

Feminism, Misogyny, & Rap Music: A Content Analysis of Lyricism within the “New Wave” of Female Rappers

by  
Nava Sepehri

A thesis presented to the Honors College of Middle Tennessee State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the University Honors College.

Fall 2020

Feminism, Misogyny, & Rap Music: A Content Analysis of Lyricism within the “New Wave” of Female Rappers

by Nava Sepehri

APPROVED:

---

Dr. Tricia Farwell  
Associate Professor, School of Journalism and Strategic  
Media

---

Dr. Meredith Dye  
Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

---

Dr. Philip Phillips  
Associate Dean, University Honors College

This paper is dedicated to hip-hop's "21 Club." Every artist listed created a paradigm shift in music, despite their short time in the industry.

Gustav Elijah Åhr (Lil Peep)  
November 1996 – November 2017

Jahseh Dwayne Ricardo Onfroy (XXXTentacion)  
January 1998 – June 2018

Jarad Anthony Higgins (Juice Wrld)  
December 1998- December 2019

Bashar Barakah Jackson (Pop Smoke)  
July 1999 – February 2020

"The party never ends"

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
History of Hip-Hop.....	1
Misogyny in Rap.....	4
Women in Hip-Hop.....	9
Methodology.....	14
Results.....	18
Discussion.....	28
References.....	33
Discography.....	36

**List of Tables**

Table 1: Number of times the 3 terms were used in the 10 songs.....23

Table 2: Number of times the 3 terms were used in Rico’s 5 songs.....24

Table 3: Number of times the 3 terms were used in Megan’s 5 songs.....28

## **Abstract**

This study examines how the “new wave” of female rappers use misogyny and hegemonic masculinity in their lyrics through a hip-hop feminism framework. The researcher conducted a content analysis on the top 5 songs of Megan Thee Stallion and Rico Nasty to examine how young female rappers express misogyny in their lyrics. The results showed that both artists use misogyny, hegemonic masculinity, and hip-hop feminism in their top 5 songs, but the degree to which they used these themes differed significantly. The results suggest that women in hip-hop are held to a double-standard, and as more women enter the rap industry, the genre will change over time.

## **Introduction**

Rap music has become a global genre and is growing more and more popular every day. Unlike other genres, rap is dominated by Black men, allowing for the freedom of expression that has otherwise been historically unavailable to them. Although this genre is an important medium for minority men, Black women remain underrepresented in hip-hop. Women who do assimilate into this industry have to navigate how they use misogyny in their lyrics, along with other controversial themes. Male rap personas typically embrace hegemonic masculinity variables, which include misogyny. Some upcoming female rappers assimilate into a hegemonic male persona, and others carry a feminine persona. Analyzing misogyny, hegemonic masculinity, and hip-hop feminism in modern female rap lyrics provides the opportunity to understand how the new wave conveys these dynamics and, in return, influence the youth. Previous literature on female rappers and misogyny in their lyrics examine women who have been in the industry for a long time. Recently, there has been an influx of young women within the hip-hop industry. This study seeks to analyze how two upcoming female rappers, Rico Nasty and Megan Thee Stallion, use the traditional themes of misogyny and hegemonic masculinity, as well as an analysis of hip-hop feminism in their top 5 songs in Apple Music.

## **History of Hip-Hop**

Rap music has its roots in the hip-hop scene, which began in New York during the mid-1970s and was led by African-American, Afro-Caribbean, and Puerto Rican youth (Oware, 2018). Although the term “hip-hop” is often used interchangeably with rap today, it originally contained four elements: breakdancing, graffiti, DJing, and finally, rap music.

Breakdancing first appeared in the early 1970s, led by “B-boys” and “B-girls,” who challenged one another to dance for stardom, this element became mainstream when the moonwalk was introduced. Breakdancing continued to gain momentum as it opened up the 1984 Olympic ceremony. The popularity of this style of dance died down by the late 1980s.

Matthew Oware describes graffiti as the visual representation of hip-hop culture (Oware, 2018, p.8). Eventually, both graffiti writing and breakdancing became connected to criminal activity. From time to time fights broke out after breakdancing contests which led police to associate breakdancing with deviance (Ewoodzie, 2017). As for graffiti, the consequences of being caught with open spray cans were fines and jail time (Oware, 2018). Even though authority figures saw graffiti as vandalism, artists saw graffiti as an innovation that belonged in galleries. One street artist and overall hip-hop pioneer, Fab 5 Freddy, is credited with popularizing graffiti to the point of commercialization (Oware, 2018).

Before rap had emerged as a genre, DJing was the ruling component of hip-hop. DJs were responsible for spinning tracks on turntables while initiating a call and response technique throughout block parties in New York. The sole purpose of the DJ MC, or rapper, was to talk up the crowd as the DJs hype man (Keyes, 2004). It was not until Grand Master Flash and the Furious Five invited artists to rap on stage that rappers began inching towards the limelight.

As a result of being invited onstage, rap battles debuted and became extremely popular. During rap battles, rappers took turns in coming up with the best rap lyrics on the spot. The reactions from the audience determined who the winner was that night. The



success of rap battles led music entrepreneurs to discover the commercial appeal of the rap artist (Oware, 2018).

Rap was party music when it first originated (Oware, 2018). This theme became the ruling component of hip-hop after the release of “Rappers Delight” in 1979, which became the first rap song to go mainstream on vinyl (Oware, 2018). The theme of partying is highlighted by the groundbreaking track “Rappers Delight,” with the lyrics: “Let’s rock you don’t stop/Rock the rhythm that’ll make your body rock” (The Sugarhill Gang, 1979). This track made rap music commercially appealing on a global scale (Oware, 2018). In the book *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture*, author Mark Anthony Neal wrote, “the ‘party and bullshit’ themes of most early hip-hop represented efforts to transcend the dull realities of urban life, including body-numbing experiences within low-wage service industries and inferior and condescending urban school systems” (Neal, 2009, p. 140). The beginning of the war on drugs and the political distrust of the late 1970s created stressful times for American youth. The theme of partying was dominant in rap because it was an easy distraction from the overwhelming reality of that time.

The transition from party music to socially conscious rap was inevitable in hip-hop. Although partying helped the youth escape from everything that was going on at that time, it only helped so much. Eventually, rappers began rhyming about what they saw in their neighborhoods and how it affected them and those around them. Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, founders of hip-hop who are credited with shifting the limelight from DJing to rapping, released one of the first mainstream socially conscious rap songs called “The Message” in 1982. This track, like “Rappers Delight,” popularized a theme in

rap, except instead of partying, the theme was social problems. With verses like: “got a bum education, double-digit inflation/Can’t take the train to the job, there’s a strike at the station” along with the renowned hook “It’s like a jungle sometimes/It makes me wonder how I keep from going under,” “The Message” created a paradigm shift in hip-hop themes that allowed for other conscious artists like Public Enemy to go mainstream (Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five, 1982).

