

**DECADES OF MASCULINITY DYNAMIC PORTRAYAL
IN R&B MUSIC**



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**LETTER OF AGREEMENT
UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**

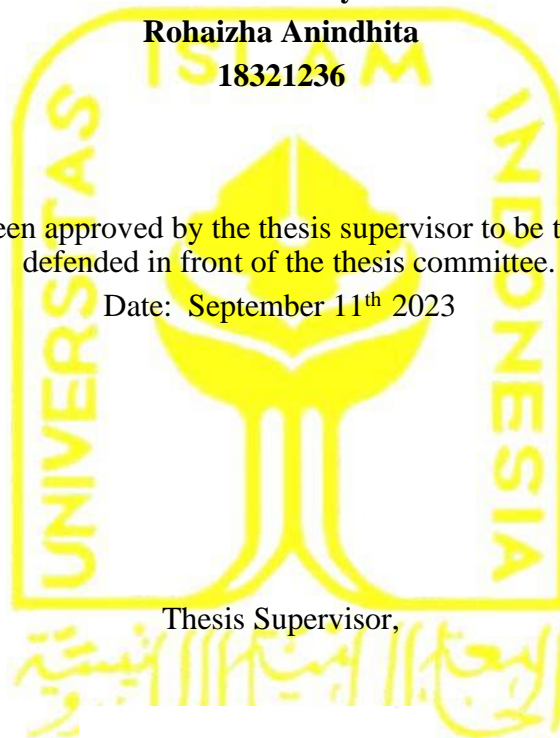
**DECADES OF MASCULINITY DYNAMIC PORTRAYAL
IN R&B MUSIC**

Written by

**Rohaizha Anindhita
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It has been approved by the thesis supervisor to be tested and defended in front of the thesis committee.

Date: September 11th 2023



Thesis Supervisor,

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**STATEMENT OF ETHICAL CLEARANCE UNDERGRADUATE
THESIS**

**DECADES OF MASCULINITY DYNAMIC PORTRAYAL
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It has been defended and has been validated by the Thesis Committee of Communication
Science Department in Faculty of Psychology and Social-Cultural Science Islamic
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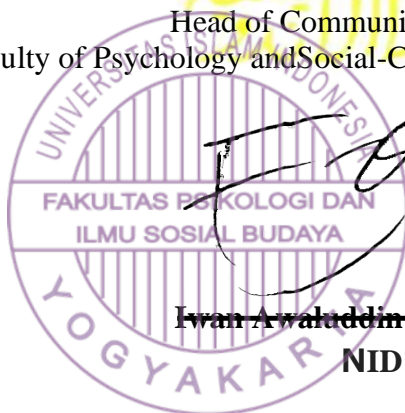
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STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC ETHICS

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Signing below, I:

Name : **Rohaizha Anindhita**
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In this letter I stated:

1. During the process of accomplishing this thesis research, the researcher did not perform academic fraud in any kind of form, such as plagiarism, involving others in making the thesis, or any kind of violations that contradict the academic ethics highly upheld by the Islamic University of Indonesia.
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Hence this statement is sincere

Yogyakarta, September 10th 2023
Stating,



(Rohaizha Anindhita)
18321236

MOTTO

Do it from the heart; soon, it will align.

Another taken from one of my favorite books by Mitch Albom:

Life is a series of *tension of opposites*. Don't wait!

FOREWORD

Alhamdulillahil'alamin, all the praise Allah SWT for His blessing and endless grace and gifts. Shalawat and greetings are always offered to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, a role model and perfecter of Islamic religious teachings to become rahmatan lil' allamin.

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9. All of those who are involved in completing the final assignment that cannot be mentioned name by name.

Therefore, the study has room to grow more profound, and I expect constructive criticism and suggestions regarding the thesis from all parties.

Yogyakarta,
September 11th 2023



Rohaizha Anindhita

ABSTRACT

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Sexual signification traits are combined and presented distinctively in particular genres and contexts (Björck, 2011). To this day, the masculinity culture in R&B portrays a concept against femininity of highly sexualized manhood (Dhaenens & Ridder, 2014). The study analyzes how R&B music portrays masculinity dynamics in four different decades using the semiotics approach by Roland Barthes and a critical paradigm in understanding the complexity of the 'real world' environment. With purposive sampling, the selected samples are Get A Job by The Silhouettes (1958), I Wanna Know by Joe (2000), OMG by Usher featuring Will.I.Am (2010), and Blinding Lights by The Weeknd (2020). The sample selected is R&B or Doo Woop genre, sung by black male artists, ranked in the top 10 Billboard Hot 100 Singles Year-End, and released within the selected decades. The study shows a fluctuation in the masculinity portrayal in 1958, 2000, 2010, and 2020. The hegemonic structure can become less hierarchical and allows other forms of masculinity to be adapted by men. Although some non-hegemonic embodiment was tolerable at the end of the 20th century, public consumption in popular music in the 21st century remained grounded on hegemonic masculinity, disregarding race.

Keywords: *hegemonic masculinity, R&B, masculinity portrayal, popular music, semiotics, Billboard Hot 100 Year-End, popular music, public consumption*

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Rhythm and Blues, or R&B, emerged from the African-American expressive culture in the 1900s. According to its time frame, the genre has undergone a complex development of many experiences. From the legally sanctioned racial segregation, international conflicts, and civil rights problems (Vild, 2021). Due to its broad experiences, the genre was soon identified as 'race music.' The genre contains a songwriting expression related to the community of African Americans experienced explicitly from the migrations of African Americans into urban society between World War I, World War II, and the civil rights movement. Throughout 1916-1930, African-American music began transitioning into the urban environment and marketplace. The genre is accepted in the music market, where it is categorized as *race records*. Only soon after, the name was replaced by Jerry Wexler into Rhythm and Blues in the 1950s (Rittenbach, 2018). In the development of R&B, African-American artists picked stylistic elements for the genre identity, including rhythmic dives concerning African-American empowerment. A genre that talks about marginalization, exclusion, resistance, and resilience (Puryear, 2016).

The success of R&B music caught the youth's attention, and it managed to affect the changes of racial issues in American society through music. For this reason, R&B artists begin to address issues beyond interpersonal and group intimacy. The social situation changes within the genre, backing up the idea that popular music displays a mirrored attitude against its imminent form (Dibben, 1999). As part of mass media, popular music has contributed to representing gender and sexuality. One of the songwriting topics found

to be popularised is contributing around sexual signification traits, distinctively in particular genres and contexts (Björck, 2011). In its development in the mainstream media, the depiction of gender and sexual signification in R&B and Hip Hop portrayed a concept against femininity that is shown to preserve the idea of highly sexualized manhood (Dhaenens & Ridder, 2014). The concept is subconsciously implied in song messages regarding manhood and masculinity related to social life, sexuality, and society worldview, which is slightly far from a mere passive pleasure (Chiweshe & Bhatasara, 2013; Bennet, 2005).

Focusing on gender-specific content, masculinity portrayal in R&B music is connected with the contemporary society affected by cultural, historical, and geographical display based on music genre and historical period (Avery et al., 2016; Cooper, 1985). Masculinity is a concept of social behavior, language, and practices applied to men in a particular society's culture (Fauzi, 2021). The explanation of the masculinity dynamic is included within a theory by Connell in his gender order theory, revealing masculinity and gender relations based on four masculinity patterns: *hegemony, subordination, complicity, and marginalization*. (Drianus, 2019). Relating to the genre and its racial background, the masculine embodiment focuses on Hegemonic Masculinity as a man's successful quality at a particular time and place is defined by hegemonic masculinity (Beynon, 2002; Kimmel, 1994; Connell, 1995). The explanation explains that masculinity is fluid and capable of changing throughout time as a dynamic. It is why additional masculinity theories, such as Subordinate Masculinity and Inclusive Masculinity Theory, are included to represent the depiction of cultural changes and race relations on R&B genre development by society consumption.

The media display men with hypermasculinity expressed with aggression, sexual ability, and emotional stoicism. The authenticity put the performer in a notion of their performance to 'keep it real' in representing the African American identity. The depiction set a standard on men's characteristics within society. The characteristic will become hegemonic when a dominant gender within the society's culture agrees. Hence, the research subject is taken from four decades of popular music in the R&B genre to show the dynamics. The research sample is taken from a music musical chart named Billboard as US popular music as a primary source of trend and innovation (Billboard, 2011). The chart category used in presenting the selected sample is taken from The Billboard Hot 100 Singles Year-End musical chart, which contains various popular music genres, including R&B. The samples are The Silhouettes (1958), I Wanna Know by Joe (2000), OMG by Usher featuring Will.I.Am (2010), and Blinding Lights by The Weeknd (2020).

The selected sample is later examined with the Semiotic approach by Roland Barthes through signs, denotative, connotations, and myth. His theory focuses on two significant steps, which are denotation and connotation. Denotation produces an explicit, direct, and specific means of description. Denotation refers to the reality that is socially agreed on. In Barthes's point of view, the connotation is the sign that the signifier has implicit, indirect, and uncertain means, while connotation is open to new understandings. Myth is a message in the communication system he considers a type *of speech*. Myth is a development of previous connotations that have long formed in society. It is also a sign pattern defined by human or semiology systems. By combining connotative and denotative markers, Barthes emphasizes the text's interaction with personal experience and the culture the person follows. The theory is then landed with a critical paradigm in understanding the complexity of the 'real world' environment. The realms individuals construct in intangible reality are ontology

constructivism (Umanilo, 2020). The methodology is expected to present the semiotic explanation of the masculinity dynamic in R&B music as mass media in different time ranges, reflecting public consumption and lifestyles geographically.

B. Research Question

How has the decades of R&B music sung by male artists portrayed the dynamic of masculinity in 1958, 2000, 2010, and 2020?

C. Research Objectivity

The research proposed to analyze how R&B music portrays the dynamic of masculinity in four different decades using the semiotics approach by Roland Barthes. The four samples is selected by purposive sampling with criteria such as R&B or Doo Woop genre, sung by black male artists, ranked in the top 10 on Billboard Hot 100 Singles Year-End, and the song released within the selected decades. The samples are Get A Job by The Silhouettes (1958), I Wanna Know by Joe (2000), OMG by Usher featuring Will.I.Am (2010), and Blinding Lights by The Weeknd (2020).

The semiotic methodology examines the lyrical understanding of the four samples by using language style, grammar, and song narrative. Semiotics in this research will enable further understanding of masculinity portrayal based on the time and place where the consumption of each sample occurred.

D. Research Benefit

1. Academic Benefit

The topic of Hip Hop and R&B culture is on the rise when it comes to semantic context and its relation to gender studies. Most are focusing on Hip Hop and less on R&B. The research aims to serve as a reference for future gender studies in communication and expand the use of semiotic and cultural approaches to musical topics. The research aimed to bring awareness and broader ideas on masculinity and culture within the popular musical genre and how it affects community decision-making on media consumption.

2. Social Benefit

The expected benefit of the research is to raise public awareness in understanding gender issues, exactly masculinity matters, which most societies avoid discussing the topics as a part of social expression. It also offers perspectives on marginalized genders and sexuality referring to masculinity in R&B and black men that are inflexible and oppressive, to then able to express masculinity outside the traditional form.

E. Theoretical Framework

1. Previous Research

a. Tuning Gender: Representations of Femininity and Masculinity in Popular Music by Black Artists

A research article written by Avery, Ward, Moss, et al., in 2016. The research discusses gender message in contemporary music using systematic content analysis on 527 top songs by black artists from 1990 to 2010. The results link music exposure and gender development of Black Youth. The similarity found with this research is finding gender messages based on genre and time period that correlate with hegemonic masculinity. The paper is not only focusing on one sexual

representation in the music genre but two sexual representations (hypermasculine and hyperfeminine).

b. *'Ndezve Varume Izvi'1: Hegemonic Masculinities and Misogyny in Popular Music in Zimbabwe*

A research article written by Chiweshe and Bhatasara (2015) is mainly talks about how hegemonic masculinities and misogyny are normalized or 'natural' in Zimbabwe's popular music. The research shows how the message in the music portrayed in the songs reflects how young males and females in Zimbabwe grow up with sexual stereotypes. The similarity that is able to be found in the research is the method that uses hegemonic masculinity and semiotics in completing the research. The difference found within the paper highlights the misogynistic element that is dominating the Zimbabwe music industry.

c. *Hegemonic Masculinity in Hip-Hop Music? The difference in Brand Mention in Rap Music Based on the Rapper's Gender*

A research article written by Baksh & Callison (2015) discusses a significant difference in the number of product and brand mentions based on artist gender using hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical perspective. The paper found that women are being underrepresented compared to men in hip-hop. The visible difference to this research is the use of hegemonic masculinity in measuring unfair gender roles in hip-hop music. The similarity is the use of media in representing sexual characteristics within the music lyrics.

d. Resistant masculinities in alternative R&B? Understanding Frank Ocean and The Weeknd's

Paperwork is done by Frederk Dhaenens and Sander De Ridder (2015) about representations of gender. The paper article specifically discusses the emergence of the sub-genres of alternative R&B culture to alternative masculinity. Qualitative textual analysis is done within the study to show the representation of gender in defying normative masculine identities.

e. Typologies of Black Male Sensitivity in R&B and Hip Hop

A study by Cassandra Chaney and Krista D. Mincey is a qualitative content analysis of 79 R&B and Hip Hop songs lyric from 1956-2013. The analysis was conducted to reveal Black male sensitivity in R&B and Hip Hop, particularly in a romantic theme song. The results are that public sensitivity is demonstrated by Black men as a form of tears while being conscious of society's expectation that men supposedly suppress emotion, and refrain from crying.

f. Representations of Femininity in Popular Music

A research paper by Nicola Dibben (1999) discusses the musical narrative with two music approaches; music as material social forces which are structured into reading subject and text, and other text is re-written within practices of everyday life. It also questions how the representation of a particular music system constructs gendered subjectivities. The theory used in the research is Semiotics and Adornian critical theory to analyze how music encourages the listener to adopt possible interpretations and implications towards social content. The subject is what makes this research paper dissimilar, although it discusses music and gender.

2. Theory

a. Masculinity Embodiment

1) Hegemonic Masculinity Theory (HMT): Class Race and Masculinity

Hegemonic Masculinity Theory (HMT) emerged in 1987 to explore patriarchal accounts of power dynamics among men and women in North America. The concept evolves from Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony, defined as a social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extend beyond brute power into the organization of private life and cultural process. HMT professes that masculinity traits are socially less prevalent within a given society, and hegemonic or idealized masculinity will linger (Dei-Sharpe, 2019; Connell, 1987, 1995, 2005). The theory of hegemonic masculinity is derived from the typical white hegemonic man who displays hypermasculine characteristics, including sexual power, aggression, heterosexuality, emotional stoicism, and socioeconomic influence.

Hegemonic representations express cultural norms and define a man's quality in a particular time and space. The variety of hegemonic representations is seen as a cultural expression. Representing hegemonic varieties defines man's quality in a particular time and space (Beynon, 2002; Kimmel, 1994; Connell, 1995). Due to the explanation, hegemonic masculinity as part of gender order theory is affected by the culture and time it occurred. The theory encounters patterns that identify hegemonic masculinity as fluid and capable of changing over time. The dynamics within Connell's gender order theory are separated into four behavioral patterns: hegemony, subordinate, complicit, and marginalized. The theory that remains commonly found in men's

characteristics is Hegemonic Masculinity, which is proposed through power class as a crucial factor in ideological struggles, contesting the sense of masculinity. The contemporary representation of masculine expression is not openly welcome with how hegemonic masculinity was defined originally. The contemporary representation displays the body as an important component of hegemonic masculinity. Hanke (1992), quoted from Beynon (2002), mentions “Television contributes to this through its images, plots, and narratives”. Media represents male toys such as cars, guns, and relationships between men to become one with our general consciousness of hegemonic masculinity, which is assumed to be ‘normal’ in current society.

2) Black Masculinity as Subordinate in History

CSMM solely focuses on gender and uncritical investigation of race, which explains that the study has no intention to essentialize the marginal position of black men perpetuating racial prejudice. The framing begins in the 18th century with sex and race, but the roots can be taken back to the 15th century through the transatlantic slave trade. The black African American was transported as cargo to the West, labelled as uncivilized, uneducated animals. Black men are demonized as hypersexual and violent brutes because of their more incredible physicality than white males. Unfortunately, the Enlightenment thinkers continued labelling black men as subordinate to legitimize white male dominance. The false assertions that black men are innately hypersexual, genetically inferior beings with small brain sizes and lacking in evolution (Smedley, 2007). This lens depicting black men includes many characteristics of the hegemonic man within HMT, such as aggression, sexual ability, and emotional stoicism.

