

University of Mary Washington

Eagle Scholar

Student Research Submissions

Spring 5-12-2021

Black, Gay, and Unapologetic: How Lil Nas X Is Bringing The Out Group In

Julianne Stella Swope

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.umw.edu/student_research



Part of the [Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Swope, Julianne Stella, "Black, Gay, and Unapologetic: How Lil Nas X Is Bringing The Out Group In" (2021). *Student Research Submissions*. 383.

https://scholar.umw.edu/student_research/383

This Honors Project is brought to you for free and open access by Eagle Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Research Submissions by an authorized administrator of Eagle Scholar. For more information, please contact archives@umw.edu.

Black, Gay, and Unapologetic: How Lil Nas X Is Bringing The Out Group In

Abstract

Lil Nas X is a gay, Black artist who is succeeding across multiple genres. His first number one hit was a mix of country and trap, including elements of black culture. The second was a mix of hip hop and pop, showcasing elements of queer culture. Lil Nas X is a special case study because he is a Black queer man succeeding in the mainstream. Using ideological criticism I identify that Black pride and gay pride are driving him in his work and public persona. His success pushes against dominant ideologies and forces people who consume mainstream content to acknowledge experiences they may not have been confronted with before. While Lil Nas X is not the first artist to address Black or queer themes in their work he is the first to do so with such a large platform. His work will have lasting impacts on the communities he represents.

Keywords: Lil Nas X, ideology, Black pride, gay pride, pop, hip hop, country, music

About the Author: Stella Swope is a senior Communication and Digital Studies major at the University of Mary Washington. She is interested in the music industry, specifically in music videos and their production.

Introduction

Lil Nas X is black, gay, and here to stay. His rise to fame started when he carved a space for himself in the country music genre as a Black man with his song, “Old Town Road”. More recently, he has been explicitly gay in his music video, “MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)”. Both the songs themselves and their videos contribute to the progress of “out groups” making their way into popular spaces. Lil Nas X being both a Black and gay man is extremely important for representation of diversity in popular media. Even though the responsibility that comes with this can be heavy for a 22 year old to carry, Lil Nas X understands what being himself means for those who can not. While he is not the first artist to have queer themes in their work, he is unlike artists before him because he is expressing himself clearly in both his music and public persona. He is the first mainstream artist to do so.

Lil Nas X first subverted stereotypes in the country music genre as well as pushed boundaries in hip hop and R&B. There is a clear history of homophobia in country, rap and hip hop music that cannot be ignored. By including queer themes in his work he is shifting the possibilities in these genres of music. Lil Nas X’s popularity and success makes him the first person to represent these two big groups of people in the mainstream. In this paper I argue that Lil Nas X is a significant figure making a space for Black and queer people in popular culture through his lyricism and visuals. I use ideological criticism to analyse these two music videos and show how specific themes in his work help Black and queer people become more seen and accepted.

Background

Old Town Road’s first official music video was released July 19th, 2019. The song itself was first independently released December 3rd, 2018. It was rereleased under Columbia Records

on March 22nd, 2019. The song made it onto Billboard's Hot 100 list under both the Country and R&B/Hip Hop genres. However, there was controversy when Billboard took it off the country list because they felt it did not embrace the modern styles of country music enough. Country is a notoriously white dominated genre with continuous gatekeeping (Crosby, 2017). Lil Nas X breaking into the space with a hit song caused controversy among traditional country music fans.

The video itself starts by showing various people in a Black community doing chores, such as watering the lawn and fixing a car. They all have an expression of confusion on their faces. Then, Lil Nas X is seen riding down the street on a horse in a traditional, old west style cowboy outfit. He is playing an outlaw who has suddenly appeared from the past into the modern day version of the old town road. He hops off his horse and interacts with the members of the community. After gaining acceptance, Billy Ray Cyrus pulls up in a red car and Lil Nas X jumps in. They enter a bingo game with white people all wearing cowboy outfits. They all dance a line dance as a group while the chorus plays and Billy Ray Cyrus and Lil Nas X perform on a stage. The video ends with a photoshoot-esque sequence in front of a tapestry with the words "Old Town" and desert scenery.

MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name) was released on March 26th, 2021. It is Lil Nas X's second number one hit after Old Town Road. This video received backlash because of the very explicitly gay, sexual, and satanic imagery that appears. Various public figures took to Twitter to complain about those aspects of the video. Some complaints were about the satanic imagery, claiming that the video glorified hell. Others were bothered by the blatant homoerotic imagery.