Gangsta rap, a genre that would completely shift the mainstream sound of rap to this day, emerged in the mid-1980s. This new genre was led by artists like Ice T and N.W.A. (Adams & Fuller, 2006). Gangsta rap lyrics contain elements of misogyny and gun violence. “You are now about to witness the strength of street knowledge” is the intro given by Dr. Dre from N.W.A.’s first studio album “Straight Outta Compton.” This track, also titled “Straight Outta Compton,” is a prime example of early gangsta rap. The track continues with lyrics like “You think I give a damn about a bitch? I ain’t a sucker” along with, “And once you’re on the scope, your ass is through” (N.W.A., 1988). These gritty lyrics alongside a raunchy beat create an unapologetic sound that models mainstream rap music today. Many other genres and sub-genres of rap have emerged since the 1980s and 1990s since rap music has become a global phenomenon. Despite growing in popularity, the themes expressed in rap music have remained controversial (Conrad et al., 2009). One theme that has remained persistent in hip-hop is misogyny.

### **Misogyny in Rap**

Adams and Fuller define misogyny as “the hatred or disdain of women...an ideology that reduces women to objects for men’s ownership, use, or abuse. It diminishes women to expendable beings” (Adams & Fuller, 2006, p. 939). Misogyny has been around for a

long time and continues to be pervasive throughout society. Although rap originated in the 1970s, misogyny in rap songs did not emerge until the 1980s with the introduction of gangsta rap. Artists like Ice T and N.W.A. created this sub-genre that paved a model for future violent and misogynous sub-genres such as modern trap and drill music. Weitzer & Kubrin found that misogyny was present in 22% of all platinum rap albums from 1992 to 2000 (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009).

When discussing misogyny in rap, it is important to remember that rap music is race music. This race music genre originated from the lack of acceptance of Black American men into mainstream culture. Matthew Oware argues that the reason why misogyny is profitable and persistent in hip-hop is because of the concept of Black hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is defined as “heterosexual men’s dominance over other males and females, hyper-competitiveness, and the appearance of strength and independence” (Oware, 2018). Oware argues that Black men did not have the status and resources to copy white heterosexual hegemonic masculinity, therefore they created Black hegemonic masculinity, which took the “strong Black man” character and added a “cool pose” frame of mind (Oware, 2018). Joseph Ewoodzie claims that “hip-hop became a masculinized space because it helped the male participants onstage to perform their masculinity, especially their heterosexual desires” (Ewoodzie, 2017, p. 142). Rap music provides a medium for Black American men to express their masculinity and dominance in a society where white heterosexual men maintain a majority of the power structure. Hip-hop provided these men with an opportunity to tell their side of the story. Black American men pioneered hip-hop and continue to carry this genre today; therefore, misogyny in rap music, like much of U.S. history, is tied to race.

Although misogyny in rap takes on many forms, it is easily identifiable through the use of the words “bitch” and “ho,” or “hoe.” These words originate from the popular stereotypes of the Sapphire and Jezebel.

The Sapphire, or the bitch, originated from the Mammy, a notable stereotype of an asexual Black American woman who nurtures white children and takes care of household chores (Adams & Fuller, 2006). The Sapphire is referred to as the “post-war Mammy” and is similar to the Mammy as she is bossy towards other people of color yet remains loyal to the white family (Morton, 1991). One reason why the Sapphire is portrayed as bossy is because she is generally depicted as the leader of the household. The Sapphire, however, is not asexual like the Mammy is; instead, she is uptight in general and controlling of her man in particular.

The Jezebel concept, or the ho, is similar to the Sapphire except the Jezebel is centered around being a loose overly sexualized character with no morals. Lerner (1972) writes that “a myth was created that all Black women were eager for sexual exploits, voluntarily ‘loose’ in their morals and, therefore, deserved none of the consideration and respect granted to white women. Every Black woman was, by definition, a slut according to this racist mythology; therefore, to assault her and exploit her sexually was not reprehensible and carried with it none of the normal communal sanctions against such behavior” (p. 163). The Jezebel supplies a twisted justification for the history of the sexual exploitation of Black American women (Adams & Fuller, 2006).

The Sapphire and Jezebel images may seem outdated, but these stereotypes are pervasive. The welfare queen, for example, is a stereotype derived from the image of the Jezebel. The welfare queen propaganda originated in the late 1990s and depicts an

unemployed single African American mother who is entirely dependent on the welfare system (Adams & Fuller, 2006). The welfare queen ties to the concept of the Jezebel because her children are portrayed as being conceived out of wedlock, which is the reason why she is so dependent on the welfare system. In another example, E. Franklin Frazier (1948) and Patrick Moynihan (1965) suggested that Black families were falling apart because the women of the household were too dominant (Adams & Fuller, 2006). This study ties to the concept of the Sapphire who is portrayed as the bossy, dominant figure of the household by reinforcing the stereotype.

These steady images of Black American women throughout history have been internalized by Black American community and the general public. Sociologist Rodgers-Rose explains this by saying, “It is easy for Black people to internalize and use such false definitions of themselves. To the extent that an individual has internalized these definitions, his/her mode of interaction with the opposite sex will be affected” (Rodgers-Rose, 1980, p. 253). This may be one explanation as to why the stereotypes of the Jezebel and Sapphire, or bitch and ho, are so prevalent in rap music.

Misogyny is common even among the most respected hip-hop artists. In his song with Kanye titled “N\*ggas in Paris,” Jay-Z raps: “Ball so hard bitch behave/Just might let you meet ‘Ye” (Jay-Z & Kanye, 2011). In this line, Jay-Z is telling a woman, or bitch, to behave if she wants to meet Kanye, or ‘Ye. Even J. Cole, who is often compared to conscious rapper Kendrick Lamar, has misogynistic lyrics. In his song titled “No Role Modelz,” Cole explains that the women in L.A. are either “sisters” or “hoes.” He raps: “Out in Hollywood bringin' back 5 or 6 hoers/Fuck em' then we kick em' to the door” (J. Cole, 2014). Cole goes on to explain that they deserved to get kicked out because it is a

trap to get involved with “L.A. hoes” and that “She don’t wanna be saved” (J. Cole, 2014), meaning that she does not want to become loyal and in touch with reality.

Male rappers may be using misogyny in their lyrics to amplify themselves in a society that persistently devalues them. Reducing Black American women to stereotypes may allow the males to claim their masculinity. It is important to note that some male rappers may use misogyny in their lyrics to boost sales without being personally misogynous themselves (Oware, 2018). This deception also takes place with the theme of drugs in rap, where some rappers who have been abstinent their entire lives will still mention drugs in their lyrics.

Along with misogyny and sexism, sociologist Matthew Oware identified braggadocio, violence, and homophobia as attributes of hegemonic masculinity. Oware defines braggadocio or bravado as when “an artist proclaims he is the best at something, possesses expensive material items, and receives adulation because of his superstar status” (Oware, 2018). In his song titled “Gotta Blast,” Tay-K raps: “Smoke him down like a damn swisher/Fuck a thot cause I need my bands bigger” (Tay-K, 2017). In the first line, Tay-K uses slang to describe killing his opponent. In the second line, he explains that a “thot,” or an openly sexual woman, will distract him from accumulating money. In just two lines Tay-K embraces the themes of misogyny, materialistic braggadocio, and violence. Other elements of hegemonic masculinity are “pride, strength, and control” (Oware, 2018). In his song “Red Opps,” which stayed on the billboard 100 for 13 weeks and has one-hundred and twenty-four million views on YouTube, 21 Savage raps: “I’m a real right Blood and these n\*ggas counterfeit” and “Y’all say real street n\*gga/Y’all ain’t on no block” (21 Savage, 2016). 21 Savage is expressing his pride in being a real Blood,

unlike posers that are not from the streets. Oware argues that authenticity is central in Black hegemonic masculinity and that being “street” not “suburban” is important (Oware, 2018).

