

SAE Institute Australasia

Creo

---

Exemplars

Student Works

---

29-10-2023

CIM211.2 Critical Analysis Example 1

Elliot Birch

Follow this and additional works at: <https://creo.sae.edu.au/exemplars>

---

Project 2 content:

1985 - Intro to "The Fall Off" ..... 1
Intro to the intro to the fall off, (The Intro)..... 1
Cultural Context & Critical Theory:..... 2
Intersectionality..... 3
Race..... 3
Racialism..... 4
Intrinsic racism..... 4
Extrinsic racism..... 4
Postcoloniality..... 4
Aesthetic style and audiences:..... 5
Aesthetic..... 5
Outlaw Aesthetic..... 5
Demographic..... 6
Reinforced stereotypes..... 7
The Trap..... 9
New Wave Hip Hop and exploitation of youth..... 11
In Conclusion (Outro to the Intro to The Fall off)..... 12
List of references:..... 13
Media References..... 15
Mid-Project Reflection..... 15
Pre-class activities:..... 15
Project work & theory:..... 16
Project-completion Reflection..... 17
Appraisal:..... 17
Challenges:..... 17
Future goals:..... 17

Student: Elliot Birch, Sydney, and Class 1

1985 - Intro to "The Fall Off"

Intro to the intro to the fall off, (The Intro).

1985 - Intro to "The Fall Off" is a hip hop track written and performed by artist J. Cole (Jermaine Cole). The song was released on April 20, 2018 and on face value is a diss track response to a

teased unreleased song by new wave rapper, *Lil Pump*. J. Cole does not reference the target of the lyrics in the song directly.

Diss tracks are a trend in hip hop music that is often seen as an opportunity to test skill against another artist. Usually this will consist of multiple songs, duelling back and forth until one artist comes out on top, or the disagreement is neutralised in another way. Sometimes, these battles can become personal, violent and even deadly, as in the case with Tupac Shakur (2pac) and Christopher Wallace (The Notorious B.I.G) which resulted in the death of both individuals in 1996 and 1997 respectively (Govaert, C. 2007. pp. 10-11).

Broadly, J. Cole is aiming to address the negative attention from another rapper with a positive reply by constructively unpacking the actions and themes of his opponents music and the cultural impacts of it.

J. Cole touches on topics of social class, race, post-colonialism and intersectionality by critiquing the target of the song and the problematic elements of their music and persona. He comments on the role of young minority men in culture, their impacts on their peers and the expectations placed upon them by the dominant culture. He also notes the disposable nature of new wave hip hop, where once lyrical skill was valued, now repetition, consumerism and drug use is more prominent. Further, he comments on “Trap Life”, the phrase for how social structures keep young minorities trapped in a disadvantageous lifestyle.

---

## Cultural Context & Critical Theory:

The cultural context of “1985” by J. Cole encompasses several elements including the evolution of hip hop culture, generational divides within the culture and the wider socio-economic and political environment that directly impacts young people of colour. This spans critical theories such as race and postcoloniality, cultural and subcultural capital as well as intersectionality. He also comments on social class and the difficulties of exiting “The Trap”.

Of particular note, Cole unpacks the problematic nature of racial dynamics in hip hop and popular culture. He takes aim at the representation that the unnamed target of his song portrays, the effect this has on his audience and on himself. Within this argument, he relates this closely with the throw away, temporary nature of the lyrics found in songs by artists in the new wave of hip hop culture, (Lil Pump, Lil Yachty and others).

In the song *Gucci Gang*, Lil Pump's chorus repeats the term "Gucci Gang", and consists of references to taking percocet, selling meth, giving cocaine to his female partners and wearing expensive watches. (Lil Pump, 2017)

▶ Lil Pump - Gucci Gang [Official Music Video]

Cole notes how these lyrics play into the common racist stereotypes of young hispanic and black men as drug taking, violent and acting out. The commercial success of hip-hop has brought about a shift in lyrical and thematic content, with a perceived emphasis on materialism, drug use, and other negative stereotypes. J. Cole comments on these shifts and the long-term implications for artists and the genre.

## Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the theoretical framework named in 1989 by Kimberle Crenshaw where she argued that black women were often excluded from feminist theory because both elements were not addressed alongside each other (Crenshaw. K, 1989 pp. 3).

