

## PLAYED: How Music and Tech Grooms Violence Against Black Girls Online

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Session chair: Nikki Moran (Music, University of Edinburgh)

Abstract: When we search for and discover rap artists on YouTube (the number one music discovery channel on the web and the number one destination for kids) or on TikTok, we rarely think our views as users are complicit in the sexual grooming of girls in their intimate bedroom musical play. We rarely consider that we are participants orchestrating that violence, and until we notice it, we can't stop.

This talk unpacks the role that music and tech plays in the way that girls turn up to patriarchal violence and anti-Black sexism, and explains how we can understand these processes as an ecological threat of violence.

When music and tech broadcast the idea of persons labeled as bitch, female (which is an adjective not a noun), dyke, trans, or THOT (the acronym for "that ho over there"), it is not only anti-Black sexism and misogyny, it is psychological and linguistic violence! It tells audiences that those persons should not be taken seriously. We blame the victims and not the climate of air / noise pollution socializing their silence nor the technology enabling it.

Tween twerking content is situated at the intersection of music monetization, algorithmic search recommendations, sexually-objectifying comments, and online sexual enticement tactics. Black and Brown girls have been growing up and drowning in anti-Black misogynistic musical mansplaining. Participation is central to how we can understand what's going on with Black girls online, both in negative terms of marginalisation, but also in terms of imagining solutions: if online Black girls wrote their own twerk songs rather than merely driving attention to the most viral songs on YouTube or TikTok, they could break the Internet in music and tech.

It is critical to understand that full control or independence over one's body or voice is a trap, or a patriarchal illusion, because twerking online is never a solo act.

Respondents: **Kyung Myun Lee**, KAIST (Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology) | **Maiko Kawabata**, Royal College of Music and Open University, UK.