Black men are considered members of the marginalized group striving yet unable to achieve hegemony because of their lack of racialized whiteness (Dei-Sharpe, 2019). In the updated version of HMT, Connells argues that black men can adopt 'protest masculinity' to face white hegemony. Though the notion is intended for the marginalized, it puts black men through racially biased traits celebrated by the white men and the perpetual practice of the subordinates due to their socio-economic status. The Manhood Acts Theory (MAT) also adopts a similar approach. The need to present assertive behavior and resist control at women's expense indicates a man in a dominant and privileged position in the eyes of society (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009, pp. 288-289). These reasons put black men as dominant members of the poor working class, with an unlikely chance to perform a successful manhood act. The position of black men continues with an exaggerated expression of aggression and illegitimate methods of creating an acceptable masculine persona (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009, p. 186).

b. Non Hegemonic Embodiment

1) Inclusive Masculinity Theory

IMT emerges from the inclusivity of men's heterosexual behavior in peer groups in the UK, the US, and other Western countries. Meanwhile, the theory is deeply connected to homo hysteria behavior associated with the fear of being socially perceived as gay. The concept has become the central theme of IMT since it is the core explanation of social changes. In a way, homophobic behavior is regulated only in a setting where the homohysterical concept occurs. In homohysterical cultures, the behavior of men is restricted, stratified, and hierarchically by one hegemonic form of masculinity

defined exaggeratedly by culture. This theory defies how the intra-masculine hierarchical structure adapted before as how boys and men aspire to become one hegemonic archetype of masculinity rewarded with the most social capital (Cleland, 2013).

The evident changes in men's gendered behavior are not fleeting but show the fundamental shifts in the practice of masculinities. The social changes IMT offers are a variance between cultures and generations. It has come as a contribution where men's behavior is affected by social trends along with the decrease in homophobic behavior. Thus, the theory argues that profound changes in masculinities become less hierarchical and allow diverse forms of masculinity to be evenly esteemed (Cleland, 2013).

c. Black Man and Media

Black men's racial perspective has constantly been misrepresented through the decades in the United States. The issue also affected black music recognition, a major achievement in the mainstream industry. In the 19th, people celebrated black music but also scarred their musical identification. The energy and pride of black music, such as jazz and blues in the 20th century, continue to receive racial stereotypes involving blacks and music (New York Times, 1988).

1) The Portrayal of Black Masculinity as Subordinate in Media

The contemporary African-American culture has distinct values dating back to slavery. The abolishment of slavery in the United States caused black men to become disabled by the social systemic constraints such as unjust criminalization and acts of violence by the ideology of black brutes that posed a threat to society. This irrational

fear also adds to the false belief that the freed black slave people would conduct psychopathic revenge, sexually mutilating and impurifying white women (Sharpe, 2019). The historical problem of black men's representation continues in the media.

Racial stereotyping of black people on social networks is not new (Kumah-Abiwu, 2020; Entman & Rojecki, 2000). The negative label attached to black men focuses on the issues of poverty, powerlessness, academic underachievement, and incarceration (Abiwu, 2020). These images render the black middle class to become invisible and reduce blackness merely to pejorative categories. Such descriptions of black masculinity are problematic for media consumers and emasculating for black folks. This could lead the viewers to view the image of blackness as a problem and whiteness as ideal. The idea correlates to social imagery, which not only shapes the generation's cognitive reality or perceived reality but it also remains to become a tool for social domination, economic exploitation, and political disenfranchisement are sedimented (Kumah-Abiwu, 2020; Howard et al., 2012, p. 85).

F. Methodology

1. Research Paradigm

The research is to figure out the cultural changes within a society. Since gender is fluid, hegemonic masculinity is the dominant gender expression widely accepted in different time ranges. The subject of the research uses music as a medium to represent hegemonic masculinities in different time eras. As mass media, music can reflect public reception, current consumption, and alternative lifestyles geographically. The appliance on critical paradigm is suitable for understanding the complexity of the 'real world' environment.

The variety of realms constructed by individuals, as well as the implication of the construction, is being learned in constructivism. Each individual has a unique experience, and their perspective is valid. The assumption of constructivism in ontology is taken for its belief in intangible reality factors that people construct. A personal construct and mind-dependent is what is defined as ontology. Reality is limited to context, space, time, and individuals or groups in a given situation and cannot be generalized into a single common sense (Umanilo, 2020).

2. Type of Method

a. Qualitative Research

Research methods are an essential factor in conducting research, as they provide a scientific approach to gathering data for specific purposes and applications. The research method is a systematic effort to explore, develop, and verify knowledge using scientific techniques. Therefore, the selection of an appropriate research method is crucial to the success of any research endeavour. According to the approach and the data appliance within the research, it is intended by the researcher to apply qualitative research method to be able to deeper elaborate the future findings.

Qualitative research is a powerful tool for gaining insight into the viewpoints of individuals and groups on social or human problems, as emphasized by Creswell (2013). The final report of a qualitative study is designed to be flexible, allowing for a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of the issue at hand. By adopting an inductive approach that prioritizes individual interpretations, this research method can help to shed light on the complexities of the problem and provide valuable insights for decision-making.

b. Semiotics by Roland Barthes

Barthes's theory on semiotics associates sign elements by identifying *signified* and *signifiers* and seeing signs through ideology aspects adopted by a culture. His semiotics are also pragmatic, studying signs (*Thing*) and connections with their users (*Humanity*). His theory focuses on two significant steps, which are denotation and connotation. Denotation produces an explicit, direct, and certain means of description. Denotation literally refers to the reality that is socially agreed on. The connotation in Barthes's point of view is the sign in which the signifier has implicit, indirect, and uncertain means while connotation is open to new understandings.

Denotation is the first level of the signifier system, and the second level is where the connotative is identical to '*Mythologies*' (Vera, 2014: 28). Myths is a message in the communication system he considers to be a type of *speech*. Myth is a development of previous connotations that have long formed in society. It is also a sign pattern defined by human or semiology systems. Barthes placed ideology alongside myth due to both relationships between connotative and denotative markers occurring in a motivated manner. Connotation is demonstrated in text form as a cultural expression, which ideology also has to demonstrate implicitly in the form of codes through texts. The form of markers and critical markers such as point of view, background, and others. Barthes implies in his concept that connotative signs have an added meaning and the combination of two denotatives, which underlines its existence. This completes Saussure's understanding of semiotics that stop on a denotative level. Barthes emphasizes the text's interaction with personal experience and the culture the person follows. Therefore, denotative, connotative, and myth are implied and direct meanings according to certain ideologies in that period.

3. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection for this research is conducted with purposive sampling. The sample is gathered with the purpose of giving a clear explanation of particular issues as the representative of the problem. The use of purposive sampling is suitable to use within qualitative research for its purposive manner that is determined by the researcher as the most qualified data to answer the research question. According to Turner (2020), “purposive sampling is a sampling technique used when researchers already have a target individual with characteristics appropriate to the research.

The selected sample consists of four R&B songs sourced from the Billboard Hot 100 Year End Chart, one of the most credible systems for ranking popular music in North America (Lafrance et al., 2011, p. 3). The four samples selected to represent each decade are charted in 1958, 2000, 2010, and 2020 and stay on the chart for a minimum of nine weeks ranked as the top ten. The purposive sampling then continues with genre categorization of the R&B genre. The finalized samples are Get A Job by The Silhouettes (1958), I Wanna Know by Joe (2000), OMG by Usher featuring Will.I.Am (2010), and Blinding Lights by The Weeknd (2020).

To further validate the sample, the chosen song is inspected through an additional process. First, the selected songs listed on the Billboard Hot 100 Year End were also presented on the Billboard Hot R&B Songs chart. This involved analyzing the Year End Chart in 1958, 2000, 2010, and 2020 from both music chart categories through the Billboard Chart Research Services. Second, the song must be sung by black male artists within R&B music or DooWop musical genre. The song selected is necessary to fit the

below criteria to be added as a sample analysis:

- a. Masculinity and Blackness
 - 1) The selected songs are identified to be led by men.
 - 2) The selected songs are sung by men who identify socially as black.

- b. Listed on the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Charts
 - 1) Ranked in the top 10 on the Billboard Hot 100 Year End Chart.
 - 2) If the song is sung by a solo or a group of black male artists.
 - 3) The year in which the song is released is within the selected decades.
 - 4) Identify the music according to R&B/ DooWop characteristics.

- c. Hegemonic Embodiment
 - 1) Representation of hypermasculine traits such as emotional stoicism, aggressive pretense, and detachment.
 - 2) Expression to drug use, material wealth, authenticity, male desirability.

- d. Non-Hegemonic Embodiment
 - 1) Representation of emotional expression and attachment.
 - 2) Expression of emotion, sex, and affection to women

The preparatory review for the sample continued to be sorted to ensure the sample had met the criteria. The editorial of the music lyrics is auditorily acquired through <https://genius.com/>. The detailed selection includes (1) A quotation of song lyrics as findings that represent masculinity behavior, (2) An explanation of the selected lyrics according to semiotic theory by Roland Barthes that correlates to the hegemonic embodiment and non-hegemonic embodiment, (3) Providing reasoning for the selected lyric based on the society culture in each era according to Connell's Gender Order Theory.

The lyrical explanation will involve a line-by-line examination of the complete song lyrics, concentrated in song settings involving the time and the cultural situation the song was released. How it affects the public perception and acceptance of gender expression within the decades of masculinity portrayal in R&B music.

CHAPTER II

OBJECT OF RESEARCH

A. Rhythm and Blue Music

The roots of rhythm and blues music begin from complex strands of the cultural experience of African American culture, where their form of expression in music is an amalgamation of jump blues, big band swing, gospel, boogie, and blues. The musical genre then develops through a landscape of social and political conflicts and the civil rights problem of American race relations that affects urban life, culture, and popular entertainment in American mainstream media. In understanding the social and cultural context of R&B, there are three historical processes of African American migration to urban centering World War I, World War II, and the civil rights movement.

The growth of twentieth-century African-American urban communities is to be closely intertwined with the development of R&B. Cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Memphis, and Detroit become the anchor of the genre layouts (Puryear, 2016). In the well-known event, the Great Migration in 1930 during World War I, African American music could transition into the urban environment and the marketplace. During the transition, many are confronted with a range of discrimination in the form of housing and employment practices. Hence, large national organizations work to support the social and political concerns regarding African Americans in pursuing labor rights. The community then united in expressing cultural pride through music.

Under the category “race records”, the first successful appearance of commercial music by African Americans is dated Mamie Smith’s “Crazy

Blues” in 1920 (Puryear, 2016). Race records were a marketing category in the music recording industry, where the term was borrowed from a vernacular term of “race man” in that era in expressing racial pride and solidarity of African Americans. Some genres included under the category became the foundations of R&B, particularly blues, big band, boogie-woogie, jazz, and African-American swing. Rhythm and Blues immediately replaced the term race records. Billboard magazine reporter that Jerry Wexler created the name for the genre for Billboard musical marketing in designated upbeat popular music by African-American artists in the 1950s (Rittenbach, 2018).

The second migration during and after World War II African Americans in Western cities population increased. This expansion of African Americans in urban areas caused a huge demand for social interaction with music and entertainment. Even so, less than eight record labels specialized in R&B were supported in that segregated era. In the development of R&B, stylistics picked up from Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five from Arkansas. He and his group of six musicians melded the elements of shuffle rhythm, boogie-woogie bass lines, and shit horn patterns or riffs (Puryear, 2016). The hit song “Is You Is or You Ain’t My Baby” (1944) uses African American Vernacular humor and vocal call response between Jordan and his group. The styles that emerged in the era were often played by small groups, emphasizing rhythmic dives over swing orchestras’ instrumental and harmonic complexity. T-Bone Walker works in South Central LA as a blues guitarist. He pioneered the electric guitar, developing a single-lined solo style that became a reference for today’s musicians. His song in 1947, “Call It Stormy Monday,” became a standard in R&B and blues, where its lyrics reference the working-class life (Puryear, 2016).

Though the genre emerged from African-American culture, the style caught the attention of the youth audience during the post-war period. It affects the racial change in American society and music. By late 1950, the segregation of black and white youth became a social issue, posting a strong reaction of America's youth of all ethnic backgrounds to come together in civil rights activism, ethnic consciousness, and anti-war movements. For this reason, with the attention to the contradiction of moral and social inequity in urban society, R&B artists and songwriters began to address the issue beyond interpersonal and group intimacy. Through this, young black artists overcame complex issues of race, separatism, and assimilation during the period. Identifying the genre's new musical style is proof of a more equal society.

Records such as Motown and Stax in 1970 became a resource for the popular music industry, including the business of records, radio, promotion, and songwriting to express their empowerment towards the African-American community explicitly. In the same year, Stax Records added the slogan "*Tell it like it is*", inspired by a romantic ballad that reached the number one spot in the U.S. R&B charts in 1967. The song contained nothing about segregation, urban riots, civil rights, or legal and de facto issues at the time, which conflicted with how Stax Records uses the song's name. Instead, the catalog they owned consisted of recitations and readings reflecting black consciousness, where their targeted school system and churches were their intended audience. The popularity and broad resonance ultimately play a central role in shaping mainstream American popular music. The song is adapted by various artists, naming Andy Williams, Heart, to Freddy Fender, telling us the story of the kind of music that speaks about marginalization, exclusion, resistance, and resilience (Puryear, 2016).

B. Popular Music

Popular music has a significant part in representing gender and sexuality. Although music comes second in popular media consumption, gender-specific content was found to be featured in popular music. Popular music professes the reflection on social situations, as it displays a mirrored attitude against its imminent form (Dibben, 1999). Similar characteristics in contemporary social settings affected by cultural, historical, and geographical– show that its content is not static, differently based on music genre and historical period (Avery et al., 2016; Cooper, 1985). With its popular music history, the musical genre differentiates the approach to masculinity portrayed in the mainstream media. For example, rock music, perceived as a ‘masculine’ genre, is seen as authentic and meaningful due to its dominant gender ideologies (Biddle & Ivens, n.d). If related to hegemonic masculinity, rock music checks most of the hegemonic traits such as aggressive, independent, demanding, active, and confident. Sexual signification traits combine in various ways within genres and contexts (Björck, 2011).

The popular music genre as a racial form is being deconstructed by the articulation of both black and white artists on hegemonic masculinity, as pointed out by Rodman (Dhaenens & Ridder, 2015). Hip Hop is another genre type that is perceived to fill the traditional masculinity pattern in the media. The musical culture in Hip Hop is known to have specific ideas of gender and racial identification to its authenticity (Morris, 2014). Hip Hop masculinity is a concept against femininity that is shown to preserve the idea of highly sexualized manhood. The authenticity put the performer in a notion in their performance to ‘keep it real’ in representing the African American identity. For instance, the song *I Get Around – Tupac*. The original musical pattern is portrayed through a nihilistic attitude and aggressive pretense, representing the element of hyper-masculinity. Similar to R&B, both cultures are articulated by hypermasculine, hypersexual, and

heteronormative. Even so, there have been some changes in R&B culture, causing a sub-genre known as Alternative R&B. The alternate genre is a crossroad between hip-hop, soul, and contemporary R&B culture (Dhaenens & Ridder, 2015). The new sub-genre has gone through many controversies regarding race and gender. The relation to masculinity is that this new sub-genre projects men's fragility, which defies the traditional masculinity culture in R&B.

C. Masculinity Studies

The beginning of men's study in the critical lens in investigating masculinity first emerged with the second-wave feminist movement, as it is applied to the white male role and manhood. The movement inspired the liberation movement of heterosexuals in the 1970s, challenging the patriarch and further sexism while propelling an anti-patriarchal depiction of heterosexual men as vulnerable and inflicted by oppression (Dei-Sharpe, 2019; Carrigan et al. 1985, p. 1516). With the awakening of heterosexual men towards their expression, the practice of Critical Studies of Men and Masculinity (CSMM) in the late 1970s was established. The study no longer follows traditional ways of studying men through their biological condition but diverts within the fields of social sciences. Dedicated to social, cultural, structural, and power-related factors that contribute to men's experiences. Likewise, femininity and masculinity are seen as sex-specific and sex-appropriate personality traits expressed behaviorally rather than as attribution by acts of domination and subordination.

As the term masculinity begins to enter the mainstream, the oversimplified theory of men's behavior is developed further to be aware of representing race and class that influenced the gender imperatives and ideals. The Hegemonic Masculinity Theory (HMT) by Raewyn Connell in 1987 fills

the gap.

