
A Study Of The Use Of Profane Language In Music And Whether Music Censorship Is Necessary

Deafening Silence

Music has been an incredibly important part of nearly all cultures in the world for as long as anyone can remember. Many people around the world use music to express their emotions and feelings. Some people listen to music when they're in a good mood so they can celebrate their happiness. Some people listen to music when they're sad so they can have someone or something they can relate to, so they don't feel like they're alone, or that they're the only ones that feel the way they do. Producers will add music to movies to increase the emotion of a scene. Many people like to liven up the party with some catchy tunes to dance to. In one way or another, music has been there for all of us.

Music censorship has existed since the 1800's. One of the earliest examples of music censorship was right after the Civil war, when Pro-southern songs were banned during Reconstruction because the US government thought that they would stir up revolution and Pro-Southern feelings (Belcik). Music censorship started to become used more often when rock n' roll became more and more popular. Artists like the Beatles and the Rolling Stones certainly sparked a lot of controversy in their time. Many rock artists wrote songs that condoned the usage of drugs, which at the time, was never done before. So, many people took offense to such obscene activity. In 1970, President Richard Nixon and Vice President Spiro Agnew publicly urged broadcasters to ban songs that allegedly promoted or condoned illegal drugs. (Gale) To this day numerous radio stations and other music services such as Pandora ® chose to simply blank out certain dialogue in songs that they deem inappropriate for certain parties to listen to, or that they feel some might find offensive.

No artist should be forced to have the product of their hard work and dedication altered or defaced just to protect someone else from being offended. If someone doesn't like what they are hearing on the radio, they can simply change the channel. Art is used as an outlet for many people. Artists often pour all of their feelings into their work because that is the only way they know how to express themselves, and everyone needs a way to express their feelings. Furthermore, most artists want to share their creations with the people around them, because they are proud of what they have accomplished. No artist would want to have to share their artwork in an unwillingly revised version. If an artist painted a portrait of a woman with her breasts exposed, and the image was displayed in a museum for the public to see, would the owners put black boxes over the woman's breasts to hide them? Of course not, so tell me why music should be treated any differently? Art is meant to be appreciated in its raw form, the way the artist intended it to be perceived.

Marilyn Manson is a critically acclaimed rock singer who started off in the nineties and is still producing records today. Marilyn Manson is a very diverse and creative artist, but he is widely hated and has even been made out to be a worshipper of Satan for his particularly macabre image. Manson has stated that religion to him is irrelevant, or unnecessary. His music and his art is intended to signify rebellion, and although his images are rather obscene, it is that very obscenity that has given him his fame, and made him loved by abnormal teenagers all over the

world.

Marilyn Manson's works however, are not so greatly appreciated by many people. Manson's rock group was barred from performing in Utah after he ripped up the book of Mormon on stage during a Salt Lake City concert (Landman). Manson's works have been censored time and time again, and in some contexts without reason. His song "Blank and White" the words "shoot the president of whatever" were bleeped out in the radio version (MansonWiki). The referenced line was an important part of the song. "Blank and White", like many other songs by Marilyn Manson, signifies rebellion and the angst many people feel towards authority figures. This line is another great example of Manson's passion for rebellion, and how it has influenced teenagers over the years. Kids these days are having their hands held through life, and aren't able to think for themselves. Marilyn Manson's music, art, and philosophy is to encourage kids to think for themselves and think through what they believe and what they want, which is why he goes about all his crazy make-up and "satanic" costumes, it's what he likes doing and how he feels he views himself.

Marilyn Manson is just one of many vilified artists that are attempting to make a difference in the world. The purpose of this passage is in no way to convince you to go home and buy a Marilyn Manson album, because let's face it, he's probably not your cup of tea. The point I want to make is that these artists that have worked so hard to bring their music into the world are not being treated as fairly as artists with different forms of expression, such as painting, sculpting or even poetry. Isn't most sung music just poetry with a catchy melody in the background? Especially Hip-Hop music, which is a perfect example of heavily censored music in today's age. Hip-Hop music is all about the lyrics, but the people who invented the style of Hip-Hop music did not have access to a good education, the words they spewed out were not always grammatically correct. Regardless, the words to their songs were still a reflection of how they felt, and that's exactly what art is supposed to be.

While most artists that use profane lyrics in their art spark offense in some listeners who do not agree with their methods, the words they are sharing are, more often than not, meant to spread a message. Sometimes, the reason an artists' work is found to be so offensive is because these artists are willing to do the things that no one else will. Some people become so frightened by people who have the nerve to stand out, some people even feel threatened by these artists who are so hungry for change in the world, and that's what people truly fear; change.

Eminem is another great example of a widely hated, yet widely misunderstood artist. Eminem's lyrical content meets nearly the same level of obscenity as the art of Marilyn Manson. Unlike most rappers, who rap about how cool they are, how hard they party, and how many women they've slept with, Eminem's lyrics consist of how much of a loser he is, and his theory that if he didn't become a famous music artist, he would probably grow up to be a serial killer.

Eminem's philosophy may sound a bit too obscene to you, but that was his exact intention. By revealing his humanity and sharing his life, Eminem has been accepted by those he lived to bait (Bozza, 267). Eminem decided that instead of sugar coating himself to look good for people, he wanted the world to see him for what he really is, and he gained more respect because of it. Shouldn't radio stations do the same? Rather than trimming out all the "adult language" in songs in order to appease the listeners, perhaps listeners would appreciate it more if we broadcasted the art for what it truly is.

Music has been an incredibly important part of my life since i was very young. I'd hate to see an artists hard work become skimmed for the comfort of those who cannot understand it. Surely we must think of the children, though. Parents wouldn't want their kids to be exposed to inappropriate images or words, but unfortunately, those children are going to learn all the swears in the book one way or another. If you don't like a song you're hearing because the lyrics offend you, nobody is forcing you to listen to it.

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