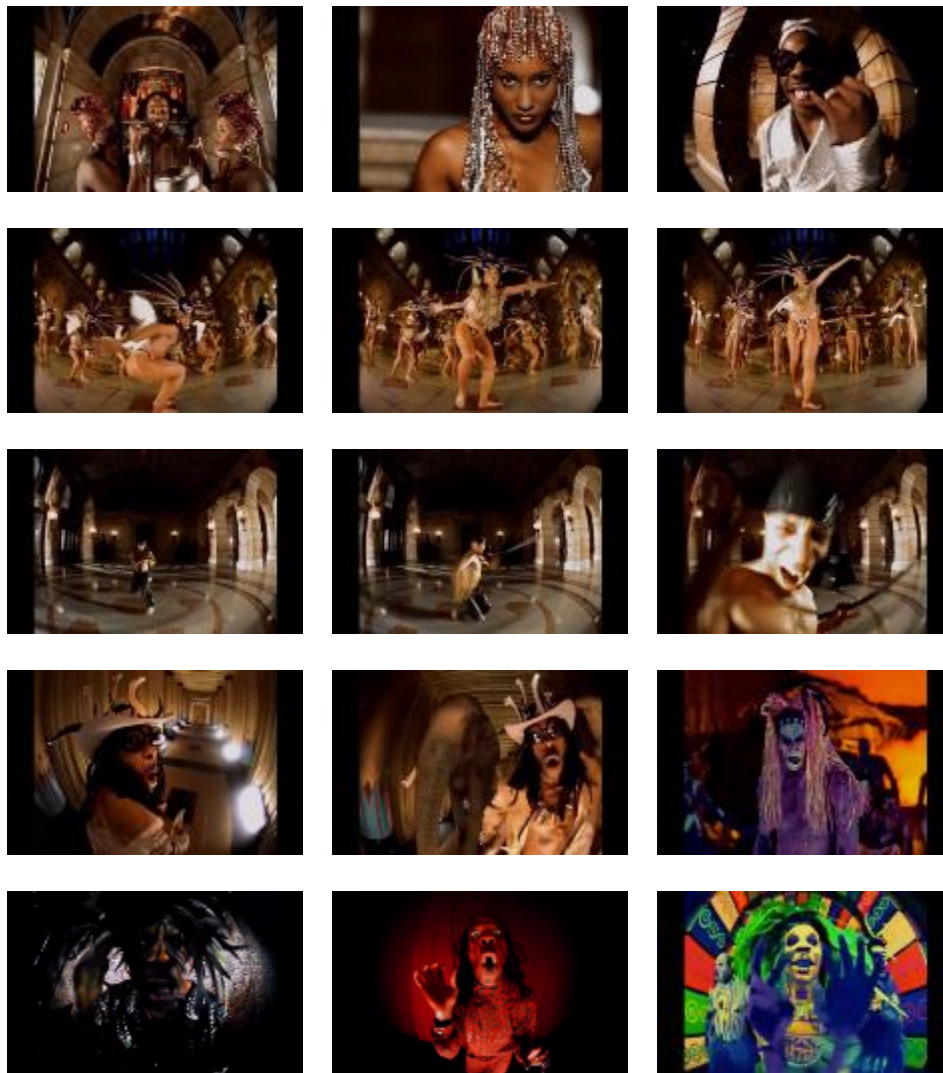


Fig. 23 – Frames from the "Put Your Hands Where My Eyes Can See".

The number of frames needed to better showcase the music video in this dissertation shows us the dimension of this particular production. Centred in an African theme, we see Busta Rhymes as an African Prince, waking up in his palace, surrounded by gorgeous women throwing rose petals at his feet as he walks by; a group of over 10 female dancers paying

tribute to him and two gladiators battling with spears, in a stylised “Kung-Fu like” motion (both these scenes were edited with a curious dynamic: shot with a wide angle lens, it was shown in fast-motion, in order for the movement to accompany the rhythm of the song); Busta Rhymes running down a hallway, with an elephant chasing him (this was also shot and edited in the same style of the two previous scenes); Busta Rhymes accompanied by extras in indigenous attire and face paint; Busta Rhymes in two stylised sets, with matching attire. Directed by Hype Williams, the video was produced for Elektra Records in 1997.

Another example of the growing budgets in Hip-Hop music videos is the video for the 1998 Nas single, “Hate Me Now”, featuring Puff Daddy. Like “Put Your Hands Where My Eyes Can See”, the video was directed by Hype Williams. In it we see the rapper Nas depicted as Jesus of Nazareth, in a recreation of the crucifixion chapter of the Bible. However, to avoid any more controversy, a brief description of the contents of the video appears in the beginning, explaining that the theme is in no way intended to offend Christians. In addition to the historic recreation, the video also shows Nas and Puff Daddy in an urban scenario, performing on top of a store ceiling, surrounded by fans and in a club, in the middle of gorgeous women and silver-painted strippers, with expensive outfits and props, as well as pyrotechnic shows, like a mushroom cloud explosion behind Nas.

These are clear examples of the flamboyance of Hip-Hop music videos in the late 90’s to early 2000’s.

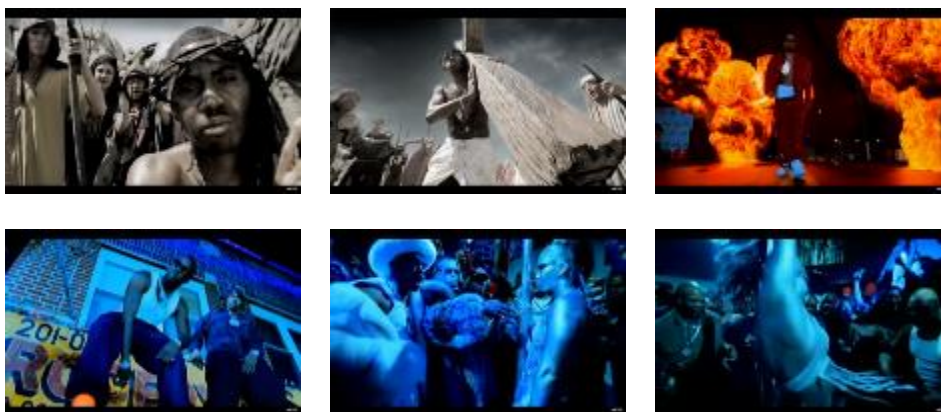


Fig. 24 – Frames from the “Hate Me Now” music video.

2.4 The 2000’s – The Million Dollar Budget Era

As we enter the decade of 2000 to 2010, we come across a number of Hip-Hop music videos that raises a point: is there a pattern amongst the successfully commercial Rap acts and can we find it based on the music videos produced?

Like MC Hammer and Vanilla Ice 10 years earlier, in the 2000’s Hip-Hop seems to be sold to the mainstream in a “package”, containing three characteristics: beautiful women, virile men and a club dancing environment. All music videos featuring these three elements were bound by a common denominator: a massive budget.

This “package” can be mostly associated with *Gangsta* Rap genre; however, we can detect it on other musical genres and even in international music videos outside the US.

Let’s analyse Rap acts like Ja Rule, 50 Cent and Terror Squad. All three are highly successful recording artists, yet we can see many similarities among three of their music videos: Ja Rule’s “Between Me & You”, 50 Cent’s “In Da Club” and Terror Squad’s “Lean Back”.

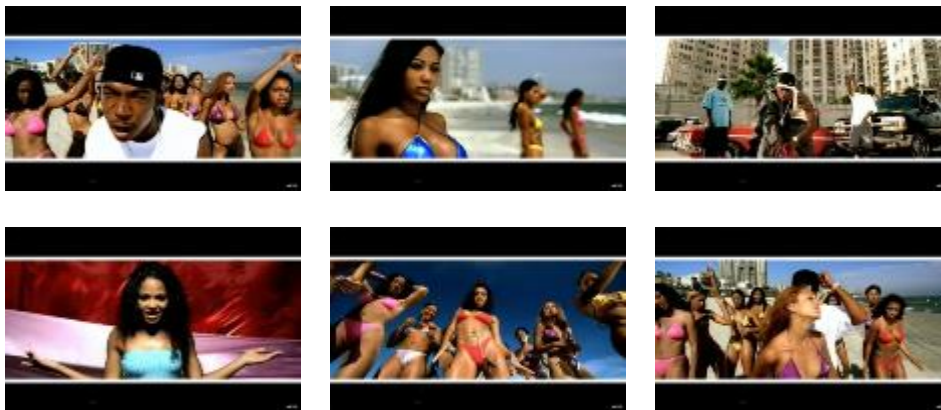


Fig. 25 – Ja Rule, “Between Me & You” (2000).





Fig. 26 – 50 Cent, “In Da Club” (2003).



Fig. 27 – Terror Squad, “Lean Back” (2004).

The point is to show the artists’ virility and success, in a party atmosphere, with people dancing and enjoying the music in the dance floor. We can see a technical resemblance when it comes to the colour correction of the footage, with a warmer, low-saturated, high-contrast tone that provides us a summer-like feeling.

If we group these characteristics as an aesthetic formula, we can easily see its influence in other musical genres’ music videos: for example, Jennifer Lopez’s “Jenny From The Block”¹⁸ features Lopez exposing her body, exploring her sensuality in the same way the females in the last three videos do. As Ja Rule, 50 Cent and Fat Joe are shown as hyper virile in their videos, Jennifer is shown as a powerful, dominant female act, due to her sexuality and presence.

Another element that started to be noticed on Hip-Hop music videos of the 2000s is *product placement*. The “Lean Back” video promoted brands like Cristal and Nike, in “Jenny From The Block” video we can spot a FedEx truck driving in the background.

¹⁸ Although frequently associated with Hip Hop acts such as Ja Rule or P. Diddy, Jennifer Lopez music categorizes as R&B music genre.

*“YouTube Killed the MTV Star”
Did Hip-Hop music videos become the blueprint
for other genres of music videos in the digital age?*

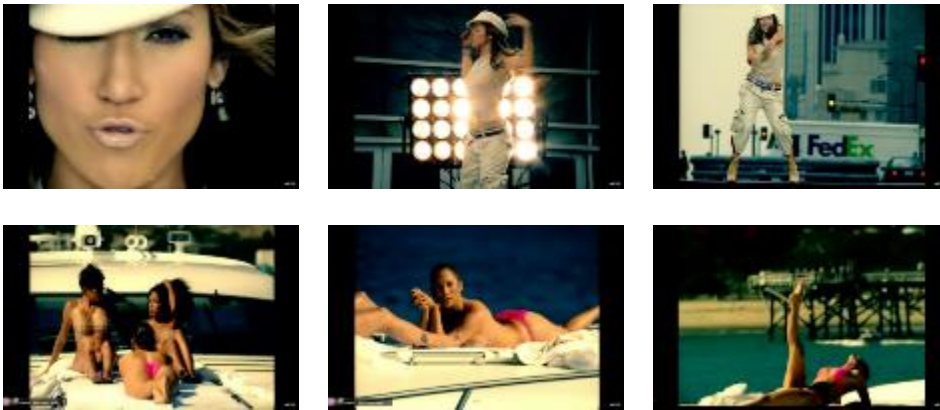


Fig. 28 – Frames from the Jennifer Lopez music video “Jenny From The Block”.

This overall aesthetic became popular in Rap music promotional tools outside of the U.S. The music videos for German “Gangsta Rapper” Fler’s single “Papa Ist Zuruck” (Daddy Is Proud), and Jamaican Reagge/Dancehall singer Sean Paul’s “Get Busy”, are a good example of the use of the 2000s “package” style: cars, beautiful women and a party atmosphere.



Fig. 29 – Frames from German Rapper Fler’s “Papa Ist Zuruck” music video.





Fig. 30 – Frames from the Sean Paul “Get Busy” music video.

Around the 2000’s, a fusion between Hip-Hop and Rock becomes more evident. The number of Hip-Hop acts that reach out others than the African-American community is rising, and bring forward new visual influences in their music videos. Hip-Hop acts like the Hispano-American group Cypress Hill or white rapper Eminem assume their Heavy Metal or Gothic influence in relation to their music.

In the “Rock Superstar” music video, Cypress Hill goes full Rock Music when it comes to the art direction of the whole production. Skull and bone imagery abounds - as the “Rock Superstar” invitation given to the kid, who is about to be in a hellacious ride in what resembles a Heavy Metal theme park - or in the decor of the set: flames, smoke and a classic Metal mosh pit performance by Cypress Hill, fully embodying a Rock band, with a bass player, drummer, guitar player, big amplifiers and other Rock live concert’s equipment.

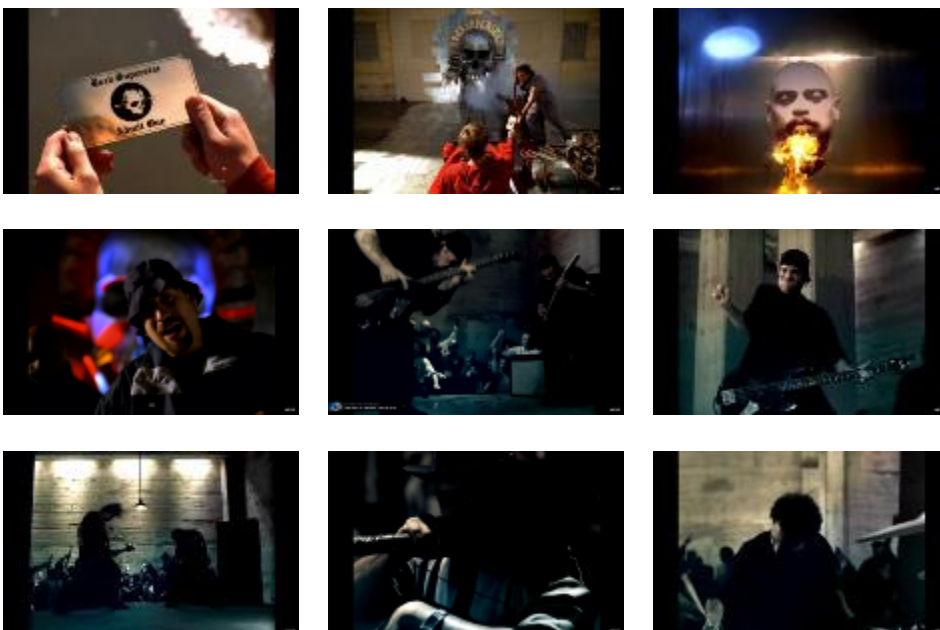


Fig. 31 – Frames from Cypress Hill’s music video for the single “Rock Superstar”.

When it comes to Eminem, we see clear visual influences of Rock in his grimness and shadowy tones, particularly when it relates to dark contents of the songs. Let's analyse the music video for Eminem's 2000 single "Stan", off his second full-length LP "The Marshall Mathers LP": the video and the song tell us the story of a fan named Stan who is obsessed with his idol, Eminem. Stan repeatedly sends him letters without reply. His obsession leads to Stan's suicide, taking with him his girlfriend and their unborn baby in a drunken car rage. The music video portrays the narrative along the song's lyrics and is marked by a photography leaned to shadows, high contrasts and an overall green tonality, representing a sick and twisted vibe likewise the mind of Stan.



Fig. 32 – Frames from Eminem's "Stan" music video (2000).

This song relates to the tragic social scandal of the Columbine Shootings, where two white teenagers enter Columbine High School with shotguns and killed 13 people. With the media attempting to find clues and reasons to this massacre, they discovered that the youngsters listened to artists such as Ramstein or Marilyn Manson, who ended up being a scapegoat for the massacre, with serious damages to their careers. With Eminem's music reaching a wider and wider audience of white teenagers, there is a big concern for the artist - having his music misunderstood and un-intentionally influencing his fans to commit criminal acts.

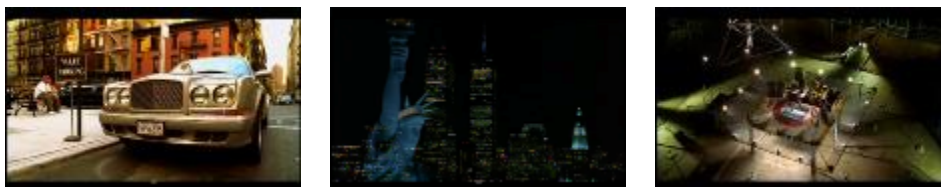
It is possible that Eminem related to Manson's struggle to hold on to his integrity as an artist throughout the media storm that was the Columbine massacre and felt inspired for his own music video for the song "Stan". If we take for example the music video for Marilyn Manson's single "The Beautiful People", released in 1999, one year prior to "Stan" and the same year of Columbine massacre, we can see similarities in tonality and in the overall

twisted vibe of the video, although Manson’s video is clearly much more abstract and contains more shocking imagery, intended to make audiences reflect on what it’s being said in the song - a deep reflexion on the concept of beauty and society’s perception of it.



Fig. 33 – Frames from Marilyn Manson’s music video for “The Beautiful People” (1999).

It is also about this time that the style fusion between Rock and Hip-Hop starts turning in Rock’s direction. Nu Metal¹⁹ band Limp Bizkit is notorious for its Rap influence and the band’s videos are good examples. If we take a look at the music video for Limp Bizkit’s 2004 single “Rollin’”, we clearly see the influence of the Hip-Hop promotional “package” we had previously mentioned. In the video, we see the band’s lead singer Fred Durst driving an expensive Bentley, performing in a studio set stage with female backup dancers and the band playing on the roof of a building. The band’s clothing, as well as the backup dancers’ outfits are similar to Hip-Hop attire, with baseball caps turn sideways, “baggy” XL pants, T-shirts and white sneakers.



¹⁹ Nu Metal is a subgenre within Heavy Metal genre of Rock music. Its main characteristic is the fusion between Heavy Metal instrumentation and other musical styles, such as R’n’B, Funk, Soul and Hip Hop.



Fig. 34 – Frames from Limp Bizkit’s “Rollin’” video (2004).

When it comes to creativity and heavy influence from other fields, being musical, cinema or other cultural aspects, we must mention Kanye West. With a wide range of creative and well thought provocative body of work, we can assume Kanye’s music videos as bringing a new perspective on branding music in the 2000s, and setting the bar high for the present decade, making Hip-Hop as close as a legitimated art form as possible. We will, however, study West’s music videos later on this dissertation, as we deal with Fine Arts’ influence in Hip Hop.

For now, the one thing we want to focus in this analysis is Alain Mikli Shutter Shades sunglasses, introduced by Kanye in his 2007 music video for the song “Stronger”.

“Whatever your thoughts on Kanye West, it’s hard to ignore the contributions he has made to fashion. Aside from launching Louis Vuitton sneakers and Nike Air Yeezy’s, he started a relatively short lived, yet undeniable trend: Shutter Shades.

The visibility impairing, seemingly impractical sunnies were the highlight of Ye’s 2008 Glow in the Dark tour, and created a literal fury with absolutely everyone rocking the shades in a rainbow of colours.

Of course Kanye didn’t create this look in a vacuum, and was undoubtedly influenced by Sho’Nuff, the Sho’Gun of Harlem from the 1985 cult flick The Last Dragon.

No matter his inspiration, it was Kanye who made the look mainstream and ridiculously popular, if only for a 6 month time span.” – Taken from the article “Black History Fashion Trend: Kanye West Shutter Shades”, in the online fashion blog Fashion Bomb Daily.²⁰

²⁰ Online address: fashionbombdaily.com



Fig. 35 – The “shutter shades trend”, illustrated by Kanye, fashion photoshoots and people’s own photographs on social media.

Having in to account the huge trend originated by a single prop from a music video, can music videos start fashion trends? Yes, they can. In fact, as we turn the decade on the 2000’s, we may also assume that music videos are one of the most efficient marketing tools for the fashion industry.

In 2007, the 17 year old rapper and dancer known simply as Soulja Boy, wrote, rapped and produced a song called “Crank That”. Along with a group of his friends and a dance group called the Fresh Squad, Soulja Boy recorded a video with a choreography performed by him and the group. The choreography, alongside with the colourful wardrobe and trademark sunglasses with words painted on the lenses (perhaps a Kanye West influence...) made this little amateur video go instantly viral.

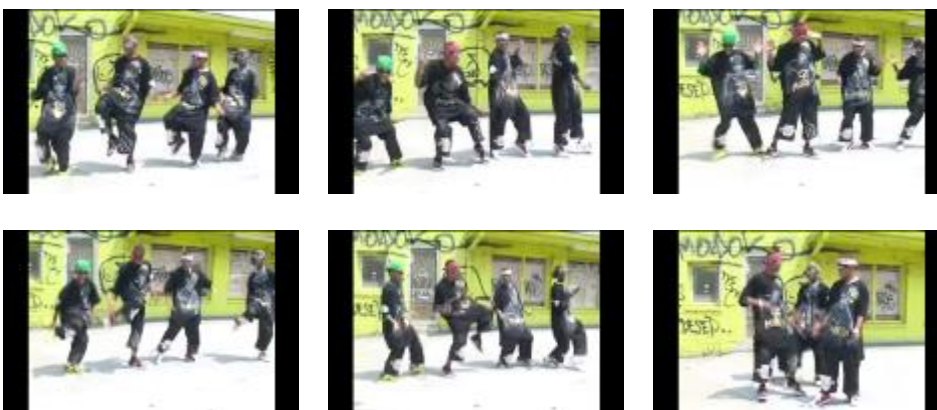


Fig. 36 – Frames from the viral Soulja Boy amateur video called “Crank That In The Hood”

Riding the momentum of his viral online *hit*, Soulja Boy released independently “Crank That” as an official single. Soon he would make a deal with a major label and “Crank That” would get an official music video.

The “Crank That” music video turns around three points: 1) it makes reference to the

online popularity of Soulja Boy, as a supposed CEO of a record label sees his children doing the “Crank That” dance and watches the viral video, as well as several young people doing the dances, recording them and sharing them via web; 2) it shows the choreography as a marketing tool, proven by the online spread of the trend; and 3) it emphasises Soulja Boy’s wardrobe, in particular his trademark sunglasses. We can assume here an evolution of the marketing “package” of *Gangsta Rap* videos, summed up in a colourful and fun music video.



Fig. 37 – Frames from the “Crank That” music video.

We can label the “Crank That” video as a mark in Hip-Hop music video history, not only for being a sign of the changing times, but also because it stated the new power of the independent artist through the internet. As we approached the ending of the 2000s decade, it becomes more evident that the marketing, branding and overall business strategies regarding music were changing.

2.5 2010 / 2015 – The digital age

Smartphones, Tablets, Apps, Facebook, Instagram, all of these new words were created by technological advances of digital software and hardware, and used in our everyday lexicon thanks to the most powerful desire of the 21st century: staying connected.

We have now reached halfway of new millennium’s second decade and, obviously, a

lot has changed. In regards to the music industry, if piracy and free downloading were ruining what once was a very lucrative business in the 2000s, the 2010s are trying to present a solution. If the problem is online, so will be the solution, yet no solution can be found without a marketing strategy and a "rebranding" of institutions so, naturally, music videos had to evolve with the times.

If any conclusion can rise in this analyses is that music videos, in the 21st century and, most recently, in the digital age, have become much more than marketing and promotional tools. They have become fashion and Pop culture billboards, controversy sponges, highly anticipated entertainment content, cinema based experiences and, most importantly, undeniably the creation of art work.