D. Billboard Hot 100 as US Popular Music Barometer

The first issue, launched in an eight-page magazine dated November 1, 1894, was surprisingly not focusing on the music industry but devoted to entertainment business advertisers, advertising agents, and secretaries of fair interests. The chart has not become a weekly publication but a monthly resume of what is new and interesting on the boards. Over decades, Billboard became a more specific focus, segmented for the music industry. The first national music chart is the 10-position on July 27, 1940 issue known as the “National List of Best Selling Retail Records”, a hallmark in tracking music popularity (Billboard, 2021). At the time, the metric for Billboard Hot 100 emerged as a way of expanding the ranking of the best-selling song in the US by radio airplay component and retail. The unique thing about the Hot 100 chart is that it does not only measure one thing specific in determining music popularity. It has its formula as it is frequently retooled throughout history.

As a magazine tracking the entertainment business for decades, Billboard was simultaneously tracking record sales separately for best-selling records in-store, disc jockey playlists, and jukebox plays (Malonphy, 2013). Only then does the magazine have its mind, experimenting with adding the whole mashup of music data pool (radio airplay, song sales) into one chart. This experimentation on the protochart was done from 1955 to 1958 as they launched the Hot 100 on August 4, 1958, continuing the basis of the protochart formula. It should be noted that even to this day, radio airplay and song sales have remained the premise and the biggest component of the Hot 100. Other digital media, such as YouTube and Spotify, also play a role in determining a hit.

Billboard added new data streams or even changed the ground rules when necessary. Most of the changes are caused by the consumer side of the equation from the changing norms of song purchase (Billboard, 2021). Four major formula changes have affected the Hot 100 functions in keeping it relevant. Throughout the changes, the Hot 100 has a three-legged stool. The first two legs are sales and airplay, with streaming music as the third leg. Billboard alone mentions that the formula continues to be inclined toward the weight of sales and airplay rather than streaming, only on some phenomenon that the streaming component could make up to 30% of the Hot 100's data wherein a whole week the streaming activity is high. This is how a song is classified as popular according to the Hot 100 chart: sales, airplay, and streaming. To this day, Billboard validates musicians' musical work as it indicates the public reception of the song. The music chart developed into a primary source of trends and innovation in music that is reliable in the US (Billboard, 2011).

E. Selected Sample

The research tries to give a distinct perspective on masculinity in R&B

music sung by Black male artists. The song selection is by decade from 2020, 2010, 2000, and 1958, listed on the official Billboard Hot 100 Year End Chart releases.

1. Get A Job – The Silhouettes (1958)

The Silhouettes is a doo-woop and soul group from Philadelphia, best known for their song 'Get A Job' recorded in 1957. The song became a number-one hit on the R&B and pop charts in 1958. The song was written by the group member Richard Lewis while serving in the US Army. It was after that he joined a church-gospel quartet group called

The Thunderbirds. They recorded their first song for a local label, Kaer Records, where they suggested The Silhouettes as their new group name. After Get A Job was starting to get sales, the master of the song was sold to Ember Records, where it made it into the national charts.

Table 2. 1 Get A Job Lyrics

Lyrics
Verse 1: <i>Well every morning about this time/ She gets me out of bed, a-crying get a job/ After breakfast everyday she throws the want ads right my way/ And never fails to say - get a job.</i>
Verse 2: <i>And when I get the paper/ I read it through and through/ And my girl never fails to say/ If there is any work for me/ And when I go back to the house/ I hear the woman's mouth/ Preaching and a-crying/ Tell me that I'm lying/ 'Bout a job that I never could find.</i>

2. I Wanna Know – Joe (2000)

I Wanna Know is a song by Joe, an American R&B singer with the birth name Joseph Lewis Thomas. He signed with Jive Records in 1997, selling more than one million copies in the US, reaching No.13 on the Billboard 200 album charts and No. 4 on the R&B charts (Reuters, 2007). 2001, at the BET Awards, he was named the best R&B male artist and won his first Grammy Awards for his album ‘My Name is Joe’ for best R&B album 2001. ‘I Wanna Know’ is one of the singles featured in the ballad album released in 1999. The song managed to sit at No. 4 on the Billboard Hot 100.

Table 2. 2 I Wanna Know Lyrics

Lyrics
Verse 1: <i>It's amazing how you knock me off my feet/ Everytime you come around me I get weak, oh yeah/ Nobody ever made me feel this way/ You kiss my lips and then you take my breath away/ So I wanna know.</i>
Chorus: <i>I wanna know what turns you on/ So I can be all that and more/ I'd like to know what makes you cry/ So I can be the one who always makes you smile.</i>
Verse 2: <i>Girl, he never understood what you were worth/ And he never took the time to make it work, no/ (You deserve more lovin', girl, oh)/ Baby, I'm the kind of man who shows concern, yes I do, oh/ Anyway that I can please you, let me learn/ So, I wanna know</i>
Bridge: <i>Tell me what I gotta do to please you/ Baby, anything you say, I'll do 'll do/ 'Cause I only wanna make you happy (Happy)/ From the bottom of my heart, it's true (It's true)/ Tell me what I gotta do to please you (Please you)/ Baby, anything you say I'll do (I'll do, girl)/ Cause I only wanna make you happy/ From the bottom of my heart, it's true (Oh, it's true)</i>
Verse 3: <i>I wish that I could take a journey through your mind, ah, alright/ And find emotions that you always try to hide, babe, ah, oh/ I do believe that there's a love you wanna share, oh, oh-oh/ I'll take good care of you, lady, have no fear, uh, oh/ So I wanna know</i>

3. OMG – Usher featuring Will.I.Am (2010)

Usher Terry Raymond IV is an American R&B musician known for his smooth vocal and sensual ballad, beginning his popularity in the 1990s. At 12, he moved to Atlanta two years after signing a contract with LaFace Records. His success is marked by his My Way album, which marked him as a major R&B star. He got his first two Grammy Awards under two singles, ‘U Remind Me’ and ‘U Got It Bad’, where he continues his range of ballads (Britannica, 2021).

‘OMG’ by Usher is included in *Raymond v. Raymond’s* Album in 2010, where he openly discusses the private life of his disintegrated marriage. The album won its Grammy Award for Best Contemporary R&B

Album. The song ‘OMG’ features Will. I. Am on the album was released in March 2010, where the single gained several accomplishments. The song is certified by The British Phonographic Industry for platinum on its sales of over 787,000 copies. Topped on the Billboard Hot 100 and the Rhythmic Charts. Usher mentioned that the concept behind the OMG tour is to give the audience experiences of overall theatrical, edgy, sexy, and energetic.

Table 2. 3 OMG Lyrics

Lyrics
Verse 1: <i>I fell in love with shawty when I seen her on the dance floor/ She was dancing sexy, dropping low/ Never ever has a lady hit me on the first sight/ This was something special, this was just like dynamite/ Honey got a booty like pow, pow, pow/ Honey got some boobies like wow, oh wow/ Girl, you know I'm loving your, loving your style/ Check, checking you out like.</i>
Pre-Chorus: <i>Oh She got it all/ Sexy from her head to toe/ And I want it all, it all, it all.</i>
Chorus: <i>Baby, let me love you down/ There's so many ways to love you/ Baby, I can break you down/ There's so many ways to love you/ Got me like, "Oh my gosh", I'm so in love/ I found you finally, you make me want to say/ Oh, oh my gosh.</i>
Verse 2: <i>Feel so hot for honey out of all the girls up in the club/ This one got me whipped just off of one look, yep, I fell in love/ This one something special, this one just like dynamite/ Out of sight/ Fell in love with honey like my, oh my/ Honey looking wonderful, fly, so fly/ Honey like a supermodel, my, oh, my/ Baby, how you do that, make a grown man cry?</i>

4. Blinding Lights – The Weeknd (2020)

Blinding Lights by The Weeknd is a single that became an immediate hit, according to The Guardians (2021), titled Greatest Songs of All Time Hot 100 Chart. Abel Tesyafe, better known by his stage name, The Weeknd, is a Canadian Rhythm and Blues singer and songwriter. Tesyafe began his career when he crossed paths with musician and

producer Jeremy Rose, as they first released their work together via YouTube in late 2010. The songs released are atmospheric; ‘The Morning’, ‘Loft Music’, and ‘What You Need’. His popularity climbed quickly when Drake, a Canadian rapper, reposted his work on his blog. He partnered with Republic Records in 2012 (Brittania, 2022), continuing his success by winning Grammy Awards for best R&B performance for one of his songs, Earned It. The Weeknd made his terms in refining R&B, Pop, and Hip Hop, taking over pop music and culture.

Well known for his explicit songwriting, which revolves around sex, drugs, and alienation, he released his most successful song in November with his musical twist. In one of his interviews, Blinding Lights is described as his single released after his ten-year musical career. It became 2020’s biggest song in terms of sales and size, according to Billboard, staying 90 weeks on the top of Hot 100 charts. Blinding Lights is streamed over 2.5 billion times on Spotify alone (BBC, 2021). At the same time, the song set its new record for most weeks in the Top 5 of the chart for 43 weeks, Top 10 in 57 weeks, and Top 40 in 86 weeks.

Table 2. 4 Blinding Lights Lyrics

Lyrics
Verse 1: <i>I've been tryna call/ I've been on my own for long enough/ Maybe you can show me how to love, maybe/ I'm going through withdrawals/ You don't even have to do too much/ You can turn me on with just a touch, baby</i>
Pre-Chorus: <i>I look around and Sin City's cold and empty/ No one's around to judge me/ I can't see clearly when you're gone.</i>
Chorus: <i>I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights/ No, I can't sleep until I feel your touch/ I said, ooh, I'm drowning in the night/ Oh, when I'm like this, you're the one I trust</i>

Verse 2: *I'm running out of time/ 'Cause I can see the sun light up the sky/ So I hit the road in overdrive, baby, oh*

Bridge: *I'm just calling back to let you know (Back to let you know)/ I could never say it on the phone (Say it on the phone)/ Will never let you go this time*

CHAPTER III RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Semiotic Analysis on Selected Sample

The lyrical interpretation goes through denotation, connotation, meaning, and myth. As known, Barthes includes denotation as literal meaning that is seen by the naked eyes, explained as it is by its natural form. The connotation by means is the continuation of the signification added by additional information to explain things unseen from its surface. This myth explains how the culture understands the aspect of reality, where it often is a product that is dominant within a particular social class.

The findings will be written sequentially connected from denotation connotation to myth in two sections through lyrical interpretation. The process will begin with a purposive selection in identifying the lyrics' signs based on the song's lyrical structure.

1. Get A Job – The Silhouettes (1958)

a. Lyrical Structure

The lyrical structure within Get A Job by The Silhouettes consists of 2 verses

Table 3. 1 Get A Job Lyrical Structure

Structure	Lyrics
Verse 1	<i>Well every morning about this time/ She gets me out of bed, a-crying get a job/ After breakfast everyday she throws the want ads right my way/ And never fails to say - get a job.</i>
Verse 2	<i>And when I get the paper/ I read it through and through/ And my girl never fails to say/ If there is any work for me/ And when I go back to the house/ I hear the woman's mouth/ Preaching and a-crying/ Tell me that I'm lying/ 'Bout a job</i>

	<i>that I never could find.</i>
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b. Semiotic Analysis

1) Preview on Sign, Denotation, Connotation, and Myth

Table 3. 2 Get A Job Semiotic Analysis

SIGN	DENOTATION	CONNOTATION	MYTH
<i>Well every morning about this time/ She gets me out of bed, a-crying get a job</i>	An action regularly repeated in waking a person up in the morning and asking them to get a job loudly.	The roles of the member in the family as breadwinner and homemaker. A homemaker is to take care of house needs, the breadwinner's main role is to fulfill the family economy by working.	Traditional relationship: Marital roles.
<i>after breakfast everyday she throws the want ads right my way.</i>	At a specific time of the day (after breakfast) the woman throws a newspaper that contains a job offer advertisement to the subject		
<i>After breakfast everyday she throws the want ads right my way/ And never fails to say - get a job.</i>	direction repeatedly, asking for the subject to find a job	The pressure the male subject faced towards his unemployment where he too realized that the relationship stake is based on his effort & a constant request by the female subject as a direct form of support in maintaining the relationship in the family.	Unemployment Issue
<i>And my girl never fails to say/ If there is any work for me</i>	An action regularly repeated, asking for the subject to find a job		
<i>And when I go back to the house/ I hear the woman's mouth/ Preaching and a- quality crying/ Tell me that I'm lying/ 'Bout a job that I never could find.</i>	every time the subject goes back home, the woman repeatedly speaks in an annoying way that the subject is lying about getting a job that the subject is having a hard time finding	The decline of two subjects in their relationship in facing the long-term issue.	Happiness Quality

2) Denotation

Table 3. 3 Get A Job Denotation

Verse 1	<i>Well every morning about this time/ She gets me out of bed, a-crying get a job</i>
	<i>After breakfast everyday she throws the want ads right my way/ And never fails to say - get a job</i>

Well every morning about this time/ She gets me out of bed, a-crying get a job in grammatical breakdown begins with the word *well*. The word is an interjection in the sentence used to introduce a sentence (Dictionary.com, n.d). *Every morning* is translated to a frequency of an event that is regularly repeated (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d) in the early part of the day (Longman, n.d). *Out of bed* arises after sleep (Merriam Webster, n.d). The next word within the sign is *crying*, which translates, according to the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d), as an adjective describing a serious need for attention. While on its own as a verb, the word is used to describe an act as to produce tears from your eyes while making loud sounds of pain or other strong emotions (The Britannica Dictionary, n.d). In these findings, crying is added with the prefix ‘a-’ as in *a-crying* that acted as a verb. When added with a prefix, the word’s meaning is defined as a repeated action in calling a person loudly (Merriam Webster, n.d). Thus, the sign denotes an action regularly repeated in waking a person up in the morning and asking them to get a job loudly.

The second sign of the first verse is *After breakfast everyday she throws the want ads right my way/ And never fails to say - get a job*. To gain the denotative meaning of the sign, we will

look at the grammatical breakdown of the sentence. The *Wants ads* is a plural form of want ad, a classified advertisement in a newspaper placed by a company or a person in a specific column who offers a job (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, n.d). The word *right* from *right my way* is an adverb that indicates the furthest extent to emphasize context (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, n.d). On the other hand, the word *way* is a singular noun with meaning if something is coming in your direction. Lastly, the word *get a job* is a synonym to find a job where, in the sentence, it acts as a specific request addressed to someone (The Free Dictionary, n.d). So, the overall meaning of the sign denotation is at a specific time of the day, specifically after breakfast, the woman throws a newspaper that contains a job offer advertisement to the subject direction repeatedly, asking for the subject to find a job.

Table 3. 4 Get A Job Denotation

Verse 2	<i>And when I go back to the house/ I hear the woman's mouth/ Preaching and a-crying/ Tell me that I'm lying/ 'Bout a job that I never could find.</i>
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The sign on the second verse has the word *‘preaching’* defined by the dictionary as a religious speech in a public place. It is also used to demonstrate a way of speaking in an annoying way about the right way to behave (The Britannica Dictionary, n.d). With the information obtained, the denotative meaning of *And when I go back to the house/ I hear the woman’s mouth/ Preaching and a-crying/ Tell me that I’m lying/‘Bout a job that I never could find* as the sign on the second verse is that every time the subject goes back home, the woman repeatedly

speaks in an annoying way that the subject is lying about getting a job that the subject is having a hard time finding.

3) Connotation & Myth

The one-hit wonder ‘Get A Job’ by The Silhouettes is first recognized as a Doo Wop group, a genre now understood as R&B. The song led the group to become a number-one hit wonder in 1958. With an exuberant and danceable rhythm, the song brings a general sense of fun. However, the song serves a cheerful melody, implying the issues of unemployment and domestic relationships (The Silhouettes, n.d).

Table 3. 5 Get A Job Connotation

Verse 1	<i>Well every morning about this time/ She gets me out of bed, a-crying get a job</i>	Traditional relationship: Marital roles.
	<i>After breakfast everyday she throws the want ads right my way.</i>	

As the previous background of the song is introduced as a story of a domestic relationship, the findings of the song theme are found to discuss a rather similar type of relationship to the domestic relationship. The type of relationship that is revealed in the narrative is structured as a traditional relationship. This type of relationship requires strict gender roles where the function within the relationship is based upon gender and stereotypical role expectations. The binding gender roles in the relationship put a certain pressure on each spouse to be able to fulfill the marital needs in order for the relationship to be sustained. It is common to have the

type of traditional relationships back in the 60's. Moreover, the type of structure of the relationship remains continued in today's relationship structure.

