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## Rhetorical Construction of Gender: How Women are Portrayed in Popular Music Today.

The way we construct gender today can come from many different places. It can come from societal, family, or cultural norms, and in more recent times it can come from the media. Magazines and television have played a big role in how we perceive and construct gender and now popular music is starting to play a part as well. Being able to understand how we are affected by different types of media is very important because the media is becoming one of our main sources for information. Popular music plays a particularly important role in the way we shape our views because a song on the top of the charts will sell hundreds of thousands of copies and will be played over and over on the radio receiving even more exposure, yet no one cares about the messages that they are spreading to all of the listeners. Nicola Dibben argues in her article, "Representations of Femininity in Popular Music," that music not only has social content but that it can also encourage the listener to adopt a position towards this content (Dibben).

Many rap and hip hop songs are about men using women and having control over them. Others portray women as being property and sex objects or simply show lack of respect for women as human beings. Some songs use derogatory names for women to show subordination or tell stories about how they beat women up to show that men are more powerful. Either way, there are very few rap or hip hop songs that portray women in a positive or respectful way. According to an article in *Brown University Child and Adolescent Behavior Letter*, "Songs are filled with violent, raunchy language, misogynistic allusions, sexual innuendo – sometimes blatant references to lewd sexual acts – and suggestive dancing" (Brown). Strangely enough,

even though these songs say negative things about women, women will still listen to them and support the artist by buying their CDs. If you go to a dance club you will hear these songs being played and you will no doubt see hundreds of women dancing and singing along to these songs that are about having no respect for women. You will sometimes hear a girl shout, "Oh, it's my song!" when one of these songs comes on the radio. It is horrible that we are programmed to be okay with men referring to women in a negative way and acting as if they are so much better than women. Nicola Dibben says that popular music affirms the dominant economic order in such a way that it represses and controls listeners while creating the illusion of freedom and choice (Dibben). It is distressing that this has become the norm. Women can dance to it and sing along to it when it is camouflaged in a good beat. However, I highly doubt that if a man came up and said some of the degrading song lyrics to a woman's face she would have the same reaction. Unfortunately, there are too many songs that would be an excellent example of these degrading lyrics that I am talking about. So instead of talking about many different songs that say many different things, I decided to pick one. This is a very popular song listened to by both men and women and is an excellent example of what I have been talking about. The song is by artist Flo Rida and it is titled, "Right Round".

"Right Round" topped the charts when it came out. It was at number one on February 28<sup>th</sup> 2009 and stayed on the Billboard Hot 100 list for nineteen weeks (Billboard). Many people listened to this song and it was continuously played on the radio and in dance clubs. The fact that you could not go anywhere without hearing this song contributed to its popularity. The song not only topped the Hot 100 list but was also number one on Canadian Hot 100 and Digital Songs, number ten on Rap Songs, number fourteen for Pop Songs, and number sixteen for

Radio Songs (Billboard). According to *Rolling Stone*, Flo Rida is on top, and in record-breaking fashion with "Right Round." In its debut week, "Right Round" was downloaded about 636,000 times, shattering the record Flo Rida himself set in January 2008 when "Low" was purchased (Kreps). This song was heard by many different people and probably affected each of them in a different way. Unfortunately, since this song was so popular everyone who listened to it heard the way women were represented in this song. There has not been much research to support this, but I believe that because of these types of songs, men will start to believe that it is alright to treat and view women in a negative way.

Popular songs have a big impact on the way gender is constructed in our culture. If a song is played over and over and everybody likes it, then it is cool. So therefore, doing what is represented in that song must be cool too. An article in *Brown University Child and Adolescent Behavior Letter* states that, "It forms the background of car rides and social gatherings, and it also informs the adolescent about the adult world through the lens of the artists' lives, language and role modeling" (Brown). For example, if a rapper uses a derogatory term to refer to a woman in his song, chances are other people will start using the same term to refer to women. It could also work in another way; if women are wearing a revealing outfit in a music video then young girls will think that they should be wearing the same kind of clothing. In most songs men are viewed as strong, protective, and in charge while women are viewed as an object, submissive, and disposable. There is rarely a song that talks about a woman having more power than a man. Most songs represent a particular image; usually a man with a lot of money has girls all over him and controls them like he owns them, as if they could not think on their own. Many girls see this type of woman being portrayed and feel as if they need to imitate

that kind of woman in order to be accepted. The fact that a song can control a person's actions and behaviors shows us how the music industry plays a big part in gender construction.

