

The Misogynistic World Of Hip Hop

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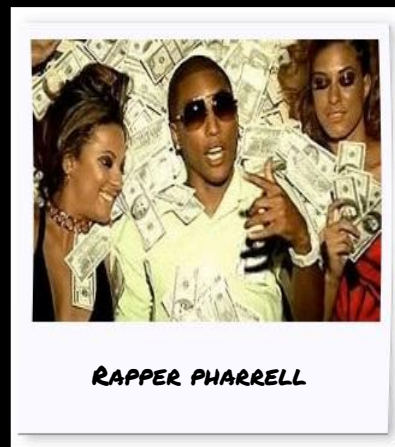
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An expose on the current sexist atmosphere
in hip hop



Hip Hop. A powerhouse genre. A genre that can sometimes combine other music genres' elements and make that one perfect song that can connect with anybody and everybody. Hip Hop is like crack to me. It combines elements of storytelling while making you feel so much more than what a story can tell you. For as long as I remember Hip Hop has been my happy place.

I remember the first time I got into Hip Hop. I was a shy, awkward 5'0 girl straight out of 8th grade in a new high school tasked with the burden of being the new girl. It was my second week here and so far I had no friends thus I was alone and bored out of my mind. The homework was too easy for my private school advanced mind so I decided one day bored at home to skip thru Youtube. I was accustomed to the website frequently visiting it to listen to music videos. Anyways as I was going through my usual skipping and play of girly pop songs I happened upon a music video called "Wet Dreams" by J. Cole. I honestly did not know who this artist was but like I said I was bored with nothing else of interest to do so I listened. And I loved it. So after that it was history. I learned of the genre: Hip Hop and started listening to more rappers and rap songs of his. It's fastly became my favorite genre 9he became my fav artist) and I even started creating raps of my own to find a fun way to express the ongoing thoughts in my head.

"It just reminded me so much of poetry. The relatable lyrics over a smooth hard hitting, sensed awakening beat."



**J. COLE "WET DREAMS"
SCREENSHOT FROM
VIDEO**

"It fastly became my favorite genre and I even started creating raps of my own to find a fun way to express the ongoing thoughts in my head"

It just reminded me so much of poetry. The relatable lyrics over a smooth hard hitting, sensed awakening beat. The perfect almost hard to miss rhymes. The close hitting stories. The change in the tones of the rappers giving the listeners anticipation leading up to the head bopping hip swaying hook. It honestly made me feel much so alive and so centered and spoke to the creative always writing girl in me. But then as I began to divulge deeper and deeper into the world of Hip Hop attaining a list of other new favorite artists such as Asap Rocky, Rico Nasty, 6lack, Tupac, Big Sean, A Boogie, Chance The Rapper Kendrick Lamar, Megan Thee Stallion, Nicki Minaj, etc. a problem became evident.

Hip Hop is known for being a genre where you are free with your lyrics or bars to express whatever you want. Like I said it's like poetry and poetry as known as something used to freely express yourself. But in these lyrics I started to see often the display of exploitation, sexism, disdain, and mistreatment towards women. I also started to see reflections of the same themes these lyrics displayed in the whole Hip Hop culture and lifestyle. The feminist side of me was very upset. And I started to think: Well I love Hip Hop but does Hip Hop love me? As I became more and more involved in the genre one thing became clear: misogyny has and have had a profound effects on the culture of Hip Hop. That is the culture of misogyny ingrained in the lyrics of the songs, day to day life of the rappers behind it, and the rules of the culture.

“In these lyrics I started to see often the display of exploitation, sexism, disdain, and mistreatment towards women”



**[FROM LEFT TO RIGHT] RAPPERS
MEGAN THEE STALLION, CARDI B AND
RICO NASTY**



**RAPPERS CHANCE THE RAPPER
AND BLACK**

“And I started to think: Well I love Hip Hop but does Hip Hop love me?”