The song narrative connotes each of the roles of the member in the family as breadwinner and homemaker. The lyrics on the first verse *Well every morning about this time/ She gets me out of bed, a-crying get a job.* The connotation of the selected lyrics regarding gender roles is depicted through the storyline. As the role of a homemaker is to take care of house needs, the breadwinner's main role is to fulfill the family economy by working.

The lyrics also implicitly explain the role of females in the family as a homemaker is to wake their husbands up, make breakfast, and take care of their home. The continuation of the lyric *After breakfast everyday she throws the want ads right my way* connotes the success of the female roles and the failure of the male roles in the family. Her expected role as a homemaker within the lyric is successfully met when most of her home duty is done right by her. On the other hand, the expected role of the breadwinner does not stand in the right lane. As seen, the female subject constantly asks for her spouse to fill his marital role as the breadwinner by looking for a job.

Table 3. 6 Get A Job Connotation

Verse 1	<i>After breakfast everyday she throws the want ads right my way/ And never fails to say - get a job.</i>	Unemployment issue
Verse 2	<i>And my girl never fails to say/ If there is any work for me</i>	

In this finding, the main narrative topic is the issue of unemployment. It is visible in every part of the verse that the downside of traditional relationships lies in the economic problem. *After breakfast everyday she throws the want ads right my way/ And never fails to say - get a job* not only explicitly expresses the frustration of the female subject but also implicitly describes the unsolved problem on the side of the breadwinner. The selected lyric of the first verse connotes the pressure the male subject faced towards his issue, where he too realized that the relationship stake is based on his effort. Whereas the second verse *And my girl never fails to say/ If there is any work for me* connotes the constant request asked by the female subject as a form of direct support in maintaining the relationship in the family. Both lyrics implicitly indicate the breadwinner's role has been vacant for quite some time. The longer the breadwinners take ownership of his neglected roles in order to keep the relationship sustained, the higher the chance it will affect the happiness and stability within their traditional relationship.

Table 3. 7 Get A Job Connotation

Verse 2	<i>And when I go back to the house/ I hear the woman's mouth/ Preaching and a-crying/ Tell me that I'm lying/ 'Bout a job that I never could find.</i>	Happiness quality
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Though the issue's timeline is not mentioned in the narrative, the length of men's unemployment negatively impacted men's and women's relationship quality via economic strain and psychological distress (Kinnunen & Feldt, 2004). The longer the couple is exposed to stressful circumstances, the higher the possibility of declining spousal support. *And when I go back to the house/ I hear the woman's mouth/ Preaching and a-crying/ Tell me that I'm lying/ 'Bout a job that I never could find* from the second verse connotes the decline of two subjects in their relationship in facing the long term issue. The study on American women shows that some wives increasingly abstained from emotionally supporting their partner when he was long-term unemployed because it became too emotionally costly for them. The lyric explains that her attempt to support her spouse has been conducted multiple times. The emotional decline is visibly implied through the man's complaints as he states that his attempt to find a job is never there or else mentioned as '*lies.*' On the other end, the male subject in the narrative cannot avoid the high pressure of his unemployment and his lack of ability to provide income for the family.

2. I Wanna Know – Joe (2000)

a. Lyrical Structure

The lyrical structure of I Wanna Know by Joe consists of three verses, a chorus, and a bridge.

Table 3. 8 I Wanna Know Lyrical Structure

Structure	Lyrics
Verse 1	<i>It's amazing how you knock me off my feet/ Everytime you come around me I get weak, oh yeah/ Nobody ever made me feel this way/ You kiss my lips and then you take my breath away/ So I wanna know.</i>
Chorus	<i>I wanna know what turns you on/ So I can be all that and more/ I'd like to know what makes you cry/ So I can be the one who always makes you smile.</i>
Verse 2	<i>Girl, he never understood what you were worth/ And he never took the time to make it work, no/ (You deserve more lovin', girl, oh)/ Baby, I'm the kind of man who shows concern, yes I do, oh/ Anyway that I can please you, let me learn/ So, I wanna know</i>
Bridge	<i>Tell me what I gotta do to please you/ Baby, anything you say, I'll do (I'll do)/ 'Cause I only wanna make you happy (Happy)/ From the bottom of my heart, it's true (It's true)/ Tell me what I gotta do to please you (Please you)/ Baby, anything you say I'll do (I'll do, girl)/ Cause I only wanna make you happy/ From the bottom of my heart, it's true (Oh, it's true)</i>
Verse 3	<i>I wish that I could take a journey through your mind, ah, alright/ And find emotions that you always try to hide, babe, ah, oh/ I do believe that there's a love you wanna share, oh, oh-oh/ I'll take good care of you, lady, have no fear, uh, oh/ So I wanna know</i>

b. Semiotic Analysis

1) Preview on Sign, Denotation, Connotation, and Myth

Table 3. 9 I Wanna Know Semiotic Analysis

SIGN	DENOTATION	CONNOTATION	MYTH
<p><i>It's amazing how you knock me off</i> Development: <i>my feet/</i> Initiation <i>Everytime you come around me</i> <i>I get weak, oh of yeah/ Nobody by ever made me feel from this way</i></p>	<p>Whenever the object is present, the subject feels like he lacks power. The subject has never experienced such feelings towards a person before.</p>	<p>The interest of both subjects to move the relationship to another stage as it is depicted by the existence of voluntary acts both subjects social to</p>	<p>Relational</p>
<p><i>You kiss my lips and then you take my breath away/ So I wanna know.</i></p>	<p>The subject is astonished by the action conducted that causes the subject to request for more information about the woman.</p>	<p>relationship.</p>	
<p><i>Girl, he never understood what you were worth</i> Experimenting (<i>Hmm, no/ And he never took the time to make it work, no</i></p>	<p>The subject speaks to the woman that the other man is not in any way going to understand her self value and he does not make an effort to find a way to understand.</p>	<p>An attempt to penetrate the conversation into self disclosure to create the safe atmosphere while making sure the scope of the competitors surrounding the potential partner (obtain & conduct research).</p>	<p>Relational Development: intriguing topics by</p>
<p><i>Baby, I'm the kind of man who shows concern, yes I do, oh/ Anyway that I can please you, let me learn</i></p>	<p>The speaker wanting to let know that he has the characteristic of a man that expresses worry. He also wants to acknowledge how to make the woman happy.</p>		
<p><i>I wanna know what turns you on/ So I can be all that and more</i></p>	<p>The subject is asking for an information about someone or something that the woman finds exciting, so the</p>		

	subject can adapt to the information given		
<i>I'd like to know what makes you cry</i>	The subject is curious to know about the information that caused the woman to feel a certain way.		
<i>Tell me what I gotta do to please you/ Baby, anything you say, I'll do (I'll do)</i>	The subject is asking for information about ways the subject can do to make the her feel happy. The subject is willing to agree with any suggestion made by the her. passion	Request conducted by the main subject derived from the previous level signaling the main subject's willingness to bring their relationship to achieve the desired intimacy and	Relational Development: Intensifying
<i>I wish that I could take a journey through your mind</i>	the subject is wanting to experience the process of the other person's way of thinking.	between partners with psychological availability.	
<i>Cause I only wanna make you happy/ From the bottom of my heart, it's true</i>	The subject is expressing his sincere wish for the object to be happy.	Projects the closeness feeling and mutual support the main subject offers towards the woman by assuring that she feels safe in expressing her emotion. It also projects the woman's feelings that she might feel uncomfortable in showing the love she has due to the connection of her previous relationship.	Triangular Theory of Love; Intimacy
<i>I do believe that there's a love you the wanna share/ I'll love take good care of you, lady, have no fear</i>	The subject considering that existence of from the other person is true and the other person has a desire to tell the subject about the feelings. The subject also stressed that he will make sure to prevent the woman from damage or harm		
<i>You kiss my lips and then you take my breath away</i>	The subject is astonished by the action conducted by	The participation on each subject towards the motivational	Triangular Theory of Love; Passion

	the object that causes the subject to request for more information about the woman	involvement that is related to physical attraction or the existence of passion. It also indirectly describe the relationship as a non-bonding relationship within an undetermined type of close relationship.	
<i>I wanna know what turns you know on</i>	The subject is curious to about the information that caused the woman to feel a certain way.		

2) Denotation

The elaboration on the denotation of the sign within the song lyric is chosen by the correlation to the connotation and the myth based on song structure.

Table 3. 10 I Wanna Know Denotation

Verse 1	<i>It's amazing how you knock me off my feet/ Everytime you come around me I get weak, oh yeah/ Nobody ever made me feel this way</i>
	<i>You kiss my lips and then you take my breath away/ So I wanna know.</i>

The first denotation process begins with *It's amazing how you knock me off my feet/ Everytime you come around me I get weak, oh yeah/ Nobody ever made me feel this way* as the chosen sign. The word *amazing* is an adjective that translates to cause a great surprise or wonder (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d). Continuing to *knock me off my feet* that acted as a metaphor for being overwhelmed emotionally (Dictionary.com, n.d). This phrasal verb is used as a form of

expression to express admiration for someone. On the second bar, the word *come around* on *Everytime you come around me I get weak* is a phrasal verb according to the Longman (n.d). The use of phrasal verbs *come around* is an activity of a person to visit someone's place. The phrasal word is then continued with the word *I get weak*. The word is translated to a lack of power or force (The Britannica Dictionary, n.d). Lastly the *made* in the sentence is a verb cause with definition is to cause something (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). Through all the breakdown, the denotation meaning from the sign is the subject is surprised by the object causing the subject to be emotionally overwhelmed out of admiration. Whenever the object is present, the subject feels like he lacks power. The subject has never experienced such feelings towards a person before.

The second sign from the first verse is ***You kiss my lips and then you take my breath away/ So I wanna know***. The sentence *take my breath away* within the sign is also categorized as a phrasal verb in expressing astonishment. The word use is applicable in expressing the feeling of excitement towards something or someone that is extremely beautiful (Merriam Webster, n.d). The sign *So I wanna know* is the definition of asking for a piece of information (Merriam Webster, n.d) that starts with a word *so* as a conjunction. Hence the sign denotative meaning is that the subject is astonished by the action conducted by the object which causes the subject to request for more information about the object.

Table 3. 11 I Wanna Know Denotation

Chorus	<i>I wanna know what turns you on/ So I can be all that and more</i>
	<i>I'd like to know what makes you cry</i>

The selected sign on the chorus is *I wanna know what turns you on/ So I can be all that and more*. By grammatical structure the meaning *wanna* is a slang of want to where within the sentence of *I wanna know* is translated to a request for information (Dictionary.com, n.d). *Turn on* according to Collins Dictionary has the meaning of someone or something that is sexually excited (n.d). The phrase *be all that* is a form of slang that indicates to be remarkably adept (Dictionary.com, n.d). Hence the denotative of the sign is the subject is asking for a request of information about someone or something that the object finds exciting, so the subject can adept to the information given. The second sign on the chorus is *I'd like to know what makes you cry*. The use *would like* in the sentence is served as an idiom to explain that someone wants to do or have something (Merriam Webster, n.d). Still with the use of idiom within the sentence, *what makes you cry* is an idiom that translates to the things that cause a person to behave in a certain way such as their feelings, opinion that is part of the person's personality (Merriam Webster, n.d). Hence the denotative from the sign *I'd like to know what makes you cry* is the subject is curious to know about the information that caused the object to feel a certain way.

Table 3. 12 I Wanna Know Denotation

Verse 2	<i>Girl, he never understood what you were worth (Hmm, no)/ And he never took the time to make it work, no</i>
	<i>Baby, I'm the kind of man who shows concern, yes I do/ Anyway that I can please you, let me learn</i>

Into the second verse the sign *Girl, he never understood what you were worth (Hmm, no)/ And he never took the time to make it work, no* begins with the word *never* that directly translates to not at all (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d) and *understood* as a verb that translates to not know the meaning of something a person says (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). The sentence also includes *worth* as a noun referring to one's own value as a person (Dictionary.com, n.d) and *took the time* where it translates to make an effort to something (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). Then the sentence is closed with the use of *make it work* where according to the Urban Dictionary (n.d) is an act to find a way or to solve a problem. Therefore the denotative meaning is the subject speaks to the woman that the other man is not in any way going to understand her self value and he does not make an effort to find a way to understand.

The last sign of the second verse is *Baby, I'm the kind of man who shows concern, yes I do/ Anyway that I can please you let me learn*. The word *kind of man* is a collocation within the English dictionary. The collocation consists of *kind* as an adjective that translates to a group characteristic and *man* as the noun of a person (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). *Show* is translated to express ideas or feelings and *concern* (Cambridge

Dictionary, n.d)is worrying (, n.d). Since the word positioning according to grammar is a verb, the meaning of *please* here is to make someone feel happy or to give pleasure (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). The sentence is closed with the word *learn* with means to get knowledge (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). Hence the sign denotes the speaker wanting to let know that he has the characteristic of a man that expresses worry. He also wants to acknowledge how to make the woman happy.

Table 3. 13 I Wanna Know Denotation

Bridge	<i>Tell me what I gotta do to please you/ Baby, anything you say, I'll do</i>
	<i>Cause I only wanna make you happy/ From the bottom of my heart, it's true</i>

The sign *Tell me what I gotta do to please you/ Baby, anything you say, I'll do* on the bridge through grammatical breakdown, the word *tell me* is an idiom that is used in the beginning of the sentence to ask information about something (Merriam Webster, n.d). *Got to do* refers to obligation which comes from the outsider of the speaker (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d) while the word *please you* is a definition to make someone feel happy and satisfied. Ended with *anything you say* that translates to telling someone that you agree with their suggestion (Longman, n.d). From the breakdown above, the denotative meaning from the sign is that the subject is asking for information about a way the subject can do to make the object feel happy. The subject is willing to agree with any suggestion made by the object. The second sign is *Cause I only wanna make you happy/ From the bottom of my heart,*

it's true. The first word to get breakdown is *only want to (wanna)* translated based on the dictionary as an idiom to stress someone's wish is a simple truth (Merriam Webster, n.d). *Make you* is as the verb within the sentence is translated to cause something or someone (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). The second sentence from the sign begins with the word *bottom of my heart* as a phrasal verb where it is identified as an idiom as an expression of sincerity (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). Hence the denotative meaning of the sign is the subject is expressing his sincere wish for the object to be happy.

Table 3. 14 I Wanna Know Denotation

Verse 3	<i>I wish that I could take a journey through your mind</i>
	<i>I do believe that there's a love you wanna share/ I'll take good care of you, lady, have no fear</i>

On the third verse sign *I wish that I could take a journey through your mind* containing a sentence *journey through your mind*. The sentence is broken down per word. Begin with the verb *wish* which translates to want to do something (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d), and continues with *Journey* as an act of traveling from one place to another (The Britannica Dictionary, n.d). The word is often used figuratively to describe experience. *Through* in the sentence is positioned as a preposition, where it is used to indicate passage or process (Merriam Webster, n.d). Lastly is *mind*, which according to the Oxford Learner's Dictionary (n.d) meaning is a way that somebody thinks. Hence the denotative meaning of the sign is the subject is wanting to experience the process of the other

person's way of thinking.

The second sign on the third verse is *I do believe that there's a love you wanna share/ I'll take good care of you, lady, have no fear*. The sign comes with two sentences which break down with the first word *believe*. The word translates as a transitive verb that translates to consideration of something to be true (Merriam Webster, n.d). *There's a love* refers to something the existence of something (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d) such as love. Lastly is *wanna share* directly translates to desire (Dictionary.com, n.d) and continues with verb *share* that translates to tell about feelings to others (Merriam Webster, n.d). The second sentence within the sign begins with *take good care* is a phrase used when you look after something making sure to prevent damage. The word *no fear* is served as an idiom in the sentence that translates to certainly not (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). Hence the denotative meaning for the sign is the subject considering that the existence of love from the other person is true and the other person has a desire to tell the subject about the feelings. The subject also stressed that he would make sure to prevent the woman from damage or harm.

1) Connotation & Myth

The song is a story about the infatuated feelings of a man who is on his way to gaining the love of his desired woman. At the beginning of the music video, you will immediately be served with a mini skit of an arguing couple. The skit ended with both of the couple breaking up and later the woman was left alone. Joe as the main character of the narrative takes advantage of

the situation to gain the woman's attention.