Popular music today has the power to construct the public's view of each gender. In this paper I intend to examine this by analyzing the song "Right Round" by Flo Rida and show how the song portrays each gender, and then decide whether it supports patriarchy, denies patriarchy, or does both. I will argue that this song portrays women as submissive and men as the dominant figure and, by doing this, fully supports patriarchy.

### Context

The artifact that I will be studying is the song "Right Round" by Flo Rida. This song describes a man at a strip club paying a woman to strip for him. Throughout the song you can tell that the woman is viewed merely as an object to the man and he is not paying any attention to anything other than her physical attributes. Another blatant aspect of this song is the man is being overly flashy with his material possessions as if it makes him more of a man because he has money and material items. You can also see this in the music video for this song. In the video Flo Rida is the center of attention and he always has at least one scantily clad woman dancing around him and putting her hands on him.

This song is in the genre of hip hop/rap music, it is three and a half minutes long, and it is about a man who is enthralled by a stripper. This song's chorus is based on the popular 80's song "You Spin Me Round (Like a Record)" by Dead or Alive. "Right Round" took the memorable chorus of the older song and added some new age hip hop to it to make it a hit. But the new song had a completely different message than the old one. The original version was telling a

story about a man who was interested in a woman, but the lyrics showed more respect towards women. The lyrics, “I gotta be your friend now” and, “I set my sights on you and no one else will do” create a whole different tone. These lyrics make the woman the center of attention; she is the one who has control over the man. Whereas, in today’s rap songs the man always has to be “spending money” or “riding in a nice car” all of these things are just showing off in an attempt to make the man more powerful. “Right Round” talks about a man treating a woman like an object and paying her to strip. Throughout the song the man is being flashy with his money, clothes, and cars. These kind of attributes make this song questionable for children to listen to, which could be a problem considering this song’s intended audience.

This song’s audience ranges from fifteen year olds to twenty five year olds, however, I am sure there are younger and older people who listen to his music, but the radio stations that play his genre of music are usually geared to young adults. This age range is a particularly crucial time in a person’s life. You are learning who you are as a person and you are trying to figure out what you should or should not stand for. When you are listening to songs with these lyrics, it could be hard for a young person to distinguish what is right and wrong. When all of the music that is shoved at you through the radio talks about women dressing very revealing and getting attention for their physical looks, and men getting what they want as long as they have money and authority, it is hard to come up with your own sense of what is acceptable and what is not. It makes you wonder if the artists know how much of an influence their songs have on many different people.

The rhetor in this case would be Flo Rida, also known as Tramar Dillard. Born September 17<sup>th</sup> 1979, he was raised by his single mother and grew up with seven sisters in one of the toughest cities in Florida – Carol City. Flo Rida initially received national attention when his first monster single, "Low," exploded seemingly out of nowhere in late 2007. The T-Pain-featured cut, now 4x-platinum, was one of the most heavily rotated rap singles of 2008. Flo Rida went on to receive the People's Choice Award for "Favorite Hip-Hop Song" and an MTV Africa Music Award for "MTV Base Request," as well as landing his first two Grammy nominations for "Best Rap/Sung Collaboration" and "Best Rap Song." *Mail On Sunday* (his first album) went on to go gold in Australia and Canada and established Flo Rida as one of the most versatile MCs to hold the microphone. The worldwide embrace was the culmination of years building his skills and credibility on the underground circuit (Flo Rida). As this shows, Flo Rida is well known and has a lot of clout in the music world. His songs, and their meanings, are heard by many different people in many different countries. That being said, the messages he promotes in his songs get heard by a lot of people with varying views and many artists do not realize fully the impact that their lyrics have on their listeners. With so many young people listening to the popular songs of today it is easy to understand how they are being shaped by the messages and themes brought about by the lyrics. These song's lyrics have the power to shape a person's idea of themselves and the way they view others. By analyzing these songs, it becomes easy to see how popular music can play a part in the way we construct and view the world around us.