Although the rap industry embraces misogyny and hegemonic masculinity, women have always been a part of hip-hop; however, it was not until the 1990s that women became more recognized in the rap industry (Keyes, 2000). Today, there are more female rappers than ever before as they continue paving their way through this male-dominated genre.

### **Women in Hip-Hop**

Women have always been present throughout the history of hip-hop though they have received less attention than their male counterparts. Before rap became a genre, women, such as Lady Pink, participated in the graffiti craze as well as b-girls, such as Baby Love, who elevated breakdancing into popular culture (Oware, 2018). As for rapping, MC Lady B released “To the Beat Y’all” in 1979 making her the first female rapper to release a record. Another woman who set the course for rap was Sylvia Robinson, founder of Sugar Hill Records. Sylvia predicted that hip-hop would become profitable if rappers created physical copies of their music. This led Sylvia to hunt for talented rappers to join her label. It was not long until Sylvia met a group of talented men who would shortly sign to her label. This group of men would be known as the Sugar Hill Gang, named after Sylvia and her partner Joe’s record label Sugar Hill Records. The Sugar Hill Gang went on to release “Rapper’s Delight.” This song, as mentioned earlier, went on to change the course of hip-hop to focus on rap music, and specifically, rap records.

Today there are many well-known female rappers, such as Nicki Minaj and Cardi B, but their legacies would not have existed without the “Queen of Rap,” Roxanne Shanté. In 1985, the all-male group U.T.F.O. released a track called “Roxanne, Roxanne” in which they rapped about a fictitious girl named Roxanne who rejected their remarks towards her. As a result of being rejected, they called Roxanne “uppity” and “stuck up.” At fourteen years old, Roxanne Shanté released a track called “Roxanne’s Revenge” as a challenge and rebuff towards U.T.F.O. and their sexist track. In this song, Shanté raps that she is a “fly MC” and that the boys in U.T.F.O. wish they could be as good as she is. Although U.T.F.O. did not release “Roxanne Roxanne” with Shanté in mind, she used this opportunity to confront misogyny in rap music while gaining notoriety in hip-hop. Tricia Rose writes that Shanté “gave a voice to a young girl’s response to real-life street confrontations with men” (Rose, 1994, pp. 57, 162). Shanté was the first woman to challenge misogyny in early hip-hop, paving the way for female artists in the 1990s such as Lil’ Kim and Salt N’ Pepa.

With the rise of rap music as a global genre, a rise in female rappers has inevitably taken place. One female rapper who remains a key figure in hip-hop is Nicki Minaj. In one of her top songs titled “Only,” featuring Drake and Lil Wayne, Nicki raps “These hoes couldn’t test me even if their name was pop quiz/Bad bitches who I fuck with, mad bitches we don’t fuck with” (Nick Minaj, 2014). These lines are a prime example of how ambiguous rap lyrics can be.

Feminist critics point out that female rappers embrace hegemonic masculinity and misogyny in their lyrics. Matthew Oware found that out of the 173 female rap songs he sampled from 2005 to 2015, “52% of women rappers’ lyrics include bravado, 31%



reference violent imagery, and 52% are misogynistic or sexist” (Oware, 2018, p. 87).

Other feminist critics argue that women should be allowed to express themselves however they want in their music. With valid points from both sides of the argument, the best way to understand feminism in rap music is through the framework of hip-hop feminism.

The first wave of feminism was born in the mid-1800s. This wave focused on women’s right to vote (Oware, 2018). The second wave of feminism debuted in the 1960s, and this time women used their platforms to fight for equal pay, reproductive rights, and many other social issues (Oware, 2018). Although the first and second waves of feminism paved the way for several constitutional rights that women have today, scholars argue that the first and second waves of feminism excluded women of color (Oware, 2018). Women of color, particularly Black American women, not only face sexism and misogyny, but they also face structural and cultural racism. Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” to explain to the public the unique circumstances that women of color face in America. Intersectionality is defined as “the interactivity of social identity structures such as race, class, and gender in fostering life experiences, especially experiences of privilege and oppression” (Gopaldas, 2013, p. 90). Intersectionality dismisses the assumption that racism and sexism are mutually exclusive, and instead focuses on how they work together to create a distinctive form of oppression.

Around the 1970s and 1980s, third-wave Black feminism emerged, and these feminists focused on the framework of intersectionality (Chepp, 2015). It was not until the 1990s that Black feminists began criticizing female rappers for sexually exploiting themselves in their music; however, younger third-wave feminists embraced sex-

positivity in hip-hop. This disagreement created a generational divide, and the younger third-wave feminists broke off to create hip-hop feminism.

Feminist scholar Aisha Durham describes hip-hop feminism as “a cultural, intellectual, and political movement grounded in the situated knowledge of women of color from the post-civil rights or hip hop generation who recognize culture as a pivotal site for political intervention to challenge, resist, and mobilize collectives...” (Durham et al., 2013, p. 721). Although hip-hop feminists and traditional Black feminists disagree on sex positivity, they agree on most aspects of Black feminism. Matthew Oware explains that both groups “share the goals of intersectional analysis, examining the linkages between gender, class, race, and sexuality;” however, hip-hop feminists “account for contradictions among individuals from the hip hop generation” (Oware, 2018, p. 83). Hip-hop feminists argue that the opportunity for women of color to express themselves exceeds the cost of conforming to the misogyny and hegemonic masculinity in rap music.

There are far more female rappers than there were in the 1990s when hip-hop feminism first took off; however, the controversy around what women rap about remains persistent. Rappers Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion have been making headlines for collaborating on a song in which they rap only about female sexual pleasure. In this new Cardi B song featuring Megan Thee Stallion titled “WAP,” Cardi B raps, “Bring a bucket and a mop for this wet ass pussy/Give me everything you got for this wet ass pussy” (Cardi B, 2020). “WAP,” which stands for “wet ass pussy,” broke records for the most streams on the first day of release for a female rapper (Abad-Santos, 2020). Since its release, “WAP” has been a source of controversy. Republican congressman James Bradley commented that “WAP” is “what happens when children are raised without God

and without a strong father figure” (Kappler, 2020). On the other side of the argument, Maija Kappler expressed that “None of these people objected when Cardi B posed nude. It crossed a line, apparently, when they became active participants: when they talked about what they liked in bed, or how it made them feel” (Kappler, 2020). Other critics worry that people will use “WAP” as an excuse to oppress minority women. One artist who unapologetically rapped about sex long before Megan and Cardi B debuted was Lil’ Kim. In her song titled “Not Tonight” Lil’ Kim raps, “I didn’t mind it when he fucked me from behind/It felt fine” (Lil’ Kim, 1996). Although critics argue that these lyrics are salacious, hip-hop feminists contend that Lil’ Kim is allowed to express the pleasure she receives from men (Oware, 2018). Rapping about sexual pleasure gives Lil’ Kim power because the sexual act is expressed “on her own terms” (Oware, 2018, p. 84). She has control of the situation.

