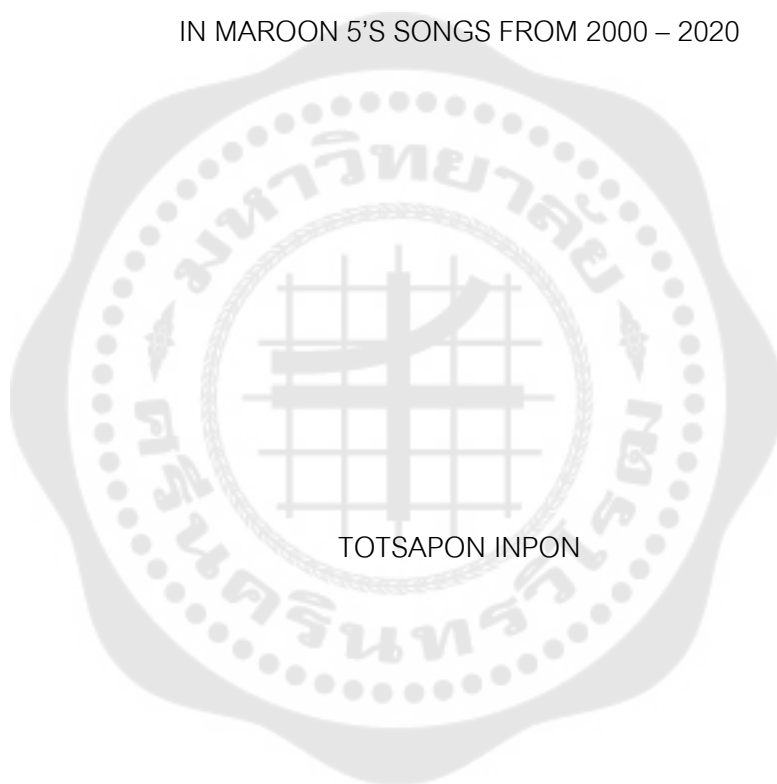




THE PORTRAYAL OF GENDER STEREOTYPES
IN MAROON 5'S SONGS FROM 2000 – 2020



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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of MASTER OF ARTS
(English)

Faculty of Humanities, Srinakharinwirot University

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THE THESIS TITLED
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IN MAROON 5'S SONGS FROM 2000 – 2020

BY
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This study investigates the portrayal of gender stereotypes in Maroon 5's songs. Fifteen songs were selected from the Billboard Hot 100™ chart and analyzed using a framework of gender stereotypes characterized by traditional feminine and masculine traits. The analysis revealed that eight songs predominantly portrayed feminine traits, such as dependence, submissiveness, and vulnerability, while seven highlighted masculine traits, including dominance and endurance. Notably, some songs transcended traditional stereotypes, portraying men as emotionally dependent and submissive, and women as dominant. The findings provide valuable insights into the depiction of gender stereotypes in men and women while reflecting potential shifts in these cultural constructs.

Keyword : Gender, Stereotype, Song, Portrayal, Maroon 5

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	D
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	E
TABLE OF CONTENTS	F
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background of the Study.....	1
Objectives of the Study	6
Significance of the Study.....	6
Scope of the study.....	6
Definition of Terms.....	7
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
Gender	9
Gender Roles.....	10
Gender Stereotype	11
Feminine and Masculine Traits.....	13
Dominance	14
Endurance	15
Dependence.....	15
Submissiveness.....	17
Vulnerability	17
Portrayal of Gender in Media.....	18
Related Research	21

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY	25
Research Design	25
Data Collection	25
Data Analysis	26
CHAPTER IV GENDER STEREOTYPES IN MAROON 5'S SELECTED SONGS.....	27
Women are Dependent	27
Women as Submissive	29
Women as Vulnerable.....	32
Men as Dominance.....	37
Men as Endurance	41
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION.....	47
Men as Dependent.....	48
Men as Submissive.....	53
Women as Dominant	55
REFERENCES	58
VITA	69

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Today, the media has a significant role in shaping several aspects of our everyday existence, ranging from minor issues to serious concerns on one's perception of identity (Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2021). It's significant to understand that media messages can help people learn "gender-linked knowledge and competencies" as well as gender roles and behaviors, self-evaluation standards, and perceptions about their own abilities. According to Mastro (2008) some people say that one way people accept gender traits is by watching the rewards and consequences of other people's behavior. Because of this, the way female characters are portrayed in the media might affect how people think about their gender identity, which could then affect how they feel and what they think about gender roles. Meanwhile, the media also exerts a significant impact on the perception of men and women, generally positioning the idea of male superiority and female subordination (Behm-Morawitz & Mastro, 2008).

Tuchman's (2000) argues that mass media symbolically annihilate women by ignoring or portraying them in certain stereotypical roles or behavior. For example, that women are often underrepresented in a few social jobs. Conversely, men are depicted as participating in a wide variety of social and business roles. The media plays a significant role in reinforcing these ideas. Tuchman explains that women are often portrayed in stereotypical gender roles, such as performing housework or being wives and mothers. For instance, advertisements for detergent frequently depict women as mothers, often showing them washing clothes with their young daughters. In contrast, men and young boys are commonly shown in advertisements engaging in activities like working or playing outdoor together.

Gunter (2014) explains that women are frequently depicted in the media in restrictive and stereotypical ways. They are frequently portrayed as objects of sexual desire and are expected to adhere to narrowly defined ideals of beauty. (Gunter, 2014)

This is apparent in advertisements for consumer goods, fashion, and beauty products, which frequently objectify and commodify women's bodies. Furthermore, Dill and Thill (2007) claim that women are often depicted as feeble and submissive, whereas men are often portrayed as dominant and strong. This phenomenon is especially apparent in film, television, and news media, where women are frequently portrayed as passive targets of aggression while males are portrayed as active aggressors.

Nowadays, songs are among the most famous forms of media. This is partly because of technological advancements. There are various ways for people to access and listen to songs. In the past, people would tune in to their favorite songs on the radio, use tape recorders to play their cassette tapes, or wait for their favorite singer to perform on TV or in their town. However, technology has transformed the music listening experience for the better. In 2017, some still cherished cassettes, vinyl records, and CDs, while others continued to enjoy radio broadcasts. Thanks to technology, using a smartphone to listen to music has become incredibly convenient. People can now access their favorite songs with a simple tap, taking just a few seconds (Kennedy, Gioia, & Bauerlein, 2005).

A song often reflects an individual's life and has the power to influence the mood of the person who listens to it. The story behind a song often derives from the author's daily life, experiences, or imagination. According to Hornby (1974, p. 822), a song is a short poem with a few lines, intended to be heard and set to music. Songs serve as a medium through which individuals can not only express their personal experiences and emotions but also influence the emotional states of others through the conveyed message.

Moore (2012) presented that popular music, sometimes referred to as pop music, possesses a wide-ranging appeal particularly among younger audiences. It is defined by its ability to resonate with individuals, often inspiring them to sing along or engage with the music actively. Moore also stated that popular music is characterized by its inclusion of lyrics and a structured rhythm that connects with a significant portion of the youth, often prompting them to engage in listening and dancing activities. Compared to other music

genres, popular music tends to prioritize profit, which may influence the portrayal of gender norms in its lyrics.

Since the past, the portrayal of gender in music often leaned towards stereotypes. For instance, in woman, the association between women and sexuality in music has become increasingly prominent and intense (Song, 2016). Women are frequently confronted with visual representations that impose societal expectations regarding their identity, physical appearance, and the management of their personal and professional lives (Luddy, 2016). The objectification of women is a significant issue in the portrayal of women in music. The issue surrounding the objectification of women and their representations in the media has attracted increasing scholarly attention. Sexual objectification is characterized by the perception of women primarily as physical objects valued primarily for their utility to others. This concept includes the phenomenon when individuals are mostly perceived and valued based on their appearance, primarily for the purpose of fulfilling the needs and desires of others (Ward, Hansbrough, and Walker, 2005).

Additionally, a review of music from 1959 to 2009 found that men are often depicted in a sexualized manner. This kind of manner is believed to be aligning with the objectification seen with female figures, yet maintaining a focus on masculine ideals such as physicality and power (Hall et al., 2012).

However, there have been notable changes over the past decade in how gender is portrayed in music. Leavy and Trier-Bieniek (2014) noted shifts in the way women are represented in music videos and lyrics. They state that the rise of feminism has led to a surge in the songs by female artists that positively promote feminist ideas in the portrayal of women. For instance, the third wave of feminism emphasizes depicting women as strong and independent, not reliant on other, especially men. These feminist concepts now play more significant roles in society than in the past, resulting in an increasing number of songs from female artists that present positive images of women to a global audience (Trier-Bieniek & Leavy, 2014, p. 87-88).

For example, Lestari and Nurochman (2022) stated that Britney Spears's songs, such as "Stronger" reflects the influence of liberal feminism. The song criticized societal rules that are perceived as unfair, highlighting women's desire to break free from constraints imposed by patriarchal, paternalistic, and moralistic laws. It underscores their aspiration for independence and rejection of being continually controlled by men.

The increasing number of songs supporting women's liberation has led to an immense amount of research analyzing the depiction of women in song in which most of the studies focus on songs by female artists who are iconic figures such as Katy Perry, Pink, Madonna, Britney Spears, Lady Gaga, and Beyonce. For example, Areeraseda and Tapinta (2015) investigated how feminist values are reflected through figurative language in contemporary American songs by women artists such as Madonna, Pink, Beyonce, Britney Spears, Lady Gaga, and Kesha. Additionally, Kaewphut (2019) investigated the representation of women in the lyrics of the top 30 Billboard Hot 100 songs from the 2010s, with a particular emphasis on songs performed by male artists. Utilizing feminist theoretical frameworks, the study critically examines themes of objectification, inferiority, and gender stereotyping embedded in the lyrics. The analysis reveals a persistent pattern of negative portrayals of women, frequently depicted as sexual objects or confined to traditional gender roles. Hence, these findings highlight the continued reinforcement of gender inequalities within contemporary popular music.

However, research analyzing both male and female stereotype in songs by male artists is limited. Furthermore, although there is some research on popular male artists, including Maroon 5, most of that research focus on a narrow scope, typically analyzing only one or two songs. This approach fails to examine the changes that have occurred over the past decades across different artists and, again, primarily focuses on the portrayal of women.

Among male artists with plenty of research regarding the portrayal of gender, Maroon 5 is considered a highly esteemed band in the contemporary Western music landscape. The musical group was formed in Los Angeles, California. The band's ensemble comprises Adam Levine serving as the primary vocalist, Jesse Carmichael

fulfilling the roles of pianist and rhythm guitarist, Mickey Madden assuming the position of bassist, James Valentine assuming the role of lead guitarist, Matt Flynn serving as the percussionist, PJ Morton contributing as a keyboardist, and Sam Farrar demonstrating proficiency in several instruments. The band achieved their initial Grammy Award in 2005, specifically in the category of "Best New Artist." Furthermore, they attained considerable commercial success at that period, with album sales surpassing 17 million units globally. Maroon 5 earned gold and platinum certifications in over 35 countries for their musical works (Bibliography, 2014).

To sum up, Maroon 5 has been producing hit songs for more than two decades since their formation in 2001. Their numerous awards and the multitude of fan clubs worldwide underscore their reputation and popularity. Many of Maroon 5's songs primarily revolve around themes of sex, love, and relationships.

This study aims to analyze the presentation of gender stereotypes in selected Maroon 5 songs from the 2000s to the 2020s, examining how these portrayals reflect and reinforce traditional gender norms. Additionally, the research will explore the evolution of these depictions across the band's discography over the same period, considering how shifts in lyrical content may signal changing societal views on gender. Given Maroon 5's widespread popularity, the analysis acknowledges that their music, along with the implied messages within the lyrics, has the potential to influence a global audience's perceptions of gender roles.

