The Hummer

Myths and Consumer Culture

Edited by Elaine Cardenas and Ellen Gorman

LEXINGTON BOOKS
A division of ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS, INC.
Lanham • Boulder • New York • Toronto • Plymouth, UK
The Hummer: Race, Military, and Consumption Politics

Julie Sze

A Hummer stands at the visual, symbolic, and literal center of the Army’s “Taking it to the Streets” and Campus Combat campaigns, two national “hip-hop” tinged recruiting drives that have informally targeted African-Americans since 2003. According to Colonel Thomas Nickerson who is in charge of the Army’s recruitment, “our research tells us that hip-hop and urban culture is a powerful influence in the lives of young Americans. We try to develop a bond with that audience. I want them to say, ‘Hey, the Army was here—the Army is cool!’” (Joiner). That the Hummer is used for military recruitment is unsurprising given its military origins. But its use as a recruiting tool is racially and culturally coded. This essay asks why the Hummer particularly represents hip-hop culture for the Army. What are the cultural assumptions and political histories behind this link, and what are the larger stakes in the context of war? The simple answer is that the Hummer is glorified by hip-hop icons and by extension, hip-hop culture. But that observation alone ignores larger cultural questions about why and how the Hummer stands for a racialized object of “cool.”

I examine how the Hummer functions as a racialized commodity symbol of excess, masculinity and violence in these particular military recruiting campaigns. To do so, I situate the Hummer within racial and social contexts of hip-hop marketing and consumption politics, hip-hop and car culture, and as part of the widespread expansion of the advertising of war for recruitment purposes as the military struggles to enlist soldiers for active duty during wartime. This paper illuminates the multiple contexts of these particular campaigns, and the Hummer’s centrality in making symbolic connections between race, culture, and violence.

In part, I suggest that broader racial and consumption politics, particularly what anthropologist Elizabeth Chin calls “combat consumption,” shapes the
marketing and reception of the Hummer as a cultural signifier of violence and excess designed to appeal to African-American, and specifically male youth. She defines combat consumption as the discursive frame that shapes media representations of inner-city African-American youth consumers as violent and pathological, willing to kill for sneakers, gold chains, bicycles, or cars (30). In Chin’s ethnography of poor African-American youth engagement with mainstream consumer culture, she asks what it means to be “young, poor, and black in our consumer culture.” She suggests that these are symbolic and cultural questions that cannot be answered without attention to “the questions of poverty, racism, and social inequality.” These realities and histories are shaped by and also affect consumption practices, specifically “who buys what, who possesses what, and how do they get it?” (46). The related question of why they (in her analysis, poor, black youth) want it, may also unveil the symbolic appeal of the Hummer in hip-hop culture. More effectively than sneakers and gold chains, I argue that the Hummer is combat consumption made literal, as an example of the Army’s attempt to utilize and transform racial and symbolic messages about the “street,” ideas of black material excess and consumer pleasure, urban culture and ghetto violence into actual combat overseas for black youth. Literally embodied through the material artifact that is the Hummer, the Army mobilizes complex symbolic connections between race and masculinity, and the politics of excess and aggression.

The Campaigns

The Hummer is the “signature vehicle” and the literal centerpiece of the Army’s Taking it to the Streets Campaign which began in 2003. According to the Army’s web site description of the campaign (under a picture of a bright yellow Hummer against a military fatigues pattern backdrop), Taking it to the Streets:

is your chance to take part in our Army Flight Adventure Simulator. It’s the Army experience in your backyard. You’ll be able to find out more about the Army and see if you have what it takes to become An Army of One. Throughout the year, the Army will be touring high schools, colleges, malls and national events all around the country. Find out how you can kick your future into high gear with the U.S. Army” (Taking it to the Streets).

Another version of the Hummer that travels with the Campaign is covered with images and slogans: two black men and a white woman in military uniform, a U.S. Flag, the U.S. Army logo (with GOARMY.COM) underneath it, and the Army slogan, “An Army of One” (Joiner). Although the Army’s description of Taking it to the Streets does not make it explicit, the schedule makes clear that the campaign’s target audience was African-American. In 2005, the tour traveled exclusively to events where the attendance was predominantly African-American, such as the National Black Arts Festival, Black College Reunion, Black Heritage Festival, and Black Entertainment Tour. An offshoot of the Tour. In 2003, the magazine, to sponsor (Temple, De Pau-

The Racial

An offshoot of the Black Heritage Festival in 2003, the Black Entertainment Tour. In 2003, the magazine, to sponsor (Temple, De Pau-

Maryland reads: the headliners at the tour side (at this even Carson and Akon winner to be judged at bat Tour omits the hip-hop entertainers and draws The Hummer as a critical campus across American men out.