Intersectionality theory examines how forms of social categorisation such as race, gender, class, sexuality and others, intermingle and interact with each other. It poses that individuals possess many intersecting identities that are influenced by social categories and that these identities interact further in complex ways.

This leads to unique experiences of discrimination or privilege. This underscores that forms of oppression like racism, sexism classism and ableism are interconnected and often compounding. The theory extends beyond individual experiences in order to explore systemic and structural forms of oppression, seeking to understand how structures and institutions contribute to the marginalisation of individuals with intersecting identities.

The theory attempts to examine and address simplistic views of social justice and discrimination by approaching analysis with a more in depth understanding of social oppression. It provides a multidimensional approach to understanding societal inequalities and attempts to create a more holistic approach to problem solving in a societal context.

## Race

Race and Postcoloniality theory challenges ethnocentric foundations of culture in the wake of the dismantling of the colonial apparatus.

The theory comprises two separate phrases that are deeply interlinked. Race as a concept is firmly baked into the post-colonial world. Race is a fundamentally flawed concept where individual humans can be divided into distinct morphological categories. As science progresses

we develop a clearer understanding of how genetics operates, and the colonial understanding of race becomes deconstructed.

Race is seen as a pivotal and natural part of our identity, but as with many other groupings, we have come to find that race, like sexuality, nationality and gender, is a socially constructed phenomenon. Even so, we still must look at this understanding of race in the context of our modern world. Our race is printed on our birth certificates, tax documents, and often, we segment ourselves into racial groups. (Wake, P., & Malpas, S., 2013. pp. 132)

Given our understanding of genetics, race is an extremely difficult thing to define. In an attempt to define race and racialism, Appiah notes that there are three expressions of the theoretical content of race and racism:

## Racialism

The belief that there are heritable characteristics (racial essences) that certain races have that are not shared with other races.

## Intrinsic racism

People who believe that each race has a varying moral status, independent of the moral characteristics of their racial essence.

Intrinsic racists believe that the moral values and status of races are immutable.

## Extrinsic racism

People who “make moral distinctions between members of different races because they believe that the racial essence entails certain morally relevant qualities. Extrinsic racism should be empirically verifiable or falsifiable and because of this extrinsic racists should be dissuaded via empirical data.

Appiah was attempting to contest the notion of race as a normalised concept. In particular he aimed to challenge English literature as an embodiment of racist colonial sentiments in both jingoistic imperialism and anti-colonial nationalism (Appiah, 1990).

## Postcoloniality

Postcolonial studies aim to come to terms with the historical impacts of European colonialism since the fifteenth century. The colonial nations, England, Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal and Netherlands conquered much of the global south and other regions, ingraining white supremacy and western modernity as the apex of humanity. The actions of these nations impacted the

sovereign right of self-determination of indigenous populations across the globe and resulted in the slaughter of these populations worldwide. The theory examines the impacts of colonialism in an attempt to come to terms with the incredible damage caused and the generational trauma inflicted on communities worldwide.

Specifically, postcoloniality is used to trace the historical path of institutions to examine their origins and to define the exact colonial moment and context of their birth.

The impact of colonialism runs deep in our modern day world. As noted by Ashcroft et al, three out of four people on the planet have had their lives impacted by colonialism in some way. (Ashcroft et al. 1989) (Wake, P., & Malpas, S., 2013. pp.136 - 138)

---

## Aesthetic style and audiences:

### Aesthetic

*1985* harkens back to the 1990s era of old school back-pack (or underground) hip hop. With a smooth funk beat and simple rhythm, the song leverages a minimalistic aesthetic so that the listener can focus wholly on the lyrics. The old school aesthetic of the melody aims to contrast the divide between the generation Y rappers (inspired by the lyricism of Gen X) and the new wave rappers whose lyrics are perceived to focus more on consumerism.

The song is through-composed and eschews a chorus in favour of well enunciated and clear song writing. Cole aims to deliver a message with this song, to his interlocutor, their audience and his own. At its core the song is a diss song, but its delivery is unorthodox in that Cole aims to defeat his enemy with positivity and kindness. In a way, this is the most powerful form of diss, because it doesn't provide the target with ammunition for a rebuttal.