Nowadays, contemporary society is witnessing a shift in gender roles and perceptions. Research in social psychology indicates that, while traditional stereotypes regarding masculinity and femininity persist, there is a notable trend toward change. Particularly among younger generations, especially those under the age of 30, there is a decreased adherence to rigid conceptions of gender. This demographic is more likely to embrace fluid interpretations of masculinity and femininity. Furthermore, there is growing recognition that societal expectations, rather than biological determinism, play a significant role in shaping perceived gender differences (Hentschel, 2019). Hence, the study of songs from Maroon 5 for almost over two decades from 2000s – 2020s along

might erupt the gendered changes through the lyrics and extend these changes to the wider listeners around the world.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the portrayal of gender stereotypes in selected Maroon 5's songs from 2000 to 2020.
2. To analyze the changes in the portrayal of gender stereotypes in selected Maroon 5's songs from 2000 to 2020.

Significance of the Study

By reviewing the messages conveyed in selected songs, the portrayals of genders in popular music can impact people's attitudes. In other words, the narratives in lyrics may influence women's self-perception, shape men's views of women, and impact interactions between men and women in the future. Hence, this study significantly promotes the awareness regarding how genders are presented through popular music. Also, the result of this research will also have substantial educational implications. For example, people who are interested in research regarding the gendered stereotypes might apply this analysis to further analyze the impact of these stereotypes towards society.

Scope of the study

The study will cover fifteen songs from Maroon 5's Billboard Hot 100 Chart hits over the last two decades (2000s – 2020s). Moreover, song lyrics from Genius.com will be included in this study as well. The song list includes: "Harder to Breathe (2002)", "She Will Be Loved (2004)", "Sunday Morning (2004)", "This Love (2004)", "Won't Go Home Without You (2007)", "Wake Up Call (2007)", "Misery (2010)", "Moves Like Jagger (2011)", "One More Night (2012)", "Payphone (2012)", "It Was Always You (2014)", "Animals (2014)", "Sugar (2014)", "Wait (2018)" and "Nobody's Love (2020)".

Definition of Terms

Gender

Gender can be conceptualized as a multifaceted construct that includes aspects such as gender identity and expression, alongside societal and cultural norms regarding status, traits, and behaviors typically associated with specific biological sex characteristics (National Academies of Science, 2022). Also, Barr (2023) addressed that gender represents a social and structural construct encompassing various interconnected domains, including gender identity and expression, roles and norms, power dynamics, and the principles of equality and equity (p.13).

Moreover, gender identity, such as woman, man, transgender man, gender-diverse, or nonbinary, is self-determined and may evolve over time. It does not necessarily align with the cultural norms and expectations associated with an individual's biological sex characteristics. For instance, an individual with typically female biological traits may or may not identify as a woman in terms of gender identity (National Academies of Science, 2022). Additionally, World Health Organization (2016) emphasized that gender identity can be understood as an individual's intrinsic and profoundly experienced sense of self, which may or may not align with their physiological characteristics or the sex assigned to them at birth (p.1).

In summary, gender is a construct shaped by societal and cultural norms. Notably, gender identity represents an individual's authentic sense of self, which may not necessarily conform to these established cultural expectations.

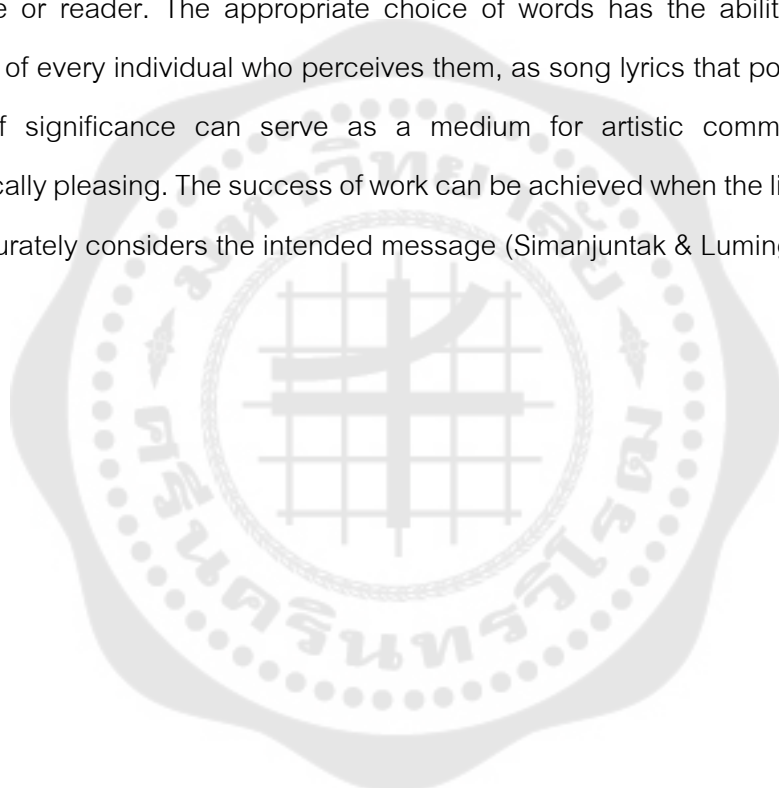
Stereotype

Stereotyping involves portraying and evaluating individuals based on rigid and inflexible assumptions. These assumptions center on perceived traits attributed to the group or category to which individuals are assigned. As a result, individuals are reduced to the stereotype associated with their group rather than recognized as unique persons with distinct characteristics and attributes. Instead of being perceived and treated as individuals, they are represented solely through their categorical association, which is imbued with generalized and normalized attributes. The influence of stereotypes is

particularly potent when they are widely regarded as immutable and unchangeable (Pickering, 2015, p.1).

Lyrics

The term "lyrics" encompasses the textual content of a musical composition or a concise poetic piece that serves as a medium for the author's individual sentiments and reflections. Typically, composers employ words in a manner that is both concise and purposeful, facilitating the comprehension and analysis of their intended message by the audience or reader. The appropriate choice of words has the ability to embody the essence of every individual who perceives them, as song lyrics that possess a profound depth of significance can serve as a medium for artistic communication that is aesthetically pleasing. The success of work can be achieved when the listener thoroughly and accurately considers the intended message (Simanjuntak & Lumingkewas, 2022).



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research examines the portrayal of gender stereotypes in selected songs by Maroon 5 from 2000 to 2020. Its primary aim is to identify changes in the depiction of gender stereotypes in Maroon 5's songs over these two decades. To achieve this, this research will apply Gender Theory to analyze the gender stereotypes presented in selected songs and explore the potential change that might disrupt these stereotypes. Therefore, this chapter will examine gender studies, including the historical background, gender roles, and gender stereotypes. Additionally, it will examine the portrayal of male and female in media and review related studies on the depiction of gender stereotype in songs.

Gender

Gender differs from sex. While sex is a biological classification primarily determined by reproductive capacity, gender is the social construction (Eckert, Penelope and McConnell-Ginet, 2013, p.2). As Simond de Beauvoir claimed that "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." (1973, p.301), her statement made a distinct separation of the physical sex from gender. Gender is a specific trait that sets individuals apart based on their social interactions with others. Lorber (1994) explained that the process of gender formation starts with assigning a sex category based on the appearance of genitalia at birth. Then, the classification of sex is transformed into a social position of gender through the processes of naming, attire, and the utilization of gender indicators (p.55).

In a similar way, gender is not an inherent trait or something one possesses, but rather an ongoing set of actions or performances (West & Zimmerman, 1987). This perspective aligns with Butler's (1990) conceptualization of gender as performative, suggesting that gender is not a stable identity, but a series of actions that individuals enact in response to social expectations. These frameworks highlight how gender is constructed through behavior rather than being an innate characteristic tied to one's

biological sex, reinforcing the idea that gender is socially and contextually enacted, not simply a static state.

For example, a young boy may imitate his father by swaggering and puffing out his chest, striving to embody the traits he admires in his male role model. While his father may not exhibit these behaviors, the boy is constructing a persona influenced by his perception of masculinity. Similarly, a young girl might mimic her mother by wearing high heels, applying makeup, and walking in a delicate manner. While these childhood actions may not directly translate to adulthood, they often shape future gendered behaviors. It is likely that as an adult, the girl may occasionally adopt more traditionally masculine behaviors, but they may not be viewed as endearing as her childhood performance. Conversely, if the boy were to engage in such feminine behaviors, they would not be met with the same approval. This reflects how gender expectations shape and limit the behaviors that are socially acceptable for boys and girls, as well as the societal norms that govern how masculinity and femininity are perceived (Eckert, 2013).

Also, Eckert (2013) addressed that gendered performances are accessible to all individuals; however, societal norms impose limitations on who is permitted to embody specific gender roles without facing social repercussions. This intersection of gender and sex occurs as society endeavors to align behavioral expectations with biologically assigned sex categories. These constraints often influence which traits or actions are deemed appropriate for men and women, perpetuating traditional gender roles that are deeply intertwined with biological sex. These gender norms shape and regulate individual behaviors, creating a structure in which deviations from traditional performances are often scrutinized or stigmatized.

Gender Roles

Gender roles are expectations for how females and males should feel, think, and act (Ruble, Martin, & Berenbaum, 2006). As Gilbert and Malone (1995) explained, gender roles stem from the distinct domestic and occupational responsibilities traditionally associated with women and men in a society. Individuals form their perceptions of the

traits and behaviors of men and women by observing their actions. People often incorrectly view women within the traditional homemaker-provider model, doing domestic chores such as cooking, caring for children, and sewing, while men and boys are often engaged in activities for the paid job market. Additionally, people tend to essentialize gender by thinking that the different ways men and women act are due to fundamental differences between the sexes. Consequently, even though the division of labor is based on the needs of the area, individuals in that area tend to perceive it as natural and inevitable.

The concept of gender roles arises from the interaction between individuals and their surroundings, providing individuals with manifestations of typical behavior based on their sex to be considered as masculine or feminine. (Brannon, 1996, p.160; Blackstone, 2003, p.335). Gender roles are the expected behaviors and responsibilities assigned to men and women based on their sex. Traditionally, many Western societies have held the belief that women are more nurturing than men. As a result, the conventional view of the feminine gender role dictates that women should act in nurturing ways. On the contrary, traditional views of gender roles assume that men are natural leaders. Therefore, the traditional masculine gender role implies that men should lead their households by being the primary financial providers and making key family decisions. (Blackstone, 2003, p. 337). Gender roles and gender stereotype concepts are connected. When individuals attribute a consistent pattern of conduct to either females or males, they may fail to consider individual deviations and differences, leading them to conclude that the behavior is inherently linked to one gender but not the other. Hence, gender roles provide the basis for gender stereotypes (Brannon, 1996, p.160).

Gender Stereotype

Ellemers (2018) explained that stereotypes represented broad assumptions concerning individuals belonging to specific social groups (p. 276). Goffman (1979) stated that in Western cultures, gender stereotypes are dominant. He also argued that advertisers perpetuate gender stereotypes by incorporating them into the images that

bombard individuals in industrialized societies throughout the majority of their daily activities. According to Berger (1972), it is precisely male-centric attitudes that give rise to stereotypes. From the rise of ancient Greece to the present day, these male-centered perspectives have dominated democratic thought. As a result of gender stereotypes, men are often portrayed as social actors who can move freely in and out of the public eye, whereas women are, unfortunately, confined to it.

Brannon (1996) explained that a gender stereotype encompasses the views on the psychological attributes, qualities, and suitable activities for men and women (p.160). According to gender stereotype theory, males are typically seen as more masculine than women, while women are typically seen as more feminine than men (Kachel et al., 2016). Brannon (1996) addressed that gender stereotypes exhibit significant influence, shaping perceptions of women and men and establishing societal classifications based on gender. These categories reflect individuals' perceptions, and even if these perceptions differ from reality, they can nevertheless exert significant influence on how people evaluate themselves and others (p.160).

Stereotypes can be both helpful and harmful. Ellemers (2018) claimed that gender stereotypes can be a useful tool when making an assumption on how individual might behave, or when comprehending overall differences among large groups of people. However, gender stereotypes could be harmful when those assumption or expectations influence on how we judge the ability of women and men (p.278). For instance, gender stereotypes lead to the perception that female students possess lesser abilities than male students in science or mathematics (p.279).

