The Commodification of Bodies in Women's Rap

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Imagine this: You walk into an all-you-can-eat buffet. The aromas of food fill your senses with sugary delights and tantalizing goodies. Platters of chocolate and vanilla cake, eggplants, bananas, peaches, and cherries surround you. One cannot help but think of the suggestive images that flood your mind with colorful and delectable objects. Imagine the baby-blue frosting on fluffy cupcakes; the butter dripping down girthy sausages; candies stuffed with fillings that gush with a single flick of the tongue. You gaze at the split melons, their sweet juices trickling down the edges of the rind and pooling around the platter. There are bundles of crimson-rich pomegranates, tangerine-colored papaya, and fuchsia-colored figs. It's impossible to decide what to devour first; all cravings render you speechless. "Make That Cake" plays on the speakers as you fill your plate, which is ten times the size of a human head. The sweets' colors burst to life with LunchMoney Lewis's rendition of baking massive, delectable pastries.

Of course, he is using cake as a sexual metaphor for the voluptuous butts of women and for anal sex. As you pile rolls onto your plate, Doja Cat's verse floods through the restaurant:

> Sugar Mama, turn you to a dumb sucker . . .
> More water, needs milk, needs sugar
> More cocoa, half cup, pure vanilla
> Out the oven, mittens on, need a chiller
> Big cake . . . (Genius Lyrics)

Licking frosting off your fingers, you think about the way she combines a recipe for a cake as an innuendo for her butt. The "cocoa," "milk," "sugar," and "pure vanilla" all act as ingredients for her body. You visualize the way bread rises in an oven, slowly constructing itself until it spills over the edge of the pan. You

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remember a song you heard about food and genitalia used interchangeably. Doja Cat's "Tia Tamera" comes flooding your cerebral plane with its bright,

bubbly lyrics:

He wanna eat up the Caesar (ayy)

Bonita, bonita, bonita (ayy)

Baby girl needed the wiener (ayy)

Dug in the guts and I skeet her (ayy) (Genius Lyrics)

You bite into a steaming hot dog while admiring the clever way she incorporates sexual slang into another popular food item. The reference to "the Caesar" is a euphemism for her butt; it is also a reference to "tossing salad," which describes the act of stimulating a person's anus with a tongue. These lyrics are a clear distinction between Doja Cat's desire for sex and to have sexual acts performed on her. Also, the use of "weiner" replaces penis and "dug in the guts" illustrates sex. Just before you eat your dense pudding, Rico Nasty's voice rings, "He just wanna eat me like some candy, but I'm not his buttercup" (Genius Lyrics). You chuckle at the innuendo of yet another sexual organ referencing candy and sweetness. You think about the ways women in rap have used sexual metaphors to describe their sexual desires and body parts.

Through food, euphemisms of sexual acts, and references to body parts, women rappers vibrantly communicate sexual desires in mainstream rap. Women artists illustrate the connections between food and their bodies to emphasize the insinuation of sexual organs and pleasures. Food and sex have a distinct mission to submerge sexual innuendos and euphemisms in media; these two things are connected through primal desires. The use of foods in place of sexual organs or acts is a way to bypass generations who may not understand what the song is hinting at; sexual actions can be insinuated through carnal activities such as licking, biting, tasting, and squeezing (Akande and Ojoawo 10). Sexual metaphors for women's bodies and genitalia have altered drastically in women's rap throughout time. The aphrodisiac emphasis on sexual acts and food in women's rap plays a role to disrupt the traditional sexualization of women in rap.

The rap and hip-hop music genre has gained explosive popularity since the 1950s, 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s. Early origins of the hip-hop and rap genre in the 1950s were classified as Blues, Rhythm and Blues (R&B), Swing, Doo-Wop, and Jazz. Black musicians were at the forefront of these genres and combatted segregation in the music industry. However, the music styles in the 1950s and 1960s later developed into rock n' roll; white figures, such as Elvis

Presley, covered songs of R&B from Black composers to market to white audiences (Library of Congress). Hip-hop and rap were generated in the early 1970s with the DJs (disc jockeys) spinning records (Dye). Not only did DJs create visibility for Black MCs (unknown rappers) and the community, but they cultivated "commercial viability" for rap (Dye).