### Outlaw Aesthetic

"Hip-hop was explicitly experienced as a counter to the crucible of state neglect and marginalisation of the South Bronx." (Johnson, I. K., 2018)

As a counter culture, Hip Hop leverages the concept of "Outlaw Culture" and practitioners use it as a foundation for interactions between members. Hip hop is an anti-authoritarian, confrontational and counter-conventional subculture. Cole's response to his interlocutor turns this idea on its head by introducing the positive element of a big brother/elder persona. Cole aims to take the target under his wing, and without patronising, support a younger member of hip hop culture. Therefore, in this, Cole is an outlaw in an outlaw sub-culture. Refusing to follow the negative route by escalating the battle, instead supporting the focus of the song by offering a helping hand to a misguided opponent.

The outlaw counter narrative is a reaction to and result of the ostracization by the dominant culture. An artefact stemming from cities being abandoned by the federal government, and neighbourhoods being abandoned by the city. (Schloss, J. G. 2009)

“...youth in those neighbourhoods were, in turn, abandoned by traditional institutions... .As a forgotten minority of a forgotten minority of a forgotten minority, their culture was almost totally ignored” (Schloss, J. G. 2009)

## Demographic

J. Cole has been described as a member of “conscious hip hop” (Seth, A. 2022). So it would be easy to assume that the intended audience are listeners of other conscious hip hop acts such as Kendrick Lamar, Talib Kweli, Mos Def or Nas, in an age range from 25 - 50. I think it goes deeper than this. Because the target of the song is from a new generation of rappers, I believe this was also an attempt to garner a new generation of fans by showing his opponent’s audience the level of lyrical skill they are missing by listening to artists such as Lil Pump and others.

Moreover, in its context as a diss song, Cole was aiming this specifically at a very limited audience. In an interview with the culture website *Complex* he notes:

“It’s really a “shoe fits” situation. “... You must feel attacked in some kind of way, must feel offended, and if you feel offended, then that means something rings true, something struck a chord. That’s cool with me. That’s all I ever want to do.” (Cowen, T. W., 2018)

Here he is noting that the audience for this song is not one person specifically, but a whole generation of rappers. Cole is saying if you feel it’s targeted at you, then it is.

---

## Reinforced stereotypes

These white kids love that you don't give a f\*\*k  
'Cause that's exactly what's expected when your skin black  
They wanna see you dab, they wanna see you pop a pill  
They wanna see you tatted from your face to your heels  
And somewhere deep down, f\*\*k it, I gotta keep it real  
They wanna be black and think your song is how it feels  
So when you turn up, you see them turnin' up too  
...  
One day, them kids that's listening gon' grow up  
And get too old for that s\*\*t that made you blow up  
Now your show's lookin' light cause they don't show up

Birch. E. (2023). [Image of lyrics by J. Cole from the track *1985 Intro to "The Fall Off"*].

(Cole, J. 2018. 1:27)



*"If you exclude the top three rappers in the game, the most popping rappers are all exaggerated versions of black stereotypes."* J. Cole. (Cowen, T. W. 2018)

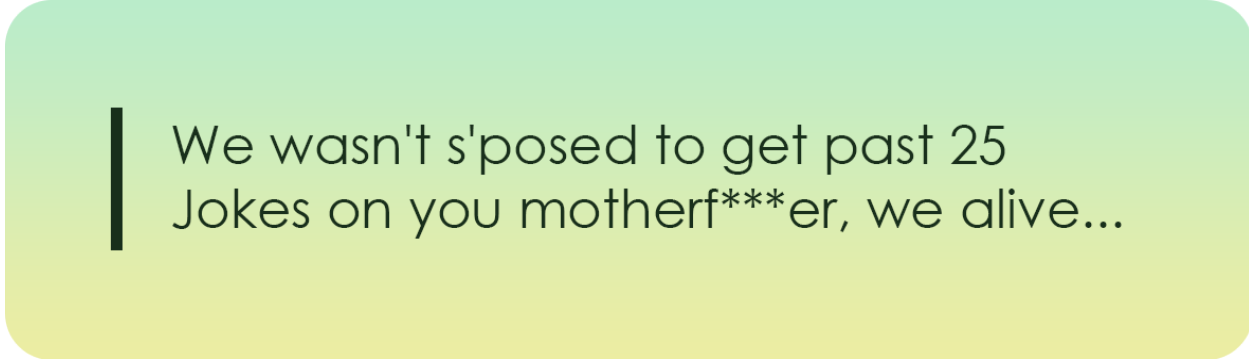
In this segment of the song Cole presents a narrative and aesthetic that focuses on reflective critique and realism. The form is lyrical and conversational, leveraging direct address to engage with younger artists and audiences. The aesthetic style, as mentioned previously, is minimalist and this is what makes the lyrics all the more impactful. Cole uses straightforward language to deliver a powerful message. The imagery in the lyrics revolves around the stereotypes perpetuated by artists of colour as well as the expectations of their audience.