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Hoe. Thot. Bitch. Gold digger. Cheater. Words like that are becoming more and more commonly used in Hip Hop. Words that are now used to represent me and/or describe me. A woman. In specific and more socially aware terms, a black woman. "2 Live Crew" started the trend of misogynistic lyrics appearing in rap songs upon the debut of their first album, "As Nasty As They Wanna Be". The controversy behind their lyrical content grew substantially. Their music video sparked more fire for the depiction of girls shaking their butts, grinding, and giving the innuendo of sex. It is here where they claim Hip Hop's exploitation of women really began.



Women from then that were involved in anything Hip Hop had a negative image shed on them. It was mostly due to the sexually explicit lyrics that male rappers now used to sell their albums and the videos showcasing them. A present time example is Ugly God's song "I'm Tryna Fuck" where he raps "Bitch you better twerk or I'm snitching that you're cheating/Bitch I wanna see a show, throw that neck and show some cleavage". A music video example is Nelly's video for "Tip Drill" that was filled with women in bikinis grinding. The use of women and their bodies being showcased as talent in Hip Hop and not their minds wasn't just a new thing. But some of the blame for sexual exploitation falls heavily on ideals that have been there since the dawn of time: sexism and the effects of it.

"The use of women and their bodies being showcased as talent in Hip Hop wasn't just a new thing"



**NELLY
"TIP
DRILL"
VIDEO**

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Society falls very guilty of degrading women who freely and unapologetically sexually express themselves. It's deemed not appropriate but men who display women as sexual objects are given glory. For example, rapper Megan Thee Stallion, a 21yo college graduate from Miami, FL, with her lyrics from her song Captain Hook, "Dance on the d--k, now, you been served/ I like a d--k with a little bit of curve/ Hit this p---y with an uppercut/ Call that n---a Captain Hook". People refer to the song as disgusting and label her a whore. Some even judged Megan for always wearing revealing outfits.



MEGAN THEE STALLION "CAPTAIN HOOK" VIDEO
(CLICK PIC TO WATCH VIDEO)

"The only way women can be seen in a sexual way or expressive of their sexuality is if they are exploited by men"

Unfairly, people had a different reaction when they hear, Cash Money Records biggest star, Lil Wayne, make a song about sex -- "But man, I ain't never seen an ass like hers....That pussy in my mouth had me lost for words"; Wayne's song got him a hit on Billboard charts culminating in a Grammy award. Even though these incidents are years apart from each other it shows certain beliefs that never left: the only way women can be seen in a sexual way or expressive of their sexuality is if they are exploited by men. It is also connected with a long acknowledged mindset of women having to be seen as desirable for men or they are not of value. This mindset and sexism, in general, is a pure product of misogyny which is the dislike of, contempt for or ingrained prejudice against women. The problem is not the rap videos with beautiful women simply being beautiful, the problem is the lack of content expressing that women can be other things besides beautiful.

Sexism also rears its ugly head when it comes to a long Hip Hop tradition of men being tasked with deciding if aspiring female rappers are worthy of a seat at the table in the Hip Hop world. Even when women are shown through history of being capable of holding their own. For example, during the 70s women were known for combining Jamaican deejaying remix skills with African American and Latinidad vernacular poetry at parties in the South Bronx with roles as DJs which contributed greatly to Hip Hop culture. Additionally, they headlined and were emcees of their own groups like Sherri Sher's Mercedes Ladies and female solo rappers like Sha Rock. Although all this happened they still to this day have to acquire the male approval stamp in order to get fame. A prime example of this is 37 year old Queens rapper Nicki Minaj and her male dominated music label Young Money.

