Solarize-ing Native hip-hop: Native feminist land ethics and cultural resistance

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Keywords: decolonization, environmental ethics, Native feminism

ABSTRACT

In this article I focus in-depth on what constitutes cultural resistance within the genre of Native Hip-Hop. Rather than examining multiple songs and artists I have chosen to focus on one recent Native hip-hop song titled “Solarize” which was created in 2013 through United Roots Oakland (a youth center for green arts and media) by Desirae Harp (Mishewal Wappo Tribe of the Alexander Valley), Fly50, and SeasunZ. I argue that the collective work in this song moves us closer to developing a Native feminist land ethic which privileges living with the land rather than over the land; and, at the level of praxis, their song builds alliance with, rather than isolation from, Black communities. Therefore, the song represents the productive move of employing what Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith have called “theoretical promiscuity” through hip-hop music and culture.

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Jenell Navarro teaches in the Department of Ethnic Studies at California Polytechnic State University where she regularly teaches a course titled Hip-Hop, Poetics, and Politics. Her research focuses on various revolutionary productions of hip-hop throughout the Americas.
A hip-hop feminist is defined as young feminists born after 1964 who approach the political community with a mixture of feminist and hip-hop sensibilities, hip-hop feminism. The term hip hop feminism was coined by the provocative cultural critic Joan Morgan in 1999 when she published the book When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: A Hip Hop Feminist Breaks it Down, which has been described as "seminal". Hip-hop is more than a music genre, it is a culture that has shaped America over the past three decades. Read more to find out how hip-hop has influenced society in the United States. To this end, Hip Hop culture redefined cultural norms and practices nationwide by establishing new modes of learning, conduct, and social interaction. The nineties saw a marked increase in the establishment of street gangs as a direct response for coveted social reform. The emphasis of the street in the upbringing of communities of lower socioeconomic standing augments the power of street education. “Solarize-ing Native Hip-Hop: Native Feminist Land Ethics and Cultural Resistance.” Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, & Society 3, no. 1 (2014): 101-118. Noble, Bobby. “Native Tongues: Hip-Hop's Global Indigenous Movement.” Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop, edited by Jeff Chang. New York: BasicCivitas Books, 2006.