Via the lyrical aesthetics, Cole is attempting to force an introspective emotional reaction as well as discomfort and a call to action of awareness. He urges both artists and the audience to reflect on the implications of their actions, preferences and expectations. All of this is used as a way to refocus his and his interlocutors' audiences and instil a sense of urgency as well as a call to confront the uncomfortable realities surrounding racial stereotypes and cultural appropriation in the music industry.

The critical theories of race and post-colonialism are relevant to this part of the media artefact. Through the lens of these theories, the lyrics focus the listener on the reinforcement of racial stereotyping and commodification of American Black culture for the entertainment of white audiences. This exploitation echoes post-colonial themes of cultural appropriation and the perpetuation of power imbalances between racial and cultural groups. The excerpt critiques the superficial engagement with Black culture and the harmful stereotypes that are perpetuated by the artists and their audiences in this dynamic. Moreover, it touches on the last impact this has on the perception and treatment of Black individuals, both within and outside the hip-hop community, reflecting broader societal issues of racial inequality and misrepresentation.

---

## The Trap



We wasn't s'posed to get past 25  
Jokes on you motherf\*\*\*er, we alive...

Birch, E. (2023). [Image of lyrics by J. Cole from the track *1985 Intro to "The Fall Off"*].  
(Cole, J. 2018, 0:04)

Two bars that hold a huge amount of weight and cultural significance. Here, Cole is commenting on "The Trap". A concept where the poor are focused in a particular region of a city, with nicknames like "The Hood", "The Block" and others, these areas usually have a lower amount of funding, safety, fewer jobs, fewer areas to purchase healthy food and fewer community areas. Also, depending on the particular municipality, these areas are policed in a variety of ways that further marginalises the community. (Reid, E. 2022. para. 8-9)

In the lyrics, Cole is prompting an emotion of rebelliousness that reflects the Outlaw aesthetic previously mentioned. He is giving the finger to society at large and the cultural hegemony that keeps poorer Americans locked in a cycle of violence, crime, drug abuse and premature death. He is pointing out the odds that people in his community have to face to escape the trap life, and given this is the first bar of the song, it tells us that this song has a deeper meaning to it. By using the word "We", he fosters a sense of community, unity and positivity while also laughing in the face of their oppressors.

In a 2010 report, the Los Angeles County Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology noted a strong correlation between life expectancy and economic hardship in lower socio-economic areas. The study also found that areas that were predominantly black were also victim to lower life expectancy, whereas more affluent areas of the county were more likely to have a higher life expectancy.

**Table 2: Leading Causes of Premature Death by Sex, Los Angeles County, 2006**

Rank	Men		Women	
	Cause of death	Years of life lost	Cause of death	Years of life lost
1	Coronary heart disease	46,642	Coronary heart disease	16,948
2	Homicide	41,636	Breast cancer	13,716
3	Motor vehicle crash	24,159	Motor vehicle crash	8,468
4	Liver disease	14,812	Stroke	7,841
5	Suicide	14,563	Lung cancer	7,506
6	Drug overdose	11,618	Diabetes	6,584
7	Lung cancer	10,950	Drug overdose	5,447
8	HIV	9,952	Homicide	5,163
9	Diabetes	9,772	Liver disease	5,063
10	Stroke	9,644	Colorectal cancer	4,749

Henry, E. (2010) *Leading causes of premature death by sex, Los Angeles County 2006*

[Infographic]

A common feature of “Trap Life” is the homicide rates in lower socioeconomic areas. In Los Angeles County in 2006, the second most likely cause of premature death (before the age of 75) was that of homicide given the higher levels of poverty, desperation and gang violence in these areas. Moreover, the leading cause of premature death for Blacks and Hispanics in this area was homicide with homicide not appearing in the top ten for white demographics. It can be also noted that Black and Hispanic demographics were more likely to die prematurely of health issues correlating with poorer diets and a lack of healthy and accessible foods.