The sexualization of women within the generations of the 1950s, 1970s, and 1980s hip/hop developed into a powerful force of persuasion. Sex developed into a source of ambiguous lyrics to emphasize and shield the smutty meaning behind the songs. According to scholars Terri Adams and Douglas Fuller, hip-hop's connection to misogyny minimizes women as objects and "fortifies men's ownership" of their bodies (Bernard 84). For instance, Wynonie Harris's "Wasn't That Good?" (1953) creates an image of him and a partner sexually engaged in a variety of settings: "Here's another game called kissing in the dark/ We can play it in my room or over in the park" (Genius Lyrics). Sex is meant to be playful and seen as a game; the term "play it" refers to sex as the man possesses the authority to select the setting. The reference to "in the dark" is also a subtle metaphor for sexual activity. In Marvin Gaye's "Let's Get It On" (1973), he discusses sex hidden in this song through the act of her body being a gift to him: "And giving yourself to me can never be wrong / If the love is true, oh baby" (Genius Lyrics). The sexual partner "giving the good feeling" refers to the sexual encounter. He convinces his partner to perform sex with him and emphasizes his pleasure. Even the title conveys the "It" as an illicit sexual act. Another example, in Kool and The Gang's "Get Down On It" (1981), they connect sex and dancing. Dancing and "getting down on it" insinuates sexual activity (Genius Lyrics). The gang hints that women should "get down on it if you really want it" (Genius Lyrics). Sex is hidden within lyrics like "play" and "do it" to desensitize the sexual act while shielding the actual meaning. A women's sexualization and sexual representation are heightened throughout the lyrics. The situations are dictated by the men's perspective as they place their sexual partner through a limited lens. The censorship of sexual activity in rap and hip-hop genres deteriorated into more overtly sexual lyrics in the transition to 1990s rap.

Black rappers in the 1990s used their platform to expose political injustices and uplift people of colors' experiences. Music, historically, has been a medium to express identities, address hardships, and connect communities. Popular 1990s rappers such as Biggie (The Notorious B.I.G), Tupac, and Ice Cube have formed aggressive hypermasculine personae to reflect their successful and competitive

status in the rap industry. They have also reinforced the image of hegemonic masculinity in the rap space. Hegemony describes the influence of cultural ideologies, and ideas dominating the common sense of society (Nealon and Giroux 157). The hegemonic identities constructed through men rappers may affect young women's identities and "adherence to objectifying labels" (Griffin and Fournet 301). Hegemonic masculinity places men in a dominant role and authority that shadows others' autonomy and freedom. For example, in Biggie's "One More Chance," he describes his masterful techniques in the bedroom and his reputation as a satisfying sexual partner. He mentions a lack of emotional regard towards his partners and mentions his only interest in women is sexual: "She mad because what we had didn't last/ I'm glad because her cousin let me hit the ass" (Genius Lyrics). He claims to have sexual abilities that women cannot resist and that they beg for *his* pleasure. In addition, in Tupac's "Wonda Why They Call U Bitch," he illustrates the story of a woman and the shaming of her promiscuous actions. Tupac personifies the word "bitch" through the perception of the woman subject. The song tries to express the woman character's sexual worth and appeal through men's locker room conversations. For instance,

> It was said you were sleazy, even easy
> Sleepin' around for what you need, see
> It's your thing, and you can shake it how you wanna
> Give it up free or make your money on the corner (Genius Lyrics)

Tupac claims he listens to the men talk about the female subject in an objectifying way; he describes the woman's worth only being her genitalia and sexual appeal. Tupac reinforces an overtly hypermasculine, aggressive, and angry persona to characterize performances and illustrate traditional gender roles (Máthé 67). He also states that the men call her "bitch" and "slut" to degrade her identity and restrict her sexual freedom.

