

MASTERARBEIT | MASTER'S THESIS

Titel | Title

Hip Hop Music in Austrian EFL Teaching – Analyzing Hip Hop from a
Gender-Critical Perspective to Foster Critical Media Literacy

verfasst von | submitted by

Karin Lugmayr BEd

angestrebter akademischer Grad | in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education (MEd)

Wien | Vienna, 2025

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt |
Degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

UA 199 504 507 02

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt | Degree
programme as it appears on the student
record sheet:

Masterstudium Lehramt Sek (AB)
Unterrichtsfach Chemie Unterrichtsfach
Englisch

Betreut von | Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Alexandra Ganser-
Blumenau

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1. Introduction

“HIP HOP’S SEXISM IS VISIBLE, vulgar, aggressive and popular” (Rose *Wars* 114). Nonetheless, Hip Hop songs are played on the radio, are available on streaming platforms and their videos are easily accessible for our students through a click on YouTube. 50 Cent’s song “Candy Shop” reached the number one position in the Austrian charts and remained in the charts list for nineteen consecutive weeks (austriancharts.at), which resulted in frequent airplay of lines such as

I’ll take you to the candy shop
I’ll let you lick the lollipop
Go ‘head girl, don’t you stop
Keep going ‘til you hit the spot [...]
Got the magic stick, I’m the love doctor [...]
Get on top, then get to bouncing ‘round [...]
I melt in your mouth girl, not in your hands (50 Cent).

The catchy beat and playful metaphor of a “candy shop” and seemingly innocent imagery of a “lollipop” turn out to be representations of sexual experiences framed through the male gaze. Lines like “Keep going ‘til you hit the spot” suggest a clear power imbalance in the portrayed sexual relationship with the woman as an object for the male pleasure. Hip Hop record executive Russel Simmons defends such displays of sexism and praises the genre for its frankness to “paint a picture that is overlooked. The misogyny, the racism, the violence, the homophobia, these are things that we try to avoid instead of dealing with” (qtd. in Rose *Wars* 149). While it is true that sexism is not inherent in Hip Hop alone but reflects larger systemic societal issues (Rose *Wars* 149-154), merely displaying the problem “reinforce[s] the very ideas they express” (160). Instead, stereotypical, and sexist representations of women in Hip Hop should be critically examined to identify underlying power structures and to develop a social consciousness. Only if those issues are opened for critical reflection and discussion, eventually, change can occur with the goal to promote social justice.

Hip Hop emerged as “a locally inspired explosion of exuberance and political energy tethered to the idea of rehabilitating community” (Rose *Wars* xii) but it also marginalizes female voices, perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes and reinforces hypersexualized depictions of women (113-130). We cannot shield our students from the realities of overt sexism, but we, as educators, must

equip pupils with the tools to critically analyze how media texts are never unbiased or neutral as they can be strategically used to construct and reinforce existing power structures and ideologies.

With this goal in mind, I aim at analyzing how women are lyrically and visually portrayed in Hip Hop music videos through using Critical Discourse Analysis as an analytical framework and how Critical Discourse Analysis of Hip Hop lyrics and music videos can be used to foster critical media literacy in Austrian upper-secondary EFL teaching. To explore the educational possibilities of utilizing Hip Hop as authentic input in Austrian EFL classes it is crucial to first provide a more complete picture of Hip Hop culture. I, thus, agree with Price (18-19) who believes that

[i]n order to better understand Hip Hop Culture, it is imperative to revisit the political, social, economic, and cultural developments that the early innovators faced [...] to contextualize the need and the desire for something such as Hip Hop, a cultural movement with the aim of empowering disenfranchised, ostracized, and oppressed youth.

Chapter 2.1., therefore, summarizes Hip Hop evolution's cornerstones with the premise that "you've got to understand hip-hop's past and understand it as a cultural tradition rather than treat it as merely a product" (McLeod 144). Although Smith *et al.* and Kosut report a clear underrepresentation of female rappers and that the genre centers around a "heterosexual male aesthetic" (Stovall 599), highlighting female Hip Hop artists is important for the following reasons. First, an exploration of the representation of women in Hip Hop would not be complete without including Hip Hop's female pioneers who have challenged traditional gender categories through powerful displays of independence, skills or their sexuality to assert agency as a means of empowerment (see chapter 2.2.). Secondly, I do not want to perpetuate this gender imbalance in my thesis as well as in the classroom. Thirdly, a text's meanings are created through "social, historical, political, and ideological contexts" in which it is embedded (Rogers 5). Thus, the different realities of female and male Hip Hop artists render different contexts for the song to be analyzed in. In my analysis, I, therefore, contrast the representation of women in female and in male artists' Hip Hop songs.

Chapter 2.3. summarizes and contrasts #HipHopEd and Hip Hop Based Education (HHBE) as the two main approaches that advocate for an inclusion of Hip Hop into education. Hip Hop Based Education (HHBE) in American education

has already concluded the discussions of *why* Hip Hop should be included into the classrooms and moved on towards developing practical implications of *how* HHBE can be put into action (Hall *Deeper* 342). I believe that this first vital step has not yet been taken in the Austrian educational context. Chapter 2.4. therefore, outlines HHBE's research on Hip Hop's educational potential, which I then adapt to fit the Austrian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context in Chapter 3. Chapter 2.5. and 2.6. provide a comprehensive overview of Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Media Literacy. Although the introduction to this thesis briefly elaborated on the educational possibilities of using Hip Hop as authentic material to scaffold students' critical reflection skills to foster media literacy, chapter 4 addresses the criticism surrounding Hip Hop's sexism, violence and explicit language in more detail and argues for its inclusion in upper-secondary EFL teaching.

The analysis section of my thesis (chapter 5) starts with an outline of my methodology and data collection, followed by a brief empirical examination of the underrepresentation of women in Hip Hop. In my analysis of female representations in Hip Hop videos I contrast videos by male and female artists with regards to clothing, hairstyles, skin tone, female-male relationships, and the fragmentation of female bodies. The analysis and its findings are then used to bridge the gap between theory and educational practice by appropriating the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis with a gender-critical focus to the needs of an Austrian EFL classroom. With the lesson plan in the appendix, chapter 6 describes my Hip Hop project for an upper-secondary English class to foster students' critical media literacy. Chapter 7 presents the conclusion and addresses the limitations of this study as well as ideas for further research.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Hip Hop Culture

"Enhancing teachers' understandings of the historical and social significance of hip-hop and HHBE pedagogical practices [...], encourages teachers to attempt HHBE" (Hall and Irby 228). This thesis, therefore, begins with an overview of Hip Hop culture's history.

Hip Hop as a musical genre originates from the oppression of African Americans residing in the United States, more precisely in the ghettos of the

Bronx. Thus, Hip Hop culture derives from and expresses the social, political and economic difficulties and needs of the “poor inner-city youth” and has become a globally celebrated phenomenon. In times of high crime rates, drug trade and gang activities in the 1970s, Hip Hop seemed a welcomed solution to fulfill marginalized people’s “emotional needs” and to reduce gang warfare in the Bronx. This, by then, musical innovation changed the nature of gangs by calling for action to leave violence behind and to dance instead, which also lead to gang warfare being translocated and expressed through music (DJ-ing) and its lyrics (MC-ing), but also through b-boying/b-girling (i.e. breakdancing) and graffiti art, which constitute the four foundational elements of Hip Hop.

The turmoil of the 1960s, underpinned by racial injustice and poverty, resulted in a decline in neighborhoods, such as the Bronx, which became the birthplace of Hip Hop. From the Bronx being a “desired place” in 1910, was not much left in the 1970s as numerous arson attacks occurred, safety diminished, and crime rose; all of which led to mass emigration of those who could afford it and left behind “a city of despair”, especially in the South Bronx. This area was particularly known for its drug trade, violence, and gang activities. Since gangs seemed to fulfil the “emotional needs” of the youth, more and more young people became members and participated in gang wars and so-called “tagging” activities to gain respect in the community. As the climax of gang violence was reached, different attempts, such as a truce or a NYPD task force, were aimed at reducing gang warfare, however, only later, as Hip Hop emerged as an alternative, the goal seemed achievable (Price 1-7).

Despite emerging as a localized phenomenon and regional response to draw attention to social and political injustices, its creativity and enjoyment cannot be forgotten. DJ Kool Herc (Clive Campbell), who moved from Jamaica to the Bronx and is seen as the founding father of Hip Hop, brought his passion for music and a new style of DJ-ing to the people of the Bronx (Forman 2). Campbell’s innovative style, however, could not be kept a secret for long and not only paved the way for other artists but also gained the attention of other audiences and the music industry. During the 1980s and 1990s Hip Hop artists’ success led to nationwide recognition and “showcased the empowering aspect of Hip Hop” (Price 19). With its rising success, the corporate influence grew and so did media coverage. However, the media proved to be biased and insufficient

as it primarily portrayed the Hip Hop community as violent, sexist and with the “pursuit of an unashamed, irresponsible, careless lifestyle”, which was fueled by media companies’ “desire to attain and retain viewers and ratings” through “sensationalized stereotypes” (72-73). Jeffries also identifies this as the time when the “narrative of black purity” has been imprinted onto Hip Hop because “spectacular, oppositional ghetto blackness are captivating and salable to consumers in a range of social milieus” (6). Indeed, these portrayals are impartial and do the Hip Hop culture’s achievements and activist intentions injustice, as well as they neglect Hip Hop communities’ ethnic diversity and reinforce negative stereotypes about Black people (Rose *Wars* 75-77). Although “Afro-diasporic speech, music, and patterns” are deeply ingrained into Hip Hop, African Americans are not the only practitioners whose efforts played a crucial role in its development. For instance, DJ Kool Herc, the founding father of Hip Hop, emigrated from Jamaica to the United States. Thus, apart from African Americans, Latino, White, Indigenous and Hispanic Americans played essential roles in the emergence of Hip Hop culture (Price 6) but are often disregarded.

This raises the frequently discussed question: Who is Hip Hop? (45). This question is far from easy to answer. “Trying to define hip-hop is a little like asking what air is” (Cummings 9). The interrelation of authenticity, membership and ownership (Price 45) needs to be examined to get a glimpse into the controversial debate of who Hip Hop really is. Therefore, I will only offer a brief insight into this ongoing and non-conclusive debate to demonstrate how my target group, Austrian EFL students, fit into Hip Hop culture.

I agree with Price that there is no simple answer to the question of who Hip Hop is as it would be “most likely due to frantic stereotyping on the basis of race or class or the denial of the extremely inclusive nature of youth culture and its various musical and subcultural manifestations” (45). I also concur with McLeod that understanding Hip Hop’s past is crucial (144) for understanding it as a cultural tradition. With the frequently used phrase “keepin’ it real” a specific belief system (Low *et al.* 118), usually related to Hip Hop’s beginning phase, is referred to and strived for. Nonetheless, regarding Hip Hop culture in its entirety, the music industry’s influence cannot be neglected. On the one hand, the increase in popularity in the mainstream music sector and its commodification has led to a changing nature of musical products. As a result, Hip Hop has

frequently been attacked for “being threatened with assimilation” and for losing its once pervasive authentic character (McLeod 134). On the other hand, the music industry’s involvement led to a global rise in the prominence of Hip Hop artists. This way, a new generation of youth gets the opportunity to search and show “their own unique manner and method of expression and aim[s] to challenge various issues from generations past” (Price 17). In this paper I, therefore, employ the concept of a “global hip-hop culture” which allows all young people independent of their cultural and ethnic backgrounds to “connect and interact in aesthetic activities” (Horton *et al.* 59). Seeing Hip Hop as a transnational genre emphasizes Hip Hop’s possibility to serve as a platform for marginalized groups to voice their struggles regardless of their cultural boundaries and, thus serves as a justification of why Hip Hop can and should be adapted to the Austrian educational context.

An exploration of Hip Hop’s history, however, would not be complete without including Hip Hop’s female pioneers who have powerfully expressed their struggles since Hip Hop’s emergence. The next chapter, therefore, summarizes female Hip Hop pioneer’s strategies to counter the patriarchal system and their accomplishments that paved the way for “Hip Hop feminism” as a field of study.

2.2. Hip Hop Feminism and Hip Hop’s Female Pioneers

This master’s thesis analyzes Hip Hop music from a gender-critical perspective, which employs concepts inherent in Hip Hop feminism. Peoples argues that Hip Hop feminism evolved out of the “dire need of a new feminist movement” as traditional feminism has failed to include Black women’s perspectives and realities (20). The term “Hip Hop feminism” can be traced back to Joan Morgan’s influential work “When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost”, which combines her personal experiences and her seemingly contradictory roles of being part of the Hip Hop community and a feminist (Halliday and Pay 9). Joan Morgan argues that Hip Hop feminism should reconcile its apparent contradictions through developing a feminist consciousness that allows Black women “to examine how representations and images can simultaneously [be] empowering and problematic” (Jamila 392 qtd. in Horsley 103). Nicole Horton summarizes Hip Hop feminism’s goal to “ruptur[e] ideologies of universal womanhood, bodies, class and gender construction to center the Black identity as paramount.” Hip Hop

feminism, thus, addresses the multifaceted experiences Black women face in a racist and patriarchal society and demands an intersectional approach, which demarcates traditional feminism for a lack of racial inclusivity. Peoples, nonetheless, highlights Hip Hop feminism's important connection to "university-based feminism", which provides an initial framework and understanding of feminism (26).

Although Joan Morgan is credited with the term "Hip Hop feminism", female rappers have raised their voices in the male-dominated genre since its emergence (Keyes 255). Rose praises those Black female rappers for spreading feminist messages that center around Black women's "fears, pleasures, and promises [...] [who] have been relegated to the margins of public discourse" (*Noise* 146). In addition, those feminist voices engage in discourse with their male counterparts and provide counter-narratives through different thematic foci, such as addressing "sexual politics" (147). Peoples, thus, regards Hip Hop as the medium through which "hip-hop feminists can spread their message of critical analysis and empowerment" (25).

In her book "Black Noise", Tricia Rose focuses on influential women in Hip Hop and addresses their complex roles and struggles in this male-dominated genre. Rose describes MC Lyte, Queen Latifah and Salt-N-Pepa as pioneering female MCs who use different strategies to reclaim their narrative and challenge sexist structures and gender norms. For instance, Queen Latifah is praised for her skillful rhymes that are "embedded in an aggressive self-possessed identity that exudes confidence and power" (163), particularly visible in her anthem "Ladies First", which celebrates Black female power and solidarity. Latifah "forges new territory for black women" (166) through powerful rap passages in an assertive voice enhanced through visual references to Black female political activists and the portrayal of Latifah as a "Third World military strategist" (162) among pictures of struggles Black people face. While Latifah asserts her independence and power without attacking or blaming Black men, another strategy for resistance and the reimagination of gender roles is through "confrontational communication" which encapsulates how female rappers' lyrics address or even attack their male counterparts as a response to their sexist lyrics. Unfortunately, many female attempts of open confrontation have been reduced to "bitching" and subverted to "female complaint", which depicts the "vulnerability

of women's voices to devaluation" (162). As a third approach to express resistance to Hip Hop's sexism and patriarchal system is the active display of sexuality and the expression of female desire. Rose mentions Salt 'N' Pepa as early Hip Hop representatives who use their sexuality to assert agency and as a means of empowerment. In their video for "Shake Your Thang", the plot surrounds their arrest for public sexual dancing, which they mockingly endure as a sign of their "irreverence toward the morally based sexual constrictions placed on them as women" (167). While Salt 'N' Pepa's sexual dancing can be seen as a form of sexual freedom, when viewed in a patriarchal context "with the common practice of objectifying all women's bodies", Rose calls out this "dangerously close [connection] to self-inflicted exploitation" (168). Peoples summarizes this as the "potential for coercive power to assert [sexual freedom] via the use of racialized hypersexual tropes and the simultaneous disruptive possibilities that arise when those tropes are read in a different light" (25). It is, however, time to understand that self-determined representations of female sexuality does not grant men the permission to exploit it. Moreover, embracing agency in the expression of female sexuality must be accompanied by a broader societal shift that challenges established power dynamics and promotes mutual respect and focuses on consent.

Contrary to Salt 'N' Pepa, Missy Elliot challenges traditional gender categories and norms through performances of masculinity and ambiguity and "clever strategies such as performing insanity, double (and triple) entendre, queering subject personality, and articulating the carnivalesque" (Witherspoon 872). Through expressing a fluidity of gender roles, she performs the role of what Witherspoon calls a "trickster" who employs "chameleonic constructions of fluid and dual gender" (881). Elliot, however, does not reject femininity entirely, she fuses masculine energy and her unique expression of womanhood that presents her as a multifaceted persona. Elliot holds agency over her own sexual narratives and voices the importance of "a sex-positive agenda" that centers Black women's sexual desires and sexual agency (884).

This chapter offered a brief overview of Hip Hop feminism's emergence and objectives. Despite their marginalization, female participants have been part of Hip Hop from early on. This list of female Hip Hop trailblazers, indeed, is not exhaustive. Nonetheless, this chapter summarizes Salt 'N' Pepa, Queen Latifah

and Missy Elliot's strategies to navigate Hip Hop's gendered norms and portrayal of female sexuality. While Rose celebrates their resilience and creative strategies that paved the way for future female participants in a hostile male-dominated environment, she also calls out their challenges. On the one hand, female rappers are scrutinized for adopting a masculine aggression or their confrontational effort is belittled and mocked as "bitching", but on the other hand, they are judged for their public embrace of their sexuality.

2.3. #HipHopEd versus Hip Hop Based Education (HHBE)

In recent years, there have been several movements, particularly in the United States, which offer a theoretical framework of how Hip Hop can and should be included into teaching and learning. Thereby, two main approaches emerged: #HipHopEd and Hip Hop Based Education (HHBE). While the first advocates for a more radical approach where educational institutions either fully immerse themselves in Hip Hop including all its aspects or leave it be (Emdin *Introduction* 1-4), the latter more liberally aims at using Hip Hop as the "possibility of transformation" (Chang ix). Therefore, I deem it crucial to first describe both movements' principles and aims and then to appropriate them to the needs of the Austrian educational context.

Emdin describes #HipHopEd as a "sociopolitical movement", "theoretical framework and practical approach to teaching and learning" that aims at "disrupting the oppressive structures of schools and schooling for marginalized youth" (*Introduction* 1). Through describing educational and academic institutions as well as the entertainment industry as "oppressive" and hypocritical, Emdin indicates a clear dichotomy of 'we' (the Hip Hop community) versus 'them' (the institutions that "present themselves as our saviors" (*Introduction* 2) and fail the students on a daily basis). He further expresses a quite radical position where educational institutions either fully immerse themselves in Hip Hop or leave it be. There seems to be no room for compromise or a settle-in period that allows educators to familiarize themselves with Hip Hop education and all its connected notions. You are either already part of the Hip Hop community or you belong to the 'enemy'. Emdin even goes as far as saying that "[w]e, [the members of the Hip Hop community] will fight [...] within the walls of classrooms until hip-hop is established within schools as the *primary approach* for the delivery of instruction"

(*Introduction* 4; emphasis added). While he originally advocated for an inclusion of #HipHopEd into the established structure, he now wants #HipHopEd to occupy the school system because he is “tired of seeing our youth being emotionally and intellectually slaughtered in traditional schools” (ibid.).

Following the aforementioned ‘us versus them’ dichotomy, Emdin (*Introduction*) likewise distinguishes between “true” Hip Hop and commercial Hip Hop. He ascribes news stations and corporate record labels as educational institutions’ “co-conspirators” to discredit Hip Hop through “brainwash[ing] the public” and marketing a misogynistic and violent picture of Hip Hop (5). Instead, Hip Hop in its purest form is an expression of peace, unity, freedom and creativity (2) that provides critique of formal education (17). He likewise distinguishes between artists that the youth can aspire to and look up to on the one hand and commercially successful sell-outs to the entertainment industry on the other hand (2). Regarding Emdin’s ‘the real hip-hoppers versus the commercial sell-outs’ distinction, his reasoning sometimes lacks a convincing line of argumentation: When Emdin praises Kanye West as a critic for traditional schooling, he contradicts his earlier critique of sell-outs to the music industry because Kanye West clearly is a commercially successful artist: In the billboard’s ranking of the “50 Greatest Rappers of All Time” (Lamarre *et al.*) Kanye West scored the eleventh place. This position resulted from his impact on Hip Hop through offering (often controversial) social critique and achievements, such as keeping 19 songs in the billboard 100 charts for more than twenty weeks (billboard, Kanye West). In West’s clothing line he sells kid’s T-shirt for \$100 or hoodies for \$200 (with a logo resembling the Hakenkreuz) (kanYeWest). Moreover, the annual tuition for West’s private school, Donda Academy, reportedly costs \$15 000 (Johnson; Roundtree), making it unaffordable for and thus excluding many children; all of which contradicts #HipHopEd’s goal to make education more accessible and relevant for marginalized communities.

While Emdin’s outcry against the Hip Hop industry and educational institutions is understandable, for me, scapegoating them for the negative image Hip Hop has gained is not an educational and future-oriented solution. Instead, the connection should be regarded as more complex. It should be acknowledged that sexism, violence and explicit language has already been part of Hip Hop from the beginning, just as it is part of our society. We should hence move beyond

simply attacking and blaming Hip Hop and must “view these allegations through the broader lens of American popular culture and society characterized as equally patriarchal, violent, and misogynist” (Pulido 71). In addition, classrooms are never homogeneous, more precisely not all students can personally connect and relate to Hip Hop culture. Using #HipHopEd as the primary educational approach to make education more relevant and engaging for marginalized communities can equally exclude personal experiences of other groups.

I would therefore include Hip Hop in education adhering to the concepts of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. According to Ladson-Billings, culture “involves every aspect of human endeavor including thought, perceptions, feelings, [...] attitudes”, values and norms, which all influence the perception of and interaction with the world (*Homie* 22). Media content is, thus, a product of a certain cultural framework. As one negative example, she mentions human service professionals who often employ the term cultural competence in their educational curricula. This often consists of “do’s and don’ts in dealing with clients” who differ racially or linguistically from the mainstream. This notion, however, wrongfully depicts culture as static including “unchanging sets of actions or behaviors”. Instead, Ladson-Billings emphasizes “the fluid nature of culture” and advocates for cultural education that helps students to “recognize and appreciate their cultural [sic] of origin [even though this is the mainstream culture] while also learning to develop fluency in at least one other culture” (*Homie* 22). Hence, instead of a “reductionist rap-centric approach”, Hip Hop culture should be regarded as a practical sum of cultural identities and lived experiences. The goal should be to understand and learn from those experiences. Instead of assimilating students’ home culture to the school culture, a “dynamic or synergistic relationship” (Ladson-Billings, *Theory* 467) should be established. Learning from each other should foster an inclusive learning environment that reinforces diverse cultural identities in the classroom. For the purpose of making sense of authentic material beyond the surface-level, to explore how different audiences perceive media messages differently, influenced by different ideologies, power dynamics and societal norms Critical Discourse Analysis serves as the main analysis approach.

In addition, instead of merely scapegoating the media industry of painting a distorted picture, highlighting the benefits it has brought to Hip Hop culture is equally important. Without the media industry, Hip Hop would not have become

such a globally celebrated phenomenon as it is today. “Catering to audiences of all races”, music has the unique opportunity to unite people from all walks of life independent of their skin color (Price 57). This allows people around the world to enjoy it (fun element), learn from it (media competence) and “expand the boundaries of hip-hop by crafting new texts, and practices” (Hill and Petchauer 2) through appropriating it to their needs.

On the one hand, #HipHopEd’s incentive to incorporate Hip Hop into education is mainly to change the oppressive educational system through foregrounding the experiences of marginalized communities. Hip Hop Based Education (HHBE), on the other hand, refers to all kind of “educational research using the elements of Hip Hop (i.e. rap, turntableism, break dancing, graffiti, knowledge of self, fashion, language)” that “inform pedagogy” (Love 108) as opposed to taking possession of pedagogy like in the former approach. Chang acknowledges not only the power and the “possibility of transformation” of Hip Hop in education, but also that Hip Hop cannot be the “conclusive solution” as it is not “free of contradictions” (ix).

In their book “Schooling Hip Hop”, Hill and Petchauer (2-5) describe the growth HHBE has achieved since its emergence. The focus shifted from originally only incorporating rap lyrics to including all other dimensions of Hip Hop as well. This expansion contributes to valuing the genre’s “role of knowledge” that is not only inherent in the genre, but also in (young) peoples’ everyday lives. Together with valuing its cultural relevance, this allows the deep and complex analyses that the genre deserves. However, not only English and language classrooms can profit from HHBE. Hill and Petchauer argue for embracing HHBE in different disciplines, such as Maths or Science (3). Being able to do so, Hip Hop should not only be used as a product to be analyzed in classes. Instead, Hip Hop practices, such as freestyling (Hall *Shop* 399), sampling (Hall *Shop* 400; Hall *Deeper* 345; Petchauer 962; Kelly 54), battling (Adjapong 54; Emdin *Cypher* 14-16), cyphering (Emdin *Cypher* 14-16) or storytelling (Love 117-125) should be integrated into classes.

Both #HipHopEd and Hip Hop Based Education highlight the importance and the potential of Hip Hop in education. While both are in accordance with the *why* (it should be included) and agree mostly on the *how*, their perception of *how much* differs greatly. Despite (or because) of Emdin’s radical approach and

commitment he managed to expand HipHopEd's reach. For instance, he initiated the Twitter page and hashtag #HipHopEd as a "[h]ome to a global community, reimagining the relationship between Hip-Hop and education" (#HipHopEd Twitter) with Twitter chats scheduled every Tuesday to promote communication and exchange between the practitioners. With over 25.000 followers, #HipHopEd is made available through Twitter as a medium for a global audience. On the contrary, HHBE, which focuses more on academic and practitioners' research in the field, has hardly managed to leave the academic area according to Richards (21). HHBE, hence, represents the different strands of academic research and the opportunities of what is possible through incorporating Hip Hop into education, which will be presented in the next chapter.

2.4. Hip Hop's Educational Potential

Emdin compares and describes both Hip Hop and science as "ways of looking at and making sense of the world" (*Urban* 1). While science is an established component of our curricula and it would not be dared to question its existence in education, the same could not be said about Hip Hop. Instead, some educators seem afraid that Hip Hop passes "violence, misogyny, homophobia, hypercapitalist consumption, and [...] bad grammar" (Seidel 117) to our students. This chapter, therefore, aims at outlining already researched aspects and trends in Hip Hop education. Reviewing the literature, I have organized the different content and skill-related purposes of using Hip Hop in education into three main categories: Focus on the student (identity), gaining knowledge about societal structures as well as cultural knowledge and acquiring academic skills.

Hip Hop and Student (Identity)

With regards to Emdin's critique about the traditional educational system, the main reason for incorporating Hip Hop is to put the student at the center of attention. Teaching effectively does not only involve proficiency in the subject matter or knowing the curriculum, but a "profound understanding of the cultural backgrounds of students [...]" (Emdin *Urban* xii) is equally important for several reasons. Firstly, knowledge about students' cultures and incorporating them into the classroom can bridge the often-anticipated cultural differences between the teacher and the students. Including Hip Hop as a "medium that expresses the

realities of their [students'] lives" (2), allows the teacher to gain insights into the students' realities as well as their thoughts. In doing so, numerous researchers agree on the positive influence on students' motivation and ultimately on their participation. Secondly, if the content seems relevant for the students and if they are able to connect to material that activates their personal prior knowledge (Seidel 118-119), including Hip Hop can increase motivation. In Kumar's study, students ascribed Hip Hop a certain "cool factor" (1238). While this indeed serves as a useful starting point, Seidel (120) rightfully describes the risk when Hip Hop is used as bait to hook students but as nothing more. It would be a mistaken assumption that all (urban) students equally like the same Hip Hop artists, songs or even that students like Hip Hop in general. Thus, simply using Hip Hop as a 'trick' to catch students' attention would not just be unfair but it would also undermine Hip Hop's full potential.

Since rap speaks honestly and straightforwardly about emotional realities experienced by Hip Hop's participants, this might also encourage students to express their personal realities and honest thoughts in the same (creative) way (Broughton 19; Richards 22). Hip Hop materials can enable students to find and express their voice in open classroom conversations (Hill 11). Through open dialogue and authentic Hip Hop materials dealing with different subjects, teachers can help students to incorporate important issues that shape their daily lives into the classroom. In this case, Hip Hop can contribute to "more favorable learning environments" (Hill 2). In his book "Beats, Rhymes, and the Classroom Life", Hill investigated the influence of Hip Hop culture classes on students' identity (formation) and how identity is renegotiated. Through what he terms "wounded healing", Hill structured his literary classes not just around Hip Hop texts to be analyzed but more importantly around students' personal stories. While Hill provided topics and suitable materials as entry points, he engaged students in journal writing, group discussions and critical analyses to provide "a form of release and relief for themselves" (65). Eliciting such a personal response not only aims at scaffolding identity formation but also to critically engage with Hip Hop culture and the mainstream/ dominant culture of schools, to "radically challenge sanctioned formations of knowledge and produce new categories of meaning" (121). Hip Hop, hence, can help students to "orient themselves and

identify who they are in social and cultural ways” (Horton et al. 59), all of which are important factors in identity development.

In addition, expressing an informed opinion in an open classroom discussion requires critical examination of the respective topic. This should not only be based on personal experience but also involves gaining an understanding of relevant background information and critical theories. The second aspect of how Hip Hop can be used in education is, thus, raising awareness on cultural and societal issues.