**Table 3: Leading Causes of Premature Death by Race/Ethnicity, Los Angeles County, 2006**

Rank	Whites	Hispanics	Blacks	Asians/Pacific Islanders
1	Coronary heart disease	Homicide	Homicide	Coronary heart disease
2	Lung cancer	Motor vehicle crash	Coronary heart disease	Motor vehicle crash
3	Motor vehicle crash	Coronary heart disease	Lung cancer	Stroke
4	Drug overdose	Liver disease	Stroke	Suicide
5	Suicide	Diabetes	Motor vehicle crash	Lung cancer
6	Liver disease	Suicide	Diabetes	Homicide
7	Breast cancer	Stroke	HIV	Colorectal cancer
8	Diabetes	Drug overdose	Breast cancer	Liver cancer
9	Stroke	HIV	Drug overdose	Breast cancer
10	Emphysema/COPD	Breast cancer	Colorectal cancer	Diabetes

Henry, E. (2010) *Leading causes of premature death by ethnicity, Los Angeles County 2006*

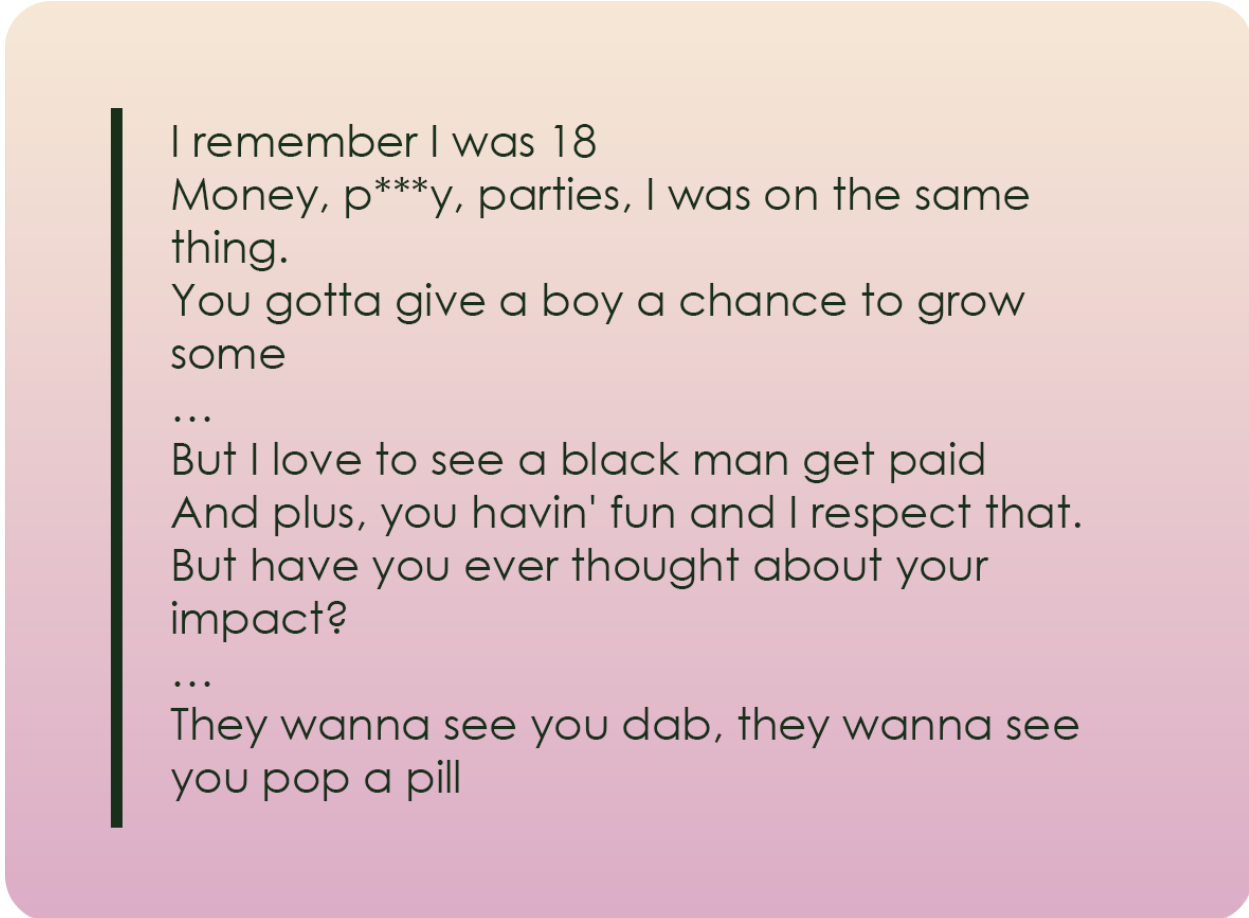
[Infographic]