Matthes, Prieler, and Adam (2016) determined, using content analysis, that a nation's culture has a significant impact on the role of portrayal of genders and concluded that gender stereotypes persist in nations with a higher ranking on Hofstede's masculinity index. In addition, these concerns are based on the premise that the use of stereotypes can be viewed as unethical because they present an unrealistic image both male and female.

Feminine and Masculine Traits

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) stated that "masculinity" is not a static concept inherent in the physical or personality traits of individuals. Masculinities refer to patterns of behavior that are carried out through social interactions and might vary depending on the gender dynamics within a certain social context (p.836).

Following by Hearn et al. (2023), masculinities are the established and organized patterns of gender behavior that are relational, physical, ever-changing, disputed, and include interaction between individuals. They are also performed and have a significant impact on society. Also, masculinities are shaped in response to cultural norms and expectations of men and males within the framework of gender hierarchies (p.194). Importantly, Hearn et al. (2023) also supported the idea of Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) that masculinity is not fixed but men, women, and individuals of other genders can actively demonstrate and maintain different forms of masculinity. These forms of masculinity encompass various indications, discussions, actions, and presentations that may conceal conflicting ideas (p.194).

Masculinity is characterized by a wide range of characteristics. The masculine traits include characteristics such as being forceful, independent, self-reliant, and having a tendency to take risks. Studies have shown a direct relationship between the characteristic of masculinity and mental well-being (Bassoff & Glass, 1982) and self-esteem (Whitley, 1983). Further, according to Bem (1974), there are some traits shown in the measurement scales for masculinity-femininity (M-F), specific items were categorized as 'masculine' (e.g., 'aggressive', 'ambitious', 'analytical', 'assertive', and 'athletic') in contrast to other items categorized as 'feminine' (e.g., 'affectionate', 'cheerful', 'childlike', 'compassionate', and 'flatterable') (p.156). As well, traditional masculinity is commonly associated with negative and socially undesirable traits and behaviors that align with idealized masculine norms in society. It is characterized by instrumental personality traits like aggression, self-assertion, social dominance, and a lack of empathy towards others (Courtenay, 2000; Kupers, 2005; Maccoby, 1998; Parent, 2019, as cited in Malonda-Vidal et al., 2021).

Dominance

Male dominance is one of the traditional traits of masculinity. The term male dominance refers to the subjugation of women to the authority or influence of men, encompassing various dimensions, including physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. The concept emerged in the 20th century as a theoretical framework to describe the systemic power imbalance between men and women as collective groups, highlighting the pervasive inequalities rooted in societal and cultural structures (Ntethelelo, 2022). This term captures the dynamics of hierarchical gender relations and their impact on broader social interactions and institutions (P.R., 2001).

In the context of male dominance, the notion of men holding authority over women is often depicted, with men portrayed as the competent figures who rescue women from their perceived incompetence. This trope is commonly seen in children's literature, where females are depicted as passive or helpless, while males are positioned as their saviors. A prominent example of this is the tale of *Sleeping Beauty*, where the female protagonist's revival is dependent on the male protagonist's kiss. This motif is also present in modern gothic romance novels, where similar themes of male heroism and female vulnerability persist. Such portrayals reinforce traditional gender roles, where men are cast as powerful and active, while women are relegated to passive and dependent roles. This dynamic reflects long-standing societal narratives about gender power imbalances (Modleski, 1982).

According to Matud (2019), in "Masculine/Instrumental and Feminine/ Expressive Traits and Health", the evidence indicates that these social norms, although not biologically or inherently determined, exert a profound and lasting impact on men's lives, particularly concerning mental health. These norms, characterized by traits such as strength, dominance, stoicism, self-reliance, and emotional restraint, are frequently identified as barriers to seeking professional assistance, especially for mental health concerns (p.1).

Endurance

According to Elliot (2016), research suggests that the stereotype of the "endurant" male has significant consequences for men's mental and emotional health. The societal pressure to conform to an ideal of masculinity that emphasizes strength, stoicism, and emotional restraint often leads to negative outcomes, such as engaging in high-risk behaviors, neglecting self-care, and struggling to express emotions. These expectations can compel men to suppress vulnerability or adopt a hyper-masculine identity that is misaligned with their authentic selves, contributing to increased stress and mental health challenges. Additionally, media portrayals often reinforce these stereotypes, depicting men as physically strong, emotionally unyielding, and capable of enduring hardship without displaying weakness.

Apart from masculinity, the concept of femininity encompasses a wide range of traits and behaviors that are often associated with women. Femininity often includes nurturing, empathy, sensitivity, and non-aggressive communication (Windsor, 2015; Lemon, 2016). When critically analyzing femininity, it is frequently connected to the realm of personal life and tied to roles that involve nurturing and care. The maintenance of the home, the upbringing of children, and various other forms of emotional labor are frequently at the core of these expectations (Lemon, 2016).

Besides, women in media are frequently depicted as being significantly younger and thinner than the average woman in society. Additionally, these portrayals often present women as passive, dependent on men, and primarily engaged in domestic duties or interpersonal relationships. Such representations reinforce traditional gender norms, casting women in subordinate, domestic roles while idealizing youthful beauty and physical appearance (Davis, 1990).

Dependence

Dependence is associated with female and considered a major part of femininity (Lerner, 1984, p. 125). Dependence is considered as the claim that women require male protection and assistance may appear innocent. In fact, certain women may appreciate the practical assistance and courtesy that these attitudes foster and maintain. In past

centuries, the social structure deprived women of power. Although they were able to work, society rarely provided them with positions that would allow them to earn as much as a male. Consequently, women were dependent on the income of their husbands to ensure their survival. In the present day, any individual who is dependent or reliant on others may be portrayed as feminine. They are perceived as vulnerable and require a strong individual to assist them in their survival. This causes them to be the submissive individual in a dominant-submissive relationship (Drew, 2023).

Apart from Drew's perspective towards dependency of women, there are more aspects about the dependency of women as one of the gendered stereotypes as well. Female dependency on interpersonal interactions is a gender stereotype that has been reinforced and fulfilled. From a young age, girls are taught to be submissive, obedient, and deeply committed to building and maintaining social connections (Kirsh & Kuiper, 2002, as cited in Hurt, 2008, p.3). Additionally, Nugent & Jones (2005, as cited in Hurt, 2008, p.3) claimed that women have been culturally influenced to establish connections with others, yet the culture undervalues women's preferences towards relational connectivity and instead prioritizes conventional male characteristics such as independence and autonomy.

Importantly, there are some existing studies regarding the dependency trait of women presented in the various studies of song lyrics by two notable female artists; Britney Spears and Katy Perry. First, Niiranen (2008) presented the woman's dependence from Britney Spears's song lyrics. In "Baby One More Time", as the lyrics says, "Oh baby baby, the reason I breathe is you", this line illustrates Spears' acceptance that her partner is the sole basis for her continued existence. This statement may be interpreted as a figurative expression of affection, but it also implies that women are portrayed as the inferior gender, dependent on the existence of men (p.56). Importantly, this demonstration of women's dependency on men is supported by the idea of Bretthauer et al. (2007), who suggested that many women tend to sing about not being able to live without men (p.40). Moreover, Lisara (2014) also uncovered gendered messages in Katy Perry's chosen song lyrics. The results indicated that 80% of the song lyrics by Katy Perry from *One of the Boys*

album that were examined include negative gendered themes, which reinforce women's reliance on and need for men. Likewise, most song lyrics of Katy Perry convey gendered themes that express a sense of diminished self-worth and acknowledge a certain reliance on men (p.66 – 67). To conclude, the lyrics of the songs from various female artists continue to contain references to the existence of women's dependence.

Submissiveness

In addition to the portrayal of women as dependent, there is also the recurring stereotype of women as submissive. In many cultural narratives, men are positioned as authoritative figures, while women are expected to rely on men for guidance and direction (Basow, 1992, p. 161; Bretl & Cantor, 1988). The study of Sanchez (2011) in "Women's Submissive Behavior in the Context of Heterosexual Relationships" explored how societal expectations and individual preferences converge to shape women's behavior, particularly in the context of sexual interactions, and the potential implications for both women and their male partners. Research suggests that women, more frequently than men, assume a submissive role in these contexts. This submissiveness can manifest in behaviors such as waiting for their male partners to initiate sexual activity (p.5).

Vulnerability

As dependency and submissiveness of women have been mentioned earlier, there is another female trait, which is women are vulnerable. An excerpt from a research article titled "Experience of Vulnerable Women Narrated Through the Body-Mapping Technique," from de Souza (2021) examines the experiences of women who face multiple forms of vulnerability within the context of a socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhood in Brazil. It identifies a combination of factors that contribute to women's vulnerability, including: socioeconomic disadvantage, which encompasses low income, financial dependence, limited access to education, and living in an area marked by poverty, limited opportunities, and a heightened risk of violence. These factors collectively exacerbate women's precarious socio-economic position. Next, mental health challenges, the research also highlights the vulnerability of women who experience mental health

disorders or significant psychosocial distress. These mental health issues add another layer of disadvantage and contribute to their overall vulnerability in the community. Lastly, exposure to violence. Many of the women in the study reported experiencing interpersonal conflicts and domestic violence, which further intensified their sense of vulnerability within both their social and familial environments. Such exposure to violence underscores the compounded risks they face (p.1 – 10).

Overall, the feminine traits involve three main themes: dependence, submissiveness and vulnerability. For dependence, it is shown through portrayals of women needing male support to solve their problems or needing male validation. This dependence can also be tied to the objectification of women, where their worth is based on how they are viewed or treated by men. Then, the submissiveness involves with a passive acceptance of control, especially in relationships where women assume traditional roles. Also, submissiveness can manifest as women yielding authority over their decisions, bodies, and minds to men. Followed by vulnerability, this trait involves with how women are often portrayed as vulnerable, with this vulnerability stemming from factors such as socio-economic disadvantage, mental health challenges, and exposure to violence.

Portrayal of Gender in Media

In the media, common stereotypes often present women in submissive roles or positions, objectify them as sex symbols, depict them as housewives, or present them as voiceless individuals. Johnson (2017, p. 13) stated that the media played a significant role in perpetuating societal gender norms. She explained that women were presented in domestic roles or superficial duties that restricted their advancement (p.6).

According to various studies, women are often depicted as "sex objects" to generate erotic appeal in the media (Courtney & Whipple, 1983). They are frequently used as decorative objects by depicting body portions, such as the breast, leg, and pubic region, often dressed in leisurewear or swimwear (Hall, I., & Crum, 1994). Other research has revealed that women are frequently cast in sexually enticing roles (Lin, 1998).

Bardwick and Schumann (1967) analyzed male and female roles in television commercials and concluded that women are more likely to be portrayed as homebound or as housewives than as engaged in business, industrial, or professional activities. When depicting women as housewives, they are frequently shown in kitchen and bathroom locations (Dominick & Rauch, 1972), implying that women's roles are limited to cooking and cleaning. (McArthur & Resko, 1975; Furnham et al., 2000). Women are also more likely to be defined in relationship categories such as mother, sister, and wife than as individuals.

In addition, women are often portrayed as submissive to men and are shown experiencing verbal or physical aggression. For instance, , Lyonski and Pollay (1990) found that women are typically presented as submissive in domestic settings, inactive, indoors, and powerless. Then, women are more prone to rely on men for their survival (Sukumar & Venkatesh, 2011; Das & Sharma, 2017). Goffman (1979) found that women are frequently presented as having passive behavior. Moreover, Browne (1998) identified several aspects of body language that result in feeble depictions of women. Similarly, Kitsa and Mudra (2019) associated women in media with traditional feminine traits, such as shyness, giggling, weakness, and passivity.

The immense influence of the media affects the complex topic of gender roles as media continues to present both women and men in stereotyped ways that limit individual's perceptions of humans (Wood et al., 1994). Furthermore, the media might potentially create the underrepresentation of women to the viewer. According to J. A. Doyle (1989), whose research focuses on masculinity children's television typically showed males as "aggressive, dominant, and engaged in exciting activities from which they receive rewards from others for their 'masculine' accomplishments" (p.111). On the other hand, most of female activities are not likely to be exciting as she mentioned in her article, she preferred to read the books from boy's section as some of them are more exciting than the ones in the girl section.