At stops for the Hummer stands a hummer hang out in it, chaotic the state-of-the-art set ups and climbing shirts, headbands the CEO of Vital this “stuff” such a to the brand in a different people’s bodies by the flight simulator time as in video emphasized, while experiences and the Campaign events (perfume, key chains, the Hummer, experience) reminds them of the
Black Heritage Festival, the Essence Music Festival, the NAACP Convention, and Black Entertainment Television’s Spring Bling.

An offshoot of the Taking it to the Streets campaign is the Campus Combat Tour. In 2003, the Army collaborated with The Source, a major national hip-hop magazine, to sponsor events at five colleges with high black student populations (Temple, De Paul, University of Pittsburgh, University of Maryland, and SUNY Stony Brook). One ad for a Tour event, which took place at University of Maryland reads: “The Source: Campus Combat Tour” with a picture of the headliners at the center (Nappy Roots), and a listing of other performers to the side (at this event, Memphis Bleek, Black Moon, Big Noyd, Alchemist, Sonny Carson and Akon). The flier also reads: “Compete in the ‘MC Battle’” (with the winner to be judged by The Source staffers). The publicity for the Campus Combat Tour omits that the Army is a sponsor, and instead focuses on The Source, hip-hop entertainment and audience participation in the events as the main draws. The Hummer is also central to the Campus Combat Tour. According to a critical campus account of the Stony Brook event, a Hummer with eight African-American men out of a total of ten figures on it was stationed outside the show.

At stops for Taking it to the Streets and the Campus Combat Tour, the Hummer stands as the focal point for activity. People/ students/ potential recruits hang out in it, check out the “tricked out” sound system, watch videos (including the state-of-the-art flight simulator), engage in contests (shooting baskets, push-ups and climbing walls), and “get stuff” as prizes or just for coming by, like T-shirts, headbands and wristbands, customized dog tags and hats. According to the CEO of Vital Marketing Group who organized the Campus Combat Tour, this “stuff” such as Army apparel “creates a connection. [Teens] are able to see the brand in a different light, as cool” (Joiner). Part of the coolness is in how people’s bodies become extensions of the machine/Hummer, especially through the flight simulator which mimics the experience of moving through space and time as in video games. In the contests, the physicality of the participants is emphasized, while the stuff is a souvenir that lets participants remember the experiences and the feelings that came with participation. In that sense, Campaign events echo Hummer’s broader strategy of marketing its products (perfume, key chains and laptops) which enable people to become one with the Hummer, experiencing power and advanced technology, and to get “stuff” that reminds them of their experiences in/ with the vehicle (Patton, 2005).

The Hummer: Race, Military, and Consumption Politics

The Racial Politics of Cool, Branding, and the Hummer

To fully explore the cultural work that the Hummer performs in the Army campaigns, I begin by documenting the relationship between hip-hop culture and the Hummer. To do so is not to suggest that it is the emblematic hip-hop vehicle. But undeniably, there is a clear relationship between the Hummer and hip-hop culture. According to one representative that specializes in renting commercial products in films and videos, “When you are dealing with macho films, your
macho video, the rappers, they all want Hummers” (quoted in Bradsher, 365). According to the Auto Channel, Xzibit, the host of MTV’s popular “Pimp My Ride” showcases his Hummer prominently in the show and in other commercial and media venues such as Celebrity Car magazine. Lyrics of songs by leading hip-hop artists highlight the Hummer (from Jay-Z’s “Pretty Girls” and “Imaginary Player” to 50 Cent’s, “G-Unit That’s What’s Up” and “Don’t Push Me”). The Hummer also appears prominently in songs or videos for Ludacris, Missy Elliot, and 50 Cent. Wyclef Jean won the second annual Funkmaster Flex Celebrity Car Show, beating Nelly, DMX and Lil’ Kim in 2002. In 2003, he defended his victory with a Hummer equipped with an aquarium and Spiderman Chopper (Davis).