In contrast, men rappers such as Kendrick Lamar and Jay-Z have combatted toxic masculine labels and the stereotypical image of drug abuse associated with Black masculinity (Máthé 66). These rappers emerged in the early 2000s and promoted a challenge to traditional masculinity. For instance, in Lamar's "Swimming Pools (Drank)," the rapper demonstrates the normalization and glorification of alcoholism: "Pool full of liquor, then you dive in it/ I wave a few bottles, then I watch 'em all flock/ All the girls wanna play Baywatch" (Máthé 77). The pressure of succumbing to alcohol in social settings, like a party, influences negative effects.

Another example, in Jay-Z's “The Story of O.J.,” he communicates his criticism of the conspicuous consumption of men rappers and celebrities: “You wanna know what's more important than throwin' away money at a strip club? Credit...Financial freedom my only hope” (Genius Lyrics). He stresses the ignorance of dismissing the obtainment of financial success and negligence of women as the primary subject.

Despite Lamar and Jay-Z’s pursuits, men's rap predominately illustrates the hypersexualization of women in rap through misogynistic terms and gender roles in the 21st century. Women in men’s music videos, for instance, serve as a commodity to the rapper’s status and success (Griffin and Fournet 299). Their bodies are draped around the settings, even on the rapper himself, to convey his materialistic power. According to author bell hooks, music videos also reinforce objectification through the “thin-ideal imagery” (Zhang et al. 263). For example, in Travis Scott’s “Butterfly Effect” and “goosebumps,” the women surrounding the rapper are thin, white, and young. This portrayal of thin white women appeals to white audiences and society’s body idealization; it also reinforces the dichotomy of “ghetto rap music” as an unpopular genre for white listeners or white audiences (Hunter and Cuenca 32). The Black woman embodies sex and represents a character who is present in physical form while “invisible in voice” (Lane 777). Women in videos are referred to as a type of property, reduced to sexual body parts and cater their bodies to the “male gaze” (Onanuga 104).

In addition to thin bodies, music videos portray women with large breasts and massive butts to appeal to the “male gaze.” The film theorist Laura Mulvey introduces the concept of the “male gaze” in her 1975 book, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema;” the “male gaze” is a tool utilized to view women through a compulsory heterosexual lens. According to Mulvey, “women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact” (“Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 19). Mulvey describes the “male gaze” as a masculine point of view that normalizes the inferiority of women in cinema (Tehranian 348). Mainstream film codes sex and transforms it into language to serve the “dominant patriarchal order” (Tehranian 805). Media leads to blaming Black women’s flesh for their sexualization through men’s gazes (Ohman 10). Furthermore, anthropologist Laura Nader emphasizes the “hegemonic control” that serves the marketing of women’s bodies in media and the imagery for “social propaganda” (Bernard 5). Compulsory heterosexuality refers to heterosexuality forced upon women to fulfill sexual or romantic

relationships with men. Women in this lens possess physical features that make them attractive to cisgender men. The dominance of the "male gaze" fetishizes women's bodies and depiction of their sexual value.

Sexual and gender roles influence the concept of cisheteropatriarchy that normalizes hegemonic masculinity (Alim et al. 59). It is a term utilized in opposition to femininity and is used to describe weakness. The term also refers to white heterosexual men who marginalize women and all gender non-conforming individuals (Alim et al. 59). In adherence to *cisheteropatriarchy*, rap battles in Cape Town lyrically use feminine attributes to insult their opponent's physical or emotional characteristics (Alim et al. 67). They utilize feminine imagery like "double-D tit" and "bitch" to describe and offend their opponent (Alim et al. 61). The language of hip-hop is gendered and structured through "heterosexual metaphors of power" (Lane 776). These heterosexual metaphors include men's usage of objectification and stripping women characters of sexual agency. Traditional sex roles regard femininity as a weak trait and as a form of otherness.