These lyrics are a brilliant representation of race, postcolonialism and intersectionality. Over the last century the poor and people of colour have been focused into specific areas while gentrification has pushed them out of others. In America, this can be directly linked to systemic racism and the redlining behaviours of governments beginning in the 1920s-30s (Cornell Law School, 2022). These policies, being hold overs from the post-colonial mindset and the intrinsic racism of that mindset, have had extreme impacts until this day. In our modern day, these policies echo in the political gerrymandering of districts that ensures black neighbourhoods have as little power as possible.

Louisiana, which in 2021 had a voting age population of 33% Black and 58% white, was delivered a new congressional map where redistricting had given Black Louisianans only one state district where they held a majority (Fernandez, M. 2022).

---

## New Wave Hip Hop and exploitation of youth



I remember I was 18  
Money, p\*\*\*y, parties, I was on the same  
thing.  
You gotta give a boy a chance to grow  
some  
...  
But I love to see a black man get paid  
And plus, you havin' fun and I respect that.  
But have you ever thought about your  
impact?  
...  
They wanna see you dab, they wanna see  
you pop a pill

Birch. E. (2023). [Image of lyrics by J. Cole from the track *1985 Intro to "The Fall Off"*].

(Cole, J. 2018. 0:16)

In these lyrics, Cole is highlighting the exploitation of youth in the music industry, where young artists are given huge amounts of money, and no skills to manage it. In this he is creating some common ground with his lyrical opponents and explaining how they have been leveraged by the music industry to represent themselves beyond their own interests. In this way, this segment of the song is an attempt to create an aesthetic of friendship and understanding. Cole is showing that he understands his opponents, and sympathises with them, but he is also prompting them to consider their impact on not only the music industry, but on hip-hop culture as well.

Cole encapsulates a critique of the exploitation of youth, both as consumers and performers within the music industry. The lyrics suggest a cycle where young Black artists are incentivized to perpetuate harmful stereotypes for popularity, while young audiences, regardless of race, are drawn into a superficial, commodified engagement with Black culture. The line **"One day, them kids that's listening gon' grow up / And get too old for that s\*\*t that made you blow up"** and **"man they barely old enough to drive, to tell them what they should do, who the f\*ck am I?"** hints at a temporality and fleetingness of this engagement, underscoring a concern for the long-term implications on the artists' careers and the youths' perceptions of Black identity.

This exploitation of youth, paired with the racial and post-colonial themes discussed, creates a layered critique of the structures within the music industry and broader society that perpetuate racial stereotypes and commodify cultural expression. The narrative urges a reckoning with these issues, advocating for a deeper understanding and respect for Black culture beyond stereotypical portrayals, and highlighting the need for responsible engagement from both artists and audiences to break this cycle of exploitation and misrepresentation.

It also indicates a layer of intersectionality in the song that is commenting on black youth culture as well as the exploitation of impressionable youth. Cole invites the listener to consider their own impact on both the industry and society more broadly. The content that we listen to and patronise directly impacts minorities and their communities more broadly. We should consider not only the music we make, but the music we listen to and what it represents, and is attempting to do culturally.