The relationship between hip-hop culture and the Hummer must be understood within the larger context of hip-hop icons engagement with car culture and car customization. This “traffic” between hip-hop and the Hummer and hip-hop and car culture/customization is best embodied by Funkmaster Flex, a celebrity hip-hop D.J. in New York City. Flex sponsored the car show that Jean won, is the host of Spike T.V.’s car show (“Ride with Funkmaster Flex”) and is car columnist for The Source and Mobile Entertainment magazine. He also organized a celebrity car club whose members include Missy Elliot, Ludacris, Justin Timberlake, and Faith Evans. In 2005, he signed a contract with Verizon to deliver exclusive content showcased in a Hummer “Def Jam Mobile” which highlights custom video content in the vehicle (AG Greetings). Hip-hop car culture is the latest manifestation of the relationship between racial minorities and car culture/customization. Historically, low-riders have long been associated with Chicano and barrio identities (Vigil). Asian American youth cultures also customize cars to express racial and cultural identities through the import car scene, mostly Japanese sub- compacts such as Honda Civics and CRXs, Mitsubishi Eclipses, and Acura Integras (Kwon).

But why is hip-hop car culture focused on the Hummer as its “vehicle” of racial and cultural identity? How are these images projected out to the larger media and commercial culture? Lastly, what are the roles of key individual African-Americans and organizations in creating, shaping, and distributing these messages? These range from the African American Colonel Nickerson in charge of the Army’s recruitment campaign, to advertising agencies whose focus is on racial and ethnic marketing. For example, the Campus Combat Tour was organized by Vital Marketing Group. Their entire staff is young and black, which their CEO describes as helping to create “trust” and connection with the black youth market (Joiner). The Source/Army collaboration was brokered by Walls Communications, an influential public relations firm. These images of hip-hop = Hummer are manufactured and received by hip-hop icons who then project these same messages out to consumers and racially segmented markets. An example of cross-branding between hip-hop and the Hummer is best exemplified by Timbaland (who himself borrowed his name from the Timberland boot) and Ms. Jade. Their contract with GM showcased the Hummer in the 2002 video, “Ching Ching Ching.” As the Hummer’s advertising director
explained, this is “one of the next trends in marketing—a national expansion of what we’ve been seeing. Marketers are always looking for innovative ways to expand the brand message” (Strong). The production side is best embodied by Ed Welburn, GM Vice President of North American Design in charge of the Hummer who is also African-American. As he describes his design philosophy, cars in contemporary culture, like armor during the European Middle Ages, signify lineage, rank and identity (Patton, 2004).

How then does the Hummer signify rank and identity, in this case, the racial politics of cool in the context of hip-hop culture? Coolness has many simultaneous meanings. As one African-American youth interviewed said in response to the Army’s recruiting campaigns, “Joining the Army is a personal choice. . . . Even if Jay-Z was passing out enlistment papers, I’m not joining. But still—it’s a choice. They use hip-hop to market beer and clothes. So why not the Army? I think it’s cool” (Joiner). “Cool” is how Colonel Nickerson described the Taking it to the Streets Campaign and its infusion of hip-hop culture. “Cool” is also how Vital Marketing describes its approach to the Campus Combat Tour, especially through the give-a-ways of “stuff.” For this particular youth, the Army’s marketing using hip-hop is a “natural” and logical extension of branding and the interpenetration of hip-hop culture and advertising. Coolness is a feeling, of being part of an in-group culture, or at the cutting edge. Coolness-as-feeling is then made material, as the feeling is transferred to “stuff.” The manufacturing of coolness is not unique to hip-hop culture. As Thomas Frank argues in The Conquest of Cool, corporations co-opted and absorbed ideas of rebellion and individuality from oppositional social movements in the 1960s, marketing these ideas and feelings to sell “stuff.”

In this larger cultural formation, coolness is a “choice” made by individuals, as free agents in a free market. This choice reiterates the American Dream enacted through acts of consumption (Cohen). Absorbing and reflecting back the language and discourse of individual choice is central to the Army’s recruitment campaigns. Elsewhere, Nickerson speaks of the difficulties of maintaining levels of recruits in an all-volunteer Army (even before the Iraq war), specifically, when a booming economy renders military service less attractive (Lehrer). To compete with job opportunities, the Army developed a marketing campaign that emphasized individual development and the acquisition of life and career skills as opposed to emphasizing appeals to patriotism and nationalism. This shift is exemplified first by the slogan in 1981 to “Be All that You Can Be,” and the more recent “An Army of One” (O’Brien). As a spokesman who works on the Taking it to the Streets campaign describes:

our goal is to present the Army as an option for career advancement, as a life alternative, and as a way to represent one solution out of many for African-Americans specifically. If someone’s looking for a way out of their current position, the Army presents a very compelling argument (Joiner).
But, as several critics have noted, military service is rarely a free “choice” made by individuals. Rather, the military disproportionately draws from groups, specifically, poor and working class populations, racial minorities, and those from Southern and rural communities. Military recruits generally lack conditions of “choice,” especially when it comes to limited job opportunities in depressed localities, and lack of education financing. Take, for instance, the issue of racial and ethnic disproportionality in the military. In 2003, 16 percent of the military was African American compared to their 11 percent representation in the population, while the Latino numbers were 13.4 versus 11 percent. The numbers are even more glaring if different measures are used, such as front line presence, which some estimate to be up to 17.7 percent Latino (Pablo). In 2004, Congressmen Charles Rangel (unsuccessfully) proposed reinstating the draft to address race and class factors and to ensure that the children of the wealthy and the powerful did not opt out of war. At the same time, contemporary African American youth are more skeptical of the Iraq war than the population at large, with only 36 percent who think the war is justified as opposed to 61 percent of white youth (Lehrer). Not surprisingly, black recruitment has fallen off, down from 21 percent to 15.6 percent in 2004 (Cooper).

Thus, the military’s strategy in making up lost (specifically black) recruits is to increase marketing and to step up their recruiting (their other strategy is to reach out to Latinos, see Alvarez). The military is the 25th in the nation in terms of marketing budgets: the Army spent 290 million in 2004 (up to 320 million in 2005-2006), the Marines-67 million, the Navy-100 million, and the Air Force-61.6 million. (O’Brien). In other words, the military is trying to solve this problem (not enough bodies) through increased and more sophisticated marketing. Taking it to the Streets and Campus Combat Tour Campaigns are part of this approach, along with the Army’s sponsorship and presence at Nascar, Arena Football, bull riding, and at rock concerts (Lehrer). The military’s strategy is to make up their recruiting shortfalls through the marketing of cool, engagement with sports and popular culture, and via their strategic use of cultural commodities and material interventions.

The Cultural Politics of Hip-Hop and Consumption

Cool marketing and the specific marketing of racial minorities as cool have larger histories than these military recruiting campaigns. In No Logo, Naomi Klein argues that “over the past decade, young black men in American inner cities have been the market most aggressively mined by the brandmasters as source of borrowed “meaning” and identity” (73). Young, black, inner-city men have been a key component of successful marketing strategies of major corporations like Nike and Tommy Hilfiger to increase their popularity and sales. Through the identification of certain products with their (young, black, male, urban) identity, they “blow it up” and make it cool so that others (young,
made up, those litigations ressed racial militancy in the members since, 2004, raft to icy and African large, extent of down suits is is to terms in Force-equated instances are at itary's cool, use of non-black, suburban) desire the brand and the cultural associations of that product as cool, cutting edge, and (slightly) tinged with danger.

To talk about branding in hip-hop culture is to necessarily enter a complicated and contested terrain of hip hop, race and cultural representation, and politics writ large. Several writers have argued that hip-hop has moved away from its political roots as a social and cultural movement that critiqued racism, capitalism, and oppression by focusing on conspicuous consumption. Kitwana attributes this shift to the power of media corporations in shaping the content of hip-hop, while Bynoe focuses on the choices that the artists themselves make. Watkins focuses on conscious rap as an alternative to corporate hip hop. In attempting to understand the appeal of the Hummer to hip-hop culture and the Army’s mobilization of the Hummer as cultural symbol, I agree with cultural critics like Tricia Rose and Robin Kelley who attempt to seriously analyze hip-hop’s images and modes of production that moves beyond moral opprobrium and which take seriously a class, gender, and race-inflected analyses. Imani Perry argues that hip-hop creators are “prophets” that speak of oppositional politics and resistance to dominant culture, at the same time that they are focused on “profits.” She suggests that hip-hop artists are intrinsically complex and contradictory cultural figures. In their complexity, they embody nihilism and hope, and act as purveyors of cool and sex (20). In her analysis of politics of consumption embedded in hip-hop, she suggests that the hip hop generation is focused on “keeping it real” but that it ultimately parts with the Black Power movement in its acceptance, even glorification of capitalism and its rewards. In particular, she describes the fascination of the “pull yourself by the bootstraps” from the ghetto mentality that dovetails with the identification of figures like Scarface and (paradoxically) with elements of Ronald Reagan’s anti-welfare ideology (86). The complexity of the prophet/profit figure resonates with particular themes within hip-hop culture, specifically the idea and image of the outlaw and with representations of masculinity and violence in gangsta rap, which I describe below.