### Method

The method I will be using to analyze "Right Round" is feminist criticism. Feminist criticism comes from the feminist movement and the major goal of the feminist movement was

to gain equality for the sexes. There were three waves of feminism which began in the nineteenth century. The first wave was focused on women's suffrage and also dealt with education, marriage laws, and employment. The second wave came about after the Civil Rights movement and focused on ending discrimination of women both in the public and private sphere. The third wave of feminism wanted to combat the inequalities women face as a result of their age, gender, race, social standing, etc. These waves of feminism translate into feminist criticism because they are focused on having women viewed as equals in every aspect of life. And by analyzing an artifact using feminist criticism we are trying to see how the artifact portrays each gender and if there is a sense of equality or not.

Many feminist critics believe that the way gender is constructed in popular culture today is wrong and degrading towards women. Take for example, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, a feminist critic who believes that the way society has defined the different genders is unfair and unequal. She uses our marriage laws as a way to show this inequality by saying, "The core of these [marriage] laws is that spouses have reciprocal- not equal- rights and duties. The husband must maintain the wife and children, but the amount of support beyond subsistence is at his discretion. In return, the wife is legally required to do the domestic chores, provide marital companionship, and sexual consortium but has no claim for direct compensation for any of the services rendered" (Campbell). This shows how distorted the relationship between man and woman is. The way Campbell explains it is that the man is the head of the household and in charge of protecting the family while the woman is supposed to take care of the house and make sure the husband is happy. This is a perfect example of gender roles being constructed with the man in charge and the woman portrayed as a subordinate. Campbell also goes on to



say, “Men are male *humans* whereas women are human *females*, a notion enshrined in the familiar phrase, ‘I now pronounce you man and wife’” (Campbell). This also emphasizes that a man is better than a woman by placing the man before the woman and because they used the term wife instead of woman it implies a sense of ownership.

In another article, *Beauty and the Patriarchal Beast: Gender Role Portrayals in Sitcoms Featuring Mismatched Couples*, we see how feminist criticism can be applied to analyze the messages popular television shows are sending to the viewers and how they are presenting each gender. In this article it talks about how a number of recent situation comedies depict smart, witty, and attractive women who are married to inept, overweight, and immature men. As *New York Times* critic Richard Marin observes, “[A]ll family sitcoms—virtually all sitcoms now— are about a fat guy with a hot wife” (Walsh). By having this type of a marriage portrayed in many popular sitcoms it gives off the idea that men are superior to women because these lazy, overweight men are married to very beautiful and successful women. By depicting this type of marriage it implies that women are less valuable than men because they are supposed to look good, be intelligent, take care of the house, and cater to the man’s needs just so that the man can be lazy and never have to lift a finger. In this article, Bonnie Dow, in her research on gender ideology in television, emphasizes the difficulty of challenging patriarchy on television. Dow explains how—even within sitcoms—hegemonic discursive devices are used to protect the dominant patriarchal ideology that portrays seemingly independent, working women (Walsh). With this information it is easier to understand why sitcoms portray women in a certain way; to maintain the patriarchal ideal. So, although women are sometimes portrayed as beautiful and intelligent in sitcoms, it still supports patriarchy because the woman answers

to the man and although the woman is strong, intelligent, and independent, she still relies on the man.

Another feminist critic, Nicola Dibben, believes that patriarchal construction of femininity which abounds in popular music produces an image in which women are portrayed as simultaneously submissive, innocent and childlike, yet sexually available (Dibben). This goes hand in hand with most of the music being played on the radio today where women are portrayed as sexual objects and unable to function without the help of a man. Another example of this is how women act and dress in music videos. Most of the time women wear barely any clothing and sometimes you see women with young hair do's, like pig-tails, to make them look more innocent while they are wearing a mini skirt and a bikini top which is symbolizing that they are still sexually available. These different looks that women are portraying make them seem needy and incompetent.