“The problem is not with rap videos featuring beautiful women simply being beautiful, the problem is with the lack of content expressing that women can be other things besides beautiful”

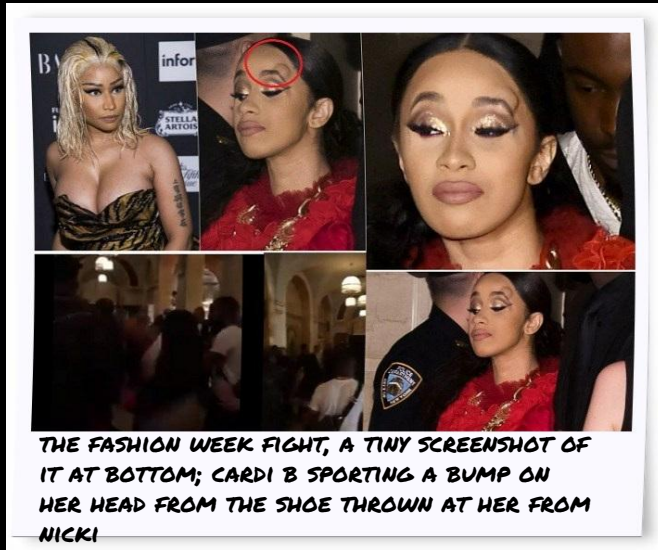
Nicki rose to fame and was signed to Young Money mostly due to her connection to Lil Wayne and Drake, a well known Grammy award winning rapper. Both male rappers who featured her on their songs which gave rise to her career. Sadly, Nicki isn't the only aspiring female rapper who laid victim to this tradition. It happened in the past with Biggie Smalls and Lil Kim, a veteran female rapper. Lil Kim notably, due to the pressure of being desirable with her public career, bleached her skin and got plastic surgery to appear more white since her dark skin wasn't seen as attractive. Also it was the case with Remy Ma and the Terror Squad. Moreover, Rick Ross's comments on a radio show, The Breakfast Club, about how signing a female rapper would be a bad business move further cosigns the fact that women aren't taken seriously when they are shown as artists. He backs his view by saying he would be so focused on her good looks that he would have to fuck her a few times. Once again demeaning them to being noted as “eye candy”.



NICKI MINAJ AND YOUNG MONEY IN SONG "BEDROCK" MUSIC VIDEO (CLICK TO WATCH VIDEO)

Hip Hop culture pushes that there can only be one woman shown on top in Hip Hop. Women and others are trained into a mindset that there is a spot for only one woman on top in Hip Hop as the industry is mostly dominated and controlled by men. This is proven in the case of two female rappers Cardi B and Nicki Minaj. “Bodak Yellow”, the only song to top the Billboard charts by a female artist in 19 years. A remix that became a go-to Instagram caption and Snapchat sing along. One of the many songs that challenge Hip Hop’s views on silent but sexy women with it’s raucy, powerful, sexually expressive lyrics and feel good beat. Two years ago when Cardi B came on the scene, it seemed like even early on in her career people were comparing her to another chart-topping female rapper named Nicki Minaj. There were many discussions on social media on who was better, how Cardi was now the new queen of rap, etc. In the midst of all of this, it made me wonder: Why there had to be one queen? And why did they have to compare the two of them?

“Why there had to be one queen? And why did they have to compare the two of them?”



People put an up and coming rapper against a veteran just because they shared a gender and race. Some might say the Hip Hop culture’s lack of accessibility to women and the history of women being pit against each other at the expense of men is to blame. If there wasn’t such little space and so much male approval that women had to attain in Hip Hop maybe Nicki wouldn’t have felt threatened enough to throw a shoe at Cardi during New York Fashion Week. Maybe Cardi wouldn’t have initiated a fight believing rumors that Nicki talked bad about her child. And maybe if we as a society didn’t have such a bad reputation of pitting women against each other (i.e. reality tv shows like “Love and Hip Hop” showcasing women almost every episode fighting with each other over a man) and/or with magazines praising one body type over another. Maybe it would have been easier for these women to not fall victim to the false narratives being put out.