---

## In Conclusion (Outro to the Intro to The Fall off)

Cole's overall message in "1985" is a multifaceted critique and reflection on the dynamics of race, cultural representation, economic exploitation, and the impact of systemic issues on the lives of Black individuals and communities. Through a lyrical narrative and direct engagement with both younger artists and audiences, Cole presents a critical examination of the music

industry, the stereotypes perpetuated and the wider socio-political structures that contribute to the marginalisation and misrepresentation of Black culture and identity. He delves into the harsh realities of “The Trap” life, reflecting on systemic racism, post-colonial remnants and the intersectionality of these issues with socio-economic conditions.

This narrative significantly challenges the dominant cultural values and beliefs. By highlighting the superficial and commodified engagement with Black culture, the exploitation of youth and the systemic nature of racial and economic oppression, Cole disrupts narratives that might overlook or simplify these issues. He urges a deeper understanding and respect for the authenticity and complexity of Black culture, a more responsible self-aware engagement from artists and audiences, and a broader societal reckoning with systemic racism and inequality. Cole invites us to be introspective and to take seriously the dialogue that opposes a simplistic or exploitative representation of hip-hop as well as examine the and challenge the systemic and economic structures that oppress already marginalised communities. Cole offers a counter-narrative to the dominant cultural hegemony in hopes of creating a better future for young minorities.

---

## List of references:

Andy Seth. (2022, January 2). *Inspiring wisdom from the 20 most conscious rappers in 2022*.

Andy Seth.

<https://www.andyseth.com/2022/01/02/inspiring-rap-wisdom-from-the-top-20-most-conscious-rappers-in-the-game/>

Appiah, Kwame Anthony (1990). *Racisms*. In David Goldberg (ed.), *Anatomy of Racism*.

University of Minnesota Press. pp. 3-17.

Crenshaw, K. (n.d.). *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist*

*Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. Chicago

Unbound. <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8/>

Cowen, T. W. (2018, April 25). J. Cole on apparent “1985” diss: ‘It’s really a “shoe fits” situation.’

*Complex*.

<https://www.complex.com/music/a/tracewilliamcowen/j-cole-1985-diss-its-really-a-shoe-fit-s-situation>

Felluga, D. (2015). *Critical Theory: The Key Concepts* (1st ed.). Routledge.

<https://doi-org.saezproxy.idm.oclc.org/10.4324/9781315718873>

Fernandez, M. (2022, September 22). Why race matters in redistricting: Protecting black power & preserving democracy. *Legal Defense Fund*.

<https://www.naacpldf.org/redistricting-racism/>

Govaert, C. (2007). How reflexive documentaries engage audiences in issues of representation: Apologia for a reception study. *Studies in Documentary Film*, 1(3), 245–263.

[https://doi.org/10.1386/sdf.1.3.245\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/sdf.1.3.245_1)

Henry, E. (2010, July 28). *Compton life expectancy among lowest in Los Angeles County*. Intersections South LA.

[https://intersectionssouthla.org/story/compton\\_life\\_expectancy\\_lowest\\_in\\_los\\_angeles\\_county/](https://intersectionssouthla.org/story/compton_life_expectancy_lowest_in_los_angeles_county/)

[http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/epi/docs/Life%20Expectancy%20Final\\_web.pdf](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/epi/docs/Life%20Expectancy%20Final_web.pdf)

Hill, L, Ndugga, N, Artiga, S. *Key data on health and health care by race and ethnicity*. (2023, March 15). KFF.

<https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/report/key-data-on-health-and-health-care-by-race-and-ethnicity>

Johnson, I. K. (2018). *Battling in the Bronx: Social Choreography and Outlaw Culture Among Early Hip-Hop Streetdancers in New York City*. *Dance Research Journal*, 50(2), 62-76.

<https://saezproxy.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/battling-bronx-social-choreography-outlaw-culture/docview/2098276829/se-2>

LII. (n.d.). *redlining*. LII / Legal Information Institute. Retrieved October 29, 2023, from

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/redlining>

Reid, E. (2022). 'Trap Life': The psychosocial underpinnings of street crime in inner-city London.

*The British Journal of Criminology*, 63(1), 168–183. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azac004>

Schloss, Joseph G. 2009. *Foundation: B-Boys, B-Girls, and Hip-Hop Culture in New York*.