Moreover, in the same way that children's literature has made limited efforts to depict women engaged in activities outside the home, little effort has been made to depict

men engaged in family and domestic life. In instances where a child is being cared for, the mother is typically depicted, not the father (Hook & Horovitz, 2015).

In addition to the portrayal of women in the media, it is also important to examine how men are represented. According to Wood (1994, p.32), male often portrayed in various media as extremely masculine such as tough, independent, aggressive, dominant, unafraid, sexually aggressive, violent, and totally in control of all emotions. Csernik (2023, p.3) stated that music videos and lyrics often showcase males in powerful positions, such as in rap music that presents men as tough, dominant, aggressive, and in control. Interestingly, male is not depicted as taking care around the house, doing household chores or nurturing children. On the contrary, the depiction of women is often portrayed as passive, soft, dependent, lacking confident, ornamental objects (Wood, 1994, p. 33). Gow (1996) indicated that despite a potential increase in MTV executives' awareness of gender issues at the start of the new decade, the popular music videos still exhibited a lack of representation of women and depicted them in a way that prioritized physical appearance over musical talent. All these perpetuate the negative stereotypes of both masculinity and femininity-subservience.

According to Santoniccolo (2023) in his study *"Gender and Media Representations: Stereotypes, Objectification, and Sexualization"*, men are frequently overrepresented in media, especially in roles of authority and expertise. For instance, news media often feature more male figures, particularly as authoritative or expert sources of information. This pattern reflects broader societal trends in which men are commonly positioned as leaders and experts, while women are often marginalized or portrayed in more passive roles (p.4).

There are various aspects of how men are portrayed differently through media. Some of them will be addressed as follows.

The representation of men in media often reinforces conventional gender stereotypes, particularly in the context of advertising. Men are frequently portrayed in professional and authoritative roles, while women are more commonly depicted in domestic, leisure, or non-professional contexts. This gendered division of roles is

particularly pronounced in countries with higher levels of gender inequality, where media representations tend to reflect and perpetuate traditional views of masculinity and femininity (Hentges, 2023).

Through the variety of media, film serves as a prominent medium through which male portrayals are depicted, with various genres illustrating different aspects of masculinity. Notably, films in genres such as westerns, gangster, and detective narratives often center on male protagonists whose individualistic traits and actions uphold or challenge the established social order. These films commonly feature masculine symbols and iconographic elements—such as knives, guns, telephones, and cars—which are integral to the construction of the hero figure (Schatz, 1981).

Moreover, men are also depicted in various other forms of media, such as television and video games, where anger and violence are often portrayed as acceptable and even necessary emotions for men. This portrayal stems from historical narratives that associate these traits with growth and progress, which are then reflected in popular media. In films, TV shows, and video games, male characters, especially those embodying the hero archetype, are typically shown expressing aggression and emotional restraint as part of their journey toward success. These characters, intended to represent the idealized version of masculinity, influence societal standards of masculinity in the real world, reinforcing the belief that men must embody strength, control, and emotional toughness to be considered "real" men (Woolbright, 2021).

Related Research

Though the subversion of gender stereotype has been a common theme of analysis in pop music, most research focus on the works of female artists, such as the songs by Katy Perry and Janelle Monae. For instance, Lisara (2014: 67) analyzed the song lyrics from some of Katy Perry's songs from her study, *The Portrayal of Women in Katy Perry's Selected Song Lyrics*, which is utilizing gender studies and post feminism as theoretical frameworks. The result showed that some song lyrics portray women differently from normative stereotypes. As women are traditionally depicted as being passive than

men; contrastingly, in some of Katy Perry song lyrics, women are dedicated to empowering themselves by taking initiative and cultivating strong self-confidence.

Dworsky (2019: 29) studied how Janelle Monae engaged with the idea of femininity throughout her music videos and lyrics in the thesis named, (Miss) Representation: An Analysis of the Music Videos and Lyrics of Janelle Monae as an Expression of Femininity, Feminism, and Female Rage.

Dworsky's (2019) study found the following:

Monae sings "I don't want to live on my knees" (24) which can be an innuendo for several things, one being fellatio. The lyric can also be interpreted as fellatio using to Beyoncé's "Partition," where she proudly sings about pleasing her husband with the lyrics "I don't need you seeing 'Yonce on her knees." This notion can be linked with being weak and subservient, which Monae does not want to be. With this message in tow, she may urge her viewers to understand and feel the same way (p.29).

In the analysis of lyrics, Dworsky found that some song lyrics indicate the unwillingness of being depicted as being subservient and weak, which belong to the traditional feminine traits. Dworsky further concluded that Janelle Monae has shown her commitment and investigation of gender, feminism, and female anger through her song lyrics and the music videos of Dirty Computer. Every music video embodies the concepts of gender equality, acceptance of sexual choices and fluidity, political statements, self-love and acceptance, and the struggle for racial equality (p.34).

Guskaroska & Taylor (2019) studied how are genders are portrayed through 90s to present time in "A Corpus-Analysis of Gendered Items in Pop and Country Music from the 90s to Now".

Guskaroska & Taylor's (2019) study found the following:

On the other hand, men in Country music are frequently represented as Partner/Lover throughout both periods. There are instances of men being referred to as Tough/Brave which indicates a more traditional representation of man. In general, males are often portrayed as Attractive/Desirable, but

there are some more recent portrayals as both Strong/Weak or Dependent (p.271).

The findings indicate that in contemporary pop music, males are predominantly portrayed as attractive or desirable figures. Additionally, males are depicted in roles such as adults, partners, and authority figures. Similar to the portrayal of women, there is an observable shift over time, with men increasingly depicted as part of informal relationships rather than traditional family structures. Moreover, male figures in pop music are often shown as strong, confident, or attractive, but also at times presented as disloyal, particularly by female artists. This suggests a departure from the conventional depiction of men within family contexts in pop music. More recently, there has been a diversification in the portrayal of men, with some representations showing them as both strong and weak or dependent. These changes reflect a broader trend in contemporary media where male figures are presented in a more complex and multifaceted manner, moving beyond traditional ideals of masculinity (p.271).

In the 1990s, pop music predominantly depicted women in traditional roles, often as family members or romantic partners, using terms like "lemmas girl" and "baby" to refer to them as lovers. In contrast, contemporary pop music has shifted toward portraying women as informal partners or objects of desire, with a notable decrease in the use of the term "woman." Instead, women are often described in terms of their roles as partners or lovers. This trend is also evident in country music, where the portrayal of women as "attractive/desirable" was virtually nonexistent in the 1990s, but has gradually become more prevalent in contemporary songs. This evolution reflects broader changes in the representation of women in popular music, moving away from traditional family-oriented depictions and embracing more complex, less conventional portrayals of femininity (Guskaroska & Taylor, 2019, p.271).

Matheus Gomes Alves (2024)'s study, *"The Representation of Femininity in Lana Del Rey's Songs"*, delves into the portrayal of femininity in the artist's work. Alves focuses on how Lana Del Rey's lyrics reflect traditional notions of female vulnerability and dependency. For instance, in the line "We all look for heaven and we put our love first.

Somethin' that we'd die for it? It's a curse. Don't cry about it, don't cry about it," the lyrics suggest that women often prioritize their romantic relationships over their own well-being. This prioritization of men's feelings over their own needs is indicative of the fragile nature of female friendships in the context of Del Rey's music. The study also notes that Del Rey constructs an image of femininity that is heavily dependent on male presence, presenting an idealized, almost helpless version of womanhood that cannot find happiness without male affection (p.9).



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter demonstrates the methodology of this study. The discussion features three sections: research design, data collection and data analysis.

Research Design

In this research study, qualitative strategies are utilized in the research design. A qualitative research method was adopted to analyze the portrayal of gender stereotype in the selected songs of Maroon 5. Through the analysis of 15 popular Maroon 5 songs during 2000 – 2020 ranked by Billboards.

Data Collection

In adopting content analysis, this researcher gathered the song lyrics from <http://genious.com> and the Billboard HOT Chart from <https://www.billboard.com/artist/maroon-5/chart-history/hsi/>. The subjects of this study are 15 songs from 2000s – 2020s. The data of this study contained the lyrics. The researcher would like to study the portrayal of gender stereotypes through the selected songs of Maroon 5.

To do this research, the researcher had a procedure as follows:

1. Review the related literature

- 1.1 Studied gender
- 1.2 Studied gender roles
- 1.3 Studied gender stereotypes
- 1.4 Study feminine and masculine traits
- 1.5 Study the portrayal of gender in media
- 1.6 Study the related research

2. Analysis of the text

The researcher conducted the investigation into how gender stereotypes are portrayed in songs by employing the concept of gender stereotypes, feminine traits and masculine traits as a theoretical framework.

Data Analysis

The data analysis is implemented in qualitative content analysis.



CHAPTER IV

GENDER STEREOTYPES IN MAROON 5'S SELECTED SONGS

This chapter will undertake a critical analysis of the portrayal of female and male stereotypes in selected songs by Maroon 5. For female stereotypes, the analysis will focus on three predominant themes: the portrayal of women as dependent, submissive, and the depiction of women as vulnerable. Moreover, for male stereotypes, the analysis focuses on two prominent characteristics associated with traditional masculinity: dominance and endurance, as they are portrayed in the lyrics and themes of the chosen tracks. Through these themes, the lyrics will be examined to understand how these recurring portrayals reflect broader societal constructs surrounding gender and their implications for the perception of femininity and masculinity in contemporary popular culture.

Women are Dependent

In popular music, women are often portrayed in ways that highlight their dependence on men, especially in the context of romantic relationships. Studies show that such portrayals contribute to a broader narrative of women being emotionally or physically dependent on men. For instance, a comprehensive analysis of popular songs from 1960 to 2009 found that female characters are frequently portrayed as emotionally reliant on men (Betti, L., Abrate, C. & Kaltenbrunner, & A, 2023). In addition, this trend also continues in more recent analyses of objectification and gender portrayal in music lyrics (Flynn et al., 2015). The objectification of women in music often links directly to their perceived dependence on men, whether emotionally or socially. This statement means that when women are portrayed as objects in music, it is often tied to how they are shown as being reliant on men. Therefore, women's value or identity in such music is often presented as dependent on their relationships with men—either needing their emotional support or fulfilling societal roles that are defined by men. This objectification reduces women to passive figures whose worth comes from how they are viewed or treated by men. Moreover, research by Hatton and Trautner (2011) on the sexualization and

objectification of women in media suggests that the visual and lyrical content of music often portrays women in roles where they seek validation from male attention, further implying dependence. This reinforces traditional gender roles where men are depicted as dominant or savior figures, and women as needing their protection or validation.

This section of female dependency includes a selection of two songs: "Harder to Breathe (2002)" and "She Will Be Loved (2004)".

The song "Harder to Breathe" will also be analyzed with a focus on the theme of women's dependence on men. Released on May 22, 2002, as the lead single from Maroon 5's debut album *Songs About Jane* (2002), this track conveys a sense of tension, having been composed under challenging circumstances. It reflects on a past relationship involving the band's lead singer, Adam Levine.

The lyric, "You want to stay but you know very well, I want you gone", reflects a woman's recognition of her partner's intention to leave or end the relationship, as implied by the phrase "you know very well." Additionally, the man's explicit desire for her departure is emphasized through the statement, "I want you gone." Despite this rejection, the woman persists in wanting to remain in the relationship, highlighting a potential dependency on men. This persistence, even when no longer valued or needed, underscores a dynamic of emotional reliance in such relationships.