2.5.1 "YouTube killed the MTV Star"

In the end of the 2000s' chapter, we analysed the case of Soulja Boy and how anyone could start an independent career out of obscurity and reach the mainstream, with hard work, good timing and the Internet.

Paraphrasing the chorus line from the famous The Buggles song, if "Video Killed the Radio Star", YouTube definitely killed the MTV Star. It is a fact that record sales have dropped quite notoriously and the music business goes through a restructuring phase, but one significant evolution in the musical world is co-related with the weakening of the major record labels grip on artists' careers, and the increasing of new independent promotional possibilities provided online. Although there is not so much money to be made as before (at least in traditional ways), there is more freedom for artists to explore their creativity and manage their careers. If in the '80s, up to the 2000s, MTV was the dominant brand, logo and platform for visual display of musical content, the '010s have been experiencing a cutthroat competition.

The VEVO platform

"VEVO is the world's leading all-premium music video and entertainment platform with over seven billion monthly views globally. VEVO brings a library of 100,000 HD music videos, exclusive original programming and live concert performances to everyone on the planet who loves music. Viewers can watch on-demand through Vevo.com, the mobile web

and apps for mobile/tablets and TVs, or through VEVO TV, the always-on broadcast-style linear music channels built by expert human programmers. Additionally, VEVO syndicates its catalogue to dozens of sites across the web giving music fans the option to view their favourite programming anywhere, anytime. It is VEVO’s massive scale and reach that has attracted more than 900 brand marketers around the globe since its launch in 2009.” – Overall business view and stats taken from the VEVO official Facebook page.

VEVO’s curriculum speaks for itself. Since it appeared in 2009, VEVO has become a “must” in every mainstream major label artists’ career in the US (names like Eminem, Drake, Rihanna, Beyoncé, etc.), and has become a symbol of excellence and prestige around the world, with artists outside of the US signing contracts with the platform and joining the club (names like Daddy Yankee, Seu Jorge, Enrique Iglesias, etc.).

Having its origin in a business fusion between Universal Music Group (USG), Sony Music Entertainment (SME) and online giant Google, VEVO has also become a symbol for an alliance between record business giants and Internet powerhouses, working side by side to empower the music world by embracing the possibilities opened by the World Wide Web.

VEVO tends on growing not only thanks to its present status and the corporations behind it, but also due to the fact that in no way, shape or form they do intend to be an elite product, thus opening its doors to a new strategy of reaching the masses of independent artists. Now, more than ever, it is possible to an independent artist to create and have a VEVO account and hopefully someday can reach the levels of the big VEVO accounts. With content partners such as Vydia and Google’s purchase of YouTube, which made VEVO the premiere channel for music videos on the site, we can foresee further steps to change the business model for music.

But the competition doesn’t stop there. Online based networks such as Complex News or Revolt TV (created by Rap “mogul” Puff Daddy) have countered MTV in the journalistic area, producing and providing big amounts of content such as special interviews, special reports, documentaries and other interactions with or involving famous recording artists and the music media in general.



Fig. 38 – Official logos for VEVO, Revolt TV and Complex News

2.5.2 The role of music videos in today's music world

Let's take a step back in the history of the music business, a step away back to the '50s and the '60s, back to vinyl records. Back then, "singles", "maxi-singles" (single records that contained up to 3 different tracks) and "Eps" (Extended Plays, records that contained up to 25 minutes of music) were the highest selling products of the music industry, for the simple fact that music was consumed in a different way. These were cheaper than full-length "LPs" (Long Plays, or as we commonly know them, Albums) and, to the majority of consumers, everything turned around one or two singles, since that was the main promotional tool for the recording artist.

As the music business evolved, so did the consumer habits: LPs became the main focus of record sales, while Singles were still released to huge commercial success, but only with the intent to promote and boost Albums' sales.

Nowadays, due to a number of reasons such as piracy, dropping sales of albums, shorter attention-spans²¹ and the overall way we consume music, can we assume that the music business works in cycles and it's all about the Singles again?

Single releases in the digital age

After analysing carefully online single releases, via iTunes, Google or, most importantly for this dissertation, YouTube, we have come across an interesting Single release strategy by various well known artists in the music business, particularly in Hip-Hop.

Influenced by traditional strategy of officially releasing a song through radio and stores and then, after evaluating its success, releasing a music video to boost the sales, one of the main marketing strategies adopted now is releasing the single online with an audio visual support that we cannot consider, however, a music video. Usually is a video displaying the lyrics of the song in a creative manner - this is called a "lyric video" and is usually used to test the public's engagement to it and get some "hype" around the single so its mileage can be prolonged, when the official music video hits the web. All this strategy allows refreshing the single which, if had been released aside with a music video, would have grown old sooner.

One clear example of this type of strategy is Pop music superstar Katy Perry.

²¹ We can therefore assume that digital age, with so many offers of diversified contents has been diminishing exponentially our attention-span, since there is always too much to focus on.

Although being related to Hip-Hop merely by having some Rap music features in some of her singles, Katy seems to have made good use of "lyric videos" strategy - as she released "lyric videos" and subsequently music videos for hit singles such as "Roar", "Wide Awake", "Part of Me" and "E.T.".

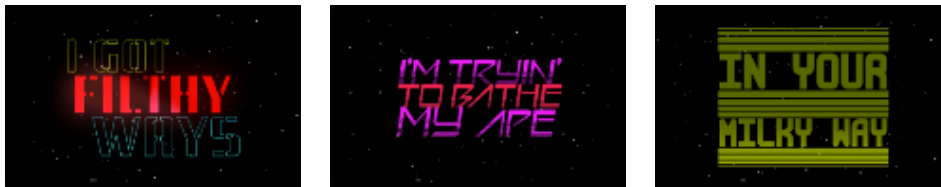


Fig. 39 – Frames from Katy Perry lyric video for the single "E.T.", featuring Kanye West (16/03/2011).

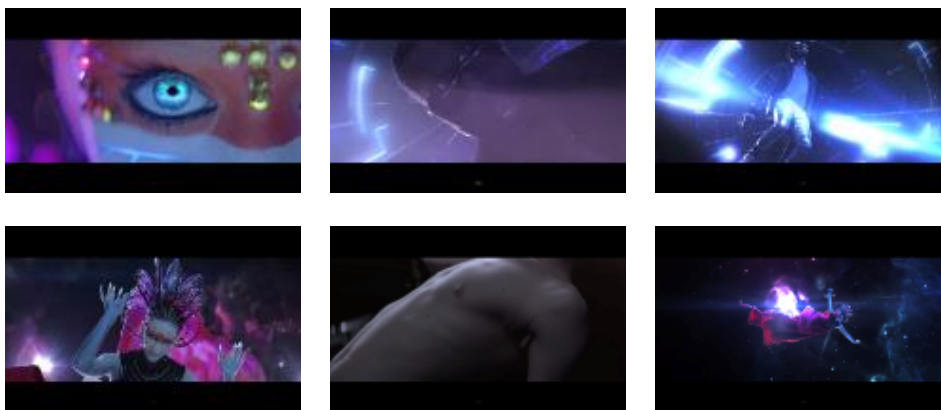


Fig. 40 – Frames from Katy Perry's music video for "E.T.", featuring Kanye West (30/03/2011).

Streaming services

"Streaming" services are a very interesting phenomenon, result of the digital age, and appear to be a successful solution to the illegal downloading of music, as well as a new direction for music industry nowadays. It's a business model that embraces the notion of free listening to all the music you want and uses it to its advantage, trying to cash in a profit in every form they can. Instead of buying song per song, album per album, any costumer can get access to a wide amount of top-quality music, free of charge and, if you are a devoted consumer of music and want to get rid of advertisements and/or get extra and more exclusive content, you pay for a subscription (like in a magazine, for example). One of the first streaming services, and at present, the widest is Spotify.

“With Spotify, it’s easy to find the right music for every moment – on your phone, your computer, your tablet and more.

There are millions of tracks on Spotify. So whether you’re working out, partying or relaxing, the right music is always at your fingertips. Choose what you want to listen to, or let Spotify surprise you.

You can also browse through the music collections of friends, artists and celebrities, or create a radio station and just sit back.

Soundtrack your life with Spotify. Subscribe or listen for free.” – Quote from the “About Us” section of Spotify’s web page²².

Since Spotify’s big splash in the digital business world, there has been fierce competition, obviously motivated by profit, less from subscription fees than for publicity and sponsors - basically following television’s old way of financing itself. Apple has taken quite an interest in Streaming services, creating the platform Apple Music, which provides a similar service and applies the same business model as Spotify.

“For Apple Music members, the collection you own and love is just the beginning. Now you can also listen to the tens of millions of tracks in the Apple Music library.

Our dedicated team of experts is here to help you find new music to love. Enjoy recommendations handpicked just for you or explore everything they find that’s new and noteworthy in the world of music. It’s all yours.” – Quote from the “Discover” option in “Music” section of Apple’s web page²³.

However, for the purpose of this dissertation, the most relevant Streaming service must be Tidal. Created by Rap “mogul” Jay-Z, Tidal has self-promoted has a service that provides a bigger connection between the artists and their audience, also supplying a wide variety of editorial content - including special reports and interviews - and, more importantly, impacting music videos that debut exclusively on Tidal.

²² <https://www.spotify.com>

²³ www.apple.com

“TIDAL is an advertisement-free, lossless, CD-quality music and music video streaming service with extensive curated editorial expertise. TIDAL gives you access to more than 30 million songs and 75,000 music videos. (...)

Choose TIDAL because of your love of music. We aim to be a service that benefits both users and artists, and in the same process bringing them closer together. Enjoy amazing amounts of expertly curated content in High Fidelity sound quality and High Definition video, as well as exclusive material and pre-streams only available in TIDAL.” – Quote from the “Title FAQ” section of Tidal’s web page²⁴.

Tidal’s strongest offer is the exclusive music videos – most of the artists associated with Jay-Z, through his label Roc Nation or other business relations, are in some way involved with Tidal. The brand’s biggest promotional campaign was when the exclusive music video for Beyoncé’s much anticipated collaboration with female Rap “queen” Nicki Minaj, “Fellin’ Myself” – although the record was released online for free in both iTunes and YouTube, and even an online teaser was posted on YouTube, the complete video is available exclusively on Tidal.

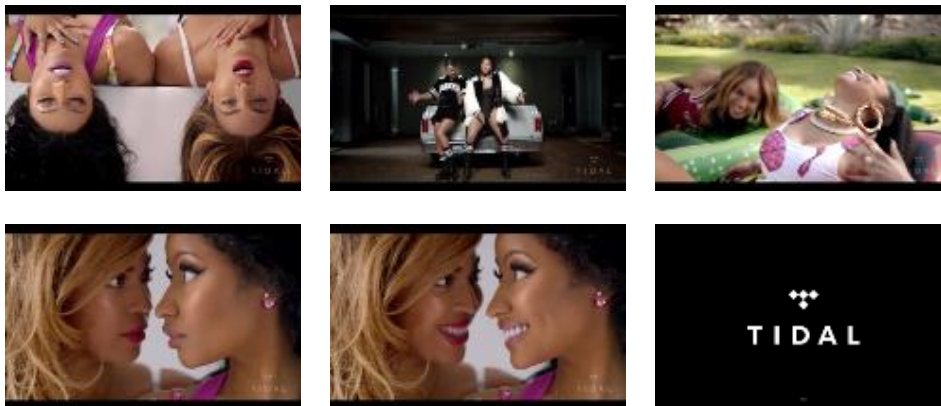


Fig. 41 – Frames from the trailer of “Fellin’ Myself” music video (2015).²⁵

Tidal’s strategic bet proves how important this medium – music videos – are in digital age’s way of consuming music. Therefore, we can conclude that music videos serve not only as a visual component to enhance a single, but are used as an important tool of promotion, with

²⁴ www.tidal.com

²⁵ In Figure 51, we see small clips of the video, with Beyoncé and Nicki involved in all sorts of crazy fun scenarios, with Tidal’s logo always present in the bottom right corner, and appearing in full-length at the end of the trailer.

certain features intentionally inserted to promote its sharing as most as possible, that is trying to go “viral”.

2.5.3 The viral effect – can it be manufactured?

In the 2000s chapter we have seen the meaning in digital age of the word “viral” – it’s the best way to describe any content – whether it is video, animation, image, audio – to be massively shared through online users, reaching the million mark (or more) of views in the shortest period of time.

The early viral videos were comedy skits, real life funny accidents or a practical joke, which makes all the sense - if a funny story or an anecdote can reach the other side of the world, jokes and laughter will spread much faster in the digital age. And quickly the viral effect reached other types of content, particularly, music videos.

The first example we can analyse is Justin Bieber’s “Baby” music video, featuring the rapper Ludacris. Released in 2010, was Justin Bieber’s debut single and, like the majority of major label single debuts, it followed a formula: since it was a teenage Pop music, it featured a cast of all teenage extras, from girls to dancers, with a very simple storyline: Bieber is in love with a girl, who plays hard to get, and he tries to win her over in a bowling alley, where all the teenagers hang out. Another marketing strategy was the guest appearances of already established stars in the video, to help boost it thanks to their star power: Ludacris (who is also featured in the song, with a Rap verse of his own) and Canadian rapper Drake (who appears in the video, along with some older guys, acting like the “big brothers” watching amusingly the kids trying to act like adults).



Fig. 42 – Frames from Justin Bieber’s “Baby” music video (2010).

At that time, “Baby” became the **most viewed** video in YouTube history, with over 500 000 000 views. To this day, it has gathered over 1 billion views, and still stands as one of the most watched videos of all time, proving that the marketing strategy and its formula were a success. Even so, there is a small detail we can’t ignore: it is the most disliked video in YouTube history, with over 5 000 000 “dislikes”, as opposed to 3 000 000 “likes”²⁶, which raises a different question: can “hate” make something go viral?



Fig. 43 – The ratings for “like” and “dislike” in “Baby” music video.

Having this example in mind, although we can’t surely and accurately say that “hate” can make a video go viral, yet we can safely assume at least that not liking something is not a hurdle when it comes to people sharing ones content.

Going from one extreme to the other, we can now learn from a video that went massively viral for its light-hearted humour, bright colours and just overall likeable “personality” of the singer: the current most watched video of all time, the “Gangnam Style” music video, from South Korean singer/rapper PSY.

With over 2 billion views on YouTube, “Gangnam Style” can be considered the most viral video ever. For the sake of this dissertation, let’s analyse the video itself and compare it with the, quite arguably, most famous music video of all times, Michael Jackson’s “Thriller”. Then we can consider another hypothesis: is “Gangnam Style” the “Thriller” of digital age?

²⁶ “Like” and “Dislike” are options of YouTube that allow you, as a viewer, to rate a particular video having in account your personal opinion. It serves as an important statistic tool and helps YouTube platform to better connect with its audience.

“Gangnam Style” does have a narrative structure, although it doesn’t appear to be so at a first glance. In the beginning of the video, PSY falls asleep while sun-bathing, and he’s transported, arguably, to a dream state - which could explain the funny non-sense imagery of the video. However, this is not a video charged with unreal/surreal imagery like, for example, Tricky’s “Hell is ‘Round The Corner” (reviewed previously), but rather a playful dream, based mostly on reality, with strange situations and interactions among elements of the real world.

The key factor of the success of the video, as it gave it a particular look that not many other videos have, is the “over-the-top” experience. Wind blowing powder similar to snow, explosions in the background, a man dancing in his underwear on a lift, and a heavy use of pyrotechnical and lightning effects create such an overwhelming and excessive piece that brings humour to it and makes quite impossible not to watch it and have fun.



Fig. 44 – Frames from PSY’s “Gangnam Style” music video (2012).

Another strong point in this video is choreography. PSY presents a very unique and particular dance move, simulating a horse ride. This dance inspired millions of people around the world to dance to the tune in a fun and silly way, which created a trend and, therefore, helped spread the video even more.

*“YouTube Killed the MTV Star”
Did Hip-Hop music videos become the blueprint
for other genres of music videos in the digital age?*

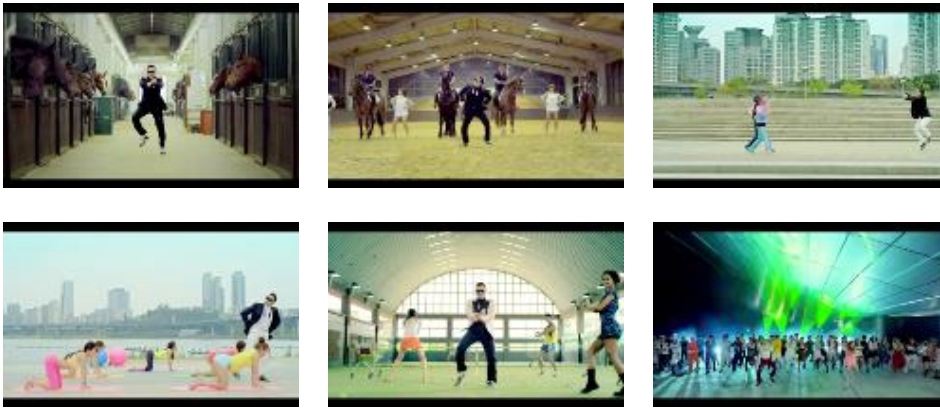


Fig. 45 – Frames from PSYs “Gangnam Style” music video with the distinct choreography.

The choreography is the key point to a possible comparison with “Thriller”, which is not only one of the most successful singles released by late Pop legend Michael Jackson, but also, quite arguably, one of the most important marks in music video history.

Produced on a high budget at the time (approximately 500 000 \$00), it blends the notions of cinema, in particular B horror movies, with those of music video, a relatively new medium back in the ‘80s.

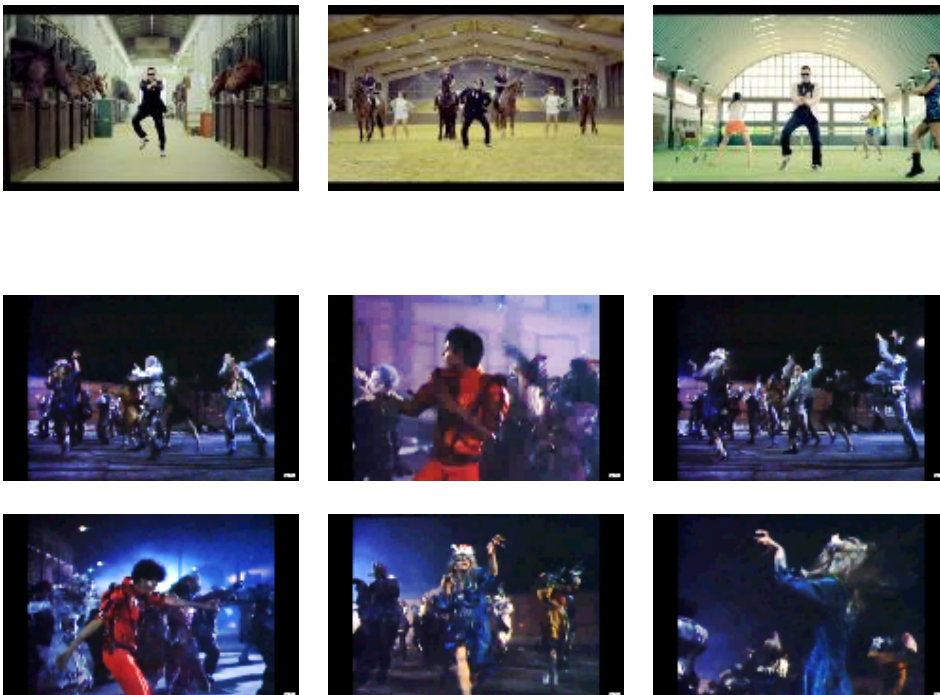


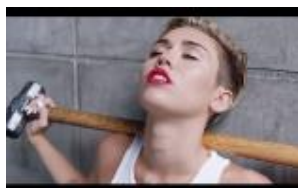
Fig. 46 – Frames of both “Gangnam Style” and “Thriller” and respective choreographies.

This is not an assumption that PSY copied in any way Michael Jackson's "Zombie" choreography; they are two completely different move sets. What we argue is that, as "Thriller" made an entire generation in the '80s do the "zombie hands" dance, "Gangnam Style" made an entire generation in the 2010's, do the "horse riding" dance. And if "Thriller" is, arguably, the most famous music video in history, and "Gangnam Style" is the highest viewed video in Internet history - at least with available stats of the number of viewings - calling "Gangnam Style" the "Thriller" of the digital age may be controversial, yet can be a valid statement.

We have to address as well another decisive question: the "shock value". Shocking an audience has been a tactic used to make people talk about a subject for years and years. Some examples of this assertion are: the raping scene on Gaspar Noe's 2001 movie "Irreversible", stickers on the cigarette pack labels showing images of infected lungs, women burning their bras in the '60s hippie and feminist movements. So, it's only natural that "shock value" has been used to help make a video go viral.

Former Disney Teenage Pop Star, the singer Miley Cyrus tried to differentiate herself from the clean image she once had by cutting her long hair short, acting wild in front of *paparazzi* cameras and releasing provocative pictures and music videos, charged with explicit sexuality. However, none of these actions had a "shock value" as huge as the music video for Miley's 2013 single "Wrecking Ball".

The song relates to heartbreak and the music video turns around the "wrecking ball" theme, with a real life wrecking ball tearing down concrete walls and Miley herself breaking the walls with a sledgehammer. It seems like a simple concept, but it goes one step further, as Miley is shown naked on top of the wrecking ball and performing what seems like oral sex to the sledgehammer. So, we acknowledge a well-conceived metaphor for the artist's is feelings while performing this song, but interrupted by provocative highly charged sexual innuendo with the intention to shock and outrage the audience, causing it to spread and be shared by millions. "Wrecking Ball" has over 700 000 000 views since its release in 2013.



*“YouTube Killed the MTV Star”
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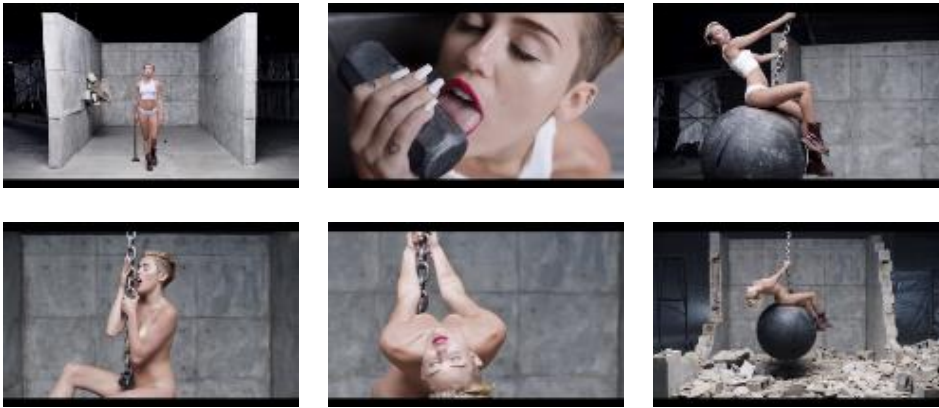


Fig. 47 – Frames from the Miley Cyrus “Wrecking Ball” music video (2013).

Our last example on the viral issue is, in fact, quite opposite to Miley Cyrus “Wrecking Ball”. Instead of a shocking effect, Pharrell’s “Happy” was a case of a particular music video being shared because of the song’s good influence and massive appeal.