Scholar Matthew Oware argues a form of hegemonic Black female masculinity debuted in the 1990s alongside hip-hop feminism (Oware, 2018). This form of female masculinity “borrows from mainstream Black male rapper aesthetics, but also presents female ‘attitude’” and “conveys a ‘hyper-femininity,’ which is sexualized” (Oware, 2018, p. 85). The traditional themes of misogyny, violence, and braggadocio are prominent in hegemonic Black female masculinity. In her song, “Can You Hear Me Now,” Lil’ Kim raps that she “Got a big dick” that she’ll use to “bone you out” (Lil’ Kim, 2003). Oware argues that these types of verses use an “authentic hyper-masculinity” that is popular in rap music (Oware, 2018, p. 86). In their song, “Pussy Talk,” the newly groundbreaking duo City Girls rap “Boy, this pussy talk Bentleys, Rovers, and Benz/Boy, this pussy fly to private islands, to M’s” (City Girls, 2020). These lyrics embody both hip-hop feminism

and hegemonic female masculinity because City Girls rap about sex-positivity in the form of materialistic braggadocio. Throughout this entire song, City Girls rap that their genitalia are lucrative and successful. Critics may argue that City Girls are objectifying themselves, but I argue that because as a society we add value to things that make a profit, City Girls are expressing that their female genitalia are profitable and therefore valuable.

Additionally, rap music as a topic of research study deserves respect and consideration. According to a survey done by Audiencenet and published by the Music Business Association, hip-hop/rap was the most popular genre among 48% of music consumers in the U.S. from ages 16-19, 54% from ages 20-24, and 42% from ages 25-34 in 2018. Rap music is a large factor in American culture, especially among the youth, and for this reason, rap music should be studied more closely. Rap music has the power to revolutionize culture, and women can use that to their advantage.

### **Methodology**

This study analyzes the content of new wave female rap artists' songs to examine whether or not they confront or conform to misogyny and hegemonic masculinity in their music using a hip-hop feminism theoretical approach.

The researcher examined song lyrics from the new wave of female rappers. The starting point for being considered in the new wave was determined by Cardi B's hit single "Bodak Yellow." To be considered for selection, female rappers must have gained momentum either around the same time or after Cardi B's summer 2017 release of "Bodak Yellow." Otherwise, they were not considered as part of the new wave. The

researcher used the streaming platform Apple Music to identify female artists' most popular songs along with the date of release.

After collecting a list of the new wave artists and songs, the researcher selected two female rappers for the focus of this study: Megan Thee Stallion and Rico Nasty. Both women were selected based on qualifying as part of the new wave, their consistent rap persona within their music, their frequent release of new music, and their popularity among listeners. Consistency within music personas is important because some female rappers may have multiple rap personas within the same album. Therefore, having a single consistent rap persona would give each artist a single voice in determining how they typically approach misogyny, hegemonic masculinity, and feminism. In an interview with Genius titled “The Many Flows of Megan Thee Stallion,” Megan described that each of her albums carries a different rap persona. In a separate interview with Genius titled “Rico Nasty Breaks Down Her Iconic Flow,” Rico describes that Joan Jett influenced her overall angry rap persona. Therefore, these two rap artists remain consistent enough within their personas from album to album that it would not cause outliers in how they typically approach misogyny, masculinity, and feminism within their songs.

As for consistency when releasing projects, these two artists qualify for selection because they have less than one gap year in-between the releases of albums and singles. Consistency in releasing new music is a valuable measure because some artists may take years to release new music. This current content analysis focuses on two artists who are playing an active role in the music industry.

The researcher analyzed music statistics to determine the number of streams and views an artist receives along with social media presence, which was determined by the number of followers a rapper has. At the time of the analysis, Megan Thee Stallion was the tenth most popular artist in the world while spending 58 weeks on the Billboard 100. According to Billboard, the methodology to be represented in the top 100 is decided by “an average chart ratio whereby streams are the most heavily weighted factor, followed next by radio airplay and then sales” (How Billboard Came to Its Calculations in This Week’s Race For the Hot 100 No. 1, 2020). Rico Nasty, however, was not represented on the Billboard 100 at the time of the analysis. As for social media presence, Rico has 1.6 million followers, and Megan has 14.3 million followers on Instagram. Rico Nasty’s YouTube channel has over 100 million views, and Megan Thee Stallion’s YouTube channel has over 800 million views. Although Rico Nasty’s success is not on the same level as Megan Thee Stallion’s success, the researcher chose to include her songs in the analysis because her hyper-masculine persona shows a parallel to Megan’s hyper-feminine persona. Rico and Megan are very different artists, which adds a balanced range to the content analysis. The researcher argues that both artists are very young and new to the hip-hop industry; therefore, this content analysis would allow someone to see how these artists change over time.

After identifying the rap artists to study, the researcher began the content analysis on their songs. The songs were considered for analysis if they were released after “Bodak Yellow,” since this song marks the paradigm shift in rap music. Once songs were selected, they were analyzed based on words and phrases that met the requirements of misogyny, hegemonic masculinity, and hip-hop feminism, as defined in the literature

review. To identify misogyny, the researcher analyzed the words “bitch” and “hoe,” along with how many times the artists referred to other women as less than, described other women as being hateful and/or jealous, and described physical violence/threats towards other women in the 10 songs. For identifying hegemonic masculinity, the researcher analyzed the term “n\*gga,” along with braggadocio, overall violence/threats, and financial independence in the 10 songs. Lastly, to identify hip-hop feminism, the researcher tracked general independence from others, particularly men, and sex-positivity in the 10 songs. To make the content analysis more comprehensible, words and phrases were grouped according to those themes with which they aligned most closely. To account for the contradictory nature in rap lyricism, the words “n\*gga,” “bitch,” and “hoe” were identified as neutral, negative, or positive in each song using framing theory, which is used to approach an issue from multiple perspectives (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Framing theory was developed by Gregory Bateson in 1972 (Arowolo, 2017). Although Bateson used framing theory for psychological purposes, this theory has since been used across several fields to better understand how a message can change based on how it is communicated. Framing theory is effective in this analysis because rap music is a contradictory genre, in which the words can mean different things depending on the context in which they are used. For example, the word “bitch” can be connotated negatively or positively depending on the context surrounding it.

As for the limitations of the methodology, different sub-genres and styles of rap music may influence the degree of masculine variables within songs. For example, trap music and “gangsta” rap may have more misogynous lyrics than other rap genres. The

researcher did not find sub-genres to affect this content analysis because both artists typically work within the sub-genre of trap music.

## **Results**

The researcher examined how current, new-wave female rappers used the themes of misogyny, hegemonic masculinity, and feminism in their song lyrics. A content analysis of the top 5 songs from Apple Music reported on April 5th, 2020, by Rico Nasty and Megan Thee Stallion was conducted. Songs that included collaborations with other artists were excluded out of concern that featuring artists would affect Rico and Megan's rap personas. The 10 songs were analyzed for the variables of misogyny, hegemonic masculinity, and hip-hop feminism, as defined in the literature review. The researcher found that Rico Nasty and Megan Thee Stallion incorporate misogyny in their lyrics while trying to assimilate into a male rap persona, as identified by variables of misogyny and hegemonic masculinity. Feminism was not as prominent as misogyny, although feminism was apparent in the lyrics through variables like sex positivity and female empowerment.