The video starts with Lil Nas X doing a voiceover talking about no longer having to hide in shame. He plays every character in the video. First we see him play Adam who is sitting under

a tree playing the guitar. A snake, also played by Lil Nas X, comes and seduces Adam by stunning him and kissing him. Then, he is taken for a trial at the Colosseum where he is judged by other versions of himself in blue Marie Antoinette outfits. Spectators pelt him with butt plugs, one of which hits him in the head and kills him. His glowing body rises toward heaven and an angelic figure is seen in the distance but then a stripper pole appears and he rides it down into hell. Then, he gives Satan a lapdance while wearing underwear and black stripper boots. The video ends with him snapping Satan's neck and stealing his horns, wings appearing and eyes glowing.

Literature Review

“Because of the internet, we are constantly consuming media and popular culture, and since the majority of pop culture is dictated by hip hop, we are continually surrounded by it” (Cooper, 2019). The main messages that are portrayed in hip hop are those of Black masculinity. Several concepts that masculinity is tied to are the collection of material things, being successful breadwinners, and sexualizing women. White people's perceptions of blackness is influenced by media like music videos. Music videos are a powerful source for representation of identities (Balaji, 2009). Artists and music producers are often battling over the ways that an artist is able to represent their work. Typically the latter wins out, and people's artistic visions are not able to emerge. The music industry is dominated by white men and therefore there is concern that they will perpetuate the stereotypes that Black men are aggressive, violent, and dangerous. (Cooper, 2019). Corporations capitalize on this and continue painting Black men as the “other”, benefiting the push toward certain economic and policy decisions (Balaji, 2009).

Black men performing in music, specifically the rap genre, often struggle with double consciousness while trying to build their image. Double consciousness is the way Black people

view themselves through both their own eyes and the eyes of the dominant culture (Randolph, 2006). They have to perform in a way that appeals to both the people they are selling to and the people they are representing. When Lil Nas X came out as gay, many fans reacted negatively because he no longer performed in a way they expected. He experienced homophobia from fans in the country music genre, as well as rap. Rap has also been singled out as a genre with hostility toward men acting feminine in any way (Randolph, 2006). Artists like Jay-Z and Thug Slaughter Force have made comments about rappers like Kanye and Pharell Williams in an effort to control the perception of the Black body in rap and hip-hop. They did this as a way of ensuring the masculine image in hip hop culture was rid of any traces of homosexuality (Penney, 2012). “Hip hop is a performance of Black masculinity and all that it represents” (Cooper, 2019).

Lil Nas X not only goes against the standard of masculinity in rap, but he actually performs queerness in his work. More importantly, he is queer himself. There have been pop stars who are not queer and have had themes of queerness in their work. There is a big difference between being and performing queerness. Being queer means that one internally identifies with a specific label, typically going against the norm. Performing queerness can happen with and without the internal identification, reinforcing how queer people fit into predefined spaces (Parahood, 2020). Unfortunately, being both Black and queer has its complications. Since Black men are already fighting to define themselves in white spaces, there is a habit of othering queer Black men as a way of putting themselves higher in the battle against oppression. (Penney, 2012). In order to survive, minority groups tend to perform in a way that adheres to the norm. “Performing white and playing straight in everyday life is a phenomenon practised by both black and queer peoples” (Adebayo, 2016).

Before Lil Nas X came out, even before he rose to fame, he was suspected to have run a Nicki Minaj fan account. Nicki Minaj is an extremely successful Black woman in the rap genre. She not only uses her own sexuality as a way to empower herself, but she also portrays herself as sexually dominant and aggressive (Cooper, 2019). She pushes against the norms by appearing to perform as both straight and queer, without being defined clearly as either (Shange, 2014). She also uses a unique brand of camp aesthetics, paving her own path because camp has more commonly been associated with white, gay men (McMillan, 2014). Similarly, she breaks that heteronormative mold that is still dominating music. “Although heavily populated by lesbians and gays, the various branches of music have been slow to exhibit any overt opposition to the heteronormative order of things” (Brett, P., Wood, E. & Palombini, C., 2002).

Despite her identifying as straight, there have been female artists that have been able to create positive feelings between being openly queer and having queer themes in their work. Hayley Kiyoko was one of the first queer female artists whose success rose after she came out (Holland, 2020). She is influential by performing in and directing her own videos, effectively changing what the “gaze” can mean in pop music. (Freeman, 2019). Not only is she giving queer people more visibility in popular media, but videos with queer couples are also more likely to have diversity. A study done about diversity in music videos, specifically with queer couples, revealed that videos with queer couples had 30.08% with no diversity. Whereas, the videos with straight couples had 41.29% with no diversity (Holland, 2020).