Male rappers are notorious for degrading women in their songs and in their music videos. One infamous artist who did this is the rapper, Eminem. In the article, ““Will the Real Slim Shady Please Stand Up?”: Masking Whiteness, Encoding Hegemonic Masculinity in Eminem's Marshall Mathers LP”, author Lindsay R. Calhoun says, “Objectification against women and homophobic lyrics in rap music are part of the musical genre. Hence, Eminem is not the only rap artist to objectify women, encourage rebelling against institutions, or even to invoke homophobia of some kind” (Calhoun). As Calhoun said, this genre of music is known for its negative portrayal of women and its powerful portrayal of men. This form of masculinity and the way these male artists assert power over women is common not only in today's media but in today's society. Calhoun believes that there are five ways in which hegemonic masculinity is constituted in our society: (a) by advancing physical force and control over subjugated bodies (i.e., women); (b) by demonstrating occupational achievement; (c) by instituting

familial patriarchy; (d) by manifesting frontiersmanship; and (e) by performing heterosexuality (Calhoun). All of these methods are seen in popular rap music today. Since portraying masculinity in these ways has become so popular in many aspects of the media, we can start to see some of these aspects become accepted in today's society as well. With this, artists today must adopt a similar view point in order to have their music heard in our male dominated society; even if the artist is female.

In the paper, *Feminism for Stupid Girls: A Feminist Rhetorical Critique of a Popular Song by Pink*, the authors, Marianne Leonardi and Elizabeth Dickinson talk about how patriarchy is established in many popular songs today. They also discuss how each gender is being portrayed in the song when they say, "Females are constructed and portrayed through various negative strategies to be passive, shallow, unengaged, and disempowered creatures. These strategies can be broken down into the following three themes: 1) the alternative terms for 'woman' that are used to negatively label and portray the femme; 2) an idealized construction of females based only on what they should *not* be and how they are marginalized through this negative construction; and 3) characters in the song and video that depict females as stupid sexual objects for men" (Leonardi). With this, they found that the song supports patriarchy by making the woman seem inferior to the man and having the man be a more powerful figure in the song. The most interesting part about this analysis is that the artist in this case is a woman. So, what this article has shown is men are not the only ones who are supporting patriarchy and putting women down, but it is female artists as well. This makes an even bigger statement about the power of popular music today, because if female artist are putting out the same messages as male artists, that women should be inferior to men, then women are supporting this patriarchal view as well. With this, we can see how music can influence our views and beliefs.

Music has the power to shape the way we understand and relate to the world around us. In the article, *Music as Persuasion: Refuting Hegemonic Masculinity in "He Thinks He'll Keep Her,"* the author, Deanna D. Sellnow, argues that, "Music plays a key role in the development and maintenance of attitudes and values held by various groups within the general population" (Sellnow). This shows us how music can influence our thoughts and behaviors due to its persuasive nature. The author goes on to say, "I argue that a musical work communicates dimensions of both verbal content and emotional content simultaneously via lyrics and musical score. Lyrics and score work together to create an illusion of life for the listener that differs from actual daily living in that it is influenced by the artist's perspective" (Sellnow). This shows how much of an influence an artist can have on the people listening to their music. By putting lyrics together with a melody, they have the power to affect the way a person views the world around them.

Another topic that has been important to feminist critics is the idea of a "male gaze" in the media. According to Demetria Shabazz, author of, *Racializing Feminist Film Theory and "the Male Gaze": Images of Black Women in American Cinema*, "The signifier for the male or other within patriarchal culture is woman who is bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning" (Shabazz). This means that the male gaze is viewing a woman from a man's point of view. So, in the film industry, certain scenes are shot from a male perspective; and, in the music world, songs are written from the man's point of view and portray the woman in the way the man wants to see her. With this, women are forced to view many aspects of the media from the male perspective. Shabazz also

states, "The male gaze is not always male, but it is always male-dominated" (Shabazz). What this means is the female viewer has to adopt the male gaze in many situations because of our patriarchal society and the male dominated industry.

One of the reasons that the male gaze is so popular in the media is brought up in the article, "*Chick Flicks*" as *Feminist Texts: The Appropriation of the Male Gaze in Thelma & Louise*, by Brenda Cooper. In this article Cooper explains why the male gaze is dominant in the media by saying, "The dominant male gazes in mainstream Hollywood films reflect and satisfy the male unconscious: most filmmakers are male, thus the voyeuristic gaze of the camera is male; male characters in the film's narratives make women the objects of their gaze; and inevitably, the spectator's gaze reflects the voyeuristic male gazes of the camera and the male actors. The result is film narratives that marginalize women and encourage spectator identification with male protagonists" (Cooper). This explains why the male gaze would be adopted in a male dominated culture and why women must simply accept the male gaze in many aspects of the media that they encounter on a daily basis. The male gaze is important to feminist critics because it supports a patriarchal society by taking the man's point of view in many situations. By doing this it makes the woman seem inferior to the man.