Table 3. 15 I Wanna Know Connotation

Verse 1	<i>It's amazing how you knock me off my</i>	Relational
	<i>feet/ Everytime you come around me I get weak, oh yeah/ Nobody ever made me feel this way</i>	Development: Initiation
	<i>You kiss my lips and then you take my breath away/ So I wanna know.</i>	

With the background explanation, it is assumed that the interaction that occurs between Joe and the woman is happening for the first time between two strangers. The narrative of the song is expressed through the standpoint of Joe as the main subject, describing his experience in an attempt to create close relations with the woman. The first verse of the song *It's amazing how you knock me off my feet/ Everytime you come around me I get weak, oh yeah/ Nobody ever made me feel this way* is a sign that indicates the both direct and indirect meaning of Joe's initial intention. The lyrics are translated as a first impression where the interaction is categorized as part of the Coming Together Process between potential partners. The process alone has several stages in order for the two strangers could develop their relationship into a close relationship. The stages begin with the Initiation Stage as the first stages of Relational Development. The sign above also connotes an understanding between subjects that the relationship grows from what is known to be a social relationship to a personal relationship. The growth is depicted by the involvement of emotional and intimate feelings where

the emotion is found in the sentence within the lyrics *Everytime you come around me I get weak and Nobody ever made me feel this way*. The involvement of feelings and emotions experienced by Joe within the sign is important to be underlined to classify that “*Personal relationships* meet emotional, relational, and instrumental needs, as they are intimate, close, and interdependent relationships such as those we have with best friends, partners, or immediate family”. The statement is important to be underlined since it helps to classify the key relationship the both subjects are having. The sign refers to a relationship turning into a personal relationship, where some connecting factors need to be filled to achieve personal relationship. Hence, the connotation of *You kiss my lips and then you take my breath away/ So I wanna know* as a sign is the interest of both subjects to move the relationship to develop into another stage as it is depicted by the existence of voluntary acts by both subjects where the woman shows her interest by kissing Joe’s as her response to Joe’s initiation lips. The voluntary act is part of the characteristic of personal relationship development that is being represented with *so I wanna know*.

The Experimenting Stage is known as an attempt to move on from a mere stranger to an acquaintances. The stage is considered as the most important stage in determining the flow or direction of the relationship. The use of small talk in this stage is crucial in this stage. Though it might seem harmless, it is the determining factor whether the relationship will last or end at this stage.

Table 3. 16 I Wanna Know Connotation

Verse 2	<i>Girl, he never understood what you were</i>	Relational
	<i>worth (Hmm, no)/ And he never took the time to make it work, no</i>	Development: Experimenting
	<i>Baby, I'm the kind of man who shows concern, yes I do, oh/ Anyway that I can please you, let me learn</i>	
Chorus	<i>I wanna know what turns you on/ So I can be all that and more</i>	
	<i>I'd like to know what makes you cry</i>	

Girl, he never understood what you were worth (Hmm, no)/ And he never took the time to make it work, no is the selected sign found in the second verse. People compare themselves more to people of the same gender than the other gender (Kiesling, 2007). The behavior is suitable with Experimenting Stage characteristics where a person is auditioning both on themselves and the competitor. It is also an attempt used to enter into a wider topic area for each person to discover whether the possibility for a close personal relationship is possible (Maricopa, n.d). The sign connotes an attempt conducted by the main subject commencing to penetrate the conversation into intriguing topics while making sure the scope of the competitors surrounding the potential partner is possible to breach. (Knapp & Anita, 2009). Similar to the findings above, the sign *Baby, I'm the kind of man who shows concern, yes I do, oh/ Anyway that I can please you, let me learn* also related to self auditioning. The Experimenting stage is the stage where the disclosure of general information about yourself is welcome safely. The disclosure comes with the

unwritten norm of 'if you tell me your info, I will tell you mine'. Moreover, the connotation of the selected sign is to point out that self-disclosure that is revealed in this stage is used to convince the other person with a sense of community that you are safe.

The use of phatic communication is also the part of Experimenting Stage characteristic. *I wanna know what turns you on/ So I can be all that and more* that directly indicates the use of phatic gestures towards the other subject. Other than showing interest and willingness to please the desired woman, the stage drives both strangers to find what is common yet similar to one another. The sign connotes an attempt by the main subjects to obtain and conduct research of both demographic information, considering if the conversation stays as it is or moves into another stage of the relationship which is acknowledged as the Intensifying Stage. On the other hand, the sign *I'd like to know what makes you cry* connotes the physical attraction the main subject has. The existence of the component of sexual and physical attraction is what leads to what is called passion within the relationship. This component within the findings from the selected sign is the indication of the subject's openness towards intimacy and romantic relationships. Where intimacy meets passion is closely associated with long-term relationships.

When the small talk is successful to be actively involved with a good response from the woman for some period of time, the relationship between subjects is ready to use the term 'close

friend'. When a 'close friend' is achieved, the communication and the relationship are intensified (Knapp & Anita, 2009). This is known as the Intensifying Stage of Relational Development.

Table 3. 17 I Wanna Know Connotation

Bridge	<i>Tell me what I gotta do to please you/ Baby, anything you say, I'll do (I'll do)</i>	Relational Development: Intensifying
Verse 3	<i>I wish that I could take a journey through your mind</i>	

In the chorus, the sign *Tell me what I gotta do to please you/ Baby, anything you say, I'll do (I'll do)* is a sign that connotes permission or request initiated by the main subject. Though both subjects have obtained 'close friend' status, the Intensifying Stage is considered to be fragile if not done correctly. Typically, one of subject initiation in this stage needs both participants' active awareness in responding to one's request for intimacy. The request can come in the form of both physical or psychological. The sign also connotes that the request conducted by the main subject derived from the previous level signaling the main subject's willingness to bring their relationship to achieve the desired intimacy between partners. While permission, confirmation, and signaling plays a big part of Intensifying Level, the main subject participation and voluntary acts within the relationship is represented by the third verse signs. *I wish that I could take a journey through your mind* connoting the psychological request towards the woman that the main subject is available within the area. The use of physical or psychological favors are sometimes used to

validate the existence of the intensity of relationship (Knapp & Anita, 2009). This kind of personal disclosure is addressed towards the female subjects projecting the main subject vulnerability, an indication of change in personal boundaries and space as a new expectation for future relationships. Such disclosure is increased within the stage where the increment could occur in a short or even longer time period. Thus why the request that has been made within the relationship is necessary to be evenly accepted or else the relationship will be unbalanced which results to enter the Coming Apart Process.

Within the Coming Together Process of Relational Development, the subject's progress also goes through three components of love. As the key relationship is figured as a personal relationship, the development within stages is noticed to contain the involvement of intimacy and passion. The use of Triangular Theory of Love could help in determining which type of love on a scale of the three components of love which are intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment (Myers, 2023 ;Sternberg, 1986).

Table 3. 18 I Wanna Know Connotation

Bridge	<i>Cause I only wanna make you happy/ From the bottom of my heart, it's true</i>	Triangular Theory of Love; Intimacy
Verse 3	<i>I do believe that there's a love you wanna share/ I'll take good care of you, lady, have no fear</i>	

The sign *Cause I only wanna make you happy/ From the bottom of my heart, it's true* connotes the main subject's intimacy towards his desired woman. Intimacy is from the Latin word that translates to deepest and intimate. The meaning refers to mutual trust, openness, and sharing in a relationship. The connotation meaning of the sign in a deeper sense projects the closeness feeling and mutual support the main subject offers towards the woman. Though intimacy can be controlled towards the stages the subjects are going through, the sincerity, openness, and the voluntary act of understanding that the male subject gives is not limited to his awareness, but the intimate feelings are also being projected towards the woman and the relationship.

Intimacy is an emotion that makes people feel close to each other, such as respect, affection, and mutual support (Agusdwitanti, 2015). The sign in the third verse *I do believe that there's a love you wanna share/ I'll take good care of you, lady, have no fear* is the sign that connotes an assurance towards the female subject, ensuring that she feels safe in expressing her emotion. The mutual openness between partners makes people feel safe and close to each other so they can share feelings related to intellectual, physical, sexual, and

emotional problems (Muloko et al., 2020). The sign also connotes the woman's feelings within the development of the relationship that she might feel uncomfortable in showing the love she has due to the connection of her previous relationship.

Table 3. 19 I Wanna Know Connotation

Verse 1	<i>You kiss my lips and then you take my breath away</i>	Triangular Theory of Love: Passion
Chorus	<i>I wanna know what turns you on</i>	

Passion is also found in the two subjects' interaction in the song narrative. The first verse and the chorus *You kiss my lips and then you take my breath away*, and *I wanna know what turns you on*, continuously connote the participation in each subject towards the motivational involvement related to physical attraction. The passion component within the relationship directs the relationship towards romantic and loving phenomena. The passion component tends to have a massive impact on the role within the short-term relationship than the long-term one (Myers, 2023). Hence, the sign also connotes a non-bonding relationship within an undetermined close relationship.

3. OMG – Usher featuring Will.I.Am (2010)

a. Lyrical Structure

The lyrical structure of OMG by Usher featuring Will.I.Am consists of two verses, pre-chorus, and chorus. The songwriting background emerged from the singer's personal relationship experience.

Table 3. 20 OMG Lyrical Structure

Structure	Lyrics
Verse 1	<i>I fell in love with shawty when I seen her on the dance floor/ She was dancing sexy, dropping low/ Never ever has a lady hit me on the first sight/ This was something special, this was just like dynamite/ Honey got a booty like pow, pow, pow/ Honey got some boobies like wow, oh wow/ Girl, you know I'm loving your, loving your style/ Check, checking you out like.</i>
Pre-Chorus	<i>Oh She got it all/ Sexy from her head to toe/ And I want it all, it all, it all.</i>
Chorus	<i>Baby, let me love you down/ There's so many ways to love you/ Baby, I can break you down/ There's so many ways to love you/ Got me like, "Oh my gosh", I'm so in love/ I found you finally, you make me want to say/ Oh, oh my gosh.</i>
Verse 2	<i>Feel so hot for honey out of all the girls up in the club/ This one got me whipped just off of one look, yep, I fell in love/ This one something special, this one just like dynamite/ Out of sight/ Fell in love with honey like my, oh my/ Honey looking wonderful, fly, so fly/ Honey like a supermodel, my, oh, my/ Baby, how you do that, make a grown man cry?</i>

b. Semiotic Analysis

1) Preview on Sign, Denotation, Connotation, and Myth

Table 3. 21 OMG Semiotic Analysis

SIGN	DENOTATION	CONNOTATION	MYTH
<i>I fell in love with shawty when I seen her on the dance floor/ She was dancing sexy, pop-pop-popping, dropping, dropping low</i>	The subject is attracted to a woman when he sees her on the dance floor. subject is intentionally letting her body fall near to the bottom when she was dancing in a sexual manner.	The main setting is the dance floor. It indicates subjects as strangers, where the meetings between them are unplanned. It also depicts a successful attempt by the female subject to attract male attention to her physical appearance.	Narrative settings: Club, Night Life.
<i>Never ever has a lady hit me on the first sight</i>	The experience that the subject is never sexually attracted to a woman on a first encounter.		
<i>Feel so hot for honey out of all the girls up in the club</i>	An expression where the subject is conscious that the woman is giving the subject a sexual attraction among all the people in the club.		
<i>I fell in love with shawty when I seen her on the dance floor</i>	The subject is attracted to a woman when he sees her on the dance floor.	The term of endearment <i>shawty</i> , <i>baby</i> , and <i>honey</i> connotes an agreement from the male side to conduct his act of scoring.	Terms of Endearment (ToE): 'Honey, shawty, and baby'.
<i>Baby, let me love you down</i>	An invitation to ask the person for sexual activity.		
<i>Baby, I can break you down</i>	Asking the other person to surrender.		
<i>Fell in love with honey like my, oh my</i>	A declaration to a person that they are beginning to develop a feeling of affection towards someone.		
<i>Honey looking wonderful, fly, so fly</i>	Compliment being given to the woman		

<i>Oh She got it all/ And I want it all, it all, it all!</i>	The woman obtained everything and the subject desire to have want everything.	An implicit flirting behavior and motives from the female subject and flirtatious tactics of verbal communication by the male subject.	Flirting behavior
<i>Baby, let me love you down/ There's so many ways to love you/ Baby, I can break you down</i>	There are different ways to have a personal attachment to the woman		
<i>Honey got a booty like pow, pow, pow</i>	A woman who has sexy buttocks.	Flattery language as flirting tactics, but also depict an implicit idea of sexual objectification.	Sexual Objectification
<i>Honey got some boobies like wow, oh wow</i>	The woman has wonderful breasts.		
<i>Sexy from her head to toe</i>	Declaration referring to the object's entire body being sexually stimulating.		
<i>This one got me whipped just off of one look, yep, I fell in love</i>	The power the woman has is dominating the subject within their relationship and the subject finds it to be attractive.	The intention or an expectation in obtaining his mating goals. Though the lyrics blatantly use the terms 'love', the meaning behind the word is intended as an exaggerated expression of excitement at that moment when the male subject receives the signal. It also connotes to the expression of desire and implicit meaning of casual sexual relationship is conserved under the word 'dynamite'.	Casual Sexual Relationship; hook-up
<i>This one something special, this one just like dynamite</i>	Describing the woman as unique and exciting.		

2) Denotation

The first denotation meaning from the first sentence at the beginning of the first verse sung by Usher that is taken as sign is *I fell in love with shawty when I seen her on the dance floor.*

Table 3. 22 OMG Denotation

Vese 1	<i>I fell in love with shawty when I seen her on the dance floor</i>
	<i>She was dancing sexy, dropping low</i>
	<i>Never ever has a lady hit me on the first sight</i>
	<i>Honey got a booty like pow, pow, pow</i>
	<i>Honey got some boobies like wow, oh wow</i>

Through the findings, there is no definite definition found in any official English dictionary on the word *shawty*. On the other hand, the word is classified as a slang word as it is described in the Urban Dictionary (2010) that term is used as a referring to an attractive young woman. On the other hand, *I fell in love* is translated to be attracted to someone and begin to love them (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). Hence the denotation meaning in *I fell in love with shawty when I seen her on the dance floor* is the subject is attracted to a woman when he sees her on the dance floor.

In *She was dancing sexy, dropping low*, the sign contains a denotation meaning of *dropping low*. The meaning of the word is split into two individual words ‘dropping’ and ‘low’. Dropping, with drop as the base word, is identified to be a transitive word as an act to let something fall by accident (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d). Low is an adjective it defines an object that is near the bottom of something (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d). Grammarly the two words are a continuation of an action where a drop is added with an

adjective (low). This concludes the denotation meaning of the sign is the subject is intentionally letting her body fall near to the bottom when she was dancing in a sexual manner.

Hit me on if it is read by its literal meaning as an action that the subject is hit by someone or something. The base word of *hit me on* is *hit on* where it is identified as a phrasal verb to start talking to somebody that you are sexually attracted to (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d). On the other hand, never ever is described according to Collins Dictionary (n.d) as an empathic way to say never. *The first sight* within the sentence is translated to when you see a person for the first time (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d). Hence ***Never ever has a lady hit me on the first sight*** denotes the experience that the subject is never sexually attracted to a woman on a first encounter.

Pow, pow , pow in ***Honey got a booty like pow, pow, pow*** that acted as an expression that the common wording is unable to describe. Usually, the origin of the word is created from sounds, adding an exaggerated or hyperbolic feel to the sentence. **Pow, pow, pow** in accordance with the dictionary definition is the expression of the loud sound of an explosion, gunshot, or a person hitting another person (The Britannica Dictionary, n.d). Only in the case of the selected sentence with reference to a person (woman), the expression is related to sexual activity. The Urban Dictionary (n.d) translation to Pow Pow is a vigorous sexual activity. Whereas the word booty within the sign is understood as slang known as the buttocks

(Dictionary.com, n.d). Since the context of the sign is associated with a person, then the subject *honey is* translated to be an affectionate way to address a person (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). Hence the sign denotes a woman who has sexy buttocks.

The last denotation meaning of the first verse is ***Honey got some boobies like wow, oh wow***. The first denotative of the selected sentence is boobies. **Boobies** is a plural form of booby which translates to stupid person. The word is also a form of slang that translates to female breasts (Dictionary.com, n.d). Where else **wow** at the end of the sentence is translated to express surprise, wonder, or pleasure (Collins Dictionary, n.d). Hence the denotation of the sign is addressing that the woman has wonderful breasts.

Table 3. 23 OMG Denotation

Pre-Chorus	<i>Oh She got it all</i>
	<i>Sexy from her head to toe</i>
	<i>and I want it all, it all</i>

Oh She got it all within grammatical breakdown *she* is a pronoun that is used by the subject in referring to a person who is a woman that has previously been mentioned (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). *Got* is a past tense from get which is defined as a verb of to obtain or earning something (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). Whereas *all* in the sentence is a determiner adjective with meaning the whole of (Cambridge Dictionary,

n.d). Thus the denotative meaning of the sign is that the woman obtained everything.