Being first featured in the soundtrack for the animated movie “Despicable Me 2”, “Happy” began a slow but steady journey in to a worldwide phenomenon.

Nearly half a year later, after the single’s increasing success, Pharrell released the official music video. However, the way he did it is truly remarkable. “Happy” has the distinction of being the first ever 24 hour lasting music video.

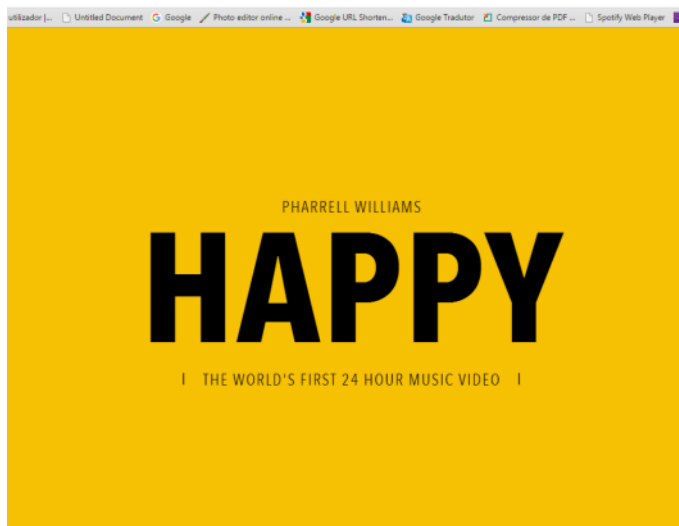


Fig. 48 – Website for Pharrell’s 24 hour long music video for “Happy”

With its own website, the music video, directed by the team We Are From LA, features Pharrel walking through the streets and other locations and scenarios singing the music, as well as several characters (some of whom are celebrities) are dancing to the tune.

The music video footage is not ground-breaking, but it doesn’t have to be. It simply illustrates the overall feeling of the song, a feel good Pop single that is loved by the masses and makes everybody want to dance.

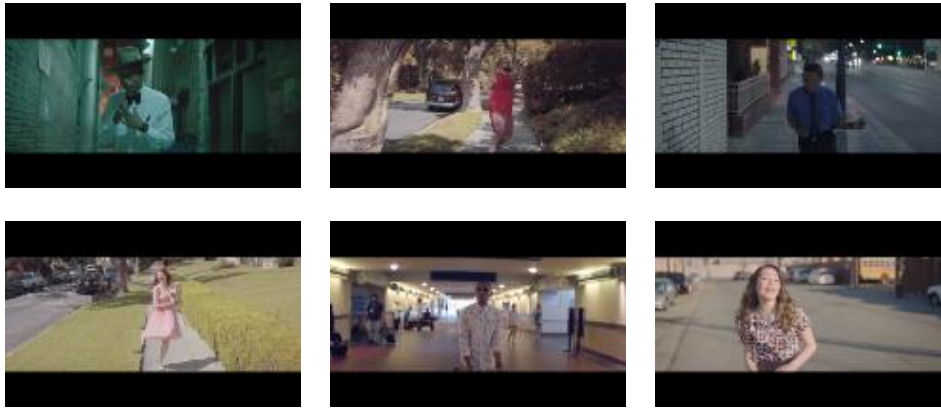


Fig. 49 – Frames from the YouTube short version of Pharrell’s “Happy” music video²⁷ (2013)

But the phenomenon wasn’t over yet. Thanks to its “catchy” hook and danceable melody, people around the world started making videos of them dancing “Happy” and uploading them online. The result was a true viral effect that made “Happy” the single of the year 2013, and stands as a crowning achievement of the digital age, whilst showing clearly the direction that the entertainment world as a whole is heading to: a massive connection to an audience on a global scale.



Fig. 50 – Frames from a collection of people around the world dancing to “Happy”, from Bosnia, Tunisia, Italy, Spain, Poland and Australia.

So, what is the definition of “viral”? There are, naturally, many layers on the subject, but the question still remains: can we manufacture a viral video? Taking into account the

²⁷ Not only is a short version uploaded to YouTube, the 24 hour’s music video is also divided, hour per hour, into 24 individual videos on YouTube, titled with the hour and the day they represent [for example: “Happy (1AM)”].

controversy intentionally generated by artists like Miley Cyrus or branding and marketing strategies or commercial formulas pushed by big labels in acts like Justin Bieber or Rebecca Black, it seems to us arguable to say that viral videos can be manufactured, and there are ways to increase your online audiences and conditioning them share your content. However, we can't accurately define viral videos as add campaigns or marketing tools since online audiences are particularly unpredictable, due to its constant evolving and changing nature. Therefore, viral videos can be described as "perfect storms", where all the ingredients meet at the same time: if it works, and if it is accepted organically and shared likewise, there isn't any other more powerful way to go viral.

2.5.4 How We See vs. How We Saw

The dive in the past and retrospective journey that we have been doing up to this point leads, naturally, to a comparison between the past and the present of music videos. And the question to be asked is: what has changed?

After our near 40 year look back at Hip-Hop music videos, we are entitled to assume that music videos in general were produce to sell a product (or promoting an artist) as well as being a visual complement to depict the artist's song. As we compare with nowadays, we can conclude that not much has changed except for one aspect: the main channel to display music videos today is online. Although music videos still serve the same purpose as before, the overall design or motivation has changed.

With Internet, there are no more rules to be broken. The artists' promotion is in their own (or their staff's) hands. There is no more corporate censorship and long gone are the MTV days when N.W.A.'s music videos were banned in fear of losing sponsors. If nothing else, examples like Miley Cyrus "Wrecking Ball" video prove us is that erratic behaviour and controversy are very much welcomed as ways to go viral.

The commercial factors of music videos are more crystal clear than ever, nevertheless, music videos have become such an artistic complement of the artists' main vision that have become as significant (or more, in some cases) to the artists' expression than the song itself.

In this respect, two examples that broke the artistic barriers of Hip-Hop through their sound and music videos are the experimental band Death Grips and female singer / MC Fka Twigs. The originality in their music videos serves as a good example of the importance of

videos in complementing their music.

Death Grips break-out single was the song “Guillotine”, off of their 2011 debut “Ex-Military” mixtape²⁸. Death Grips’ sound has been very distinct and loud for Hip-Hop levels, influenced by Punk Rock, Industrial music and an overall experimental electronic tone. This unconventional fusion of styles, while still inside the Hip-Hop genre, as turned up Death Grips in to a cult band, with music videos just as strange as their music. In “Guillotine” we see the group’s main vocalist, MC Ride, in the front seat of a car, with static visual noise covering his eyes and the landscape that passes by, as if the video suffers from a severe malfunction. The video quality is very low, as if it was shot with a Mini-DV camera or other cheap digital video camera, in straight opposition to the 1080 full HD image quality popular in the digital age, where technological improvements can give us the best image quality possible at the most accessible price. While Hip-Hop standards go one way, Death Grips try to go the other way around.



Fig. 51 – Frames from Death Grips’ music video for “Guillotine” (2011).

Another note-worthy topic of discussion for this analyse is the massive amount of independent contents the digital age as provided. With a free worldwide platform like YouTube, Facebook and other social media and with newer, more cost-efficient video and sound equipment, it was never so easy to build a career all by yourself. This “do-it-yourself” appeal is present in successful music videos, released by independent artists, with simple but effective imagery that makes them popular with an easy to understand consumption, while maintaining its own artistic style.

The music video for the 2011 song “Lonely Boy”, from Indie-Rock band The Black Keys, is the perfect example of this assumption. Shot in one single take, the video shows only a black man dancing to the tune, in a set one assumes is his work place. The idea behind the video – everybody has to dance this music – alongside the silliness of the situation and the

²⁸ Initially referring as a cassette tape with several unrelated songs recorded, the term “mixtape” has been used in Hip Hop to describe a promotional album (usually available free online) which is not a commercial release but is the first step before launching an official LP.

dance by this middle-aged man makes a strong impression on whoever views it and is a key-element on the song’s success.

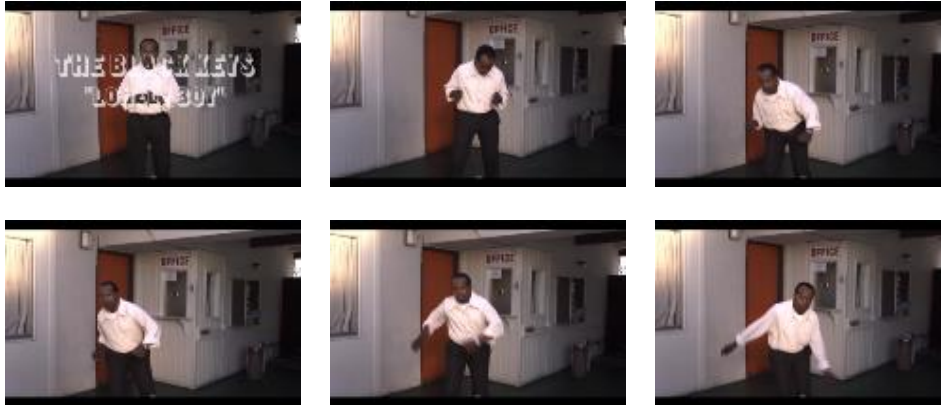


Fig. 52 – Frames from The Black Key’s music video for “Lonely Boy” (2011).

This very simple approach was also taken by female rapper Azealea Banks, in her break-out single “212”. Shot in black and white, the set was the street outside her home and a grocery store. The shots of Azealea and fellow producer Lazy Jay dancing next to a brick wall and posing in silly poses, as well as quotes from the song’s lyrics flashed in between frames produce a very entertaining video, in which Azealea’s aggressive attitude is portrayed by both the song’s and the frantic editing.

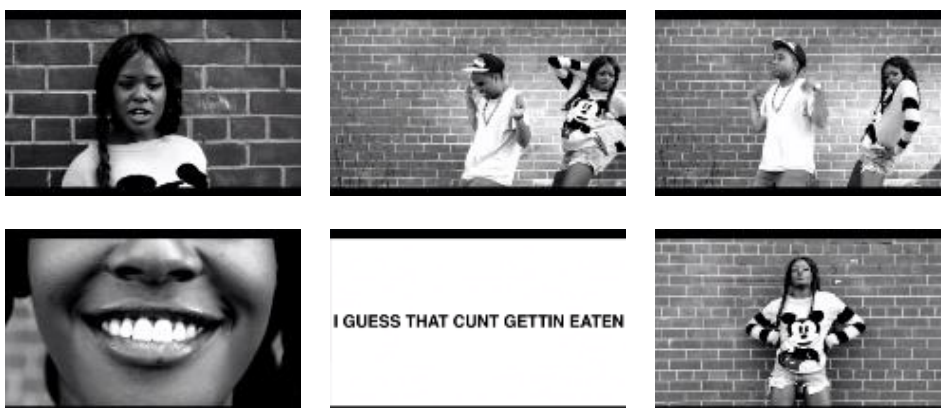


Fig. 53 – Frames from Azealea Bank’s “212” video (2011).

This simple style of shooting music videos was adopted by Pop / R’n’B star Beyoncé, on her 2014 music video for the song “Yoncé”, off of her 5th self-titled album. The short video (2:02 min) is shot in a set similar to a fashion photo shoot, with Beyoncé and three

other beautiful models, sporting a more urban wardrobe, with the southern Hip-Hop trademark “grills” on the lower teeth. In this particular video we can see clear similarities with Azealea Banks’ “212” video, as the brick wall as background and the detail shot of Beyoncé’s mouth singing the lyrics.

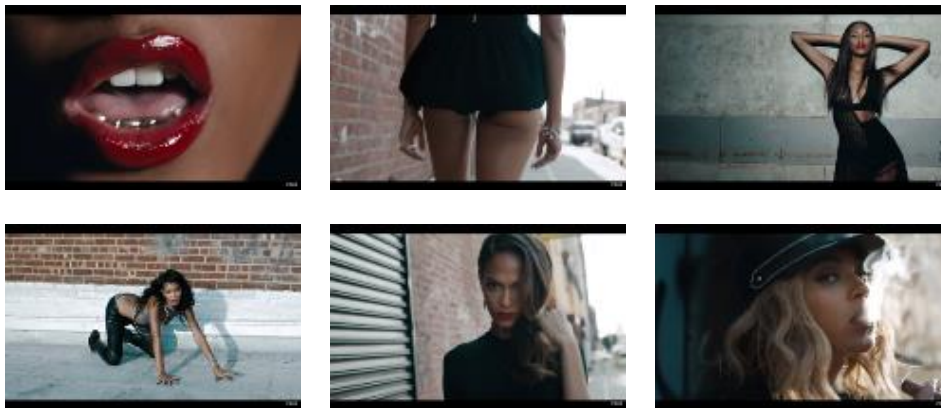


Fig. 54 – Frames from Beyoncé “Yoncé” music video (2014).

Besides the “do-it-yourself” appeal, there is one more special “appeal” in Hip-Hop music videos to notice in the digital age: the “nostalgic” appeal.

“Brands are focusing on the '90s, because they know they need to tap into the spending power of the biggest and most diverse generation that’s ever existed: the millennials.

Many of these young adults grew up in the 1990s and are now entering their peak earning and spending years. Ignoring them would be a bad business move.

But what is it about the past that’s so seductive?

According to Dr. Clay Routledge, a social psychologist and associate professor of psychology at North Dakota State University, when people think about the happy memories from their past, that nostalgia makes them feel good about the future. It also increases people’s self-esteem and their perception of social connectedness.” – Giang, V., “They Love the ‘90s: Using Nostalgia to Woo Millennials”, opinion article from the American Express website²⁹.

A “nostalgia” trend in the ‘010s has led people to like old-fashioned items for a nostalgic feel, for a simple reason, has explained in Vivian Giang’s article. The 20 year olds

²⁹ www.americanexpress.com

of the digital age were born in the '90s, so it makes sense to appeal to their emotions by evoking themes and images from their childhood, thus making them consume certain products. Hip-Hop videos are no exception to this trend - with VHS-like quality of footage (intertwined with full HD footage), arcade video games and a lighting resembling a nightclub³⁰, PARTYNEXTDOOR's "Recognise" music video, featuring rapper Drake, is a great example of this "nostalgic" appeal.

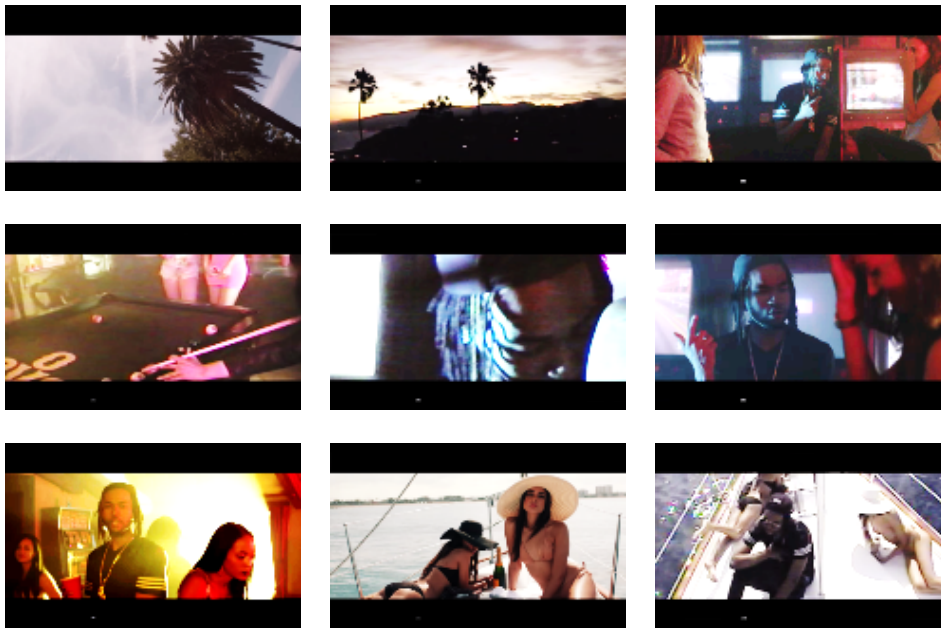


Fig. 55 – Frames from the PARTYNEXTDOOR music video for "Recognise", (2014).

One of the most recent examples of nostalgia elements involved on a music video is "King Kunta" music video, from rapper Kendrick Lamar, off the 2015 LP "To Pimp a Butterfly". The video is under the influence by old-school West Coast *Gangsta* Rap music videos, like Dr Dre's "Still Dre", and especially 2Pac's "To Live and Die in LA". Both the videos show the rappers wandering in the streets of their hometown (2Pac's Los Angeles and Kendrick's Compton) in a "low rider" car with women. The video also shows shoot-outs, trying to capture the feel of an urban area, as well as local residents. In Kendrick's case, the video is shot in 4.3 displays, as opposed to the standard 16.9 from the 1080HD. The intent is to display in an old-school manner, giving the video a distinctive look.

³⁰ Straight out of a "Miami Vice" episode, one can argue.

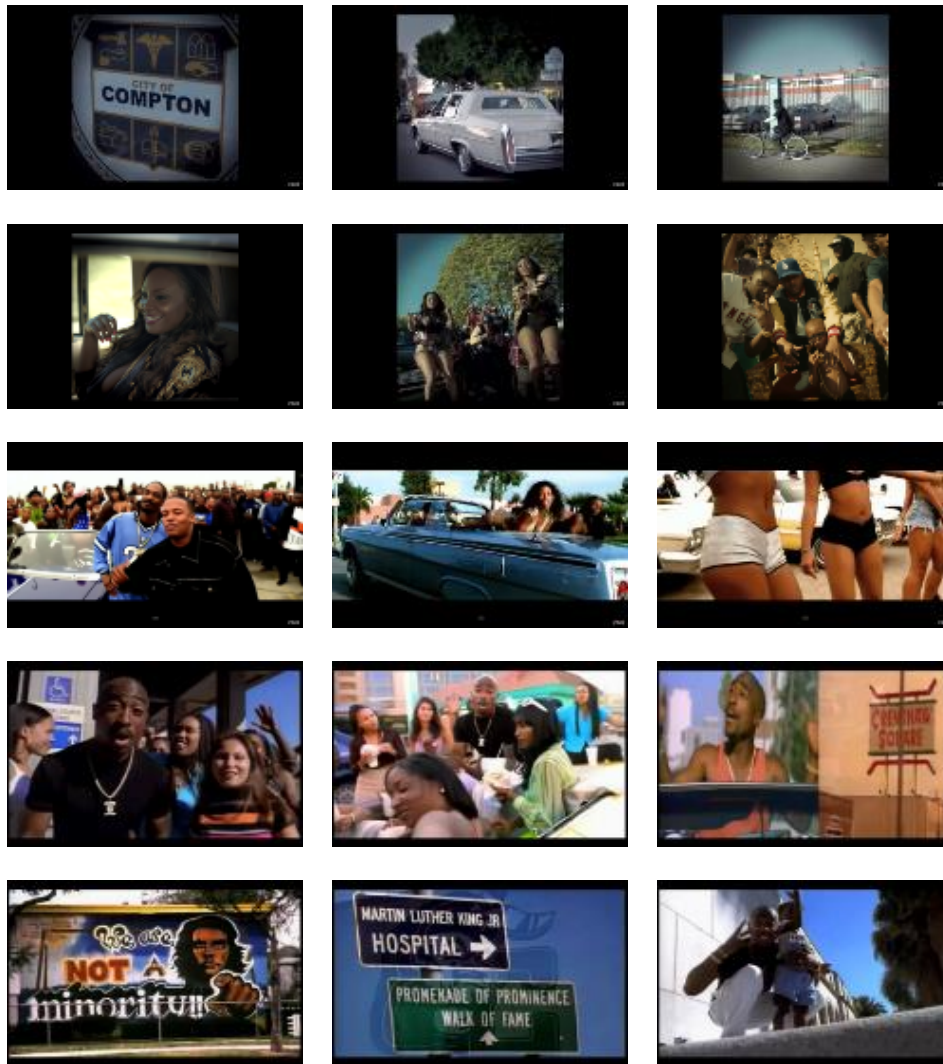


Fig. 56 – Frames from Kendrick Lamar’s “King Kunta” music video (2015), compared with Frames from Dr Dre’s music video for “Still Dre” (1998) and 2Pac’s “To Live and Die in LA” music video (1996).

Still on the “nostalgic” topic, and keeping in mind that particular aspects of any director’s point of view are always present in the music videos production, can we say that today’s Hip-Hop acts take visual influences from past music videos?

In order to better answer this question, the best example to analyse is the working relationship between Canadian rapper Drake and fellow Canadian music video director Director X.

Julien Christian Lutz, also known as Director X, is a music video director with an extended curriculum in the music video world, most notably in the Hip-Hop world, where he has directed for artists like Usher, R. Kelly, Sean Paul, Rihanna, Jay-Z and Kendrick Lamar.

His work as a film director lasts for nearly two decades, with his first music video dating back to 1998.³¹

By taking a look at his resume and music videos it's safe to assume that Director X played an active role on the 2000's Hip-Hop aesthetics, in particular when it comes to the “package” referenced earlier. In fact, his videos included in this dissertation so far (Sean Paul's “Get Busy” and Kendrick Lamar's “King Kunta”), although separated by roughly a decade, still show distinct traces of that particular “package”: big cars, beautiful women and the male artists being portrayed as alpha males.

“I have put a lot of beautiful women in a lot of music videos and discovered a lot of new faces. (...) When making a music video with a female lead the ultimate compliment is when a person approaches me and asks “Yo, Who's That Girl?” (...) I've done a lot of videos for male artists. Cleaning up the dirty ones. Hardening up the soft ones. Surrounding a man with expensive cars, clothes and jewellery and beautiful woman will make him look better. A real man exudes manly power with or without these things (...)” – Quote taken from Director X's official website, on the Portfolio section.

One of the artists with whom Lutz has worked frequently is rapper Drake. On three different occasions, the rapper and the director have teamed up: “Hell Yeah Fucking Right” (2012), “Started From The Bottom” (2013) and “Worst Behaviour” (2014). As we analyse this collaboration, we become aware of the same pattern of expensive sets, luxurious cars, fine clothing and beautiful women that the 2000's era was so famous for.

“He (Drake) comes from a generation... (that grew) watching videos that my generation made, you know? So, those guys watched Puffy (P. Diddy), he's in a private jet, the jet explodes, he parachutes out in the desert then soldiers pick him up (...) and they drive to a castle, and there's Jennifer Lopez (...) everything was big, everything was epic and Drake was a teenager watching this and thinking: “Uau, one day I'm going to make a video (like that) (...) and he is in a position where he can push the boundaries, a bit, to make something along the lines of what you grew up watching...” – Quote from the Director X interview, on the 2013 JUNO Awards.