The method I am going to be using for my analysis of the artifact, "Right Round" by the artist Flo Rida, will be feminist criticism. The procedures that go along with this are first identifying how each gender is described or portrayed in the artifact. Then the next step would be to, based on the gender roles that I had found, determine whether the artifact supports patriarchy, denies patriarchy or does both. I expect to find that women are portrayed as inferior to men and that men are portrayed as masculine. I also expect to conclude that this artifact will

support patriarchy. These findings are important to me because I believe the mass media plays a huge role in our construction of gender and that popular music artists need to realize the messages that their songs are sending out to their audience. This information is key because if you take a chart topping song and see how many times it gets played or how many albums were sold you would come up with a pretty large number and this number is directly correlated to the number of people who have heard this song and were affected by its portrayal of gender roles.

### Analysis

In this song the female is viewed as an object that a man can pay for, a sexual object. The lyrics, "Time to get paid, it's maximum wage. That body belong on a poster," imply that the woman is doing things to please the man and in return he will pay her money. So this implies that the woman *needs* the man in order to make money. The second part of these lyrics talks about the woman's body. By doing this it portrays the woman as having no real importance other than her looks. When Flo Rida says her body is so beautiful it should be on a poster, this clearly shows that the woman is only viewed as physically attractive and there is no need to have a good personality or that her beauty could be more than skin deep. The chorus of the song is, "You spin my head right round, right round. When you go down, when you go down down." When the song says, "When you go down" this is very misogynistic because it is insinuating that the woman is sliding down a stripper pole, so the woman being portrayed in this song is being viewed as an object. This effects our construction of gender because it makes women feel as if they need to be sexual in order to be viewed as attractive by a man. The first

part of the chorus says, "You spin my head right round," which implies that when she goes down the pole, that is when she gets his attention. This sends off a message to women that they are expected to act in this type of manner in order for a man to be attracted to them. Also, this implies that women who are understated and reserved do not solicit a man's attention.

Another aspect of the lyrics that affect gender construction are the different terms he uses to describe women. First, he uses "girl" which suggests an innocence or youthfulness. This translates into a woman being immature or in need of a caretaker or provider. "Girl" is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as, "A young or relatively young woman, female child, a prostitute, a female servant, or a young female in a derogatory or offensive way" (Oxford). This use of "girl" shows how the female is viewed as inferior to the man. Also he uses the term "shawty" which is defined as a sexy female (Urban Dictionary<sub>2</sub>). This term also has no representation of a woman's inner beauty or personality, it simply is based on outward appearances. The last word he uses instead of woman is "lil mama" which is defined as a female interest or a female who is fine, caring, and nurturing to their man (Urban Dictionary<sub>1</sub>). Yet again this supports the idea that a woman is supposed to attract a man with her looks but it also goes further to state that she has to be nurturing to her man. This shows us that women are supposed to be subordinates and make sure that the man is content. With all of this information it is easy to see that according to this artifact a woman is supposed to act very sexual to get a man's attention and there is not a lot of value put on a woman's personality or thoughts. It is also implied that a woman should act needy and innocent so that a man can take care of her and be in charge of her.

In this artifact the man is viewed as the controller of women, he is able to pick and choose the women he wants and he has the power to make them do whatever he wants. Throughout the song the male is depicted by using flashy gestures or showing off material items. The lyrics, "I like my jewelry, that's always on gold" show that the amount and quality of jewelry that he has make him more masculine and more attractive. The fact that the artist makes a point to talk about his material possessions in this song shows how these items affect the amount of clout a man has in society. Another part of the song says, "My money loves her like a number one fan, don't look at my mouth, let her talk to my fans, my Benjamin Franklins." These lyrics represent the man and his worth by describing how much money he has. So the man is portrayed as wealthy and able to spend his money as he pleases. This makes the man seem like he belongs to a more elite class than a woman and the man has more worth. Another aspect of these lyrics is that the man does not have to talk to the woman to get her interest, all he has to do is show her how much money he has. The last lyric I want to point out says, "I'm king of the club and I'm wearing the crown, popping these bottles, touching these models, watching their asses go down down." This obviously shows that the man should be viewed as superior, by referring to men as kings it symbolizes ownership and in this case the man not only acts like he owns the club but as if he owns the woman as well. When he says, "Popping these bottles," this implies that he is showing off his wealth again by buying champagne. The lyrics, "Touching these models," demonstrate that since he views himself as the king of the club he obviously believes that due to his status he can do whatever he wants to the women in the club. It is obvious in this artifact that the man is viewed in high regard and the woman is simply an item that the man can win over with material items.