Oxford: Oxford University Press

Wake, P., & Malpas, S. (Eds.). (2013). *The routledge companion to critical and cultural theory*.

Taylor & Francis Group.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/sae/reader.action?docID=1221495>

## Media References

Cole, J. (2018). 1985 - Intro to "The Fall Off" [Song]. On *KOD* [Album]. Interscope Records.

Pump, L. (2017). Lil pump - Gucci gang [official music video] [Video]. In *YouTube*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LfJnj66HVQ>

---

# Mid-Project Reflection

## Pre-class activities:

The pre class activities, in particular the padlet activities, have helped keep me on task with regular implementation of referencing. With each padlet activity I attempt to provide at least one authoritative



reference. This has helped me improve at APA7. This has also improved my ability to find references which has been pivotal with this project, and in the support of my arguments.

Week 4 was particularly helpful for me in relation to this project. In that preclass activity I spoke about Adam Goodes and the public racism he encountered in the indigenous round of AFL in 2013. It was interesting to look back on this alarming event especially in light of the Voice Referendum which recently failed. The 2013 event of a young girl calling an indigenous footballer an “ape” shows how the idea of Australia as a post-racial nation is completely ridiculous. In this project I go into detail about the challenges faced by people of colour in the United States and how the effects of colonialism still live on and impact people today.

In week 4 we were also introduced to the book *Race and Ethnicity: the Key Concepts* and I plan to use this as a reference in this project.

Ansell, A. E. (2013). *Race and ethnicity: the key concepts*. Routledge

## Project work & theory:

The media I chose focuses heavily on representation of young minorities in media and specifically in hip-hop. Because of this, I researched how minorities have been affected by colonialism and racism in the wider dominant culture, but also in specific communities.

I found a great reference from the LA county health department which comments on the leading cause of premature death in the area and has a great breakdown by ethnicity. This data was extremely helpful because it pointed out that the leading cause of premature death (before the age of 75) in the black community was homicide. Moreover, the second, most likely cause of premature death in men in Los Angeles was homicide. This is an example of Intersectionality because the data implies that young black men who are poor are the most likely to be killed by homicide. This points out that there was a severe problem with poverty, known as “the trap”, in suburban Los Angeles and in particular affected the poor. (Henry, E. 2010).

I found some interesting references about early hip-hop in New York that commented on how hip-hop in general is a reaction to being forgotten by the government and culture at large.

I also stumbled upon the concept of outlaw culture, which exists within hip-hop. Again, this is a subcultural reaction to disenfranchisement and part of the cultural capital of hip-hop.

Specifically, the aesthetic arose as a defence mechanism, and a doubling down on the cultural oppression enacted by post colonial society.

---

# Project-completion Reflection

## Appraisal:

I think my project was quite successful. I love hip hop, and especially old school inspired hip hop. Hip hop has taken a new path lately, and the lyrical nature of the skill has been left behind in some areas of the culture. J Cole, and other rappers like him, show that the lyrical mindset still exists in today's hip hop culture. Because of this I really enjoyed looking further into the meaning behind the lyrics in the song. I felt that I had a pretty strong ground for content, even with a song that is quite short but given Cole's well thought out and clear lyrics, it made it easy to do my research. I was particularly happy with the Los Angeles county document I found that went into great detail about the social issues found in lower socio-economic areas. It was firm footing to discuss race, post-colonialism and intersectionality.

I think overall, the work I did in this assignment matched my expectations as I feel I already had a pretty good understanding of the issues, even if I didn't have the referencing to back it up in the initial stages.

## Challenges:

The main challenge I met was that I got incredibly sick recently with shingles! It really sapped any drive I had towards my school work and made it really hard to sit at my desk given the pain it causes. I think this may have happened due to stress of university and my day job where I am a manager of a team and a designer. The build up of stress weakened my immune system and opened me up to infection. I still haven't overcome this and the road to recovery will take a further 3-4 weeks.

## Future goals:

This project helped me to actually enjoy research. Honestly, I usually do not enjoy these types of projects, but because the topic was so interesting, and the song I used is so good, it made it easy to proceed. I'm still not sick of the song!

I think this points towards doing things I enjoy. I should try to focus on project topics that keep me motivated to push on if possible.