³¹ All information on Lutz's biography, videography and overall portfolio can be found in his personal website: www.directorxfilms.com

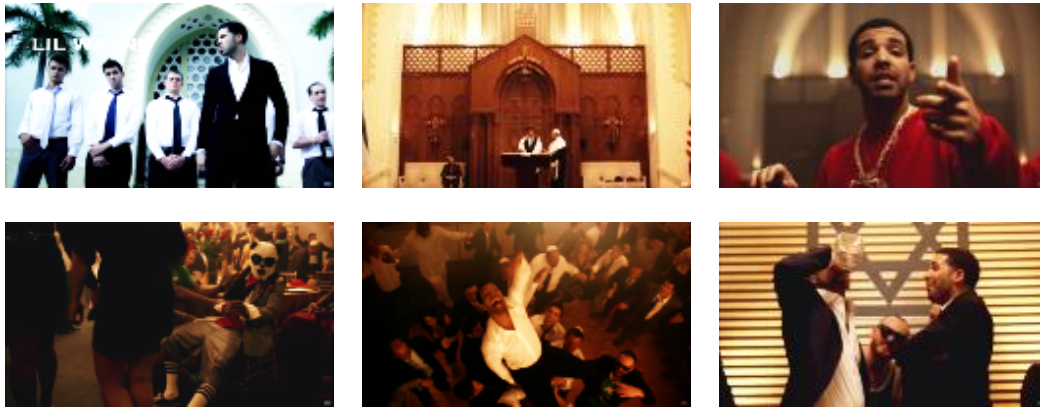


Fig. 57 – Frames from “Hell Yeah Fucking Right” music video, by Director X (2012).³²

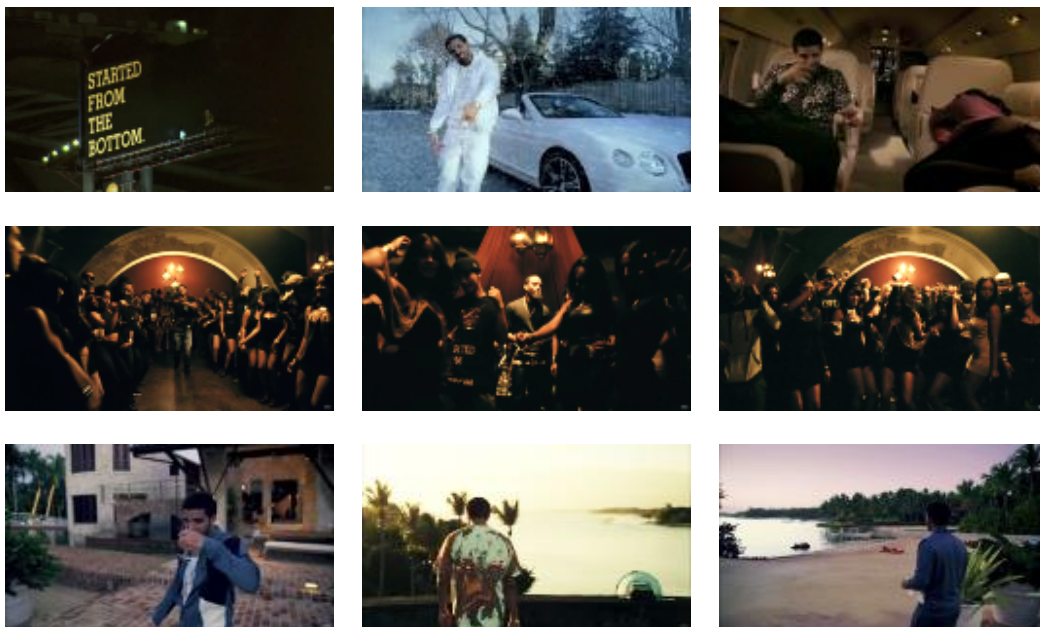


Fig. 58 – Frames from “Started From the Bottom” music video, by Director X (2013).

Still about influences, we come across some music videos that can make us wonder if, unintentionally, Hip-Hop history is reaching a full-cycle, at least music video wise. Based in the “do-it-yourself” style, videos like “212” by Azealea Banks, for Chief Keef’s 2012 single “I Don’t Like” and for Bobby Schmurda’s 2014 single “Hot Nigga” are a raw, almost amateurish approach to music video, that not only can be interpreted as a bi-product of the time where video equipment is of easy access (some smartphones have a very high quality video recording system), but can also be interpreted as a re-launch of the raw visual of previous eras, most notably the ‘80s, when compared to videos like Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five’s “The Message”.

³² In Figure 74, the video takes place in a synagogue, documenting Drake’s re-Bar Mitzvah.

Although these videos’ footage only show the rappers with a group of friends and neighbours, in the middle of their neighbourhood, partying and acting tough, it is still a piece of documentary of a raw reality without fictional characters: that’s what they are, that’s what they show to us. So, we can argue that Hip-Hop, in the digital age, is going “back to the hood”.



Fig. 59 – Frames from Chief Keef’s music video for “I Don’t Like” (2012).

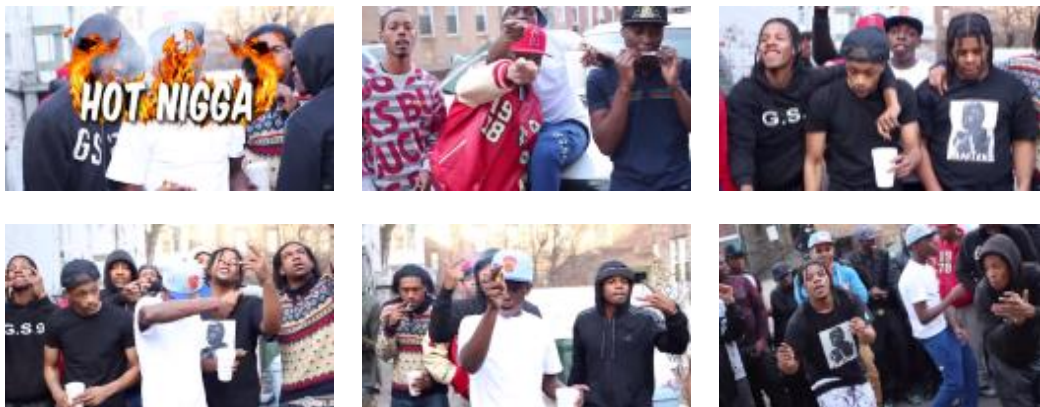


Fig. 60 – Frames from the Bobby Schmurda’s “Hot Nigga” music video (2014).

2.5.5 From Minimalism to Baroque – Hip-Hop as an art manifestation

As we acknowledge by examples such as Tricky’s “Hell is ‘Round The Corner” or Massive Attack’s “Karmacoma”, it is not a novelty that Hip-Hop and the Art world have crossed paths, at least when it comes to music videos. Even so, that influence may have grown from just a resemblance or clever detail to a fully assumed visual style. We will dedicate this subchapter exclusively to the work of rapper Kanye West.

As we take a closer look to some of the “gems” of his music video portfolio, we can trace an evolution in both style and aesthetics, and also note clear influences from several elements of the Fine Arts world.

We begin with the “Flashing Lights” music video. Composed of only a two sequence’s shots, it shows a beautiful sexy woman driving to the desert, setting the floor on fire, returning to the car, opening the trunk (revealing a tied up and gaged Kanye West) and killing West with a shovel, after repeated blows.

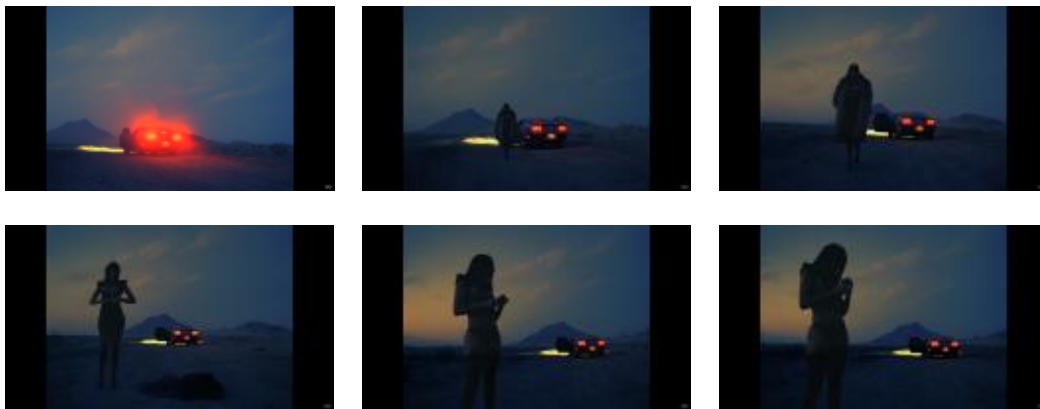


Fig. 61 – Frames from Kanye West’s “Flashing Lights” music video (2007).

At the first look, it is evident the cinema’s influence present in this video; however, the colour pattern, with beautiful sky dark blues and yellows, in contrast with the bright red lights of the car, the pacing of the action and the *cliché* scenario of driving to the desert to kill someone and dispose of the body shows a clear influence of Art House cinema, where *clichés* like crime and cheap drama are explored with a high-detailed artwork, beautifully crafted shots and creative colour patterns. A good example of this particular genre of cinema is the director Wong Kar Wai, most notably with two of his films: “Chunking Express” and “Fallen Angels”.



Fig. 62 – Wong Kar Wai’s “Chunking Express” (1994).

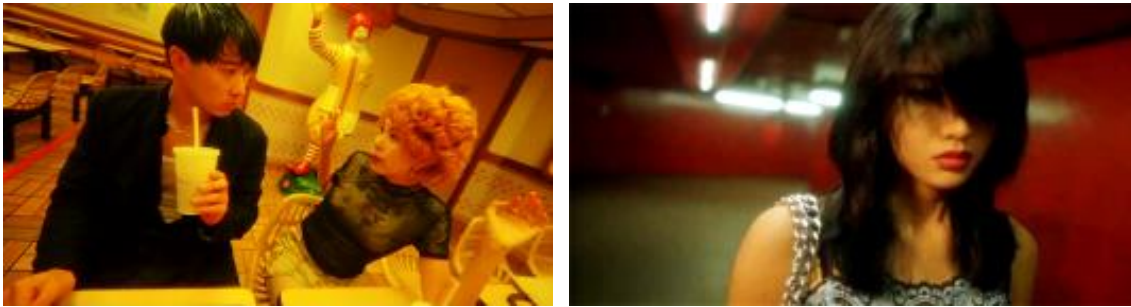


Fig. 63 – Wong Kar Wai’s “Fallen Angels” (1995).

Another note-worthy aspect of the “Flashing Lights” music video is the female character. With sun-glasses at night time, a fur coat, sensual lingerie, high heels and a cigarette, she has all the makings of a *femme fatale*, a term made popular by the *film noir*, another genre that can be of some influence, at least when it comes to the element of crime and the strong, seductive female character.



Fig. 64 – Past and present of the *femme fatale*: Ava Gardner (left), playing Kitty Collins in the *film noir* “The Killers” (1946) and Eva Green paying homage to Gardner, by playing the character “Ava” on the 2014 comic book film “Sin City – a dame to kill for...”

Another aspect always present is the “flashing lights”. The strong red lights of the tail-end of the car, as well as the fire burning in the background treat us with a considerable amount of lighting flares that give the video a red tone, proper for crimes of passion like

murdering a lover.

When it comes to the video for the song “Welcome to Heartbreak”, we can see a clear inspiration from video art. Directed by Nabil Elderkin, the video uses the technique known as “datamoshing”, often used in an art genre called Glitch Art, to complete its aesthetics with a rough, intentionally broken style, as if the final export or the files compression was badly handled or damaged.

“Databending and datamoshing are techniques used to create broken copies of any original media file (...) These techniques have been developed through exploiting discovered glitches within software and modern technology. (...) Glitch art, on a philosophical level, gives us insight on how imperfection does not equate to irrelevance. The essence of glitch art is purposefully breaking virtual objects in various ways using software in an irregular fashion.” – Quoted from “An Introduction to Glitch Art” taken from the URL: www.datamoshing.com



Fig. 65 – Frames from the “Welcome to Heartbreak” music video, by Kanye West (2009).

This video can be taken as a very good example of an artwork in the digital age, a piece that stands as a testament of the evolution of traditional art techniques and artefacts to digital ones. The beauty found in the ugliness of something broken, the colour patterns we can accidentally find, the mixing of different types of information and data and the higher flexibility

of the digital raw matter over the physical and analogical one, are all elements present in works like this particular video. We can also see a clear influence of this digital artistic expression in other music videos studied previously, like the video for the song “Guillotine”, by Death Grips.

The “Welcome to Heartbreak” music video begins with a “Play” sign on the top left corner of the frame, resembling the “Play” icon of VHS tape players. Once we reflect about it, it has a clear intentionality: since video art’s first works came from VHS tapes and other video equipment, it is only natural that VHS, particularly broken and old VHS, would be portrayed in some way. The raw, cold and broken aesthetic found in VHS can also be seen on video art works – and even influenced cinema, as in the 2009 film “Trash Humpers”, by director Harmony Korine.



Fig. 66 – The title of the movie “Trash Humpers”, displayed in an old VHS style.

The visual imagery created by *datamoshing* can also resemble some paintings from *cubism* or *expressionism*, as we can see below, in Figure 87.



Fig. 67 – *Datamoshing* (left), compared to *cubism* (centre) and *expressionism* (right).

When we analyse the music video for “Love Lockdown”, a single from the same

album from which “Welcome to Heartbreak” was released³³, we can see a visual style heavily influenced by Minimalism. Telling the story of a recently broken-up relationship, Kanye West wonders around the couple’s recently bought apartment. The new furniture is covered in white sheets and, together with the white walls, they converge in a sense of empty space, a metaphor for the emptiness inside West’s soul. The adding of extras, dressed as African warriors, creates a big unreal visual contrast to the minimalist approach, but it works and flows perfectly.

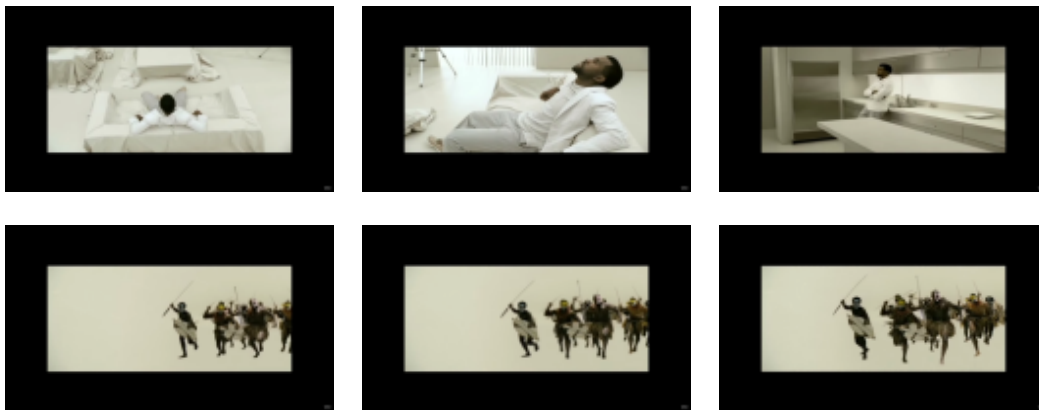


Fig. 68 – Frames from Kanye West’s music video for “Love Lockdown”, directed by Simon Henwood (2008).

As his discography progresses, we can see the evolution of Kanye’s visual influences in his work displayed clearly. “Power”, a single off of his 2010 LP “My Beautiful, Dark, Twisted Fantasy” was a clear 180° turn from his minimalistic and broken visuals from “Love Lockdown” or “Welcome to Heartbreak”. In the video, directed by Marco Brambilla, West is shown in what could only be described as an animated painting.

With a deep-rooted Renaissance and Baroque influence, the framing opens up slowly in a “travelling” that reveals more and more visual elements and characters involved with the video, that features the likes of top-model Irina Shayk, of actress Jessica White and of albino model Diandra Forrest. The video, much shorter than the actual song (it lasts only 1:42 minutes, while the actual full length single lasts 4:52 minutes), serves almost like a “mosaic” of delightful imagery and stands as an (arguably) evidence of Hip-Hop’s merging with the Arts World.

³³ Kanye West’s 2008 album “808s & Heartbreak”, released by Roc-A-Fella Records and Def Jam Records.

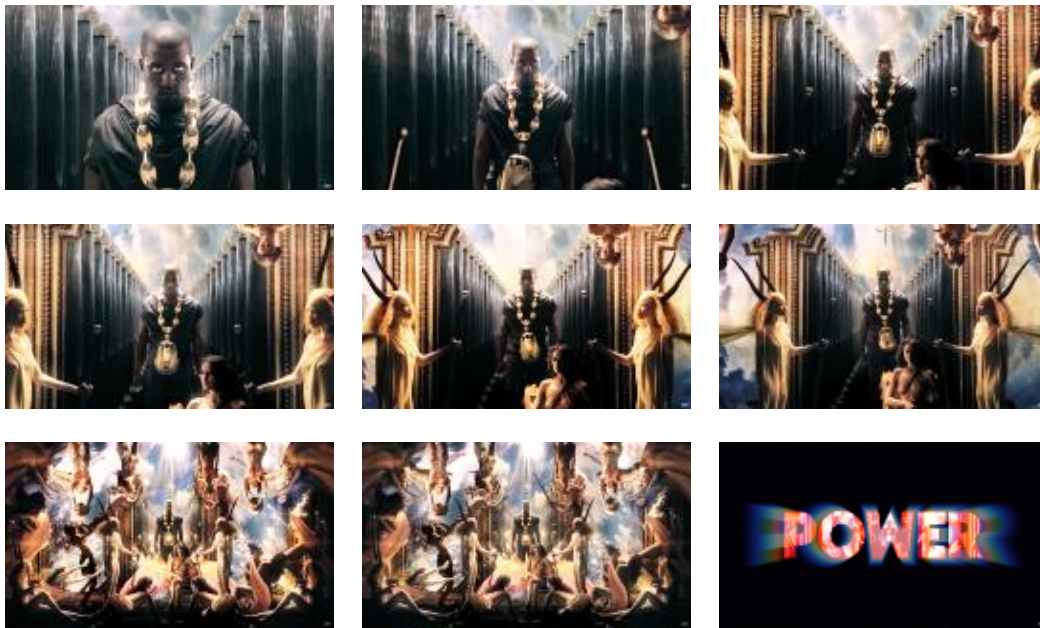


Fig. 69 – Frames from Kanye West’s music video for “Power” (2010).

The case of the music video for the song “Runaway”, off of the same album as “Power”, is a very unique one. It is actually a short film (34:31 minutes) that features the majority of the album’s songs as soundtrack, almost like a music video for the entire album, making an impressive piece of cinema and a landmark for the artistic evolution of Hip-Hop.

Directed by Kanye West and written by Hype Williams (with the story created by Kanye West), “Runaway” tells the story of a rich aristocrat that comes across a phoenix, fallen from space into earth. The aristocrat nurses her back to health, falls in love with the majestic creature and tries to adapt her (since appears to us as a woman like creature) to the human high society world.

The first act has a distinctive European influence, both visually and in passing (a influence helped by the fact that it was shot in Prague at the Czech Republic.³⁴) The film opens with West running through the woods, at the sound of Mozart’s “Requiem”. The use of classical music gives an overall “opera-like” atmosphere to the film, complemented with apocalyptic imagery, like a meteor about to hit earth, which is later revealed to be the phoenix.

³⁴ As seen on the film’s ending credits.



Fig. 70 – Frames from the Kanye West “Runaway” short film.

The film has also some familiar Hip-Hop music videos’ elements, in particular ostentatious objects, like the luxurious car that Kanye drives in the woods.



Fig. 71 – Frames from the Kanye West “Runaway” short film.

With cinematography from Kyle Kibbe, the film, particularly in its first act, explores the artistic beauty of nature, with the woods as scenario and with the appearance of animals like deers. We can recognise some similarities of Lars Von Trier’s 2009 feature film “Anti-Christ”, when it comes to explore the poetic beauty of the woods and wild animals.

The European cinema’s influence doesn’t stop here. We also see slow motions and longer, more contemplative shots, almost in an attempt to recreate classical painting in film, like the work of British film director Peter Greenaway. Another element that contributes for this painting approach is the art direction of Vanessa Beecroft, with a mixture between modern and contemporary architecture with baroque furniture and decor.

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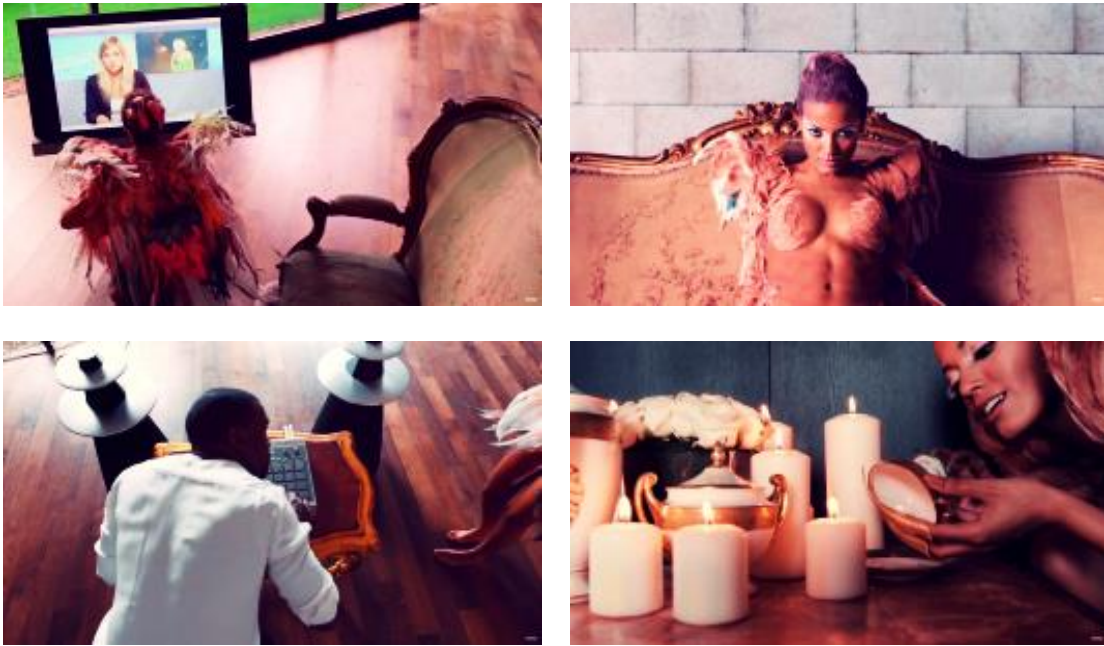


Fig. 72 – The baroque furniture in a contemporary house.



Fig. 73 – The “painting like” framing of “Runaway”.



Fig. 74 – The long and contemplative shot in slow motion, in “Runaway”.

The film's cinematography also makes use of a contrast between a bright, warm colour and a more sober, cold coloured background, an aesthetic used in films such as the M. Night Shyamalan's films “The Sixth Sense” and “The Village”.

As the film moves to the second act, we see a shift of continents. Although the European visual sensibility is still present, the elements and social commentary of actions and direction are clearly U.S. based, as we can notice in the parade lightened by fireworks, with a huge dummy head figure of Michael Jackson. In the middle of the crowd of the parade, we can see red hooded figures holding a smoke gun, in a clear reference to the racist cult of the Ku Klux Klan.



Fig. 75 – The USA parade in “Runaway”.

We then cut to the main part of the second act: the dinner scene. Set in an old warehouse, we see a clever inversion of the slavery inheritance of the United States: all the rich high society members are black, while the servants (who can be interpreted as slaves) are white.