White people have stolen music from Black people for generations (Morris, 2019). Almost every genre is influenced by musical styles created by Black people. Lil Nas X took trap music and mixed it with country to create something new. “A black kid had not really merged white music with black, he had just taken up the American birthright of cultural synthesis”

(Morris, 2019). His song, Old Town Road, shot to the top of Billboard's Hot 100 Singles chart. He also topped the charts in both the R&B/Hip-Hop and Country genres. Unfortunately, Billboard took his song off the top of the country charts. They claimed that it did not embrace enough elements of current country music to stay on the chart. They did not elaborate, which contributed to the assumption that it was about his race. Though some people reacted negatively and refused to play his song, other artists supported him. White artists, namely Billy Ray Cyrus, performed tributes in support. His verse and vocals for the chorus are featured on a remix of the song and he appears in the music video for the remix (Morris, 2019).

Hip hop is versatile, it is able to be enjoyed by many because it is able to evolve wherever it is. Hip Hop perseveres when people are oppressed. "Hip hop's innovative aesthetics were not created in a vacuum; America's obsession with brand consciousness, antiintellectualism, violence, homophobia, sexism, and materialism all frame hip hop" (Love, 2017). All of those concepts contribute to Hip Hop and they influence many of the artists that perform in this genre. Two former members of the group Odd Future, Frank Ocean and Tyler, The Creator, are an interesting case study as to the ways that queer men are able to express themselves differently and still find success. Where Frank Ocean is soft spoken and more open with sexuality, Tyler, The Creator is more aggressive and has been accused of misogyny and homophobia. However, while they represent it differently, they both push the boundaries of their respective genres because they are both including queer themes in their work (Blanchon, 2020).

Method

To analyse the two music videos I used ideological criticism. Ideological criticism is a method of rhetorical analysis focused on discovering the values and ideologies of a person or organization by reviewing the artifacts they produce. The two ideologies I am coding for are

Black pride and gay pride. The first is a direct opposition to the oppression that Black people face in America. Since Black people have been cut off from knowing their ancestry, being Black in America became an identity and finding pride in that is one of the biggest minority ideologies in the United States. The second is a direct opposition to the oppression that queer people face in America. Gay pride is a more recent ideology that became a more coherent ideology at the Stonewall riot and is characterized by visibility and authenticity to one's sexual and gender experience. I chose this method because I wanted to specifically identify the ways that Lil Nas X's music videos use rhetorical themes relating to both the Black and queer experience. By having specific imagery onscreen he is able to take these experiences and put them into the mainstream, which will be viewed by people who may have never been confronted with these ideas and experiences before.

I watched each video all the way through three times. My first close viewing was to absorb the video and become familiar with the style. On the second viewing I wrote down every choice that felt relevant to the Black or queer experience and culture. The third viewing was to listen closely to the lyrics and write down specific parts of the song that could provide further context. For "Old Town Road" I watched to see how some imagery connected or juxtaposed with other imagery. For "MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)" I looked for references or homages to the Bible.

For "Old Town Road" I was specifically looking for imagery that would showcase Black culture. I paid attention to the lyrics of the song, setting, the character's behaviors, the style of clothes and props, and the activities that characters engaged in. I wanted to see how traditional country imagery would stand out against a modern Black community that Lil Nas X's character was disrupting. I also wanted to see how he ended up being able to fit into the white community

shown in the latter half of the video. For "MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)" I looked for imagery that would showcase queer culture as well as Black culture. I paid attention to the same things as before, but I also kept an eye out for references to the Bible. I looked for biblical imagery because the queer experience is partially defined by the struggle of being seen as inherently full of sin. I looked more closely at the costume design for aspects that would relate to Black culture.

By doing all of this I will be able to narrow down the specific ideologies that I believe Lil Nas X ascribes to. However, since he is representing minority groups I will be looking for both aspects of the Black and queer experience as well as things that might oppress or oppose it. “Ideology, then, is a form of social control exercised by the entire white society to retain its privileges in a system partially sustained by this ideology” (Staples, 1973). Identifying as Black or queer means having to fight against the predominant ideologies that are held by the majority groups, leading minority ideologies to be built on pushing against the norms.