Similarly, historical sexualized visuals and labels function to dehumanize Black women and their sexual freedom. Black women and their bodies are distinguished through marginalized identities; they are either classified as exotic or dehumanized. The colonization of women's bodies reinforces hypersexualization and objectification of their features. The history of women's sexualization has presented figures such as the Jezebel stereotype and Saartje (Sarah) Baartman. The Jezebel stereotype is a concept that refers to women as sexual objects. This stereotype draws on racist, sexist, and classist ideologies to classify the sexual value of women (Anderson et al. 463). It is a stereotype meant to treat a woman's body as a tool that serves to pleasure others. It reinforces the "bad" or "dirty" sexual behavior of women and mediates a relationship between gender roles and negative sexual encounters (Fritz et al. 103). Links between the hypersexuality of women and the Jezebel stereotype are "reinforced in mainstream media" (Anderson et al. 463). For instance, Black women's bodies in rap and hip-hop music videos are depicted as "decorative objects" rather than active participants (Anderson et al. 463). This stereotype portrays the connection between women as tools of men's pleasures and the fetishization of racial or ethnic identities. Furthermore, Baartman faced sexualization and objectification of her body's exoticness. She was detained by white Europeans and forced to showcase her abnormal buttocks and breasts (Anderson et al. 461). Baartman's body was displayed to white audiences, reinforcing the white notion of deviated

Black sexuality (Bernard 6). The mistreatment of her body and genitalia also reinforces the "animalistic concepts associated with Black women" (Anderson et al. 461). According to the blog *Jezebel* (2014), Baartman's body is still fetishized through labels like "'The Original Booty Queen'" and the "'Venus Hottentot'" (Hobson 106). These labels function as sexualized figures to fortify Black women's hypersexualization and aestheticization of their bodies. The ethnic identities of Black women are regularly fetishized and act as "idealization" in men's rap (Zhang et al. 263). Their sole purpose is to appear seductive and desirable to the male gaze while being a physical embodiment of sex. A women's purpose in men's rap has functioned as erotic objects for sexual pleasures while emphasizing patriarchal control.

As we near contemporary time, the reinvention of rap and hip-hop has led women to embrace liberation in their sexual desires and exploration of sex. Music is a space where Black communities and people of color can dismantle stereotypes, combat toxic masculinities, and promote social and political justice. Through the commodification of women's bodies in women's rap, they can reclaim the authority of their bodies and sexual autonomy. Women rappers exemplify how their sexualization is reclaimed and appropriated through rap. Commercialization has become a major component of cultural popularity and means of profiting from their bodies. Women's rap achieves a space that has been dominated by men's presence in the rap industry; they gain support to expose sexual stereotypes and express sexual pleasures and identities. They demonstrate the reclamation of their bodies through the appropriation of degrading lyrics and hypersexualization from men rappers.

As the male music industry continues to convey women as sexual material and feminine stereotypes, women rappers' self-sexualization transitions into third-wave feminism and Black Feminist Thought to influence the connection of Black women communities (Tyree and Williams 69). Black Feminist Thought examines the connections between the symbolic, structural, and daily aspects of domination, as well as the collective and individual struggles that Black women face in various domains of social life (Khoza 310). There have been three distinct waves of feminism that have served to equalize the ideologies surrounding social and political injustices toward women. Initially, first-wave feminism functioned to open the political sphere to women, for voices to participate in suffrage and human rights. Second-wave feminism focused on struggles for equity, the disruption of gender roles, and sexuality. Third-wave feminism, in musical

culture, functions against racial and class oppression as a space that Black women can explore sexual identities and a spectrum of feminist ideologies (Tyree and Williams 67). Third-wave feminism incorporates intersectional frameworks like class, race, ethnicity, gender, and age; however, Black women are still oppressed in white feminist spaces. They pose as a threat to disrupt the worlds of race and gender that they are bound to (Khoza 308). In the rap sphere, third-wave feminism seeks to reclaim the words, images, and symbolism established by media and norms of Black women, gender, and sexuality.

As rap develops into the bucket hats and gold-chain link necklaces of the 1990s, women rappers challenge the traditional role of women's bodies and identities in men's rap. They play with gender roles while generating sexually positive messages and images. For instance, the rapper MC Lyte uses her low and aggressive voice to oppose binaries of gender, identities, and experiences as a Black woman (Mosley 8). She produces a masculine persona with baggy, androgynous clothing, and a gravelly voice. She combines masculine imagery with blaring messages of her sexual pleasures and her authentic version of femininity.