Hip Hop and Societal/ Cultural Issues

Studies about the implementation of Hip Hop in educational settings reported increased focus on critical reflection skills (Lynch) and the call for action regarding important societal and political issues both in Hip Hop culture and the dominant culture (Stovall). Malone and Martinez termed Hip Hop an “organic globalizer”, which ultimately ascribes the genre its unique possibility to serve as a “vehicle for social transformation [...] both locally and globally” (5) through its relation and reflection on societal issues, such as (racial and gender) inequalities and discrimination, police brutality, poverty or materialism to only name a few. Despite originating in New York, Hip Hop managed to spread across borders and exposed other communities to Hip Hop’s awareness-raising and transformative impact. Emdin compares Hip Hop to a mirror showing the “socio-political landscape of the country and their implications on the urban populace” (*Introduction* 3). Looking into this mirror, called Hip Hop, thus, allows gaining insights into authentic and culturally relevant content within a specific context (of time and place).

Since Hip Hop is intrinsically rooted in African American culture, with rap originating in the oral tradition of storytelling (ibid. 1), counter to common beliefs, Hip Hop is rich in literary traditions and historical information. Dyson explains that “[r]ap artists explore grammatical creativity, verbal wizardry, and linguistic innovation in refining the art of oral communication” (408-410, qtd. in Seidel 118); all of which can be traced back to illiteracy experienced during slavery. This literary uniqueness of rap texts allowed Alim to initiate “Hip Hop Linguistics” to understand and research “Hip Hop Nation Language” with its rules, conventions and innovations, just as any other language has. Alim calls Hip Hop artists the

Shakespeare or Chaucer of the twenty-first century (viii). We should, therefore, finally reject the idea of having “high” and “low” cultures (Hill 6) or “linguistic supremacy” (Alim viii) and grant Hip Hop just as much validation in literary studies and education as any other genre. For instance, in Lynch’s project “Illuminating Chaucer”, he compared “The Canterbury Tales” with performances of Eminem, Kanye West or Lauryn Hill (46) to highlight the importance of rhyme for social and political critique (43).

To learn from Hip Hop and regard it as social critique rather than a celebration of (gang) violence or drugs, Stovall discusses another literary device, namely the importance of metaphor in rap music (592). Through the combination of literary analyses and social studies, Hip Hop culture has been used to analyze numerous specific topics with regards to an educational background: Consumerism and the (exploitative) workings of record companies (Stovall); mental health (suicide rates of African Americans (Ogbevire) or Hip Hop’s influence on youth alcohol consumption (Williams)); censorship and the relation between language und meaning (Kelly); African-American history and traditions (Love); or the “hybridity of cultural identities” (Love), only to name a few.

It becomes apparent that a multitude of different (specific) topics can be integrated into education through Hip Hop. The list of topics, however, is by far not complete. Moreover, the topics that have been researched in academics without a relation to education are even more diverse and offer a broad foundation for further research into their adaptation for teaching.

Hip Hop and Teaching (Academic) Skills

Hip Hop materials can also be used to master and practice different (academic) skills. Pate, for instance, equals rap with poetry, a rap song with a poem and the artist with a poet. He asserts that “many rappers use complex techniques of poetic structure in their work” (xv). In addition to metaphors, metonymies or alliterations, which occur in both classical literature and Hip Hop, the latter has this unique addition that its language use is dynamic, alive and constantly changing (53). Regarding Hip Hop as poetry validates the genre’s literary capacity and to some degree aims at challenging the classical literary canon and justifies the inclusion of African American literature (119). Additionally, this broadens the possible texts to be analyzed in literature classes. The success of

doing so can be seen in Sitomer and Cirelli's, as well as Lynch's designed English literature courses surrounding rap texts. The former structured their book "Hip Hop Poetry and The Classics" around poetic devices, motifs and themes and compared traditionally studied poems to Hip Hop texts. With practical implications for the (multicultural) classroom, their goal was to make "the academic study of poetry accessible, relevant, comprehensible and enjoyable to students" (2).

Hip Hop education cannot only be combined with literary studies, but also with linguistics. Hip Hop language can be used to discuss the importance of context in language use, as well as the connotations of certain words (Kelly 54). For instance, the term "nigga" could either connote something positive ("as symbolic for young people negotiating identity and resisting those definitions that have been created for them" during slavery) or negative (reinforcing oppression), depending on the context of use (Baszile 15).

Emdin examined the similarities between established skills in Hip Hop culture and those necessary in science education. He points out that both science communication and Hip Hop exchanges require similar sub-skills: Particularly "active debate [...] and the ability to defend one's position" and "rap battles", as well as the "demonstration of mastery" and "freestyle sessions" (*Cypher* 15-16) show similar structures. Hall also compared Hip Hop skills to skills occurring in argumentative essay writing. He used the concept of freestyling to take away the pressure of formal/ academic writing conventions and to just write. Students, then, produced their own text just as in the process of sampling, which constitutes "reformulate[ing] isolated and unrelated ideas to construct a new text" (345).

While the previously mentioned studies primarily focused on academic skills, Broughton described the possibilities of using age-appropriate Hip Hop in a preschool classroom, which can ultimately foster "phonemic awareness and language development" (20). He also emphasized having fun as the key factor for including Hip Hop in the classroom, which Kumar calls its "entertainment value" (1239), and which should not be forgotten.

STUDENT	SOCIETY/ CULTURE	SKILLS
•bridging cultural differences •including students' realities of lives •motivating students •increasing participation •initiating open/ honest conversations •identity formation	•examining content knowledge •gaining historical information •raising awareness •being a vehicle for social transformation •analyzing literary/ linguistic content	•analyzing literary texts •analyzing word meanings and the context •learning debating skills •encouraging text writing
having fun		

Table 1: *Hip Hop's Educational Possibilities.*

Issues in Teaching Hip Hop

While the previous examples illustrate Hip Hop's potential in education, which I have summarized in **Table 1**, there are some issues to be considered. If students' culture outside of school is brought into the classroom, Greenfield claims that it can only be successful if teachers grant authority to the students and if they are "open to learning from and with their students" (242). In the construction of such a collaborative classroom, teachers must give a certain amount of power to the students, their wishes and ideas. This often leads to unexpected outcomes that cannot be planned beforehand and, thus, requires flexibility and confidence on behalf of the teachers, with which many educators struggle.

Love or Seidel confirm that more and more educators understand the value Hip Hop can have in education and show their incentive to include it in their own teaching. However, many teachers outside of Hip Hop culture are concerned and feel insecure about having enough knowledge about the culture and how to effectively include it in their teaching (Love 109). This often leads teachers to reduce Hip Hop to being the "bait" for students to motivate them and lure them into a certain topic without using it any further (Seidel 120).

Love also described a situation where an elementary-school student uttered extremely sexist and violence-glorifying remarks after dealing with Hip Hop in class. Love admitted that she first had to overcome her "romanticized notions of Hip Hop" (125) to acknowledge that Hip Hop is full of misogyny or violence and to challenge and contest those practices that reproduce oppression, even though she is a proud member of the Hip Hop community. Although Hip

Hop depicts an imbalance between female and male representations, the same should not be brought into the classroom. Stovall clarifies that education should critically discuss that Hip Hop mainly revolves around a “heterosexual male aesthetic” (599) and that teachers should not engage in the same dynamic.

Another common critique is the difficulty of aligning Hip Hop education with common core standards for teaching and preparing students for standardized tests (Hall 343). As the studies examining Hip Hop in education were mainly conducted in the American context, the third chapter will discuss such issues with regards to the Austrian context. First, however, to tackle the previously described issues when including Hip Hop in teaching, a critical framework of analysis is needed to account for Hip Hop’s sexist content. In addition, due to the previously mentioned potential of Hip Hop to offer societal critique, Critical Discourse Analysis lends itself to serve as a primary approach to analyze the genre. The next chapter, therefore, summarizes Critical Discourse Analysis as my main approach to analyze Hip Hop songs from a gender-critical perspective, and Critical Literacy Analysis then serves as the bridge to education to foster critical awareness and to encourage students to question in Hip Hop inherent inequalities instead of only passively consuming it.

2.5. Critical Discourse Analysis

Flowerdew and Richardson define Critical Discourse Studies’ (CDS) goal to “develop a critically contextualized approach to linguistics which identifies issues of ideology, power and inequality as central” (1). This goes beyond the analysis of clauses and sentences as it includes the environment the text has been produced in (Widdowson 1). CDS examine “real-world examples of language in use” with the crucial consideration of its context (Wodak 1) and the particular interest in the interrelationship between power and language. Thus, Critical Discourse Analysis’ (CDA) aim is to examine how “dominance, discrimination, power and control is [both overtly and covertly] manifested in language use”, and how language is (strategically) used to construct and reinforce existing power structures and ideologies (2).

Wodak identified three main levels in a critical discourse analysis: Firstly, the ideology and power structures that influence(d) text production. Secondly, the historical aspect, which sees “individuals or groups as social historical subjects”

and where every text is located at a specific point in time and space with respective ideologically set norms. Lastly, the reception of a text through different creations of meanings through different audiences. Ideologies determine and naturalize (language) conventions until they are regarded as the norm and through which social hierarchies are reinforced. Any deviation of those installed norms could be regarded as resistance to the existing ideologically set conventions (2-3). Wodak ascribes Kress the formulation of CDA's basic assumptions developed in its early stages in the 1970s to 1980s, which include:

- "language is a social phenomenon;
- not only individuals, but also institutions and social groupings have specific meanings and values, that are expressed in language in systematic ways;
- texts are the relevant units of language in communication;
- readers/ hearers are not passive recipients in their relationship to texts [...]" (Wodak 6).

Adhering to those tenets, it becomes apparent that CDA overlaps with Ladson-Billings' "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy" as both regard social/ cultural factors as key elements in forming a person's identity and ultimately in influencing their response to a text. In addition, Ladson-Billings highlights how mainstream culture always plays an essential role in how a text, despite being a product of a marginalized culture, will be understood and to which it will be compared. The different linguistic features can be systematically used in "establishing, manipulating and naturalizing social hierarchies" (Wodak 6). To interpret the power linguistic structures can convey, the "text- and context- dependency" has to be analyzed to better understand the meaning-making processes of individuals. In the 1980's another layer of analysis, the "discourse-historical approach" (6) was integrated to critical linguistics.

To fully understand CDA, Wodak claims that a basic understanding of Halliday's approach to grammar and linguistic analysis is essential (8). As a founding father of a functionalist approach to linguistics, Halliday focuses on culture, which he defines as a "set of semiotic systems, a set of systems of meaning, all of which interrelate" (4), and which gives meaning to not just language, but any other mode of cultural behavior. This includes various kinds of art forms, dress, how families are structured, and much more. All the possible elements combined, including language, constitute culture. Halliday's and also CDA's primary focus is thus, to examine the relation between social structures

and texts. Historically, terminology, such as the definition of a text, has undergone considerable changes. The following chapter, therefore, addresses how CDA defines certain key words and how they will be adopted for the purposes of this thesis.

The Conception of Text

Widdowson addresses issues in Discourse Analysis and stresses the ambiguity of the term 'text' even within CDA (5). Originally, text was defined quite narrowly as a "piece of written language" (Fairclough *Study* 4). Through the emergence of (Critical) Discourse Analysis, first the spoken discourse was added and later a text did not have to be considered linguistic at all. As formerly stated, reducing Hip Hop to its lyrics would be an insufficient approach, which coincides with CDA's notion of a text. A text "goes beyond what is said and written; it includes other non-verbal goings on – the total environment in which a text unfolds", the so-called "con-text" (Halliday 5). For a text to be understood and for language to be meaningful, it needs to be placed in and analyzed through the environment in which it was produced. Texts can be regarded as "indicators of sociocultural processes, relations, and change" (Fairclough *Study* 4). Fairclough supports this development of the definition of text as nowadays we primarily deal with multi-semiotic texts, in which language is combined with other semiotic forms. Television, for instance, incorporates visuals, sound and music with language (ibid. 4). In Hip Hop music, a song entails the combination of lyrics, sound and visuals, as in music videos, incorporating fashion, performance, setting et cetera. Apart from being multimodal, a text is equally functional. Halliday defines a text through its functionality as it is always intended to fulfill a certain job within a specific context (10). But merely recognizing something as a text is not sufficient when analyzing it. According to Widdowson, this is where the recognition of a text's intention, and thus, where discourse comes in (8).

Discourse in Critical Discourse Analysis

The choice of vocabulary, tone and intonation, gestures and mimics or symbols, summarized as representational systems, shape how a message's meaning is constructed and interpreted. Meanings are created through "social, historical, political, and ideological contexts" in which they are embedded. Additionally, they

are never unintentional as they are always motivated and intended to achieve a certain outcome (to “build relationships, knowledge, identities, and worldviews”) (Rogers 5). Again, rooted in Hallidayian linguistics, producers of texts are making active choices on what representational system they choose, how they use language and for what social functions (6). Halliday identifies the experiential, interpersonal, logical and textual functions which constitute the discourse of a text. As the name suggests, the experiential function refers to the representation of the sum of experiences a person has gained; through social interactions between speaker and listener, language can be seen as reflection and action of interpersonal relations; the logical function accounts for the logical and coherent organization of a text and lastly, the textual function encompasses all the aspects that make a text (16-23). Fairclough (*Social* 64) adapted Halliday’s functions and proposed the identity function (i.e. constructing a social self), the relational function (i.e. constructing relations(hips) with others), and the ideational function (i.e. constructing “systems of knowledge and belief”). Fairclough, however, claims that those functions are not only rooted in the social environment/ in the discourse, but also vice versa as they might also be used creatively to initiate social change (Fairclough qtd. in Rogers 7). Thereby, active choices are made about what to include or exclude. In textual analyses, the explicitness and implicitness of content may hence offer valuable insights into sociocultural structures and ideologies (Fairclough *Study* 6). Ideology refers to how power and domination was and is distributed unequally within social environments through the strategic deployment of symbolic forms and discourse practices (Wodak 10):

For CDA, language is not powerful on its own – it gains power by the use powerful people make of it. This explains why CL [Critical Linguistics] often chooses the perspective of those who suffer, and critically analyses the language use of those in power, who are responsible for the existence of inequalities and who also have the means and opportunity to improve conditions (ibid.).

What makes Discourse Analysis Critical?

Again, the definitions of what makes the approach critical vary greatly. Wodak (9) summarizes “distance to the data, embedding the data in the social environment [...], and a focus on self-reflection as scholars doing research” as the basic and prime notions of something being ‘critical’. Approaching texts critically allows the possibility to serve as guidelines for further action driven by “enlightenment and

emancipation” (10). Critical approaches are initiated through the definition of a problem, which is then addressed, ideally for the sake of educational practices. There is a strong connection to the former defined concepts of power and ideology as most of the problems to be analyzed stem from unequal power distributions and opposing ideologies (Rogers 1). Naming and unveiling structures of domination and engaging in critique are initial, yet not the prime goals of critical approaches. Essentially, “the end goal is to hope, to dream and to create alternative realities that are based in equity, love, peace, and solidarity” (5). CDA, as the scholarly, problem-oriented approach, investigates pressing societal issues to guide towards morally supported decision making (Widdowson 89). Those issues, including “dealing with causes of societal inequalities, such as gender inequalities” are directly stated in the Austrian curriculum and teachers are supposed to scaffold learning to “critically engage with established stereotypes” (RIS 11). The critical aspect is hence not only inherent in CDA as this thesis’ methodology but also serves as the connecting factor to Critical Media Literacy as the applied pedagogical theory and to the Austrian curriculum. With the next chapter focusing on goals, terminology and methods of Critical Media Literacy, the following discusses striking parallels of CDA and CML and relates them to the Austrian curriculum and offers validation for its importance in using them in the (Austrian) educational context.

2.6. Critical Media Literacy

Students in the 21st century grow up, more than ever, in a society full of a magnitude of different media influences (Butler *Teacher* 153) and those “[r]apid advances in technology and multimedia are changing how we learn and communicate” (Beach and Bolden 43). It equally has an impact on how and through which lens the world is perceived (155). As media has gained such a fundamental role in everyday life, students should be guided to use media constructively and critically, as stated in the Austrian curriculum (10). Media nowadays, however, rarely only consists of spoken and written texts alone. Sound, visuals and images together are multimodal media outlets through which students access powerful information (Beach and Bolden 43) in addition to traditional texts. This gained information shapes thoughts and the perception of citizenship, it can socialize, empower, educate, inform, but also manipulate or

mislead (Kellner and Share xi). This demands the educational system, pre-service training and teachers to initiate Critical Media Literacy as early as possible and to use it in-service (Butler *Educating* 1). The following quote by Kellner and Share (xi) sums up the fundamental influence media provides and why it is imperative to foster critical understanding of the processes and effects media can have:

[P]roducts of media culture provide materials out of which we forge our sense of selfhood; our notions of gender; our conceptions of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, and of sexuality. Media culture shapes our views of the world into categories of “us” and “them,” influencing our deepest values: what we consider good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil.

Being media literate ultimately means understanding that media equals a lens through which we perceive the world, and which shapes our assumptions about society and its inherent structures and dichotomies. The awareness of this not quite unproblematic influence of media is the first, yet crucial step. Particularly the understanding that media is never neutral and unbiased requires careful awareness-raising activities early on. The analysis of bias in traditional print media reports has found its way into EFL teaching and materials a long time ago. Additionally, with Trump’s allegations to spread fake news through his social media channels, bias in social media has embarked on a similar path into education. It can, however, be argued that knowledge about the same existence of bias in music (videos) and its introduction into (EFL) teaching is not as advanced as with the other two examples.

Additional to critical engagement, CML aims at empowering students to take action as “active participants in a democratic society” (Kellner and Share xiii). Teachers can scaffold tasks to create counter-narratives to biased, manipulative and stereotypical media texts with the goal to challenge dominant and ‘set’ media narratives and to empower oppressed groups and to promote social justice. Compared to traditional teaching and what Freire called the “banking concept”, in which students are merely passive recipients of teachers’ knowledge, CML advocates for a hands-on approach. Instead of merely identifying and memorizing oppressive structures, CML adds the competences of engaging critically with and challenging biased media products and participating through creating positive alternatives (xiii-xiv); all of which are ‘new’ skills

expected to have upon entering the modern workforce. Again, for a better understanding of concepts in CML some key terminology will be specified in the following section.

A Note on “Critical”

For the purpose of this thesis and the educational context, it is crucial to elaborate further on the term in terms of its role in education as well as its often-conflicting definitions. Kellner and Share (19) and Butler (*Teacher* 159) draw attention to the fact that the term ‘critique’ often provokes negative connotations. Particularly in education, when using the term ‘criticism’, students and parents alike often understand criticism as something negative that attacks them and their work. Such a sentiment is not unsubstantiated when looking at the dictionary entry of the term ‘criticism’. When comparing two online dictionaries, the first definition on both websites carries negative connotations as ‘criticism’ is described as “usually unfavorably” (Merriam-Webster) or even as “saying that someone or something is bad” (Cambridge Dictionary). Both dictionaries then offer other definitions closer to the purposes of CDA, CML and this thesis. Although Cambridge Dictionary also defines ‘criticism’ as “a careful discussion of something in order to judge its quality or explain its meaning”, it is most probably not the connotation that first comes to many people’s minds. Being in the teaching profession for some years now, I have gained similar experiences as hooks: “Time and time again, I have had to explain [to the students] that there is a useful distinction to be made between critique that seeks to expand consciousness and harsh criticism that attacks or trashes” (*Teaching* 137). Hooks further explains that as drawing conclusions from being critical and critical analyses ideally directly influence our way of life, it is face threatening and thus often perceived negatively. This is because it “requires the interrogation and even the dismantling of previously held assumptions”, while “most folk would rather stay with the status quo even if to change would be an improvement” (ibid. 137-138). Particularly when the critical examination and the proposed changes for improvement feel like an intrusion into one’s personal life, people might feel threatened with losing face as well as their so-far proven routines. Critical practices entail challenging “dominant narratives” and coming up with “own counter-narratives” instead (Kellner and Share 20). However, challenging one’s own narrative often proves

difficult and is sometimes even painful, all of which leads to the often-negative connotation with the terms 'critical' and 'critique' due to the perception of being an intrusion into one's personal life. Therefore, evoking immediate (personal) change through critical examinations of power structures within media, would be naïve and utopian thinking. If this were the case, this would suggest that there would not be any dominant narratives oppressing others – or at least where critical examinations took place. Instead, 'critical' for this purpose should be regarded as an "analytical process" that "seeks to develop in students a social consciousness" (Kellner and Share 19). The first step to foster change is to raise awareness of the underlying structures in ideological systems enforced through what is regarded as facts distributed within media. Therefore, being 'critical' starts with the identification of underlying power structures of texts and to initiate self-reflection about those narratives and to foster conversations about what is regarded as 'fact' or 'normal'. Only if such topics are opened and discussion is facilitated (through education), eventually, change (in perception, thinking or action) can occur. Nonetheless, "[i]f we ask children to critique the world but then fail to encourage them to act, our classroom can degenerate into factories of cynicism." (Bigelow *et al.* 5 qtd. in Kellner and Share 59). A student-centered approach to CML should, therefore, empower students to actively create media themselves to produce counter-narratives or to challenge omission in media representations (Kellner and Share 54, 58).

Defining 'Literacy'

The first and most obvious explanation of what being literate means is being "able to read and write" as defined in different dictionaries (Merriam-Webster). Literacy in CML can be described with "gaining the skills and knowledge to read and interpret the texts of the world". Media literacy therefore adds the interpretation of the text to the mere phonetic decoding. During the interpretation process, several aspects are crucial: Without taking the context into account, the message of a text relies solely on the analyzer's prior knowledge and personal experiences, which may result in a multitude of different readings and interpretations of the same text (Kellner and Share 18). When deciphering a text's message the author's, in our case, rapper's or songwriter's, intention informed by his or her social, political and economic context, play a crucial role. With the goal of making

CML more accessible Kellner and Share (8) offer guiding questions to approach textual analyses for educational purposes, all of which are illustrated in **Table 2**.

Conceptual Understandings	Questions
1. Social Constructivism	“WHO are all the possible people who made choices that helped create this text?”
2. Languages / Semiotics (codes and conventions of different mediums)	“HOW was this text constructed and delivered/ accessed?”
3. Audience / Positionality	“HOW could this text be understood differently?”
4. Politics of Representation	“WHAT values, points of view, and ideologies are represented or missing from this text or influenced by the medium?”
5. Production / Institution	“WHY was this text created and/ or shared?”
6. Social and Environmental Justice	“WHOM does this text advantage and/ or disadvantage?”

Table 2: Guiding Analysis Questions (Kellner and Share 8).

Thus, literacy in CML is defined as the ability to analyze and create media through critical engagement with the social, cultural or political implications of the message. Both CML and CDA focus on the analysis of multimodal texts, ideology, power and (in)justice as well as their mutual influence. So why is it necessary to include both Critical Discourse Analysis, as well as Critical Media Literacy?

Combining CDA and CML

Literacy initially referred to print media; however, technological progress demanded a broader scope and moving towards “multiple literacies” (Kellner and Share 3). Just as reading and writing in traditional print literacy, multimedia literacies and computer literacies share the common goal of enabling educated, informed and empowered participation in today’s economy and society (3-4). But being literate goes beyond the competence of reading and interpreting texts. Those are just the necessary initial steps to reach the ultimate goal – the common denominator – the C in CDA and CML – the *critical* aspect. For me, this is the crucial – the critical – aspect so to speak. Educators’ priority should be to empower students so that upon their release from school into the working world, they have gained the necessary tools to make informed decisions, which are

guided by a strive to foster peace, justice and equality. To make such decisions, people rely on their existing knowledge and social surroundings, their education, as well as the media they consume. Critical analyses can thus broaden a person's knowledge base, to leave their 'bubble', which is inevitably created for each person when sticking to their comfort zone, their experiences and knowledge without critically questioning it. This 'bubble' is further enhanced through media algorithms. Tristan Harris, a tech ethicist and the co-founder of Center for Humane Technology, explained in the Netflix documentary "The Social Dilemma", what he calls a "reality swap", as a crucial tool to understand how media algorithms work:

So it's like [the movie] *Freaky Friday*. You open up Facebook on both your phones with someone you disagree with. And then you swap realities. You step into their world to see why do they think the things they're thinking? Well, you scroll through their feed, and you see they're not seeing the same information that I'm seeing.

This potentially even dangerous fact is crucial to understand when talking about (social) media. Additionally, this insight is essential within CML to "read information critically [...], to create alternative representations that question hierarchies of power, social norms and injustices, and to become agents of change" (Kellner and Share 14).

Something similar can be observed in the perception of Hip Hop for outsiders of the Hip Hop community. Without the willingness to broaden their scope and dive into the text producer's reality, to critically question the music genre's history, it is easy to dismiss it as violence- and drug glorifying and misogynous. CML encourages students to challenge the assumption of what is regarded as "common sense", which is strategically promoted through controlling images in media representations.

In sum, both approaches critically interrogate how ideologies influence texts and how texts construct and perpetuate systems of power. While CDA serves as the main approach to investigate the interrelation of a text's discourse, i.e. communicative practices, and societal structures, CML provides the connection to the educational context to equip students with the necessary skills to be responsible and critical media consumers and producers who question underlying power dynamics with the goal to make informed decisions driven by equality. CDA and CML empower students to critically evaluate media not just as

texts but also as powerful tools that shape beliefs about gender, race and identity, which fits the teaching objectives in the Austrian curriculum, as applicable in the next chapter.

3. Using Hip Hop in the Austrian EFL Context

In Austria, the general teaching objectives are summarized in the curriculum. While each school type has its own specific curriculum, the first sections, the general teaching objectives as well as the general didactic foundations, overlap greatly and are independent of the specific subject.

A general principle profoundly important and numerous mentioned is the equality aspect. Through increasing challenges due to the globalization of today's economy, political and social crises and resulting migration, social collaboration and (gender) equality are more important than ever (RIS 8). Adhering to fundamental human rights, students should gain the knowledge and skills to act responsibly when it comes to, for instance, topics of gender or race to become independent participants of social life (9). Thereby, every human's dignity, freedom, integrity, and equality, as well as solidarity with the weaker are the most fundamental values to be imparted. Based on those values, students should be familiarized with (age appropriate) problems, critically reflect the status-quo and their actions to identify problems and independently formulate practical solutions (9).

As education is more than just the sum of all the knowledge of each subject, five educational subject-independent foundations have been formulated. This thesis particularly focuses on the areas "language and communication", "human and society" and "creativity and creation". The first two particularly share the goals of CDA and CML: The (historical, political) causes for unequal power structures, gender and racial stereotypes should be elaborated on, critically discussed to enhance one's scope of possible actions and perspectives informed by "humanity, solidarity, tolerance, peace, justice, gender equality and environmental awareness" (10-11).

Based on those general principles, teachers are required to follow didactic principles, as stated in the second part of the curriculum. For the purpose of this thesis, Hip Hop music can be integrated into (English) teaching for the following reasons. Firstly, teaching material should incorporate students' prior knowledge

and their experiences (12, 15). Offering teaching material relevant to the students' lives not only enables them to participate with their existing knowledge but can also be a motivating factor. Secondly, with the term "intercultural learning", the Austrian curriculum intends the examination of the connection between language, its cultural context and the connected identity formation of the speaker (12). While I agree with the importance of the proposed examination, I cannot agree with using the term 'intercultural'. The term suggests that cultures are homogeneous and stable with clear boundaries, which ignores intersectionality and can often lead to the reinforcement of cultural stereotypes. Instead, I would propose the term 'transcultural', accounting for the "movement of ideas, influences, practices, and beliefs between cultures and the fusions that result when the ideas, influences, practices, and beliefs of different cultures come together in a specific place, text, or contact zone" (Dictionary of Critical Theory n.p.). The task of analyzing the connection between language and cultural and personal identity, however, is interesting when looking at Hip Hop. Being "street-produced and a street-evolved culture", Price (39) lists Hip Hop Language (HHL) as an important element, just as graffiti, MCs, DJs or fashion. Overlapping with African American English (AAE), Cutler (520) describes HHL as a "language style" of AAE. Despite sharing some key points, HHL is "highly variable and transitory" depending on the person, situation and (local) group identity the user wants to be associated with (ibid.). Incorporating such topics helps raising, what the Austrian curriculum terms, "language awareness" (RIS 13). Lastly, Hip Hop materials, which often perpetuate gender-stereotypes, can be used as an authentic starting point to spark debates about (gender) equality. The curriculum then requires teachers to scaffold exercises to support and accompany students' progress to develop critical analysis skills with the goal of promoting equality (15).

When it comes to media and technology, the Austrian curriculum also mentions the occurring rise of mass media throughout all eras of life. Therefore, developing multimedia competence is a key element crossing all subjects. The curriculum describes a competent media user as someone who can critically examine media's effects on society and economy and vice versa (9). This ties in exactly with the fundamental goals of CMA: Identifying and critically discussing the effects of the underlying power structures that reinforce the dominant ideology through media productions.

