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**Crunk Feminist Reflection**

The Crunk Feminist Collective opened my eyes to many different struggles black women face in hip-hop as they argued that it was harder for a female MC to break into mainstream than a male MC. It also opened my eyes to many different aspects of the culture, and that it extended further than that of the music. The core values combined with the Ten Commandments mad for a very interesting discussion. However, the discussion was somewhat confusing at times because the speakers used terms that I didn’t get. The commandments helped to highlight what a black female, especially female MC’s, must do to stand out in the male dominated world.

The first thing they gave was a background of hip-hop, defining four core values of the culture. These were the visual, like graffiti, the movement, the word, and the drum. A combination of the word and drum compose the musical part of the culture, however of other two values extend pass this. The culture that I was not aware of was the visuals, the art, the graffiti, the sculptures, and the movement. I also thought that there were settings where hip-hop was predominant. Commandment two explains how this never existed, and says how each generation through the decades has brought something unique to the culture, and influenced the movement.

This part of the discussion confused me as they used terms that were highly unfamiliar to me. Terms such as b-girl and b-boy were strange to me, and I lost the next part of the discussion as I didn’t know the context of what they were talking about. They finally explained what these terms meant, and I missed a good portion of the movement sub-discussion within the core values.

The next commandments get into how to stand out as a female in hip-hop culture. Black women have to assume a position that they want to take, take a risk with that position, and take an oppositional stance, all while recognizing the operations of institutional power. Hip-hop artist also have to contextualize themselves with in the culture, political history, and scholarly views, and situate themselves appropriately. They used an example of putting up many famous black female MC’s, and asking the crowd to identify them. This part went a little too fast for me as well, as I knew of none of the artist minus Missy Elliot and Lil’ Kim. They used this to explain how once an artist creates differentiation, they become easily recognizable outside the context of hip-hop.

After a woman fully understands these concepts, she then has to avoid the pitfalls of presentism. This means that they cannot mix up the things that made the past, and represent an interpretation of the past in a distorted way. They then can embrace ambivalence. This ambivalence will be very uncertain, and the view of who you are will be completely different than the view of you from your mainstream audience. An artist has two types of listeners, the hardcore true fans, and the mainstream listeners. Because of this fact, an artist has to produce both conscious and commercial rap, and in both types they have to avoid being two different people. After you are able to do this, then you have to be able to ask new questions, and find the world that you want to create.

I already knew that social media was a powerful tool for artist, and this knowledge was further validated with the commandment explaining that wielding technology leads to commercial success. Using blogs, Facebook, twitter, and tumblr, artist can promote themselves quicker using the power of inbound marketing. These tools also have a bad side to them, because anything that you release or say will hurt your image faster as the information will spread quicker.

Through explaining the Ten Commandments a female artist must take to penetrate into a male dominated hip-hop industry, the Crunk Feminist speakers backed up their argument at the beginning. Overall, the presentation was well structured, as each commandment resembled a step. The one thing they could have done better was to take into account that the knowledge of their audience.