Missy Elliot creates a similar persona against stereotypical femininity to explore spaces of gender and sex. She creates a queer image that allows her to redefine her gender and threatens men's dominance in the rap industry (Lane 778). Elliot is a prominent rapper who significantly constructed a textual space for Black women's erotic pleasures and freedoms (Sullivan 709). She also plays with masculine and feminine imagery through clothing and rapping style. Furthermore, the rapper Lil' Kim promotes sex-positive femininity as she gains power over men through allure and seductive appearance (Mosley 11). For instance, in her song "How Many Licks?" she emphasizes the desire for oral sex while expressing her hyper-femininity in revealing clothing. As men in rap use women as sexual objects for oral sex, Lil' Kim creates an image of sexual autonomy and prioritizes her pleasure.

Women rap groups like Salt-n-Peppa produce messages about safe sex practices that obliterate the objectification of their bodies in men's rap (Griffin and Fournet 300). The lyrics focus on the social acceptance of sex and sexual activity in their song "Let's Talk About Sex:" "Those who think it's dirty, have a choice/ Pick up the needle, press pause, or turn the radio off" (Genius Lyrics). They want to dispel the social taboo of sex talks and will not shy away from the topic. It is emphasized to those who feign ignorance of sexual activity or themes

and deny that sex exists all together. Sex inhabits social media, film, literature, and let's not forget *music*.

Women rappers perform and dismiss gender roles to create a non-binary or masculine persona in their music. Gender roles in rap, and communities, reveal the dichotomy between femininity and masculinity. Women artists can play with and switch gender or sexual roles to mock and reclaim their form of femininity. The theorist Judith Butler's gender performativity is a concept of performing gender through socially influenced, repeated acts (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 20). Women and men learn and develop behaviors that associate them with the "appropriate" gender. According to Dr. Sandra Zichermann (2013) of the University of Toronto, women in men's hip-hop portray traditional gender roles such as mothers, girlfriends, sexual partners, bitches, and hoes (Onanuga 84). For example, in the song "Who's That Girl," the rapper Eve embodies a clash of masculine and feminine energies through clothing and dance style. She wears a durag on a motorcycle then the panel switches to her in a tight top in pants surrounded by pink. Gendered labels are damaging and restricting to both men and women; they dictate your attitude towards the dichotomy of gender. The roles women perform in men's rap serve as a form of degradation and limitation of femininity. Women rappers' performances of masculine identities illustrate rejection of gender conformity and present forms of their gender identities.

The rap and hip-hop industry utilize pornography as a heavily marketed tool toward men to act as a visual stimulant; strippers, magazines, and television programs create a clear, provocative picture. Pornography becomes a picture created verbally and its imagery has controlled the fetishization of women's bodies. Degrading and bigotry lyrics leave women grappling with their sexual identities and freedoms as women rappers strive to reclaim their body's objectification through ownership of genitalia. For example, Nicki Minaj is an iconic rap model who embodies an image of the "increasingly pornographic culture of popular music" (Tyree and Williams 73). She self-hypersexualizes her body and commodifies her sexual features. As she markets her breasts and butt for consumption, her "Black Barbie" personae combats "the regime of white beauty" standards (Hunter and Cuenca 33). Her body serves as a product not only for consumption but for her empowerment.

Women rappers continue to utilize lyrics to appropriate and reclaim the fetishization of their bodies. For instance, Minaj's infamous "Anaconda" tore through the rap space to demand her sexual identity be on display. In the music

video, she accentuates her curvy figure and plastic personae. She emphasizes her figure and "sex appeal" to arouse and satisfy her sexual partners: "Put his ass to sleep, now he calling me NyQuil/ He keep telling me it's real, that he love my sex appeal" (Genius Lyrics). She, along with other women rappers, emphasizes the fetishization of their bodies to shatter the patriarchal ownership of Black women's bodies. Minaj exaggerates Black forms of beauty like a curvaceous figure and large posterior to commodify her body (Hunter and Cuenca 33). Black women's posteriors are popular, aesthetic pleasures of black women's bodies (Hobson 107). Aesthetic sexual sites of Black women's bodies are depicted and hypersexualized to emphasize their sex appeal to their audiences. Women rappers, especially Niki Minaj, utilize themes of pornography to construct hypersexualized images in music. As these images are clearly illustrated through her curves and flaming sense of sensuality, Minaj embraces self-objectification to signify *her* dominance of her body and image (Cuenca and Hunter 29).

