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**Portfolio Reflection**

During this assignment, I have been informed upon why artist change their persona throughout their career to fit into their respective molds. I also learned that society creates norms and labels that heavily effect what persona an artist chooses to take on, and these personas differentiate them in different ways. Through analyzing Thugs, Black Divas, and Gendered Aspirations, I learned that labels are consistent across context and definition.

Before I started this assignment, I viewed many rap artists with the same eye, that they were all thugs and wanted sex, money, and drugs. However, this is what the artists want the public to think because it sells, and so they have to constantly be worried about the public persona they construct. Kanye West and Nicki Minaj are the staples for challenging these norms by openly expressing themselves, and rise among the question of “When and why did the “thug” norm become instilled in hip-hop culture?”

The pressure of complying with the female MC norm is driving them away due to the expressive sexuality. The thug persona instilled on a male MC keeps diversity away from lyrics, and rappers fit a mold to become mainstream. Without these norms, homosexual, female, and “soft” artists could share the mainstream light with the “thugs” and the “bad bitches”.

Many questions arose from this newfound knowledge. “Whom defines cultural labels?” Also, “If these norms were challenged by every artist, would they disappear?”