The music video for this song also helps construct gender by portraying the man as the center of attention and the woman as an object meant to entertain the man. The music video for "Right Round" portrays women and men in the same way that the lyrics in the song portray them. The music video starts off by showing the artist, Flo Rida, in the center of a stage being spun around slowly. A female approaches him and begins to dance around him while he seems to be paying no attention to her at all. Then, it switches from close ups of Flo Rida rapping to the woman dancing by herself on a stage. Later in the video, Flo Rida is shown lying on a couch with six girls lying around him. Throughout the music video it cuts back to the scene with the girl dancing around Flo Rida and then it shows close ups of Flo Rida's watches, sunglasses, jewelry, and clothes. As the music video progresses, there are more girls dancing around or behind Flo Rida all the time. The music video also makes a point to show his expensive cars and him drinking alcohol with the women in a club setting. Later in the music video Flo Rida is shown on a stage again without a shirt on showing off his stomach with women dancing behind him.

This music video is obviously portraying Flo Rida as a dominant male figure. The fact that he is shown in the center of a stage with a woman dancing around him shows that women are only considered to be objects to men. Throughout the music video the man is portrayed as more masculine because of his material possessions. The fact that the video made such a point to show the material possessions so many times sends the message that things like cars, jewelry, and money are how men obtain status in today's society. There are many aspects of this video that follow the gender construction used in the song's lyrics. The women in this video are being portrayed as needy, incompetent, and objects that can be used for the male's

pleasure, while the man is being portrayed as dominant, successful, and powerful. This video is a good example of the male gaze because it is shot from a male perspective. When the camera focuses on the women dancing and pans up and down their bodies, the viewer is seeing the women through the male's view point. This video is all about how the man sees himself and how he sees women responding to him. The fact that this video adopts the male gaze makes the man seem superior because it is completely shown from the male's perspective and does not show any aspect of the woman's view point.

After examining the artifact and describing how each gender is portrayed I believe that this artifact supports patriarchy. It is apparent that the male is viewed as having more worth than the female throughout the entire song. Many of the lyrics imply that a woman is only good for entertainment, looks, or pleasure whereas the man is viewed as more powerful than a woman and a provider for a woman. In this artifact it is apparent that the male is perceived to be at the top of the hierarchy and throughout the artifact he continues to reiterate this fact by controlling the woman and making her obey him and viewing her as a possession rather than an equal. The woman's place is clearly below the male because during the entire song the woman has no say in what she is doing and the fact that the entire song is from the male perspective shows that the woman's thoughts and feelings are of no value to the man. Another aspect that shows the artifact supports patriarchy is how the woman is always referred to in a condescending way by being called "girl", "shawty", or "lil mama" while the male is referred to as a "baller" or a "king". This blatant support of patriarchy is unfortunately a constant in popular music today. Over the years there have been more and more derogatory words referring to women put into songs and the popularity of these songs have just amplified the

patriarchal structure in our culture. It is becoming more uncommon to hear a song that talks about a woman in a positive, respectful way which can have an effect on our view of women.

### Conclusion

It has been shown that music and lyrics can affect our views and perceptions. Through lyrics, beat, tempo, and melody, a lens is created through which we can view the world and find a voice that reflects lived experience. With the influential power of music it is only natural that it can both positively and negatively affect us (Lionardi). Although it is possible to positively affect us it is unfortunate that the popular music of today tends to support patriarchy and portrays women in a negative light. In analyzing the song "Right Round" by Flo Rida I have found that, through the lyrics, women are perceived to be immature, sexually available, and dependent on men. Whereas the male figure in this song is made out to be wealthy, dominant, and self-sufficient. These images combine to show a clear support for patriarchy.