The Hummer: Reading Race, Masculinity, Excess and Violence

How does hip-hop culture “read” and reflect back the Hummer? The Hummer operates as a commodity symbol independent of its affiliation with hip-hop culture, primarily as a symbol of aggression, excess, and conspicuous consumption. You have to be rich to buy it. You also have to be rich to not care about its abysmal gas mileage in the context of rising national gas prices (and, of course, the war in Iraq and international oil politics). It also is designed to look and feel threatening. As one analyst observes, “In a world full of danger, the H2 girds you in armor—in appearance, if not in fact—for highways where road rage may get you if terrorists do not, where the gridlock of aggressive utility vehicles make it every woman (or man) for herself (or himself)” (Cobb).
These ideas of aggression resonate in how they are racialized and read by African American, particularly male youth culture. The literature on race and music, and in particular, on gangsta rap again illuminates these links. As Robin Kelley argues in his influential *Race Rebels*, race and gender are intimately connected in the stories of gangsta rap. Gangsta rap embraces violence in gendered ways, so that the criminals are almost always men, and violence against women a consistent theme. He argues that this gendered and racial representation functions as a collective reaction to particular racial and historical realities that severely constricted the life chances of African-Americans (especially men), in working class urban communities in the post-war era. He cites a criminologist who suggests that for most young black men, the connection between masculinity-power-aggression-violence is part of their developing male identities (198). Thus, gangsta rap reflects the reality in postindustrial communities that black male youth have already and consistently been criminalized by the dominant culture.

In addition to “reflecting” a socio-historical and racial reality, gangsta rap also creates, celebrates, and manages its images of criminality in mainstream popular culture. This appreciation of violence and criminality is part of larger black cultural formations. As Perry describes, hip-hop culture is obsessed with the “outlaw” as an iconic figure. Quinn describes in her study of the culture and commerce of gangsta rap that these rappers represent the “The Nigga Ya Love to Hate.” How they get the money to buy luxury items, like cars and jewelry, is tied to illicit trades, specifically in prostitution and drug-dealing. But Quinn argues that this fascination is not racially distinctive. Rather, gangsta rapper’s fascination with violence and weaponry is part of the broader American fascination with violence, re-worked through racially specific forms, because “black Americans have certainly invested in, and been subject to, the nation’s abiding fascination with violence and weaponry—what Richard Slotkin calls a nostalgia for ‘regeneration through violence’” (103). This analysis dovetails with Kelley’s assessment of gangsta rap’s representation of capitalism. He suggests that gangsta rappers represent capitalism in varying contexts (sometimes approvingly, and at others, more critical and even anticapitalist). He asserts that these representations are “consistent about tracing criminal behavior and vicious individualism to mainstream American culture” (201). In part, selling out, embracing capitalism, the politics of conspicuous consumption and material excess are part of what “keeps it real” for gangsta rap.

Thus, themes of violence, criminality, excess, and conspicuous consumption are intertwined in the Hummer, which the Army then mobilizes to recruit African-American, particularly, male youth. These themes help to explain why all the black figures on the Hummer used in the two campaigns are images of black men. The Hummer, coupled with M.C. Battles at Campus Combat events, draws from cultural and popular ideas of the “ghetto” and “blackness.” The embrace of conspicuous consumption, embodied through items like the Hummer, re-works the dominant culture’s representation of black consumption practices as somehow perverse and threatening. As Chin argues:
African Americans were the “anti-consumer”: the welfare mom who has amassed several Cadillacs, while the drug dealer loads himself down with ill-gotten gold chains. In other words, they spent money they haven’t earned on things they shouldn’t have. . . . These two figures are the Barbie and Ken from hell: they are morally corrupt consumers, dangerous and threatening. The evidence of their moral corruption is their very consumption (43).