Development of image and commercialization is more popular and anticipated for current music. Commercial image increases a rapper's popularity in mainstream music and social media platforms; it reinforces the hypersexualization of women's bodies. In music videos, women use close-up shots of the body, self-touching of sexual body parts, dancing, and excessive skin exposure (Ojoawo and Akande 5). Furthermore, the visual degradation of Black women is labeled as "sex objects" and "video hoes" (Tyree and Williams 72). Women reclaim their sexualization through sex talks, sexual innuendos, and slangy expressions (Ojoawo and Akande 6). For example, "Pussy Talk" by City Girls refers to the vagina as an entity and a commodity itself, an expression for sexual messages which are visual. The City Girls refer to their vaginas as characters or physical beings. They state that their genitalia can detect and choose a sexual partner that will suit their materialistic and sexual desires. The City Girls personify their "pussy" as characters that possess wealth, luxurious sports cars, extravagant fashion brands, access to travel, and multilingual abilities:

Boy, this pussy talk English, Spanish and French (hello)

Boy, this pussy talk Euros, Dollars and Yens [. . .]

Boy, this pussy make movies, wetter than a whale (hahaha)

Their genitalia, breasts, and butts are avenues of sexual pleasure; their "pussies" act as a tool of commodification and empowerment. The rappers display several images of success, sensually dancing in a corporate office. The rappers are sexually stroking papaya, grapefruit, and hibiscus flowers while dressed in

dazzling gold catsuits. They are the embodiment of yonic symbols. The penis in rap represents the tool and source of pleasure while the vagina is simultaneously objectified and humanized by women rappers. The "pussy" holds weight in physical and conversational form; it holds persuasion and praise while encompassing multifaceted labels. The City Girls reclaim their vaginas as symbols of fertility, financial success, and sexual pleasure.

Media utilizes women's bodies as sexualized products, but women rappers reverse this role. The aesthetics of hip-hop culture influence women's sexualization and "stylization" of their music (Miles 15). These "aesthetics" refer to Black women's breasts, butts, and curves. Hypersexualization may act to dehumanize Black women and reinforce "racist, homophobic, and sexist ideology" of Black women's bodies (Lane 789). However, women rappers utilize their hypersexualization to reclaim their body parts. Rico Nasty's "Pussy Poppin" threatens phallocentrism by prohibiting her male partner's genitalia as the subject of the song. She controls the situation, claiming her dominance over her sexual desires and genitalia; the lens of objectification shifts to the rapper's perspective as she continues to advance:

I tell him that he better eat it like he starving (what?)

Put this pussy in his mouth while he yawning

He put that woo all down my throat until I started coughing (Genius Lyrics)

She states that her "pussy" is a source of food and extreme pleasure. She asserts her authority over her body through the lyrics "I let him stick me" "I might let him crash in" and "I bend it over" (Genius Lyrics). She replaces the male character's penis with "woo" to signify that the song focuses on *her* pleasure and genitalia. She accentuates the feminine features of her voice to sound high-pitch, cutesy, and coy. Her intonation is utilized to sound feminine to appeal to her sexual partner. As men rappers emphasize their penis as the central tool for their pleasure, Rico Nasty centralizes it as an avenue to achieve an orgasm. Furthermore, in the music video, she utilizes pink costumes and overtones to accentuate femininity while assertively referencing her genitalia.