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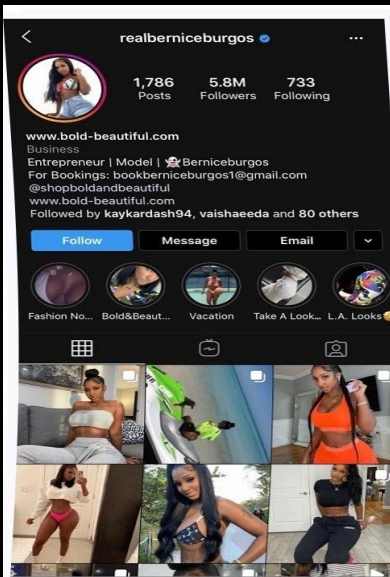
A discourse community that can be connected to this genre is the community known as video vixens. Video vixens are known as the beautiful women showcased in the male rap videos. In the early 2000s, they were also shown as a symbol of confidence and beauty with the array of body types and skin tones they had. They didn't fit the image of the girls shown on the covers of Cosmo but they still made sure they were unforgettable with their irresistible attitudes. Most of them were women of color and them being shown in that light pushed forward a total makeover of the music video industry. More thought was put into music videos because of them and therefore due to the music videos being more detailed and aesthetically pleasing made the CD sales grew higher. This paved the way for them to live a more lavish lifestyle. That was all in the past though, Fast forward to 2018 with CD sales less and streaming becoming a more active thing; smaller budgets were given to music videos and now also to video vixens.



“They didn't fit the image of the girls shown on the covers of cosmo but they made sure they were unforgettable with their irresistible attitudes”



CURRENT VIDEO VIXEN (ALSO INSTA BADDIE) BERNICE BURGOS AND DJ KHALED IN HIS 2018 VIDEO "DO YOU MIND"



BERNICE BURGOS INSTAGRAM PAGE



PHARRELL WILLIAMS AND FORMER VIDEO VIXEN LANISHA COLE IN HIS 2003 VIDEO "FRONTIN"

The whole image of video vixens was now transformed. The goal amongst this community was to be shown as a mirror of self love for women of color who don't normally see themselves in mainstream media but now the capitalist approach to find these beauties tainted it. For example former video vixen Lanisha Cole got a lot of praise for her role in Pharrell Williams "Frontin" for her dark skin representation. To find video vixens now directors go to strip clubs or look to "insta baddies", that is women with a huge following on Instagram mostly for being pretty, to be in music videos for example current video vixen Bernice Burgos. They weren't like before making women go through interviews evaluating their personas in order to be cast in music videos but instead inviting women to be in music videos just based on their bodies further spurring the objectification of them. Body positivity became a thing of the past with rappers choosing to glorify one specific body type (curvy and petite with a big ass and boobs) in their videos and songs over the others. So now to communicate outside the community and get jobs in order to still be a part of the community, video vixens and aspiring ones were forced to make social media accounts. They are forced to upload pictures of their body and pictures that exaggerate their beauty in hopes to be seen as desirable enough to be contacted by a director, producer or manager in charge of a video. They also were falling to the effects of sexism. Video vixens now go from in the early 2000s being paid \$10,000 per video to making less than \$500. Women were once again being designated as disposable sex objects, now hypersexualized with less clothing on and erotic portrayal in music videos.