While those overarching goals inform all teaching practices, writing for the purpose of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the subject specific goals play a crucial role. The curricular section specifically related to teaching and studying foreign languages, states the following for this thesis relevant goals: Communicative competence is named the superior educational goal in which the four language skills, listening, reading, speaking and writing should be equally and regularly trained in integrative exercises and ideally using authentic materials (RIS 140). Hip Hop music, as authentic and multimodal material, lends itself perfectly to design critically informed exercises to practice all the necessary language skills. Watching interviews, listening to songs with focus on the written texts or lyrics, contributing to debates and analyses, exchanging opinions or producing own creative texts or counter-narratives are all exercises that practice language skills while enhancing critical analysis skills. Additionally, through the importance of authentic materials, foreign language teaching should offer “fundamental inter- and transcultural insights” into the studied language’s “society, civilization, politics, media, economy, culture and art” (RIS 143). When talking about the studied language English, the focus is or at least was primarily on Kachru’s “inner circle”, Great Britain or the USA (Hedge 269), particularly on ‘Standard’ English. While offering authentic ‘Standard’ English materials and models for production might make sense at the beginner level, teachers have to make a sensitive decision. Firstly, “[t]here are political tensions surrounding the use of terms such as ‘standard’ and ‘native speaker’ as these imply ownership by the inner circle” (Hedge 269). Secondly, the decision should be based on the students’ needs, where being “able to communicate with people in an international language, both at home [...] and while travelling in other countries” (22) is mostly ranked at the top of the list of reasons for learning English as a foreign language. Internationally, one will not only encounter speakers of ‘Standard’ English, but speakers of different varieties of English. In my opinion it is crucial to familiarize students with numerous varieties, including AAE or HHL, to value its speakers and each variety’s uniqueness.

Another mentioned aspect concerning material choice is age appropriateness (RIS 9). The target group for this thesis is upper-secondary students due to several reasons. Firstly, using Hip Hop texts as authentic material to be analyzed already requires students to have basic or proficient language

skills and a foundation of vocabulary that they can draw upon. “Students are capable of guessing 60-80 per cent of unknown words in a text if the density of new words is not too high.” (Hedge 193). If students, however, lack knowledge of most of the vocabulary, tasks can easily be overwhelming and lead to a decrease in motivation. Moreover, as the goal of a Hip Hop project using CDA and CML as a basis is the analysis (in this case) from a gender-critical perspective, students should have developed a certain amount of fluency in the language to express their thoughts. It is important to note that I agree with Kellner and Share (46) that media education should be implemented as early as possible and in as many subjects as possible. However, due to the initial language restrictions when learning a foreign language, my Hip Hop project focuses on upper-secondary students. One question in terms of appropriateness, however, remains unanswered: How is it appropriate to use Hip Hop in the classroom when it is full of sexism, violence and explicit language?

4. Sexism, Violence and Explicit Language

In the preface of her book “The Hip Hop Wars”, Tricia Rose admits “with self-conscious wistfulness” that she enjoys remembering “when hip hop was a locally inspired explosion of exuberance and political energy tethered to the idea of rehabilitating community” (ix). Although she acknowledges that Hip Hop back then was far from being ideal, Rose argues that “HIP HOP IS IN A TERRIBLE CRISIS” (*Wars* 1) in capital letters as the first sentence of her introduction. Indeed, gangsta rappers were not a product of the record industry but had their place in Hip Hop early on. Rose, however, claims that “these figures were more complex and ambivalent” in the origins, whereas commercially successful and promoted songs nowadays show increased hyper-sexism with an “ever-narrowing range of images and themes” reducing those once complex figures to “simple-minded, almost comic stereotypes” (ibid. 1-2). Rose is by far not the only person within the Hip Hop culture to reminisce about Hip Hop’s origins, often termed the ‘authentic’ or ‘underground’ Hip Hop (Emdin). While the question of authenticity is an often discussed and researched topic in Hip Hop studies (McLeod; Jeffries; Judy), this is not within the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, when it comes to the choice of materials to use in the classroom, it must be at least briefly reflected on. Karvelis, for instance, suggests focusing on and

choosing Hip Hop that “lends itself naturally to a critical pedagogy”, particularly Conscious Hip Hop as a subgenre, dealing with societal and political issues (49). Most Hip Hop songs and artists recommended for educational purposes in different studies are representatives one would rather allocate to ‘authentic’ Hip Hop and the genre’s origins. Karvelis (49) recommended artists such as Public Enemy or Dead Prez, Richards (22) proposed Queen Latifah’s song “U.N.I.T.Y.” to debate about gender issues in Hip Hop, and Greenfield (239-240) deliberately chose Na’s song “If I Ruled the World” to discuss questions of identity formation within the realities of urban American society. Both songs will serve the purpose of tackling the mentioned issues, however, being published in 1993 and 1995, I claim that the prominence with Austrian upper-secondary students will most probably not be very high.

For educators being unsure about the inappropriate language and whose doubts prevent them from using Hip Hop in the classroom, Karvelis (49) proposes using the ‘clean’ versions of songs instead. However, in the process of researching the differences between the original and the clean version, it becomes apparent that in the latter, the inappropriate expressions are mostly just blurred or deleted. Changing Post Malone’s refrain in “Rockstar” from “I’ve been fuckin’ hoes and poppin’ pillies” to “I’ve been (I’ve been) (I’ve been) popping (popping)” in the clean version seems like a quick relief but does not tackle the greater issue. Taking up Tricia Rose’s (*Wars* 162-163) example of the ‘clean’ version of Nate Dogg’s “I Need a Bitch”, the word bitch was changed to chick for radio airplay. The rest of the song, however, remained unaltered, resulting in the lines, “I need me a chick, who ain’t hard ta please [...] with some sore up knees [...], I need me a chick in the middle of the grocery store she’ll lift up her skirt” (Nate Dogg). Thus, the overall sexist message remains the same. Using through the teacher pre-selected, (good) ‘clean’ versions of Hip Hop songs, previously unknown to the students to discuss certain specific topics has its justification: The lessons are more likely to stick to the selected topic and explicit language is not included in the material. For the purpose of this thesis, I will however argue for the following approach: From my experience, the broader audience not deeply embedded in the Hip Hop culture primarily consume commercially successful and distributed Hip Hop, if they consume Hip Hop at all. These authentic experiences or (dis-)likes of Hip Hop, thus, need to be brought to the center of discussion to

scaffold critical thinking processes surrounding those personal experiences. It cannot be neglected that explicit language, harmful racial and gender stereotypes, drug and violence glorifying depictions are part of Hip Hop. These songs are played on the radio or are easily accessible on platforms such as YouTube or Spotify. It would, hence, be naïve to think that students are devoid of knowing these explicit and sexist expressions. Speaking from experience, particularly younger students use explicit expressions they have picked up from their surroundings and often without even knowing what they mean or cause and what (historical and social) significance they have attached. They, therefore, need careful guidance to understand the implications and context of explicit expressions or words, such as “nigga” or “bitch”.

Moreover, I agree with scholars such as Tricia Rose and Noah Karvelis, who argue that this problem is not only inherent in Hip Hop but it is the reflection of society as a whole. Thus, it is neither fair nor possible to accuse individual artists, songs or videos or even allocate culpability to Hip Hop alone or we would “miss the forest for the trees” as Rose (*Wars* 4) puts it fittingly. Rather, it surpasses Hip Hop’s responsibility alone and we have to relate it to its context – its history and the media industry and its interconnectedness to the preferences of a society what they (think they) want to consume, which is ultimately what sells. Driven by corporate consolidation to increase profit off of Hip Hop, Rose identified the “black gangsta-pimp-ho trinity [as] the vehicle for hip hop’s greatest sales and highest market status” (*Wars* 13). This results in a complex dichotomy of allocating the blame to the opposing party: On the one hand, the media industry decides to promote sexist and misogynous images for their profit and justify this by claiming that those images are just mirroring the “reality”. On the other hand, Hip Hop is blamed and attacked for promoting such outrageous images and even for “destroying America’s values” (ibid. 24-25).

Hip Hop, just like any other musical genre, is connected to the mass media industry and their goals to increase revenues through marketing strategies, such as ‘sex sells’. So why is Hip Hop at the center of being attacked and blamed unlike any other genre? The reason cannot be that sexism, and the objectification of women is not existent in other musical genres. For instance, in the Country song “Country Girl (Shake It For Me)” by Luke Bryan he invites a girl (“Hey girl!”) to

Get up on the hood of my daddy's tractor [...]
Down on the tailgate, girl I can't wait
To watch you do your thing
Shake it for the young bucks sittin' in the honky-tonks.

The lyrics do not provide the woman any agency or voice and Luke Bryan directs her to perform sexually loaded actions for the pleasure of himself and others, which portrays the woman in a passive role. Robin Thicke's Pop song "Blurred Lines" neglects women's boundaries and rights comparing women to animals ("you're an animal, baby, it's in your nature") that need to him be "domesticate[d]" and "liberate[d]" to be "a good girl", just like a dog. With the repetition of "I know you want it" in the refrain, Thicke deprives the "good girl" of her autonomy as he is the one who knows what is best for her. Those are just two very brief examples within music where male artists objectify women, so why is particularly Hip Hop at the center of critique? Firstly, Price blames the sensationalized and partial media coverage of Hip Hop (72-73). In addition, Rose asserts that the historical aspect of "associating black culture and black people with violence, lawlessness, and deviant sexuality" (*Wars* 97) and the "long history of America's refusal to consider black women worthy of patriarchal protection and respect" (ibid. 115) are other aspects to consider. Those associations again served and serve the purpose of maintaining the dominant ideology through what is called "oppressive othering". Oppressive othering advantages the dominant group through representing other groups as, for instance, morally inferior (Laybourn 2086), which is further enhanced through controlling (media) images and the negative influence of the corporate media industry; all of which results in a vicious cycle negatively influencing (Black) people associated with Hip Hop culture.

The question is neither if Hip Hop is sexist, as its sexism is clearly visible, which will also be shown in the analysis part of this thesis, nor whether students will encounter sexism and gender inequality. Instead, Hip Hop with all its vulgar, sexist and aggressive expressions is authentic material that is out there, for the world to listen to. I, therefore, take an "activist ethical" approach, contrary to an "impact mediation" approach (Kosut 218) to the in Media Literacy education often discussed question whether children should be actively protected from negative media influence or not. The latter, which aims at protecting students from possibly damaging media images and messages, has often been criticized for pushing students into the role of a "vulnerable and passive audience in need of

protection". The former recognizes the importance of active engagement with media through training with the focus on "self-examination, social critique, and cultural transformation" (ibid.), which for me sums up the essence of what media literacy should represent.

We cannot completely shelter students from the realities of overt sexism, nor would it be correct to advocate censorship altogether (as proposed by some conservative critics). Students will eventually get in contact with sexism and if not through Hip Hop, then in numerous other occasions. However, simply acknowledging that Hip Hop "paint[s] a picture that is overlooked. The misogyny, the racism, the violence, the homophobia, these are things that we try to avoid instead of dealing with it" as Russell Simmons points out (qtd. in Rose *Wars* 149), is unsatisfactory and cannot be enough. We need to offer students tools and the safe space to critically discuss Hip Hop's sexism with all its complex connections to ideology, power, history, race, gender and consumerism. Hip Hop's sexism should neither be legitimized, nor should the genre be reduced to it, but it should be seen as a chance for critical reflection with the goal for further action, just as intended in CDA and CML. Through all the previously described factors and connections, the often-voiced criticism should not be anti-Hip Hop, but instead it should be against promoted sexist messages and images objectifying women altogether, because it is certainly not the case that "[o]nce imagery and music are "respectful", order will be restored" as ironically pointed out by Rose (*Wars* 121-122). Now that I have explained the choice of using original, uncensored Hip Hop material in upper-secondary EFL teaching, the following chapter outlines my choice of authentic materials for the classroom and data for this thesis.

5. Analysis

5.1. Data

As mentioned earlier, allowing students to participate in the process of choosing teaching materials offers the advantage of increasing motivation and participation through establishing personal relevance and centering students' concerns. As always, a class is never homogeneous and just as outside the classroom, there will be students who are part of the Hip Hop community, others who do not listen to it at all or even hold a negative opinion. Given this heterogeneity of students' characters, opinions, likes and dislikes and prior knowledge, the teaching

outcome in critical analyses lessons are dynamic and unpredictable. The teacher, taking on the role of a facilitator, must deal with a “vulnerability of sorts” (Stovall 589), acknowledging that the teacher is not all-knowing and can also learn from the students. This uncertainty might often arouse a feeling of insecurity, which can be eased through choosing pre-selected materials or at least a list of possible materials and topics. While this is helpful for the given reason, it again reduces the benefits of granting authority to the students. In the context of teaching, I suggest a mixed approach of combining pre-selected case studies on topics that the teacher regards important, offering a corpus of songs from which the students can choose and centering the lesson around students’ material choices, ideas, and topic wishes.

Although the focus of this thesis is not an empirical one, I have compiled a corpus of songs to be analyzed for the following reasons: First, as previously described, offering students a list of songs to choose from can be a suitable technique in class to guide students unfamiliar with Hip Hop to find analysis material and it helps teachers with the plannability of analysis lessons. Secondly, due to my background in natural sciences, I advocate for a close examination of pre-given facts. Instead of taking the general perception of Hip Hop being a male-dominated genre for granted, I conduct a brief empirical analysis to proof this statement. To avoid compiling the corpus only based on personal preferences, I have used the Billboard charts as a basis for data collection.

Billboard is a “global music media brand, with a renowned authority among artists, fans and the industry”. It publishes a music magazine and organizes events, such as the “Billboard Music Awards”, “Women in Music” or “Latin Music Week” and is primarily known for its “most complete and well-respected database of charts across all music genres” (Billboard n.p.). Parts of their database is freely available on the website www.billboard.com, encompassing the global “Billboard Hot 100” charts for each individual week, the “Year-End Charts”, “Top Current Album Sales”, “Radio Songs” and more, as well as the charts of different genres, such as the “Hot Rap Songs”, “Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs” or “Greatest of All Time Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs”. The charts lists are compiled and ranked based on streaming activity, radio airplay and sales data (Billboard Charts Legend).

For the purpose of this thesis, I used the “Year-End Hot R&B/Hip Hop Songs” charts from its beginning in 2006 until 2023, to compile a list of all Hip

Hop songs and songs with collaborations with Hip Hop artists that were in the top 100 of the respective years (see appendix). Although Rap is part of Hip Hop, it received its separate chart ranking, whereas the Hip Hop charts only occur in combination with R&B. While Hip Hop and R&B share their African American roots, combining both genres does not value each genre's unique characteristics.

After identifying the Hip Hop songs and collaborations, the corpus for this thesis consists of 558 songs and their music videos from 2006 to 2023. While an in-depth analysis of all 558 Hip Hop songs would go beyond the scope of this thesis, it still offers valuable insights into the question of gender representation. In case studies, I will analyze individual songs and music videos more closely. It is also important to highlight that although the corpus of songs starts with the year 2006, Hip Hop's earlier pioneers are equally important. The reasons for limiting the analysis to this time span are that the Billboard charts list was only founded in 2006 and based on personal experience, many students primarily know the current Hip Hop songs and artists. Thus, adhering to the principle of centering students' personal experiences and likes, students will likely choose those (recent) Hip Hop songs for their analyses. To incorporate Hip Hop into EFL teaching, I will link the gained insights from my analysis to practical teaching ideas on how CDA of Hip Hop songs can be used in the classroom, which is summarized in chapter 6 and with the full lesson plan in the appendix.

5.2. Underrepresentation of Women in Hip Hop

There are numerous prejudices about Hip Hop that circulate the internet and when talking to people outside the Hip Hop community. Most of them surround the glorification of violence, drugs and most prominently the sexist depictions of women and the misogynistic expressions that come with Hip Hop being a male-dominated genre (see Tricia Rose's "The Hip Hop Wars"). Conversations about the negative connotations of Hip Hop primarily surround male rappers' sexist depiction of women, leaving female artists unnoticed. Therefore, my goal in this chapter is to examine the pervasive perception that Hip Hop is male-dominated and substantiate it with facts and figures based on an empirical analysis of my corpus of songs.

The previously described data set for this thesis was used to determine the percentage of male and female Hip Hop artists making it in the Billboard

“Year-End Hot 100” charts from 2006 to 2023, as illustrated in **Table 3** (and with the full data list in the appendix). As one Hip Hop song often cannot be allocated to one male or female solo Hip Hop artist, it was further distinguished between collaborations of a female or male main Hip Hop artist with a female or male artist from another musical genre, and a collaboration between male and female Hip Hop artists.

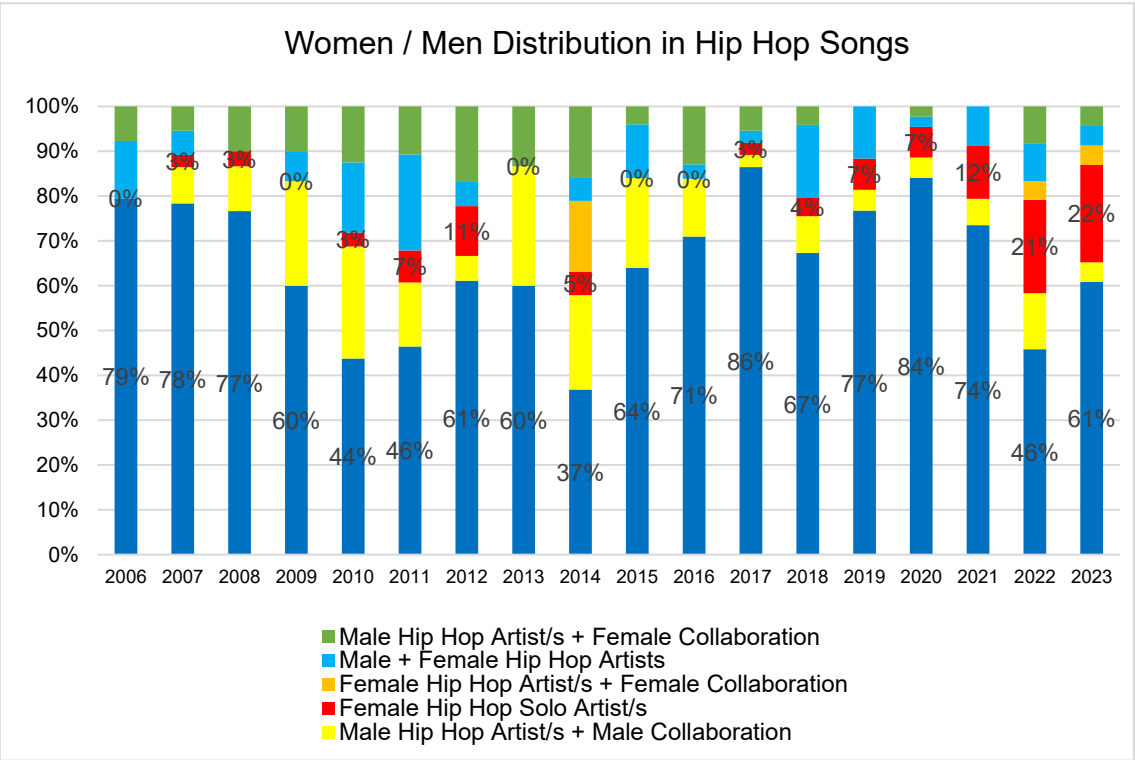


Table 3: Women/ Men Distribution in Hip Hop Songs.

Table 3 already indicates a clear overrepresentation of solo male Hip Hop artists (mean = 68%) when compared to solo female Hip Hop artists (mean = 6%). When it comes to collaborations, with a mean of 10%, Hip Hop artists collaborated more often or at least slightly more successfully in the charts with male artists from another genre than with female Hip Hop artists (8%) or with female artists from another genre (7%). The least occurring collaboration was between female Hip Hop artists and female artists from another genre with a mean of only 1%.

Focusing on the gender gap of solo Hip Hop artists, **Table 4** takes those 409 Hip Hop songs with only one artist into account. Out of the 18 analyzed years, there have been five years without any female Hip Hop artist making it in the Top 100 charts list. The highest percentages of female solo artists can be observed

in the years 2022 and 2023 with 31 and 26 per-cent, indicating a notable gain within the last few years. Out of the 409 Hip Hop songs performed by solo artists, 92% (n=378) were male and 8% (n=31) were female. Those 31 songs can be allocated to only 11 female Hip Hop solo artists reaching the “Year-End Hot 100” charts, with Cardi B and Nicki Minaj surpassing the others.

Comparing Hip Hop Solo Artists					
Year	No. Solo Songs	No. Male	No. Female	Male [%]	Female [%]
2006	31	31	0	100%	0%
2007	30	29	1	97%	3%
2008	24	23	1	96%	4%
2009	18	18	0	100%	0%
2010	15	14	1	93%	7%
2011	15	13	2	87%	13%
2012	13	11	2	85%	15%
2013	9	9	0	100%	0%
2014	8	7	1	88%	13%
2015	16	16	0	100%	0%
2016	22	22	0	100%	0%
2017	33	32	1	97%	3%
2018	35	33	2	94%	6%
2019	36	33	3	92%	8%
2020	40	37	3	93%	8%
2021	29	25	4	86%	14%
2022	16	11	5	69%	31%
2023	19	14	5	74%	26%
Total	409	378	31	92%	8%

Table 4: Number and Percentage of Songs in the Billboard “Year-End Hot 100” Charts by Hip Hop Solo Artists’ Gender.

The artist is the most visible part when it comes to the production of a song. However, there are numerous other crucial positions when it comes to record production and ultimately also record success. Those positions include producers, songwriters or composers, as well as engineers or technicians. In their study on the gender gap in the music industry, Smith *et al.* identified that the female-male ratio is even more prevalent in those areas of the music industry compared to the artists. From 2012 to 2022, a mean of 22.3% of artists, 12.8% of songwriters and only 2.8% of producers were female, making it a 34.1 to 1 male to female ratio in the production sector (Smith *et al.* 1-2). As a thorough study of the gender distribution among those roles of all the songs of my compiled corpus would go beyond the scope of this thesis, insights are limited to the following two case studies. Smith *et al.* identified Drake (with 48 song credits in the Billboard Hot 100 in 11 years) and Nicki Minaj (with 22 song credits) as the

top performing solo artists. Focusing on Drake's "God's Plan" and Nicki Minaj's "Anaconda", **Tables 5 and 6** indicate the composers and producers for both songs written in grey for male and black for female contributors.

"God's Plan" by Drake (Spotify)	
Composer/ Lyricist	Aubrey Graham (Drake) Brock Korsan Daveon Jackson Matthew Samuels Noah "40" Shebib Ronald LaTour
Producer	Cardo Yung Exclusive Boi-1da Noah "40" Shebib
Label	Young Money / Cash Money Records

Table 5: Male (grey) and Female (black) Distribution in Drake's "God's Plan" (Spotify).

"Anaconda" by Nicki Minaj (Spotify)	
Composer/ Lyricist	Anthony Ray Ernest Clark Jonathan Solone-Myvett Jamal Jones Marcos Palacios Onika Maraj (Nicki Minaj)
Producer	Polow Da Don Anonymous Da Internz
Label	Cash Money Records

Table 6: Male (grey) and Female (black) Distribution in Nicki Minaj's "Anaconda" (Spotify).

Both Drake and Nicki Minaj were co-writers for their own songs. It is, however, striking that Nicki Minaj was the only female contributor. In her song "Anaconda", Nicki Minaj co-wrote with five male composers/ lyricists and the song was produced by three male producers. This observation is by no means quantifiable, nor does it offer significant results, but it still provides important insights regarding the gender gap in the (Hip Hop) music industry, which could also be incorporated in the classroom.

The gender gap issue in the music industry or in Hip Hop specifically has received increased media attention (Tobias, Price) within the last few years, which has led to several larger-scale studies (Smith *et al.*; Kosut; Wang and Horvát). In Wang and Horvát's examination of 232,789 songs published by established record labels from 1960 to 2000, they report an increase of

percentages of female artists from 20% to 25% (519). In addition, Wang and Horvát explain this gap with record labels' (un)willingness to sign up female artists. Out of the examined 4,873 record labels, only 1,563 have signed at least one woman in the past. Among the major record labels, particularly Universal Music Group ranked high on signing women. Thereby, a connection between female artist representation and female leadership positions in record labels can be observed, as Michele Anthony was the Executive VP at Universal Music Group at that time (522).

Smith *et al.* published an annual report on inclusion in the music industry, examining the Billboard "Hot 100 Year-End" charts. They reported a slight increase in percentage of female Hip Hop artists in the charts list from the year 2021 to 2022. While this is a desirable trend, the increase from 23.3% in 2021 to 30% in 2022 still shows a clear underrepresentation of women making it in the charts because for every woman there are 3.5 men represented (Smith *et al.* 1, 7). My analysis showed an increase of female solo artists from 14% in 2021 to 31% in 2022. The diverging numbers could be explained through the focus on only solo Hip Hop artists in my analysis and on female Hip Hop artists in general (i.e. solo artists and in collaborations) in Smith *et al.*'s study. The distinction between female solo artists and female artists who are featured in a male artist's song, however, is important because whether the main artist in a collaborative song is male, or female has got several crucial implications concerning the theme or representation of women. Out of 47 collaborations between male and female Hip Hop artists, only 15 songs had male rappers featured in female rappers' songs. Thus, in 69% of the collaborations the male artist occupied the leading role reinforcing the idea that female artists are only complimentary to their male counterparts. This reflects general stereotypical gender roles where women are often expected to have supporting roles for their male counterparts. Being featured in a male rapper's song can boost the female artist's visibility, particularly for newcomer artists. Nonetheless, being 'only' the feature in a song highly limits the amount of rap time and screen time, which again limits overall visibility and the perceived public connection with a song and its success. Those who are (usually asked to be) featured in a song may also have less control over the content. For instance, there is a difference in themes and female-male

relationships when comparing Hip Hop songs with a female main artist and male feature and vice versa:

The song “I Like It” by Cardi B featuring Bad Bunny and J Balvin reflects themes of empowerment, the assertion of (sexual) agency as well as materialism. Cardi B asserts personal agency through her repeated use of the personal pronoun “I” to self-confidently express her expensive taste and wishes (“Now I like dollars, I like diamonds”), all of which she can now afford due to her successful career. The expression of her wishes is not something she desires of others but which she can provide for herself, portraying her as the dominant figure who knows what she wants and how to get it without being submissive or dependent on others. She continues rapping about how she likes “proving niggas wrong” who did not believe in her. Now she “run[s] this shit like cardio”, which metaphorically relates to the endurance and strength she has put into her career. In addition to her lyrics, Cardi B’s performance exudes confidence through full shots centering Cardi B’s energetic movements in colorful and extravagant outfits with Latin influences. In addition, she explicitly portrays her sexuality in an assertive manner, calling herself a “spicy mami, hot tamale” with a “banging body” who is not afraid to ask for the name of the handsome man she likes. She not only includes her Latin heritage, evident both in the lyrics (“tamale”, “piñata”) and music but also challenges the existing stereotype of the “fat black Mammy” (Stephens and Few 251) through asserting that a “mami” can also be sexy and “spicy”. The interaction with her two male collaborators reflects the celebration of cultural pride and unity. Although Cardi B takes the central role of the video, reflecting her role as the main artist, Bad Bunny and J Balvin bring in their unique styles and personalities without competing for attention. Rather than overshadowing one another, each artist receives their time to shine during their rap verses, which contributes to the overall celebratory portrayal of independence and cultural pride. Their unity is further enhanced through smooth transitions between their individual verses, portraying the shifts like a natural continuation of the narrative instead of individual segments. Although there seems to be no rehearsed group choreography, their individual movements align with the joyful rhythm of the song, creating a connection between the artists.

In the song “Hot Girl Summer” by Megan Thee Stallion featuring Nicki Minaj and Ty Dolla \$ign, as another example, Megan explores themes such as

female empowerment, sexual agency, self-expression and independence. In a tweet, Megan Thee Stallion (Snow) explains that for her a “Hot Girl is about being unapologetically YOU, having fun, being confident, living [sic] YOUR truth, being the life of the party etc [sic]”. The term “Hot Girl Summer” has become more than just a song, but a 73 000 times reposted anthem particularly for female Hip Hop fans who celebrate unapologetic self-expression and freedom. The song itself addresses topics such as female empowerment and independence (“Handle me? (Huh) Who gon’ handle me?”; “I told him ain’t no taming me”), challenging the in Hip Hop often perpetuated idea that women need to be controlled by men. In the chorus Ty Dolla \$ign raps that “it’s a Hot Girl Summer, so you know she got it lit”, which not only addresses the artists Megan Thee Stallion and Nicki Minaj but the use of the personal pronoun “she” can be interpreted as a call to all women to embrace the “Hot Girl Summer”. This feeling of solidarity and community is not only present in the lyrics, but the video also starts with the words “calling all hotties”. In the video, a group of women celebrates the “Hot Girl Summer pool party”. The video flips the typical picture in Hip Hop videos where women wearing revealing clothes dance sensually and are positioned as passive objects for the male gaze. Although there are a few men present, the women are clearly in the focus and are active agents pouring each other’s drinks, dancing freely and cheering each other on, promoting (sexual) independence. The video then ends with Megan Thee Stallion and Nicki Minaj happily hugging each other, grinning and blowing kisses into the camera acting as friends and allies instead of competitors (for the male attention). The video and song emphasize the importance of lifting each other up, creating a sense of collective empowerment. This is equally promoted when Nicki Minaj raps “And who gon’ tell him that my bitch is getting her degree” addressed at Megan Thee Stallion, who is enrolled at Texas Southern University to get a degree in health administration (Gracie n.p.). Megan continues with the words “college girl, but a freak on the weekend” challenging the outdated categorization of women being either a good girl (college student) or sexually open and liberated (freak) showing that women are multidimensional. Although the usually most remembered part of a song – the chorus – is rapped by Ty Dolla \$ign, Megan Thee Stallion and Nicki Minaj are clearly the main artists connected with the song’s success and influencing the main theme – female empowerment.