Misogyny was traced by analyzing the words "bitch" and "hoe," along with tracking how many times the artists referred to other women as less than, described other women as being hateful and/or jealous, and described physical violence/threats towards other women in the 10 songs. The word "bitch" appeared a total of 108 times in the 10 songs. Of those 108, 26 were positive, 62 were negative, and 20 were neutral. The word "hoe" was connotated negatively in each case and was only apparent a total of 5 times in the 10 songs. Through the context of these terms, it appears that Rico Nasty embraced misogyny more than Megan Thee Stallion did in her top 5 songs, although both artists used the



word “bitch” to the same degree. Rico appears to adopt a masculine persona by using the term “bitch” in a more derogatory manner and by referring to other women as “bitch” significantly more than referring to herself as one. In her song “Poppin,” Rico raps, “Ain’t no bitch in me bitch, come proper,” implying that Rico is trying to distance herself from the term “bitch” (Rico Nasty, 2017). Megan, on the other hand, appears to adopt a feminine persona around the term “bitch” by using it to refer to both herself and other women at a similar rate and by referring to other women as “bitch” when they appear to be a threat towards her relationship with men. In her song “B.I.T.C.H.,” Megan raps, “You really want me to whoop the hoe that you fuckin’ with if I find her” and “Them bitches ain’t gon’ give it to you right” (Megan Thee Stallion, 2020). Although the context in which Rico and Megan frame misogynous terms are different, both artists tended to react to other women in an overwhelmingly negative connotation and viewed other women as threats and haters in their song lyrics.

Rico Nasty embraced misogyny in her top 5 songs through referring to other women as less than in all 5 songs, describing other women as being hateful and/or jealous in all 5 songs, and describing physical violence/threats towards other women in 2 out of 5 songs. Rico used the word “bitch” a total of 57 times. “Bitch” was negatively connoted a total of 36 times, in which she referred to other women, and positively connoted a total of 7 times, 5 of which she referred to herself and 2 of which she referred to other women. “Bitch” was neutrally connoted a total of 14 times. The word “hoe” was used once and was negatively connoted. Every time a word was negatively connoted, Rico referred to other women, and most of the time if the word was positively connoted, Rico referred to herself. In her top song on Apple Music “Smack a Bitch,” Rico raps, “Smack

a bitch today/Thank God I ain't have to smack a bitch today,” expressing physical violence toward other women (Rico Nasty, 2018). Although the lyrics do frame Rico as having relief not having to partake in the physical violence, they also imply that physical violence against women is commonplace. In the song “Countin’ Up,” Rico raps, “I’m the bitch with the long hair and the top off.” In this case she uses “bitch” to empower herself by referring to her physical beauty and expensive car, yet in the same song she raps, “It’s upsetting that these bitches think they better than me,” in which she uses “bitches” to refer to other women as less than herself (Rico Nasty, 2018).

Megan Thee Stallion also embraced misogyny in her top 5 songs. Megan referred to other women as less than in all 5 songs and described other women as being hateful and/or jealous in 3 out of the 5 songs. Megan described physical violence/threats towards other women in 1 out of 5 songs. Megan used the word “bitch” a total of 51 times. “Bitch” was negatively connoted a total of 26 times, in which she referred to other women, and positively connotated a total of 19 times, in which she referred to herself. “Bitch” was neutrally connotated a total of 6 times. “Hoe” was used 4 times, and each referring to other women in a negative connotation. Every time a word was negatively connotated, Megan referred to other women, and every time a word was positively connotated, Megan referred to herself. In “Captain Hook,” Megan raps that she will “break a hoe in half like a Kit-Kat” if they “try her,” expressing physical violence toward other women (Megan Thee Stallion, 2020). In her song “Savage,” Megan raps that she is “still that bitch,” connecting the term “bitch” with authenticity by implying that she is still the same woman as before, yet within the same song she raps that she is “kickin’

these bitches out they spot,” implying that she is better than other “bitches” which is why she has the power to remove them from their spot (Megan Thee Stallion, 2020).

Hegemonic masculinity was traced by identifying braggadocio, overall violence/threats, and financial independence. The term “n\*gga” and the context in which it was used was also analyzed. “N\*gga” was used a total of 27 times in the 10 songs. Rico Nasty embraced hegemonic masculinity by using these terms more than Megan Thee Stallion did in the 10 songs. Rico’s rap persona appears to associate closely with a male rap persona. In “Trust Issues,” Rico raps “Rich bitch in the passenger,” implying that women are accessories to make herself look better while Rico is the driver in control, much like in male rap lyrics (Rico Nasty, 2018). Rico referred to her sex life with men in only one song, but appears to sexually objectify women in her lyrics. For example, in “Coutin’ Up,” Rico raps, “Beggin’ for the kitty on his hands and knees,” implying that her male sexual partner is begging for her female genitalia (Rico Nasty, 2018). In her song “Trust Issues,” however, she raps that “bitches” are on her “dick,” in which Rico is sexually objectifying other women by using them to make her appear more desirable with disdain for their feelings towards her (Rico Nasty, 2018). Rico also seems to rap about herself as “one of the boys” by assimilating into male rap culture and referring to men as her friends or equals. Megan Thee Stallion identified with hegemonic masculinity to a smaller degree than Rico did in her 5 songs. Megan appears to rap about men as her sexual partners in her lyrics. By positioning her relationship with men as sexual and personal, Megan remained consistent with her feminine rap persona.

Rico Nasty embraced hegemonic masculinity in her top 5 songs by asserting braggadocio in all 5 songs, expressing overall physical violence/threats in all 5 songs, and expressing financial independence in all 5 songs. Braggadocio was expressed through materialism and narcissism. In her song “Trust Issues,” Rico raps, “Car paid full in cash and you ridin’ in a rental,” implying that she has a lot of money therefore she is better than “you.” Violence appears to be tightly associated with Rico’s masculine rap persona, which she aims towards both men and women. In 2 of the 5 songs, Rico refers to gun violence, which is a popular topic in trap music. In “Countin’ Up,” Rico raps, “Talking shit on Instagram, that pistol make you log off,” implying that trolling her on social media could result in violence, and ultimately death (Rico Nasty, 2018). Rico fancies herself as the breadwinner and provider in her song “Smack a Bitch,” when she raps “If I’m getting money, then you know we all got a plate” (Rico Nasty, 2018). Rico used the term “n\*gga” a total of 5 times, in which 1 was connotated negatively and 4 were connotated positively. In “Smack a Bitch,” Rico raps “Fuck these n\*ggas, ‘cause the money the only thing I’m a chase,” implying that she would rather focus on her net worth than chase men around (Rico Nasty, 2018). Although “n\*gga” was negatively framed in this song, this still portrays hegemonic masculinity because Rico is referring to men as less than while embracing financial independence. Rico may also be implying that she doesn’t need men because of her financial status. The other 4 times Rico use the term “n\*gga,” she refers to men as her friends who will interfere in an altercation on her behalf. In the song “Trust Issues,” Rico raps “Talkin’ too much, my n\*ggas pull up with that fye,” implying that because she is “one of the boys,” her men will interfere with

guns, or fye, if you “talk too much,” or disrespect Rico (Rico Nasty, 2018). It appears that by aligning herself as equals with her men, she is assimilating further into a male rap persona. Rico’s persona is heavily tied to masculinity in general. In “Countin’ Up,” Rico tries to assimilate into male rap culture by saying, “Bitches on my dick so what/It don’t matter cause’ I’m steady countin’ up,” implying that women love her, although it does not matter to her because she is too busy counting her money (Rico Nasty, 2018). Rico is also directly identifying herself with male genitalia, saying that she has “bitches” on her “dick” implies that she is verbatim “one of the boys.” This line is a strong example of assimilating into male rap culture because hegemonic masculinity focuses on heterosexual men’s dominance and independence, and Rico identified herself with heterosexual men’s desires while emphasizing financial gain. Given the analysis of her top 5 songs, Rico Nasty appears to adopt a full-rounded hegemonic masculine persona.

