

DECADES OF MASCULINITY DYNAMIC PORTRAYAL IN R&B MUSIC

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Abstract

This research proposed to analyze how R&B music portrays the dynamic of masculinity in four different decades using the semiotics approach by Roland Barthes. R&B is a music genre as part of mass media that contains songwriting expression related to the community and contributed to representing gender. With purposive sampling, the selected samples are Get A Job, I Wanna Know, OMG, and Blinding Lights. 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. The study shows a fluctuation in the masculinity portrayal in 1958, 2000, 2010, and 2020. The hegemonic structure 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 and disregarding race.

Keywords: *hegemonic masculinity, masculinity, R&B, semiotics.*

INTRODUCTION

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.

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).

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; 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 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. 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.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This 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).

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic Masculinity theory 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. Hegemonic masculinity theory professes that masculinity traits are socially less prevalent within a given society, and hegemonic or idealized masculinity will linger (Connell, 1995). 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; Connell, 1995). 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.

2. Non Hegemonic Embodiment

Inclusive masculinity theory 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 inclusive masculinity theory since it is the core explanation of social changes. In a way, homophobic behavior is

regulated only in a setting where the homohysteria concept occurs. In homohysteria 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 intramasculine 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 inclusive masculinity theory 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).

METHODOLOGY

Barthes's theory on semiotics associates sign elements by identifying denotation and connotation. Denotation is the first level of the signifier system, and the second level is where the connotative is identical to 'Mythologies' (Vera, 2014). 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. 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.

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. 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: (1) The selected songs are identified to be led by men, (2) Listed on the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Charts, (3) Ranked in the top 10 on the Billboard Hot 100 Year End Chart, (4) If the song is sung by a solo or a group of black male artists, (5) The year in which the song is released is within the selected decades, and (6) Identify the music according to R&B/DooWop characteristics.

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.

RESULTS

1. Get A Job

a. Denotation

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. 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). 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.

b. Connotation

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.

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.

2. I Wanna Know

a. Denotation

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).

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.

b. Connotation

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 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 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*.

3. OMG

a. 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..* 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). Grammatically 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.

b. Connotation

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. 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).

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.

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.

4. Blinding Lights

a. Denotation

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). 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.

b. Connotation

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.

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.

Table 1: Summary of The Results

Year-Song Title	Masculinity in popular R&B	Hegemonic embodiment	Non-hegemonic embodiment
1958- <i>Get A Job</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blinding gender roles 2. Masculinity quality is based on wealth, dominant power within society and in the family, physical strength 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Low-income African American during recession (economical segregation) 2. Heterosexual men indicator of success is wealth (breadwinner) 3. The subject fail to meet the standard of masculinity in showing dominance, providers, and respect from society 	-
2000- <i>I Wanna Know</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Competing with affection than wealth from the liberation 2. Emotional and psychological compatibility 	-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emotional and affection displays 2. No threats on showing emotion and interdependent relationship
2010- <i>OMG</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sex-focused relationship 2. Men separated female worth to reaffirm manhood in post-industrial era 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aggressive pretence & detachment 2. Terms of endearment & sexual objectification is use to assert powerful masculine persona 3. Short term relationship caused by manhood fragility 	-
2020- <i>Blinding</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Liberation in values and relationship expectation 2. The freedom in relationship value on both gender caused fragility and ambiguity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Detachment, sexual aggression, drug abuse (intoxication) 2. Threats in manhood quality that leads to Gender Roles Stress 3. Booty call to boost men's ego 	-

DISCUSSION

1. Masculinity through the lens of popular song

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 selected sample in 2010 portrays the acceptance of a relationship focused on sex known as casual sex or hookups (Dei-Sharpe, 2019). 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). 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. 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.

2. 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. 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, 1995).

With black men categorized as subordinate, the chosen sample *Get a Job* by Joe from 1958 represents masculine ideology for low-income African American males interconnected with race and class (Bowleg,

2004). In this era, males are expected to take a more active role, exert more effort, and couples sexual activity for marriage. 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). 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* contributed to the portrayals of masculinity in 2010. 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). 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).

The hegemonic embodiment is also visible within *Blinding Lights*, 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).

3. 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.

CONCLUSION

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 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.

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