Comparing the two previous examples with female main artists and female empowerment as the main theme, different thematic foci can be observed with a male main artist. For instance, in his song “My Chick Bad” Ludacris collaborates with Nicki Minaj. Particularly through the collaboration, the song employs an interesting male-female power dynamics that both empowers women and objectifies them, with the latter predominating the other. Ludacris’ verses describe what a “bad chick” is for him and how his “bad chick” is “sicker”, “badder” and better than the others. While Ludacris describes his chick as fierce and celebrates her toughness, hinting at an empowered woman, the examples mentioned in the song relativize the degree of empowerment again. The first example (“She always bring the racket like Venus and Serena”) mentions Venus and Serena Williams, two tennis pros, ready to give their best, beating their opponents in a fair match where they can show their skills and strength. Ludacris then compares his chick with Tiger Woods’ ex-wife Elin Nordegren (Comin’ out swingin’ like Tiger Woods’s wife”), who shattered the windows of Woods’ car with a golf club, who was trying to escape after Elin had found out about his numerous affairs during their marriage (Benedict and Keteyian). Media coverage on the scandal was a mix of sympathy with Elin and sensationalized scrutiny of her actions hinting at the stereotype of a vengeful partner who snapped (Zakarin). Although the connotations are different, both examples show descriptions of strong women who stand up for themselves. Ludacris’ mention of his girl’s toughness is, however, less a praise of her empowerment but more competitively directed towards other men. The song fosters a competitive spirit between men which is measured according to their women and how “bad” they are. In this song the term “bad chick” undergoes different connotations depending on the user.

In her verse Nicki Minaj references different main characters of movies or important female role models with whom she then compares herself to show her importance and superiority. For instance, in “runnin’ down the court I’m dunkin’ on ‘em, Lisa Leslie” Minaj compares herself to the two-time world champion, Lisa Leslie, a female basketball player with four Olympic gold medals and a place in the basketball Hall of Fame (Basketball Hall of Fame). Minaj continues comparing her to Freddy and Jason, the protagonists of the two horror movies *Nightmare on Elm Street* and *Friday the 13th*, putting herself in the position of the main character of whom everyone should be afraid. The sentiment of creating fear in her

opponents is further enhanced as she continues rapping “better hold onto your teddy”, “the mental asylum lookin’ for me”. In her verse, Minaj uses the above-mentioned metaphors as well as puns (“[For you] It’s goin’ down, basement”) in a playful yet assertive manner to emphasize her dominance.

While Minaj’s definition of a “bad chick” involves being tough, empowered and self-assertive of herself and her skills, as the feature of the song, she only raps one verse. The majority of the song is rapped by Ludacris who ultimately also controls the narrative and foregrounded definition of a “bad chick”. As mentioned above the song implies competition between men measured against their women similar to comparing and bragging about their cars. The women’s worth is defined in terms of their ability to please their man (“My chick bad, [...] my chick do stuff that your chick wish she could”; “And when we all alone, I might just tip her, She slides down the pole, like a certified stripper”) and her sexual attraction (“Chick’s so bad the whole crew wanna bone her”). The initial described praise of the women’s toughness is, thus, seen through a male gaze, which objectifies women by using them as a status symbol and values them primarily for their sexual and physical desirability.

The music video enhances Ludacris’ domination as the main character who controls the portrayal of the women in this narrative. The video’s setting resembles the set of a music video with Ludacris sitting in the director’s chair behind screens and monitors. Behind those monitors a woman is filmed dancing sexually but in an assertive manner through fast and powerful dance moves. Although the setting would lead to the assumption that the woman being filmed might be in the spotlight, it is Ludacris who is in the focus of lighting. In the close shots of Ludacris, light beams emerge from behind his head resembling a halo, a sign of power and enlightenment. The lighting in the scenes with the dancing girl is used in a manner that only her silhouette is visible, and her face vanishes in the shadow, again hinting at the importance of the female body for establishing her worth. Although Nicki Minaj’s rap encapsulates her (female) dominance and empowerment, Minaj’s portrayal in the video diminishes those lyrics’ power to some extent. Nicki is wearing Freddy Krueger’s signature feature, his metal-clawed glove, and is tied to a couch resembling one usually depicted in a psychiatrist’s office. Although in her verses she challenges traditional gender stereotypes by putting herself in the position of power through her strategically

used wordplay showing her rap skills, her performance in the video suggests that her dominance and 'badness' might be too much resulting in her being tied to the couch. In the video and lyrics there is a constant (re-)negotiation of power and reflection of power imbalances. The song is an example of female empowerment being limited through a male gaze. In sum, although Minaj's verse enhances female empowerment it is overshadowed by Ludacris' part, which occupies the majority of the song and video due to him being the main artist and Nicki Minaj the feature.

The initially described common perception that Hip Hop is male dominated is clearly visible in the large-scale studies by Smith *et al.* and Wang and Horvát and can be verified by my small-scale study. The main difference is that both studies analyzed female Hip Hop artists in general and did not distinguish between main artists and feature artists. The analysis above shows, however, that the distinction is crucial as the gender of the main artist in a collaboration ultimately creates different contexts, themes and readings of the text. In a collaboration between a male and female artist there is a constant negotiation of power with the main artist surpassing the other due to an increased amount of rap and screen time and therefore visibility and perceived connection with the song. As mentioned earlier with 69% of collaborations entailing a male main artist, there is again a clear power imbalance that leads to the male artists being the main decision makers when it comes to a song's production. This shows that Hip Hop and music in general is not devoid of patriarchal norms that structure the industry. The strife for financial success, just as in any other industry or occupation, follows the history of men pushing women aside to claim the praise and revenue for themselves. Patriarchy can be defined as "a social formation of male-gendered power with a particular structure that can be found with striking regularity in many different arenas of social life" (Ortner 307). Starting with a "social stigma against public performance by women in the early 20th century", Tobias asserts that the "process of erasure of women" in Hip Hop is still persistent (55).

Nonetheless, women have always been an integral part of Hip Hop taking on different roles, most visibly the "decorative roles" (Kosut 241) for the male performer. Female Hip Hop artists, on the other hand, are often marginalized and face barriers to enter and sustain careers in the music industry as the fight for the

spotlight is different for women than it is for men. In an interview, the female rapper Remy Ma states that

[it] can be a thousand guys that's putting out music and rapping and doing what they do, but when it comes to females in this hip hop business, they make it seem like it can only be one, and if there's more than one then 'Alright, y'all better be at each other's throats every chance that you get. (Zonyeé n.p.)

Although Remy Ma praises Nicki Minaj in the same interview and expresses her wish to collaborate with her, a few years later, a public feud marked their relationship. In 2017 Remy Ma posted a promotional tweet for her upcoming song “ShETHER” (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1: Remy Ma's Twitter Post.

Even before the song's release it was clear that it was a diss song directed at Nicki Minaj. Firstly, the tweet includes a defaced Barbie doll embodying Nicki Minaj, which had been crafted by Martell in 2011 for charity. Instead of the by Martell intended matching ball gown, the doll was stripped naked with detached arms and legs and blood splatters around them. While the nakedness could be

connected to showing vulnerability, it clearly goes beyond that. Instead, a sentiment of destruction is achieved and should hint at the ruin of Minaj's career, which the fight was all about. Secondly, if the deconstructed Minaj-Barbie was not hint enough, Remy Ma even tagged her opponent directly to eliminate all misconceptions and to start a direct and public attack at Minaj. Moreover, the title of Ma's song "ShETHER" is a modification of Nas' infamous diss track "Ether" at Jay-Z. Remy Ma, however, did not just adopt the song's name to fit the women's fight, but used Nas' instrumental and fragments of his lines for her rap. As she did not seek permission, her song got banned from radio airplay, all streaming platforms and from being performed live soon after its release due to copyright infringement (Winslow). In addition to attacking her opponent, through the tag #Barz, which the Urban Dictionary describes as "talent or trait that comes close to perfection" ("Barz"), Ma self-confidently promotes her skills. It is also the rap skills and ultimately the rappers' successes the fight is all about. "ShETHER" is regarded as a response to Nicki's lyrics (in "Make Love") "Oooohhh, oh you the qu-e-e-the queen of this here? / One platinum plaque, album flopped, bitch, where? (bitch, where?) / [...] / You see, silly rabbit, to be the queen of rap / You gotta sell records, you gotta get plaques". In "ShETHER" Remy Ma countered with the lines "No, to be the Queen of Rap, you can't have a ghostwriter" insinuating that Minaj is not writing her lines herself.

The fight between the rappers is continued in the comments and splits the fans into opposing groups. The comments to Remy Ma's tweet clearly illustrate the either-or sentiment among fans. Almost every comment keeps a clear, defensive stance either for Remy Ma or for Nicki Minaj (**Figure 2**), but mostly for the latter. Fans went as far as asserting that Remy Ma had committed career suicide by dissing their "queen of rap", Nicki Minaj.



Figure 2: Comments on Remy Ma's Tweet.

One question surrounding the public debate is who is allowed to call herself or to be called the 'queen of rap', which is a position that can only be occupied by one artist. Following the tradition of achieving street credibility, battling with the goal of "diminishing an opponent's importance and raising one's own by exposing a weakness or character flaw" (Price 51) has been a prominent feature in Hip Hop from early on – most notably known from the East Coast versus West Coast feud. It is therefore not surprising that such battles take place between women in Hip Hop as well. There are, however, different connotations attached to female battles. In Tyree and William's analysis of Black women's rap battles, they have identified the role of dissing and battling as a crucial part in starting a woman's rap career. Women used battles to show their "lyrical prowess and showcase their ability to perform on the same levels as their male counterparts" (65-66). Once they have made it into the Hip Hop publicity, female battling and dissing serves the purpose of singling out the one and only 'queen of rap'. While a public

feud can boost both careers, it can also be the opposite. In the previous example, following the diss tracks in 2017 and the majority of fans siding with Minaj, Remy Ma has not released any new music since then. Therefore, a fight can also end a career, which then again limits overall female visibility in the Hip Hop scene.

While the fight between Remy Ma and Nicki Minaj focused on using their rap skills to belittle and outperform the opponent, many Hip Hop battles went beyond the lyrical staging, most prominently the tragic feud between Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G., which ended in both being murdered. Another in the media frequently reported Hip Hop fight was between the female Hip Hop artists Cardi B and Nicki Minaj. The fight reached its zenith at the Harper's Bazaar's Fashion Week party when Cardi B allegedly threw her high heel at Nicki Minaj. After they were escorted out of the party, with ripped dresses and a big bump on Cardi B's forehead, media coverage reported about their "bitchfight" (SWR). The Urban Dictionary describes a bitch fight when "two or more girls [are] engaged in scratching, punching, biting, box kicking, hair pulling, clothes ripping, and all the other brutal ways girls hurt each other". Other users added that they are "usually very amusing to watch and film" and "a reason for men to get popcorn" ("bitch fight"). While fights between men are frequently connotated with the expression of masculinity and a way of showing power and strength, fights between women are described as a form of entertainment that is not to be taken too seriously. Female fights are often ridiculed and made fun of, showing a clear difference in the attributed connotations with a battle or fight based on gender.

In sum, this chapter verified the public opinion that when it comes to the representation of female artists in Hip Hop, they are clearly underrepresented compared to their male counterparts. Those who reach a certain level of success are continuously compared and set up for battle. Although battling has been an element of Hip Hop from the start, women's compared to men's public staging of feuds are diverging as well as their connotations and by media and fans distributed messages. While male feuds are connected to the exertion of power and skills, female fights are often belittled and do not have the same significance. In addition, fueled by media coverages, female rappers battle for the position of the 'queen of rap', insinuating that there can only be one queen out of the very few women who manage to reach the spotlight. This fierce battle women find themselves in can also lead to female rappers ending their careers, as in Remy

Ma's case. If one of the many male rappers quits, the implications are not the same as if a female rapper ends her career. First, as the patriarchal structures in the music industry make it more difficult for a female rapper to get signed and to reach the charts, if a woman quits, this again limits female public visibility and aids at maintaining the gender gap. Secondly, thinking in an educational context, few women in the spotlight leads to few female role models young women can relate to. Moreover, as the analysis above shows, songs by female and male artists explore different themes and different representations of women.

From 2006 to 2023, with a mean of 8%, only the minority of artists reaching the Billboard Top 100 Charts were female. Although the visibility of female artists, producers or composers is very limited, there are female participants that nonetheless appear in connection to the majority of Hip Hop songs, the so-called 'video vixens'. Their visibility and representation ultimately also contribute to Hip Hop's image and success, which will be analyzed in the following chapter and compared to the representation of female Hip Hop artists.

5.3. "Where Them Girls At"¹ - Female Representations in Hip Hop Music Videos

The emergence of music video platforms, such as MTV or BET, has anchored music videos as a key source of income for artists through earning royalties for the number of streams (Sharpley-Whiting 24). In addition, music videos should be recognized for their advertising effects with the purpose of self-promotion (Roberts 142) and advertising the song and album, and a certain often anticipated (Hip Hop) lifestyle (Hunter and Soto 171). Simo Frith argues that a music video's function is to draw attention to the main artist, thus "[w]hether as video-art or as video-promotion, clips work as self-portraits: they represent their performers to their fans" (Frith 216 qtd. in Roberts 142). Kosut and Sharpley-Whiting argue that Hip Hop's aesthetic often includes a focus on the protagonist's material wealth (house, car), drug abuse and a party lifestyle with women as "decorative roles" (Kosut 241), the so-called video vixen (Sharpley-Whiting). While those themes might be the most obvious aspects, due to a video's multimodality, the close analysis of music videos is a powerful tool to identify different layers of meaning.

¹ "Where Them Girls At" by Megan Thee Stallion

A music video's impact is created through the combination of setting, filming techniques, performance and costumes. When analyzing music videos with a gender critical focus those aspects offer valuable insights into the construction of an artist's identity and the underlying power dynamics. Roberts (143) also argues that in the interpretation of a "multivoiced and polyphonic video" the auteur theory that the director alone controls the images and thus the meaning is no longer valid. Instead, the (female) performer "interweaves and juxtaposes meanings through her delivery, her look, [and] her gestures" (ibid.). Roberts, however, focuses his study on female Hip Hop artists. The previously mentioned 'video vixens' who are usually not involved in any decision-making processes do not have the same agency. On the contrary, Rose (*Noise* 16) describes pay inequalities and "oppressive working conditions" and even sexual harassment as daily experiences female video actresses experience on set.

The roles women occupy in Hip Hop influence their degree of agency and artistic autonomy. As shown in the previous chapter, the distinction between songs with female main Hip Hop artists and female collaborators entails different narratives and thematic foci, which results in diverging depictions of women. This gap is further enhanced when comparing videos of female artists and videos with female background dancers or actresses, as their right to participate in decision-making processes differs greatly. Considering the importance of both groups, I will divide the analysis chapters into two sections, one focusing on female artists and the other analyzing videos with female background actors.

In addition, the visuals add another layer of meaning through images and symbolism, which evoke emotions and add to the exploration of the in the lyrics expressed themes and concepts. Music videos are, thus, designed to complement the lyrics. Each analysis of different Hip Hop song from my corpus, thus, focuses on the interplay of lyrics and visuals and how videos complement or expand the lyrics to enhance a song's emotional impact.

In the analysis of male artists' Hip Hop videos, I have identified common beauty features of the music video actresses across most of the songs of my corpus. Those common denominators are: (1) their clothes, (2) their hairstyle, (3) their skin tone, (4) their relationship with/ positioning towards the rapper, and (5) the focus on body parts. Most of them express a certain (Eurocentric) beauty standard that is imposed on video vixens. In the following chapters I will examine

those identified common features of the depiction of video actresses more closely using different examples from my corpus of songs. I will then compare them to female Hip Hop artists' use and appropriation of those aspects.

5.3.1. Dress to Impress – but Who?

In Tyga's video for "Taste", clothing or mostly the lack thereof plays a crucial role in the representation and sexualization of women. The video features a variety of different settings. In the first thirty seconds the camera follows Tyga accompanied by three young women cruising in his Mercedes down a city street until they reach a modern mansion. The scenes at the mansion start with a full shot of the house with around thirty women dancing lined up at the balcony. The balcony's glass railing reveals the women's thong bikinis and bathing suits. Tyga is positioned on the roof of the house centered above the line of girls, similar to reigning over them. The different height levels between the rapper and the girls in combination with the line "Walk, talk it like a boss, I just lift the hand" indicate Tyga's dominance and control, conveying the idea that the gesture of raising the hand is enough to express commands. This is further enhanced through the camera angles. The camera moves from a frontal long shot to a low angle creating a powerful, even heroic impression of the rapper. The difference in height is further pursued in the next scene, which depicts Tyga and his male friends standing at the pool of said mansion and the girls kneeling, sitting or twerking below them. A sexually loaded atmosphere is created through the use of a toy water gun and a cream whipper serving as a double entendre for male genitalia. Both the toy water gun and the cream whipper are used to messily spray water or cream in a girl's gaping mouth and on her butt mimicking male ejaculation. The song's chorus "Taste, taste, she can get a taste" is loaded with innuendo. The phrase 'get a taste' implies the rapper's allowance for the girl to pursue a sexual act with him reinforcing the idea that he is in control of the interaction. The video's imagery with the cream whipper as a phallic symbol then adds another layer of meaning in which the woman can get a taste of the man's ejaculation after she "suck[ed] me like a fuckin' Hi-C" focusing on the male instead of the female sexual pleasure. In addition, there is a significant contrast between how men and women are dressed in the video. Tyga and his companions typically wear casual and baggy clothes, like oversized T-shirts, jeans or shorts emphasizing comfort. In a later

scene the group is at a roller-skating rink, whose dim, ambient lighting with LED lights colored in the seductive color red creates the sultry atmosphere of a strip club. While a bikini would be the obvious choice for a pool party, the girls wear the same attire at the rink whereas the men have changed into a chicer outfit. For me, this choice of clothing contradicts common sense and instead reinforces female hypersexualization through a lack of clothing and offering a one-dimensional portrayal of women's bodies.

Another interesting aspect is the choice of accessories. In the video it is only the men who are full of accessories, such as with rhinestone decorated sunglasses, diamond-encrusted earrings, big, gold or silver sparkling necklaces, high-end watches, wristbands, cross body bags and a ring on each finger. The extensive use of male accessories serves the purpose of signaling wealth and success to assert social status. On the contrary, the lack of accessories on the women may serve to draw attention to the powerful and affluent main artist who is the focal point within the narrative. This again increases the power imbalance implying that the women are not worth the same and their role in the narrative is merely to enhance the rapper's image rather than to express their own agency and identity.

This example clearly illustrates the symbolic value the choice of clothing and accessories carries, including power dynamics and the sexualization of the female body due to minimal clothing. This choice of clothing aligns with Laura Mulvey's concept of the 'male gaze' which suggests that women in media are often depicted as passive objects for the male pleasure rather than as autonomous participants (Paasonen *et al.* 21-22). Research equally highlights the recognizable visual connection to the pornographic industry (Hunter and Soto; Sharpley-Whiting). Thus, these videos arguably contribute to the normalization of pornography and strip clubs. This is, however, not a phenomenon in Hip Hop alone. Regular appearances of strip clubs in mainstream television shows, such as "How I Met Your Mother", or the success of the "50 Shades of Grey" movies, contribute to its acceptability and normalization and the "pornification of youth culture" (Hunter and Soto 170). The pornography industry, generating 12-14 billion dollars in revenue each year in the United States alone (Lindner *Pornography n.p.*), is even closely tied to Hip Hop. For marketing purposes, Snoop Dogg produced porn music videos for two of his songs

("Doggystyle" and "Snoop Dogg's Hustlaz: Diary of a Pimp") (Essence *n.p.*). (Young) listeners must "explore and affirm [their] sexuality in an era rife with pornography, the mainstreaming of strip clubs, and the sexualization of everything" (Sharpley-Whiting 11), leading to what Sharpley-Whiting calls "the ironies of hip hop" (7). This irony can equally be seen in the different interpretations of female sexuality in music videos depending on the context and agency.

The most obvious and expressive component that aids in the expression of identity and sexuality in music videos and on stage is the choice of garments. Fashion choices have become an important transformative factor that advocates for women's rights, autonomy, freedom and gender equality through the expression of feminism independent of the music genre. Li, Wang and Xie argue that female Hip Hop artists usually chose one of two ways of costuming: Neutral, baggy and unisex or sexy, highlighting the artist's curves (579-580). While both styles of clothing can be used strategically to convey female empowerment, the approaches differ in their message. Comparing Missy Elliot and Nicki Minaj, it is apparent that they employ different approaches to clothing and female empowerment. Missy Elliot's baggy and oversized clothing can be seen as a form of defiance that challenges the norms of female sexuality by "taking off gender labels and breaking gender stereotypes" (ibid. 582) to prioritize her music and redirect the attention to her skills. She also boldly challenges the notion that success in the industry is linked to stereotypical and sexualized notions of beauty imposed by the capitalist music industry. Despite wearing baggy clothing, Elliot still manages to express her unique persona through creative fashion statements. For instance, in her video to "The Rain (Supa Dupa Fly)" Missy Elliot is filmed in a black inflatable leather suit with gold-plated shimmering sunglasses in the shape of a crown from a low camera angle. Without breaking eye contact Elliot raps into the lens of the camera, directly addressing and almost controlling the audience. Through the accentuated use of innovative styling and camera placement, Elliot appears bold and heroic, emphasizing her individuality and uniqueness rather than conforming to the male gaze.

Nicki Minaj equally uses fashion to assert control over her persona and identity in the male-dominated industry, but in a distinctive way. Minaj usually chooses colorful, tight, bold and revealing outfits accentuating her curves and

femininity. She embraces her femininity as a form of empowerment and self-expression. Like Elliot, Minaj uses fashion fearlessly through statement pieces and extreme outfits to position herself as a powerful figure who is in control of her image. Her over-the-top wigs can be seen as a theatrical hyperbole that makes her appear taller and more important. However, it is important to add that Hip Hop artists do not provide an economic counter-model to capitalism, rather they operate within its structure, leveraging consumer appeal without challenging the underlying commercialistic structures. Artists, therefore, often pragmatically adhere to the mantra 'sex sells' to maximize the appeal, reach and profit. Minaj's stylistic choices emphasize self-empowerment and agency but are simultaneously compatible with the mainstream commercial standards guided through the male gaze.

The previously described emancipatory effect of an autonomous choice of garment is related to Hip Hop artists. Comparing them to the female background dancers show varying levels of agency and emancipatory potential. Female artists mostly exercise control over their fashion to express agency and create a distinctive personal identity. While this choice can be seen as reclaiming and subverting the male gaze, the fashion choice of background dancers usually adheres to the male gaze and commercial norms. It is not the dancers who control the image but the production team and artist (Balaji; Sharpley-Whiting; Steffans) who aim to create an image that fits the theme of the song, complements and promotes the artist rather than presenting their personal identities. Due to the advertising effects of music videos, they are also related to the "logics of late-stage capitalism" (Sharpley-Whiting 7) reinforcing stereotypical depictions of beauty and sexuality appealing to the mostly male audience (Li *et al.* 581). The imagery of female beauty and sexuality is, however, not only achieved through fashion, but also through more subtle choices, such as the hairstyles.

5.3.2. Hairstyles – Where is the Afro?

In his song "HUMBLE.", Kendrick Lamar raps about his emotions connected to his success but also challenges his competitors and the music industry itself. The video's frequent change of setting juxtaposes seemingly contradictory images and themes, adding multiple layers of meaning to critically underscore the

complexity of topics such as humility opposed to materialism and the definition of female beauty standards, contrasting natural to artificial beauty standards.

The chorus with the repetitive use of the phrases “Bitch, be humble” and “sit down, be humble” serves as a double-entendre: First, it can be seen as reminder to himself to focus on humility despite his success. Secondly, if directed at his opponents, the imperative in the chorus creates an authoritative voice to either challenge the focus on materialistic values in the music industry or to command humility from his opponents comparing their and his success. This double-entendre is further enhanced through the set design in the video. The first interpretation of the line to serve as a reminder for himself to be humble is enhanced through scenes such as him casually riding the bike along an empty street or almost vanishing in a group of people who are all wearing the same casual black hoodie. These humble representations of him are then confronted with scenes focusing on opulence and materialism. Religious imagery is used to present Lamar as a god-like figure adding to the perception of authority and importance. For instance, Lamar is depicted as a pope figure with a beam of light illuminating his persona in an otherwise dark room. A later scene portrays him in a re-enactment of Leonardo da Vinci’s painting “The Last Supper” where he is placed in the position of Jesus. In the scene following the lyrics “Girl, I can buy your ass the world with my paystub” Lamar lies on a pile of bank notes surrounded by sparsely dressed women putting money into a cash counting machine. This excessive display of wealth could imply that due to his tremendous success he needs help keeping track of his wealth. In addition, this portrayal signals a sort of pretentious indifference that he does not care about how much money he has as long as it is enough to “buy [...] the world”. The ambiguity of who the intended recipient for the imperative “be humble” is relates to the complexities of staying humble in an industry intertwined with materialism and the focus on wealth and personal status. In addition, the hyperbolic comparison of his persona with the pope and Jesus lets me assume that Lamar has used this figurative tool as a means to invite the audience to reflect on the meaning and relevance of personal status and wealth.

Another crucial theme explored in the song are the complexities related to the representation of women and beauty standards:

“I’m so, so sick and tired of the Photoshop
Show me something natural – like Afro on Richard Pryor
Show me somethin’ natural like ass with some stretch marks”
(Kendrik Lamar – “Humble”)

In the quote above Lamar advocates for a natural and authentic depiction of beauty without alterations and retouching through digital tools such as Photoshop. Through Lamar’s reference to natural hair, an “Afro on Richard Pryor” in particular, he additionally affirms the importance of showing African American identity and beauty features. Although the lyrics mention Richard Pryor, a male African American comedian and actor famous for his prominent afro, the video scene connected to the verse indicate that the lines are directed towards women: For the Photoshop line, the video shows Lamar’s profile on the left side of the frame and divided through a black line, an African American woman fiercely focusing the camera on the right side. Contrary to the video for Tyga’s “Taste” and many other examples from the corpus, the frame is equally divided as the same amount of space is allocated to the woman and the artist, indicating a balanced depiction of power. Through the woman’s fierce look and direct focus at the lens of the camera, it seems as if she was holding direct eye-contact with the audience and ultimately also controls the shot. As Lamar continues rapping about the afro, he and the woman swap positions and through a transition that seems as if the two were merging, a different woman appears on the left side. The shot design and the woman’s fierce look remain the same and only the woman’s looks change. The new girl wears a simple white top, has voluminous, curly black hair and does not wear noticeable make-up. This focus on natural beauty is further enhanced in the next shots, showing the back of an African American woman from her waist down until her knees, casually moving her body to the music by tilting her waist from one side to the other. While such a shot with the clear focus on the buttock might be considered highly sexual in many other Hip Hop videos, this one differs those greatly due to the following aspects: First, the girl’s subtle movement resembles an authentic representation of how a woman would move to the song and is different from exaggerated, pornographic-like dance moves as in many other videos. Secondly, the girl wears simple black high-waisted bikini-like underwear, and not a tanga or thong, offering more coverage and hinting at a more casual and everyday choice of underwear. Lastly, and most importantly, the shot shows and zooms in at the woman’s natural

stretch marks. Through offering authentic representations and counter-images to the often-spread idealized beauty standards, Lamar critiques the expectations placed on women's bodies, particular in the music industry, to fit idealized, often Eurocentric beauty norms.

Lamar's imperative to show natural beauty and natural hairstyles of African American women gains importance when watching the other videos of the songs in the corpus. The majority of videos portrays music video actresses with long brown hair, straightened or first straightened and then curled by a hairdresser. While the choice of hairstyle might seem trivial at first glance, it carries historical, cultural and social meaning. "Hair has historically been a medium of adornment for people of African descent" (Byrd and Tharps 47). The process of straightening hair was associated with the quest for social and economic upward mobility. This already started in the nineteenth century, when slaves with kinky hair were out on the plantations and those with straighter hair got less strenuous work, doing domestic service inside the houses (26). These different connotations continued into the 20th century. Blacks tried to emulate white (beauty) standards, which regarded kinky hair as "uncivilized" and straightened as "well groomed" or respectable (34), making social status or the prospect of a job partly dependent on hair structure (49). This was soon taken advantage of by the market industry, which evolved into a whole Black Hair-Care industry, selling beauty guides for Black people (36), hair straighteners and the 'promise' for improving one's social status (31). This trend of straightened hair among African American women is also reflected in as well as reinforced through Hip Hop music videos. Hip Hop scholars (e.g. Sharpley-Whiting; Stephens and Few) recognize Hip Hop's powerful advertising effect and influence on consumer behavior through presenting re-occurring ideal beauty standards for women (Sharpley-Whiting 27).

Raising awareness of the influence that (Hip Hop) media consumption has on adolescents' identity formation and perception of beauty is particularly crucial in the educational context. In Stephen and Few's qualitative study on "the effects of images of African American women in Hip Hop on early adolescents' attitudes toward physical attractiveness" (251), they concluded that the way they perceive female beauty and perform gender is influenced by three groups: Their female caregivers, female Hip Hop role models as well as their male peers'

comments on female physical attractiveness (261). The latter group particularly commented on hair texture and skin tone and found straightened hair and lighter skin color more desirable. These preferred beauty features are influenced through frequent Hip Hop consumption and re-occurring types of female beauty (258).