Women rappers redefine gender roles through performances of mimicking features through redefining masculinity from men performers. The androgynous clothing and aggressive attitude produce a masculine image. Women rappers such as Da Brat and Queen Latifah wear loose-fitting clothing or men's sportswear to "be one of the boys" (Lane 778). Clothing reinforces the use of masculinity as a form of rebellion against gender norms and disruption of compulsory

heterosexuality. Furthermore, Princess Nokia's "Tomboy" reflects the sexualization of unconventional sexualized body parts, such as "little titties" and "phat belly" (Genius Lyrics). She self-sexualizes her "boyish" features and highlights the limited standards for women's bodies; the rapper refuses to enable feminine body standards to affect her self-worth. She emphasizes the naturalness of women's bodies and the disregard to appear feminine and cater to traditional gender roles. She redefines beauty standards through a lack of attention toward the "male gaze." Furthermore, the rapper highlights her success with her body: "My little titties be bookin' cities all around the world" (Genius Lyrics). She combats the marginalization of Black women's sexuality that subjects them to racialized beauty (Hobson 106). The rapper expands the beauty expectations for Black women, emphasizing that masculinity does not conform to solely the male gender. She can still seduce and appeal to men and people without having a conventionally "perfect" female body. The rapper also initiates self-respect for your body in a society where women's bodies are set at unfeasible standards.

The traditional attributes of women conversing or shouting too loudly are deemed unladylike or inappropriate, but they combat gender stereotypes by communicating their messages through brash and explosive lyricism. In Lil Mariko's and Rico Nasty's "S.I.M.P," the rappers appropriate the fetishization of their bodies and racial identities to emphasize their sexual desires. A "simp" is an internet slang phrase and refers to a person who expresses too much attention or sympathy toward another person to gain their affection. The person or subject of interest usually does not reciprocate the attention or affection towards the "simp;" the goal of a "simp" is the pursuit of a sexual relationship. In the synthetic beats of "S.I.M.P," instead of women obsessing and succumbing to men's authority and affections, the roles are reversed. Lil Mariko illustrates her power over the male character through the worship and excessive attention he gives her. Full-Tac, a featured artist on the track, performs as the "simp" character; the rapper Rico Nasty, who is also featured, acts as Lil Mariko's partner. In the music video, Full-Tac wears a black, full-body latex suit with a red dog collar and leash; these items relate closely to bondage and submission accessories. Rico Nasty and Lil Mariko act as dominatrix characters and "owners" of Full-Tac. Lil Mariko and Rico Nasty combat the stereotypes of gendered language through their raspy, destructive voices. Furthermore, American linguist George Lakoff refers to the avoidance of assertive speech as a part of lady-like speech (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 141-2). The rappers emphasize their menacing demeanors by

punishing and degrading the "simp," they claim he is "wrapped around" their "fingers" and subject him to "on his knees" to illustrate their power (Genius Lyrics). The subordinate position of the "simp" male character acts as a tool for sexual dehumanization. The hegemonic masculine attributes, displayed by the rappers, classify as independence and assertiveness (Tyree and Williams 71). Lil Mariko and Rico Nasty reinforce elements of masculinity to redefine femininity through explosive vocals and the sexual overtones of bondage and submission. The rappers reclaim the degradation of embodying a submissive character, while using Full-Tac to criticize men's fetishization over their bodies.