Sexy in the definition of dictionary on Merriam Webster (n.d) is sexually suggestive or stimulating. Continuing the last sentence of the pre-chorus, *head to toe* direct meaning is the entirety of the body (Dictionary.com, n.d). Thus the denotation of the sign *Sexy from her head to toe*, is a declaration referring to the object's entire body being sexually stimulating. On the other hand, the denotation of *and I want it all, it all* of the lyrics come from the word *want*. According to Dictionary.com (n,d), the word *wants* as a verb that is followed by an object in a sentence is defined as a feeling of need or a desire. Meaning the denotative of the lyric is the subject feeling to have everything.

Table 3. 24 OMG Denotation

Chorus	<i>Baby, let me love you down</i>
	<i>There's so many ways to love you</i>
	<i>Baby, I can break you down</i>

Love you down and *break you down* in plain Sight seems to have a similar wordplay between the sentences with two distant means. Loving someone down as in the sentence of let me love you down is a slang term for having a sexual intercourse with a person (Urban Dictionary, n.d). Therefore the denotative meaning of the *baby let me love you down* is an invitation to ask the person for sexual activity. The second sign of the chorus is *There's so many ways to love you*. The

sentence contains *many ways* which translated to in many different ways (The Free Dictionary, n.d), while *to love* is acted as the main verb that translates to have a warm personal attachment to or deep affection for (Dictionary.com, n.d). This concludes to the denotation of the sign that there are different ways to have a personal attachment to the object (you). The last sign of the chorus, the definition of ‘breaking someone down’ is an act to force someone to give up and tell their secret or to do as said (The Free Dictionary, n.d). This led to lyric denotation of ***Baby, I can break you down*** as an act asking the other person to surrender.

Table 3. 25 OMG Denotation

Verse 2	<i>Feel so hot for honey out of all the girls up in the club</i>
	<i>This one got me whipped just off of one look, yep, I fell in love</i>
	<i>This one something special, this one just like dynamite</i>
	<i>Fell in love with honey like my, oh my</i>
	<i>Honey looking wonderful, fly, so fly</i>

The sign grammatical breakdown of ***Feel so hot for honey out of all the girls up in the club*** begins with *feel*. The word in the sentence is an intransitive verb where by definition is an act to be conscious of an inward impression, state of mind (Merriam Webster, n.d). The next word is *hot* where it translates to giving off heat (Dictionary.com, n.d). Hot can also be translated as a slang for a person that is sexually attractive or also translated to feel sexually attracted to a person (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d)

Thus the denotative of the sign is an expression where the subject is conscious that the object is giving the subject a sexual attraction among all the people in the club.

noun. Whereas related to describing a person with the word dynamite is translated into a person that is exciting (Collins Dictionary, n.d). While *special* is served as an adjective to *something* that translates to a distinct or particular kind. Meaning that the denotation of the sign is describing the person as unique and exciting.

The sign *Fell in love with honey like my, oh my* is focuses on two terms. The first term is *fell in love* where it acts as an idiom in the sign with meaning to be very attracted to someone and begin to love them (Cambridge Dictionary, n,d). Whereas for *honey* within the sign is The denotative meaning on the second verse of the song sung by Will.I.Am. *Whipped* with the base word whip is a phrasal verb to hit a person or an animal hard with a whip as a punishment (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d). According to Merriam Webster (n.d) the word whipped in slang used in a romantic relationship is to let their partner have great control over what they do. *This one got me whipped just off of one look, yep, I fell in love* denoting the power the object has is dominating the subject within their relationship and the subject finds it to be attractive.

In its direct denotation of the dictionary, *dynamite* within *This one something special, this one just like dynamite* is placed as an uncountable acted as a noun to a person, which according to

Cambridge Dictionary ([n.d](#)) is defined as an affectionate way in calling a person. Thus the sign denotes a declaration to a person that they are beginning to develop a feeling of affection towards someone.

The last denotation on the sign *Honey looking wonderful, fly, so fly* focuses on the use of the term *fly*. By definition, *fly* is a verb meaning to move through the air (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). However, in popular culture definition, *fly* is used as a slang word to describe an object as being stylish, or attractive (Dictionary.com, n.d). Hence, the denotative meaning of the sign is a compliment being given to the object.

3) Connotation & Myth

The greatest hits by Usher, OMG, gained its popularity from the negative reviews by music critics and listeners. The reputation of the song is widely agreed on by having a generally low songwriting quality and little narrative (Cole, 2010). Yet the song gained its success from the song presentation as a club-ready cut. Later the depiction is explained by Usher as the nightlife of a single man looking for easy love (Pluggedin, n.d).

Table 3. 26 OMG Connotation

Verse 1	<i>I fell in love with shawty when I seen her on the dance floor/ She was dancing sexy, pop-pop-popping, dropping, dropping low</i>	Narrative settings: Club, Night Life.
	<i>Never ever has a lady hit me on the first sight</i>	
Verse 2	<i>Feel so hot for honey out of all the girls up in the club</i>	

The club and nightlife narrative in the 2000 has become a part of a subculture. In western society, sexually mature females use a non-verbal facial expression as a signal for their interest towards the adult males (Bøhling, 2015). The signal is being delivered with physical appearance as the main determinant for people to communicate. This behavior is caused by its darkened and noisy environment, where the capability for conversation to happen is likely difficult to be comprehended. Hence the articulation for physical display is necessary to be exaggerated in order to achieve male attentiveness towards the female appearances (Grammer & Renninger, 2004).

The first verse is introduced through the male subject point of view as he wanders the dance floor; *I fell in love with shawty when I seen her on the dance floor/ She was dancing sexy, pop-pop-popping, dropping, dropping low*. The connotative meaning that presents in the lyrics are the main location of song settings and the interaction between subjects. The main setting is the dance floor. Bøhling (2015) observes how the dance floor is a key arena for the enjoyment of music, dancing, and as the night progresses for “blatant sexual encounters and scoring”. With the acknowledgment of the meaning of dance floor, the interaction that is done by the female subject is considered as signaling by dancing in a sexually suggestive manner. The action communicates as a signal for ‘willingness’ to be approached. *Never ever has a lady hit me on the first sight* connoting agreement and a positive response towards the signal. The lyric also connotes that the interaction indicates subjects as strangers, where the meet between them are unplanned. With the settings

and the interaction explained, the second verse *Feel so hot for honey out of all the girls up in the club* connotes a successful attempt done by the female subject in attracting the male attention towards her physical appearance. The act is supported later from the language used by the male subject in describing the interaction.

Table 3. 27 OMG Connotation

Verse 1	<i>I fell in love with shawty when I seen her on the dance floor</i>	Terms of Endearment (ToE): 'Honey, shawty, and baby'.
Chorus	<i>Baby, let me love you down</i>	
	<i>Baby, I can break you down</i>	
Verse 2	<i>Fell in love with honey like my, oh my</i>	
	<i>Honey looking wonderful, fly, so fly</i>	

The table above presents the terms of endearment that are often used within the song. The terms of endearment that can be identified throughout the song are *shawty*, *baby*, but one that frequently appears is *honey*. Terms of endearment (ToE) are mutually understood as a phrase or words that expresses love and affection in close relationships, often being addressed to women (Hildebreand et al., 2022). The close relationship that is categorized to be sensibly tolerated such as the use 'sweetie' when a father calls his daughter or 'baby' to call your significant other.

The later finding described the relationship between subjects as strangers. It is also acknowledged that communication between

subjects is a two way communication, although being addressed through the male point of view. The term of endearment *shawty*, *baby*, and *honey* connotes an agreement from the male side to conduct his act of scoring. With *honey* used frequently in the narrative, the second verse ***Fall in love with honey like my, oh my*** connotes to the expression of interest. The term resonates with Americanisms dictionary from the 1880s where *honey* is a synonym to lovers (Grząśko, 2015; Hendrickson, 2008). Furthermore, the endearment term that is applied within the song is not as innocent as it purposely meant in expressing love. As the relationship between subjects is acknowledged as strangers, the use of endearment terms towards adult women outside of close relationships could reflect and communicate sexism (Hildebreand et al., 2022). Added with the fact of the song narrative being conveyed through the male subject point of view, lyrics with terms of endearment are potentially turned towards sexual objectification.

Table 3. 28 OMG Connotation

Pre-Chorus	<i>Oh She got it all/ And I want it all, it all, it all</i>	<i>Flirting behavior</i>
Chorus	<i>Baby, let me love you down/ There's so many ways to love you/ Baby, I can break you down</i>	

The relationship of two subjects then grows from stranger into a potential mate. The relationship growth between subjects is figured through an interaction as flirting. The behavior is displayed as an attempt to gain a potential sexual or romantic interest where one utilizes suggestive haptic interaction or other

nonverbal messages to communicate a desire for increased relational intimacy (Clayson & Dutcher, 2010; Abrahams, 1994). *Oh She got it all/ And I want it all, it all, it all* connotes an implicit flirting behavior and motives from the female subject. Though it is described through the male standpoint, the description depicts a behavior that contains an explicit meaning or motives of the female subject. The behavior depicted is a way for the female to look for a short term relationship. The equation is proven through the exaggerated non-verbal cues and visuals towards the targeted subject, making their sexual availability known as flirting tactics. On the other hand, the desire to increase the personal intimacy between subjects through appearance, mood setting, and body language through male perception is also often being perceived on the point of sexual exploitability in employing tactics intended to acquire short-term sexual liaisons. The point of increment of personal intimacy from the male subject is depicted in *Baby, let me love you down/ There's so many ways to love you/ Baby, I can break you down* where the lyrics connotes the flirtatious tactics of verbal communication. Though men were assumed to be the ones who were less linguistically expressive, decades later the expressiveness in men's linguistic use shows that men are just as expressive. The statement of men's expressiveness in language in today's era is pointed out from either flattery or the use of TOE.

Table 3. 29 OMG Connotation

Verse 1	<i>Honey got a booty like pow, pow, pow</i>	Sexual Objectification
	<i>Honey got some boobies like wow, oh wow</i>	
Pre-Chorus	<i>Sexy from her head to toe</i>	

The first verse and the pre-chorus *Honey got a booty like pow, pow, pow/ Honey got some boobies like wow, oh wow* and *Sexy from her head to toe* connotes not only flattery language as flirting tactics but also depict an implicit idea of sexual objectification. As previously explained by Hall and friends, the region of objectifying gazes is the waist-hip regions though in general description of objectification towards women excludes the personality and subjectivity leaving only the body part as a physical object for male desire (Calogero, 2012). The act is depicted through specific body parts with inappropriate use of interjection at the end of the sentence.

It is also possible that the objectification occurring within flirting is due to assertion in male dominance between genders. This correlates to the opportunity within one night stand where it is done to boost the masculinity threats experienced by the male subject from his past relationship failure. Hence men would respond to situations that challenge the gender hierarchy by wishing to put women back in place, resulting in increased sexual objectification of women as an attempt to reaffirm one's manhood.

Table 3. 30 OMG Connotation

Verse 2	<i>This one got me whipped just off of one look, yep, I fell in love</i>	Casual Sexual Relationship; hook-up
	<i>This one something special, this one just like dynamite</i>	

As the nightlife and club settings between two strangers are the highlight of the narrative, the environment is closely associated with sexual practice as a form of entertainment. Often, the form of sexual practice that is intended is not targeted into the type of a long-term relationship but rather casual sexual relationship. Casual sex is varied and complex it is defined as a consensual sexual activity that occurs between two people (e.g., strangers, recent acquaintances or friends) outside of a committed or long-term relationship (Pedersen, et al. 2017; Paul, McManus et al. 2000). *This one got me whipped just off of one look, yep, I fell in love* connotes the intention or an expectation in obtaining his mating goals. Though the lyrics blatantly use the terms ‘love’, the meaning behind the word is intended as an exaggerated expression of excitement at that moment when the male subject receives the signal.

In correlation to the mating intention, one night stands, better known as part of casual sexual relationship, has been associated with psychology as an ego boost, opportunity to be naughty, and to experience the thrills (Farvid & Braun, 2017). With the acknowledgment of the subject's situation and intention, the connotation meaning in *This one something special, this one just like dynamite* captured a depiction of desire. The expression

of desire and implicit meaning of a casual sexual relationship is conserved under the word ‘dynamite’. As the behavior of the actual dynamite is explosive, the word used when intended for a person is indicating that the person is excited. The term meaning is then suitable to the previous findings to support ego boost and masculinity threats.

4. The Weeknd - Blinding Lights (2020)

a. Lyrical Structure

Blinding Lights, in Abel’s point of view, is a story of desperation, the urge to see someone in the middle of the night, late-night driving under the influence of substances, and loneliness. Primarily expresses the male character’s emotions and feelings in the story. The semiotic analysis of The Weeknd - Blinding Lights is expected to reveal the masculinity representation through in-depth research of the song based on the communication use of the song in that era.

Table 3. 31 Blinding Light Lyrical Structure

Structure	Lyrics
Verse 1	<i>I've been tryna call/ I've been on my own for long enough/ Maybe you can show me how to love, maybe/ I'm going through withdrawals/ You don't even have to do too much/ You can turn me on with just a touch, baby</i>
Pre-Chorus	<i>I look around and Sin City's cold and empty/ No one's around to judge me/ I can't see clearly when you're gone.</i>
Chorus	<i>I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights/ No, I can't sleep until I feel your touch/ I said, ooh, I'm drowning in the night/ Oh, when I'm like this, you're the one I trust</i>
Verse 2	<i>I'm running out of time/ 'Cause I can see the sun light up the sky/ So I hit the road in overdrive, baby, oh</i>
Bridge	<i>'m just calling back to let you know (Back to let you know)/</i>

	<i>I could never say it on the phone (Say it on the phone)/ Will never let you go this time</i>
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b. Semiotic Analysis

1) Preview on Sign, Denotation, Connotation, and Myth

Table 3. 32 Blinding Lights Semiotic Analysis

	SIGN	DENOTATION	CONNOTATION	MYTH
I've been tryna call	The subject have continuously been trying to reach the female character by phone for a relatively long time.		An ongoing act that occurs from the past to the present time. The subject uses a phone call as a way of communicating his emotion to the female subject in the narrative.	Way of communication: Phone call, one way
<i>I'm just calling to let you know/ I could never say it on the phone.</i>	The subject is reaching the object via phone call to give information/ the subject's request to meet in person to give out the information rather than a telephone call			
<i>I'm going through withdrawals</i>	The subject is facing a problem with something from the past, possibly substance.		The mental condition related to being overwhelmed or having too many emotions to deal with in a short period of time. Such behavior related to the possibilities of alcohol intoxication indicated with agitated, restless, and craving	Mental State; sensitive, substance use
<i>I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights</i>	The subject is distracted by emotions.			
<i>I said, ooh, I'm drowning in the night</i>	The subject feels overwhelmed and unable to deal with both of his physical or emotional problems at that night			
<i>So I hit the road in overdrive baby.</i>	The subject is speeding in his vehicle.			
<i>I've been on my own for long enough Maybe you</i>	The subject of the song requests for a possibility of a strong affection from the other person he has		The main subject cause of relapsing is due to his lack of self-control for his desire, which is the female subject. The subject state of mind is suitable with loneliness since the main	

<i>can show me how to love, maybe</i>	had connection with in the past.	storyline of the narrative is lack of companionship. Dependency, loneliness, desperation, craving.	
<i>You can turn me on with just a touch, baby</i>	The subject is aroused by a female.		
<i>I can't see clearly when you're gone</i>	The subject is unable to function normally out of the presence of the object.		
<i>No, I can't sleep until I feel your touch</i>	The subject is unable to fall asleep without the presence of the object		
<i>Oh, when I'm like this, you're the one I trust</i>	The subject trusts the other person's presence specifically in that particular manner.		
<i>Will never let you go this time.</i>	The subject is not wanting to release or give up control on someone		
<i>I'm running out of time</i>	The subject does not have much more time to complete something		
<i>Cause I can see the sunlight up the sky</i>	The subject witnessing the sun rise.		
<i>So I hit the road in overdrive baby.</i>	The subject is speeding in his vehicle.	The subject characteristic in the narrative is not afraid to display both his feminine and masculine traits even when his environment is dominated with hyper masculine behavior.	Masculine Representation
<i>I look around and Sin City's cold and empty</i>	The subject is describing Sin City as an empty metropolitan area that lacks human emotion		
<i>No one's around to judge me</i>	The opinion on others does not affect the subject in the song.		

2) Denotation

The first verse in the song primarily describes the expression of 'I' as the first subject, identified as a male character, towards the second subject, 'you', and 'baby' identified as a female character in the song narrative. One that will be analyzed is the first verse.