Again, Hip Hop videos present their audience with rather narrow beauty standards when it comes to hairstyle. This is problematic due to the following three aspects: First, the desirable hairstyle as shown in Hip Hop videos is historically rooted in slavery and derives from the marginalization of African American features through the domination of Eurocentric beauty standards. Secondly, the quest for maintaining or improving one's social recognition or adhering to beauty standards expressed by the other sex through external features, such as hair, cannot be achieved without investing money. The tedious process of chemically straightening black hair has its price and is unaffordable for people with low income. With African Americans spending nine times the amount on hair products compared to other ethnic groups, "Black women spend approximately \$1.7 billion annually on hair care products" in the U.S. in 2023 (Lindner *Hair n.p.*). Thirdly, presenting narrow Eurocentric beauty standards influences the way African American beauty is perceived. In her famous TED talk "The Danger of a Single Story", the African author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explains how her childhood with only reading British and American books has led her to believe that all books by nature had to contain white, blue-eyed protagonists whose hair was up in a ponytail. She also wrote stories surrounding those European people whom she had never seen and who were foreign to her. As no alternative was offered to her as a child, this became her "single story". Similarly to Adichie mentioning children to be particularly vulnerable when it comes to believing in "single stories", the same vulnerability can be observed with adolescents searching for a sense of (racial) identity. Hip Hop is therefore in need for an inclusion of diverse images of female beauty including natural black hair to counter the historical narrative that straightened hair is the only path to success.

Since the 1970s, natural black hair has gained importance and was intentionally used as a tool to show Black pride and identity through representing a visible statement of empowerment (Byrd and Tharps 56-58). While an increase of 23% of Black women preferring natural hair can be observed from 2017 to

2020, in 2020 still only 36% of African American women opted for natural hair (Lindner *Hair n.p.*). Comparing videos from the years 2006 and 2023 from the corpus of songs for this thesis should give a brief, yet limited and by no means quantifiable, overview of how the situation has changed over the decades in Hip Hop music videos. The videos from 2006 present the majority of actresses with straightened long hair and only 19% of the videos featured women with natural black hair in leading roles in the video. If a female dancer has got natural-looking black hair, she is either (almost hidden as) one in a group of several women, all with straightened hair, or has got a special role. In my corpus, the special roles with natural hair, diverging from the sexually depicted video vixens, were children, mother figures, or loyal girlfriend types. The use of different hairstyles for different roles indicates the diverging connotations of the hairstyles. Straightened hair is related to mainstream beauty ideals and glamour, sexual desirability and temporary pleasure. Natural hair, on the other hand, aligns with authenticity, cultural pride and stability and is emotionally charged through establishing a connection to “home” and a feeling of comfort. This duality of representations of women in Hip Hop videos ties in with the Freudian “Madonna-Whore Dichotomy” (Manuel 393-394). The Madonna-Whore Dichotomy postulates that women are put in either one of two categories: They are either seen as “good” and nurturing, who are worthy enough to be loyal girlfriends, wives and mothers, the so-called “Madonna”. The “Whore” on the other hand is “bad” and driven by their sexuality. This dichotomy “sees women’s goodness and sexuality as mutually exclusive” (393).

This concept is often also visible in society. The advertisement branch, and Hip Hop videos alike, show and promote products or lifestyles (to women) that attract and are (sexually) appealing to men. Simultaneously, women are branded as ‘whores’ or ‘sluts’ if they adopt this lifestyle or are too revealing and act out sexually. The issue of allotting these two different roles to women, often based on looks or hear-say, influences the way relationships are formed (394). A woman is supposed to be sexually appealing but to be suitable for a relationship she should be ‘Madonna-like’ and sexually restrained or even untouched, which does not apply to men the same way. Even nowadays, there is still a double standard when it comes to male and female sexuality. “A double standard occurs when two groups are judged differently for engaging in the same behavior (Kalish

175). Regarding sexuality, there are different standards for what is regarded as socially acceptable for men and for women. These standards are particularly connected to the number of sex partners, sexual agency and the freedom to have sex outside of relationships, all of which influence a woman's eligibility to be a girlfriend or wife, but for which men are not judged or scrutinized the same way (176). Therefore, women often find themselves at the crossroad between social desirability and being 'wife-material' through adhering to the societally and culturally imposed standards of appropriate female sexuality or sexual autonomy and agency. This stigmatization is further enhanced through the previously described visual choices for the different roles. While the choice or lack of garment is a more obvious aspect that aids to the differentiation between video vixen and girlfriend figures, the choice of hairstyle is another more subtle one.

This clear visual distinction between "Madonna" (natural hair) and "Whore" (straightened hair) figures becomes continuously blurred when moving down the timeline of the songs of my corpus. With an increase from 19% in 2006 to 87% in 2023, women without chemically straightened hair constitute the majority of leading female roles within the latest videos of my corpus. The choice of hairstyles is continuously detached from stigmatized roles and both background dancers as well as mother and girlfriend figures show a variety of hairstyles, such as afros, braids, twists or cornrows.

The shift towards more women in Hip Hop wearing natural black hair reflects broader cultural, social and political dynamics. From the 1970s onwards, a rise of returning to natural black hair to show Black pride, to embrace the African heritage (Black Power Movement) and as a form of protest against the imposed Eurocentric beauty standards occurred (Natural Hair Movement) (Byrd and Tharps 56-65). Moreover, rising feminist voices and feminism as a movement "to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (hooks *Feminism* 1) emphasized the importance of female agency and embracing one's identity as a form of resistance. It was, however, with the employment of intersectionality that until then marginalized Black women's experiences were included in feminism (Kendall xvii). Intersectional feminism regards feminism as "pluralistic" and emphasizes feminism's individuality that not all women share "a common gender identity or set of experiences and that they often interpret similar experiences differently" (Snyder-Hall 256). The shift towards natural black hair is more than

just a fashion trend. Instead, it is a cultural statement rooted in Black, female empowerment and resistance influenced by the Natural Hair Movement or intersectional feminism.

The use of hairstyles to express female empowerment is clearly visible in the Hip Hop videos of female solo artists. None of the 31 female Hip Hop videos from my corpus of songs, portray female rappers with only straightened hair. Instead, female artists wear afros or locs, vibrant hair colors, exaggerated lengths, or dramatic wigs. Those hairstyles are, however, more than just aesthetic choices. For instance, Ice Spice (in “Princess Diana” and “Barbie World”), for instance, stays true to her eye-catching red curls, which have become her signature look and are part of branding her individuality and authenticity. Spice’s repeated collaboration partner, Nicki Minaj, on the other hand, constantly reinvents her (hair)style, supporting her artistry and multifaceted style through bright colors or flamboyant wigs. Minaj uses her hairstyle as an additional tool to underscore her song’s visuals. For instance, her multicolored wig followed by a bright pink and green one with extra-long lashes and a cotton-candy pink lipstick aid to the playful and dream-like aesthetic of the video to “Super Bass” that presents Minaj in a Barbie-like aesthetic. Her straightened, short bob in “Your Love” reflects the song’s themes of showing love and admiration and underpins those topics and her vulnerability through refraining from bright colors and exaggerated hairstyles. The Samurai narrative (“When I was Geisha, he was a Samurai / Somehow I understood him when he spoke Thai”) is further enhanced through the display of Minaj as a warrior, which in combination with the sleek hairstyle suggests discipline and ties in with the romantic storyline of fighting for love. In the video for “Barbie World”, Nicki Minaj juxtaposes two personas, enhanced through fitting hairstyles: Nicki Minaj wears perfect long, sleek pink hair, which reflects the anticipated perfection of a Barbie doll. In other scenes, she is shown with voluminous black curls, which adds Afrocentric elements and can be seen as a commentary on Eurocentric beauty standards as well as the unrealistic Barbie aesthetic. The exaggerated volume makes Minaj appear bigger, which presents her as a powerful and confident figure. Although Minaj has used a Barbie-like aesthetic in earlier videos, she refrains from doing so in this one, even though it deals with Barbie’s world. Minaj reclaims the Barbie image through presenting herself as an empowered version. Hairstyles can, thus, be

used to reject stereotypical portrayals and expectations of female beauty through reclaiming hair as a powerful tool for empowerment and to express individuality and (artistic) control.

5.3.3. Black Does not Equal Black – ‘Trends’ in Skin Tone

Hip Hop originates from offering social critique surrounding the hardships oppressed groups, African Americans in particular, experience and aims at celebrating their uniqueness (Sajjani 93). While the mostly male rappers or MCs vary a great deal regarding their skin tone, the same variation cannot be observed as much when it comes to video vixens. Instead, active choices concerning the skin tone of the video actresses are made based on marketing strategies that heavily rely on the favorable marketability of Eurocentric beauty ideals, as well as on the concept of oppressive othering.

For example, in the song “Every Girl” by Young Money² Lil Wayne starts with the line “Ugh, I like a long-haired, thick redbone” and Gudda Gudda later continues with “I like ‘em caramel skin, long hair, thick ass” or “my butter-pecan, Puerto Rican”. Despite the line “I don’t discriminate, no, not at all”, Mack Maine mentioning “retards” and “midgets” who he would also fuck and the repetitive use of the term “every girl” in the chorus, the rappers of Young Money clearly express a preferred type of female beauty. Through the use of the adjectives “caramel” and “butter-pecan” as well as the term “redbone”, which describes mixed-race and lighter-skinned Black women (*redbone* Urban Dictionary), the rappers elevate Eurocentric beauty standards and fetishize lighter-skinned Black women through their portrayals. This preference is further enhanced through the choice of video actresses and the lyrically mentioned examples of female celebrities: The “desperate housewife that resemble Eva” Longoria, Sanaa Lathan, Meegan Good, Angelina Jolie, Paris Hilton and Miley Cyrus, who are all either lighter-skinned Black women or white. At the beginning of the video, Lil Wayne is alone in a warehouse in front of a Rolls Royce with a rotating globe shown at the top right corner, which signifies the start of his trip around the world so that he can “fuck every girl in the world”. Then, Lil Wayne gradually admits women to enter

² Young Money is a collaboration between the rappers Lil Wayne, Drake, Jae Millz, Gudda Gudda, and Mack Maine, who are signed at the by Lil Wayne founded record label Young Money Entertainment.

the scene as he opens them the car door and thus also asserts control over their presence in the scene. This form of domination is also visible in the lyrics: The repetitive use of the personal pronoun “I” in combination with the will-future to express future predictions (“I’ll fuck the whole group”), sex is described as a self-centered act focusing on male pleasure rather than a shared experience. The men are, thus, portrayed as the active agents whereas the women are passive recipients of the male attention. The refrain equally reduces women to objects of the male desire and compares them to trophies that the rapper can tick off his checklist until he has achieved his sexual conquest to “fuck every girl in the world”. In addition, the provocative and explicit use of the word “fuck” reduces sexual encounters to its physicality without leaving room for the emotional aspect. As Lil Wayne starts his implied round-the-world trip, women dressed in clothing associated with different nationalities and cultures exit the car: One girl wearing an ushanka, a traditional Russian fur hat, the next one dressed in a sari and a bindi, the red dot on the forehead as a Hindu symbol, and with the word “Blackanese” framed with two fans appearing in the shot, a girl wearing a blue kimono leaves the car. The women, hence, are dressed to appeal to stereotypical male fantasies. This superficial use of culturally significant attire merely as props constitutes cultural appropriation as the clothing is detached from its authentic context without showing understanding and respect for the culture (*cultural appropriation* Cambridge Dictionary). In addition to the women wearing culturally specific dresses, numerous other video actresses with different hairstyles and body types leave the car, all of whom share own common feature: light-brown skin. Although the idea of the song suggests the celebration of a broad spectrum of women, the lyrics as well as the video fails to represent darker-skinned Black women and opts for favoring Eurocentric features, which reinforces colorist hierarchies that prefers lighter-skinned or racially ambiguous over dark-skinned women.

Similar to the hairstyle, offering the audience this narrow image of what ‘Blackness’ should look like contradicts Hip Hop’s initial goal of giving marginalized groups a voice because part of this group is excluded. Instead, within this often-times disadvantaged group, ideals and standards are presented on what is regarded as more desirable compared to others. In her study on “black authenticity, colourism, and Billboard Rap Chart rankings” Wendy Laybourn

states that the music industry strategically uses and commodifies “Blackness” through the two concepts of “oppressive othering” and “white standards of beauty”, which stem from colorist thinking and evoke different expectations of what “Black” is supposed to look like and how it is supposed to act (2085-2086; 2098). Sharpley-Whiting (27-29) and Zackodnik (7-9) report that the negatively connoted term “mulatta” or even “tragic mulatta” is often used to describe those fairer-skinned women. A “mulatta” is defined by her “in-between racial status” (Sharpley-Whiting 27), through “mixed white and Black ancestry” (*mulatto* Merriam-Webster), often due to the fact that during slavery they were their master’s illegit offspring (Byrd and Tharps 28). Historically, similar to females with straight hair, those slaves with mixed-race and hence lighter skin were more likely to work in the homes of their masters rather than on the field, due to showing familiar features, yet also some sort of interesting exoticness, which often led to sexual exploitation (Byrd and Tharps 27-28). After slavery was abolished, the “mulatta” figures, with most similarities to white features, gained societal acceptance more easily and hence had a more privileged position compared to those with darker skin (ibid. 28; 32). According to Sharpley-Whiting’s research, the “mulatta” figure is regarded as the most ideal when it comes to female beauty because it combines ‘the best of both worlds’, “the skillfulness in matters of sex (read: black) and physical beauty (read: white)” (Sharpley-Whiting 27). Zackodnik, on the other hand, summarizes the history of the stereotypical “tragic mulatta” figure in American fiction. Contrary to Sharpley-Whiting’s definition, the “tragic mulatta” does not combine ‘the best’ features but is portrayed as troubled or even “doomed” (Zackodnik 7) because of her mixed-race and due to the attributed stereotypical traits, that are “divided by blood, with whiteness credited with positive traits and blackness with negative ones” (ibid. 8).

The favored position of lighter skin, however, is not only with regard to video actresses, but can equally be observed with rappers as well as outside of Hip Hop. For example, Wendy Laybourn reports a connection between the skin tone of a male rapper and his success in the charts as the most successful artists in the Billboard charts were lighter skinned (2098-2099). Out of the eleven female rappers in the corpus of my thesis, two can be identified as white and the remaining nine echo the racist figure of the “mulatta”, while darker skin tones are again not represented. Within Hip Hop and outside, given the range and variety

of Blackness, a narrow definition of how Black beauty should look like is promoted, propagating stereotypical images of female Blackness. This particularly affects adolescents in the process of identity formation. Social comparison with their surroundings and with media images is an inevitable part of the process of forming one's identity and self-concept. The degree to which this comparison with the "external stereotyped messages about their own racial group" (Stephens and Few 257) then (negatively) influences an adolescent in the perception of his or her identity depends on how secure a person already is in defining his- or herself (ibid.). Times of transition during early adolescence are particularly crucial in determining self-concept and is therefore an important topic to be considered in the classroom. Stereotypical views of prioritizing skin color closer to white has been called "colorism" and "a colorism-informed standard of beauty may pose a particular risk for those African American girls who do not conform to this standard" (Wallace *et al.* 1316). Teachers and society itself should, however, not forget that this struggle of identity formation is not the same for white and Black girls. Defining Black femininity is a constant negotiation "at the intersection of history, economics, identity, ideology, and subculture" (Balaji 7). Eurocentric beauty standards are oftentimes prioritized by decision-makers, leading to "a conflicted internalization" for Black girls (Stephens and Few 257). It is, hence, crucial to understand that focusing on gender alone does not do the experiences and struggles many Black girls have justice. Instead, the analysis of the representation of women in Hip Hop needs an intersectional approach, as analyzing gender in isolation would fail to account for its complex interactions. Intersectionality, "examines ways in which these categories [race and gender] interact on multiple levels" (Wallace *et al.* 1315). In connection, in 2008 Bailey and Trudy have coined the term "misogynoir" addressing the "anti-Black racist misogyny that Black women experience" (Bailey and Trudy 762).

In addition to the "existing stereotypes of sexuality and attainability that are historically associated with young Black females" (Balaji 7), Black male decision-makers in Hip Hop often abide by those outdated, historically set standards or determine additional ones. Apart from stereotypical views about skin color, Wallace *et al.*'s study reports that there are numerous stereotypical beliefs about Black women's bodies that are related to sexual behaviors (1321). They also examined a correlation between girls endorsing the promoted stereotypical

image of Black bodies and substance use because of social comparison and the oftentimes connected dissatisfaction due to appearance differences. Balaji reports that the likeliness of drug use can be diminished through increasing confidence with one's own identity, fostered through "parental racial socialization", which can moderate "the effect of negative stereotype images and colorism" (ibid.). During the most vulnerable times of identity formation, the influence of school and teachers cannot be overlooked. I, therefore, argue for incorporating Critical Media Literacy to educate teachers on the correlation between stereotypical images of Black female bodies, self-esteem and identity formation to foster consciousness and sensitivity on those topics.

It is, however, not only white participants who enforce their beauty ideals on Black women, but also Black decision-makers, resulting in what Greene calls an "extremely damaged "black male/female relationship" (71); all of which is also expressed through the performed relationships and actions between rappers and video vixens published in Hip Hop videos, as analyzed in the next sub-chapter.

5.3.4. Next to, Behind, in Front of, Around – Relationship with the Male Artist

"And we like her, and we like her too [...] – I wish I could fuck every girl in the world" (Young Money). When revisiting the song and particularly the video for "Every Girl" by Young Money, an additional layer of meaning is added through a strategic choice of camera angles and positioning, which reinforces an uneven distribution of power between the male and female performers and influences the shown relationship between them.

The video starts with a chauffeur opening the door of a Rolls Royce for Lil Wayne to get out. Low-angle shots are used to make the male rapper appear larger and in control, mounting over and looking down at the audience. This visual dominance enhances the lyrical content as both reinforce patriarchal dynamics where men are framed in dominant positions whereas women are pushed aside. After him rapping in front of the car, which jumps up and down, simulating the movements of people having sexual intercourse in it, he opens the door for one girl after the other to exit the car and grants them permission to the set. Contrary to what the lyrics say, those video vixens all conform to what mainstream society would regard as beautiful. While Lil Wayne continues rapping, standing at the center in front of the car, the group of girls dances in the background next to the

car, yet all facing the rapper and directing their eyes and movements towards him. In scenes where both the rapper and the girls are featured, the focus is on him with the girls trying to seduce him with their eyes and dance moves. Only when Lil Wayne is not in the frame or when a girl is stepping out of the car, the camera briefly zooms in on her. Those scenes with the focus on the women are shot from a high angle, which make them appear smaller and create a feeling of subordination. Then, the girls' eyes sensually focus the camera, trying to mesmerize the audience, instead of trying to capture the rapper's attention. For the most part of the video, the dancers keep their distance from the artist. Only when Lil Wayne gets assistance in form the other rappers of Young Money, the video dancers come closer, thrusting their buttocks and breasts against the men. The rappers, however, still claim the upper hand of what is happening by placing their hands on and around the women's shoulders.

Similar structures can be observed in numerous other videos: Rapper(s) are shown in dominant positions through a strategic choice of camera angles, through positions in the foreground (see "Every Girl") or on a visually higher level (see "Taste"), or through acting unimpressed by the girls' stares and actions to get the rappers' attention. Once the rapper decides to 'allow' a girl to come closer, he still controls the image and her through hand placements on the butt, around the shoulder or the waist, directing her moves. Girls only get their full shot when they do something provocative or outstanding, such as dancing lusciously. Thereby, the focus is often on one specific body part, such as the butt, the breasts or the lips, which is outlined in the next sub-chapter.

In the video for the song "Love Me" by Lil Wayne featuring Drake and Future, the male rapper's position of domination and the blatancy of asserting power over the women is even enhanced. Women in cages pleasurably stretch their hands out, trying to touch the rapper who does not relent, almost as if the rapper has to be shielded by the women's bestial lust or vice versa that the women are meant to be controlled. The women's animal-like nature is further enhanced visually through giving them the tongue of a lizard, the mane of a lion, a reptile's tail lusciously moving from one side to the other or through face painting imitating a leopard's fur. Even though one might assume that big, metal cages are eye-catchers in the respective scenes, they are relegated to the periphery with dim lighting containing red and blue undertones that casts

shadows on the women's bodies and creates a menacing yet sensual atmosphere. Key lighting, on the other hand, is directed at the rapper who occupies the central position in between the cages. During this scene, Lil Wayne raps as follows:

She say, "Cause I really need somebody
So tell me you're that somebody"
Girl, I fuck who I want and fuck who I don't
Got that A1 credit and that fillet mignon
She say, "I never wanna make you mad
I just wanna make you proud."
I say, "Baby just make me cum
Then don't make a sound" [...]
Yeah, long as my bitches love me (my bitches love me)
I can give a fuck 'bout no hater long as my bitches love me (Lil Wayne)

Again, the rapper tries to assert his power and authority by claiming that he fucks who he wants and that the girls are kept for his sexual pleasure and afterwards they will go back to their cages and are forbidden to make a sound. He also dismisses the woman's expression of emotion ("I just wanna make you proud") as Lil Wayne immediately undercuts this sentiment with the command to sexually please him and then to be quiet. This trivializes the emotional aspect of a sexual intercourse or a relationship and prioritizes male sexual pleasure. The portrayal of women as animals in possession of the man who controls the women's actions and voice, reduces women to sexual objects. The process of objectification equals "treating and dehumanizing a person as a thing, instrument or object" (Paasonen *et al.* 4). The song establishes a dichotomy between the active man and the passive woman, which is extended to 'doing it' and 'it being done to' regarding the sexual act. This coincides with Laura Mulvey's concept of 'the male gaze'. Mulvey disassembled Hollywood films' success through evoking the within Freud's work established scopophilia, the pleasure of looking, and promoting the "fantasy of man as [the] active, desiring subject and woman as passively desired" (Paasonen *et al.* 21-22). The backlash on Hollywood and debates provoked by Mulvey's work has led to numerous publications critiquing, commenting or furthering the concept of 'the male gaze' as well as questioning the production process, the kinds of representations of women in movies and the representation of female film makers (Paasonen *et al.* 26). Concerning the question of the production process, interestingly, for the video "Love Me", a woman, Hannah Lux

Davis, has directed the video. In an interview Hannah Lux Davis reported that after film school, she started as a production assistant whose job mainly consisted of getting coffee or making copies, which was not satisfying, and getting her to where she wanted to be. As a result, she re-educated herself to become an on-set-makeup artist to get into conversations with those people she needed to reach her goals. A commissioner working with a record label then introduced her to Lil Wayne who offered her the opportunity to write a script for one of his videos, for which she came up with the idea for "Love Me". She described her script as "balls to the wall, here's like a word vomit of ideas", certain that she would not be booked anyways. Lil Wayne, however, loved her idea and she got the gig, which opened the door for future collaborations. In the present, Davis primarily works with female artists, such as Ariana Grande or Nicki Minaj but she emphasized that saying yes to everything early in her career and a good work ethic really brought her to where she is now (Stevens n.p.). As long as the system itself is run on patriarchy, the question of bringing in a female perspective appears difficult and oppressed by male decision-makers. In addition, in Mako Fitts' qualitative study on the music video production processes of Hip Hop videos, she concludes that male and female casting directors employ the same managerial styles "on the preference for masculine cultural norms and values" as those women who achieve a "senior management position will adopt masculine behavior characteristics" (218).

Another example of a frequent portrayal of women in Hip Hop music videos can be found in T.I.'s song "Whatever You Like". The video depicts T.I. as a wealthy man who turns the world of a working-class woman upside down as he introduces her to a lifestyle of luxury and wealth. The prelude of the video shows T.I. and his friends entering a fast-food shop. A beautiful woman at the counter seems dazzled by his appearance and absentmindedly stares at him with open eyes and mouth, forgetting to place his order at the kitchen. Before he leaves the scene, he hands her a sheet of paper with the word "KING" and his phone number to which the woman reacts with bright eyes, a high-pitched giggle and bouncing up and down resembling the joy of a small child and expressing a kind of naivety. After this introductory scene, the actual song and the narrative mirroring a Cinderella story begins. T.I. is depicted as the woman's 'rescuer' who helps her escape her mundane life and introduces her to a life full of glamor and luxury.

The video utilizes full shots of a stack of 100-dollar bills, the popping of a champagne bottle, a diamonded necklace or a private jet smoothly gliding towards the sunset as symbols of wealth.

Apart from those props as symbols of luxury, different strategies, such as setting, lighting or costume design are used to establish a clear distinction between the working-class life and a world of luxury. First, before the girl calls T.I., the “KING”, she sits on the bed in her room resembling a typical scene from a teen movie: The protagonist sits in her pajamas and cross-legged on the bed, fluffy colorful pillows stacked up behind her and sentimental postcards and photos are pinned on the wall. In her face, a pensive expression is visible, reflecting her struggle whether to call the number or not. She then picks up her purple corded telephone and as soon as the rapper answers, the setting abruptly changes. The lighting shifts from the dimly lit teenage room and becomes brighter, aiding as a symbol to enter a better life. From then on, the setting consists of luxury boutiques, private jets, expensive restaurants, or the red carpet with spotlights illuminating the rapper and his plus one. Moreover, with the entering into T.I.’s life, the woman’s dress transforms from the mundane fast-food uniform and her pajamas to designer dresses with opulent jewelry. Simultaneously, her hairstyle changes from her natural curly hair casually put up in a bun under the cap as part of her fast-food uniform to straightened hair. Those visual changes underscore the plot that the woman’s value increases as soon as she indulges in T.I.’s lifestyle. T.I.’s possessions serve as tools to win the woman’s affection and imply that upward mobility is easily accessible through a wealthy man, which shows problematic gender roles where men are providers and beautiful women are additional status symbols and recipients of the offered privileges. In addition, the focus on materialism reinforces the idea that material possessions are key to happiness and material transactions are more important than emotional and intellectual connections in a relationship. This is particularly shown towards the end of the video when the half-naked woman secretly watches T.I. entering his car and leaving the premises through the tiny spaces between the slats of the blinds. As soon as she realizes that he is gone, she picks up his cap, sunglasses and jacket and joyfully dances around the room signaling that she would rather measure the worth of this relationship in terms of material possession than in terms of love or emotions. The video finally ends back at the fast-food restaurant

where an annoyed customer brings her back to reality and to the realization that her desire for a luxurious life had only been a daydream, and she then resentfully watches T.I. enter his car and leave. Although the woman receives approximately the same amount of screen time in the video, she is still often placed in secondary positions, behind T.I. or in the background, visually enhancing her dependency on the rapper. In instances where they are shown side-by-side, as in the plane scene, the rapper's dominance is still visible and enhanced through differences in posture. The woman's position of sitting with her legs crossed and her hands placed on her knees minimizes her physical appearance and reflects societally perpetuated expectations for women to be contained and polite. T.I., however, casually sits with his legs spread wide and one leg up on the couch opposite from him, which conveys confidence and authority and aligns with ingrained cultural scripts that encourage men to claim their space as a sign of their masculinity. This male-female difference of spatial occupation reflects gendered power structures inherent in a patriarchal society, which fosters male dominance and female passivity or subordination.

Through, for instance, the narrative in "Whatever you like" surrounding the woman's enthusiastic wish for wealth as well as the in Hip Hop frequent hypersexual displays of women aiming for the rapper's attention, women are stigmatized and put into stereotypical roles. The analysis for "Love Me" and "Every Girl" are two examples out of many from my corpus of songs that show that women are continuously depicted as hypersexual (groupies and gold-diggers) or passive objects for the male desire. Black women in particular have been subjected to what Patricia Collins coins "controlling images", which serve as a strategically used tool of power to legitimate Black women's oppression and to "manipulate ideas about Black womanhood" as they appear to be "natural, normal, and inevitable" (*Mammies* 69). Researchers (Collins; Gaunt; Wallace et al.; Keyes; Stephens and Few; West) describe several stereotypical images of Black women, most of which have negative connotations and are historically influenced based on appearance and behavior attributes pressed into categories: The Jezebel, or more derogatively called "chickenhead", driven by her immoral sexual desire; the asexual, fat Mammy, devoting her life to the nurturing of the children; and the "disagreeable Sapphire" (Stephens and Few 251), hostile towards her peers and particularly to men. In the past these images served the

goal of justifying practices during slavery, such as rape (Jezebel), or punishing defiant Black woman rebelling against the slave owner (Sapphire) (West 294-296). The film industry or advertisements heavily rely on such stereotypical images, just as Hip Hop does. In the present, the above-mentioned categories have been transformed into the similarly offensive contemporary stereotypes: The “Diva [the attention-seeker], Gold Digger [trading sex for money or other commodities], [the sexually aggressive] Freak, Dyke [declining sexual encounters altogether], Gangster Bitch [aggressively demonstrating her attitude and opinion], Sister Savior, Earth Mother [both grounded in religion and spiritual consciousness] and Baby Mother [the respected role in which each category can develop once they give birth to a child]” (Stephens and Few 251; Stephens and Phillips 3-33).