Following Chin, images of black material excess and conspicuous consumption cannot be understood distinct from histories of racial violence and the reality of overwhelming material and symbolic restraints on black consumption practices. As she argues, these portrayals tap into:

a particularly insidious American myth: that the poor are highly susceptible to commodity fetishism, that they are addicted to brands, and that they are willing to acquire expensive things even at the cost of their own (or someone else’s) health and/or well-being. Connected to this idea is a whole rat’s nest of assumptions about poverty, money, and consumption: That the poor are poor due to their own lack of discipline and self-control; that the poor do not know how to economize or prioritize expenses; and that commitment of the poor to consume somehow ends up costing “us,” whether through crime, welfare dependency, teenage motherhood; that these depravities lead to murder, drug, sex crimes (57).

This critique of the discourse of black hyper-materialism-as-perversion matters so that analyses of whether, why, and how hip-hop and the Hummer are connected do not devolve into simplistic and disapproving statements about pathological desires for a vehicle that some critics argue embody the worst impulses in American culture and politics.

**Combat Consumption Redux**

Ultimately, I suggest that the Hummer stands for an altered form of contemporary consumption. The Army is tapping into deep historical and symbolic representations: of hip-hop culture’s love of cars, and of the media’s representation of the supposed perversity of (masculinized) ghetto violence and black consumption. For the Army, the Hummer is the vehicle for which black recruits can be “cool” (like their hip-hop icons), live out dreams of material excess, literally become combatants and act out the ideas of combat consumption (where you kill, but in supposedly acceptable ways and for ostensibly suitable ends). The codes and messages of inner-city violence and consumption in hip-hop culture as embodied by the Hummer are being transformed by the Army and their marketers for socially normative ends: to serve the Nation in the context of war.

As Eric Avila argues in his study of post-war suburbanization, mass culture, and racial politics, “culture, like war, is politics by other means” (18).
Hummer is both a product of contemporary American culture, and mirrors back images of race, excess, hyper-materialism, and consumption, violence, aggression, and masculinity. But in this case, war is not just a metaphor. It is an actual political backdrop for the cultural messages that the Hummer projects in the Army’s recruiting campaigns. Thus, I want to end with counter-discourses that prioritize alternative messages distinct from the narratives of ghetto violence, consumption, and excess embodied by the Hummer. In New York City, hip-hop organizers have confronted this campaign head on. Rosa Clemente, an organizer with the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and a founder of the National Hip Hop Political Convention, describes, my roommates and I were walking when we heard [hip-hop music]. . . . we then see this Hummer with a Source logo on it as well as a U.S. Army Recruiting thing on the side. I was like, this is crazy. So I approach the guy behind the wheel. He says, ‘This is our new thing. We’re trying to enlist brothers and sisters from the ‘hood.’ So, I told him, you’re recruiting our kids to go kill kids that look like us. He got upset and said I didn’t know what I was talking about and that our people need jobs. After arguing back and forth a small crowd formed. The soldier then drove off (Pablo).

What I find fascinating about this exchange is the crossed signals between the two perspectives, both of which claim inner-city urban youth interests as their own. Clemente’s response that “you’re recruiting our kids to go kill kids that look like us,” places her critique of military recruiting within a racial framework against assumptions of ghetto violence (“our kids” killing other kids of color) at the same time that the recruiter is using a racial framework of jobs and opportunity (“our people need jobs”). As with Third World liberationist critiques during the Vietnam War, Clemente is using a global framework of international racial affiliation in critiquing what she sees as an unjust war.

This incident also reflects a push back against the increasing militarization of youth. A recently argued Supreme Court case and provisions of federal legislation reveal the increasing penetration of military recruiters into the lives of young people, especially in working class and communities of color throughout the United States. For example, a little known provision of No Child Left Behind requires high schools to provide military recruiters with access to school facilities and contact information for every student, or face a loss in federal aid (Goodman). Although these provisions do not explicitly target populations, military recruiters focus on working class and communities of color which are more likely to yield actual recruits. National and local counter-recruiting, parents groups and privacy organizations counsel individuals and activists on how to resist the militarization of youth. In analyzing the assumptions that the Army makes and mobilizes in its use of the Hummer and hip-hop culture, I hope that this paper also helps to challenge and dismantle these complex cultural ideas and connections about race, gender, culture, and war so that alternative messages can be developed and nurtured.
Works Cited


Pablo, Juan. “Hit the Road Sam: Communities Speak Out Against Army’s Hip Hop Recruitment.” The Village Voice, 1 March 2004.