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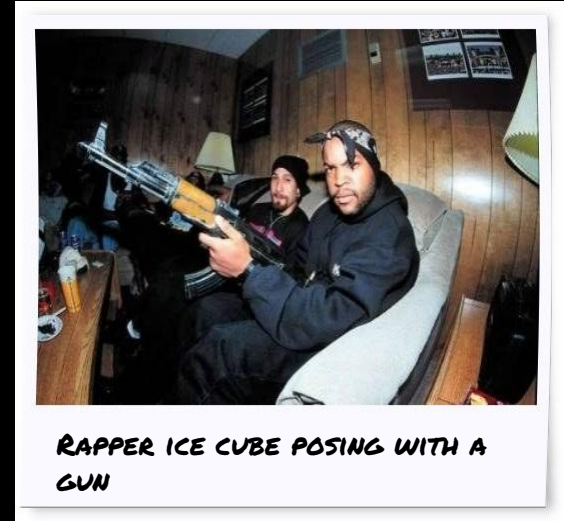
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One cause for the microaggression can be the enforcement of hypermasculinity. Hypermasculinity refers to having characteristics such as (1) the view of violence as manly, (2) the perception of danger as exciting and sensational, and (3) callous behavior toward women and an regard toward emotional displays as feminine. There is a cycle (or things that can be associated as rules to dominate charts in the hip hop world) attributed to Hip Hop for men that are given to them from young. Men from a young age were taught in order to feel powerful that you must have the most women, money, and drugs. The cycle/rules stems from hypermasculinity and continues as men try to fit in with others or follow the rules. This cycle is why they treat women as a marginality in the world of rap and also use their bars to designate women as such. In rap, artists use bars or lines to express how they are feeling. It's like poetry or even writing a story except a story for a rapper can be written as a verse and is composed of bars. A bar is basically described as the lyrics of a rapper.



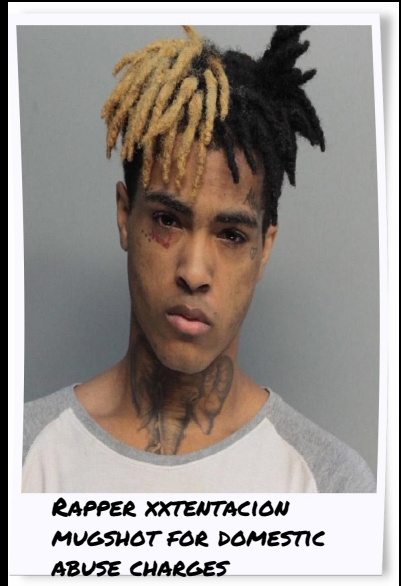
“Men from a young age were taught in order to feel powerful that you must have the most women, money and drugs”



**XXXTENACION'S PREGANT EX GIRLFRIEND
GENAVA AYLA SUSTAINED BY HIM**

A rule in Hip Hop is lyrics describing the violence, and mistreatment of women are ok because this is what Hip Hop grew up on. It's been present in rap songs since the dawn of time and cosigned by rap legend Snoop Dogg who told Sky News, "he has "no regrets" over his previous lyrics because "that was how [he] was trained when [he] first started". Snoop Dogg is referring to his own past lyrics on the song "Bitches Aint Shit" where he said, "B*tches aint sh*t but h*es and tricks / L*ck on these n*ts and s*ck the d*ck / Get the f*ck out after you're done / And I hop in my ride to make a quick run.". Hypermasculinity, and these vulgar words and encouragement of violence words towards women in Hip Hop gives leeway to the same energy in real life towards them. For example Fairly new rappers such as 22 year old Kodak Black and fallen rapper Xxxtentacion with the incidents of abuse they have with women in their own lives. XXXtentacion was arrested in 2016 for beating up his pregnant girlfriend Geneva Ayla. He claimed she was once his source of happiness but he began fucking her up because of one mistake. And even said in a police recording after his arrest that he would "kill that bitch if she plays with him". Through all this XXXtenciaion and Kodak still maintained large fan bases and billions of streams with some even saying the claims were falsified.