**Table 1.** Number of times the 3 terms were used in the Rico’s 5 songs

	positive	negative	neutral
“bitch”	7	36	14
“hoe”	0	1	0
“n*gga”	4	1	0
Total	11	38	14

Megan expressed hegemonic masculinity in her top 5 songs by asserting braggadocio in 3 of her 5 songs, expressing overall physical violence/threats in 2 of her 5 songs, and expressing financial independence in 4 of her 5 songs. Braggadocio was expressed through materialism and narcissism, although at a much less rate than Rico. In “Savage,” Megan raps, “I’m in a Lam’ catch me if you can” referring to materialistic braggadocio

by saying that she is riding in an expensive Lamborghini (Megan Thee Stallion, 2020). Megan mainly expressed overall physical violence/threats towards women in her 5 songs, implying more misogyny than masculinity. In “Captain Hook,” Megan raps, “Not a stylist, but I’ll push your fucking wig back,” implying that she will humiliate women by ripping their wig back in a fight (Megan Thee Stallion, 2020). Megan raps less about financial independence than Rico does, although it is still apparent in her lyrics. Megan used the term “n\*gga” a total of 22 times, in which 14 were connotated negatively, 8 were connotated positively, and 15 were referring to sexual partners. In “Savage,” Megan raps, “Had to X some cheesy n\*ggas out my circle like a pizza,” implying that she kicked some men out of her circle for being cheesy, or tacky (Megan Thee Stallion, 2020). All 8 times that “n\*gga” was connotated positively were in the context of sexual partners. In “Sex Talk,” Megan raps, “I love n\*ggas with conversation that find the clit with no navigation,” implying that she enjoys men who give her sexual pleasure without her having to guide them through it (Megan Thee Stallion, 2019). Although Megan uses the term “n\*gga” in her lyrics more than Rico does, Megan frames her relationship with men as sexual and personal, which shifts her rap persona as feminine, not masculine. Megan also identifies with female genitalia regarding how she makes men feel, whereas Rico takes on the persona of a heterosexual male, receiving disassociated pleasure from women with disregard for their personal pleasure.

**Table 2.** Number of times the 3 terms were used in Megan’s 5 songs

	positive	negative	neutral
“bitch”	19	26	6
“hoe”	0	4	0
“n*gga”	12	15	0
Total	31	45	6

Hip-hop feminism was traced by identifying general independence from others, particularly men, and sex positivity in the 10 songs. Rico expressed less feminism than Megan did, with 2 of her 5 songs referring to general independence and 1 of her 5 songs referring to sex-positivity. Rico appears to associate financial independence and sexual glorification notably more than general independence and sex-positivity, which ties back to her hegemonic male persona. Megan expressed feminism by referring to general independence in all her 5 songs, and referring to sex-positivity in 4 of her 5 songs. Megan was less self-referential in her lyrics about sex than Rico was, and, unlike Rico, Megan rapped about her sexual encounters with other women without exploiting them. Although Megan presented strong feminist messages in her lyrics, she still assimilated into hegemonic male culture by elevating oral sex and being self-referential in her lyrics, although not to the same degree as Rico.

Rico Nasty expressed feminism in 2 of her top 5 songs by asserting general independence in 1 of her 5 songs and expressing sex-positivity in 1 of her 5 songs. Rico rapped about financial independence in all 5 songs but barely mentioned general independence from others, particularly men. In her song “Smack a Bitch,” Rico raps, “I don’t need your opinion/Do what the fuck I want,” implying that she makes her own decisions and does not like it when others try to control her (Rico Nasty, 2018). It appears that emphasizing financial independence instead of general independence redirects to Rico’s hegemonic male persona. It seems that Rico’s male persona is strengthened by not mentioning independence from men, given that she identifies with heterosexual men and focuses on her relationship with them as friends. As for sex positivity, in her song “Countin’ Up,” Rico raps, “Beggin’ for the kitty on his hands and knees,” implying that

her sexual partner is “begging” for her female genitalia “on his hands and knees” (Rico Nasty, 2018). This is the only time that Rico has mentioned a male sexual partner and identified with female genitalia in her 5 songs. Rico centers her sexual lyrics around glorification more than positivity. She seems to rap about receiving sexual pleasure more from women while disassociating herself from them, and she only appears to rap about the sexual pleasure she receives, not the pleasure she gives back. Rico also refers to women as accessories that make her look better than if she were without them. The lack of feminist lyrics in Rico’s 5 songs redirects to her hegemonic male rap persona.

Megan Thee Stallion expressed feminism in her top 5 songs by asserting general independence in all 5 songs and expressing sex-positivity in 4 of her 5 songs. Unlike Rico, Megan referenced general independence from others, particularly men, notably more than she referenced financial independence. In her song “B.I.T.C.H.,” Megan raps, “Ain’t no n\*gga finna stop me, independent, I got me,” and “You know you can’t control me baby, you need a real one in your life” (Megan Thee Stallion, 2020). Megan is implying that she puts herself before anyone else, particularly men who try to “stop” her from achieving something. In the second line, she associates not being controlled with being “a real one,” which is seen as someone who is respected because of their authenticity. Megan is putting female independence in positive limelight by associating it with being “real” and strong. In the same song, Megan raps, “I ain’t turn into no bad bitch when you met me, boy I been that/You tryna make me something that I ain’t, and I ain’t with that,” implying that she does not change for men and is in control when she is in a relationship with them (Megan Thee Stallion, 2020). Megan emphasizing that she is in control of herself and her relationships with men is a strong expression of female



empowerment. Control is generally seen as a male attribute, but Megan shifts this to a female attribute. Sex positivity is another theme that Megan is notable for. In her song “Big Ole’ Freak,” Megan raps, “Ain’t nobody a freak like me,” (Megan Thee Stallion). Megan frequently refers to herself as a “freak,” implying that she enjoys sex and performs well in bed. In the same song, Megan raps, “Come in the room and I’m giving commands/I am the captain and he the lieutenant,” implying that she is in control of her sexual interactions with men (Megan Thee Stallion). The variable control is repetitive in Megan’s 5 songs, especially when she raps about sex. Megan also appears to value oral sex over intercourse. In her song “Captain Hook,” Megan raps, “Mandatory that I get the head, but no guarantees on the penetration,” implying that oral sex is mandatory for her, but intercourse is not (Megan Thee Stallion. 2020). In this line, she appears to put her sexual satisfaction above her partners. Male rappers tend to rap self-referentially about sex, especially oral sex, as well. Although this line was more hegemonic than feminine, Megan appears to rap about her partner’s sexual pleasure, as well as her own. In her song “Sex Talk,” Megan raps, “I wanna see your body, take your clothes off,” and, “Rock that ship ‘til ya blast off,” implying that she enjoys giving pleasure to her partner (Megan Thee Stallion, 2019). It appears that Megan is less self-referential than Rico when it comes to the topic of sex. Megan also values her body and compares it to a “masterpiece” that belongs in “museums,” (Megan Thee Stallion, 2019). When it comes to rapping about other women, Megan does not appear to sexually glorify them as Rico does. In her song “Captain Hook,” Megan raps, “I be texting with a bi chick, we both freaky, just trying shit,” implying that she is experimenting with other women (Megan Thee Stallion. 2020). In this line, Megan refers to the girl she is texting as freaky, which is a positive

characteristic in her lyrics. Megan’s context when rapping about sex and independence appears to be positive and feminine, although she does present self-referential and hegemonic lyrics at times. This redirects to Megan’s strong, feminine rap persona.