Women rappers further dismantle men's hegemonic labels in rap such as "gold-diggers," "hoes," and "freaks" (Tyree and Williams 25). "Freaks" refer to a woman's sexual fantasies or preferences with a sexual partner; "hoes" reference women's promiscuity through multiple sexual partners; "gold diggers" refer to women seeking a man's financial fortune for sexual activities. The sexualized terms utilized to degrade women consist of negative sexual images that separate their experiences from men. Women rappers may intentionally reinforce themselves as materials for the male rapper's sexual pleasure. For example, the non-binary rapper ppcocaine (Trap Bunny Bubbles) appropriates terms like bitches, thots, and hoes (Tyree and Williams 76). In ppcocaine's "That Bitch," the artist self-sexualizes themself and their image as a "slim thick bitch" and "whore" (Genius Lyrics). They adhere to gender-stereotyped labels to self-sexualize and resignify the terms utilized to degrade them. The rapper's tone is rough and contains an aggressive edge as they communicate a masculine yet bratty personae. The rapper proclaims themself as the "main bitch" and subject of sexualization. Ppcocaine's music tracks contain heavy elements of trap beats, which allows women and rappers to explore more versions of femininity and non-binarism (Miles 18). For instance, ppcocaine raps: "Heard you fucked that girl..." and "Wanted to fuck, I told her 'Slurp on this nut'" (Genius Lyrics). Their usage of "fuck" and "slurp on this nut" refer to oral sex with women. According to Professor John Erni, at Hong Kong Baptist University, the term queer sexuality refers to "a practice of discursive excess that twists normal notions of gender and sexuality" (Lane 778). Ppcociane utilizes the term "fuck" to subvert more feminine references for sex.

Women's rap also portrays masculine or feminine identities within sexual engagements (Holmes and Wilson 344). Women rappers redefine gendered labels such as "bitches" or submissive "girls" to illustrate and expand their sexual

identities. Gender performativity connects to resignification, which reshapes hegemonic norms and social structure (Washington 363). Resignification is presenting a different or changed meaning to phrases. For example, ppcocaine's "DDGL" (Daddy Dom/ Little Girl) depicts themes of masculinity hidden between shades of femininity. A DDGL relationship consists of the duality of sexual partners. The male is the dominant "daddy" figure, and the woman plays the submissive role, imitating a young girl. They experience sexual pleasure through the lens of their partner, which leads to mutual pleasures (Thorpe 12). Women twerking and sexually dancing around ppcocaine simultaneously illustrates her status as a "dom" and a "little girl." Dancing is linked to hypersexuality, exhibiting too much skin or dancing too provocatively in public is deemed "socially wrong" (Lane 790). In the LGBTQ+ community, there are phrases to classify who is sexually dominating (a top) and submissive (a bottom). The Daddy Dom and Little Girl situation accentuate ppcocoain's fluidity between masculine and feminine roles. Furthermore, the term "camp talk" refers to the patronizing language or mixing registers, for instance, referring to a man as "she" or creating clever insults (Holmes and Wilson 345). Ppcocaine refers to her female sex partners as "daddy" which challenges the compulsory heterosexuality surrounding homosexual and heterosexual relationships in rap.

For generations, throughout musical eras, women are told they exist too much. People stress women's existence is beneficial when silent and invisible. When women take up too much space in a patriarchal system, it feels too tumultuous. It feels disruptive because women become offensive if they occupy a male-dominated space. The music of women rappers allows women listeners to place themselves in the narrator's lens, to share the struggles and experiences to connect with women. Men rappers reinforce women's silence through the control they exhibit through objectifying language. Women rappers dispute these sexualized images and encourage their listeners to defend their bodies and praise the power their bodies hold. Since women's bodies are malleable to men's gaze, lyrics try to take their identities and sexual freedoms away.

Silence breeds inequity: The silence of Black women has been constructed through ideologies that suppress their ethnic, racial, cultural, and sexual identities. Silence forced upon Black women, and all women of color, function to muffle and consume their identities and existence. Women are told to adhere to traits of traditional femininity such as silence, complacency, and obedience. Society claims women should behave, dress, and communicate in hyperfeminine forms.

Gender and hegemonic labels pressure that women and men are separated, binary forces. But women's reclamation of their voices transgresses the grain of hegemony, systemic sexism, racism, and patriarchy. The conception is that men and women in music can use their voices in tandem to combat hegemonic masculinity and compulsory heterosexuality.

Music is made to inspire, connect, and uplift others. Women rappers shift the paradigms of their sexualization through brash and hypersexualized lyrics to redefine their sexual identities. Rap expands Black women's limitations on their perceived societal image; their voices of sexual pleasures and identities are a proclamation of their existence. Women rappers are a force to promote not only respect but acknowledgment for social change and to instigate conversations. Through women's rap, there is a continuity of shattering the sexual stereotypes and stigmas against women's bodies.

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