In the analysis of the videos above the controlling images most frequently used are the Jezebel (“Love Me”), the Diva (“Every Girl”) or Gold Digger (“Whatever you like”). There are also other controlling images used in my corpus of songs, even though less frequently: In the very short instances where a mother figure is shown in videos, even if only for two seconds (“I’m Sprung” by T-Pain; “Shoulder Lean” by Young Dro) they adhere to the characteristics that were typically used for the “Mammy” figure – big, loud, nurturing with kinky hair (West 289-291). Additionally, children are exempted from the assignment of stereotypical roles as well as white standards of beauty. They enjoy their lives, jump-roping or dancing as in the intro to Dem Franchize Bodyz’ video for “Lean Wit It, Rock Wit It”. In another example, Lil Durk and J.Cole create an almost gospel-like atmosphere to their song “All My Life” through featuring a children’s choir. The children in the video are given their space in the spotlight, dancing or sitting as a group with J.Cole in the middle, all in their unique styles, with different skin colors or hairstyles. Simultaneously, as their looks are all centered directly towards the camera, the viewer gets the feeling as if the children and rapper direct their attention and transmit their message directly towards you. The message of the song could be summarized as to not give up even though others try to hold you back and do not believe in you, you have your future in your hands and should try to make the best out of it. Children (male and female) are in this case used as active agents and transmitters of the positive message of the song and receive a

special status and are excepted from the otherwise prevalent allocation of controlling images on women.

Other interesting factors influencing the way women are portrayed in Hip Hop videos are collaborations and music genre allocation. B.o.B. for example, who is both rapper and singer, shows a variation of different portrayals of women in his videos depending on the degree of Hip Hop passages in the song and the collaboration partner. The song “So Good” by B.o.B. is primarily a Pop song with a few Hip Hop passages, whose narrative surrounds the male-female relationship characterized by wealth as well as idealized romance. Lines such as “You’ll say you never had it so good” or “Anything you want is yours” imply a transactional relationship with B.o.B. as the provider of a good life, which again frames the relationship as dependent on the rapper’s financial means and power. However, the visuals add an emotional layer and romanticized notion to the relationship. The phrase “We ain’t gonna rush, just take it slow” shows that B.o.B. is not expecting (immediate) sexual services in return for their trips together around the world. In addition, the song starts with B.o.B. enthusing over this girl’s intellect as she has got a “great head on her shoulders” because she “probably studied abroad” and “transferred to Harvard”. The focus on the girl’s intellect and her wishes and emotions (“tell me how you fell”) adds complexity to the relationship and suggests that a girl’s value in a relationship is not only tied to her beauty, but also her intellect and that a relationship needs a more meaningful and deeper connection beyond materialism and aesthetics. This romanticized aesthetic of the relationship is underpinned with warm, soft lighting, scenic backdrops of beaches and iconic European cities with historical architecture or cobblestone streets, which also evoke a sense of sophistication and is further enhanced through the choice of garment, such as buttoned-up dresses or blouses. The dynamic camera movement following the pair walking together through the streets creates a sense of motion and progression. Walking hand-in-hand next to each other visually achieves the sentiment of equality within the relationship. This song, thus, acknowledges female qualities beyond physical beauty but nonetheless prioritizes the need for material possession to lead a happy life.

While in the Pop song “So Good” B.o.B. does not completely manifest the previously mentioned controlling images of Black women, his Hip Hop song “We Still in This Bitch” portrays women as Jezebels or Gold-Diggers who use their

unrestrained sexuality to attract the rapper's attention and for monetary gain: Although the rapper's attention is clearly focused on the camera, the girl behind him directs her focus and movements towards the male protagonist. She lusciously dances behind him, flirtatiously bites her lower lip or licks her upper lip and continues touching her breasts minimally dressed in a laced bra, without directing her gaze away from the rapper. Despite these obvious and continuous movements of allure and seduction, the rapper does not grace her with a glance.

Indeed, the topic of the song, as indicated by the very different song titles, plays a crucial role in determining the content of the video. Nonetheless, a connection between the genre Hip Hop, sexual song topics and the stigmatization and objectification of women in music videos can be observed more than in those songs influenced by other genres or where a collaboration partner from another genre is included.

Advertisements or movies, however, equally draw on those historically anchored images. Through the occurrence in different types of media, these images "have been activated so frequently [...] that they can occur nonconsciously in the mere presence of a stereotyped group member" (West 287). Additionally, these controlling images are those offered to and internalized by Black female adolescents with a lack of positive and realistic counter-narratives they can identify with. In accordance with bell hooks, Carolyn West (288) demands for an "oppositional gaze" requiring a critical examination and deconstruction of those images and the formation of positive representations, which ties in with Critical Media Literacy's goal of creating counter-narratives to the mainstream representations; all of which will be included into the lesson planning ideas on how to include Hip Hop into EFL teaching.

To reclaim the previously described negatively-connotated controlling images of Black women, based on interviews with female rappers, Cheryl Keyes introduced the four categories "Queen Mother", "Fly Girl", "Sista with Attitude" and "Lesbian", which are identified in terms of their degree and type of rebellion against the male-dominated Hip Hop market and their male counterparts, as well as the assertion of self-determination and agency. While the Queen Mother prides herself with her African ancestry and body, the Fly Girl embraces her independency and self-determination through "flippin da script", i.e. "deconstructing dominant ideology" through clothing and proudly showing their

style and accenting their Black bodies as “an erotic subject rather than an objectified one” (Keyes 268-269). The Sista with Attitude is known for her frankness and a more radical, “hardcore” approach to asserting her empowerment without mincing matters. In this context, the word “bitch” has been reclaimed as something positive and as a tool for “carthartic release” (271). The establishment of the Lesbian category has represented a breakthrough for the queer community through having public spokeswomen addressing “lesbian lifestyle [and issues] from a Black woman’s perspective” (272). Again, the key point here is the inclusion of experiences of women of color, who very often have been excluded from the queer context struggling to showing their voices amongst the mainstream, white patriarchal culture. This reclamation of negatively connotated controlling images of Black feminism is connected to the emancipatory potential of sexuality. Tricia Rose highlights the importance of drawing a clear distinction between explicit and exploitative (*Wars* 122-124). If no distinction between “sexist forms of degrading sexual culture” and “sexually explicit culture” is established, then “the whole arena of sexuality [...] faces the threat of being painted with a shameful, dirty brush”, which “places women’s own sexual freedom and autonomy at stake” (122).

One example that showcases the emancipatory potential of an unapologetic display of their sexuality through the celebration of sexual agency can be found in Cardi B and Nicki Minaj’s song “WAP”. The combination of lyrical explicitness and visual imagery centers around the open expression of female sexual lust and desire, which has historically been oppressed. Shayna Lee summarizes this expressive and autonomous portrayal of female sexuality as “dismantling politics of silence, deconstructing gendered double standards on sexuality and demolishing sexual expectations that deny women a full range of sexual expressivities” (130). This is achieved through the interplay of lyrics and visuals: First, the song’s title “WAP”³ as an acronym for “wet ass pussy” already insinuates an unfiltered portrayal of lust and sexuality. The original lyrics’ explicitness and frequent reference to ‘wetness’ as indicator of female sexual pleasure and arousal (“Bring a bucket and a mop for this wet ass pussy”) leave

³ While the lyrics from *Spotify* present the uncensored and explicit version of the song, the *YouTube* video uses the clean version, which changed the original acronym “wet ass pussy” to “wet and gushy”, and “pussy” to “cookie”. For the lyrical analysis, I stick to originally intended explicit word choices.

no room for ambiguity and present female arousal and gratification unapologetically and without shame. Cardi B uses imperatives such as “Put this pussy right in yo’face / Swipe your nose like a credit card” or “I want you to park that big Mack truck right in this little garage / Make it cream, make me scream” to openly express her sexual desires and wishes, which include oral sex and intercourse with the focus on her pleasure, her preference and sexual climax. This assertion of agency and expression of what they want and how they want it challenges the sexual script of women being passive objects for the male desire.

Moreover, this lyrical explicitness is further enhanced visually through the setting and props. In the video’s opening scene, the camera moves through a well-groomed garden with lush greenery, colorful flowers and birds chirping in the background, creating a dreamlike atmosphere. As the opulent white villa approaches, a fountain shows Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion back-to-back with their legs spread wide and water squirting out of their breasts, hinting at the sexually-loaded narrative that is about to come. As the camera passes the fountain, the sound of a splash of water adds to the water imagery that symbolizes female arousal and ejaculation. Inside the villa, props, such as golden molds of their butts and breasts displayed on the wall of the corridor align with the confident embrace of their sexuality. The corridor shows several initially closed doors, which are continuously opened and reveal differently themed rooms, which could reflect the uniqueness and individuality of each person’s (hidden) sexual desires. The rooms include a room filled with snakes slithering across the rappers’ bodies, a leopard room, a white tiger room or an indoor swimming pool. Although the animal symbolism has also been employed in Lil Wayne’s video for “Love Me”, there are different connotations. Instead of being portrayed as wild, untamable animals, Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion harmoniously coexist with and pet the predators which seem either unimpressed or tamed by the rappers, which asserts the artists’ control and dominance. The dominant portrayal of both rappers is further enhanced through camera angles and movement. Shots taken from low angles underpin the artists’ power and authority and tracking shots follow them as they move through the villa, emphasizing their ownership of the space. Although the rappers openly express their sexual desires and what they demand from their lovers to be satisfied, the video refrains from including male actors in the video, contrary to most videos of

male rappers which mostly include female actresses. The absence of men in the video can be seen as a deliberate choice to avoid the inclusion of the typical male gaze. Instead, Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion reclaim the narrative, emphasize their autonomy over their sexuality and bodies without the need for male validation. The inclusion of only female actors and female cameos of Kylie Jenner or Normani creates an empowering and united atmosphere that celebrates female sexuality without judgement. The liberal expression of sexuality is, thus, not portrayed to fulfill the male desires, but it flips the script and through creating counter-narratives to the controlling images of sexually expressive women as immoral Jezebels. Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion embody the concept of the sexually assertive “Fly Girl” who is defined by an unapologetic self-assurance and sexual agency (Keyes 268-269). The Fly Girl claims the space for herself figuratively and literally, through their sensual yet provocative choreography. This role is further enhanced through bold hairstyles and striking outfits that are both fashionable and provocative and assist the narrative of empowerment. In the animal rooms both Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion appear in bodysuits that mimic the fur of the respective animals, which emphasizes their wild nature as well as fierceness and strength. Every costume and set design exhibit great attention to detail, most noticeable in Cardi B’s scene in the ‘leopard room’. Her perfectly fitted bodysuit features provocative cut-outs that display her inner thighs, her buttock and her breasts, which are only covered with matching nipple covers. The long, fitted sleeves continue into gloves with claw-like fingernails and are complemented with over-knee leopard-print boots that create a head-to-toe coordinated aesthetic. Her exaggeratedly long and high ponytail with its interwoven circles mimics the leopard-print and adds drama to the overall look. Despite this choice of revealing clothes, the attention to detail enhances its artistry. In addition, through the exclusion of men from the visual narrative, the rappers are in control of their image and the representation of their bodies.

In sum, Hip Hop videos of male artists strategically use camera angles, lighting, placement, movement or spatial occupation as visual tools to portray dominance. The hypersexual portrayal of video actresses as passive objects for the male desire in combination with their lack of agency in the production process perpetuate the distribution of stereotypical and negatively charged controlling images of Black femininity and sexuality. Female Hip Hop artists, however,

reclaim those controlling images through asserting control over their sexual representation in a provocative manner, as in the video for “WAP”.

5.3.5. ‘Booty Videos’ – the Fragmentation of Female Bodies

The video for the song “Wicked” by Future alternates between shots of a dancing woman and the rapper and his male friends moving to the tunes of the song. The style of dancing, as well as the camera focus for the male and female actors are, however, diverging. For the female dancer, the camera often fragments her body, focusing on specific body parts, most prominently her buttock. Dim lighting from behind with sharp contrasts emphasizes the contour of the woman’s body sexually moving to the music. Dance moves, such as twerking in combination with doing the splits and a headstand in minimal clothing resemble the performance of a stripper. The lighting as well as the positioning of the woman’s body facing the background centers the woman’s back with a clear focus on the buttock while simultaneously hiding her face. This emphasis on the woman’s body rather than her face and mind strips her of her identity and highlights her roles as décor and object of the male desire. The woman’s seductive dance is further encouraged through the line “Wicked, wicked, wicked, wicked, wicked” in the chorus, which due to its phonetic similarities and Future’s repetitive and quick delivery style creates the auditory illusion of the word “wiggle”, evoking another interpretation as a request to wiggle one’s behind. In contrast, the male dancing scenes involve Future being directly lit and facing the camera using a medium shot from the waist upwards or from a low camera angle, encapsulating his dominance and importance. During his dancing, he moves his hands in front of his body or face or stretches them out next to his body to the rhythm of this rap, actively claiming his space. Thus, while male performers are shown with their whole body, women’s bodies are fragmented with a specific focus on the buttock, reducing women to their physical attributes.

In another example, Ludacris shows in his video for “How Low” that a spot or ‘reason’ for women showing their body, their buttocks in particular, can always be found. The prelude to the video visually resembles the famous scene of “Snow White” where the evil queen consults her magical mirror. The girls, however, are supposed to shake their butt in front of the mirror to magically summon Ludacris. Those analyzed scenes with the buttock as background décor or deliberately

zooming in leads to the unsurprising fact that the expression “booty video” (Fitts 211) is used synonymously with many Hip Hop music videos:

The expression “booty video” derives from popular culture vernacular that references the video’s overwhelming representation of women’s posteriors particularly those of black, Latina, and racially ambiguous women, thus highlighting in such videos a culturally specific preference by men of color for a curvy body type. (ibid.)

Those preferred images of Black women again prescribe what Black femininity is supposed to look like in the Hip Hop context. The media images are presented through a male gaze, “reflecting [...] how mediacentric society is constructed by and for the male-dominant culture” and how media images “perpetuat[e] the socialized gender norms of patriarchal society” (Chong *et al.* 420).

Apart from the ‘booty’, the other parts of women’s bodies which are centered in Hip Hop videos are those foregrounded in porn videos as well. In A\$AP ROCKY’s video for “F**kin’ Problems” a dancing woman is filmed from a low-angle perspective with the camera placed on the ground between her spread-out legs. Although the exposure shades the woman’s body so that only her silhouette is recognizable, the choice of camera angle and placement clearly hints at the woman’s genital area. Fitts describes women’s bodies “among the many commodities used to create the music video as an extended advertisement for the music products (songs, albums) sold by the record label” (219). As a result of female bodies being seen as commodities, dependent on the level of professionalism on set and on behalf of the production company and crew, many interviewed women in Fitts’ study reported that the working environment on set was often not pleasant (220-222). This issue arises due to the increasingly blurred lines between “desire and access” when controlling images portray women as “sexually available, which crosses the boundaries of sexual desire and sexual acts” (Fitts 222). This is enhanced through the strong visual focus on those body parts associated with sexuality as well as the lyrical portrayal of women. For instance, in 50 Cent’s and Justin Timberlake’s hit song “Ayo Technology” the former raps about a stripper (“she a working girl”; “she work the pole”) using the line “she want it” with an almost dangerous certainty followed by “I wanna give it to her”. Although it could also be seen as a woman doing her job, she is regarded as promiscuous, sexually open and willing to be taken by the male protagonist. The myriad of such descriptions and depictions of Black women results in the

distribution of problematic stereotypes. This is equally reflected in the National Black Women's Justice Institute's (NBWJI) article for the Sexual Assault Awareness Month. They report a disproportionately large number of approximately 20% of female Black survivors of rape and 41% who have experienced "sexual coercion and other forms of unwanted sexual contact". A shocking number of 67% of Black female students have reported forced unwanted sexual contact with someone at school. They explain the disproportionately high number of Black women experiencing gender-based violence with the above-mentioned prevalent stereotypes and controlling images (NBWJI 1-2).

Trying to justify sexism allegations, the rapper Nelly draws a distinction between his music videos for entertainment purposes only and (his) real life (Fitts 226). Record executive Russel Simmons tries to justify sexism in Hip Hop by calling it a "roadmap [...] of things we try to avoid instead of dealing with" (qtd. in *Rose Wars* 159), simply mirroring a sexist society. While there is a grain of truth in both statements, they miss the serious repercussions Black women face due to stigmatization and controlling images, which include a higher risk of sexual abuse.

In conclusion, many women in Hip Hop music videos are presented strategically by promoting a certain gender ideology. The image of a typical video vixen, surrounding and adorning the male protagonist, is historically influenced and aims at promoting a societally approved ideal of Black femininity through controlling images to legitimize systemic oppression and employing the marketing strategy 'sex sells', with patriarchal expectations of how media images should look like, seen through a male gaze. Those images of women contain restraints on hairstyles, clothes, skin tone and body type. Due to the close relation of representations within media images and identity formation, it is imperative to bring these topics to the center of attention within classrooms, to question how mainstream or dominant ideologies promote certain images and beliefs, which result in comparatively high rates of sexual abuse.

6. Implications for the EFL Classroom

With this thesis, I aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice by appropriating the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis with a gender-critical focus to the needs of an Austrian EFL classroom to foster students' critical media literacy. CDA's objective can be summarized as the examination of a text's underlying power structures and vice versa how a text is strategically used to reinforce ideologies. Applying this to the analysis of Hip Hop songs as multimodal texts, the critical analysis' findings should serve as the basis to enhance students' awareness of the underlying power structures and bias media messages entail. Through careful scaffolding, students should be guided to question through media perpetuated dominant narratives and create their own counter-narratives based on (gender) equality and justice, all of which aligns with both Critical Media Literacy and the Austrian curriculum.

Despite the in chapter 2.4 summarized educational potential of Hip Hop, there are nonetheless concerns because of Hip Hop's apparent sexism, violence, and explicit language. I, however, advocate for an "activist ethical" approach (Kosut 218) that recognizes CML's importance of active and critical engagement with media products, which are openly accessible anyways. To successfully scaffold critical engagement with (sexist) Hip Hop songs in the classroom, the following two aspects are imperative: Firstly, students need to be old enough and secondly, class participation rules need to be discussed or revised prior to the inclusion of Hip Hop into the classroom. Especially because each students' connection to and experiences with Hip Hop and its topics are different and unique and might evoke different emotions or can serve as "a form of release and relief for themselves" (Hill 65), a classroom atmosphere where students feel safe and comfortable sharing private stories needs to be established. At the introduction stage of my proposed Hip Hop project (see appendix), I would therefore discuss guidelines for class participation with my students to establish an atmosphere grounded in safety, trust and respect, which is needed for productive discussions. The guidelines from the Center for Research on Learning & Teaching (CRLT) at the University of Michigan serve as a great basis:

- "Respect others' rights to hold opinions and beliefs that differ from your own. Challenge or criticize the idea, not the person.
- Listen carefully to what others are saying even when you disagree with what is being said. [...]

- Be courteous. Don't interrupt or engage in private conversations while others are speaking.
- Support your statements. Use evidence and provide a rationale for your points. [...]
- If you are offended by something or think someone else might be, speak up and don't leave it for someone else to have to respond to it."

As project preparation, students are then required to bring any materials they connect with Hip Hop. This can range from song titles, lyrics, pictures, CDs, a playlist to clothes, social media posts or comments or newspaper articles. This introductory task ensures a focus on materials that are relevant for the students and to which they connect, which should also increase motivation and participation. The following two collaborative exercises of identifying common themes of the brought materials and eliciting spontaneous and guided personal reactions should give the teacher an overview of students' personal responses, opinions or even prejudices concerning Hip Hop. This identification of students' needs or wishes should serve as additional aid and guideline for the teacher to prepare and structure the following exercises. In addition, it should reduce completely unexpected outcomes, as Greenfield (242) identified this unplannability as one main issue when incorporating Hip Hop in teaching. During the discussion phase, the teacher should take the role of a facilitator who ensures the class participation rules and guides students to raise awareness that media is never neutral or unbiased through asking critical questions. The following collaborative task requires students to categorize the materials with regards to their perception of it being "positive", "negative" or "not sure". As this task is designed to be collaborative, the goal is to initiate a discussion about who influences our understanding of what is "good" or "bad". The categorization is influenced by personal values, our upbringing, which shaped our worldview and values, as well as cultural and societal norms and is thus very individual. What is considered good or bad can vary greatly depending on the context and framework through which something is analyzed, similar to Hip Hop's representation of sexuality, which can be both empowering and objectifying. Concerning the relation to CML, this task serves the purpose of identifying inequalities and unequal power structures, which will then be further analyzed and for which counter-narratives should be produced to foster equality and justice.

After these introductory exercises, my proposed lesson plan focuses on the representation of women in Hip Hop. As an awareness-raising activity, students should engage in a creative task of drawing what a 'typical Hip Hopper' or rapper looks like for them. The probable outcome will reveal that the majority might have drawn stereotypical male rappers. This creative task as well as the material from the preparatory stage provide the basis for the following collaborative task, which adds a gender-critical focus to the discussion. Through by the teacher planned focus questions, the students are guided to "critically engage with established gender stereotypes" (RIS 11) and to unveil unequal power structures, which influence the (under)representation of women in Hip Hop and vice versa how media images perpetuate structures of domination.

Although Smith *et al.*, Kosut and my study substantiate the claims that Hip Hop marginalizes female rappers and that it centers around a "heterosexual male aesthetic" (Stovall 599), it is important that this imbalance between male and female representation is not enhanced in the classroom. The following part of the project, therefore, includes teacher input on Hip Hop feminism including female Hip Hop pioneers and their different empowerment strategies. This is then contrasted with input on controlling images and the discussion of Eurocentric beauty standards and its strategic use to further oppressive othering to maintain structures of domination that are grounded in times of slavery. All these awareness-raising activities and guiding questions in combination with teacher input should prepare students for the main task of my Hip Hop project: A critical discourse analysis of a Hip Hop song with a gender-critical focus. I propose a division into three steps: First, during their first 'contact' with the song and the video, students should engage in diary writing to record their first thoughts or emotions as well as questions that emerge. This should give students their space to express their honest reactions and to reflect on their own interactions with media without guidance through the teacher's pre-given questions. This personal response should then be incorporated into the actual analysis. Indeed, students who are novices when it comes to literary and cultural analyses need careful guidance to avoid feeling overwhelmed, which might decrease motivation. Based on this thesis' discourse analysis with a gender-critical focus, I have compiled an analysis guide (see chapter 9.3.) that should guide students' analysis. The guide regards Hip Hop songs as multi-semiotic texts and includes information about the

text's context, lyrics, and the video. While the proposed questions are not ultimate, it should scaffold students' analysis process and offer input on possible analysis topics, such as the choice of gendered language, personal pronouns, imperatives or the repetition of key words when it comes to a song's lyrics. Regarding the video I propose the categories symbolism and props, clothing, positioning, camera angles, movements, lighting or color as possible research foci, which can and should be expanded through students' observations. During the analysis stage, the teacher should serve as a guide and facilitator. The last stage of the analysis part then includes a presentation of each group's findings and a class discussion of similarities or differences with focus on the representation of women in Hip Hop, comparing the analysis of female and male Hip Hop artist's songs.

Both CDA and CML concur that only identifying through media perpetuated ideologies and power imbalances is a first crucial step. However, the main goal should be to empower students to take action as "active participants in a democratic society" (Kellner and Share xiii) by creating counter-narratives to manipulative media texts influenced by the dominant ideology, to promote social justice. The following task is therefore designed to promote social justice by formulating three wishes or critical questions regarding Hip Hop and gender equality and e-mail them to decision-makers in Hip Hop or to write an article or report their desired path for Hip Hop in the future with regards to gender equality. This task should empower students to take action and involves writing tasks and text types relevant for the English school leaving certification (Matura). To enhance this Hip Hop project's importance, these texts could then be published in a school newspaper or on the school website.

In addition, to challenge assumptions of what is regarded as "common sense" regarding Hip Hop and its representation of women, the next task requires students to create (creative) counter-narratives to a song they find problematic. For instance, they could change the male perspective to a female one by re-writing (parts of) the lyrics, write a screenplay for a new music video or produce an alternative music video and discuss how the overall message has changed. As a closing activity and to include critical self-reflection with the goal to "develop in students a social consciousness" (Kellner and Share 19), I would end the project with diary writing. Thereby students should reflect on how their perception

about Hip Hop and gender has changed and if or how this project changes the way they consume media.

7. Conclusion

To conclude this thesis, I summarize my main analysis findings with regard to my research questions of how women are lyrically and visually portrayed in Hip Hop music videos through using Critical Discourse Analysis as my analytical framework and how Critical Discourse Analysis on Hip Hop lyrics and music videos can be used to foster critical media literacy in Austrian upper-secondary EFL teaching. I will then outline how my thesis contributes to the field of HHBE with a focus on Austrian EFL teaching. Lastly, I will discuss the limitations of my study and present potential ideas for future research to further explore the findings of this study.

My analysis of 558 Hip Hop songs ranked in the Billboard “Year-End Hot R&B/ Hip Hop Songs” from 2006 to 2023 confirms the common perception that Hip Hop is a male-dominated music genre. Out of the 409 Hip Hop songs performed by solo artists, 92% were male and 8% were female, resulting in a 11.5 to 1 male to female ratio and a clear underrepresentation of female artists. While I identified an increase of female artists from 14% in 2021 to 31% in 2022, Smith *et al.*’s annual report on inclusion in the music industry reported an increase from 23.3% in 2021 to 30% in 2022. While Smith *et al.*’s study focused on the representation of female artists in general, I further distinguished between solo artists and collaborations, resulting in diverging numbers. This distinction is, however, important for the following reasons: Firstly, in my analysis in 69% of the collaborations the male artist occupied the leading role reinforcing stereotypical gender roles where women are complimentary to their male counterparts. Secondly, the main artist receives more rap and screen time in the video compared to the collaborator. As most collaborations have a male main artist, the female collaborator’s visibility and connection with the song’s success is limited.

Moreover, the comparison of “I Like It” and “Hot Girl Summer” as examples of collaborations with female main artists with “My Chick Bad” with a male main artist revealed a difference in the song’s portrayal of female-male relationships depending on the gender of the main artist. Although Cardi B is the main artist in “I Like It”, the music video is a blend of individual expressions of everyone’s

artistry and collective celebration of cultural pride. Their shared celebratory performances emphasize collaboration rather than competition, which contributes to the song's overall themes of empowerment, unity and cultural pride.

Although the typically most prominent part of a song, the chorus of "Hot Girl Summer" is rapped by the male collaborator Ty Dolla \$ign, Megan Thee Stallion and Nicki Minaj's powerful performances and verses clearly dominate the narrative. Ty's laid-back performance and chorus ("it's a Hot Girl Summer, so you know she got it lit") present him supportive rather than dominant. The lyrical and visual portrayal of the female rappers' friendship symbolizes unity and mutual respect, creating a sense of collective female empowerment.

The collaboration of Ludacris and Nicki Minaj in "My Chick Bad" presents a constant re-negotiation of dominance and a narrative which both empowers women and objectifies them. Although Ludacris' verses celebrate an assertive and empowered "bad chick", he fosters a competitive spirit between men which is measured according to their women and their ability to please the men. Although Minaj lyrically expresses her fierceness and dominance, her limited rap time and portrayal as a mad "bad chick" reduce her lyrics' power. The song, thus, portrays female empowerment but limited through a male gaze.

In addition to the clear overrepresentation of male artists, in my corpus of songs only eleven female artists reached the charts list. This can be explained through the fact that the music industry is not devoid of patriarchal norms and because those women who reach a certain level of success are continuously compared and set up for battle. While male feuds are connected to the exertion of power and skills, female fights are often belittled and do not have the same significance. In addition, fueled by media coverages female rappers battle for the position of the 'queen of rap', insinuating that there can only be one queen out of the very few women who manage to reach the spotlight. This results in the previously analyzed gender gap, as well as few female role models students can relate to.

In the visual analysis of the music videos of the songs in my corpus, the majority of videos display female background dancers in similar clothing, hairstyles and skin tones, with a focus on specific sexually loaded body parts and portray female-male relationships with an unequal distribution of power. In my

analysis I examined those identified common features of the depiction of video actresses more closely and compared them to female Hip Hop artists' use and appropriation.

With regards to clothing, independent of the setting female video dancers are mostly dressed in revealing dessous-like outfits. These hypersexualized portrayals of women through tight dresses or a lack of clothing prioritize women's physical appeal in visual media. In contrast, male rappers wear casual and baggy clothing enhanced through opulent golden and diamond-encrusted accessories, signifying wealth and success to assert social status. On the contrary, the lack of accessories on the female dancers contributes to ensuring that nothing distracts from their bodies, which is staged as their "main asset". In addition, it draws attention to the powerful and wealthy main artist who is the focal point of power within the narrative. This coincides with the concept of the "male gaze", which suggests that women in media are often depicted as passive objects for the male pleasure rather than as autonomous participants (Paasonen *et al.* 21-22). When it comes to female main artists, they usually employ one of two clothing strategies to convey female empowerment. For example, through oversized yet bold and extravagant fashion statements Missy Elliot challenges imposed stereotypical and sexualized portrayals of female beauty and emphasizes her individuality, artistry and skills. While Nicki Minaj also uses extravagant and theatrical clothing and over-the-top wigs portraying her as a fearless and powerful figure, Minaj dresses in tight and revealing outfits to embrace her femininity as a form of empowerment and self-expression.