Findings

For "Old Town Road" I looked specifically at the remix featuring Billy Ray Cyrus. I sorted the important parts of the video into six categories titled: lyrics, character behaviors, setting, clothes and props, activities main characters engage in onscreen and activities side characters engage in onscreen. I am looking specifically at how parts of the video could relate to Black culture to narrow down one specific ideology relating to it. I will look for the ways that Black characters act on screen and how Lil Nas X is received by white characters.

Categories	Parts of the Video
Lyrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Ridin’ on a horse, ha / You can whip your Porsche” - “Cowboy hat from Gucci” - “Cheated on my baby / You can go and ask her”

	- “Bull ridin’ and boobies”
Character Behaviors	- Confusion, surprise, slight disgust at Lil Nas X and Billy Ray Cyrus appearing - Later the white characters line dance with Lil Nas X and one white woman looks at him with affection while embracing him
Setting	- Black neighborhood - Super Mall store selling cowboy style clothes - Bingo game with all older white people
Clothes and Props	- A horse - Old style cowboy outfit - Grills and rings - Modern style cowboy outfits
Activities Lil Nas X and Billy Ray Cyrus Engage in Onscreen	- Lil Nas X riding a horse down the street in the middle of a predominantly Black neighborhood - Dismounting and dancing a line dance in the street toward people having a cookout - Beating a car in a street race - Changing outfits in a Super Mall - Billy Ray Cyrus pulls up in front of the store in a Maserati holding a bag of money - Lil Nas X and Billy Ray Cyrus walk into a bingo game with all white people playing - Lil Nas X dances with the people - Lil Nas X hugs a white woman and smiles at the camera
Activities Side Characters Engage in Onscreen	- Black father and son working on their cars - Black woman watering her lawn - Black children playing on a jump rope and scooter - Black people having a cookout and sitting on their porch - A Black girl dancing in the street in response to Lil Nas X dancing at her - Black people gathering for a streetrace between a car and Lil Nas X’s horse - A group of older white people playing bingo with a Black woman calling out the numbers - Everyone doing a line dance - People posing for pictures with each other and Lil Nas X in front of

	a tapestry
--	------------

For the first part of the video Lil Nas X's character is met with confusion and surprise by the Black community that he enters. While the members of the neighborhood are going about their day, doing chores and communing, he is the one acting out of the ordinary. He is out of place because he appears to be from the old west. His outfit of traditional cowboy gear and horse makes him stand out against the modern community he has appeared in. He does a line dance in the street and a girl challenges him in a modern take of an old west stand off. They stand still for a few seconds before she uses modern dance moves to respond to his line dance. The next scene is a street race where Lil Nas X's horse wins. This likely garnered respect from the members of the community.

Then, he emerges from a Super Mall store in a new outfit. The outfit is a modern take on the traditional cowboy outfit we saw before. It includes a grill, rings, and a bigger earring. These are pieces of jewelry more commonly worn by Black people. Billy Ray Cyrus picks up Lil Nas X in a Maserati while holding a bag of money and they drive off. The next scene takes place at a bingo game with all white people playing in cowboy outfits. When they walk through the door everyone turns toward them. Billy Ray Cyrus and Lil Nas X look at each other before taking the stage and singing along to the song. All of the people playing bingo do a line dance and Lil Nas X joins them. The song ends with a sequence of both Black and white people posing in cowboy outfits in front of a tapestry that says "Old Town".

For "MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)" I sorted the important parts of the video into six categories titled: lyrics, character behaviors, setting, clothes and props, activities Lil Nas X's characters engage in onscreen and biblical references. I am looking specifically at what parts of the video will relate to both queer and Black culture. Queer themes popped up most in the lyrics,

character behaviors, props, and choices made by Lil Nas X's main character. The costume choices are most closely aligned with popular and Black culture. The biblical references are influential in how the other characters interacted with the main Lil Nas X.