All of these aspects play a role in gender construction because when a song is portraying these different roles and it is getting played on the radio numerous times and it is on the top of all the music charts then that means a lot of people are listening to this song and either consciously or subconsciously being affected by it. When most of the songs that are being played use degrading names for women and represent women as being disposable and sexual then most women will begin to believe that is the way they must act, not only in order to gain a man's attention or interest, but to be accepted as a woman. On the flip side when men are depicted as being macho and chauvinistic other men listening to the music will start to believe that that is what defines a man and those are the gender roles he should adopt.

These findings can contribute to a more accurate gender construction, because in realizing the huge role that popular music plays in our construction of gender it will be easier to accept more accurate gender roles. If more women understand how they are being affected by what women wear in music videos and how women are treated or viewed in song lyrics then they will realize that those specific gender roles are inaccurate and unnecessary. Also, once men realize that a typical man does not view or treat women like it is portrayed in the music industry they will stop imitating this type of alpha male. With this, we could have a more accurate gender construction of male and female.

This can carry over into rhetorical practice because once people realize how the media is affecting them they will be more aware of how their gender is being portrayed in a song. This draws on a point that I brought up earlier in the paper, that even though the songs portray women in a negative way some women still choose to listen to them. In doing this they are increasing the popularity of the song and at the same time reinforcing those gender roles established in the song. Hopefully, more people will take gender construction in popular music more seriously because most women who listen to this type of music do not think that the degrading names and poor treatment of women has anything to do with them when in fact it is dictating the ways they are expected to act. If more people realize the way their gender is being portrayed then it would be easier for people to implement it into rhetorical practice either by ignoring gender roles that are not reasonable or by creating a more plausible set of gender roles to follow.

In conclusion, the lyrics of songs have a great deal of influence on the ways gender is constructed. Popular music today can easily change the way men and women are viewed. By

maintaining impractical gender roles music has played a huge part in the acceptance of a patriarchal society. Many lyrics have defined women as sexual and submissive while portraying men as dominant and strong. People need to become more aware of the ideas and meanings that their lyrics contain. If popular artists wrote songs that depicted a more realistic portrayal of gender roles then it would be easier for both men and women to embrace these roles.

**Appendix A**

**Right Round Lyrics**

[CHORUS]

You spin my head right round, right round  
When you go down, when you go down down...  
You spin my head right round, right round  
When you go down, when you go down down...

Hey! Hopped out of that house with my swagger  
Hop in that with girl, I got places to go!  
People to see, time is precious  
I look at my crowd and they out of control  
Just like my mind where I'm going  
No women, no shorties, no nothin but clothes  
No stoppin now, my parolees on role  
I like my jewlrey, that's always on gold  
I know the storm is comin  
my pockets keep tellin me it's gonna shower  
Call up my homies that's home  
Then pop in the night cuz it's meant to be ours  
We keep a fade away shot cuz we ballin  
it's platinum patrone that be ours  
Lil mama, I owe you just like the flowers  
Girl you to drink with all that and power clubs

[CHORUS]

From the top of the pole I watch her go down  
She got me throwin my money around  
Ain't nothin more beautiful to be found  
It's goin down down...  
From the top of the pole I watch her go down  
She got me throwin my money around  
Ain't nothin more beautiful to be found  
It's goin down down...

Hey! Shawty must know I'm not playin  
My money love her like a numba one fan  
Don't look at my mouth, let her talk to my fans  
My Benjamin Franklins...

A couple of grands, I got rubberbands  
My paper planes makin a dance  
Get dirty all night, that's part of my thing  
Keep building castles that's made out of sand  
She's amazing, the fire blazing  
Hotter than cajun  
Girl won't you move a lil closer?  
Time to get paid, it's maximum wage  
That body belong on a poster  
I'm in a daze, that bottom is wavin' at me  
Like damnit I know you  
You wanna show like a gun out of holster  
Tell me whatever and I'll be your roper cuz...

[CHORUS]

From the top of the pole I watch her go down  
She got me throwin my money around  
Ain't nothin more beautiful to be found

It's goin down down...

From the top of the pole I watch her go down  
She got me throwin my money around  
Ain't nothin more beautiful to be found

It's goin down down...

Yeah! I'm spendin' my money  
I'm out of control  
Somebody help me

She's takin' my bank roll.  
But I'm king of the club  
And I'm wearin' the crown  
Poppin' these bottles  
Touchin' these models

Watchin' they asses go down, down....(echo)

[CHORUS]

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