Released in 2004 as the third single from their debut album *Songs About Jane*, "She Will Be Loved" gained widespread popularity for its heartfelt lyrics and soulful melody, portraying a tender yet complicated love story. Themes of longing, unrequited love, and emotional vulnerability resonated with a broad audience, contributing to its chart-topping success worldwide. This song highlights traits of dependence through lyrics like, "She had some trouble with herself. He was always there to help her". These lines depict as being dependent on male presence as they (women) themselves couldn't resolve their own problems. The repetition of emphasizes the constant support provided by men, reinforcing the idea of women's dependence on male assistance during times of difficulty.

The lyrics further emphasize themes of dependency through specific lines. For instance, the phrase "She always belonged to someone else" reflects emotional dependency through the term "belonged to," which suggests a perception of women as possessions rather than independent individuals. According to Momeñe (2024), the notion of "belonging" fulfills fundamental needs for security and validation, fostering dependency when alternative sources of emotional support are absent. Additionally, the line "Come back and begs me Rampton (2015) catch her every time she falls, yeah," exemplifies the portrayal of women as reliant on men for emotional and physical stability. This metaphor highlights a scenario where women are depicted as struggling with challenges they cannot overcome without external support.

The song title, "She Will Be Loved," also conveys a central theme of a woman's longing for love and a desire to be cherished. This idea aligns with the lyric "Ask her if she wants to stay a while," suggesting her willingness to embrace the affection she deeply yearns for, despite her internal struggles. The metaphor of "pouring rain" symbolizes persistent and overwhelming challenges, contributing to her emotional distress. Furthermore, the line "Look for the girl with the broken smile" highlights her concealed sorrow, where her outward demeanor, such as smiling, contrasts with her internal despair. This imagery underscores her emotional fragility making her struggles evident to those who look closely.

Women as Submissive

Women being submissive is the next category to be introduced. Submissiveness is considered one of the traditional stereotypes of women. According to Garcia and M (2021), has defined the concept of submissive women in their book as often emerged within patriarchal structures, where submission is defined as an individual's act or attitude of yielding to domination or authority without resistance. To illustrate, submission typically involves a passive acceptance of control, particularly in relationships where women assume traditional roles, such as handling household tasks or fulfilling expectations related to caregiving and objectification.

This characteristic is presented in lyrics of three notable songs: “Sunday Morning (2004)”, “Moves Like Jagger (2011)”, and “It Was Always You (2014)”. These songs have been chosen for their lyrical relevant to the submissive characteristic being analyzed as follows.

Starting with “Sunday Morning”, the track was officially released on December 2, 2004, as the fourth single from Maroon 5’s debut studio album *Songs About Jane* (2002). In the United States, it reached a peak position of number 31 on the charts, marking the band's fourth Top 40 hit. The lyrics of “Sunday Morning” depict a serene and intimate moment, encapsulating the desire to savor and preserve the simplicity and tenderness of a peaceful Sunday spent with a loved one. The narrative emphasizes the value of small, everyday moments shared with someone special, conveying a sense of emotional connection and contentment.

Submissiveness can be analyzed through this song’s lyrics as shown by the line “You twist to fit the mold that I am in”. The word “mold” symbolizes a framework or, which in this context, metaphorically represents to the man’s behavior as well as the man’s lifestyle in the relationship. While the man is depicted as the mold, the woman is shown adapting herself to fit into his behaviors or lifestyles. This imagery suggests that she is twisting herself, much like dough being crushed and shaped to fit into a bakery mold, to align with his expectation.

Another song that presents submissive characteristic is “Move Like Jagger”. Featuring American Female singer Christina Aguilera, this song was the final single from the album *Hands All Over* in 2010. Internationally, the song was the ninth-best-selling digital single of 2011, with sales of 7 million copies. Additionally, the lyrics focus on a male's ability to impress a love interest with his dance moves. However, there are some evidences in the lyric that showcase the characteristic of submissiveness.

The focused line: “Take control, own me just for the night” especially emphasize how women are portrayed as yielding authorities over their decisions, bodies and minds. Notably, these words are sung by Christina Aguilera, a featured female artist. The line, “Take control, own me just for the night” explicitly shows how women are depicted as to

be ready to give someone authority to control her, while the context, controlling someone might relate to the control of dance moves; the control implied can also extend to influencing women's behaviors and decisions. Furthermore, the phrase "own me", highlights the submissive desperation of women longing to be someone's possession with intention and willingness. This portrayal reflects the traditional figures in certain relational dynamics.

In addition, there are more lines in the song that highlight the willingness of women to share their secrets with men. For example, "But if I share my secret. You're gonna have to keep it", can metaphorically refer to the vulnerability and exposure of women towards men. This line suggests that when women choose to share their secrets, they are willingly allowing me access to their inner most thoughts and emotions. Normally secrets are often viewed as deeply personal and significant to the individuals who hold them. Therefore, sharing them can be interpreted as a form of submission, as it is implied trust and a readiness to relinquish some control over their personal boundaries. This dynamic reflects the broader stereotype of women being submissive, as it portrays them as permitting men to "possess" a part of their inner selves.

"It Was Always You" by Maroon 5, a track from the band's fifth studio album, *V*, delves into themes of emotional revelation and unspoken affection. The lyrics recount a narrative in which the protagonist experiences an epiphany, realizing that the person they have sought for romantic fulfillment has been present all along. This lyrical exploration conveys a combination of longing, introspection, and emotional depth, reflecting the transformative power of recognition and love.

Even though the presence of the woman in this song isn't prominent, the fact that the male speaker repeatedly says, "It was always you," highlights that the woman in this song is a constant figure in his life. As he states, "I didn't have to search 'cause I knew that it was always you," this depiction portrays the woman as constant figure in the male speaker's life. This framing potentially reflects submissive qualities through her quiet presence and dependability. While this isn't explicitly submissive, the depiction of women as consistently supportive and unchanging can align with traditional submissive roles.

To conclude, this analysis demonstrates that the traditional stereotypes of women being submissive remain prevalent in contemporary society as reflected in the selected songs of Maroon 5.

Women as Vulnerable

In the song's lyrics, women are frequently portrayed as weak and vulnerable particularly in relation to men. This depiction can reinforce stereotypes of women as emotionally fragile or lacking autonomy. Lyrics that focus on themes of heartache, unrequited love, or reliance on a romantic partner for validation often position women in a passive role, waiting for rescue or approval. Such portrayals can perpetuate the notion that women are inherently weaker or undermine the representation of women as strong, independent individuals. These patterns of lyrical content contribute to a broader cultural narrative that equates femininity with weakness.

This idea is often discussed in the context of gender stereotypes in media and music. According to Hall et al. (2012), the sexualization and objectification of women in song lyrics position them as passive or vulnerable subjects, whose worth is tied to physical appearance or ability to satisfy male desires. This creates an image of women as fragile and dependent on male protection or validation.

Besides, this research contains some of the portrayals of women being weak through the highlighted songs. In this section, the portrayal of women as weak through four songs: "This Love (2004)", "Won't Go Home Without You (2007)", "Move Like Jagger (2011)" and "Animals (2014)" will be analyzed as detailed below.

Firstly, "This Love". This is one of the most popular songs of Maroon 5. This song's lyrics are based on the band's lead vocalist, Adam Levine's break-up with an ex-girlfriend. In addition, the song narrates about the intense highs and lows of a turbulent romantic relationship, with themes of heartbreak, desire, and the struggle to let go. Adam Levine's passionate vocals and the song's funky rock-influenced sound helped make it one of Maroon 5's signature hits.

In the highlighted line, “I’ll fix these broken wings, repair your broken wings”, the phrase to be focused on is “broken wings”, which stands out as a powerful metaphor. The metaphor of “broken wings” often refers to vulnerability and weakness. According to research on Kahlil Gibran’s novel *The Broken Wings*, the metaphor is used to convey emotional fragility and the limitations imposed by personal or societal struggles. The image of wings, typically representing freedom and strength, when broken, signifies a loss of ability, power, or independence, embodying the state of being vulnerable or hindered from achieving one’s potential (Fitria & N., 2022). In these lyrics, the “broken wings” apparently represents the vulnerable state of women within the relationship. The man is aware of that issue and is ready to fix this as implied by the phrase, “I’ll fix” and the word “repair”. Even if the relationship traditionally involves mutual effort between a man and a woman. The man in this portrayal is depicted as the one who solves and fixes the problems. In contrast, women are characterized as mentally and physically weak, waiting to be healed, reinforcing a stereotypical dynamic where women are weak and men are strong.

Followed by the second one, “Won’t Go Home Without You”, is the one as an outstanding song to present the trait of vulnerability. The song “Won’t Go Home Without You” by Maroon 5, released in 2007, highlights themes of emotional vulnerability and yearning for reconciliation within a strained relationship. Through its lyrics, the song portrays the deep regret and longing of the protagonist, emphasizing the emotional dependence and commitment to repairing a fractured bond. The song’s sentimentality is complemented by its melancholic melody and Adam Levine’s impassioned vocal delivery, making it resonate with audiences as a heartfelt plea for love and connection.

While the song did not achieve the same commercial success as some of Maroon 5’s other hits, it still garnered recognition. It peaked at No. 48 on the Billboard Hot 100 in the United States and achieved moderate success internationally, including reaching No. 44 on the UK Singles Chart. Despite its modest chart performance, fans appreciate the song for its emotional depth and relatable exploration of heartbreak and vulnerability.

The lyrics illustrate a state of emotional vulnerability through the depiction of nightly crying as a means of coping with distress. The phrase "Cry yourself to sleep" highlights a deep emotional fragility, suggesting the woman is overwhelmed by sorrow and unable to find solace. This act of crying is portrayed not merely as a reaction but as a routine necessity to cope with both physical and emotional pain, signaling profound helplessness.

Additionally, the repetition of "Every night" underscores the chronic nature of the individual's anguish, emphasizing how entrenched this vulnerability has become in her daily experience. The line, "Why does this happen to me?" reflects an unresolved inner turmoil, as she struggles to understand or rationalize her suffering, further amplifying the theme of helplessness and vulnerabilities. This interplay of phrases portrays a cycle of pain and unanswered questions, encapsulating the persistent struggle against personal hardship.

Apart from previously two songs, "Move Like Jagger" primarily explores the themes of love intertwined with sensual dance moves. As stated in the previous category, while it features traits of submissiveness, it also portrays some depictions of women as weak, which will be analyzed further. This song became a global hit due to its catchy, danceable beat and playful lyrics. The lyrics express admiration for someone's confidence and allure, comparing their dance moves to Jagger's iconic style. It blends pop, rock, and disco influences, and is often noted for its energetic and funky vibe.

The line "Maybe it's hard when you feel like you're broken and scared, nothing feels right" offers a striking example of portrayal of women as vulnerable. Words like "broken" and "scared" convey emotional fragility. By labeling the woman as "broken" and "scared", the lyrics frame her as someone incomplete or damaged, thereby amplifying the contrast between her perceived vulnerability and the speaker's implied strength or control.

Finally, the last song to be analyzed in the vulnerable section is “Animals”. This song is a popular track from the fifth album, “Animals” that depicts an endless breakup in a relationship, likening it to the interaction between “predator” and “prey” where escape seems possible.

The focused lines are “Yeah, you can start over, You can run free.” along with “But you can’t stay away from me”. These connected lines reflect the state of being weak, not able to escape from the uncomfortable relationship, which is metaphorically referred to as the relationship between “prey” and “predator”. To illustrate, In literature and media, women are frequently depicted as vulnerable or prey-like, often reinforcing stereotypical gender roles. This metaphor of women as prey underlines their perceived powerlessness, especially in the face of predatory, often male, figures. Research in this area indicates that such representations perpetuate societal views of women as objects of sexual violence or control (Bock, J., Burkley, & M., 2019). As the predator has a super strong sense of tracking its unfortunate prey, the prey will never escape if it is already targeted by its cruel predator. Metaphorically, in this song, the man is portrayed as a “predator” who controls the faith of a woman or his lover and never stops letting her go, just like how a predator never lets his prey escape from the inevitable tragedy in nature.