**Table 3.** Number of times the 3 terms were used in the 10 songs

	positive	negative	neutral
“bitch”	26	62	20
“hoe”	0	6	0
“n*gga”	12	15	0
Total	38	77	20

### Discussion

Misogyny, hegemonic masculinity, and hip-hop feminism were analyzed in the top 5 songs of Rico Nasty and Megan Thee Stallion. Misogyny was traced by analyzing the words “bitch” and “hoe,” along with analyzing how many times the artists referred to other women as less than, described other women as being hateful and/or jealous, and described physical violence/threats towards other women in the 10 songs. The word “bitch” appeared a total of 108 times in the 10 songs. Of those 108, 26 were positive, 62 were negative, and 20 were neutral. The word “hoe” was connotated negatively in each case and was only apparent a total of 6 times in the 10 songs.

Both Rico Nasty and Megan Thee Stallion embraced misogyny and hegemonic masculinity in each of their top 5 songs. When looking for themes of hip-hop feminism, Rico expressed less feminism than Megan did, with only 2 of her songs embracing hip-hop feminism. Megan Thee Stallion embraced feminism in all of her top 5 songs. The context in which the two artists used the terms “bitch,” “hoe,” and “n\*gga” connected to

their rap personas and how they conveyed gender relations in their music. Rico Nasty used “bitch” negatively 38 times and positively 11 times. This connotation reflects the misogyny in her hyper-masculine rap persona in which she views other women as haters and less than herself. Rico used “n\*gga” 5 times, in which 4 were positively connotated. This connotation is representative of the hegemony in her rap persona, in which she raps about herself as one of the boys. Her use of the term “bitch” to put down other women and sexually objectify them is representative of misogyny and hegemonic masculinity in hip-hop. Megan used “bitch” negatively 45 times and positively 31 times. Her use of the term bitch to glorify women's sexuality as well as put down women is representative of the contradictory nature of hip-hop feminism. This form of feminism accepts the contradictions regarding women in hip-hop because it focuses on representation by giving women, particularly minority women, a platform. Female rappers can say something misogynous in their lyrics and still be hip-hop feminists. What is important is that female rappers have the platform to rap about whatever they want to, whether it is sex or social problems. Megan used “n\*gga” positively 12 times and negatively and 15 times negatively, which reinforces the depiction that relationships with men are both pleasurable and challenging. Rico is an example of a female rapper who assimilates into hip-hop by embracing misogyny and hegemonic masculinity in her lyrics. Megan is an example of the potential change in future hip-hop because she uses less misogyny, rarely expresses hegemonic masculinity, and embraces hip-hop feminism in her lyrics. The analysis of these terms explains how Megan and Rico rap about other men and women in their music and how they use misogyny, feminism, and hegemonic masculinity in their lyrics.

Rico and Megan's rap personas remain consistent within their lyrics, and this affects how they rap about other men and women in their lyrics. Despite the love these two artists receive from younger generations, critics, ranging from politicians to Ben Shapiro, associate these young rappers with deviance. Critics argue that Megan Thee Stallion is too sexual in her lyrics, but other female rappers such as Lil' Kim, were just as sexual, or that N.W.A.'s lyrics are just as violent as Rico's lyrics. While these critics may be worried that female rappers are sexually exploiting themselves to get by in the industry, they also need to understand that some women are genuinely comfortable with their sexuality and enjoy expressing it. Women are held to a double-standard in hip-hop. Male rappers, for example, repeatedly rap about their desire for sex; however, when Cardi B and Megan rapped about their own female genitalia in "WAP," it created a national controversy. This controversy is representative of the double standard seen in society; that men can rap about sexuality consistently yet they receive less criticism than women do, even though they are rapping about the same thing.

There are more advantages of accepting women into the hip-hop industry than disadvantages, despite how they express themselves, and female rappers need to be seen in rap music because women need to see other women represented in male-dominated fields. Regardless of this, hip-hop remains a controversial genre. Critics argue that female rappers hurt the youth's relationship with the opposite sex by rapping about men as "them versus us." I argue that as more women assimilate into the hip-hop industry, the gap between young men and women will close. Recently, Megan Thee Stallion was shot in both of her feet by Canadian rapper Tory Lanez (Derrick Bryson Taylor et al., 2020). Megan responded in a recent SNL performance of her song "Savage," in which she

stated, “We need to protect our Black women, and love our Black women because at the end of the day, we need our Black women. We need to protect our Black men and stand up for our Black men because at the end of the day, we’re tired of seeing hashtags about Black men” (Megan Thee Stallion: Savage (Live) – SNL, 2020). Megan also played segments of Malcolm X’s “Who Taught You to Hate Yourself” speech, stating, “The most disrespected...unprotected...neglected person in America is the Black woman” (Megan Thee Stallion: Savage (Live) – SNL, 2020). Instead of bashing Tory for shooting her, she focused her attention on physical violence against Black women in general and stated that Black women need to support Black men, and vice versa. By doing so, Megan did not solidify a “them versus us” narrative between men and women; instead, she emphasized unity among Black men and women. This SNL performance highlights that younger rappers have the power to express humanitarian messages. This unfortunate incident also reflects to the violence that is commonly expressed in rap music. With that being said, giving women a medium to express themselves in this genre will naturally give way to more compassionate topics. To do this, however, more women need to be represented in hip-hop.

As with all research, this study does have its limitations. One weakness of this research is that only the top 5 songs of each artist were analyzed. This could be an issue because songs that go mainstream may differ from songs that do not hit the charts. An analysis of more songs and artists could produce different results.

Future research could compare the “new wave” of female rappers to previous generations to see whether or not misogyny has increased or decreased in lyrics. Another area of analysis for future research would be to examine more songs and artists, as well

as analyze whether or not the top songs are different from all the other songs. Given that this is a descriptive analysis of song lyrics, further research could analyze music videos along with lyrics to better understand rap themes and personas.