"Hypermasculinity and these vulgar words and encouragement of violence towards women in Hip Hop gives leeway to the same energy in real life towards them"



**RAPPER XXXTENTACION
MUGSHOT FOR DOMESTIC
ABUSE CHARGES**

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Another cause for the microaggression can be the rule and fact that rap composed of talks of sex, money, drugs and violence are more inclined to sell. "Sex, money, drugs, and violence sells and these artists know that" stated a insider named Wendy Day, who runs an advocacy group that tries to educate rappers about the hip hop business. "There's some law... They say after 500,000 [CDs], you're selling to a whole different realm. Now you are selling records to young white boys. I think once the corporations understood that, that was their time to come in and take control of it. Once the control was taken away, then came all of the nonsense" (Jones 21). What drives the Hip Hop music industry is the idea of sex, drugs, money and violence even at the expense of women. Women wearing tight, revealing clothing in videos, women twerking, displays of women half naked on on music covers, all of them are pushed on by the music industry. You see, music labels are commonly influenced by white men who own record labels and they are the ones who push an agenda that many artists cosign in order to get what they know many artists strive for: drugs, money, and women. So of course, to make themselves money and also their clients, the rappers, money they push them also to rap about a certain lifestyle that they know most young men strive for.



"What drives the music industry is the idea of sex, money, and violence even at the expense of women"

They also take the fact that young white boys may know nothing about a certain lifestyle rappers of growing up in poverty rappers talk about may be even more attracted to the music. It also causes other young men especially other black men growing up in poverty to fall in love with this lifestyle. An example of how rapping about this lifestyle really does sell can be pulled from Roddy Rich's The Box, where he raps "Pullin' out the coupe at the lot, Told 'em "Fuck 12, fuck SWAT, Bustin' all the bales out the box, I just hit a lick with the box, Had to put the stick in a box, mm, Pour up the whole damn seal, I'ma get lazy, I got the mojo-deals, we been trappin' like the '80's, She sucked a nigga soul, got the Cash App". It debuted at number 3 on the Hot 100 and Billboard reports that Rich's track racked up 68.2 million weekly streams, the highest nonseasonal stream total since Lil Nas X's almighty "Old Town Road" last summer. This song discussing a distaste for law enforcement with the line "fuck 12, fuck swat", "pouring up the whole damn seal imma get lazy" indicating the use of codeine cough syrup as drug use to sedate him and once again using connecting women to sexual visions this time oral sex: "she sucked a nigga soul" did overwhelmingly well. So it goes to say that the more you rap about gun, drugs, money, sex and violence the more likely you will attain fame and more higher your song will land on the charts thus more money you will make off of it.



CODEINE COUGH SYRUP



BOY FROM VIRAL VIDEO WITH HIM APPEARING TO SING ALONG TO MEEK MILL SONG WHILE POSING WITH GUNS

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I chose to showcase this DC or genre because I had a lot of fun writing the essay for this topic so I decided to further extend on my research findings by doing a website. I also thought about how in the future I would actually maybe would want to code a website featuring this info. So I decided that it would be interesting to maybe draw up how I would want my actual design to look. Additionally, this is a big problem and I wanted to share my view for these other articles about this problem didn't really show how hypermasculinity and sexism can be apart of this.



I wanted black to embody the mystery feel of my topic and what I was writing like I was uncovering some dark truths about the Hip Hop World which is misogyny. I wanted it to look like an expose article. I decided to lay things i.e. photos out as if I was per say a detective or a spy gathering information on a board in my room or office. I decided to choose fonts and colors that evoke a feeling of that in me. For example, the font I chose for the headlines and menu of my website was called "Special Elite". I chose that one because the font kind of looked to me like writing that would be used to display classified information on a computer in a spy show, by a detective in an investigation or even on the headline of a newspaper exposing the secrets of something. I used photos from online and used Photoshop to make the photos look like polaroids so it would look as if I took those photos myself investigating and gathering evidence to suppose my cause/case. I then used another specific font to create a look as if I wrote in marker little notes about the "evidence" I gathered.



My intended audience is maybe those who are Hip Hop fans and are interested in knowing about the culture of it. Also those who may have questions themselves about the seemingly misogynistic culture. It can also be used for maybe people doing a research project or paper like I did to find some sources to backup their claims. Another intended audience is maybe future rappers male and female alike so they can maybe be inspired to not accept this toxic culture and fight against it.

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