In "HUMBLE", Kendrick Lamar lyrically and visually presents natural representations of female beauty, which offer counter-images to the often-spread idealized beauty standards and critiques the expectations placed on women's bodies, particular in the music industry, to fit idealized, often Eurocentric beauty norms. Unfortunately, this example is an exception within my corpus of songs. Regarding hairstyles, most videos show Black video actresses with long brown straightened hair, which reflects the in slavery-rooted marginalization of African American features through the domination of Eurocentric beauty standards. In addition, natural hairstyles are used for mother-figures, aligning with authenticity, cultural pride and stability, whereas video dancers wear straightened hair connotating glamour, sexual desirability and temporary pleasure, establishing a

Madonna-Whore Dichotomy based on the strategical use of hairstyles and their diverging connotations. Towards the end of my corpus, a shift towards more women in Hip Hop wearing natural black hair can be observed and reflects broader cultural, social and political dynamics with regards to the representation of Black hair. Contrary to the hairstyles of the video actresses, none of the songs from my corpus portray female rappers with only straightened hair. Instead, female rappers employ artistic and exaggerated or natural hairstyles as powerful tools for empowerment and to express individuality and (artistic) control.

With regards to skin color, male rappers lyrically and visually express a preference for lighter-skinned or racially ambiguous women. Through the marginalization of darker-skinned Black women, Hip Hop portrays Eurocentric beauty standards and a narrow image of what 'Blackness' should like, which reinforces colorist hierarchies. The same can be observed regarding female rappers' skin color as all the female artists in my corpus are either lighter-skinned or white. The lack of inclusivity regarding skin color in combination with stereotypical portrayals of Blackness limits female Black role models and can negatively influence adolescents' identity formation. Such analyses through CDA should, therefore, educate teachers and students on the correlation between stereotypical images of Black female bodies, self-esteem and identity formation to foster consciousness and sensitivity on those topics.

The strategic choice of camera angles and positioning reinforces an uneven distribution of power in male-female relationships. Low-angle shots, focused lighting and central positions frame the male rappers in dominant positions, whereas female actresses are backgrounded, shaded or visually subordinated through high-angle shots. In "Love Me" by Lil Wayne the portrayal of male dominance is further enhanced through the portrayal of women as animals in possession of the man who trivializes female emotions, controls women's actions and voice, all of which reduces women to sexual objects. In addition, through male rappers' linguistic choices, such as personal pronouns or imperatives, men are frequently portrayed as the active agents (in sexual encounters) whereas women are passive recipients of the male attention and sexual desires. The use of explicit vocabulary reduces sexual encounters and relationships to its physicality and neglects the emotional aspect of sexuality. Songs whose main themes surround wealth and luxury again establish a

dichotomy between the active male providers of upward-mobility and the passive women serving as additional status symbols and recipients of the offered privileges. This dichotomy, which is visually enhanced through the setting, set design and colors, reflects problematic gender roles. An additional difference in male-female spatial occupation aligns with patriarchal cultural scripts that encourage men to claim their space whereas women's physical appearance reflects societally perpetuated expectations to be contained and polite. Through the portrayal of Black Hip Hop music video actresses in stereotypical roles, such as Gold-Diggers or Jezebels, women are subjects to so-called "controlling images", which serve as a strategically used tool of power to "manipulate ideas about Black womanhood" (Collins *Mammies* 69).

Female Hip Hop artists have reclaimed these controlling images of Black women through for example unapologetic displays of their sexuality and celebration of sexual agency, such as in "WAP". The song's combination of lyrical explicitness, visual imagery and camera techniques challenges the sexual script of women being passive objects for the male desire. The choice of female actresses and cameos and absence of male actors reinforces female empowerment and autonomy without the need for male validation.

The visual analysis of the representation of female Hip Hop video actresses portrays a re-occurring fragmentation of female bodies with a focus on the buttock. In combination with strategic use of lighting the emphasis is on women's bodies rather than their faces, which highlights women's roles as décor and reduces them to their physical attributes rather than their mind and identity.

This analysis shows how female video actresses are lyrically and visually portrayed as inferior and passive subjects to the male rapper's dominance. Through the portrayal of Eurocentric standards of beauty and stigmatized controlling images, a narrow image of female Blackness is promoted, which reinforces colorist hierarchies. This idealization of Eurocentric beauty standards perpetuates harmful stereotypes and can lead to a feeling of inadequacy or body dissatisfaction of Black female consumers of Hip Hop. Although female Hip Hop artists continue to challenge women's sexual scripts through powerful portrayals of empowerment and sexual autonomy, they are still underrepresented with regards to charts ranking.

With the adaptation of my analysis to the educational context, I aim at bridging the gap between theoretical explorations of Hip Hop's educational potential and practical lesson plans that use Hip Hop to foster consciousness and sensitivity about media's impact on the perception of (Black) female's bodies. Through a combination of awareness-raising activities, class discussions and teacher input on CDA, students' experiences and thoughts are centered. The teacher, in the role of a facilitator, guides students to identify media bias, underlying power structures and their repercussions on consumers' worldview and values. With the help of my analysis guide, students should engage in critical analyses with the goal of fostering critical media literacy. With CML's goal of empowering students to take action to foster equality and justice in mind, I propose exercises that focus on the creation of counter-narratives. Lastly, students should engage in diary writing to structure their self-reflection with the goal to "develop in students a social consciousness" (Kellner and Share 19).

My analysis of female representations focused on commercially successful Hip Hop songs from 2006 to 2023 as my personal teaching experience showed that students are most familiar with those songs and artists. My brief exploration of Hip Hop's female pioneers at the beginning of my thesis showed their unique strategies to challenge gender norms and stereotypical portrayals of the female body. Therefore, examining earlier Hip Hop songs could offer valuable insights on the articulation of female empowerment and how it has evolved or changed over the years. As Emdin praises authentic Hip Hop and criticizes the "oppressive" and hypocritical commercial Hip Hop (*Introduction 2*), comparing songs from both categories can be valuable to examine how the music industry influences the representation of women. Moreover, my master's thesis offers a lesson plan for a Hip Hop project based on the insights from my critical discourse analysis. Although I have planned these exercises with the goal of incorporating them into my EFL lessons, their practical implementation has not yet been tested, which leaves room for further research.

35 996 words

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9. Appendix

9.1. Data Analysis

Data collection of Billboard's "Year-End Hot 100" charts, divided into male Hip Hop artists only (Male X), female Hip Hop artists only (Female X), male Hip Hop artists collaborating with male artists from another musical genre (Male XC), female Hip Hop artists collaborating with female artists from another musical genre (Female XC), male and female Hip Hop artists collaborating (Both X) and male Hip Hop artists collaborating with female artists from another genre (Both C).

Number of Male - Female Artist Distribution							
Year	No.	Male		Female		Both	
		X	XC	X	XC	X	C
2006	39	31	0	0	0	5	3
2007	37	29	3	1	0	2	2
2008	30	23	3	1	0	0	3
2009	30	18	7	0	0	2	3
2010	32	14	8	1	0	5	4
2011	28	13	4	2	0	6	3
2012	18	11	1	2	0	1	3
2013	15	9	4	0	0	0	2
2014	19	7	4	1	3	1	3
2015	25	16	5	0	0	3	1
2016	31	22	4	0	0	1	4
2017	37	32	1	1	0	1	2
2018	49	33	4	2	0	8	2
2019	43	33	2	3	0	5	0
2020	44	37	2	3	0	1	1
2021	34	25	2	4	0	3	0
2022	24	11	3	5	1	2	2
2023	23	14	1	5	1	1	1
Total	558	378	58	31	5	47	39

Percentage of Male - Female Artist Distribution						
Year	Male		Female		Both	
	X	XC	X	XC	X	C
2006	79%	0%	0%	0%	13%	8%
2007	78%	8%	3%	0%	5%	5%
2008	77%	10%	3%	0%	0%	10%
2009	60%	23%	0%	0%	7%	10%
2010	44%	25%	3%	0%	16%	13%
2011	46%	14%	7%	0%	21%	11%
2012	61%	6%	11%	0%	6%	17%
2013	60%	27%	0%	0%	0%	13%
2014	37%	21%	5%	16%	5%	16%
2015	64%	20%	0%	0%	12%	4%
2016	71%	13%	0%	0%	3%	13%
2017	86%	3%	3%	0%	3%	5%
2018	67%	8%	4%	0%	16%	4%
2019	77%	5%	7%	0%	12%	0%
2020	84%	5%	7%	0%	2%	2%
2021	74%	6%	12%	0%	9%	0%
2022	46%	13%	21%	4%	8%	8%
2023	61%	4%	22%	4%	4%	4%
Total	68%	10%	6%	1%	8%	7%

Year	Pos.	Artist	Title	Male	Female	Both
2006	2	Sean Paul	Temperature	X		
	8	Chamillionaire feat. Krayzie Bone	Ridin'	X		
	12	Nelly feat. Paul Wall, Ali & Gipp	Grillz	X		
	16	Chris Brown	Run It!	X		
	18	Yung Joc	It's Goin' Down	X		
	24	Lil Jon Featuring E-40 & Sean Paul Of The YoungBloodZ	Snap Yo Fingers	X		
	25	Dem Franchize Boyz Featuring Lil Peanut & Charlay	Lean Wit It, Rock Wit It	X		
	34	Kanye West Featuring Jamie Foxx	Gold Digger	X		
	35	Ludacris feat. Pharrell	Money Maker	X		
	36	Bubba Sparxxx Featuring Ying Yang Twins & Mr. Collipark	Ms. New Booty	X		
	41	T-Pain Featuring Mike Jones	I'm N Luv (Wit A Stripper)	X		
	42	The Black Eyed Peas	My Humps			X
	43	Fort Minor Featuring Holly Brook	Where'd You Go			C
	46	D4L	Lafly Taffy	X		
	47	T.I.	What You Know	X		
	52	E-40 Featuring T-Pain & Kandi Girl	U And Dat			C
	55	Field Mob Featuring Ciara	So What			C
	58	Juelz Santana	There It Go! (The Whistle Song)	X		
	59	Young Dro Featuring T.I.	Shoulder Lean	X		
	62	Eminem Featuring Nate Dogg	Shake That	X		
2007	63	Chingy Featuring Tyrese	Pullin' Me Back	X		
	64	Kelis Featuring Too \$hort	Bossy			X
	65	Jibbs	Chain Hang Low	X		
	66	Akon Featuring Eminem	Smack That	X		
	69	Chris Brown Featuring Lil Wayne	Gimme That	X		
	70	Yung Joc Featuring Brandy 'Ms. B.' Hambrick	I Know You See It			X
	73	Busta Rhymes	Touch It	X		
	74	Daddy Yankee	Rompe	X		
	85	Dem Franchize Boyz Featuring Jermaine Dupri, Da Brat & Bow Wow	I Think They Like Me			X
	88	Young Jeezy Featuring Akon	Soul Survivor	X		
	89	The Black Eyed Peas	Pump It			X
	90	Eminem	When I'm Gone	X		
	92	Three 6 Mafia Featuring Young Buck & Eightball & M.J.G	Stay Fly	X		
	95	T.I.	Why You Wanna	X		
	98	T-Pain	I'm Sprung	X		
	5	T-Pain Featuring Yung Joc	Buy U A Drank (Shawty Snappin')	X		

Year	Pos.	Artist	Title	Male	Female	Both
	8	Akon Featuring Snoop Dogg	I Wanna Love You	X		
	10	Fergie Featuring Ludacris	Glamorous			X
	11	Akon	Don't Matter	X		
	14	Shop Boyz	Party Like A Rockstar	X		
	15	Akon Featuring Eminem	Smack That	X		
	16	Mims	This Is Why I'm Hot	X		
	18	Timbaland Featuring Keri Hilson	The Way I Are			C
	19	Fergie	Fergalicious		X	
	20	Soulja Boy Tell'em	Crank That (Soulja Boy)	X		
	27	Kanye West	Stronger	X		
	30	Unk	Walk It Out	X		
	33	T-Pain Featuring Akon	Bartender	X		
	34	Huey	Pop, Lock & Drop It	X		
	35	Ludacris Featuring Mary J. Blige	Runaway Love			X
	40	Lloyd Featuring Lil Wayne	You	X		
	42	Diddy Featuring Keyshia Cole	Last Night			C
	43	Fat Joe Featuring Lil Wayne	Make It Rain	X		
	44	Fabulous Featuring Ne-Yo	Make Me Better	X		
	49	R. Kelly Or Bow Wow (Featuring T.I. & T-Pain)	I'm A Flirt	X		
	53	Baby Boy Da Prince Featuring Lil Boosie	The Way I Live	X		
	54	Bow Wow Featuring Chris Brown & Johna Austin	Shortie Like Mine	X		
	56	Hurricane Chris	A Bay Bay	X		
	58	Bone Thugs-N-Harmony Featuring Akon	I Tried	X		
	60	Plies Featuring T-Pain	Shawty	X		
	66	Timbaland Featuring OneRepublic	Apologize	XC		
	73	Rich Boy Featuring Polow Da Don	Throw Some D's	X		
	75	T.I.	Big Things Poppin' (Do It)	X		
	78	Unk	2 Step	X		
	80	Young Jeezy Featuring R. Kelly	Go Getta	X		
	82	Pretty Ricky	On The Hotline	X		
	84	Baby Bash Featuring T-Pain	Cyclone	X		
	87	50 Cent Featuring Justin Timberlake & Timbaland	Ayo Technology	XC		
	88	Bow Wow Featuring T-Pain & Johna Austin	Outta My System	XC		
	92	Ludacris Featuring Pharrell	Money Maker	X		
	95	Crime Mob Featuring Lil Scrappy	Rock Yo Hips	X		
	99	Snoop Dogg Featuring R. Kelly	That's That	X		

Year	Pos.	Artist	Title	Male	Female	Both
2008	1	Flo Rida Featuring T-Pain	Low	X		
	4	Lil Wayne Featuring Static Major	Lollipop	XC		
	11	Ray J & Yung Berg	Sexy Can I	X		
	15	T.I.	Whatever You Like	X		
	29	Kardinal Offishall Featuring Akon	Dangerous	X		
	35	M.I.A.	Paper Planes		X	
	37	T.I. Featuring Rihanna	Live Your Life			C
	38	Piles Featuring Ne-Yo	Bust It Baby Part 2	X		
	40	Lil Wayne Featuring T-Pain	Got Money	X		
	43	Lil Wayne	A Milli	X		
	45	Webbie Featuring Lil' Phat & Lil' Boosie	Independent	X		
	46	T-Pain Featuring Lil Wayne	Can't Believe It	X		
	50	Snoop Dogg	Sensual Seduction	X		
	54	Soulja Boy Tell'em	Crank That (Soulja Boy)	X		
	56	Wyclef Jean Featuring Akon, Lil Wayne & Nila	Sweetest Girl (Dollar Bill)			C
	59	Flo Rida Featuring will.i.am	In The Ayer	X		
	65	Kevin Rudolf Featuring Lil Wayne	Let It Rock	XC		
	66	David Banner Featuring Chris Brown	Get Like Me	X		
	68	Young Jeezy Featuring Kanye West	Put On	X		
	70	Three 6 Mafia Featuring Project Pat, Young D & Superpower	Lolli Loli (Pop That Body)	X		
	71	Baby Bash Featuring T-Pain	Cyclone	X		
	74	Kanye West	Love Lockdown	X		
	77	Piles Featuring Akon	Hypnotized	X		
	79	Kanye West Featuring T-Pain	Good Life	X		
	84	Rick Ross Featuring T-Pain	The Boss	X		
	88	The Game Featuring Lil Wayne	My Life	X		
	90	Kanye West Featuring Dwele	Flashing Lights	X		
	91	Lil Wayne Featuring Bobby Valentino & Kidd Kidd	Mrs. Officer	XC		
	96	Timbaland Featuring Keri Hilson	The Way I Are			C
	100	2 Pistols Featuring T-Pain & Tay Dizm	She Got It	X		
2009	1	The Black Eyed Peas	Boom Boom Pow			X
	4	The Black Eyed Peas	I Gotta Feeling			X
	6	Flo Rida	Right Round	X		
	9	Kanye West	Heartless	X		
	12	T.I. Featuring Justin Timberlake	Dead And Gone	XC		
	16	Jamie Foxx Featuring T-Pain	Blame It	X		

Year	Pos.	Artist	Title	Male	Female	Both
	17	Pitbull	Know You Want Me (Calle Ocho)	X		
	18	T.I. Featuring Rihanna	Live Your Life			C
	19	Soulja Boy Tell 'em Featuring Sammie	Kiss Me Thru The Phone	XC		
	20	Jay Sean Featuring Lil Wayne	Down	XC		
	22	Drake	Best I Ever Had	X		
	28	Kid Cudi	Day 'N' Nite	X		
	31	Jay-Z, Rihanna & Kanye West	Run This Town			C
	32	Kevin Rudolf Featuring Lil Wayne	Let It Rock	XC		
	34	Jason Derulo	Whatcha Say	X		
	37	Jeremih	Birthday Sex	X		
	40	T.I.	Whatever You Like	X		
	44	Kanye West	Love Lockdown	X		
	46	Pitbull	Hotel Room Service	X		
	47	Eminem, Dr. Dre & 50 Cent	Crack A Bottle	X		
	58	Flo Rida Featuring Wynter	Sugar	XC		
	62	Jay-Z + Alicia Keys	Empire State Of Mind			C
	65	Mario Featuring Gucci Mane & Sean Garrett	Break Up	XC		
	67	Young Money	Every Girl	X		
	71	Fabulous Featuring The-Dream	Throw It In The Bag	XC		
	73	Asher Roth	I Love College	X		
	79	Soulja Boy Tell'em	Turn My Swag On	X		
	83	Iyaz	Replay	X		
	88	Drake Featuring Kanye West, Lil Wayne & Eminem	Forever	X		
	98	Jim Jones & Ron Browz Featuring Juelz Santana	Pop Champagne	X		
2010	5	Usher Featuring will.i.am	OMG	X		
	6	B.o.B Featuring Hayley Williams	Airplanes			C
	7	Eminem Featuring Rihanna	Love The Way You Lie			C
	11	B.o.B Featuring Bruno Mars	Nothin' On You	XC		
	13	Young Money Featuring Lloyd	BedRock	X		
	20	The Black Eyed Peas	Imma Be			X
	21	Jay-Z + Alicia Keys	Empire State Of Mind			C
	22	Usher Featuring Pitbull	DJ Got Us Fallin' In Love	XC		
	23	Eminem	Not Afraid	X		
	25	Iyaz	Replay	X		
	31	Trey Songz Featuring Fabolous	Say Aah	X		
	32	Drake	Find Your Love	X		

Year	Pos.	Artist	Title	Male	Female	Both
	35	Nelly	Just A Dream	X		
	36	Ludacris	How Low	X		
	37	Far*East Movement Featuring Cataracs & Dev	Like A G6			X
	38	Timbaland Featuring Justin Timberlake	Carry Out	XC		
	40	Flo Rida Featuring David Guetta	Club Can't Handle Me	XC		
	49	Rihanna Featuring Jeezy	Hard			C
	50	Jay-Z + Mr. Hudson	Young Forever	XC		
	52	Trey Songz Featuring Nicki Minaj	Bottoms Up			X
	56	Ludacris Featuring Nicki Minaj	My Chick Bad			X
	60	Drake	Over	X		
	63	B.o.B Featuring Rivers Cuomo	Magic	XC		
	65	New Boyz Featuring Ray J	Tie Me Down	X		
	66	Nicki Minaj	Your Love		X	
	71	Drake Featuring Kanye West, Lil Wayne & Eminem	Forever	X		
	75	The Black Eyed Peas	Rock That Body			X
	79	DJ Khaled Featuring T-Pain, Ludacris, Snoop Dogg & Rick Ross	All I Do Is Win	XC		
	80	Kevin Rudolf Featuring Birdman, Jay Sean, & Lil Wayne	I Made It (Cash Money Heroes)	XC		
	85	Timbaland Featuring Drake	Say Something	X		
	90	Lil Wayne Featuring Drake	Right Above It	X		
	98	Cali Swag District	Teach Me How To Dougie	X		
2011	5	Pitbull Featuring Ne-Yo, Afrojack & Nayer	Give Me Everything			C
	8	Nicki Minaj	Super Bass		X	
	10	The Black Eyed Peas	Just Can't Get Enough			X
	21	Chris Brown Featuring Lil Wayne & Busta Rhymes	Look At Me Now	XC		
	22	Jeremih Featuring 50 Cent	Down On Me	XC		
	23	Lil Wayne	How To Love	X		
	28	Lupe Fiasco	The Show Goes On	X		
	31	Wiz Khalifa	Black And Yellow	X		
	37	The Black Eyed Peas	The Time (Dirty Bit)			X
	38	Diddy - Dirty Money Featuring Skylar Grey	Coming Home			C
	39	Pitbull Featuring T-Pain	Hey Baby (Drop It To The Floor)	X		
	41	Lil Wayne Featuring Cory Gunz	6 Foot 7 Foot	X		
	45	Waka Flocka Flame Featuring Roscoe Dash & Wale	No Hands	X		
	47	DJ Khaled Featuring Drake, Rick Ross & Lil Wayne	I'm On One	XC		
	50	Nicki Minaj Featuring Drake	Moment 4 Life			X
	51	Dr. Dre Featuring Eminem & Skylar Grey	I Need A Doctor			C

Year	Pos.	Artist	Title	Male	Female	Both
	52	Nelly	Just A Dream	X		
	56	Wiz Khalifa	Roll Up	X		
	59	Kanye West	All Of The Lights	X		
	63	Tinie Tempah Featuring Eric Turner	Written In The Stars	XC		
	64	Trey Songz Featuring Nicki Minaj	Bottoms Up			X
	72	Far*East Movement Featuring Cataracs & Dev	Like A G6			X
	83	Dev	In The Dark		X	
	84	New Boyz Featuring The Cataracs & Dev	Backseat			X
	85	Drake	Headlines	X		
	89	Chris Brown	She Ain't You	X		
	95	Lil Wayne Featuring Drake	She Will	X		
	100	Big Sean Featuring Chris Brown	My Last	X		
2012	9	Nicki Minaj	Starships		X	
	11	Flo Rida Featuring Sia	Wild Ones			C
	20	Drake Featuring Lil Wayne	The Motto	X		
	23	Drake Featuring Rihanna	Take Care			C
	27	Kanye West, Big Sean, Pusha T, 2 Chainz	Mercy	X		
	32	Snoop Dogg & Wiz Khalifa Featuring Bruno Mars	Young, Wild & Free	XC		
	40	Jay Z Kanye West	Ni**as in Paris	X		
	45	Tyga	Rack City	X		
	54	2 Chainz Featuring Drake	No Lie	X		
	57	Big Sean Featuring Nicki Minaj	Dance (A\$\$)			X
	63	J. Cole	Work Out	X		
	73	Wiz Khalifa	Work Hard, Play Hard	X		
	75	Nicki Minaj	Pound The Alarm		X	
	78	Kirko Bangz	Drank In My Cup	X		
	80	B.o.B	So Good	X		
	84	Chris Brown	Turn Up The Music	X		
	86	T-Pain Featuring Wiz Khalifa & Lil' Allen	5 O'Clock			C
	92	Cash Out	Cashin' Out	X		
2013	1	Macklemore & Ryan Lewis Featuring Wanz	Thrift Shop	X		
	5	Macklemore & Ryan Lewis Featuring Ray Dalton	Can't Hold Us	XC		
	22	Jay Z Featuring Justin Timberlake	Holy Grail	XC		
	32	Drake	Started From The Bottom	X		
	34	Drake Featuring Majid Jordan	Hold On, We're Going Home	XC		
	39	Lil Wayne Featuring Drake & Future	Love Me	X		

Year	Pos.	Artist	Title	Male	Female	Both
	41	A\$AP Rocky Featuring Drake, 2 Chainz & Kendrick Lamar	F**kin Problems	X		
	43	Macklemore & Ryan Lewis Featuring Mary Lambert	Same Love			C
	48	J. Cole Featuring Miguel	Power Trip	XC		
	59	Wale Featuring Tiara Thomas Or Rihanna	Bad			C
	67	Eminem	Berzerk	X		
	79	Kendrick Lamar	Swimming Pools (Drank)	X		
	87	Rocko Featuring Future & Rick Ross	U.O.E.N.O.	X		
	91	Ace Hood Featuring Future & Rick Ross	Bugatti	X		
	99	2 Chainz	I'm Different	X		
2014	4	Iggy Azalea Featuring Charli XCX	Fancy		XC	
	15	DJ Snake & Lil Jon	Turn Down For What	X		
	16	Eminem Featuring Rihanna	The Monster			C
	26	Iggy Azalea Featuring Rita Ora	Black Widow		XC	
	27	Jessie J, Ariana Grande & Nicki Minaj	Bang Bang		XC	
	30	Chris Brown Featuring Lil Wayne & French Montana Or Too \$hort Or Tyga	Loyal	XC		
	36	Nicki Minaj	Anaconda		X	
	40	Jason Derulo Featuring Snoop Dogg	Wiggle	XC		
	42	Jeremih Featuring YG	Don't Tell 'Em	X		
	43	Kid Ink Featuring Chris Brown	Show Me	XC		
	55	Drake Featuring Majid Jordan	Hold On, We're Going Home	XC		
	58	YG Featuring Jeezy & Rich Homie Quan	My Hitta	X		
	72	Rich Gang Featuring Young Thug & Rich Homie Quan	Lifestyle	X		
	87	T.I. Featuring Iggy Azalea	No Mediocre			X
	89	Lil Wayne Featuring Drake	Believe Me	X		
	90	Mike WILL Made-It Featuring Miley Cyrus, Wiz Khalifa & Juicy J		23		C
	92	Macklemore & Ryan Lewis Featuring Schoolboy Q & Hollis	White Walls			C
	96	Schoolboy Q Featuring BJ The Chicago Kid	Studio	X		
	97	Drake	0 To 100 / The Catch Up	X		
2015	3	Wiz Khalifa Featuring Charlie Puth	See You Again	XC		
	4	Fetty Wap	Trap Queen	X		
	8	Silento	Watch Me	X		
	21	Fetty Wap Featuring Remy Boyz		679	X	
	24	Omarion Featuring Chris Brown & Jhene Aiko	Post To Be			C
	30	Drake	Hotline Bling	X		
	32	Flo Rida Featuring Sage The Gemini & Lookas	G.D.F.R.	X		
	39	Pitbull & Ne-Yo	Time Of Our Lives	X		

Year	Pos.	Artist	Title	Male	Female	Both
	44	Fetty Wap Featuring Monty	My Way	XC		
	47	Big Sean Featuring E-40	I Don't F**k With You	X		
	49	Rich Homie Quan	Flex (Ooh Ooh Ooh)	X		
	50	T-Wayne	Nasty Freestyle	X		
	51	Nicki Minaj Featuring Drake, Lil Wayne & Chris Brown	Only			X
	66	Nicki Minaj Featuring Drake & Lil Wayne	Truffle Butter			X
	69	Meek Mill Featuring Chris Brown & Nicki Minaj	All Eyes On You			X
	70	Rae Sremmurd	No Type	X		
	72	Jidenna Featuring Roman GianArthur	Classic Man	XC		
	79	O.T. Genasis	CoCo	X		
	82	I LOVE MAKONNEN Featuring Drake	Tuesday	X		
	83	iLoveMemphis	Hit The Quan	X		
	84	Macklemore & Ryan Lewis Featuring Eric Nally, Melle Mel, Kool Moe Dee & Grandmaster Caz	Downtown	XC		
	86	Chris Brown & Tyga	Ayo	XC		
	88	Big Sean Featuring Drake	Blessings	X		
	95	Mr. Probz	Waves	X		
	99	Drake	Back To Back	X		
2016	3	Drake Featuring WizKid & Kyla	One Dance			C
	6	Designer	Panda	X		
	14	Flo Rida	My House	X		
	19	G-Eazy x Bebe Rexha	Me, Myself & I			C
	24	Drake	Hotline Bling	X		
	29	Drake Featuring Rihanna	Too Good			C
	30	Future Featuring The Weeknd	Low Life	XC		
	34	D.R.A.M. Featuring Lil Yachty	Broccoli	X		
	35	Bryson Tiller	Don't	X		
	37	Drake & Future	Jumpman	X		
	38	gnash Featuring Olivia O'Brien	I Hate U I Love U			C
	41	Drake	Controla	X		
	48	Kent Jones	Don't Mind	X		
	53	Bryson Tiller	Exchange	X		
	54	Fetty Wap Featuring Remy Boyz		679	X	
	55	Jeremih	Oui	X		
	57	Kevin Gates	2 Phones	X		
	59	DJ Khaled Featuring Drake	For Free	XC		
	65	Post Malone	White Iverson	X		

Year	Pos.	Artist		Title		Male	Female	Both
	68	Lil Wayne, Wiz Khalifa & Imagine Dragons With Logic & Ty Dolla \$ign Feat. X	Ambassadors	Sucker For Pain		XC		
	69	Yo Gotti Featuring Nicki Minaj		Down In The DM				X
	70	Tory Lanez		Luv		X		
	74	Tory Lanez		Say It		X		
	75	Travis Scott		Antidote		X		
	82	Drake Featuring The Throne		Pop Style		XC		
	88	Silento		Watch Me		X		
	90	Usher Featuring Young Thug		No Limit		X		
	91	O.T. Genasis Featuring Young Dolph		Cut It		X		
	92	Kevin Gates		Really Really		X		
	97	Future		Wicked		X		
	98	Designer		Timmy Turner		X		
2017	4	Kendrick Lamar		Humble.		X		
	6	Migos Featuring Lil Uzi Vert		Bad And Boujee		X		
	10	Post Malone Featuring Quavo		Congratulations		X		
	12	DJ Khaled Featuring Justin Bieber, Quavo, Chance The Rapper & Lil Wayne		I'm The One		XC		
	13	Lil Uzi Vert		XO TOUR Llif3		X		
	14	Future		Mask Off		X		
	15	French Montana Featuring Swae Lee		Unforgettable		X		
	19	Rae Sremmurd Featuring Gucci Mane		Black Beatles		X		
	24	Cardi B		Bodak Yellow (Money Moves)			X	
	25	Childish Gambino		Redbone		X		
	28	KYLE Featuring Lil Yachty		iSpy		X		
	31	Logic Featuring Alessia Cara & Khalid		1-800-273-8255				C
	35	Big Sean		Bounce Back		X		
	37	Drake		Fake Love		X		
	48	21 Savage		Bank Account		X		
	52	Migos		T-Shirt		X		
	53	Yo Gotti Featuring Nicki Minaj		Rake It Up				X
	55	Kodak Black		Tunnel Vision		X		
	56	Post Malone Featuring 21 Savage		Rockstar		X		
	60	Aminé		Caroline		X		
	61	Ayo & Teo		Rolex		X		
	62	Kendrick Lamar		DNA.		X		
	63	Zay Hilfigerr & Zayion McCall		JuJu On That Beat (TZ Anthem)		X		
	64	Rae Sremmurd		Swang		X		