Furthermore, there is one more line from this song that should be analyzed in the way it is presented through the interaction between “predator” and “prey”. The line says, “Baby, I’m preying on you tonight. Hunt you down, eat you alive”. This line is similar to the previous lines showing how women are deficient, but there is one more aspect to add, which is the cruelty of predators towards their powerless prey. To elaborate, the fate of prey and aggressive behavior of predators can potentially showcase the evil behavior within men and the weakened images of women at the same time. To emphasize, this idea can be supported by the research result of Livingston (2021) as she addressed that women are frequently brutalized or hypersexualized, making them appear weak or submissive. Moreover, she also presented that in slasher films, this trope is particularly prevalent, as women are often portrayed as defenseless victims being hunted, reinforcing gendered power imbalances. With that said, being eaten alive, as shown in the stated

lyrics, illustrates how pathetic and unmatched being defenseless of the prey; in this case, the prey is portrayed as the women in the relationship with cruel men. Accordingly, the phrase “Eat you alive” not only underscores the weak women are portrayed, but also illustrates the man’s ruthlessness and dominance. In conclusion, the mentioned research of Livingston and the lyrics of “Animals” support the traits of weakness and vulnerability. The vivid imagery along with the predatory metaphor, presents a power imbalance, emphasizing.

In conclusion, as the analysis, Maroon 5’s lyrics highlight the theme of women’s dependence on men, both emotionally and physically. In “She Will Be Loved”, this dependence is portrayed through the need for male love and support during challenging times. Similarly, “Harder to Breathe” emphasizes emotional reliance within the context of romantic relationships. In addition, Maroon 5’s songs underscore some submissive traits of women through their lyrics of “Sunday Morning” and “Move Like Jagger”. These two songs illustrate how women are depicted as willingly conforming to prescribed roles or behaviors within romantic relationships. Furthermore, they portray women as submissive, yielding authority or control to male counterparts in the dynamics of their relationships” Lastly, Maroon 5’s songs frequently highlight the theme of women’s emotional vulnerability, portraying characters grappling with heartbreak, longing, and dependence on their partners. Through four different tracks including “She Will Be Loved”, “This Love”, “Won’t Go Home Without You” and “Animals”, the lyrics emphasize struggles with self-worth, the need for validation, and the reliance on external sources of emotional support. The imagery of persistent sorrow, unreciprocated affection, and the desire for reconciliation underscores the complexities of human relationships, particularly the fragile emotional states often attributed to women in these narratives. These lyrical themes resonate deeply with listeners, offering a poignant exploration of vulnerability and the challenges of navigating emotional bonds.

Men as Dominance

Research on male stereotypes in song lyrics consistently highlights themes of superiority. For instance, Hall et al. (2012) identified that in popular music, male dominance is frequently linked to themes of objectification and the assertion of power over women, especially through sexualization and aggressive behaviors. Moreover, it is evident that men are traditionally seen as superior to women in society, as it is reflected in the discussion of gender roles. Men are allowed to focus on personal development until they are ready for marriage, whereas are expected to prioritize caregiving and attending to others (Hentschel, Heilman & Peus, 2019; as cited in Estlind, 2020, p.6). Similarly, studies of country music lyrics reveal how traditional gender roles portray men as dominant figures within romantic and social relationships, reinforcing patriarchal norms in American culture (Carolina, 2023). With that said, these portrayals serve to perpetuate societal expectations of masculinity.

The three songs of Maroon 5, which featured the trait of dominance are composed of “Harder to Breathe (2002)”, “Move Like Jagger (2011)”, “Animals (2014)” and “Sugars (2014)”.

Firstly, the song “Harder to Breathe” exemplifies the theme of male dominance in romantic relationships. Beyond highlighting women's dependency in previous chapter, the song emphasizes traits of male control. The line, “Is it painful to learn that it's me that has all the control?” underscores male dominance by questioning the woman's response upon realizing that men possess the power in the relationship. The use of the term “control” signifies the exercise of authority and influence by men, asserting their dominance. Furthermore, the word “painful” reflects the emotional impact of this power imbalance on women, portraying them as subordinate and possibly distressed by their inferior position within the relationship dynamic.

Secondly, “Move Like Jagger” is next song to be analyzed for this theme. Similarly to “Harder to Breathe”, this song has been analyzed in the previous chapter as in the women are dependent category. Apart from that, this song also portrays the dominant traits of men throughout its lyrics as follows.

The traits of dominance could be analyzed from the line “I don’t need to try to control you. Look into my eyes and I’ll own you”. These two sentences significantly showcase the characteristics of men thinking themselves as the superior ones. As they say, “I don’t need to try to control you.”, this highlights how men realize and exercise their power that they often are dominant over women. It is implied that men can easily control women or their partners without any attempts. Especially, the line, “Look into my eyes, and I own you,” exemplifies how male dominance can be subtly conveyed through nonverbal communication, such as eye contact. It symbolizes the ease with which men assert their perceived superiority over women, emphasizing control and authority through a simple, yet powerful, interaction.

Moreover, the word "own" in song lyrics often aligns with possessive language, signifying control over relationships, resources, or environments. For instance, a study on gender and music practice discusses the performative nature of music and how power imbalances manifest in lyrical content. This is particularly evident when men are portrayed in dominant roles through their ability to "own" their success, partners, or possessions, reinforcing stereotypes of male superiority in music (Werner et al., 2020). For this reason, the line that says “Look into my eyes and I’ll own you” is a great example to show how men exist as being dominant to women through "Move Like Jagger".

Followed by those two lines, also there is one more line to express the dominant traits of men towards women. This line is quite different from those previously mentioned two lines as it is regarding the position of the driver and the passenger while traveling. The lyric, “And you wanna steer, but I’m shifting gears,” highlights the tendency of men to resist relinquishing control within a relationship. This resistance reflects a broader unwillingness to share significant responsibilities, such as leadership or decision-making, with women. Furthermore, the continuation of the lyric, “But I’m shifting gears, and I’ll take it from here,” underscores the determination to maintain dominance and authority, reinforcing traditional power dynamics.

Importantly, research indicates that male dominance is often portrayed in contexts related to driving, with larger vehicles typically associated with masculinity,

aggression, and authority. Studies have shown that vehicles such as trucks or sports cars tend to be perceived as symbols of male dominance and power. This reflects cultural associations between men and control or superiority in driving contexts, where occupying the "driver" position is seen as a metaphor for authority and dominance. Such portrayals reinforce traditional gender stereotypes by linking masculinity to control, aggressiveness, and power in public and private spaces, including on the road (Guthrie, 1993). To simplify, men will be the one who are controlling (shifting) the gear (relationship). Additionally, in driving the most important thing to do is to control the engine by controlling the gear from only one driver in the car. It is metaphorically compared to the relationship that if you allow someone to be the driver controlling the gear, that person will eventually control and navigate the relationship as well.

Apart from the song "Move Like Jagger", the "Animals" is the next song lyrics to be analyzed. In its lyrics, the "animal" aspect of the song symbolizes the innate primal instincts present in all humans when they experience desire for others, regardless of gender. It is evident that the singer is attempting to court a woman who is displaying reluctance. In addition, the man's sense of ego and self-assurance prevents him from fully acknowledging her rejection. Adam portrays a character who is undeterred by refusals (Vecchiarello, 2018).

Throughout the whole lyrics, there is one outstanding line to present the trait of male dominance. Research on the portrayal of men as dominant or superior in song lyrics often draws parallels with the metaphor of men as predators, emphasizing aggressive, controlling, and dominant behavior. Also, research suggest that masculinity is frequently associated with power and dominance, both sexually and socially. Shangani (2014) stated in her article that the lyrics of Maroon 5's "Animals" depict aggressive and invasive actions, portraying women as prey (para.9). This representation perpetuates traditional stereotypes of male dominance and sexual entitlement. Furthermore, Bock (2019) also addressed that the dominance is often framed in song lyrics through metaphors that like men to predators, asserting control over their environment or partners (p.262). Furthermore, metaphorically, from the focused line "Maybe you think you can hide. I can

smell your scent from miles”, it can be inferred that men perceive themselves as dominant to women by assuming the role of predators. This self-perception suggests that they believe they have control and dominance over their targets, whom they view as prey. Despite any efforts by women to evade or resist, men are depicted as capable of pursuing and capturing them, akin to how predators relentlessly track their prey by scent.

In addition to demonstrating dominance through predatory behavior, another characteristic closely associated with male dominance is the tendency to assert authority by issuing demands to others. To explain, research into the portrayal of male dominance in song lyrics reveals that the use of imperatives or giving demands can often be interpreted as a sign of male dominance. For instance, Freudiger and Almquist (1978) addressed that the imperatives and authoritative language contribute to the reinforcement of male-dominated hierarchies by portraying men as commanding or having power over others, particularly women. This kind of linguistic behavior in lyrics aligns with broader patterns of sexism in media, where men are frequently depicted as leaders or decision-makers (p.113). Also, as shown in “Move Like Jagger”, the line “look into my eyes” applies the same use of the imperatives to show male dominance as well.

Lastly, another song that represents the trait of dominance under the use of imperatives is “Sugar”. Released as the third single from album *V* in 2014, “Sugar” is one of the most popular songs of Maroon 5. This song peaked at number two on the US Billboard Hot 100. Moreover, Sugar is the 68th song in history to score at least 20 weeks in the top 10 of Hot 100. “Sugar” is about a man deeply craving the physical presence of his lover. Currently, he is separated from her, and his longing for their shared intimacy is so profound that he earnestly implores her to return to him.

The highlighted line to represent the trait of dominance is “Don’t let anybody touch it unless that somebody’s me”. This line itself indicates the feeling of wanting to control someone or to dominate over someone, who is likely to be the female couple in the relationship. With that said, the phrase shows how men would like to force women not to let anyone but him touch their body parts. More importantly, the word “Don’t” potentially

highlights the sense of dominance by using the imperative as giving demand over someone not to do something on their own will.

Not only the previously mentioned line, but also the line “No makeup on, that’s my sugar”. Generally, this line might be interpreted as the way to compliment the women that they are adorable without any makeup on their faces. However, the phrase “No makeup on” can also signify the trait of giving imperatives to someone, especially your couple. Other than that, wearing makeup is believed to be the right of women according to various studies. For instance, Nash et al. (2006) has drawn the conclusion on her research regarding how cosmetics influence female attractiveness that wearing makeup can be viewed as a personal choice to navigate social expectations and self-presentation effectively (p.502) Thus, when the lyrics reference "No makeup on," it can be understood as a subtle attempt to restrict women's freedom to embrace their personal choices and confidence in their appearance. This framing suggests societal pressures that undervalue or critique women’s autonomy over their own bodies and how they choose to present themselves. As a consequence, giving women the command to not wear make-up potentially relevant to the sense of dominance as well as the limitation of women's freedom.

In summary, the analysis of four selected Maroon 5 songs reveals various manifestations of dominance within their lyrics. These include portrayals of dominance in romantic relationships, demonstrations of authority and power, and expressions of control through implicit or explicit demands directed toward others. These themes collectively highlight the nuanced ways in which notions of dominance are embedded in their lyrical narratives.

Men as Endurance

In songs, men are often portrayed as embodiments of strength, authority, and resilience. This portrayal is a reflection of traditional gender roles, where masculinity is associated with power and dominance. Research into rap music, for example, Herd (2014) discussed that men are frequently depicted as tough, aggressive, and emotionally

detached, traits that align with society's expectations of male strength (p.581). These representations often reinforce patriarchal norms, emphasizing physical power, assertiveness, and control over women.

Thus, this presents an excellent opportunity to analyze the depiction of endurance in male characters as portrayed in the lyrics of Maroon 5. The selected analysis focuses on four songs: "Harder to Breathe (2002)", "She Will Be Loved (2014)", "Wake Up Call (2007)," and "Misery (2010)," each offering distinct narratives that showcase enduring masculine traits across various emotional and relational contexts.