Rap music needs to be taken more seriously and examined closely because it is very influential among younger generations. Assuming that young women look up to these two artists, it may help to understand these artists a bit better. Rico represents what happens when young women reinforce traditional misogyny and hegemony, and Megan represents what happens when modern feminist ideologies present themselves in hip-hop. Perhaps Rico's strong hegemony is not completely negative. Rapping about financial independence may be a positive thing for women who listen to Rico for financial motivation. Megan, on the other hand, enforces general independence and strength, which is always important for young women to hear. In her personal life, Rico is a single mother and provides for her family, and Megan provides scholarships for women of color who are completing their degrees in higher education. Perhaps the double-standard in hip-hop draws our attention to the negatives in female rap lyrics, but in the grand scheme of things, these themes have been apparent since the 1990s, and if women are to be closely judged in hip-hop, men should be as well. As more women enter the hip-hop industry, the genre will naturally change over time. Perhaps misogyny in rap lyrics will die down as more women enter the industry. Megan represents how the future of hip-hop may change by embracing hip-hop feminism in her lyrics and Rico represents what current hip-hop is by embracing misogyny and hegemonic masculinity. It is difficult to say what will happen with gender relations in the future of hip-hop, but women must be given a chance to rap without having to embrace misogyny and hegemonic masculinity.

## References

- Abad-Santos, A. (2020, August 14). Why Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion's "WAP" is actually a public health triumph. Retrieved from: <https://www.vox.com/2020/8/14/21368137/wap-meaning-megan-thee-stallion-cardi-b>
- Adams, T. M., & Fuller, D. B. (2006). The Words Have Changed but the Ideology Remains the Same: Misogynistic Lyrics in Rap Music. *Journal of Black Studies*, 36(6), 938–957. doi:10.1177/0021934704274072
- Arowolo, S. O. (2017). Understanding Framing Theory. Lagos State University. doi:10.13140/RG.2.2.25800.52482
- Billboard (2020, May 19). How Billboard Came to Its Calculations in This Week's Race For the Hot 100 No. 1. Retrieved from <https://www.billboard.com/articles/business/chartbeat/9380654/billboard-hot-100-number-one-calculations-6ix9ine>
- Chepp, V. (2015). Black Feminism and Third-Wave Women's Rap: A Content Analysis, 1996–2003. *Popular Music and Society*, 38(5), 545-564. doi:10.1080/03007766.2014.936187
- Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007). Framing Theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10(1), 103-126. doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.103054
- Conrad, K., Dixon, T. L., & Zhang, Y. (2009). Controversial Rap Themes, Gender Portrayals and Skin Tone Distortion: A Content Analysis of Rap Music Videos. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 53(1), 134–156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838150802643795>

- Durham, Aisha, Brittany Cooper, and Susanna Morris. 2013. The stage hip-hop feminism built: A new directions essay. *Signs: Journal of Woman in Culture and Society* 38: 721–737. <https://doi.org/10.1086/668843>
- Ewoodzie, J. (2017). *Break beats in the Bronx: Rediscovering hip-hop's early years*. Durham: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Frazier, E. F. (1948). *The Negro family in the United States*. New York: Dryden Press.
- Genius News. (2019, November 20). Rico Nasty Breaks Down Her Iconic Flow [Video]. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h\\_4MDAj-E\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_4MDAj-E_A)
- Genius News. (2020, January 24). The Many Flows Of Megan Thee Stallion [Video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6TU6VQGtbw&t=1s>
- Gopaldas, A. (2013). Intersectionality 101. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 32(1\_suppl), 90–94. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.12.044>
- Kappler, M. (2020, August 17). 'WAP' Is Making People Uncomfortable Because It's About Female Pleasure. Retrieved from [https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/wap-cardi-b-female-pleasure\\_ca\\_5f358233c5b6fc009a6340e3](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/wap-cardi-b-female-pleasure_ca_5f358233c5b6fc009a6340e3)
- Keyes, C. (2000). Empowering Self, Making Choices, Creating Spaces: Black Female Identity via Rap Music Performance. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 113(449), 255-269. doi:10.2307/542102
- Keyes, C. (2004). *Rap music and street consciousness*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Lerner, G. (1972). *Black women in White America*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Morton, P. (1991). *Disfigured images: The historical assault on Afro-American women* (5th ed., Vol. 97). New York: Greenwood Pr. <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/97.5.1585>



- Moynihan, D. (1965). *The Negro family: The case for national action*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.
- Neal, M. A. (2009). *What the music said: Black popular music and black public culture*. New York, New York: Routledge.
- Oware, M. (2018). *I got something to say: Gender, race, and social consciousness in rap music*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90454-2>
- Rose, T. (1994). *Black noise: Rap music and black culture in contemporary America*. Middleton: Wesleyan University Press.
- Rodgers-Rose, L. F. (1980). *The Black women*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Saturday Night Live. (2020, October 4). Megan Thee Stallion Savage (Live) [Video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9wq14EnezU>
- Taylor, D., Yuhas, A., Cramer, M., & Coscarelli, J. (2020, July 28). Megan Thee Stallion Says Tory Lanez Shot Her. He Responded With an Album. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/28/arts/music/megan-thee-stallion-shooting.html>
- Watson, A. (2019, June 27). Favorite music genres among consumers by age group in the U.S. 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/253915/favorite-music-genres-in-the-us/>
- Weitzer, R., & Kubrin, C. E. (2009). Misogyny in Rap Music: A Content Analysis of Prevalence and Meanings. *Men and Masculinities*, 12(1), 3–29. doi:10.1177/1097184X08327696

## Discography

- The Sugarhill Gang. 1979. "Rapper's Delight." *The Showdown: The Sugarhill Gang Vs. Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five*. Sugar Hill Records.
- Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five. 1982. "The Message." *The Message*. Sugar Hill Records.
- N.W.A. 1988. "Straight Outta Compton." *Straight Outta Compton*. Priority Records.
- JAY-Z & Kanye West. 2011. "N\*ggas in Paris." *Watch the Throne*. S. Carter Enterprises.
- J. Cole. 2014. "No Role Modelz." *2014 Forest Hills Drive*. Roc Nation.
- Tay-K. 2017. "Gotta Blast." *#SantanaWorld (+)*. 88 Classic.
- 21 Savage. 2016. "Red Opps." *Red Opps*. Slaughter Gang.
- Nicki Minaj. 2014. "Only." *Only*. Cash Money Records.
- Cardi B. 2020. "WAP." *WAP*. Atlantic Recording Corporation.
- Lil' Kim. 1996. "Not Tonight." *Hard Core*. Atlantic Recording Corporation.
- Lil' Kim. 2003. "(When Kim Say) Can You Hear Me Now?" *La Bella Mafia*. Atlantic Recording Corporation.
- City Girls. 2020. "Pussy Talk." *City On Lock*. Quality Control Music/Motown Records
- Megan Thee Stallion. 2020. "B.I.T.C.H." *Suga*. 300 Entertainment.
- Megan Thee Stallion. 2020. "Captain Hook." *Suga*. 300 Entertainment.
- Megan Thee Stallion. 2020. "Savage." *Suga*. 300 Entertainment.
- Megan Thee Stallion. 2019. "Sex Talk." *Fever*. 300 Entertainment.
- Megan Thee Stallion. 2019. "Big Ole Freak." *Tina Snow*. 300 Entertainment.
- Rico Nasty. 2017. "Poppin." *Sugar Trap 2*. Sugar Trap.
- Rico Nasty. 2018. "Countin' Up." *Nasty*. Sugar Trap.

Rico Nasty. 2018. "Trust Issues." *Nasty*. Sugar Trap.

Rico Nasty. 2018. "Smack a Bitch." *Smack a Bitch*. Sugar Trap.