Fig. 76 – The black high society and the white servants in “Runaway”.

When it comes to the wardrobe, it is a mixture of fine clothing and Hip-Hop wear (the “Grills” and gold chains), as well as typical African hairstyles like dreadlocks. It can almost be taken as a reminiscence of the ornament and ostentation of King Louis XIV of France and his court.

In the dinner scene, Kanye is trying to make the phoenix fit in among the aristocrats, an action perhaps inspired by the theatre play “My Fair Lady”. This exercise of vanity, in a way, ties in with the metaphoric reason of why the woman is dressed as a bird. Being an “exotic bird”, one can argue it’s the perfect metaphor for the “trophy wife” that a rich man takes to special events as if it was an expensive piece of jewellery or other material asset.

As Kanye West moves to the piano, we see a full performance of the song “Runaway”, with ballet dancers performing the choreography. The dancers are dressed in black in a possible reference to the movie of the same year, “Black Swan”, from Daren Aronofsky. Reference or not, the ballet dancer’s attire appears in the painting of the cover of West’s LP “My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy”.



Fig. 77 – Performance of the song “Runaway”.³⁵



Fig. 78 – Natalie Portman in the movie “Black Swan” (2010), and the cover of the LP “My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy”, by Kanye West (2010).

As the song comes to an end, Kanye stands on top of the piano, as if he could fly like the phoenix and stand above the futility of high society, an act that inspires also the phoenix Lady Bird to fly and aspire freedom and a higher level of meaning in its existence, as the high society toasts along the Kanye line: *“Let’s have a toast for the douchebags... let’s have a toast for the assholes...”*.

The smaller third act explores the love between Kanye and the phoenix. After a beautiful, intense love scene with the phoenix, West wakes up, finds her gone and desperately runs after her through the woods (just like in the beginning). West wants to go with her, as she is free, unlike him, chained to the materialistic needs of his life. The phoenix leaves Earth as she came, free.

The last Kanye West’s music video that we must consider in this chapter is the 2013 single “Black Skinhead”, off the album “Yeezus”. This music video feels like a full departure

³⁵ A reduced version of the short film is available online, containing only this performance. With 8:29 minutes of duration, it serves as the music video version of the song.

from the “Runaway” baroque aesthetic: much like “Welcome to Heartbreak”, “Black Skinhead” is more oriented to a video art or an installation art experience. Directed by West himself, shot in black and white, the video shows us dark imagery such as men with their faces covered in black sheets, wild rabid dogs barking, a 3D animated faceless Kanye West, with a big black smudge instead of his face and a digitally disfigured figure. We can see here, arguably, that one of the influences for Kanye West’s music video may have been Death Grips (analysed previously), since the band has used digital distortion techniques to build their own unique raw aesthetic for their music videos, like “Guillotine”.

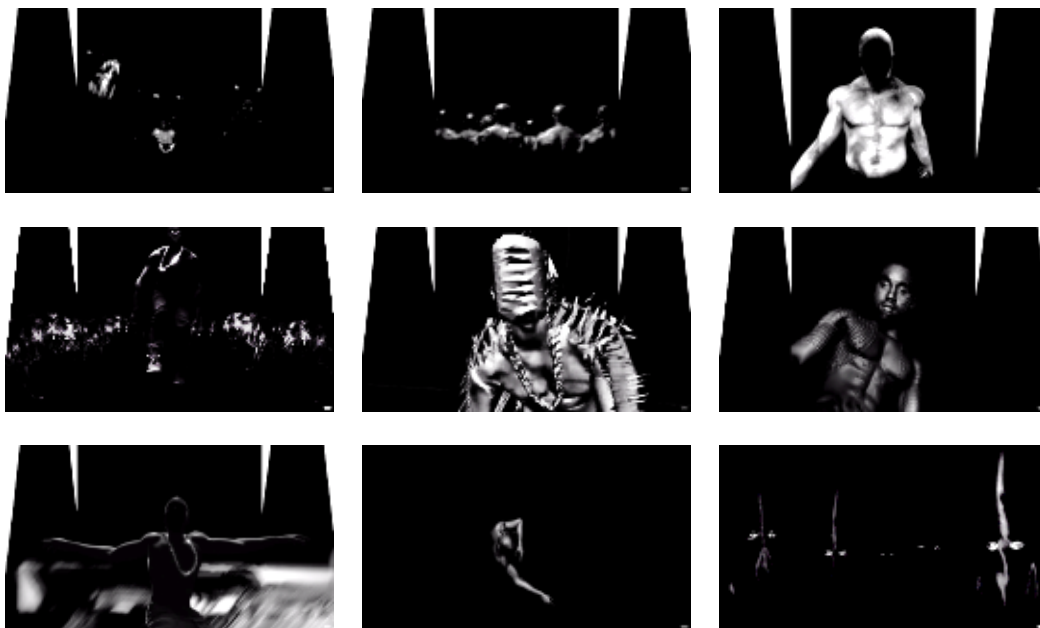


Fig. 79 – Frames from West’s self-directed music video for “Black Skinhead” (2013).

2.5.6 “Picasso Baby” - Jay-Z and Marina Abramovic

We close the chapter on the incursions of Hip-Hop in the Art World with the performance piece of “Picasso Baby”, by Rap mogul Jay-Z.

Inspired in the work “The Artist is Present” by performing artist Marina Abramovic, Jay-Z took the performing aspect of MC’ing and joined it with performing art, where the interaction between the artist and the spectator is the main focus of the artwork.

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Fig. 80 – “The Artist is Present” by Marina Abramovic (2010).



Fig. 81 – Jay-Z performing “Picasso Baby” in New York’s Pace Gallery (2013).

“Concerts are pretty much performance art (...) (but) the venues change. (...) You are in a smaller venue, it’s more intimate (...) so you feel the energy of the people. (...) in Hip-Hop, (it was) almost like art is too “bourgeois” (...) we are artists, we are alike, we are cousins. That’s what’s exciting to me, bringing the worlds back together.” – Quote from Jay-Z on documented video version of “Picasso Baby” performance.³⁶

³⁶ Available in the URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrVvZ7ZnJv4>

2.6 Are Hip-Hop music videos becoming the blueprint for other genres of music videos?

“Spotify has created a live “musical map of the world”, analysing nearly 20 billion tracks to show localized listening trends for over 1000 cities. (...) the map is based on music that is “distinctive” to each area – meaning songs that are listened to frequently in specific cities that are not frequently listened to in others. (...) The most interesting finding however is that hip-hop is the world’s top genre, showing up on playlists more than all others, regardless of geography or language. There are all kinds of factors besides just the popularity of Hip-Hop that could be at work here – including the relationship of Hip-Hop labels with Spotify, the inclusivity of the genre, the play listing of it, the use of Spotify in social settings (...) and the strong sense of narrative arc on Hip-Hop releases that lead to longer listening sessions.”
– Hooton, C. “Hip-hop is the most listened to genre in the world, according to Spotify analysis of 20 billion tracks”.³⁷

Although such a survey might be impossible to have 100% accuracy, the weight of Spotify as a music streaming service, as well as the amount of information and statistics it can provide, back up such a claim, at least when it comes to a reasonable hypothesis. Whether true or not, such surveys show how Hip-Hop (and particularly Rap music) has reached global popularity levels, and that it has some form of an impact in the Pop culture world and modern times’ society.

After an extensive analysis of both the chronology of Hip-Hop music videos as well as its aesthetics’ evolution, we divide four different topics on which we can find Hip-Hop’s influence in music videos from other genres: 1) fashion and wardrobe; 2) the portrayal of the artist; 3) sexuality and 4) themes.

2.6.1 Fashion and Wardrobe

As we saw previously (“trends” such as the Kanye West’s shutter shades), fashion and wardrobe are a constant presence in Hip-Hop culture as a whole, whether it is the big gold and silver chains, Adidas sneakers (popularised by Run DMC) or Kangol hats. “Streetwear” is a

³⁷ Article published in the official website of British newspaper “The Independent” on the following URL: www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/hiphop-is-the-most-listened-to-genre-in-the-world-according-to-spotify-analysis-of-20-billion-tracks-10388091.html

common term in fashion nowadays and may have well been inspired by Hip-Hop.

The major influences of wardrobe and fashion in other genres of music videos can be spotted in the world of Pop music, and can be perceived as a logical appropriation, due to Pop music’s constant need to customise elements of the latest trends, particularly when it comes to fashion, as the most efficient way to renovate itself for mainstream audiences.

The first video we consider regarding this topic is “We Can’t Stop” by Miley Cyrus. Directed by veteran music video director Diane Martel, the video shows us a “house party” held at Mileys house. The actions taking place in the video are no surprise: drinking, dancing, smoking, diving in the pool and having a good time. However, when it comes to the wardrobe, it was a clear departure from the Hannah Montana character portrayed by Miley a few years earlier. Golden “grills”³⁸ on her bottom teeth, heavy jewels around her wrists and fingers, tattoos on her body, a t-shirt with the words “West Coast” stamped on it (in reminiscence of the 90’s *Gangsta* Rap era) and the overall attitude shown by Cyrus and friends (who make gang related hand gestures in the video as well as nonsense behaviour such as eating a dollar bill sandwich) show not only a more adult audience oriented Miley, but a heavy influence of Hip-Hop culture on the overall visual foreground. Like Jennifer Lopez’s “Jenny From The Block” or Terror Squad’s “Lean Back” music videos a decade earlier, “We Can’t Stop” also has “product placement”, such as the Beats By Dre pill speakers, so we can say this is an intentionally oriented approach to *Gangsta* Rap followed by Diane Martel.

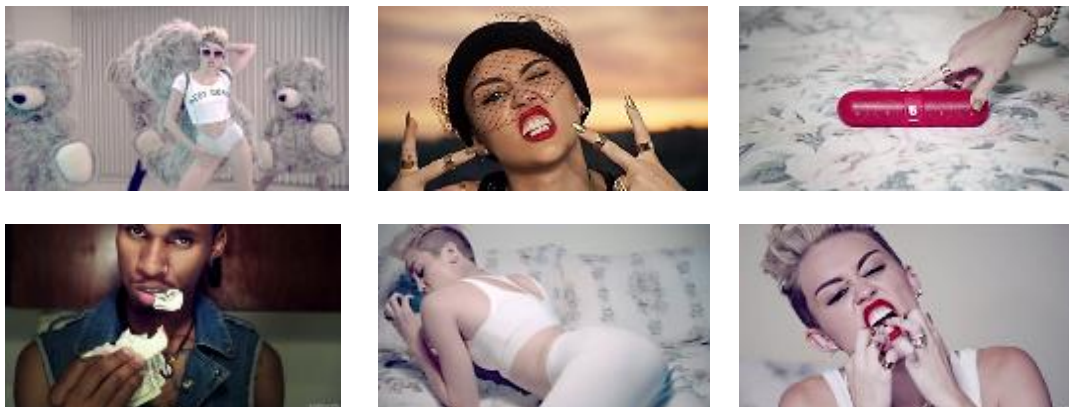


Fig. 82 – Frames from Miley Cyrus “We Can’t Stop” music video, directed by Diane Martel (2013).

When compared to Hip-Hop acts such as V-Nasty, a southern white female rapper, we can see some influences when it comes to wardrobe and female Hip-Hop fashion, with the clearest example being the “grills”.

³⁸ Grills are jewellery pieces, usually in gold or silver, used in teeth, popularised in the southern Hip-Hop scene in the late ‘90s to early ‘2000s.

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Fig. 83 – Female rapper V-Nasty.

Another good example of Hip-Hop fashion appropriation by the Pop scene is Justin Bieber’s “All That Matters” video. Filmed with an interesting art direction when it comes to the decor and set, we see Bieber dressed just like other Rap acts like Drake or Kanye West, with high-top sneakers, long dress-like t-shirts, and heavy jewellery - a big gold chain, a big gold watch and golden rosaries. Certain poses in his bear upper body exacerbate his manliness and sex appeal, the same way *Gangsta* Rap acts did in the ‘2000s, such as Ja Rule or 50 Cent.

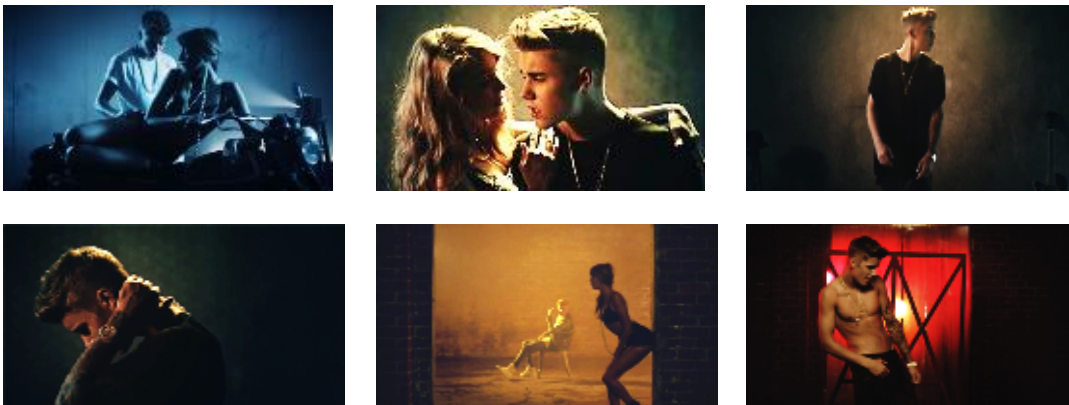


Fig. 84 – Frames from “All That Matters” music video, directed by Colin Tilley (2013).

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Fig. 85 – Drake (left), Kanye West (centre) and 50 Cent (right).

The final example when it comes to Hip-Hop fashion influence in other genres of music videos is “Uptown Funk” music video, by Mark Ronson featuring Bruno Mars. In it, Bruno Mars (who provides the vocals for the entire single), dressed just like an American pimp, interacts with Mark Ronson and the band The Hooligans, dressed like him, clearly inspired by the pimp culture present in the U.S. and appropriated to Rap acts by artists such as 50 Cent, Ice-T and Snoop Dogg. Hats, canes, carefully crafted hairstyles, big colourful Cadillac cars and males intentionally effeminate (as a mechanism of defence against women) are clear characteristics of a certain lifestyle portrayed by certain rappers in their music videos since the late ‘80s.

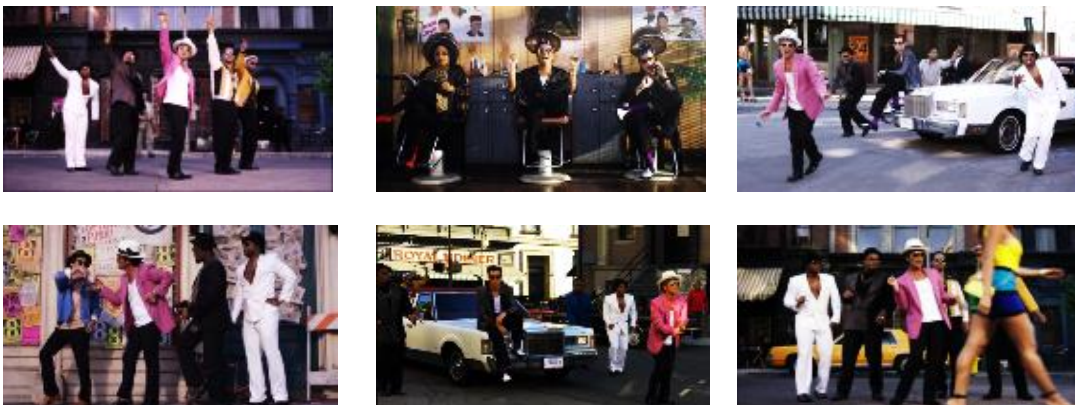


Fig. 86 – Frames from the “Uptown Funk” music video, by Mark Ronson featuring Bruno Mars, directed by Bruno Mars and Cameron Duddy (2014).

We can take Drake’s music video for “Worst Behaviour” as a clear influence for

“Uptown Funk” music video. Released a year prior, the pimp wardrobe of the video is similar to those worn by Bruno, Mark and the Hooligans.



Fig. 87 – Pimps in Drake’s “Worst Behaviour” music video.



Fig. 88 – 50 Cent (left) and Snoop Dogg (right), with their pimp style outfits.

2.6.2 The portrayal of the Artist

As we seen in the chapter of the ‘2000s, one particular feature in Hip-Hop music videos is what we can call the “portrayal of the artist”. Male or female, Hip-Hop music videos tend to portray the artist as the main focus of the video. We often see especially structured shots designed specifically to make us focus the entire attention in the artist. Usually, the shot is set in “close up”, “medium close up”, “waist shot” and sometimes “long shot”, and the set becomes a sort of neutral background (usually in one or two colours), thus making the artist stand out even more.

We can see examples of this feature in videos such as “Black and Yellow (Remix)”,

by Wiz Khalifa; “Drop It Like It’s Hot”, by Snoop Dogg; and “Breathe”, by Blu Cantrell.

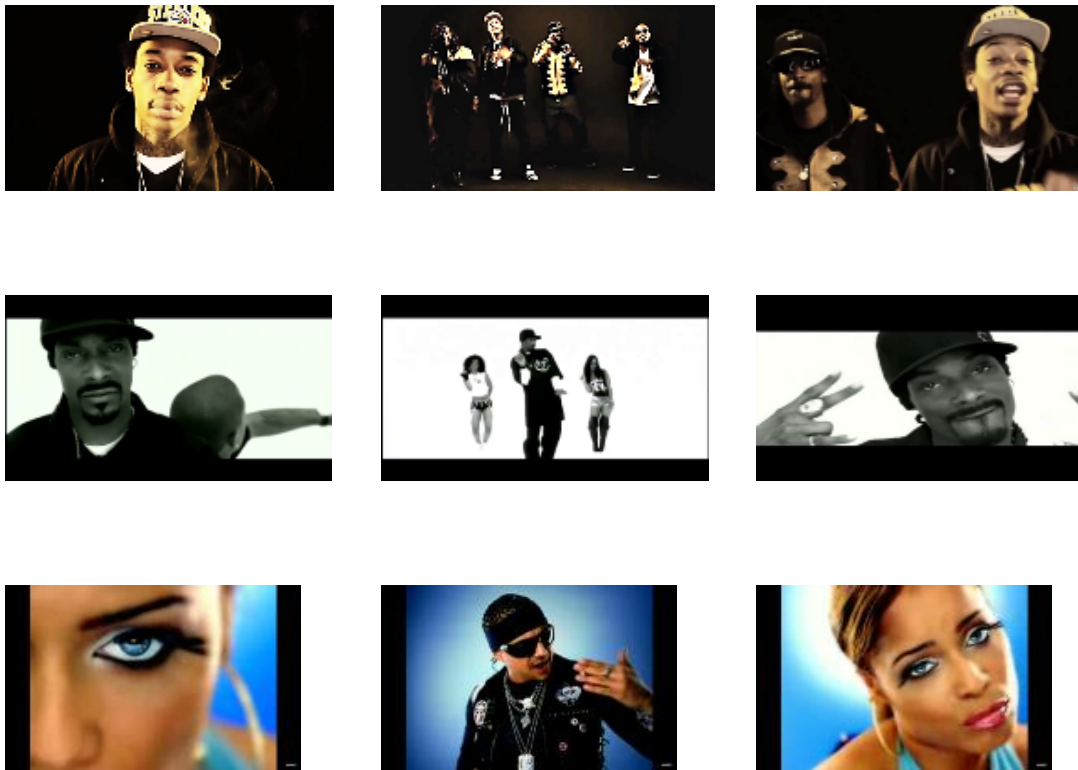


Fig. 89 – The specific shots to enhance the artists prominence in music videos: “Black and Yellow (Remix)”, by Wiz Khalifa (top); “Drop it like it’s hot”, by Snoop Dogg (centre); “Breathe” by Blu Cantrell (bottom).

We can identify similar shots in music videos for other genres, like the music video for Marilyn Manson’s late 2014 single “Deep Six”. Filled with artistic and unreal imagery, characteristic of the artist’s videography, it’s easy to identify the Hip-Hop “artist focused” shots similar to the ones shown above, proving that even Rock can be influenced by Hip-Hop.

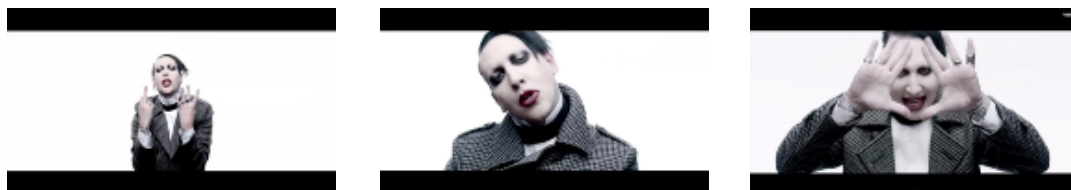


Fig. 90 – “Artist focused” shots in Marilyn Manson’s video for “Deep Six” (2014).

Outside of the U.S. we can also see heavy Hip-Hop influences in other music genres,

even the most exotic ones. For example, take the African music genre of *Kizomba* (originated and popular in Portuguese speaking countries). In the music video for the single "Vamos Ficar Por Aqui"³⁹ by *Kizomba* artist C4 Pedro, not only do we see a fashion influence in the video's wardrobe (baseball hat, high top sneakers) but most of the shots are designed to make the artist be the main focus, under the argument that these kind of shots are a good and efficient marketing tool for music videos, being adopted outside U.S.



Fig. 91 – "Artist focused" shots in C4 Pedro's video for "Vamos Ficar Por Aqui" (2015).

2.6.3 Sexuality

Does sex sell? That is an innocent question. From Marilyn Monroe's iconic blowing skirt scene in "The Seven Year Itch" to Kim Kardashian's nude photo session with the theme "Break the Internet, Kim Kardashian!", one can argue that sex has been used as a powerful promotional and marketing tool for commercial success in publicity, film, music and other businesses.

As we saw previously in some music videos (particularly from the early '2000s), male sexuality is explored in a more empowering way, with a higher display of virility and sex appeal, while female sexuality often gets objectified, with women becoming more and more like props of the music video set rather than characters in the videos' plot.



Fig. 92 – Women's sexuality objectified in Jay-Z's music video for "Big Pimpin'" (1999).

If we take the case of Pop and R'n'B singers Rihanna and Beyoncé, we can note that

³⁹ "Let's End It Here", free translation of the author.

both artists use their sexuality to their advantage in a more empowering way.

In the music video for “Pour It Up”, striptease and strip clubs are the theme explored in both video and song. Rihanna explores her sexuality not only with her wardrobe and the video settings, but also by dancing in a provocative manner. She is dressed as a stripper, but she is also the one sitting on a throne and throwing dollar bills on the air. The materialistic ostentation together with the objectification of the female body creates an interesting paradox that ultimately empowers Rihanna as a woman in a men’s world - she dresses how she wants because she pays her own bills.