Firstly, "Harder to Breathe," the lead single from Maroon 5's debut album *Songs About Jane* (2002), has previously been discussed in relation to women's dependence. However, this section explores the theme of male endurance depicted in the song. The line, 'I have the tendency of getting very physical. So watch your step, 'cause if I do, you'll need a miracle,' illustrates the notion of endurance through the implied physicality and potential for aggression. The phrase 'getting very physical' suggests that endurance in this context could manifest as violence within the relationship, creating a threatening atmosphere for women. Additionally, the warnings in 'watch your step' and 'if I do' reflect an implicit imbalance of power, where women are compelled to navigate cautiously to avoid provoking the man's endurance. The concluding phrase, 'you'll need a miracle,' underscores the severe consequences for women should men exert their strength, indicating potential harm so profound that survival seems uncertain. Overall, this line highlights endurance as a complex and potentially harmful dynamic in romantic relationships, particularly as it relates to male dominance and control over women.

Secondly, "She Will Be Loved" released in 2004 by Maroon 5, is one of the band's most iconic songs, blending pop and soft rock elements. The lyrics convey themes of unrequited love, emotional support, and the desire for connection, centering around a narrative where the protagonist expresses deep care for a woman who is struggling with her own emotional challenges. The song delves into vulnerability, resilience, and empathy, showcasing the speaker's enduring commitment to being there for the woman, despite

her emotional scars. It emphasizes the idea that love is not just about romance, but also about emotional support and understanding.

Significantly, the lyrics convey key elements that align with stereotypical notions of male endurance. The line, "I don't mind spending every day. Out on your corner in the pouring rain," may initially appear to reflect romantic devotion in a relationship. However, it also embodies a trait linked to masculinity—endurance. The phrase "pouring rain" can be interpreted metaphorically as challenges or conflicts faced by the couple or others. Despite the presence of such struggles, the man is portrayed as embodying endurance, as highlighted by the statement, "I don't mind spending every day." This underscores the perception of men as capable of confronting recurring hardships with fortitude, emphasizing their ability to persist through difficulties. Besides, this presentation still reflects the trait of emotional endurance of men as he or they are aware of their strong existence towards women. With an understanding of their endurance, men can demonstrate their capacity to shield women from harm or challenges, positioning themselves as protectors within the relationship dynamic. Moreover, they are believed to be the ones who need to face and fix the problems in the relationship.

Followed by, "Wake Up Call" is the next song to be relevant with the enduring traits of men. This song begins with the protagonist catching their partner in an act of unfaithfulness, which leads to an emotionally intense response. The introduction sets the stage for the song's dark tone, portraying a man driven to the edge by betrayal and heartbreak. Then, his reaction is immediate and violent, symbolizing the emotional turmoil that the betrayal causes. Additionally, the song explores themes of anger, impulsiveness, and the consequences of being wronged. However, this song not only presented those mentioned themes, but also the focused theme of endurance as well.

As the line says, "Would have bleed to make you happy", it can be interpreted as men are willing to do anything for whom they love, even if they have to get hurt or lose something valuable. Moreover, they are so ready to make their couple happy. Metaphorically, it is quite similar to the concept above that men would be able to bleed themselves just to make women feel delightful or satisfied. It is obviously referred to how

men consider themselves as being enduring as there are some interpretations of words regarding “blood” from various research. For example, Blood has long been used as a metaphor for strength in various contexts, including literature, mythology, and even popular music. In many instances, it symbolizes vitality, power, sacrifice, and survival—qualities that are often associated with masculine strength (McCrudden, 2023). Therefore, the interpretation discussed above from that highlighted line emphasizes the trait of being strong of men that can endure the pain (the physical hurt) to fulfill or please the woman.

As the use of “blood” in lyrics has been used to analyze the sense of male strength in “Wake Up Call”, blood itself is still found in another song as well, which is “Misery”. This song is from their 2010 album *Hands All Over*. Through lyrics, the song reflects feelings of heartache and longing as the narrator expresses the pain of a struggling relationship. Its upbeat tempo contrasts with the theme of emotional distress, creating a dynamic sound that captures the tension between love and suffering. The lyrics are centered on feelings of rejection and the desire for reconciliation.

The theme of masculine strength, symbolized through the imagery of blood, is evident in the line, “You’d rather cover up, I’d rather let them bleed.” The latter part of this line underscores how men are portrayed as resilient, forceful, and enduring, choosing to expose their wounds and endure pain rather than conceal their injuries. Moreover, this line not only reinforces the portrayal of male toughness but also subtly critiques women by suggesting that they are more likely to internalize or conceal their suffering. This implication contrasts with the stereotypical depiction of men, who are perceived as openly enduring and confronting their challenges, highlighting opposing characteristics between genders.

To conclude, Maroon 5’s songs frequently showcase male endurance, portraying it as both a physical and emotional trait. In terms of physical endurance, lyrics often describe perseverance through adverse conditions to demonstrate commitment, such as weathering storms or facing obstacles for a loved one. Meanwhile, on the emotional side, the band highlights the capacity for emotional fortitude through themes of heartbreak, persistence, and vulnerability. Men are depicted as enduring emotional pain, continuing

to fight for love even when faced with rejection or hardship. Together, these portrayals create a multi-faceted image of male endurance, intertwining the physical and emotional dimensions to challenge and expand conventional gender norms.

Overall, the analysis of seven Maroon 5 songs reveals that traditional masculine traits, such as dominance and endurance, remain prominent in contemporary music. This suggests that these characteristics continue to be perpetuated and reflected within modern lyrical narratives.

The first theme, which explores men's dominance over women, highlights various expressions of this trait within the analyzed songs. Dominance is particularly evident in the repeated use of the term "control," signifying the assertion of male authority in romantic relationships. The lyrics also underscore men's reluctance to relinquish power to women, emphasizing their dominance as a defining characteristic. Additionally, the use of imperative language within the songs reinforces this portrayal, illustrating commands and assertions of authority directed toward women. Most significantly, the depiction of dominance is metaphorically likened to a predator-prey dynamic, where men assume the role of the predator wielding authority, while women are portrayed as the prey, resigned to their subordinate position within the relational hierarchy.

Along with the second theme, men are depicted as embodying endurance in various ways within the songs. One portrayal emphasizes endurance as a means of exerting control or dominance in romantic relationships, often through implied aggression, creating an atmosphere of discomfort for women. Conversely, endurance is also shown in a supportive vibe, where men provide strength and comfort to their loved ones. Additionally, the metaphorical use of "blood" illustrates men's willingness to endure pain to bring pleasure or fulfillment to women. Finally, endurance is depicted through men's ability to confront and express their pain openly, rather than concealing it, highlighting emotional resilience as an enduring trait.

Beyond analyzing the portrayal of women and men in Maroon 5's songs, the subsequent chapter will examine characteristics within the lyrics that diverge from traditional gender traits. The discussion will explore how some attributes transcend conventional gender norms, illustrating complexities in the representation of gendered



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The construction of gender nowadays can come from many different sources, such as societal, family, cultural norms, and media. Songs have played a major role in maintaining and constructing gender. Popular songs that sell hundreds of thousands of copies or most listened to in Spotify receive even more exposure. Therefore, popular songs play an important role in spreading messages to all the listeners. Throughout Maroon 5's selected songs, gender stereotypes are continually depicted as explained in chapters 4 and 5.

In Chapter IV, this analysis critically examines the presentation of female stereotypes in selected Maroon 5 songs, emphasizing three key themes: dependence, submissiveness, and vulnerability. Through a detailed examination of songs, the chapter explores how these recurring motifs mirror societal gender norms and influence contemporary understandings of femininity. Each theme is illustrated through specific examples from the songs. The chapter concludes by synthesizing its findings on female stereotypes and providing a foundation for the subsequent chapter's exploration of male stereotypes within the same selection of songs.

The depiction of women in Maroon 5's songs reflects and reinforces prevailing societal norms, particularly those rooted in patriarchal frameworks that emphasize traditional gender roles. These portrayals highlight three central themes: First, female dependence on men: songs such as "She Will Be Loved" and "Harder to Breathe" emphasize women as emotionally and, at times, physically reliant on men, illustrating dependency as a recurring narrative within the lyrics. Second, normalization of female submissiveness: tracks like "Sunday Morning" and "Moves Like Jagger" portray women conforming to male expectations and desires, reinforcing gendered power dynamics. Last, perpetuation of Female Vulnerability: in songs including "This Love," "Won't Go Home Without You," "Moves Like Jagger," and "Animals," women are depicted as emotionally fragile or weak, reinforcing stereotypes of female vulnerability. This thematic analysis

underscores how the lyrics in Maroon 5's repertoire reflect broader societal constructs of gender, aligning with traditional and often limiting representations of femininity.

Meanwhile, the same chapter of this research examines the presentation of male stereotypes in selected Maroon 5 songs, with a focus on two central themes: male dominance over women and male endurance. The analysis delves into the lyrics to explore how these themes are articulated through depictions of control, power, and aggression, frequently employing metaphors of predation and physical strength. The findings reveal a strong presence of traditional masculine traits in the lyrics, which reinforce societal expectations of men's roles in relationships. Additionally, this chapter investigates lyrical elements that question or subvert conventional gender norms, offering a nuanced perspective on the interplay between traditional and evolving conceptions of masculinity.

Lyrics from several Maroon 5 songs perpetuate traditional male stereotypes such as dominance and endurance. The lyrics frequently use the word "control," signifying male authority in romantic relationships. For example, the line "Is it painful to learn that it's me that has all the control?" from "Harder to Breathe" emphasizes the power imbalance in the relationship, portraying the woman as subordinate. In addition, "Wake Up Call" and "Misery" use the imagery of blood to symbolize male strength and endurance. For example, the line "Would have bled to make you happy" from "Wake Up Call" portrays men as willing to endure pain to please women.

However, some of Maroon 5's songs released between 2010 and 2020 demonstrate the characteristics that deviate from traditional gender stereotypes. Those songs subtly challenge gender norms by portraying men as dependent, submissive, and women as dominant.

Men as Dependent

Traditionally, emphasizing self-reliance and independence is a commonly upheld masculine trait (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Autonomy has widely been examined in men and masculinities scholarship as an idealized trait of masculinity and a

pursuit of men, bound up with the idea of hegemonic masculinity that generates, justifies, and maintains gender disparities (Connell, 1987). However, from the analysis, it is obtained that there are some songs that contain the concept of being dependent, which is one of the female traits of femininity as will be illustrated in the following section.

“Won’t Go Home Without You (2007)” is the third single from Maroon 5’s second studio album *It Won’t Be Soon Before Long*. In 2022, Billboard ranked this as the tenth best Maroon 5 songs of all time. Moreover, this song continues to be one of the group’s most powerful and enduring ballads, evoking deep emotions (O’Brien, 2022). This song primarily focuses on the turning point of ending a romantic relationship. The girl terminated the relationship with the boy, while the boy is attempting to refute the fact that their connection has ceased to exist. He is contemplating the actions he could have taken to save this failed relationship. In addition to its fame, this song contains phrases and important lines that exemplify the characteristics associated with feminine stereotypes, as seen below.

The trait of dependency is prominently woven throughout the lyrics, as the male speaker expresses a deep emotional reliance on the presence and approval of their ex-girlfriend. In the first line of the lyric, the man sings, “I asked her to say, but she wouldn’t listen”. This line indicates that the male speaker is in a vulnerable state where he cannot be alone that is why he “asked” her to stay even though their relationship has already ended. Since this song is about the aftermath of the broken relationship, it subverts the normal expectation that males are usually the one who can move forward and become independent. However, this line shows the speaker’s desire for the other person to remain with him, indicating a dependency on her company and support.

Furthermore, in the chorus, the line that says “I may not make it through the night / I won’t go home without you” says that the male speaker’s existence is dependent on his girlfriend, as he asserts that he may not endure this evening in the absence of her presence. Therefore, this exaggeration indicates that the presence of her is essential to his well-being. These lines also reflect the fear of loneliness and the need to avoid being alone. Additionally, the repeated plea in the chorus, where he asks his ex-girlfriend to be

with him, further emphasizes the degree of dependency, as these lines indicate the speaker's refusal to accept being alone.