Table 3. 33 Blinding Lights Denotation

Verse 1	<i>I've been tryna call</i>
	<i>Maybe you can show me how to love, maybe</i>
	<i>I'm going through withdrawals</i>
	<i>You can turn me on with just a touch, baby</i>

The first denotation on the first verse is contained in *I've been tryna call* as a sign. By grammatically analyzing the structure of the sentence it is identified as a present perfect continuous tense; 'I have been trying to call'. Grammatically the sentence is depicted for a single activity that began in the past and is still continuing (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). Meaning that the denotative of the sentence is 'I' have continuously been trying to reach the female character by phone for a relatively long time.

The next denotation meaning is *Maybe you can show me how to love, maybe*. The sentences of the lyrics are introduced with the word 'maybe' which express the meaning of uncertainty. According to Collins Dictionary (n.d), maybe can also refer to something that may possibly happen in the future. The word is then continued with a request with 'show me how to love'. First

breakdown of the sentence contains 'show-me' where it translates as a demand of proof before being convinced (Dictionary.com, n.d). There are several definitions of love as a noun, one that is considered to be related the most to the context of the sentence is a strong affection for another arising out of personal ties (Merriam Webster, n.d). Hence from the denotation meaning obtained from the sign is that the subject of the song requests for a possibility of a strong affection from the other person he has had connection with in the past.

The next sign is *I'm going through withdrawals* with *withdrawals* as the denotation. Based on Merriam-Webster is defined as the act of taking back or away something that has been granted or possessed (Merriam Webster, n.d). *Withdrawals* can also be found in medical terms to describe the physical and mental symptoms that a person has when they suddenly stop or cut back the use of an addictive substance, such as opiates and opioids, nicotine products, or alcohol (NCI, n.d). The sign denotes that the subject is facing a problem with something from the past, possibly substance.

The sign *You can turn me on with just a touch, baby* has several denotations within the sentences which are *turn me on* and *baby*. The words *turn me on* in the lyric is described as a phrasal verb derived from the noun 'turn on'. Depending on the word play, the term is able to be translated into formal and informal means. The formal means is described as something that arouses someone's interests or excitement. While in informal word play the according to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d) are inclined towards sexual arousal or interest in a person.

In the same sentence, the male character ended the sentence with the word *baby*. In definition, *baby* is defined as a very young child that is not yet able to talk or walk (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). By informal definition within the dictionary, *baby* has a similar meaning to darling. It is used as an affectionate way in addressing someone notable female (Collins Dictionary, n.d). Hence the denotation from the sign is that the subject is aroused by a female.

Table 3. 34 Blinding Lights Denotation

Pre-Chorus	<i>I look around and Sin City's cold and empty</i>
	<i>No one's around to judge me</i>
	<i>I can't see clearly when you're gone.</i>

I look around and Sin City's cold and empty generally describe the settings of the song. *Sin City* alone is a nickname to Las Vegas, Nevada and Lynn Massachssetts (Dictionary.com, n.d). The term is also used in describing a place, usually a metropolitan area that features 'sinful' attractions. *Cold* and *empty* in the sentence serve as the adjective, where cold is translated to lack of human emotion or enthusiasm (Merriam Webster, n.d). Empty on the other hand is translated to containing nothing (Merriam Webster, n.d). Hence the sign denotative to the subject is describing Sin City as an empty metropolitan area that lacks human emotion.

The continuation of the above denotation meaning on the pre-chorus is on the sign *No one's around to judge me*. The denotation meaning based on grammatical order is 'no one'

translates as not a single person and ‘judge someone’ is defined as an act of expression on a bad opinion of someone’s behavior, often because the feeling of a better person you are (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). The denotation obtained from the above information is that the opinion on others does not affect the subject in the song.

The last part of the denotation means on the pre-chorus is *I can’t see clearly when you’re gone*. Here the subject is referred to as ‘I’ and the object as ‘you’ from a grammar perspective. The first definition of the sentence is ‘clear’ where it translates as an adjective as easy to perceive, understand, or interpret (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n,d). Next is ‘gone’ to be connected to a person translates to having left a place. Hence the denotation of the sentence is the subject is unable to function normally out of the presence of the object.

Table 3. 35 Blinding Lights Denotation

Chorus	<i>I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights</i>
	<i>No, I can't sleep until I feel your touch</i>
	<i>I'm drowning in the night</i>
	<i>Oh, when I'm like this, you're the one I trust</i>

The chorus with the sentence *I said, ooh, I’m blinded by the lights* at the chorus is a past participle of blind. Blinded here is defined according to Cambridge dictionary as an act to cause someone unable to see for either permanently or in a short period of time. To be continued with the word blind, lights presents as a noun in the sentence. Lights as a noun is a natural

agent that stimulates sight, but it can also be defined as an expression in someone's eyes indicating a particular emotion or mood (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d). By these two findings, it then denotes the meaning of the sentences that the subject is distracted by emotions.

The sentence in the lyric *No, I can't sleep until I feel your touch* denotes that the subject is unable to fall asleep without the presence of the object (*your touch*). This can be picked up through the word 'feel' as an experience of inability to experience something physically or emotionally (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). The emotion that the subject experienced is then continued with the denotation meaning of *drowning* in '*I'm drowning in the night*'. According to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d) *drowning* is described as a phrasal verb with means to have more of something than you are able to deal with. Hence the denotative of the sign is the subject feels overwhelmed and unable to deal with both of his physical or emotional problems at that night.

In this sentence, *when I'm like this* on *Oh, when I'm like this, you're the one I trust* is rather ambiguous. The word *like this* according to Merriam Webster (n.d) is an idiom that translates to in this manner. Hence the denotative meaning is that the subject trusts the other person's presence specifically in that particular manner.

Table 3. 36 Blinding Lights Denotation

Verse 2	<i>I'm running out of time</i>
	<i>Cause I can see the sunlight up the sky</i>
	<i>So I hit the road in overdrive baby</i>

The two continuous sentences in the second verse *I'm running out of time* denotation mean that the subject does not have much more time to complete something. Run out of time is classified as an idiom which means to have used most of the allotted time (The Free Dictionary, n.d). The sign *Cause I can see the sunlight up the sky* denoted the subject witnessing the sunrise. The sentence refers to the process of the sun emerging to the surface of the sky or else understood as sunrise (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). The last part on the second verse that contains denotation is *So I hit the overdrive baby* on the word 'overdrive', where the word acted as a noun according to Oxford Learner's Dictionary (n.d) is an extra high gear in a vehicle that is used when driving at high speeds. Meaning that the sign denotes the subject is speeding in his vehicle.

Table 3. 37 Blinding Lights Denotation

Bridge	<i>I'm just calling to let you know</i>
	<i>I could never say it on the phone</i>
	<i>Will never let you go this time.</i>

In the last bit of the song's lyrical structure, *I'm just calling to let you know* denotes to the subject is reaching the object via

phone call to give information. *I could never say it on the phone* denote the subject's request to meet in person for better circumstances to give out the information rather than through a telephone call. This definition is obtained with the word 'never' as it translates to not in any circumstances at all (Collins Dictionary, n.d). On the other hand, *Will never let you go this time* denotes information the subject is not want to release or give up control of someone (The Free Dictionary, n.d).

3) Connotation & Myth

The connotation of Blinding Lights through verses will further reveal the emotional state and expression of the main subject of the song.

Table 3. 38 Blinding Lights Connotation

Verse 1	<i>I've been tryna call.</i>	Way of communication: Phone call, one way communication.
Bridge	<i>I'm just calling to let you know/ I could never say it on the phone.</i>	

From several sentences that are in the lyric, it can be concluded that the situation and the act by the main subject is an ongoing act that occurs from the past to the present time. Here the subject uses a phone call as a way of communicating his emotion to the female subject in the narrative. The act is represented with sentences from the first verse (*I've been tryna call*) and the bridge (*I'm just calling to let you know/ I could never say it on the phone*). The song continuously illustrates a one way communication of 'I' attempting to reach the female

character via phone call. The narrative also implicitly implies that the communication is a one way communication for there is no implicit attempt that is shown by the female subject in replying to the phone call through the subject description in the narrative.

Table 3. 39 Blinding Lights Connotation

Verse 1	<i>I'm going through withdrawals</i>	Mental state; sensitive, substance use.
Chorus	<i>I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights</i>	
	<i>I said, ooh, I'm drowning in the night</i>	
Verse 2	<i>So I hit the road in overdrive baby.</i>	

The emotional condition of the main character is included within the song both direct and indirect. The first direct connotation meaning contains *I'm going through withdrawals and I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights/ I said, ooh, I'm drowning in the night* can be found on the first verse and the chorus. The sentence is a confession from the main subject that he is not fine emotionally. Both expressions of withdrawal and drowning connote the mental condition related to being overwhelmed or having too many emotions to deal with in a short period of time. From the denotation meaning of 'withdrawals', if connected to the expression of 'blind' and 'drowning' it can be drawn to the possibility of substance usage or a sign of addiction. Even though there is no direct mention of the type of substance that the main subject is undertaking, the connotation meaning in the selected sentences represents the main subject behavior to the possibilities of alcohol

intoxication. An individual who goes through withdrawals is able to be identified with symptoms of feeling agitated, restless, and craving (ADF, n.d).

This symptom is correlated to the second verse *So I hit the road in overdrive baby* as a representation of the feeling of agitation and restlessness. The above sentence, if connected to the selected sentences in both the first verse and the chorus, reveal a sudden alcohol intake after detoxification by the main subject recognized as a relapse response. Overdrive from a medical perspective is the state of brain condition being overactive where usually found in withdrawal syndrome on alcohol use. The explanation connotes that the main subject state of mind and act is affected by alcohol intoxication.

Table 3. 40 Blinding Lights Connotation

Verse 1	<i>I've been on my own for long enough</i>	Dependency, loneliness, desperation, craving.
	<i>Maybe you can show me how to love, maybe</i>	
	<i>You can turn me on with just a touch, baby</i>	
Pre-chorus	<i>I can't see clearly when you're gone.</i>	
Chorus	<i>No, I can't sleep until I feel your touch</i>	
	<i>Oh, when I'm like this, you're the one I trust</i>	
Bridge	<i>Will never let you go this time.</i>	

A relapse encounter in alcohol intake that is experienced by the main subject is due to his inability in controlling his craving. This depicts that the main subject cause of relapsing is due to his lack of self-control for his desire, which is the female subject. This depiction can be seen through the connotation meaning in the first verse *Maybe you can show me how to love, maybe* and *You can turn me on with just a touch, baby*. The continuation of the connotation meaning on main subject cause of relapses able to conceive the motive of his withdrawals. To better understand the motive, first it is necessary to identify the intention before the relapse arises. *I've been on my own for long enough*, a sentence taken from the first verse where it translates the main subject state of mind as loneliness. In this particular narrative, the connotation of the subject state of mind is suitable with loneliness since the main storyline of the narrative is lack of companionship. This is aligned with what loneliness is, an emotional distress for unmet needs of human connectivity and companionship (Chai, 2022). The loneliness that is experienced by the main subject is suspected for a lack of close confidants who he can rely on for support. This emotional need is what next supports his desperation and need for the female character in the narrative where loneliness later becomes a supported action in subjects' alcohol intakes. This is aligned with several studies that show people who experience loneliness have a high possibility of substance abuse and mental health problems (Schwartz, 2020).

Another implication implied within the lyric is also able to connote meaning that the craving happens only at night time while being intoxicated. This behavior is depicted with *I can't*

see clearly when you're gone on the pre-chorus as the effect of the alcohol intakes as impaired vision, reflexes, while *No, I can't sleep until I feel your touch* is the night time indicator. The behavior of longingness at night time is common to find. With loneliness coming in the way, night time can be a reason for rumination to emerge. Commonly, rumination tends to be experienced when you feel alone and free from distraction where this particular situation often occurs before bed.

Table 3. 41 Blinding Lights Connotation

Verse 2	<i>I'm running out of time</i>	Time limit.
	<i>Cause I can see the sunlight up the sky</i>	
	<i>So I hit the road in overdrive baby.</i>	

The second verse illustrates the main subject as being in a hurry is illustrated with *I'm running out of time* and *Cause I can see the sunlight up the sky*. Both sentences represent the connotation meaning that there is a specific time limit in main subject action for his craving to be accomplished. The time limit that is depicted is before dawn, where it indicates the appearance of indirect sunlight on earth's atmosphere. Though it is unclear about the amount of sunlight that appears in the sky as it is described in the lyric, the appearance of sunlight is broken down into three major components; visible light, ultraviolet light, and infrared radiation (Britannica, 2022). The component that is responsible for the varying color at different times of day is the visible light, which is better described as solar radiation. On its path through the atmosphere, solar radiation is weakened by the atmosphere and scattered by air

and dust molecules. In that process, the long passage of blue wavelengths is scattered leaving a blue tint known as dawn. Hence the connotation meaning of the sentences is dawn as the time limit for the main subject to conduct his action.

Table 3. 42 Blinding Lights Connotation

Pre-Chorus	<i>I look around and Sin City's cold and empty</i>	Masculine Representa
	<i>No one's around to judge me</i>	tion

The main subject in the narrative is described to be careless and aggressive by the lyric *No one's around to judge me* where the setting culture in the narrative is depicted with *I look around and Sin City's cold and empty*. The connotation meaning of the settings is originates from Basin City inside the 2005 graphic comic Sin City by Frank Miller with noir stylization. The Basin City itself is inspired from Las Vegas, Nevada settings; located in the western part of the United States, the careless characteristic, high level of crime and prostitution that leads to the expression with male-focus entertainment area. The connotation here explains that 'I' characteristic in the narrative is not afraid to display both his feminine and masculine traits even when his environment is dominated with hyper masculine behavior.

CHAPTER IV DISCUSSION

The chapter will discuss the correlation between the findings and theory to answer the question: How have the decades of R&B music sung by male artists portrayed the dynamic of masculinity from 1958 to 2020? To ascertain the depiction of masculinity dynamics of the four decades represented by four popular songs such as Blinding Lights by The Silhouettes (1958), I Wanna Know by Joe (2000), OMG by Usher featuring Will.I.Am (2010), and Blinding Lights by The Weeknd (2020). The discussion will begin with the findings of the four samples' similarity in theme within the song narrative. All samples are classified as songs that contain personal or close relationships from each subject's point of view. Since the sample is gathered to represent each decade, the depiction of men's masculinity will be supported by the growth of heterosexual romantic relationships. Furthermore, the identification of masculinity dynamics and its relation to the culture within the society will be directed based on Hegemonic Masculinity Theory (HMT), and Inclusive Masculinity Theory (IMT) which categorised into three categories as seen below on the table:

Table 4. 1 Findings Discussion

YEAR	MASCULINITY IN POPULAR LOVE SONG	HEGEMONIC EMBODIMENT	NON-HEGEMONIC EMBODIMENT
1958 Get A Job by The Silhouettes	<p>TRADITIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH POST-WWII BACKGROUND:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binding gender roles • Masculinity quality is based on wealth, dominant power within society and in the family, physical strength. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-income African - American during recession (economical segregation) • heterosexual men indicator of success is wealth (breadwinner) • The subject fail to meet the standard of masculinity in showing dominance, providers, and respect from society 	
2000 I Wanna Know by Joe	<p>ROMANTIC LOVE WITH SECOND-WAVE FEMINISM BACKGROUND:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competing with affection than wealth from the liberation • emotional and psychological 	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional and affection displays • No threats on showing emotion & interdependent relationship

	compatibility		
2010 OMG by Usher ft Will.I.Am	CONFLUENT LOVE WITH CLUBBING BACKGROUND: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sex-focused relationship Men separated female worth to reaffirm manhood in post-industrial era 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggressive pretence & - detachment ToE & SO is use to assert powerful masculine persona (dominance) Short term relationship caused by manhood fragility (one night stand) 	
2020 Blinding Lights by The Weeknd	CONFLUENT LOVE WITH INTERNET DATING BACKGROUND: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> liberation in values and relationship expectation The freedom in relationship value on both gender caused fragility and ambiguity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detachment, sexual - aggression, drug abuse (intoxication) threats in manhood quality that leads to Gender Roles Stress. Booty call to boost men's ego 	

A. Masculinity Through the Lens of Popular Love Song

The social condition is mirrored by its consumption, often professed by mainstream media, such as popular music from the musical genre (Dibben, 1999). The reflection on popular music in media experienced by the community is different based on the historical period in which it was popularized. Cultural, historical, and geographic aspects of where it was popularized are included in determining the social condition and response to gender comprehension (Avery et al., 2017; Cooper, 1985). On the other hand, the selected genre derived from part of the cultural representation of African-American culture. Often, R&B talks about the experience of black people's lives, from economic and racial issues to relationships. Taken from the roots, it has always spoken about the reality of living as a black person as it became one of the political tools in liberating the community from the mainstream. Only in the beginning of 1940-1950 the genre is not explicitly themed in political matters as the social and cultural changes set the tone for American youth in civil rights activism and ethnic consciousness (Puryear, 2016).