Year	Pos.	Artist	Title	Male	Female	Both
	65	Drake	Passionfruit	X		
	66	Kendrick Lamar Featuring Rihanna	Loyalty.			C
	68	Travis Scott	Goosebumps	X		
	70	D.R.A.M. Featuring Lil Yachty	Broccoli	X		
	78	Khalid	Young Dumb & Broke	X		
	79	Playboi Carti	Magnolia	X		
	80	SZA Featuring Travis Scott	Love Galore			X
	81	A Boogie Wit da Hoodie Featuring Kodak Black	Drowning	X		
	83	Gucci Mane Featuring Drake	Both	X		
	86	Migos Featuring Gucci Mane	Slippery	X		
	93	Gucci Mane Featuring Migos	I Get The Bag	X		
	95	YFN Lucci Featuring PnB Rock	Everyday We Lit	X		
	99	XXXTENTACION	Look At Me!	X		
2018	1	Drake	God's Plan	X		
	5	Post Malone Featuring 21 Savage	Rockstar	X		
	6	Post Malone Featuring Ty Dolla \$ign	Psycho	X		
	7	Cardi B, Bad Bunny & J Balvin	I Like It			X
	9	Drake	In My Feelings	X		
	11	Drake	Nice For What	X		
	12	Juice WRLD	Lucid Dreams	X		
	13	Post Malone	Better Now	X		
	14	Bruno Mars & Cardi B	Finesse			X
	17	XXXTENTACION	Sad!	X		
	23	BlocBoy JB Featuring Drake	Look Alive	X		
	25	Lil Baby & Drake	Yes Indeed	X		
	28	Tyga Featuring Offset	Taste	X		
	29	NF	Let You Down	X		
	30	G-Eazy Featuring A\$AP Rocky & Cardi B	No Limit			X
	31	6ix9ine Featuring Nicki Minaj & Murda Beatz	FEFE			X
	34	Migos, Nicki Minaj & Cardi B	MotorSport			X
	38	Offset & Metro Boomin	Ric Flair Drip	X		
	39	Post Malone	I Fall Apart	X		
	40	The Weeknd & Kendrick Lamar	Pray For Me	XC		
	42	Travis Scott	Sicko Mode	X		
	43	Migos Featuring Drake	Walk It Talk It	X		
	44	Lil Pump	Gucci Gang	X		

Year	Pos.	Artist	Title	Male	Female	Both
	47	Kendrick Lamar & SZA	All The Stars			X
	48	Migos	Stir Fry	X		
	50	Kendrick Lamar Featuring Zacari	Love.	X		
	51	Childish Gambino	This Is America	X		
	52	Drake	Nonstop	X		
	54	Cardi B	Bodak Yellow (Money Moves)		X	
	55	Lil Dicky Featuring Chris Brown	Freaky Friday	XC		
	56	6ix9ine	Gummo	X		
	57	Rich The Kid	Plug Walk	X		
	59	Cardi B	Be Careful		X	
	61	Cardi B Featuring 21 Savage	Bartier Cardi			X
	63	YG Featuring 2 Chainz, Big Sean & Nicki Minaj	Big Bank			X
	67	Khalid	Young Dumb & Broke	X		
	72	Gucci Mane Featuring Migos	I Get The Bag	X		
	73	DJ Khaled Featuring Justin Bieber, Chance The Rapper & Quavo	No Brainer	XC		
	74	A\$AP Ferg Featuring Nicki Minaj	Plain Jane			X
	75	Miguel Featuring Travis Scott	Sky Walker	X		
	79	Jay Rock, Kendrick Lamar, Future & James Blake	King's Dead	XC		
	83	N*E*R*D & Rihanna	Lemon			C
	84	Logic Featuring Alessia Cara & Khalid	1-800-273-8255			C
	86	Drake	I'm Upset	X		
	88	XXXTENTACION	Moonlight	X		
	91	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	Outside Today	X		
	93	Daddy Yankee	Dura	X		
	94	XXXTENTACION	Changes	X		
	97	Rae Sremmurd & Juicy J	Powerglide	X		
2019	1	Lil Nas X Featuring Billy Ray Cyrus	Old Town Road	XC		
	2	Post Malone & Swae Lee	Sunflower (Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse)	X		
	5	Post Malone	Wow.	X		
	8	Khalid	Talk	X		
	9	Travis Scott	Sicko Mode	X		
	13	Lizzo	Truth Hurts		X	
	18	Meek Mill Featuring Drake	Going Bad	X		
	24	DaBaby	Suge	X		
	25	J. Cole	Middle Child	X		
	26	Lil Baby & Gunna	Drip Too Hard	X		

Year	Pos.	Artist	Title	Male	Female	Both
	28	Lil Tecca	Ran\$om	X		
	30	Post Malone Featuring Young Thug	Goodbyes	X		
	31	Kodak Black Featuring Travis Scott & Offset	ZEZE	X		
	32	Post Malone	Better Now	X		
	34	Drake Featuring Rick Ross	Money In The Grave	X		
	37	Cardi B & Bruno Mars	Please Me			X
	38	Cardi B	Money		X	
	40	Lil Nas X	Panini	X		
	41	A Boogie Wit da Hoodie	Look Back At It	X		
	42	21 Savage	A Lot	X		
	44	Bad Bunny Featuring Drake	MIA	X		
	45	Polo G Featuring Lil Tjay	Pop Out	X		
	47	Blueface	Thotiana	X		
	48	Juice WRLD	Lucid Dreams	X		
	49	Shack Wes	Mo Bamba	X		
	51	Gucci Mane X Bruno Mars X Kodak Black	Wake Up In The Sky	XC		
	55	Mustard & Migos	Pure Water	X		
	59	Calboy	Envy Me	X		
	62	Post Malone	Circles	X		
	64	Young Thug, J. Cole & Travis Scott	The London	X		
	66	YNW Melly	Murder On My Mind	X		
	69	Cardi B, Bad Bunny & J Balvin	I Like It			X
	71	Flipp Dineiro	Leave Me Alone	X		
	74	Lil Baby	Close Friends	X		
	76	Saweetie	My Type		X	
	77	YK Osiris	Worth It	X		
	82	A Boogie Wit da Hoodie Featuring 6ix9ine	Swervin	X		
	84	Lil Baby & DaBaby	Baby	X		
	87	Offset Featuring Cardi B	Clout			X
	90	Megan Thee Stallion Featuring DaBaby	Cash Shit			X
	92	NLE Choppa	Shotta Flow	X		
	93	Megan Thee Stallion, Nicki Minaj & Ty Dolla \$ign	Hot Girl Summer			X
	100	Juice WRLD	Robbery	X		
2020	2	Post Malone	Circles	X		
	4	Roddy Ricch	The Box	X		
	5	DaBaby Featuring Roddy Ricch	Rockstar	X		

Year	Pos.	Artist	Title	Male	Female	Both
	7	Future Featuring Drake	Life Is Good	X		
	11	Doja Cat	Say So		X	
	13	Jack Harlow Featuring DaBaby, Tory Lanez & Lil Wayne	Whats Poppin	X		
	15	Megan Thee Stallion	Savage		X	
	16	Arizona Zervas	Roxanne	X		
	24	Cardi B Featuring Megan Thee Stallion	WAP		X	
	25	Mustard & Roddy Ricch	Ballin'	X		
	27	Lil Mosey	Blueberry Faygo	X		
	29	DaBaby	BOP	X		
	32	Drake	Toosie Slide	X		
	39	Chris Brown & Young Thug	Go Crazy	XC		
	40	Roddy Ricch Featuring Mustard	High Fashion	X		
	41	Drake Featuring Lil Durk	Laugh Now Cry Later	X		
	42	Lil Baby	Woah	X		
	43	Powfu Featuring beabadoobee	Death Bed	X		
	45	Travis Scott	HIGHEST IN THE ROOM	X		
	47	24kGoldn Featuring iann dior	Mood	X		
	49	Pop Smoke Featuring Lil Baby & DaBaby	For The Night	X		
	51	Rod Wave	Heart On Ice	X		
	54	Juice WRLD x Marshmello	Come & Go	X		
	57	Lil Baby & 42 Dugg	We Paid	X		
	62	Eminem Featuring Juice WRLD	Godzilla	X		
	63	Juice WRLD & YoungBoy Never Broke Again	Bandit	X		
	64	StaySolidRocky	Party Girl	X		
	66	DJ Khaled Featuring Drake	Popstar	XC		
	71	Lil Nas X	Panini	X		
	72	Young Thug Featuring Gunna	Hot	X		
	74	Lil Baby	Emotionally Scarred	X		
	75	YNW Melly & Juice WRLD	Suicidal	X		
	76	Lil Baby	The Bigger Picture	X		
	78	Pop Smoke Featuring 50 Cent & Roddy Ricch	The Woo	X		
	79	Lil Baby	Sum 2 Prove	X		
	81	Pop Smoke Featuring Lil Tjay	Mood Swings	X		
	83	Pop Smoke	Dior	X		
	86	THE SCOTTS, Travis Scott & Kid Cudi	The Scotts	X		
	87	Doja Cat & Tyga	Juicy			X

Year	Pos.	Artist		Title		Male	Female	Both
	90	Rod Wave	Featuring ATR Son Son	Rags2Riches		X		
	92	Juice WRLD		Wishing Well		X		
	98	Moneybagg Yo		Said Sum		X		
	99	H.E.R. Featuring YG		Slide				C
	100	NLE Choppa	Featuring Roddy Ricch	Walk Em Down		X		
2021	4	24kGoldn	Featuring iann dior	Mood		X		
	6	Doja Cat	Featuring SZA	Kiss Me More				X
	9	Lil Nas X		Montero (Call Me By Your Name)		X		
	19	Chris Brown & Young Thug		Go Crazy		XC		
	20	Masked Wolf		Astronaut In The Ocean		X		
	22	Pop Smoke		What You Know Bout Love		X		
	24	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow		Industry Baby		X		
	26	Cardi B		Up			X	
	29	Saweetie	Featuring Doja Cat	Best Friend			X	
	30	Polo G		Rapstar		X		
	32	Pop Smoke	Featuring Lil Baby & DaBaby	For The Night		X		
	33	Lil Tjay	Featuring 6LACK	Calling My Phone		X		
	36	Lil Baby		On Me		X		
	39	Pooh Shiesty	Featuring Lil Durk	Back In Blood		X		
	42	Moneybagg Yo		Wockesha		X		
	44	SpotemGottem	Featuring Pooh Shiesty Or DaBaby	Beat Box		X		
	45	Drake	Featuring Lil Durk	Laugh Now Cry Later		X		
	47	Drake	Featuring Lil Baby	Wants And Needs		X		
	48	Drake	Featuring Future & Young Thug	Way 2 Sexy		X		
	50	CJ		Whoopy		X		
	51	Internet Money & Gunna	Featuring Don Toliver & NAV	Lemonade		X		
	52	SZA		Good Days		X		
	54	Megan Thee Stallion		Body			X	
	58	Yung Bleu	Featuring Drake	You're Mines Still		X		
	59	DJ Khaled	Featuring Lil Baby & Lil Durk	Every Chance I Get		XC		
	68	Drake		What's Next		X		
	71	Megan Thee Stallion		Thot Shit			X	
	72	Roddy Ricch		Late At Night		X		
	76	Moneybagg Yo		Time Today		X		
	77	Megan Thee Stallion	Featuring DaBaby	Cry Baby				X
	79	Coi Leray	Featuring Lil Durk	No More Parties				X

Year	Pos.	Artist	Title	Male	Female	Both
	86	Drake Featuring 21 Savage & Project Pat	Knife Talk	X		
	97	BRS Kash	Throat Baby (Go Baby)	X		
	98	Rod Wave	Tombstone	X		
2022	3	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber	Stay	XC		
	6	Jack Harlow	First Class	X		
	7	Latto	Big Energy		X	
	9	Kodak Black	Super Gremlin	X		
	11	Future Featuring Drake & Tems	Wait For U			C
	14	Lil Nas X	Thats What I Want	X		
	16	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow	Industry Baby	X		
	18	Doja Cat	Need To Know		X	
	26	Post Malone Featuring Doja Cat	I Like You (A Happier Song)			X
	33	Drake Featuring 21 Savage	Jimmy Cooks	X		
	43	Lil Baby	In A Minute	X		
	47	Doja Cat	Vegas		X	
	48	Gunna & Future Featuring Young Thug	Pushin P	X		
	50	SZA	I Hate U		X	
	56	Nicki Minaj	Super Freaky Girl		X	
	60	Drake Featuring 21 Savage & Project Pat	Knife Talk	X		
	62	Megan Thee Stallion & Dua Lipa	Sweetest Pie		XC	
	68	Doja Cat	Get Into It (Yuh)		X	
	73	NEIKED X Mae Muller X Polo G	Better Days			C
	81	Lil Durk Featuring Morgan Wallen	Broadway Girls	XC		
	83	Lil Durk Featuring Gunna	What Happened To Virgil	X		
	84	Future	Puffin On Zootiez	X		
	90	Doja Cat Featuring SZA	Kiss Me More		X	
	97	JNR CHOI & Sam Tompkins	To The Moon!	XC		
2023	3	SZA	Kill Bill		X	
	5	Metro Boomin, The Weeknd & 21 Savage	Creepin'	XC		
	9	SZA	Snooze		X	
	14	Drake & 21 Savage	Rich Flex	X		
	21	Toosii	Favorite Song	X		
	25	Lil Durk Featuring J. Cole	All My Life	X		
	28	Lil Uzi Vert	Just Wanna Rock	X		
	31	Gunna	Fukumean	X		
	33	Coi Leray	Players		X	

Year	Pos.	Artist	Title	Male	Female	Both
	38	Metro Boomin, Future & Chris Brown	Superhero (Heroes & Villains)	X		
	43	Drake & 21 Savage	Spin Bout U	X		
	45	Drake	Search & Rescue	X		
	46	Nicki Minaj & Ice Spice With Aqua			XC	
	52	Doja Cat	Paint The Town Red		X	
	69	Ice Spice & Nicki Minaj	Princess Diana		X	
	70	GloRilla & Cardi B	Tomorrow 2			X
	76	Doechii Featuring Kodak Black	What It Is (Block Boy)	X		
	79	Nicki Minaj	Super Freaky Girl		X	
	83	Future Featuring Drake & Tems	Wait For U			C
	88	Kaliii	Area Codes		X	
	94	Young Nudy Featuring 21 Savage	Peaches & Eggplants	X		
	97	Travis Scott Featuring Drake	Meltdown	X		
	98	Latto Featuring Cardi B	Put It On Da Floor Again		X	

9.2. Lesson Plan

PROCEDURE	OBJECTIVES
OPENING STAGE	
Preparatory stage: S should bring to class <u>everything</u> which they connect with Hip Hop/ what Hip Hop means for them / which they find interesting. <i>Material suggestions:</i> song titles, lyrics, pictures, CDs, pictures, posters, clothes, accessories, screenshots of videos/ blog posts/ social media posts/ comments, drawings, list of artists, newspaper articles...	• focus on individual interests • activate prior knowledge • focus on authentic materials • broaden the 'classical' canon
Collaborative task 1: All the material is put into the center of the classroom. In groups, students identify common themes, things they find particularly interesting/ striking/ upsetting, questions, topics they would like to discuss and focus on. <i>Group allocation:</i> based on class size and teacher's knowledge of the class	• encourage students to express their personal realities • elicit personal responses
Open classroom discussion: All ideas/ common themes are collected and recorded. <i>Recording suggestion:</i> Word Cloud (collection of mentioned topics where the size of words indicates the importance of the word based on frequency) <i>Key topics for discussion:</i> • dominant / mainstream society • controlling images <i>Guiding questions:</i> • How important is topic X for your life? • What is surprising? • Can you identify with character X? Why (not)? • Can you identify any issues that are present in the collected materials? • Based on the materials collected, how would you describe Hip Hop to someone who has never heard about it? • Who decides on what "Hip Hop" is? (media coverage, historical development, artists, producers, audience, ...) • What are parallels/ deviations between the mainstream culture and Hip Hop culture?	• center student's realities and experiences • structure the discussion around students' personal stories/ experiences with Hip Hop • elicit personal responses: help students to "orient themselves and identify who they are in social and cultural ways" (Hill 121)

• What are things we could learn from Hip Hop?	
Collaborative Task 2: Students divide the collected materials up into the categories “positive”, “negative”, “not sure”. <i>Guiding questions:</i> • Why do you perceive X as positive/ negative? • What are you unsure about? • Who makes the rules of what we perceive as positive or negative/ problematic? • Is this positive/ negative aspect only visible in Hip Hop or in society in general? • Why do you listen to Hip Hop although there are such problematic topics present? • Why don't you listen to Hip Hop? <i>Key topics for discussion:</i> → scaffolding through the teacher to offer understanding of relevant background information and critical theories • mainstream/ dominant society – marginalized groups • historical development of Hip Hop (including its positive effects) • consumerism and the influence of media corporations • ideology, power structures, controlling images and stereotypes	• raise awareness on cultural and societal issues • guide students to consume media critically • gain an understanding that media is never neutral or unbiased
TOPIC FOCUS: Representation of women	
Opening/ creative task: Students should draw a typical ‘Hip Hopper’. Alternatively, they can create a text (poem, ...) about what features a typical rapper has. The drawings/ texts are compared and discussed. <i>Probable outcome:</i> Mostly male rappers/ stereotypical image of male rappers.	• raise awareness
Noticing exercise: Based on the products of the opening task and a corpus of songs (f.ex. charts list, compiled based on students’ preferences or by the teacher, or from the materials of the opening stage) students should make statements about the representation of women in Hip Hop. <i>Guiding questions:</i> • Why did you draw a male rapper and not a female one? • What’s the male-female ratio of artists? • Select a few songs: What’s the male-female ratio of producers/ composers?	• focus on self-reflection • unveiling structures of domination/ underlying power structures • “critically engage with established stereotypes” (RIS 11) • initiate critical • scaffold exercises to support students’

• What is your perception about other music genres – is it similar or different? Can a ‘gender’ be allocated to a music genre? • What could be the reason the underrepresentation of women? • If not artists, have women got other roles in Hip Hop? (connection to background dancers). • What implication could the underrepresentation of women and the use of sexist stereotypes have on its audience? For whom exactly?	progress to develop critical analysis skills with the goal of promoting equality (15)
Teacher input: To guide the following analysis, the teacher should offer theoretical input on both the emancipatory effect of Hip Hop’s female rappers, as well as the inherent power imbalances and sexist structures of the male-dominated music genres. <i>Key topics:</i> • Hip Hop feminism, intersectionality • Controlling images, Eurocentric standard of beauty, oppressive othering	
Case study: Each student/ group of students should choose one Hip Hop song. (Can be based on preference, or from the corpus of songs or because they find it shocking/ surprising/ interesting etc.). <i>Part 1: Initial Reaction:</i> Students should engage in diary writing to jot down first impressions/ emotions/ questions they would like to ask the artist. <i>Part 2: Critical Analysis:</i> Using the Analysis Guide (chapter 9.3.) students should analyze their song (lyrics + video). <i>Part 3: Presentation + Class discussion:</i> Each student/ group of students should present their findings ending with a class discussion.	• conduct critical discourse analysis • broaden the classical canon • identify the influence of a text’s context • identify underlying power structures and how texts can be used to reinforce existing power structures • analyzing Hip Hop songs as multi-semiotic texts
Take action: With regards to their analyzed song, each student should formulate three wishes or critical questions that they would like to ask the artist, the producer, the record company, a Hip Hop scholar etc. After revising the questions, students should formulate an e-mail and look for any kind of relevant contact information (e-mail address, address, social media profiles etc.) to send the questions.	• empower students to take action
Creating counter-narratives/ creative task: Students choose one song/ video that they find problematic. In	• create counter-narratives to biased

groups they should create counter-narratives, which are then discussed. <i>Suggestions:</i> • Change a text produced by a man from the male perspective to a female perspective (as if it was written by a woman). • Identify the main message/ themes of the song and create your own text for it. • Produce an alternative music video for a song. • Rewrite (problematic) parts of a song. • Write a diary entry of the female background dancer.	and stereotypical media texts • challenge assumptions of what is regarded as “common sense”
Reflection: Students are asked to write a diary entry summing up their experiences and thoughts about the Hip Hop project. <i>Guiding questions:</i> • What is/ are the main points(s) that you take away from the project? • What was surprising/ challenging/ shocking? What did you not expect? • Did the project change your perception of Hip Hop? • Do you now consume Hip Hop differently? • Are there aspects that you would like to change when consuming different types of media?	• scaffold critical self-reflection with the goal to “develop in students a social consciousness” (Kellner and Share 19)

9.3. Analysis Guide

Song Title:	Artist(s):
Release date:	Record label:
Don't forget to include references! According to the MLA style it should look like this for YouTube video clips and the lyrics from Spotify: • Artist(s). "Title of the video." Online video clip. YouTube, uploaded by X, date of upload, Link. Accessed X. Missy Elliot. "The Rain (Supa Dupa Fly)" Online video clip. YouTube, uploaded by Missy Elliot, 27 Oct. 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHcyJPTTn9w. Accessed 31 Oct. 2024. • Artist(s), "Title of the song." Album title. Record company, Release date. Spotify, Link. Accessed X. Drake. "God's Plan." <i>Scorpion</i>. Young Money/ Cash Money Records, 2018. <i>Spotify</i>, https://open.spotify.com/intl-de/track/6DCZcSspjsKoFjzjrWoCdn. Accessed 20 May 2024. <u>Your references:</u>	
PERSONAL RESPONSE: Before you start with your critical analysis, watch the video and jot down your first impressions! • How do the lyrics and visuals make you feel? Why? • What is your first thought on how gender equality is shown?	
CONTEXT: 1. Find basic information about the artist (e.g. background, career, public appearances, ...). 2. What audience does the artist aim to reach? 3. Who are the people who helped create the text? (e.g. artist, songwriters, producer, actors/ actresses, record label, director, ...) Who profits from the song's success? Is there a power (im-)balance between the different roles? How is the male-female ratio of the participants?	
KEY THEMES: 4. What are the main themes of the song? (e.g. love, wealth, power, success, ...) 5. How are these themes realized in the song? (e.g. word choices, visuals, ...)	
LYRICS: 6. What words are chosen to portray the artist or other people? ○ Look for gendered language. (e.g. girl or woman, queen, bitch, ...) → What are different connotations? ○ Identify slang words or words of Hip Hop Language. (The Urban Dictionary might help: https://www.urbandictionary.com/)	

7. Who is speaking to whom?
 - Identify personal pronouns (e.g. I, we, you, ...).
 - Whose perspective is it? How do language choices (e.g. the use of imperatives) establish (un-)equal power relations in the relationship?
 - Who is portrayed as active agents and who as passive subjects?
 - How are men portrayed in contrast to women? (active – passive, protectors, providers, dominators, ...)
8. Are words repeated or emphasized (through the performance and rapping)?
 - Why are certain words emphasized?
9. Are there references to famous people, events etc.?

VIDEO:

10. Symbolism and Props:

- What symbols (e.g. money, luxury items, mansion (symbols of wealth and success); religious symbols; flags, police, weapon (symbols of resistance or rebellion), ...) appear in the video?
- How are these objects used to portray men and women?
- How does the set design relate to the song's overall topic?

11. Visual representation of people:

- How are men and women positioned in the frame? (e.g. foreground, background, on different levels, ...)
- Are men or women shown individually or as part of a group?
- How do clothing and accessories shape the portrayal of gender?
- How is female beauty portrayed? How are Black women's bodies portrayed? (e.g. skin color, hair, focus on body parts, ...)

12. Camera angles:

- Who is shot from low angles (suggesting dominance) and who is shot from high angles (suggesting submissiveness or inferiority)?
- Do close-up shots focus on specific body parts? (e.g. women's buttock or breasts versus focus on face) What does it imply?

13. Performance:

- How do movements and body language reflect power dynamics? (e.g. How do different participants claim their space?)
- What do different movements signify (e.g. twerking, ...)

14. Lighting and Color:

- What mood is created through lighting? (e.g. soft or harsh lighting, intimate or dramatic mood, ...)
- How are shadows and contrasts used to emphasize or hide certain (body) features?
- What colors are used to evoke different emotions?

ADOPTING A GENDER CRITICAL LENSE:

15. Are traditional stereotypes reinforced or challenged?
16. Are women portrayed in active or passive roles?
17. Who has got a voice in the narrative? Who takes a central role or secondary roles?
18. How is female beauty depicted? (Are Eurocentric beauty ideals emphasized? (e.g. light skin, straight hair)

19. How is women's sexuality portrayed? (Who is in control?)
20. Are there signs of empowerment or oppression?

REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

21. How are power, relationships and societal norms portrayed in the video and lyrics?
22. How might the song shape attitudes about gender?
23. How might the lyrics and video influence its (young) listeners? How does the song affect you personally?
24. What would you change for the purpose of fostering peace, justice and equality?

TIPS:

- ✓ Watch the video and read the lyrics multiple times.
- ✓ Discuss your thoughts in your group to gain different opinions and perspectives.
- ✓ The questions serve as a guideline, it might not be possible to answer all of them or there might be additional questions that are missing.
- ✓ It's ok to have different opinions and perspectives, but don't forget: The ultimate objective of a critical analysis is to identify inequalities and challenge underlying power structures to foster "**humanity, solidarity, tolerance, peace, justice, gender equality and environmental awareness**" (RIS - Austrian curriculum 10-11).
- ✓ Don't be shy, ask your teacher for help 😊

9.4. Abstract

Diese Masterarbeit untersucht mithilfe der Kritischen Diskursanalyse, wie weibliche Video-Darstellerinnen und Künstlerinnen in Hip Hop Liedern textlich und visuell dargestellt werden. Die Analyse zeigt, dass durch strategische Mittel wie Kleidung, Frisuren, Beleuchtung, Kamerawinkel und Positionierung weibliche Darstellerinnen oft als passive Objekte männlicher Begierde und dem männlichen Rapper untergeordnet präsentiert werden. Die Bevorzugung hellhäutiger Frauen mit geglättetem Haar perpetuiert ein eurozentrisches Schönheitsideal und verstärkt coloristische Denkweisen. Zeitgenössische Rapperinnen stellen sich diesen Darstellungen jedoch selbstbewusst entgegen, indem sie ihre Sexualität selbstbestimmt zum Ausdruck bringen. Sie nutzen explizite Texte, visuelle Ästhetik und Kameratechniken als Instrumente der Ermächtigung. Trotz ihres kreativen Einflusses seit dem Aufkommen des Hip Hop sind Frauen in den Chartplatzierungen weiterhin deutlich unterrepräsentiert. Diese fehlenden weiblichen Vorbilder und die fortgesetzte Idealisierung eurozentrischer Schönheitsstandards fördern schädliche Stereotype und können bei weiblichen Hip Hop Konsumentinnen ein Gefühl der Unzulänglichkeit oder Körperunzufriedenheit hervorrufen. Im zweiten Teil dieser Masterarbeit werden daher die gewonnenen Erkenntnisse auf den österreichischen Englischunterricht in der Sekundarstufe übertragen. Es werden praktische Ansätze vorgestellt, in denen Hip Hop eingesetzt wird, um die kritische Medienkompetenz der Schülerinnen und Schüler zu fördern.

English Abstract:

In this master's thesis, I employ Critical Discourse Analysis to explore how female video actresses and female artists are lyrically and visually portrayed in Hip Hop songs. This comparison reveals that strategic use of clothing, hairstyling, lighting, camera angles and positioning presents female actresses as passive objects for the male pleasure and subordinate to the male rapper. Through the portrayed controlling images of Black women and preference for lighter-skinned actresses with straightened hair a Eurocentric beauty ideal is perpetuated, which reinforces colorist thinking. Contemporary female rappers, however, reclaim these controlling images of Black femininity through unapologetic and celebratory displays of their sexuality. They employ lyrical explicitness, clothing, visual

imagery or camera techniques as means of empowerment. Although female rappers have shown their skills and unique emancipatory strategies since Hip Hop's emergence, there is clear underrepresentation of female artists in the chart rankings. This underrepresentation of female role models and idealization of Eurocentric beauty standards perpetuates harmful stereotypes and can lead to a feeling of inadequacy or body dissatisfaction of (Black) female consumers of Hip Hop. The second part of this thesis, therefore, focuses on the adaptation of my analysis' insights to offer practical teaching ideas on how Hip Hop can be incorporated in Austrian upper-secondary EFL teaching to foster students' critical media literacy.