Categories	Parts of the Video
Lyrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Shoot a child in your mouth while I'm riding" - "Call me by your name" - "I'm not fazed, only here to sin" - "If Eve ain't in your garden, you know that you can" - "Boy" referred to in the pre-chorus - "Tell me you love me in private"
Character Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A phallic looking snake seduces Adam - Marie Antoinette council is judgemental of him - Crowd of people stone him with butt plugs - An angel from heaven floats above him - Satan sits silently while receiving a lap dance from him
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Garden of Eden - Colosseum - Heaven - Hell
Clothes and Props	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adam with locs - Denim pant suits and Marie Antionette style powder wigs - Red braids, Calvin Klein underwear, and black stripper boots - Buttplugs (used for stoning) - Long nails on almost every character
Activities Lil Nas X's Main Character engages in onscreen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plays guitar under a tree singing about falling for someone - Adam kisses the snake - Pulls against his chains while being put on trial - Rides a stripper pole into hell - Gives Satan a lapdance - Kills Satan and takes his horns, turning into a fallen angel
Biblical References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Garden of Eden - Adam, Eve, and the Snake - Heaven and angels

In the beginning of the video Lil Nas X is doing a voiceover talking about how he previously hid in shame but that the place called “Montero” would be a place where he and others could be themselves. “Montero” is his legal first name and represents a younger version of himself who might have benefited from being able to find sanctuary in the place we see onscreen. In the first part of the video Lil Nas X plays both Adam and the snake while in the Garden of Eden. Adam is singing about pining over someone and the snake starts to chase him. When he catches up he uses his third eye to seduce Adam. They kiss and the snake runs its tongue down Adam’s abs.

Then, Lil Nas X’s main character is shown being chained up in the middle of a colosseum. He is being put on trial by other versions of himself wearing jean pant suits and blue Marie Antoinette-esque powder wigs. The spectators in the crowd are jeering at him and throwing butt plugs at him. He is found guilty and a butt plug hits him in the head, killing him. The next scene shows his glowing body rising to heaven to meet an angel. The angel is in silhouette and we are not able to see him clearly because a stripper pole rises from hell and he grabs a hold of it.

His outfit changes into red braids, Calvin Klein underwear, and black thigh high boots. He descends into hell riding on the pole. When he lands in hell he struts through the doors and goes up to Satan. He proceeds to give him a lapdance while performing the song. As he finishes the song he snaps Satan’s neck and pulls the horns off of his head, placing them on his own. As a result of wearing the horns he grows wings and his eyes glow. The screen turns black and that is where the video ends.

Discussion

By showcasing elements of Black and culture in both "Old Town Road" and "MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)" as well as queer culture in the latter, I believe Lil Nas X is driven by two ideologies. The first ideology, Black pride, is showcased in a country song, a genre where it has rarely been seen before. The second ideology, gay pride, is presented unapologetically in a pop song with a mainstream audience. Both of these ideologies are responses to the oppression from dominant ideologies held by the majority group. Lil Nas X is giving visibility to two large minority groups by expressing himself confidently in his music videos. He is able to convey his experiences and who he is to a wide audience, including people who may not be confronted with these ideologies normally.

In the "Old Town Road" music video Lil Nas X's character first enters the Black community as an outsider. However, he was able to be accepted by participating in specific activities, such as dance battles and street races. Once he became a part of that community his outfit changed into a style that blends the classic cowboy style and a more modern version using elements of Black culture. He was also able to find acceptance among the white community by dancing with them, but not changing out of his new outfit. He was able to navigate double consciousness and fit into two communities without losing himself in either.

When it comes to succeeding with country music, Lil Nas X unfortunately struggles to gain acceptance. His performance and success with this song has an effect on how people perceive what is possible in the country genre. By mixing country and trap and having costumes that mix Black and Country aesthetics, he was able to bring Black culture into a space more commonly dominated by white people. Similarly, in hip hop, Lil Nas X fights against a lot of the expectations associated with the genre. While his music is not defined as hip hop, he is still contributing to the public image of Black men, which is a key part of hip hop culture. When he

came out as gay, some of those who had welcomed him before felt betrayed and those who had shunned him felt that they were further justified in keeping him out. Due to his overlapping identities it became difficult for him to find a place in both country and rap/hip hop.

While pop music is slightly more forgiving, the explicitly gay imagery and references in the "MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)" video still received a lot of negative reactions. In "Old Town Road", when Lil Nas X says "Cheated on my baby, You can go and ask her", and "Bull ridin' and boobies", he was adhering to heteronormativity and misogyny to fit in. However, in "MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)" he is talking about a "boy" who is mentioned several times in the song and also says the line, "Shoot a child in your mouth while I'm riding", openly referring to a sexual queer experience. The overarching message in the music video is that a gay man is told he is going to hell but decides he is going to do it his way. He descends into hell on a stripper pole and conquers the very thing that was used to scare and oppress him. An important detail in the video was how the costumes used elements of Black culture. In the beginning of the video his version of Adam is seen with dreadlocks. During the final sequence he has bright red, long braids. Both the Black and queer imagery on screen are vital to his self expression and it appears that his record label did not water his identity down to be more palatable.