With the evolution of the contemporary era, relationships became popular among other themes. The popularity may have been caused by the emotional and psychological bond linked to all races and backgrounds. This is why the discussion about including heterosexual relationships in depicting gender experiences is taken from the song narrative. The four samples project similar narration of man and woman relationships communicated through the black male point of view. In portraying masculinity, the development of heterosexual relationships becomes a medium worth looking into in depicting the growth of the masculinity dynamic. The common close relationship structure adapted from the song sample in 1958 is the traditional relationship. The relationship structure is due to the condition in the United States after WWII, where gender roles remain binding. The expected roles within traditional relationships of males within a family are proposed to be the sole providers. This is related to the masculinity quality in the related era based on wealth, dominant power within society and in the family, and physical strength. Moreover, the type of structure of the relationship remains continued in today's relationship structure (Morill, 2006).

In 2000, popular music began portraying romantic love as a central theme. The concept can be found at the beginning of a long-term relationship, where romantic feelings are often shared between individuals but without connection. This aligns with the theme of *I Wanna Know* by Joe, which portrays a black man pursuing a deep connection and highlights the presence of intimacy and passion (Shulman, 2011). The traits that are shown within the romantic relationship in this era are influenced by the second wave of feminism, where the image of the male breadwinner is challenged by an educated, sexually liberated female (Dei-Sharpe, 2019). The view directly changes the perspective on monogamous relationships based on economic survival into an equal exchange of emotional, gratification, and

economic support (Eaton & Rose, 2011). The notion of change in the culture caused men to adjust the mating approach through emotional compatibility as desirable to obtain a long-term relationship to keep both parties satisfied.

Entering the 21st century, the notion of the monogamous relationship is taking a turn. Clubbing culture started to influence the way of the youth in defining what close relationships are. The surge of club-related music portrayed within most popular songs in the late 2000s affected the shifting views on love. The selected sample in 2010 portrays the acceptance of a relationship focused on sex known as casual sex or hookups (Dei-Sharpe, 2019). The notion is proposed as the most popular contemporary relationship style that enables individual needs for sex to satiate themselves. The sample of the song sung by Usher ft Will.I. AM brings the narration about boys having fun in a club. The singer's perspective as a man portrays the inclusion and objectification of women's bodies. The traits that are conducted by the male subject are defined as scoring, which is common to be found in people's interactions inside the club. The scoring tactic applied by the male subjects within the song narration is through verbal language, where heterosexual men often target highly attractive women to be objectified (Riemer et al., 2017). Men direct more objectifying gazes at body parts that are informative for fertility, such as the waist-hip regions than at other body parts (Hall et al., 2011). This definition defines how the type of relationship first recognized as romantic love enters the confluent love. Within the confluent love, men begin to separate the inner quality of a woman from physical attractiveness as they no longer feel the need to be in a committed relationship to fulfill their satisfaction. The behavior of separating virtuous and worthy women is also caused by a response to the post-industrial era from men to gain self-worth and agency to reaffirm their manhood (Dahl et al., 2015).

Still, in the era of the 21st century, the definition of close relationships is similar to the late 2000s. Confluent love remains the practice of relationships as the internet takes over the dating world. With the existence of dating apps, the form of confluent love causes a form of liberation in the culture as it projects that individual has conflicting values and relationship expectations (Illouz, 2012). The sample of the song in 2020 projects exactly what a confluent love is. Unlike in the past, both genders can choose any relationship and value. Only the downfall of the liberation in this era caused ambiguity within a relationship that caused fragility and vulnerability. The explanation is suitable in supporting the narrative of the sampled song *Blinding Lights*, which became popular in 2020 and illustrated the main subject's attachment to the uncommitted relationship, causing him to experience anxiety. The unstable relationship the subject experiences within the song projects the hypermasculine traits for his only sexual consumption and satisfaction. It is necessary to underline that the confluent relationship portrayed in the sample is *Booty Calls*. The method differs from a one-night stand, which involves an underlying friendship and longevity and may be characterized by emotionally intimate acts (Jonanson et al., 2009; Grello et al., 2006).

B. Hegemonic Embodiment

In answering the questions of the masculinity dynamics in each era, the representation of masculinity traits implied within the four samples has a distinct shift in community perspective. Seyla Benhabib (1987) argues that this conception of the human being is a product of Cartesian thinking that splits people into two halves: the 'rational' self that is associated with men and culture and the 'emotional' self that is associated with women and the private sphere. The idea separates people based on gender association from what is recognized as a constructed gender category. The category is what

defines people's relationship to privilege. The assumed relationship and privilege are inflicted on female, non-white, and non-gender binary men, which affects people's access to wide aspects of human needs due to patriarchal practice (Dei-Sharpe, 2019; Connell 1987, 1995, 2005). The proposal on hegemonic masculinity by Connells argues that society has its own hegemonic or idealized masculinity. The notion generalized in Western society in describing hegemonic men is associated with white men with hypermasculine displays. In this notion, black men are considered marginalized as they can strive but cannot achieve hegemony due to racialized whiteness. Therefore, to give agency to black men in accessing power, the updated HMT proposed to 'protest masculinity' that is offered to be adopted by individual black men to encounter white hegemony. Still, it is unfortunate that the existence of protest masculinity remains to put black men into the same category consisting of economic and social desperation. Other theories also continue the same formula by presenting black men in subordinate positions to their white counterparts. In MAT, to be considered as men, all men are presented with performing behavior to evoke respect from others, principally in asserting and resisting control from women. This is why black men are closely identified as possessing exaggerated aggression and other problematic methods to create a powerful masculine persona (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009, pp. 288-289).

With black men categorized as subordinate, the chosen sample *Get a Job* by The Shilhouettes from 1958 represents masculine ideology for low-income African American males interconnected with race and class (Bowleg, 2004). The notion is appropriate with the reality of the cultural condition when *Get A Job* is popularized. The song portrays the struggle experienced by black males in 1958 when the recession occurred. The recession caused a worldwide downturn in the economy. From a gender perspective, the indicator for a heterosexual male success level is associated with wealth. In

this era, males are expected to take a more active role, exert more effort, and couples sexual activity for marriage (Gantner, 2012). The anticipation of the role leads to what is known as the hierarchy of authority and power in the male spouse as a breadwinner. This creates certain pressure on the members of the relationship as society widely agrees that male roles are necessary to be fulfilled in maintaining happiness and stability within a traditional relationship (Gonalons-Pons & Gangl, 2021). The portrayal that is presented in Get a Job by The Silhouettes features the quality of a man who is unable to meet the standard of what is considered to be masculine. Binding gender roles in relationships and economic issues depicts society's adaptation of masculinity as hegemonic in 1958. The song portrays the experience of a man who fails to meet his designated position within the family structure in showing dominance or evoking respect from society. Rather than asserting and resisting control from women to be considered hegemonic men, the main subject within the Get a Job narrative portrays otherwise. This will diminish men's self-esteem and social status due to their inability to provide income (Gough & Novikova, 2020, pp.4).

Entering the 21st century, the sampled song OMG by Usher and Will.I.Am contributed to the portrayals of masculinity in 2010. Differing from the two previous decades, the masculinity depicted by Usher and Will.I.Am is evolving around the popular subculture recognized as clubbing. With the background narrative of the song, there are some methods and behaviors that are portrayed by the main subject to assert a powerful masculine persona. The behavior refers to the use of Terms of Endearment (ToE), Sexual Objectification (SO), and the act of scoring within the club. The behavior attempted by men in objectifying women whilst flirting is due to the assertion of male dominance within gender. Men would respond to situations that challenge the gender hierarchy by wishing to put women back into submissive roles, which resulted in increased sexual objectification to

reaffirm one's manhood (Bareket et al., 2020). This notion is also correlated to the heterosexual relationship on the confluent love identified as a one-night stand. The act of scoring in obtaining a short-term relationship is a result of manhood fragility in the era, as it is a method conducted by men to boost their ego. An opportunity to be naughty and to experience thrills (Farvid & Braun, 2017). This depicts the behavior of hegemonic masculinity on sexual prowess in showing dominance by stripping away the virtuous quality that is possessed by the woman due to the vast cultural changes and technology in the post-industrial era. The ease of accessing dating apps within the post-industrial era diminishes the existence of emotion and vulnerability from men as they no longer feel the need to portray emotion and vulnerability to satisfy their satisfaction and gain self-worth and agency.

The hegemonic embodiment is also visible within *Blinding Lights* by The Weeknd, which became a popular consumption in 2020. The song introduces the traits of a man that is hegemonic yet portrays another type of masculinity. In the previous findings, the settings, as well as the narrative, managed to be identified, which helps to elaborate on the masculinity portrayal. With the extension of clubbing culture circulating around the era, the visibility of hegemonic embodiment was represented through alcohol intoxication. Within many cultures, drinking and intoxication are often linked as part of masculinity construction to be more masculine by drinking heavily and becoming intoxicated (Moore, 2023; Hunt & Antin, 2019). The idea of intoxication in masculine portrayals within the sample is manifested by the behavior exposed by the image of disinhibition that leads to traditional manhood. Thus, the linkage of aggressiveness and risk-taking being implied affects the confluent relationship within the narrative. The assertion of sexual dominance is also implicitly portrayed through the motivation to attempt booty calls by the expectation of sexual access

(Jonason, 2009).

Another point concerning intoxication and masculinity is the effects men display after intoxication. Within the sampled song, the main subject shows attachment and desperation towards the women, considered non-hegemonic embodiment. On the contrary, the referral to needy behavior could lead to the men's insecurity or threats for the inability to fulfill traditional manhood, resulting in Gender Role Stress (GRS) (Leone et al., 2022). The occurrence of GRS that men experience causes a high level of stress as it creates anxiety following the threats related to masculinity (Leone et al., 2022; Vandello et al., 2009). In situations where men feel threatened, they become subordinate to women, the use of sexual aggression is conducted as a way to assert dominance and authority. Hence, the Blinding Lights portrayed hegemonic masculinity through booty calls and intoxication in showing aggression to reestablish their masculinity (Bosson & Vandello, 2009).

C. Non Hegemonic Embodiment

Hegemonic masculinity became the most favorable concept of how men and boys aspired to gain social capital. The idea of hegemonic masculinity was later challenged by inclusive masculinity within Anglo-American society in the 1980s, where the behavior of homophobia, homophobic, and compulsory heterosexuality was binding. The emergence of Inclusive Masculinity is identified along with homophobia culture, where the event created fear among the society in men's health. The event later affected gender expression among men, trying not to be perceived as gay and continuing with the archetype of masculine subjugation. Here, Inclusive Masculinity Theory can present the cultural complexity that Hegemonic Masculinity is unable to capture. The theory argues that profound changes in masculinity become less hierarchical and allow diverse forms of

masculinity to be evenly esteemed (Anderson, 2012) through the diminished process of homophobia.

A closer look into the selected sample popularized from 2000 *I Wanna Know* by Joe depicts an inclusive masculine behavior. The portrayal of an understanding and valuing of women as equal is proof of the fluidity of heterosexual men in that era. The involvement of heterosexual relationships in the era showed that men do not feel threatened in displaying emotional, relational, and interdependent relationships with their partners (Maricopa Open Digital Press, n.d). The behavior represents a fundamental shift in the practices of masculinities. With the reduced pressure on heterosexual men to prove their heterosexuality and manhood, men can hold a more liberal view and behavioral attitude outside of traditional gender expression into a more inclusive masculine behavior.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A. Summary

With black music entering the mainstream music industry, popular R&B music became one of the tools to represent cultural expression. The mainstream media were used to determine society's consumption and understand how social absorption occurs within the area. With Billboard as the barometer of popular music in the US, the four samples selected portray the public worldview and the alternative lifestyles geographically. With music as media of communication, the medium communicates the representation of masculinity dynamic due to the presence of sexual signification traits. This helps identify how men and masculinity are understood in the public reception in different periods that emerged from trends or popularity. As in the selected sample, the research figured out that the most popular theme in the musical genre revolves around romantic relationships of different backgrounds. This gives the perspective that the most relatable topic consumed by the mass media's major society revolves around the experience of relationships. The research also connects the dynamic of heterosexual relationships within the four samples to masculinity portrayal in each decade.

The research can identify that the sole archetype of masculinity adapted by men is hegemonic masculinity. The representation is considered a cultural expression used to define man's quality. Unfortunately, although hegemonic expression can change through time, the proposed idea of hegemonic masculinity is based on white men with hypermasculine displays. The theory is considered to be in contrast to the research focus, where the four selected samples represent the experience of black men in R&B music. However, the portrayal of black men in R&B music remains

to be classified with hegemonic masculinity categorized as subordinate. The representation of hegemonic masculinity is identified from 1958, 2010, and 2020. The portrayal of masculinity traits is fundamentally similar yet conducted in different approaches. In 1958, hegemonic masculinity was portrayed through the representation of material wealth and emotional stoicism. The hegemonic model is related to the background of the segregated era in American society. In this era, most music songwriting began to address the issues associated with the post-war period beyond interpersonal and group intimacy. The song *Get a Job* by The Silhouettes portrays a wage-earning man who is oriented to pursue economic gain, being rational, assertive, and physically-emotionally detached from their family and society to define himself as hypermasculine. The expected characteristic cannot meet the supposed breadwinner roles in the family where the gender roles are binding within the time.

In 2010, hegemonic masculinity was portrayed through clubbing culture, where the song portrays aggressive pretence and detachment. The vast development of technology in the dating culture of the 21st era causes confusion and fragility for an individual to engage in a committed relationship. Hence, clubbing culture and scoring is an ideal way to escape the risks of masculinity threats. Masculinity is portrayed with sexual objectification towards women and sexual exploitability in showing dominance. The behaviour conducted within the sample in 2010 also presents how the lifestyle in that era affected men's psychological condition. To feel like a man in such a confusing era, the emotional detachment and physical liaison targeted toward women is rising, which means that society's understanding of masculinity remains stuck to the traditional form of masculinity.

A similar trait is also being portrayed in the 2020 sample in *Blinding Lights* by The Weeknd. The song portrays a man who is emotionally detached from alcohol intoxication. A wide selection of communication tools in dating caused what is understood as Gender Role Stress towards men. The relation of GRS in masculinity is the emergence of insecurity and anxious feelings resulting from the unmet qualities of traditional manhood. In a condition where men's masculinity is threatened, one of the attempts to gain men's dominance is through aggression and reality detachment through intoxication, which is included within the 2020 sample. The display of alcohol abuse is attempted for men to feel in power under the influence where the drinker can behave in ways not ordinarily acceptable by societal norms within specific social settings. The man's justification to prove his manhood comes from the societal results at that time, where the higher expression of masculinity remains hegemonic.

On the other hand, the practice of masculinity was also found to have a shift. The shift from the traditional practice of masculinity portrayed in *I Wanna Know* by Joe is depicted by emotionally able men and intimacy towards women. The idea of sexual freedom for both men and women was celebrated in the 20th century, emerging from the results of the second-wave feminist movement. Along with the liberation, the need for men to prove their wealth to gain a significant other is no longer needed. In this era, competing with other men to obtain love from women was shown with emotional and psychological compatibility, which was portrayed by the song sampled in 2000. It is why the depiction of a man showing his support and affection to win a woman's heart remains to be seen as masculine, though it is apart from traditional masculinity.

In conclusion, the masculinity portrayal in 1958, 2000, 2010, and 2020 fluctuated along with time and social understanding. The depiction of the

dynamic of masculinity in R&B music shows that the hegemonic structure can become less hierarchical and allows other forms of masculinity to be adapted by men. Although some non-hegemonic embodiment was tolerable at the end of the 20th century, public reception in popular music in the 21st century remained grounded on hegemonic masculinity disregarding race.

B. Research Limitations

The research limitation is on the research object in finding the archive of the Billboard 100 Year End Chart on the older year. Other than that, the reference to masculinity and R&B music is minimal, along with the specific terms in the genre that are not documented or discussed in media.

C. Recommendations

For future researcher with related topics, it is suggested to provide an intersectional framework for further analysis regarding race and culture to better represents the subordinated and marginalized group in masculinity. In the masculinity theory, the embodiment of non-hegemonic characteristics is suggested to use an alternative theory other than Inclusive Masculinity Theory to represent the contemporary era's masculinity dynamic better.

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