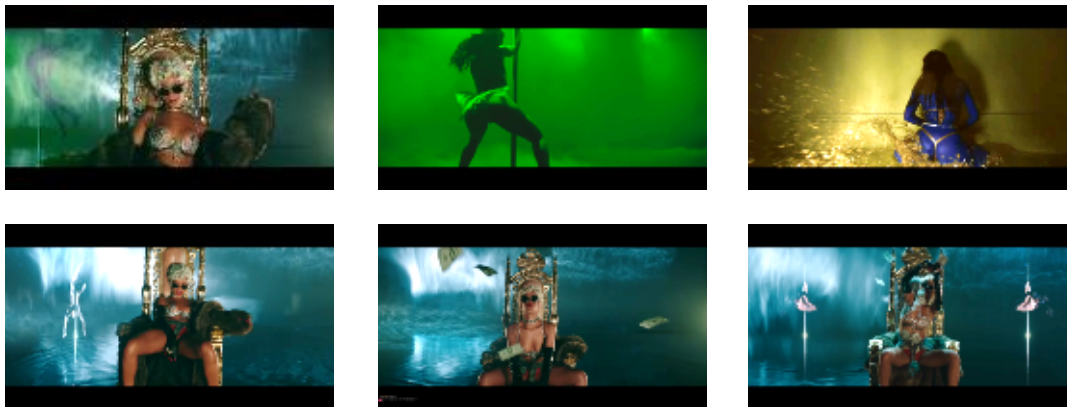


Fig. 93 – Frames from the Rihanna’s “Pour It Up” music video (2013).

When it comes to Beyoncé and her music video for the single “Partition”, the theme is marital sex. She plays the role of a high society woman that exposes herself sexually as a way to please her husband and, at the same time, pleasing herself.

The song itself shows us that you can be sexy and sensual while still being a lady and that marital sex is an experience to be enjoyed by both husband and wife, and the music video translates that pretty well.⁴⁰

Directed by Jake Nava, the beautifully crafted shots show us a raw sexuality that doesn’t, however, show any gratuity. We don’t see Beyoncé’s body because we can, but because she allows us to.

⁴⁰ A small detail that makes all the difference in the video and makes its underlying message much more effective is the fact that the only man in the video is Beyoncé’s real life husband, Jay-Z.

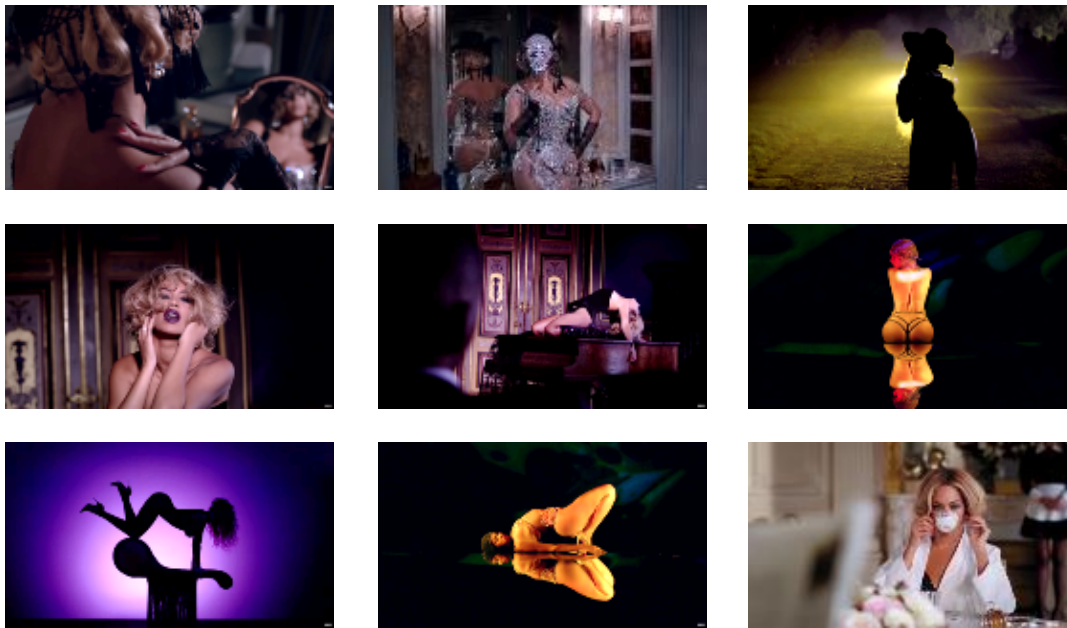


Fig. 94 – Frames from Beyoncé’s “Partition” music video (2014).

“Partition” and “Pour It Up” may exemplify the change of mentalities in this new decade. The misogyny and objectification of women’s sexuality perpetuated by Hip-Hop music videos in the ‘2000s served as inspiration for female artists to embrace their sexuality and to use it as a part of their artistic expression.

2.6.4 Themes

Recurring themes can be specifically associated to a particular musical genre. Although music is a universal concept and can be used to gather a wide variety of topics - like social issues, political stands, relationship problems, human behaviour, etc. - as we studied the evolution of Hip-Hop culture (Rap music in particular) we can see that some themes emerge more often than others.

As we have seen in some music videos analysed, subgenres of Rap music like *Gangsta* Rap glorify crime lifestyles, violence and Mafia-type characters, while groups like Public Enemy focus their lyrics on social commentary and political statements. Millionaire moguls such as Jay-Z or P. Diddy tend to “brag” about their wealth and former criminals like 50 Cent or Ice-T share their experiences in the underworld through their music. We must not forget also that Hip-Hop culture is divided in four specific elements, as follows: breaking, deejaying,

mceing and graffiti art, which are unique features to Hip-Hop culture and whose reference can be easily spotted in other genres of music videos.

The 2010 music video for Lady Gaga’s single “Telephone” (featuring Beyoncé) tackles an also recurrent theme in Hip-Hop (more specifically *Gangsta Rap*): prison life. Gaga is sent to prison and after Beyoncé bails her out, both women embark on a life of crime, poisoning an entire dinner and running down the highway in a wagon that looks just like the “Pussy Wagon” from Quentin Tarantino’s 2004 movie “Kill Bill - Vol.1).



Fig. 95 – The “Pussy Wagon” from “Kill Bill Vol.” (right) and Lady Gaga’s “Telephone” one (left).

The art direction is based in the prison theme in a creative way, especially when it comes to Lady Gaga’s wardrobe: a cigarette decorated pair of sunglasses, an attire adorned with heavy chains, beer and soda cans used as rolls for her hair, etc.



Fig. 96 – Lady Gaga’s wardrobe for “Telephone” music video.

Directed by Jonas Akerlund, “Telephone” is shot with a raw visual style, almost documentary, in contrast to the colourful and extravagant persona of Lady Gaga, exacerbated by her wardrobe and mannerisms. We can draw a comparison with other *Gangsta Rap* music

videos centred around the prison theme, such as Kid Frost’s “No Sunshine”, 2Pac’s “Trapped” and Ice-T’s “The Tower” music videos, in terms of the visual elements used to identify the set as a prison: fences, bars, walls and an overall “caged” feeling, accentuated by “medium close up” shots.



Fig. 97 – The raw documental visual style of the “Telephone” music video.



Fig. 98 – Frames from Kid Frost’s “No Sunshine” music video (left); 2Pac’s “Trapped” music video (centre) and Ice-T’s “The Tower” (right).

If Lady Gaga’s “Telephone” is directly inspired by Hip-Hop music videos is uncertain, however the crime-related theme does establish some sort of “bridge” between genres.

Talking about Austin Mahone’s “Banga! Banga!” music video, Hip-Hop’s influence is crystal clear, from the theme of the video and overall art direction to the set design which is centred on one of the four elements of Hip-Hop culture: Graffiti. With romance, choreography and skating all mixed in settings with graphitised walls as background, one can argue this is one heavily Hip-Hop influenced Pop music video.

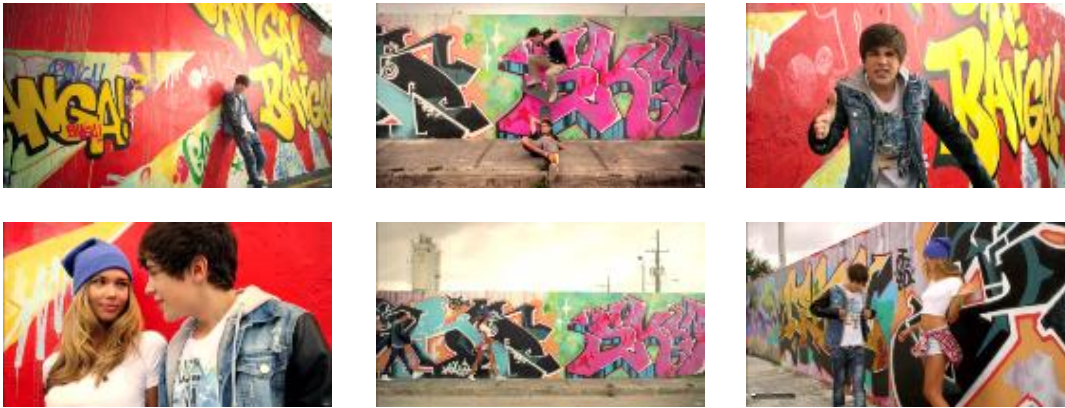


Fig. 99 – Frames from Austin Mahone’s “Banga! Banga!” music video, Cash Money Records, Inc. (2013).

When it comes to Rihanna’s “Bitch Better Have My Money”, some reporters have detected a clear Hip-Hop influence in the single itself, at least in the production, making reference to the “Trap” style of Hip-Hop musical production.

Since it is a song with violent lyrics that suggests extortion, the nature of the music video should be more violent. In fact, “Bitch Better Have My Money” is a bloody and gory music video, portraying the crime underworld in a very colourful and explicit way, with an “Art House” based cinema aesthetic.

By far the most violent and sexually explicit music video analysed in this dissertation, Rihanna’s “Bitch Better Have My Money” takes a visual style approach similar to the ones found in “Art House Crime” films like Nicolas Winding Refn’s “Drive” (2011) and “Only God Forgives” (2013), with an eclectic colour scheme and heavy shadowy contrasts, as well as “Pulp” inspired props and elements (guns, American cars, cigarettes, “zip” lighters) found also in heist “Film Noir” or “Neo-Noir” movies like Quentin Tarantino’s “Reservoir Dogs” (1992) or “Pulp Fiction” (1994). We can compare it, in some way, to the music videos of 2Pac and Biggie, “2 of Amerikaz Most Wanted” and “Warning” (respectively), analysed previously, who were heavily inspired by motion pictures like Francis Ford Copolla’s “The Godfather” (1970) or Brian De Palma’s “Scarface” (1983).





Fig. 100 – Frames from Rihanna’s “Bitch Better Have My Money”, directed by Rihanna and Megaforce (2015).

In conclusion, Hip-Hop’s influence in “Bitch Better Have My Money” is focused more in the production of the track itself; however, one can argue that the movie-like approach to the underworld of crime, drugs and violence is also Hip-Hop inspired.

Moving on from the world of crime and immorality, we look through the music video for “Neo-Soul” singer Erykah Badu’s 2010 single “Window Seat”, with themes centred in a more social consciousness and political awareness, similar to Public Enemy, Common and Kendrick Lamar. Filmed in a single continuous shot, the video shows Erykah arriving in her car, stepping out of the vehicle and walking down the street. As she keeps walking, she starts undressing, piece by piece, until she gets completely naked. At that moment, she gets shot in the head by what we presume is a sniper shot. The blood that flows on the pavement (coloured purple) forms the word “groupthink”. The camera pans away, showing us the crowd’s horror for what they have just witnessed. The camera pan back and shows Badu, resurrected, walking to the camera, with an Egyptian “Cleopatra” wig.

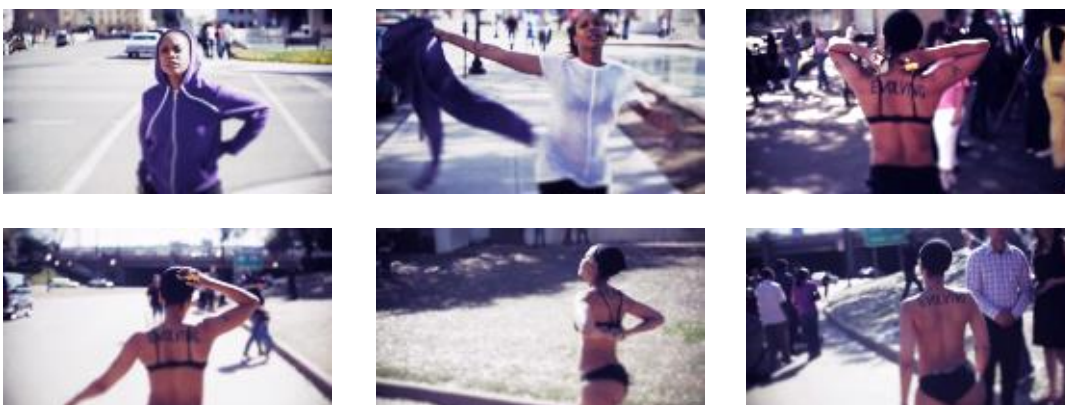




Fig. 101 – Frames from Erykah Badu’s “Window Seat” music video (2010).

Like Rihanna’s “Pour It Up” or Beyoncé’s “Partition” videos, Badu’s video for “Window Seat” has a feminist message.

In our opinion, what is fascinating about this video is the use of simple, yet effective, details: the word “Evolving” written in Badu’s shoulders, the purple blood written “groupthink”, the intentionally censored nudity and the Egyptian Queen attire, are all simple and easy to understand elements, whose message is, arguably, crystal clear: society has to evolve by breaking certain taboos (like nudity) whose time has passed, an accomplishment only possible by unity and group effort (hence the “group thinking”). Then, and only then, can humanity rise from the ashes like a resurrected phoenix, ready to rule as an enlightened queen.

“Window Seat” plays a role similar to a photo, a moment recorded in time that illustrates the timeline of the era in which it was produced. This social and political commentary aligned with music is not a new concept exclusive to Hip-Hop or any other music genre. However, we can argue that people like The Last Poets, Public Enemy or Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five empowered the visual “voice”, if you will, for Badu’s “Window Seat”.

2.6.5 Chapter Conclusions

So, after a carefully analysis of several music videos and the state of the art of music world in the digital age, it is time to pose the question: have Hip-Hop music videos become the blueprint in the digital age for other genres of music videos?

After analysing several music videos from our present decade, we think that we can justify the assumption that Hip-Hop, as a cultural movement, does play a key role in the development of other genres of music videos in the digital age.

Even so, as Hip-Hop reaches 40 years of history, what could have been considered as a fad a few decades back, can now be taken more seriously, thanks to the revenue generated, the influence in other genres of music and the amount of artworks created, whether being songs, graffiti paintings, breakdance moves or music videos.

Even though we cannot make an undeniable statement that Hip-Hop music videos have become the blueprint for other genres of music videos in the digital age, we think we have created "food for thought" about it.

More, this dissertation, if possible, can help us to better grasp some meanings in the current age we live in. World Wide Web is an amazing democratic tool that can be used to bring cultures together and, in a way, one can argue music videos and music in general translate this concept of globalization: from Miley Cyrus wearing "grills" to Cypress Hill performing as a Rock band, we might just say that styles and aesthetic, at least when it comes to music, video and other forms of artistic expression, are not only mixing, but also blending and evolving together.

Traces of this "culture blending" are visible in two particular music videos: The Child of Lov's "Fly" and Major Lazer's "Come On To Me".

In the first, we see traces of what could be identified as an "American" visual style, resembling some sort of mix of '70s rough raw footage style and today's HD, colour corrected image. The overall "theme" of the video, explored at least visually, is the U.S. as a country, focusing on the poorer, lower income areas, mostly the south, with a type of photography direction that looks more like a photo session than a video shoot. This two visual influences can be traced back to experimental films like Jorgen Leth's "66 Scenes from America" and Harmony Korine's "Gummo".

The video's colour correction is bright, almost flat, with a greyish tone that helps the bright colours of the neon lights and the colourful wardrobe blend in with the urban background. It may remind us of Sofia Coppola's "The Virgin Suicides".

Although The Child of Lov sings in English, he is actually from Belgium. So, one can argue that the American culture has a deep influence in this artist.

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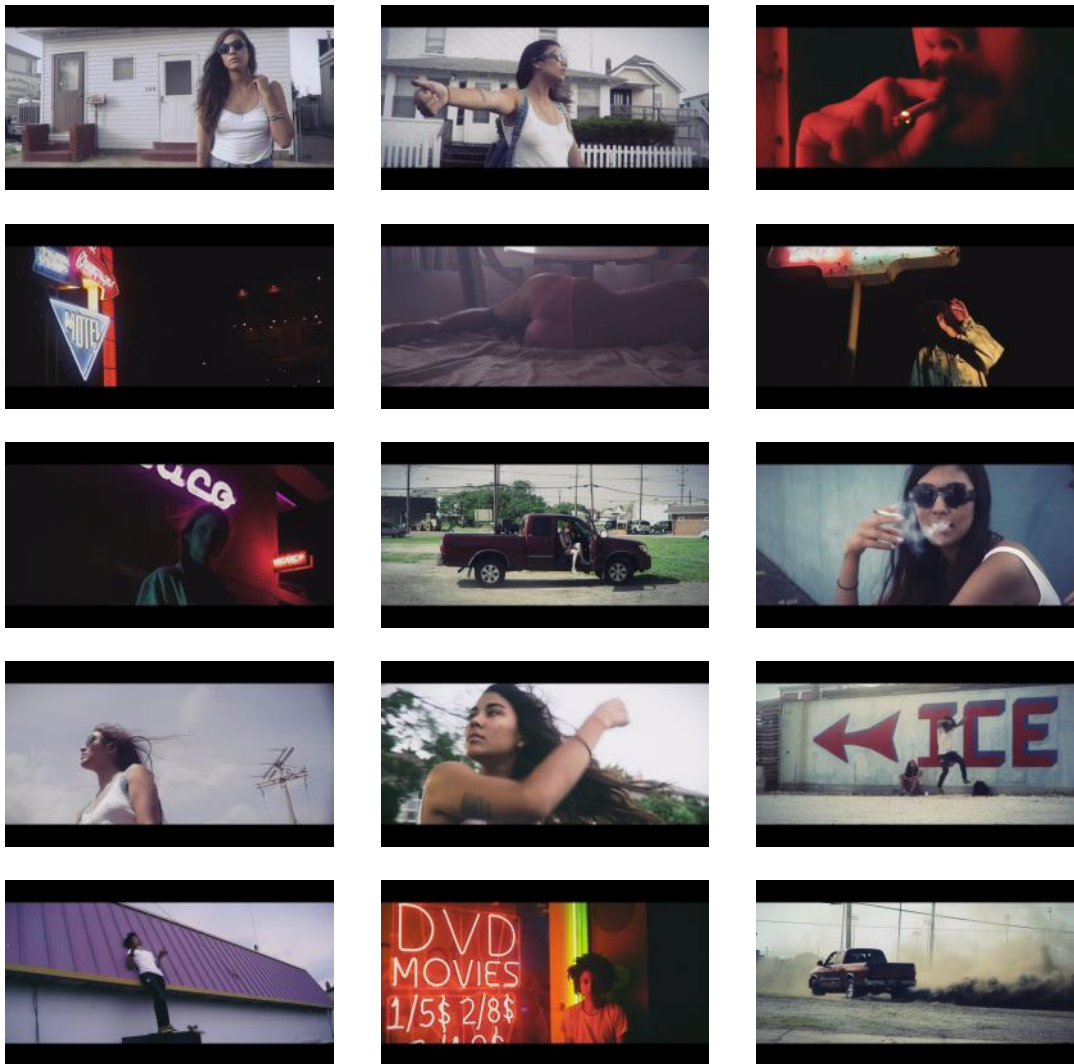
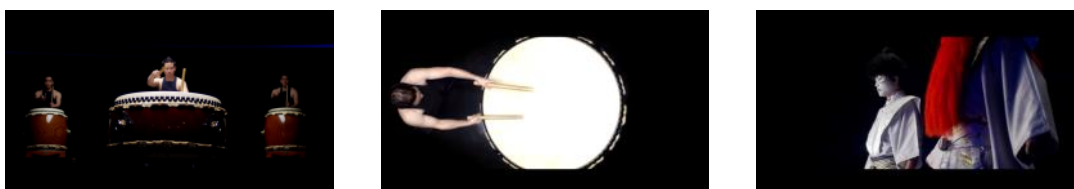


Fig. 102 – The Child of Lov’s “Fly”, directed by PENSACOLA (2013).

In Major Lazer’s case, the big visual influence is, clearly, Asian. With Geisha princesses, Chinese beating drums and drummers, face-painted Samurai warriors and Sean Paul (who supplies the vocals for the track) wearing a long skirt-like t-shirt with black Japanese letters printed on it, “Come On To Me” gives us an interesting visual blend of cultures, where, in a single track and video, we see countries like Japan, Jamaica, China, the U.S. and the U.K. join forces in creativity.



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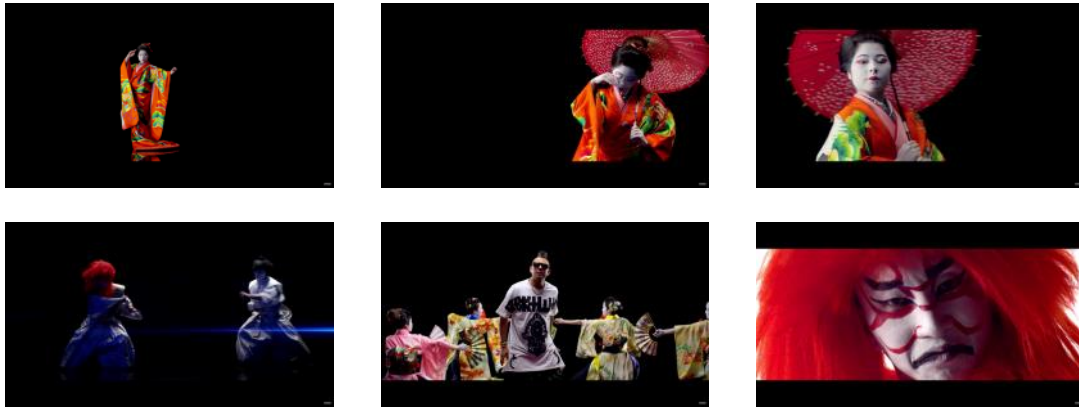


Fig. 103 – Major Lazer’s “Come On To Me” (2014)

Having said that, is Hip-Hop, as a culture, disintegrating? It’s possible. It’s a fear that exists, as we become more and more aware of the appropriation of certain cultural elements by third parties, neglecting the foundations in which the culture itself is built on.

Even so, we must face the fact that we don’t live in an era where everything is catalogued or segregated. If there’s anything the last twenty years have shown us is that the path to resolution for many of the world’s problems is by means of communication, interlacement and comprehension by all sides. This way, hopefully, we can take the positive aspects of each culture and build up a future race, above religion, politics and economic power, where culture is an instrument for awareness and peace among people of planet Earth.