This research is significant because, while there has been some research on these kinds of artists, none of them were performing their queerness so publicly in both their life as well as their work. Lil Nas X is mainstream and extremely popular while queer artists usually have smaller followings and are not as successful. While presenting these themes in his work he has, to varying degrees, been ostracized in almost every genre that he engages with. His performances give queer Black men visibility and are pushing against the boundaries that have been placed on how to fit in.

Conclusion

Further research should explore multiple aspects that were touched on in this paper. Firstly, Black artists in the country genre and how they are received by traditional country fans is a topic that has been researched but deserves more attention. Secondly, Black queer artists need a lot more research. White gay men are typically the focus of studies into the LGBTQA+ community, often overlooking how Black queer people experience challenges within their own communities as well as from the world. Lastly, how Black queer people are received by the Black community is a topic that needs more research. By studying Black queer artists there could be more understanding on the intersectionality of those two identities.

Lil Nas X's career has only begun. His confidence and energy in his public persona as well as his work forces people to acknowledge him. By representing these two minority groups so strongly in his work he is giving them visibility as well as contributing to the progress of acceptance. His creative choices and how he expresses himself will have lasting impacts on the music industry as well as the communities he is representing.

Citations

- Adebayo M. (2016) Everything You Know About Queerness You Learnt from Blackness: The Afri-Quia Theatre of Black Dykes, Crips and Kids. In: Campbell A., Farrier S. (eds) Queer Dramaturgies. Contemporary Performance InterActions. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137411846_8
- Balaji, M. (2009). Owing Black Masculinity: The Intersection of Cultural Commodification and Self-Construction in Rap Music Videos. *Communication, Culture and Critique*, Volume 2, Issue 1, Pages 21–38. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-9137.2008.01027.x>
- Blanchon, J. (2020). Representations of Black Queer Masculinity in Contemporary Popular Music: A Close Analysis of Tyler, The Creator and Frank Ocean. Honors Theses. 326. <https://scarab.bates.edu/honorsthesis/326>
- Brett, P., Wood, E. & Palombini, C. (2002). Lesbian and Gay Music. *Electronic Musicology Review*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339390949>
- Cooper, M. (2019). Gender in Hip-Hop. *The Sociological Eye* 2019. (COME BACK TO THIS CITIATION)
- Crosby, E. (2017). Feminine Twang: Rhetorical Strategies of Country Music's Legendary Second Wave Women. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh.
- Freeman, C. (2020). Filming female desire: queering the gaze of pop music videos. *Cultural Studies* 34:6, pages 1007-1032. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09502386.2019.1704039>
- Holland, S. A. (2020). Examining diversity in YouTube music videos with queer women couples from 2006–2019 (Order No. 27831970). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2430063851).

<https://umw.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/examining-diversity-youtube-music-videos-with/docview/2430063851/se-2?accountid=12299>

Love, B. L. (2017). A Ratchet Lens: Black Queer Youth, Agency, Hip Hop, and the Black Ratchet Imagination. *Educational Researcher*, 46(9), 539–547.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X17736520>

McMillan, U. (2014). “Nicki-Aesthetics: The Camp Performance of Nicki Minaj.” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 24 (2014): 79-87.

https://www.academia.edu/11873257/Nicki_aesthetics_the_camp_performance_of_Nicki_Minaj

Morris, W. (2019). Why is Everyone Always Stealing Black Music? *New York Times Magazine*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/music-black-culture-appropriation.html>

Parahoo, R. (2020). Exploring Being Queer and Performing Queerness in Popular Music.

Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository. 7010. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/7010>

Penney, J. (2012). “We Don't Wear Tight Clothes”: Gay Panic and Queer Style in Contemporary Hip Hop. *Popular Music & Society*. 35.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03007766.2011.578517>

Randolph, A. (2006). “Don't Hate Me Because I'm Beautiful": Black Masculinity and Alternative Embodiment in Rap Music. *Race, Gender & Class*, 13(3/4), 200-217.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41675181>

Shange, S. (2014): A king named Nicki: strategic queerness and the black femmecee. *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0740770X.2014.901602>

Staples, R. (1973). Race and Ideology: An Essay in Black Sociology. *Journal of Black Studies*, 3(4), 395-422. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2783853>