



# **WAP**

**AND HOW IT EMBRACES ANACONDA FEMINISM**

**BY COLBY TASSINARI  
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PROFESSOR ELLIS**

So, hip-hop feminism vs anaconda feminism. What even is the difference in their goals?



Hip-hop feminism is against respectability politics, consists of "ratchet respectability", embraces "gray" areas. It challenges patriarchy, homophobia, and misogyny. It is an expression of self, sexuality, and centers black femininity.



Aria Halliday argues that Nicki Minaj's "Anaconda" encourages sexual agency for Black girls through providing a "pinkprint" for finding acceptance and pleasure in Black women's bodies specifically. Halliday also contends that Minaj's provides a platform for finding pleasure in one's sexual experiences through her display of sexuality. Also, Halliday argues that Minaj's "anaconda feminism" provides Black girls a way to envision themselves in the future as fully human, sexual beings.



Minaj conceptualizes a feminism that fights to have pleasure and pain exist side-by-side and she is unafraid to critique the systems that circumscribe Black women's ability to be seen as fully human that is, physically, emotionally, and sexually fulfilled (71).

I would argue that the "WAP" music video, from rappers Meghan Thee Stallion and Cardi B, embodies this form of intersectional feminism that Minaj has conceptualized



To begin, women of color's bodies are embraced in a way that challenges hegemonic norms. The focus on the female body in all the imagery is present throughout and destigmatizes black women's bodies.



Secondly is the focus on female sexual pleasure which corresponds with anaconda feminism.



Thirdly, the video challenges gendered power structures through imagery, dance, and the exclusion of men.





Right from the start, there is a clear embrace for the female body, as shown by the first shot of the fountain outside of the mansion.

The shot following shows a booty and bust on the walls, going along with the theme of displaying physical assets.



Anaconda feminism challenges hegemonic body standards placed on women of color in particular. The video celebrates larger body proportions and Black women's bodies in hiphop (72).



Cardi B and Meg the Stallion are confident in showing off their curvy figures. It encourages an inclusion of all body types in the music industry. It also conveys them displaying their bodies of their own choosing, rather than to please anyone else.



The video's other theme of sexual autonomy is set into full affect with the rappers in a pit with snakes. The innuendo is the same as Minaj's use of the term anaconda.



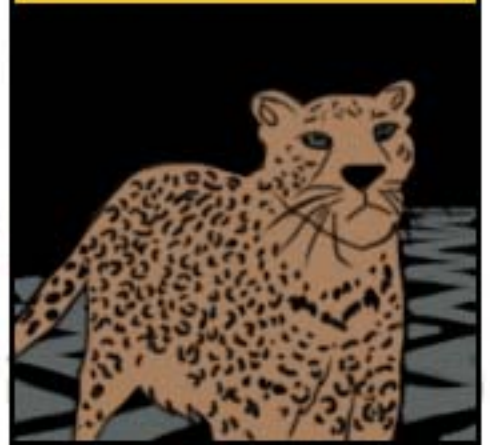
A series of WAP's costumes and shots feature animals/animal prints. This is to portray sex as a natural, more primitive endeavour where the rappers explicit lyrics state what they want to do and done to them.



Just like Minaj's "Anaconda", "WAP" promotes the idea that Black women can control who watches, comments on, and penetrates their bodies (73).



However, the inclusion of fur prints may also be to push back against problematic representations of historically comparing people of color to animals.



The last point is how it challenges patriarchal values by using a female centric perspective and defying sexist expectations. I contend that the video uses of dance and an all female cast to create a space of inclusion and sexual expression. It brings wreck to the idea that Black women's sexuality is only important in the context of Black men's sexual desires (73). The video gives black women the freedom to broaden conversations about sexual pleasure for themselves.



Through "booty dance"....



...the women can explore themselves...

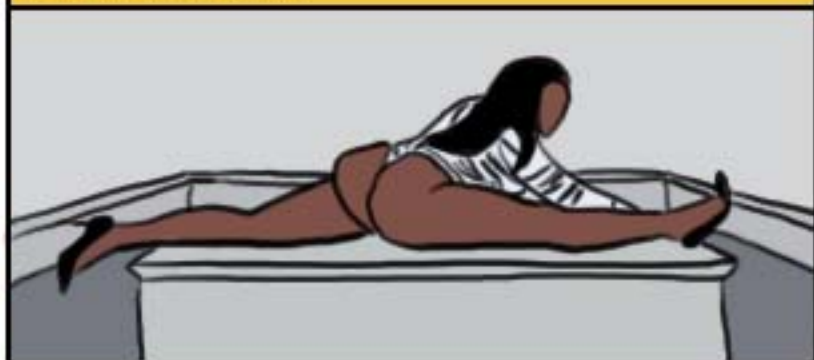
...as beautiful, sexual beings (69).



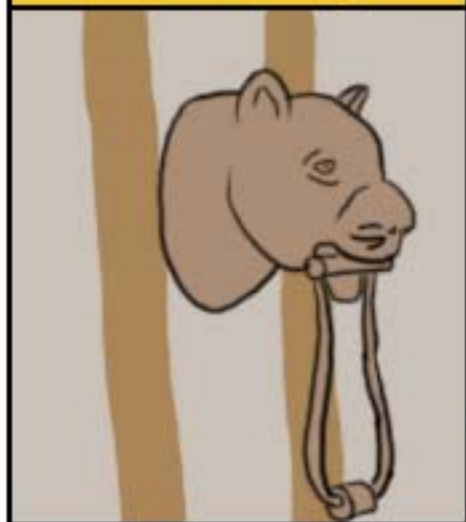
"WAP"'s visuals help bring its message to the surface.



By celebrating larger proportioned women, it challenges the imaginative space that constrains their bodies. Popular culture is actively affecting the way women view themselves, especially black women, and it is positive to see different representations rappers like Cardi B and Meghan Thee Stallion in the media.



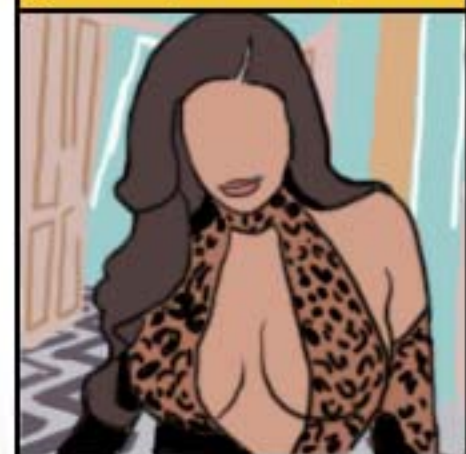
Popular culture also helps women build an understanding of sex and their own sexuality. The video's positive sexual message and images help women understand sex as a natural urge.



Ultimately, the "WAP" music video acts as a counterhegemonic response to larger cultural issues regarding the stigma around black female bodies and sexuality.



Having only women in the video also brings a message of female empowerment.



#### WORKS CITED

Haldy, A.S. (2017). Envisioning black girl futures: Nicki Minaj's anaconda fetishism and new understandings of black sexuality in popular culture. *Departments in Critical Qualitative Research*, Vol 5 (3), pp. 18-77. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/cqr.2017.5.3.68>