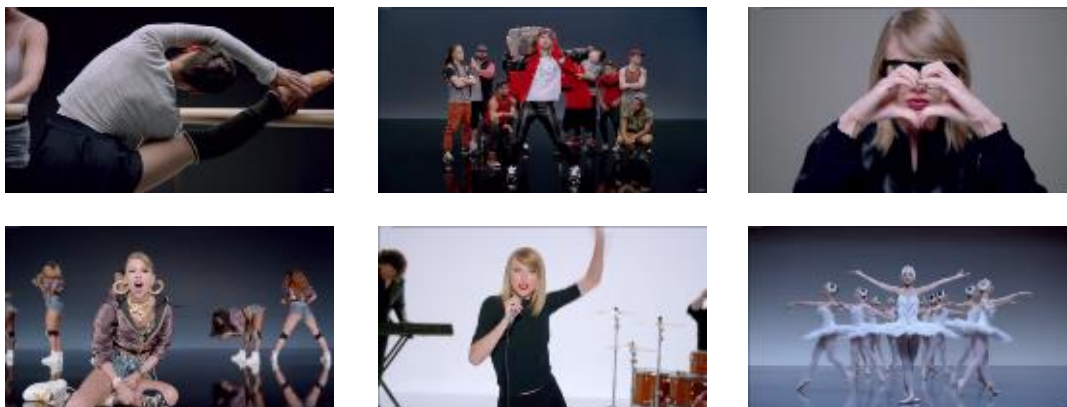


Fig. 104 – Frames from Taylor Swift’s music video for “Shake It Off”, directed by Mark Romanek (2014). In this music video, we see a blend of different styles of dance, fashion and music that illustrate the “culture blending” striking feature of the digital age.

3. “Sleep In Purple”

“Sleep in Purple”⁴¹ is a short film produced from January to March, 2015, and was the final project of my master’s degree in Cinema and Audio-Visual, in the Catholic University of Portugal - Porto. It was a group project - me and other three colleagues - and was directed (and co-written) by me, João Pascoal, under my “alias” artistic name: J. Dúbio⁴².



Fig. 105 – Alternative movie poster for “Sleep in Purple”, directed by João Pascoal (aka J. Dúbio), 2015.

The plot is centred on a lead female character, Teresa. Innocent and naive, she embraces a journey to study abroad, with two girlfriends, Estella and Rita. Upon arriving, she meets one of the local students, Julio, and they fall in love. The short film details the couple’s relationship as Julio starts, little by little, to reveal a darker side of himself unknown to everyone around him.

In my contribution to the film, I acknowledge that it is strongly inspired by the work of directors such as Wong Kar-Wai, Pedro Almodóvar and David Lynch. Kar-Wai’s “My Blue Berry Nights” influenced the colour palette, especially for the bar scene.

⁴¹ Free English translation from the author of the film’s original Portuguese title: “Dorme em Púrpura”.

⁴² “Jay Dubious”, free translation from the author.

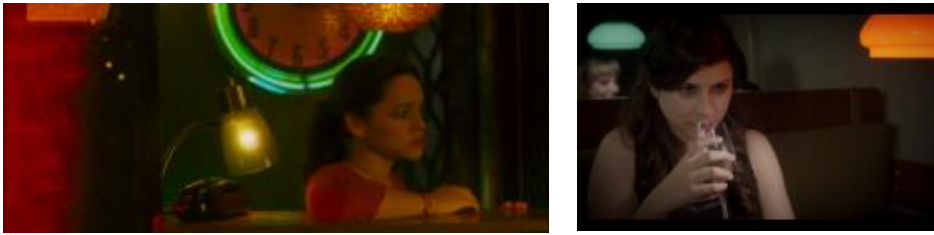


Fig. 106 – Frame Wong Kar Wai’s “My Blueberry Nights” and the bar scene from “Sleep in Purple.

I have borrowed Almodóvar’s “Women on a Verge of a Nervous Breakdown” and “Kika” sarcastic and humorous tone for the female dialogue in the Estella’s room scene.



Fig. 107 – Frame from Pedro Almodóvar’s “Women on a Verge of a Nervous Breakdown” and the scene at Estella’s room in “Sleep in Purple”.

David Lynch’s “Blue Velvet” gave me the idea for the title and also a need to add a touch of surrealism to the movie. As far as the colour blue, it has a deep presence in the interrogation scene of “Sleep in Purple”. Since it is the only scene where the action doesn’t happen as a “flashback”, but is a scene happening in the present, we used the colour blue not only to give the doctor’s office a cold and uncomfortable atmosphere, but also as a way to depict reality in opposition with fiction, for it is in this scene that Teresa finds the truth about Julio and realizes she has been living a dangerous lie.



Fig. 108 – Frame from David Lynch’s “Blue Velvet” and from “Sleep in Purple”.

Thanks to the urge of exploring surrealism, awakened in me by Lynch, my research for this dissertation revealed to be quite useful, especially when it came to the Cinematography and Art Direction department.

As I studied the '90s, I went deep in music videos from one of my favourite bands, Massive Attack. By the time I learned about "Karmacoma" music video, I've found out that the director, Jonathan Glazer, also pursued a career in cinema.

As I researched a little more, I ended up watching the trailer for his latest film, "Under The Skin". The trailer attracted my interest and, after seeing the movie, I completely fell in love with it. My favourite parts were the surreal scenes where Scarlett Johansson's character abducts several men in an endless darkness.

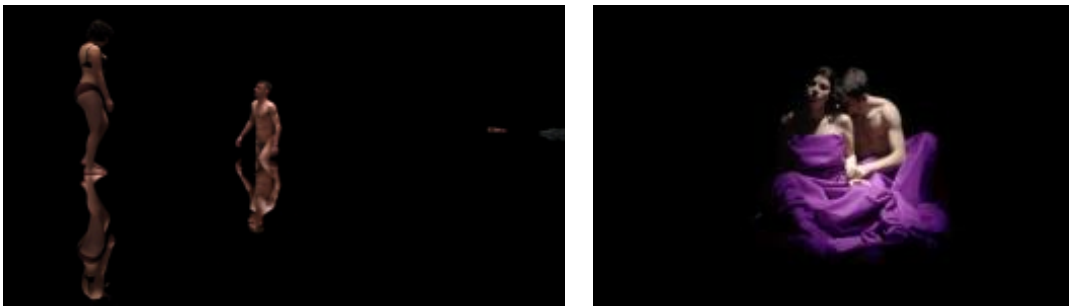


Fig. 109 – Jonathan Glazer's "Under The Skin" and the love scene in "Sleep in Purple".

The overall feeling of infinite space brought on by the colour black surrounding the action, both on the background and the floor, gave me the idea for the making of the surreal love scene in "Sleep In Purple". In it, we see Teresa and Julio making love wrapped up in purple sheets. The couple stands in the middle of the darkness, floating, sharing a moment and immortalising it in time and space. The love scene then takes a dark turn as Teresa sees her own hands covered with a liquid substance resembling blood, but purple like the sheets. Horrified, she looks at Julio, and finds him dissolving in to the purple liquid. The scene ends abruptly with a shot of Julio's face, turning from happy and in love to a dark and cold expression.

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Fig. 110 – Julio’s dark stare in “Sleep In Purple”.

When it comes to the dark infinite notion of space, there are also other works that inspired me throughout pre-production, especially music videos, in particular the video for the Kendrick Lamar 2012 single “Swimming Pools”. In it, among other beautiful shots, we see Kendrick falling in a never-ending darkness, as if he was falling in to a swimming pool or drowning under-water. The sense of motion and the interchangeable display of the frame’s size inspired me to make a “zoom-out” travelling in the first shot of the scene, reinforcing the infinity-like sensation.



Fig. 111 – Kendrick Lamar falling into infinity, in the “Swimming Pools” music video, directed by Jerome D (2012).

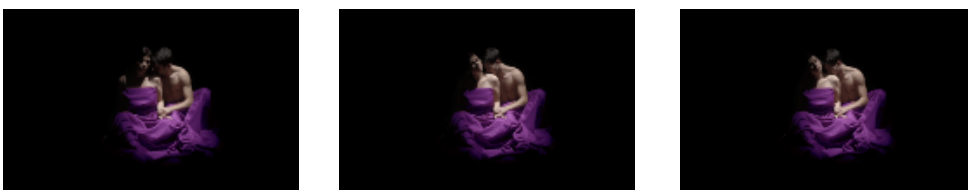




Fig. 112 – The beginning of the surreal scene in “Sleep in Purple”. As in “Swimming Pools”, the image size decreases, enlarging the overall feeling of infinite and space.

Early storyboards for the surreal scene included sketches of a woman in purple body paint, performing a kind of ritual tribal dance, symbolizing a sort of death personification. This idea was inspired by a music video for the Portuguese Hip-Hop band Da Weasel’s 1999 single “Outro Nível”⁴³. In the video, we see a party held in an abandoned building. Among other colourful images such as woman in a bathtub with a flower crown on her head or a pillow fight that fills the air with feathers, there is a woman in body paint moving around a hallway in a mysterious, yet provocative and powerful way. These ideas were later scrapped during production, however they still show the big influence my research and my love for music videos had on me as a filmmaker, during this production.

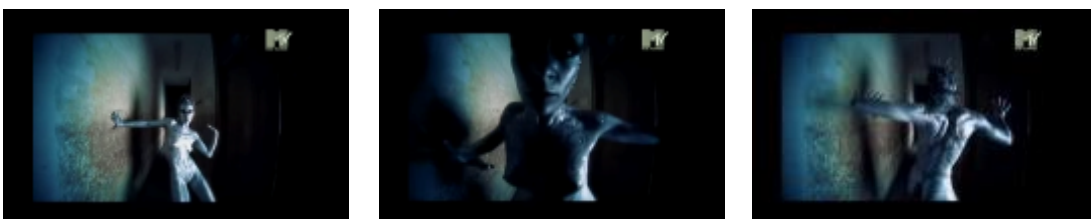


Fig. 113 – The woman in Da Weasel’s music video for “Outro Nível”, (1999).

⁴³ “Another Level”, free translation from the author.

4. Final Conclusions

As this dissertation comes to an end, we hope we've contributed to help break a few preconceived notions that people outside of the Hip-Hop community may have about Hip-Hop culture. With our research on Hip-Hop's history, spanning nearly 40 years, and narrated through time by music videos, we hope we contribute to make the statement that, not only is Hip-Hop meaningful as a cultural movement, it is also influential in more ways that an "outsider" may assume.

Although we can't proof with certainty that Hip-Hop and its music videos became the blueprint to follow when it comes to video production within the music industry nowadays, we think it's justifiable to assume, based on this research, that Hip-Hop has a significant influence when it comes to the creation and development of the music video's aesthetics in the digital age. A simple wardrobe ornament, a facial expression or even a simple hand gesture can be tracked back to Hip-Hop's heritage.

One very important conclusion we have achieved with the research work resulting in this dissertation is the value of aesthetics in the music video genre as a whole. Narration and storytelling through conventional tools such as the creation of characters, the set-up for action and conclusion of events, while being elements of traditional narrative construction, aren't necessarily what we search for in a music video.

Although directors like Director X have a preference to insert a storyline of sorts in their music videos, we saw that X's also likes to empower the artists with visual elements such as cars, colourful backgrounds and beautiful girls, which end up standing out in our viewing. When you stop at Jonathan Glazer, for example, and his direction in both "Karmacoma" and "Virtual Insanity", it is the visuals that make both music videos so iconic and memorable, therefore having no need for a formal traditional story arch or specific characters. In the case of Michael Jackson's "Thriller", even though it works as a short film, with characters and action told through a story arch, the images that stay engraved in our minds and ultimately sell the movie are the zombies dancing and the "zombie dance move" performed by Michael and his back-up dancers, just like PSY's "horse riding" dance.

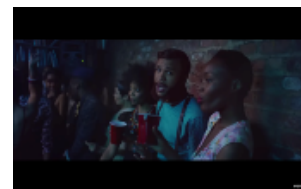
An argument that can back up the idea of those visual elements and the overall

depiction of a music video being not only the selling axes of the music⁴⁴, but also the main factor that either “make” or “brake” a hit, being more effective in embodying the message of the artist than a cinema-like narrative. It is as if music videos are closer to video art or experimental film than to traditional cinema. Although an interesting starting point for a whole new study, this is not the main focus of this dissertation, so we leave this theme as an open window for future work.

Music videos have grown in the years as a legitimate art form, creating stable professional careers and establishing household names. In a similar manner, Hip-Hop has been slowly establishing itself as a legitimate music genre and culture form. From the minimalistic “do-it-yourself” visual style of Azealea Banks’ “212”, to the baroque, stunning beauty of Kanye West’s “Runaway”, music videos and Hip-Hop culture allow each other to be great.

This statement has been the essential drive for this work and for the breaking of boundaries in prejudice against the genre, which are becoming more and more evident, especially in music videos. The video for R’n’B singer Jidenna’s “Classic Man” is the perfect example of the evolution of Hip-Hop as a culture and a form of expression.

Still with a flamboyant edge, “swagger” and “bravatto” (born in *Gangsta Rap* videos of late ‘90s and early ‘2000s) and luxurious ornaments, the video still values, much thanks to Jidenna’s “dandy” fashion style, the education and placement of men as legitimate “gentleman”, with proper manners and a dress code accordingly, while serving as an example for the younger generations, devaluating stereotypes of Hip-Hop lovers and Rap artists as thug, sexist criminals, proving there is much more to show about a culture that seems as powerful today as it was 40 years ago. It’s for its symbolic reasons we choose this as the last music video analysed in this dissertation.



⁴⁴ Even though we have classified music videos as a genuine art form, and even though music videos can be made solely for the artistic expression of the work, the music videos studied in this dissertation were used as promotional tools to marketed-to-market a particular song, and were usually backed up by a commercial entity (such as a record company). Therefore, we do have to take the commercial aspect under consideration.

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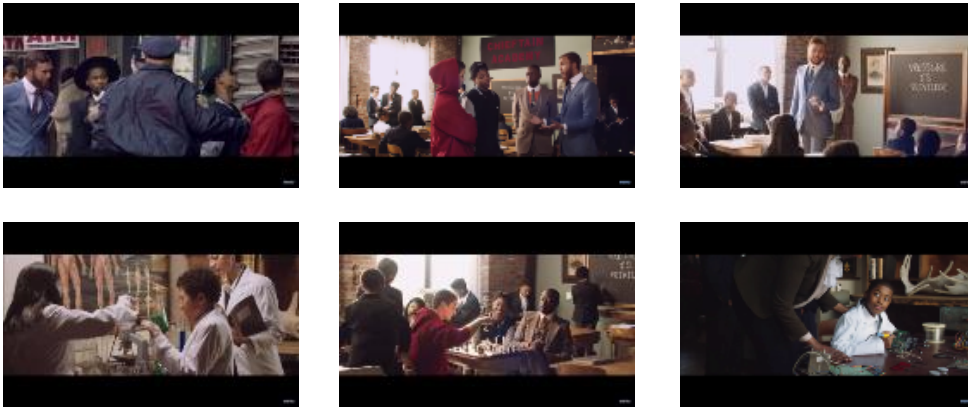


Fig. 114 – Frames from Jidenna’s “Classic Man”

In Figure 114, we can see an interesting blend between what it is expected of a Hip-Hop music video (beautiful girls, a party atmosphere, the artist empowered by his material assets) with a hopeful message of delivering a positive influence in the minds of tomorrow, taking them out of the streets and helping them improve their lives.

Webography

www.RIAA.com | visualised January 19th, 2015.

<http://fashionbombdaily.com/2010/02/11/black-history-fashion-trend-kanye-west-shutter-shades/> | visualised February 20th, 2015.

www.24hoursofhappy.com | visualised April 12th, 2015.

www.youtube.com⁴⁵

<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/100-best-albums-of-the-nineties20110427/tricky-maxinquaye-20110516> | visualised January 24th, 2015.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsrpqhIXRdM> | visualised March 3rd, 2015.

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/viral> | visualised March 5th, 2015.

https://www.facebook.com/VEVO/info?tab=page_info | visualised March 10th, 2015.

vydia.com | visualised March 10th, 2015.

<https://www.spotify.com/pt/about-us/contact/> | visualised March 14th, 2015.

<http://www.apple.com/music/discover/> | visualised March 14th, 2015.

<https://support.tidal.com/hc/pt-br> | visualised March 14th, 2015.

<https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/they-love-the-90s-using-nostalgia-to-woo-millennials/> | visualised March 28th, 2015.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBqD2Javc0o> | visualised May 10th, 2015.

www.directorxfilms.com | visualised May 10th, 2015.

www.datamoshing.com | visualised June 4th, 2015.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrVvZ7ZnJv4> | visualised July 23rd, 2015.

www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/hiphop-is-the-most-listened-to-genre-in-the-world-according-to-spotify-analysis-of-20-billion-tracks-10388091.html |

visualised August 2nd, 2015.

http://articles.latimes.com/1997-02-13/local/me-28375_1_rap-artists | visualised August 30th, 2015

⁴⁵ Youtube.com was the prime search engine and viewing platform for the music videos studied in this dissertation, therefore, we assumed that inserting every single URL related to YouTube was unnecessary.

Filmography

Music Videos:

2pac featuring Snoop Dogg, "2 of Amerikas Most Wanted" (1996)

2Pac, "To Live and Die in LA" (1996)

2Pac, "Trapped" (1991)

50 Cent, "In Da Club" (2003)

Afrika Bambaataa & The Soul Sonic Force, "Planet Rock" (1982)

Austin Mahone, "Banga! Banga!" (2013)

Azealea Banks, "212" (2011)

Beyoncé featuring Nicki Minaj, "Fellin' Myself" (2015)

Beyoncé, "Partition" (2014)

Beyoncé, "Yoncé" (2014)

Black Keys, "Lonely Boy" (2011)

Blu Cantrell featuring Sean Paul, "Breathe" (2004)

Bobby Schmurda, "Hot Nigga" (2014)

Busta Rhymes, "Put Your Hands Where My Eyes Can See" (1997)

C4 Pedro "Vamos Ficar Por Aqui" (2015)

Chief Keef, "I Don't Like" (2012)

Cypress Hill, "Rock Superstar" (2003)

Da Weasel, "Outro Nivel" (1999)

Death Grips, "Guillotine" (2011)

Dr Dre, "Still Dre" (1998)

Drake, "Hell Yeah Fucking Right" (2012)

Drake, "Started From the Bottom" (2013)

Drake, "Worst Behaviour" (2013)

Eminem, "Stan" (2000)

Erykah Badu, "Window Seat" (2010)

Fler, "Papa Ist Zuruck" (2006)

Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five, "The Message" (1982)

Ice-T, "I'm Your Pusher" (1988)

Ice-T, "The Tower" (1991)

Ja Rule, "Between Me & You" (2000)

Jamiroquai, "Virtual Insanity" (1996)

Jay-Z, "Big Pimpin'" (1999)

Jay-Z, "Picasso Baby" (2013)

Jennifer Lopez, "Jenny From The Block" (2002)

Jidenna, "Classic Man" (2015)
Justin Bieber, "All That Matters" (2013)
Justin Bieber, "Baby" (2010)
Kanye West, "Black Skinhead" (2013)
Kanye West, "Flashing Lights" (2007)
Kanye West, "Love Lockdown" (2008)
Kanye West, "Power" (2010)
Kanye West, "Runaway" (2010)
Kanye West, "Welcome to Heartbreak" (2009)
Katy Perry featuring Kanye West "E.T." (2011)
Katy Perry featuring Kanye West "E.T." (lyric video) (2011)
Kendrick Lamar, "King Kunta" (2015)
Kendrick Lamar, "Swimming Pools" (2012)
Kid Frost, "No Sunshine" (1992)
Lady Gaga, "Telephone" (2010)
Limp Bizkits, "Rollin'" (2004)
Marilyn Manson, "Deep Six" (2014)
Marilyn Manson, "The Beautiful People" (1999)
Mark Ronson featuring Bruno Mars, "Uptown Funk" (2014)
Massive Attack, "Karmacoma" (1995)
Massive Attack, "Unfinished Sympathy" (1991)
MC Hammer, "U Can't Touch This" (1990)
Michael Jackson, "Beat It" (1983)
Michael Jackson, "Thriller" (1984)
Miley Cyrus, "We Can't Stop" (2013)
Miley Cyrus, "Wrecking Ball" (2013)
N.W.A., "Express Yourself" (1989)
Nas, "Hate Me Now" (1998)
PARTYNEXTDOOR featuring Drake, "Recognise" (2014)
Pharrell, "Happy" music video (short version) (2013)
Psy, "Gangnam Style" (2012)
Public Enemy, "Fight The Power" (1989)
Rihanna, "Bitch Better Have My Money" (2015)
Rihanna, "Pour It Up" (2013)
Run DMC, "It's Like That" (1984)
Sean Paul, "Get Busy" (2003)
Snoop Dogg, "Drop it like it's hot" (2005)
Soulja Boy, "Crank That" (2007)

Sugar Hill Gang, "Rapper's Delight" (1979)
Taylor Swift, "Shake It Off" (2014)
Terror Squad, "Lean Back" (2004)
The Notorious B.I.G., "Warning" (1995)
Tricky, "Hell Is Round The Corner" (1995)
Vanilla Ice, "Ice Ice Baby" (1990)
Wiz Khalifa, "Black and Yellow (Remix)" (2011)

Films:

"Black Swan", directed by Darren Aronofsky (2010)
"Blue Velvet", directed by David Lynch (1988)
"Chunking Express", directed by Wong Kar-Wai (1994)
"Drive", directed by Nicolas Winding Refn (2011)
"Fallen Angels", directed by Wong Kar-Wai (1995)
"Kill Bill Vol.1", directed by Quentin Tarantino (2004)
"My Blueberry Nights", directed by Wong Kar-Wai (2007)
"Nightwatching", directed by Peter Greenaway (2007)
"Only God Forgives", directed by Nicolas Winding Refn (2013)
"Pulp Fiction", directed by Quentin Tarantino (1994)
"Reservoir Dogs", directed by Quentin Tarantino (1992)
"Scarface", directed by Brian De Palma (1983)
"The Godfather", directed by Francis Ford Coppola (1970)
"The Sixth Sense", directed by M. Night Shyamalan (1999)
"The Village", directed by M. Night Shyamalan (2004)
"Trash Humpers", directed by Harmony Korine (2009)
"Under The Skin", directed by Jonathan Glazer (2013)
"Women on a Verge of a Nervous Breakdown", directed by Pedro Almodóvar (1988)

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APPENDIX A – "Sleep in Purple" Script

"DORME EM PÚRPURA"

(5th Draft)

De

J.Dúbio & Manuel Guerra

Baseado numa história

de

Luís Miguel Cerqueira

producaopurpura@gmail.com

ACTO 1

CENA 1 - INT. CONSULTÓRIO MÉDICO. DIA

Teresa está sentada frente a frente com a sua médica. Ao lado dela está um agente da polícia judiciária. Teresa está visivelmente perturbada. O seu cabelo está desarrumado, a sua face cansada e magoada por várias marcas, possivelmente fruto de uma doença ou outro dano físico.

POLÍCIA #1

(calmo)

Bom, agora do início. Fala-nos dos teus últimos seis meses.

Teresa soluça e prepara-se para responder.

CORTAR PARA:

CENA 2 - INT. BAR. NOITE

Teresa, Estella e Rita estão num Bar, acabadas de chegar à cidade, pelo intercâmbio de Erasmus. Sentadas numa mesa, a música é alta, o movimento é geral.

TERESA

(alegre)

Meninas, amanhã temos aula cedo, se calhar era melhor irmos indo...

ESTELLA

Oh Teresa, a falar de aulas a esta hora?

TERESA

É que ainda não estudámos nada para os exames, temos uma entrega para a

semana...

RITA

Vá lá Teresa! Já foi tão difícil
tirar-te de casa! Aproveita as
coisas boas de cá estar... as
coisas mesmo boas!

ESTELLA

Sim, as paisagens, o ambiente...

RITA

Os gajos...

ESTELLA

(suspira)

Oh Rita, só pensas nisso...

TERESA

(sorri timidamente)

Nem olho para eles...

RITA

(rindo em ar de troça)

Tu podes não olhar, mas há quem o faça...

Teresa olha para onde Rita a indicou. Numa outra mesa, um rapaz olha para Teresa e desvia o olhar rapidamente. Teresa fixa o olhar sem se aperceber. Rita e Estella riem-se alto.

ESTELLA

Teresa... já é p'raí a 5º vez que
aquele tipo olha para ti só esta noite...

RITA

(acaba a sua cerveja)

Por isso, prepara-te, porque eu vou
chamá-lo e tu vais falar com ele...

TERESA

Oh! Não! Nem pensem! Não, não, não, não...

Rita acena a Júlio.

RITA

Oh, sim, sim, sim, sim...

TERESA

Não!

CORTAR PARA:

Júlio está sentado na mesa de Teresa, encorajada pelas amigas a falar com ele. Rita e Estella saíram da mesa e o copo de Teresa está vazio, o que indica que esta bebeu-o até ao fim por forma a arranjar coragem para falar com Júlio.

TERESA

(envergonhada, fixando os olhos na mesa)
Perdona por mis amigas. no quería avergonzarte.

JÚLIO

(rindo nervosamente)
¡No pasa nada! Me parecen bastante majas. Pero...no te lo he preguntado todavía...Eres portuguesa, ¿verdad?

TERESA

(intrigada)
Sí, ¿Cómo lo sabes?

JÚLIO

(atrapalhado)
Os he escuchado hablando por

casualidad. Creo que somos de la misma clase.

TERESA

(sorpreendida)

¿De verdad?...No tenía ni idea...

JÚLIO

(embaraçado)

Sí. Y también entiendo portugués.

TERESA

sí? Qué guay!... Pues nada, a partir de ahora hablo en portugués contigo.

JÚLIO

(com sotaque espanhol)

Muito bem, menina.

TERESA

Bem, isso torna tudo mais fácil então! Mas sendo assim...como é que nunca falámos?

JÚLIO

Sabes, es que no soy propiamente el chico más sociable del mundo, así que a veces todo se vuelve aún más complicado.

TERESA

(um pouco introvertida)

Não faz mal, eu compreendo. Eu sei o que isso é, acredita.

Teresa e Júlio param de falar por instantes e ficam a olhar um para o outro, por uns breves momentos, enquanto todo o movimento do bar decorre como pano de fundo, quase

imperceptível.

ACTO 2

CENA 3 - INT. CORREDOR DA FACULDADE. DIA

A aula terminou. A turma sai toda da sala. Teresa sai, tranquilamente, quando é abordada por Júlio, que lhe pega no braço por trás repentinamente.

TERESA

(assustada)

Júlio!

JÚLIO

Perdona. Tampoco es para tanto. No quería asustarte.

TERESA

Não tem mal, eu é que não estava à espera. Bem, eu tenho de ir andando. Ainda tenho de rever a matéria de Anatomia e ainda me estou a habituar ao espanhol...

JÚLIO

Si quieres, puedo ayudarte.

Teresa hesita, pensa um pouco e aceita.

TERESA

(sorri)

Pode ser...

CORTAR PARA:

CENA 4 - INT. SALA DE ESTUDO. FINAL DO DIA

Júlio e Teresa estão sentados, a estudar. Vários apontamentos e livros estão amontoados pela mesa, entre os quais o Atlas de anatomia "Néter", o livro "Anatomia de Grey" e outros livros de medicina.

JÚLIO

(concentrado)

Y aquí tenemos las arterias cubital y radial.

TERESA

(derrotista)

Não vale a pena. São demasiados termos e estas imagens são muito confusas.

JÚLIO

(sorrindo)

Tú...;tranquila!...Mira...

Júlio pega suavemente na mão direita de Teresa. À medida que vai explicando a matéria, vai percorrendo o braço de Teresa, bem como o resto do corpo.

JÚLIO

Al revés de lo que se cree, cortarse las muñecas no es un suicidio eficaz. En la muñeca tienes dos arterias: la cubital y la radial. Ellas siguen por el antebrazo y se encuentran en la arteria braquial.

Teresa começa a ficar nervosa. A sua respiração torna-se

mais pesada à medida que os dedos de Júlio percorrem a sua pele e a sua cara se aproxima.

JÚLIO

...hasta que lleguen a la subclavia, recorriendo el tronco branquicefálico, hasta que lleguen a la carótida.

Júlio aproxima-se lentamente do rosto de Teresa que está cada vez mais nervosa.

JÚLIO

(olhando-a fixamente)
Es la carótida la que distribuye la mayoría de la sangre de nuestro cuerpo. Es un intermediario directo del corazón. Basta un corte profundo en ella y se desvanece la vida en segundos.

TERESA

(sussurrando já)
P-parece simples.

JÚLIO

(sussurrando)
Pues sí.

TERESA

Pareces ter tudo na ponta da língua...

JÚLIO

El cuerpo humano me fascina.

Júlio beija-a lentamente e volta a fastar-se, olhando-a nos olhos.

CENA 5 - INT. QUARTO DE TERESA. FINAL DO DIA

Entramos no campo surreal. Um imenso fundo negro contém Teresa e Júlio, cobertos por um lençol púrpura. Às vezes descobertos, outras vezes completamente cobertos pelo púrpura, o casal consome o seu amor um pelo outro. Teresa tem a maioria do protagonismo visual. Observamos as suas costas, a face, as mãos de Júlio a percorrerem o seu corpo, tudo num ritmo sexual, porém suave, subtil. No momento climático, apercebe-se de repente que tem as mãos cobertas de sangue.

CORTAR PARA:

CENA 6 - INT. QUARTO DE TERESA. DIA.

Teresa acorda. Levanta-se rapidamente num só gesto, assustada. Olha para o lado e vê Júlio, que segura uma "handy cam".

TERESA

(nervosa, cobre-se com os lençóis)

Júlio! O que estavas a fazer?!

JÚLIO

(olhando para a handycam fica atrapalhado)

¿Ahm? Ah, ¿esto? No, no, ¡no estaba haciendo nada raro! ¡Ésa no es mi intención, Teresa! Yo solo estaba...o sea...es que estabas tan guapa ahí, durmiendo en púrpura y...y yo tenía aquí la cámara conmigo.

Teresa sorri e deita a cabeça no colo de Júlio.

JÚLIO

Se trata tan solo de un hobby. Me encanta captar los momentos de la vida. Pero, claro, lo puedo borrar si quieres. He sido un imbécil por haberlo hecho sin tu permiso y -

TERESA

(sorrindo)

Dormida em quê?

JÚLIO

Qué?

TERESA

O que é que tu disseste? A dormir em púrpura?

JÚLIO

(sorri)

Las sábanas... el púrpura es un color de ostentación. De poder. Pero me parece increíble que, sólamente por verte durmiendo en él, lo transformes en un color tan puro, sencillo, inocente. No lo cambies nunca.

Teresa olha para Júlio e beija-o, apaixonadamente.

CORTAR PARA:

CENA 7 - INT. QUARTO DE ESTELLA. NOITE

Rita entra no quarto de Estella, enquanto esta estuda.

Senta-se na cama ao lado dela e olha-a, com um sorriso, sem dizer uma palavra. Estella acena ligeiramente com a cabeça, questionando-a gestualmente.

ESTELLA

(suspira)

Quem foi desta vez?

RITA

O Pedro, o amigo do Juan...

ESTELLA

(chocada)

O quê?! Ó Rita, conheceste-o há dias! Ainda para mais, tens namorado! Sinceramente... que diria a tua mãe?

RITA

Ponto um: a minha mãe é uma quenga de primeira, ponto dois: o que os olhos do Miguel não vêem, o coração do Miguel não sente e ponto 3: estás muito moralista para quem esteve com o Fernando no outro dia...

ESTELLA

(envergonhada)

Oh não foi nada disso, estávamos a estudar...

RITA

Anatomia, né? O teu namorado que saiba...

Estella tenta mudar de assunto.

ESTELLA

(gasps)

É verdade, sabias?! O Júlio anda
com a Teresa!

RITA

(desdenha)

A sério que tinhas que falar nisso
agora? Não sei como é possível,
porque aquele Júlio é só o melhor
gajo da faculdade...

ESTELLA

Sim, ele é lindo, realmente...

RITA

Lindo demais para andar com a
Teresa.

ESTELLA

Mas se bem que ele me parece um
bocado estranho, não achas?

RITA

Estranho como?

ESTELLA

Sei lá, é um pouco misterioso. Fui
ouvindo o que se diz dele pela
faculdade. É sempre visto com uma
mulher diferente todos os meses mas
acho que a Teresa é a primeira
namorada a sério dele...

RITA

Bem, para andar com a Teresa, é um
ser mesmo estranho...

Rita e Estella ficam em silêncio por momentos, tentando

chegar a uma conclusão. Nisto, Teresa entra no quarto.

TERESA

(entusiasmada)

Meninas, vocês nem sabem...

RITA

Aconteceu?!

TERESA

O quê?

ESTELLA

Tu sabes o quê... tu e o Júlio...

Teresa envergonha-se sorridente.

TERESA

(tímida)

Sim...

RITA

Ah, sim senhora, finalmente! E assim começa uma linda história de amor.

ESTELLA

Mas conta lá, como foi?

TERESA

(suspira)

Ai, foi mágico. Ele foi super carinhoso, foi gentil... foi incrível.

RITA

Mas e mais? Dá detalhes. Ele chamou-te nomes?

ESTELLA

Rita!

RITA

Ah sim, porque tu não estás nada curiosa! Conta lá. Que taras é que ele tem?

ESTELLA

Oh Rita, até parece que ele tem alguma tara... tem?

TERESA

(envergonhada)

Ter até tem...

RITA

(boquiaberta)

Eu sabia! O que é que ele te fez?

TERESA

Filmou-me...

ESTELLA

(incrédula)

Ele não fez isso!

TERESA

Fez...

RITA

(ri-se)

Temos um realizador! Mas quê?
Filmou-te no acto? Por trás enquanto te agarrava o cabelo? Olha lá se não te apanhou de um ângulo mau!

TERESA

Não Rita, credo! Filmou-me enquanto
estava a dormir...

Rita e Estella ficam em silêncio chocadas. Estella quebra o
silêncio.

ESTELLA

Oh céus...

RITA

Esse Júlio é ainda mais tarado do
que eu pensava! Teresa, eu se fosse
a ti saltava fora!

TERESA

Oh também nunca mais vos conto
nada! Que mal é que tem?

ESTELLA

(hesitante)

Teresa... não nos leves a mal... o
Júlio é super giro e é um querido
contigo mas...

RITA

... mas ele é um psicopata.

ESTELLA

Rita!

RITA

Desculpa, eu tenho que lhe dizer
isto! Teresa, o Júlio não é homem
para ti. Acredita. Eu sei. Se há
mulher com experiência em homens

sou eu. Quantas vezes foste a casa dele?

TERESA

Nenhuma, ele tem a avó muito doente...

ESTELLA

Oh Teresa, não será uma desculpa?

RITA

Anda com outras, de certeza. Passa a vida a ser visto com gajas, vê lá tu!

TERESA

(zangada)

Chega! Ele não é nada disso! Vocês também é só cusquice e falar mal! Estou farta!

Teresa sai do quarto, furiosa. Bate com a porta, deixando Rita e Estella.

ESTELLA

Será que ela ficou com uma cópia do vídeo?

ACTO 3

CENA 8 - INT. QUARTO DE TERESA. DIA

Teresa, sentada na beira da cama, acaba de se vestir, após fazer amor com Júlio, que veste as calças no lado oposto da cama, levantado, ao fundo do plano.

TERESA

Já vais?

JÚLIO

Sí. Mi abuela no puede quedarse
mucho tiempo sola, ya lo sabes
tú...

TERESA

Sim, só que... (hesita)

Júlio dirige-se até Teresa e senta-se ao lado dela na cama.

JÚLIO

¿Pasa algo?

TERESA

(dá a mão a Júlio)
Estes últimos meses têm sido
fantásticos... gosto mesmo muito de
ti Júlio...

JÚLIO

Pero...?

TERESA

(suspira)
Desculpa, não quero que leves a
mal, mas preciso mesmo de saber...
porque é que nunca vamos a tua
casa?

JÚLIO

Venga, Teresa, pues, si te lo acabo
de decir... Tengo a mi abuela
enferma... no me viene.

TERESA

Mas e depois? Não posso ir lá uma
vez que seja?

JÚLIO

Teresa, entiende...Quiero ahorrarte el espectáculo degradante que es mi vida familiar, ¿me explico? La enfermedad de mi abuela... es muy difícil, ¿sabes? Vómitos, cólicos, por no hablar de tener que bañarla, darle la comida...no es fácil para mí tener una vida social.

TERESA

Mas Júlio, tenta tu entender-me... já namoramos há 5 meses e sei muito pouco sobre ti, não sei onde moras, não sei nada da tua família... e é frustrante amar uma pessoa e sentir que não há confiança...

JÚLIO

(sorri)

También te quiero, pero créeme, aún no es tiempo de que vayas a mi casa. Pero ya te llevaré allí, no te preocupes...

TERESA

Quando?

JÚLIO

(começa a ficar incomodado)

Oh Teresa, cuando sea posible...

TERESA

Porque é que estás a ficar chateado com isto?

JÚLIO

¡Porque estás insistiendo!

TERESA

Se eu insisto é porque me preocupo contigo. Quero sentir que sou parte da tua vida!

JÚLIO

Pero claro que sí...

TERESA

Então o que me estás a esconder?

JÚLIO

¿ Qué podría yo estar escondiéndote?

TERESA

Não sei, diz-me tu...

JÚLIO

¿¿ Necesitas ir a mi casa para que te fíes de mí?!

TERESA

Sim...

Júlio respira fundo, visivelmente irritado. Agarra Teresa pelo braço.

JÚLIO

Pues vamos entonces.

TERESA

O quê?

JÚLIO

Vamos...

TERESA

Onde?

JÚLIO

A mi casa, ¿Adónde podría ser?
Tanto quieres ir, pues vente, para
que veas que no te escondo nada.

Teresa hesita e Júlio agarra-a com mais força, puxando-a
pelo braço para si.

TERESA

Júlio, estás a magoar-me!

Júlio fica ainda mais bruto. Levanta Teresa da cama e tenta
arrastá-la para fora do quarto.

JÚLIO

¡Joder! ¡Pues vente! ¿No es lo que
quieres? ¿Al final quieres ir o no
a mi casa?

TERESA

Não quero ir assim!

Teresa arranca o seu braço das mãos de Júlio, que se torna
mais violento. Júlio pontapeia uma cadeira com toda a força.

JÚLIO

¿Es ésto lo que quieres? ¿Quieres
ir a ver a mi abuela murriendo?
¿Quieres ver los bichitos? ¡Mira lo
que me estás haciendo!

Teresa assusta-se.

TERESA

(em pânico)

Júlio, pára!

Teresa começa a chorar.

TERESA

O que se passa contigo, Júlio?! O
que é isto?? Nunca foste assim
comigo!

Júlio acalma-se, subitamente. Respira fundo e abraça-a.

JÚLIO

(arrependido)
Oh Teresa, perdona, perdona,
perdona...yo...no sé qué se me ha
pasado por la
cabeza...disculpa...es que con todo
lo que está pasando...es
difícil, ¿me entiendes? Perdóname,
no volverá a pasar, te lo
prometo...perdóname, no he querido
hacerte daño...

Teresa enxuga as lágrimas e afasta-se ligeiramente de Júlio.

TERESA

(ergue a cabeça)
Acho melhor ires embora...

JÚLIO

(sorri)
...¿que me vaya adónde, tonta?

TERESA

(decidida)
Embora... quero que te vás
embora...

JÚLIO

(assustado)

¿Quieres que me marche? Pero,
Teresa, entonces...?

TERESA

Júlio... por favor vai-te embora.

Júlio tenta dissuadir Teresa.

JÚLIO

Teresa... amor... te prometo que
esto no volverá a pasar,
perdona-me...

TERESA

Eu perdoo-te... mas vai-te
embora...

JÚLIO

(em lágrimas)
Pero, Teresa, te lo prometo, te lo
juro...

TERESA

Júlio, não insistas...

JÚLIO

Venga, Teresa, ¿qué ha cambiado?

TERESA

Tu.

JÚLIO

Que no he cambiado, para nada...

TERESA

(interrompe Júlio)
Júlio, sai daqui!

Júlio levanta-se, calmamente, pronto a soltar a sua loucura.

JÚLIO

Vale, pero yo no me voy solo...

TERESA

(assusta-se)

O quê?

Júlio agarra Teresa violentamente pelos cabelos e tenta arrastá-la para fora do quarto, sem dizer uma única palavra mais. Teresa debate, esperneia, até que consegue escapar de Júlio. Empurra-o para fora do quarto e tranca a porta. Deixa-se escorregar, em lágrimas, pela porta, até chegar ao chão, chorando desalmadamente. Ouvimos o pontapé que Júlio dá na porta. Este, antes de partir, ainda vocifera:

JÚLIO

(v.o.)

¡Te vas a arrepentir, Teresa!

Júlio sai do apartamento, deixando Teresa completamente destroçada. Ouvimos o barulho da porta principal. Júlio foi-se.

CORTAR PARA:

CENA 1 - INT. CONSULTÓRIO MÉDICO. DIA

De volta ao interrogatório. Teresa já está em lágrimas.

TERESA

Eu não sei o que se passou. Juro.

Isto não faz sentido nenhum na minha cabeça...

A médica suspira e decide dar o diagnóstico.

MÉDICA

(hesitante)

Teresa... as marcas no teu corpo,
as febres, os inchaços, são todos
sintomas duma doença muito
específica.

Teresa começa a lacrimejar.

MÉDICA

É uma doença venérea, mas não é
letal, não precisas de te alarmar.

TERESA

Mas então porquê isto tudo? Porque
é que me estão a fazer isto? Eu só
vim saber o que se passa comigo!

A médica tenta falar, mas hesita. O polícia decide contar o
diagnóstico a Teresa.

POLÍCIA #1

Teresa, a doença que contrais-te
pelo Júlio é uma doença venérea que
se contrai após atos necrófilos.

TERESA

(chocada)

O quê?!

Teresa vira-se para a sua médica. A expressão da doutora não
esconde a verdade horrível.

POLÍCIA #1

Por isso é que eu estou aqui,
Teresa. Precisamos da tua ajuda

para apanhá-lo. Há meses que andam atrás dele, em Espanha. A polícia de lá entrou na casa dele, onde vivia com a avó, que já morreu há uns anos...descobrimos lá dentro os corpos, mas não o apanharam por pouco.

TERESA

(chocada)

Não... não pode ser! O Júlio não era capaz de fazer isso, o Júlio é boa pessoa!

POLÍCIA #1

"O Júlio é boa pessoa"... já ouvi dizer isso tantas vezes... há sempre um predador, a fazer-se passar por príncipe encantado. Sabes o que sou, Teresa? Polícia. Ele é um assassino. E sabes o que por pouco tu eras? Estatística...

CORTAR PARA:

CENA 9 - INT. QUARTO. DIA

Júlio filma mais uma rapariga, enquanto esta dorme pacífica na cama onde acabaram de fazer amor. Em voz-off, o polícia prossegue o seu relato .

POLÍCIA #1

(v.o.)

Ele anda por aí, escondido na multidão, à procura da próxima vítima. Nós vamos apanhá-lo, um

dia. Mas até lá... dorme de olhos
bem abertos...

A próxima vítima abre os seus olhos (azuis como os de Teresa) e
repara na câmara que a filma, diretamente na cara.

O filme termina abruptamente, num ápice, com um suspiro
arrebatador da mulher.

FIM

APPENDIX B – Music Video Treatment for "Story Told", by Ghetthoven



Music Video Treatment

Artist: Ghetthoven

Track: *"Story Told"*

Director – J. Dúbio
September 2nd, 2015

Synopsis

The music video tells the story of a ghost, portrayed by Ghetthoven, who visits earth one last time before he disappears in to eternity. He wonders around his old apartment, soon to be sold to other people by his widow, in a desperate attempt to make contact with the living. In spite of making his presence felt by the ones he loves, his overall failure to communicate forces him to depart this world.

Feature films like "Ghost" or "The Sixth Sense" are inspirations of sorts for this music video, in the sense that both pictures deal with the theme of communication. The failure of communication between the living and the dead are ultimately a metaphor for relationships going wrong for lack of communication and understanding.



Outline

We begin the video in the broken couple's newly bought home, about to be re-sold. White sheets cover all of the furniture, creating a visual parallel between the moving out scenario and the ghostly atmosphere provided by the story. Ghetthoven wonders around the living room, with a white or lighter wardrobe⁴⁶, sad, confused, and lost.

In the song's second verse the set is the bedroom. With the couple's old vinyl record collection spread all over the bed, Ghetthoven lies around, with a pair of big headphones, ironically connected to an iPod or iPhone, almost as a small "jab" to the "hipster" trend.

⁴⁶ By "White" or "Lighter" we mean white or beige tons, to go along with the set design.

A recurring shot in the video will be a single extreme close up shot of Ghetthoven performing the song, in a shadowy black background, with the light and colour correction set to deep red. This might represent the afterlife, the place Ghetthoven doesn't want to go to.

The music video's third act (meaning the third verse in the song) is the darkness of the sets. In a beach, with a weather resembling mid-winter (grey sky, cold tonalities and no one around), a funeral is being held. Ghetthoven and a group of extras are attending. There is a single cross (made of two twigs held together by a string), stuck in the sand. All the participants of the "funeral", including Ghetthoven, are dressed in black. The funeral can actually be interpreted as a ritual of "passage" in to the afterlife. The extras are, in fact, also ghosts. In a wide shot, we see all the participants, fading out, one at a time, leaving only Ghetthoven.

In the end scene, Ghetthoven's wife is packing her stuff in the bedroom, getting ready to leave, with tears in her eyes. Ghetthoven walks in the room. She feels her late husband's presence. She stops packing and turns to him. As she turns, we cut to a wide shot of the room, with only the widow and no Ghetthoven to be found.

We return to the winter beach. Heartbroken but accepting his fate, Ghetthoven walks to the sea. As he walks, we see him slowly fading away in to eternity.

Treatment

The music video's direction has influences from Sofia Coppola's filmography, as well as the works of Russian filmmaker Andrey Zvyagintsev.

The photography is highly saturated, grey tones mark the video, with the exception of the extreme close up singular shot of the artist, with a dark background and a heavy red colour correction.

The camera work is a mix between hand held travelling, particularly in the living room set, and standing, well-crafted shots. There will also be some "zoomed in" style of travelling, performed with assistance of a slider.

*"YouTube Killed the MTV Star"
Did Hip-Hop music videos become the blueprint
for other genres of music videos in the digital age?*

Visual influences



Kanye West – *Love Lockdown*



Tricky – *Overcome and Hell Is 'Round The Corner*



N.E.R.D. – *She Wants To Move*



Sofia Coppola – *Lost In Translation*



Andrey Zvyagintsev - *Leviathan*