Likewise, "Payphone (2012)" is another song that shows the dependency traits in its lyrics. "Payphone" tells the story of a man reflecting on a past relationship that ended in heartbreak. The male speaker is depicted on a payphone, trying to call his ex-girlfriend. The lyrics reflect his frustration and regret over the lost love, as well as his struggle to move on. In addition, this song made its debut on the Billboard Hot 100 at the third position, eventually reaching its highest position at number two. "Payphone" does not provide a gratifying listening experience. However, the song set a new record for the highest number of digital downloads in its first week and appears to be an unavoidable hit for the summer (Powers, 2012).

The first line of the lyrics says, "I'm at a payphone / trying to call home / All of my change I spent on you". The imagery of the payphone symbolizes his attempt to reach out and reconnect with his ex-girlfriend, indicating his inability to move on. The attempt to call "home" with all the money that he spent to make the call highlights his relentless effort to salvage what remains of their connection. This act of trying to contact his ex-girlfriend, despite knowing the outcome, underscores the emotional dependency of the male speaker.

The metaphor "You turned out the lights" suggests the abrupt end of the relationship which brings the speaker into darkness and uncertainty. This imagery evokes a sense of loss, as if his world has been dimmed by the breakup. The next line "Now, I'm paralyzed" metaphorically expresses the speaker's emotional stagnation. The word "paralyzed" means that he is unable to move forward as he is trapped by his past feelings. "Still stuck in that time / When we called it love" furthers this notion, indicating that he is emotionally frozen in the past, unable to let go of the moments when the relationship was thriving. This symbolizes his deep emotional attachment and inability to accept the present reality.

Followed by the third song, “One More Night” is the last song that presents the dependent traits. This hit was released in 2012 from the fourth album *Overexposed* reached the nine consecutive weeks in Billboard Hot 100 Chart. The lyrics primarily explore the internal conflict of desiring to leave a challenging relationship while feeling too emotionally attached to walk away. The song's narrator depicts a relationship characterized by tension and dissatisfaction, where both partners appear to amplify each other's negative traits. Addressing the trait of dependence, the line “Trying to tell you ‘no,’ but my body keeps on telling you ‘yes’” illustrates the man's dependence on the woman despite the unhealthy nature of their relationship. While he tries to reject his need for her, he ultimately cannot resist, revealing his underlying reliance on her presence.

Furthermore, the lines “So I cross my heart and I hope to die. / That I'll only stay with you one more night” and “And I know, I said it a million times” highlight the man's dependence on the woman. Despite the toxicity of their relationship, they continue to reunite. Notably, the phrase “a million times” suggests that his return to her is not an isolated incident but a recurring pattern, reinforcing his awareness of their repeated cycle. These lines underscore his emotional reliance on her, even amid challenges.

“Sugar (2014)” is another song that showcases the trait of dependency. “Sugar” is one of Maroon 5's most popular compositions, having been released as the third single from the album *V* in 2014. This single reached the second position on the US Billboard Hot 100. Its release date was August 29, 2014. It achieved sales of 164,000 units within the initial week (Miller, 2015). “Sugar” is a story about a man who is profoundly yearning for the physical presence of his partner. The lyric compares the woman's love to sugar and the man expresses a deep craving for her love and attention. Currently, he is separated from her, and he is so yearning for the intimacy that he is imploring her to return to him.

In “Sugar” the dependence trait is evident through the lyrics that express a desperate need for the woman's love and presence. In the first few lines of the song, the man says, “I'm hurting, baby / I'm broken down / I need your loving, loving / I need it now.” The repetition of “I need” emphasizes the speaker's dependency on his partner's love and

affection. This neediness and urgency from the word “now” can be viewed as a dependent trait, as the speaker is expressing a strong reliance on someone else for emotional support. Then, the man says, “When I’m without you, I’m something weak. / You got me begging, begging, I’m on my knees.” In these lines, the male speaker admits his own weakness due to the loss of his partner. This admission of weakness contrasts with traditional notions of male strength and independence, highlighting a more dependent side of the male speaker.

These highlighted lyrics simply address that the presence of this woman is important and necessary in his life, and that he is willing to do whatever it takes to get her back, for example begging on his knee. This suggests that the man depends on the woman for strength and comfort. Furthermore, the action of begging can infer the man's sense of inferiority and the act of accepting the superior status of the woman. To illustrate, from the very beginning of this song, these first four lines present the way men are dependent, which is traditionally not the male stereotype, without women as they are metaphorically broken down into pieces. Also, they admit that they are something weak when they are not with women whom they love. They would do everything, even begging their knees just to be with women.

Along with a few lines from the second verse, there are dependence's traits found in this song as well. Those lines are; “When I’m without you, I’m so insecure” and “You are the one thing, one thing I’m living for”. In “When I’m without you, I’m so insecure”, it can be inferred that men, who are too dependent, feel unsafe and insecure when they are alone without women. Furthermore, this can be giving the sense of accepting their weakness as they mention their insecurity as being with women might potentially be one of the aspects that makes them feel comfortable and secure. Meanwhile, “You are the one thing, one thing I’m living for” symbolizes the fact that men are overly reliant on women since they assert that women are the most important thing in their lives and that this is the only thing they are motivated to do in their lives.

Lastly, The fifth song, “Nobody’s Love” was released on July 24, 2020, in the album *Jordi*. Also, it peaked at number 41 on the Billboard Hot 100. “Nobody’s Love” conveys a longing for peace, companionship, and stability during difficult times; suggesting that this love can provide strength and comfort, especially in challenging circumstances.

Apart from its lyrics’ underlying messages, this song strongly conveys a sense of dependency by male speaker. The line, “You’re the only hand in my back pocket / If you ever left, I’d go psychotic,” illustrates the significant role of a woman in the man’s life, as he perceives her as his sole support. Here, “back pocket” serves as an idiomatic expression suggesting something readily available for support in times of need. More critically, the line “If you ever left, I’d go psychotic” underscores the intensity of his reliance, with “psychotic” indicating a potential for emotional instability. This line, therefore, emphasizes the man’s profound emotional and psychological dependence on the woman, implying that her departure would lead him to a state of desperation and instability.

Additionally, the line “Baby, you’re the key to my heart locket / If you ever left, never unlock it” illustrates how the man views his beloved as essential to his emotional well-being. He considers her the key to unlocking his heart, symbolized by the “locket,” which traditionally holds treasured items. Metaphorically, without the woman as the key, he feels he could never love someone again. Finally, the plea to “never unlock” the locket reflects his excessive attachment, suggesting he would close himself off from love. The selected lines from this song imply that the speaker’s happiness and emotional security are dependent on their partner’s continued affection and presence, thereby intensifying the trait of dependency.

Men as Submissive

Submissiveness, which traditionally belongs to the feminine traits, can be referred to as the behavior providing the woman a feeling of security, affection, nurturing, and the opportunity to forfeit power, while also enabling her spouse to assert their authority

with mutual agreement. (Bedford, 2023). As well, submissiveness can be defined as a willingness to yield to the authority or influence of others, often shaped by cultural, social, and psychological factors rather than innate characteristics. Nevertheless, this mentioned trait is conversely found in the men' characteristics. The data source includes the lyrics from "Won't Go Home Without You (2007)" and "Wait (2018)".

The song "Won't Go Home Without You" not only explores themes of male dependency but also reveals elements of submissiveness. For instance, the line "Just give me one more chance to make it right" underscores a submissive disposition. The plea for "one more chance" illustrates a moment where the male narrator adopts a deferential stance, actively seeking forgiveness and the opportunity to amend past wrongs. This dynamic portrays a reversal of traditional power roles, highlighting male submission in the context of romantic reconciliation, as the male character begs for another opportunity from women to make up for his mistake.

The second song, "Wait", which was released on July 16, 2018 is a countdown single from the album 'Whiskey'. Commonly, this song narrates about the narrator, Adam Levine, who was trying to salvage a failing relationship. To exemplify, Levine knows he has been a bad boyfriend, but he still loves the girl. He pleads with her to stay and hear him out rather than walking out on him. Apart from its acceptability, there are some submissive traits found from its lyrics which will be elaborated as follows.

From the last line of the pre-chorus, it says "I'm beggin', beggin', beggin', beggin', I'm beggin' you". Similarly to the "beggin" found in "Sugar", this word from these lyrics potentially shows how men are being submissive to women as they are begging for love. Importantly, the word "begging" is still the main key leading to the character of being submissive of men towards women. As in the relationship, men beg his knee to show how inferior they are when they are with women in order to allow women to dominate over them.

In conclusion, the presentation of submissiveness in the songs that have been analyzed, is congruent with the attributes that are traditionally associated with women. On the other hand, it is presented from the perspective of male speakers all throughout. Not only do the traits that were provided in the lyrics that were studied reflect the sense of

being physically subservient, but they also symbolize the emotion of being intellectually submissive and the act of behaving in a manner that is subordinate to your superiors. It is essential to take into consideration the fact that the examined feminine features that were found in male speakers throughout the lyrics have the potential to be in opposition to the norm that has been created by society. According to popular culture, men are typically portrayed as being powerful, self-sufficient, and emotionally resilient.

Maroon 5's portrayal of emotional dependence and submissive behavior through male speakers in the analyzed songs aligns with traits conventionally seen as feminine, offering a challenge to traditional gender norm. The male speaker in these songs portray emotional vulnerability and submissiveness, as they revolve around stories of broken relationships. Traditionally, media often portrays men as resilient or indifferent after a breakup, while women are shown as heartbroken, in need of emotional support, and frequently submissive to a man's need in an effort to earn his love in return. However, in these songs, male characters display deep emotional struggle, yearning for what they have lost. This depiction contrasts with typical masculine portrayals, challenging gender stereotypes by suggesting that emotional vulnerability, dependence, and submission are not exclusive to one gender.

Women as Dominant

The previous section illustrates the challenge of gender norm, particularly male stereotypes, by highlighting the portrayal of feminine traits in male characters. This section shifts focus to the presentation of woman embodying masculine characteristics in several of Maroon's 5 songs. This reversal of conventional gender roles disrupts traditional expectations, presenting men are depicted as submissive figure while women are portrayed as dominant.

This focused theme is particularly evident in the lyrics of three songs: "Won't Go Home Without You (2007)", "Sugar (2014)", and "Wait (2018)".

First, the song "Won't Go Home Without You (2007)" challenges traditional gender stereotypes by portraying men as submissive and woman as dominant, subverting

established notions of romantic power dynamics. From the beginning of the song, woman is depicting as holding the agency within the relationship, being the one who decides to end it despite her partner's emotional plea: "I asked her to stay / But she wouldn't listen / And she left before I had the chance to say". These lines indirectly illustrate the woman's autonomy and decision-making power, emphasize her control over the situation while the man is rendered powerless. Furthermore, the line, "Just give me one more chance to make it right," reflects a reversal of roles. Specifically, the phrase "give me one more chance" highlights the woman's position of power in the romantic relationship, as she controls whether or not to grant the opportunity for reconciliation. Conversely, the man is depicted as subordinate, pleading for a chance to prove himself and restore the relationship.

In both "Sugar" (2014) and "Wait" (2018) present the theme of male dependency and submissiveness in romantic relationships, juxtaposed with women's dominance. In "Sugar," this dynamic is evident in the line, "You got me begging, I'm on my knees," where the imagery of a man begging symbolizes a submissive posture, elevating the woman to a dominant and authoritative role. Similarly, "Wait" reinforces this theme through the repeated lyric, "I'm beggin', beggin', beggin', beggin', I'm beggin' you." The repetitive plea accentuates the man's subordinate position, as he desperately appeals to the woman to preserve the relationship. Women, in contrast, are portrayed as holding the power, depicted as the recipients of these pleas and the decision-makers in the dynamic. The lyric, "Let me apologize, I'll make up, make up, make up, make up for all those times," further illustrates this imbalance, with the man assuming responsibility and seeking forgiveness, underscoring the woman's control over the terms of reconciliation.

Overall, the three Maroon 5 songs illustrate how the lyrics reverse traditional gender roles. These songs emphasize women's dominance and men's submissiveness, portraying men as pleading and women as powerful, particularly in romantic relationships where women are predominantly in control.

The analysis presented in this chapter indicates that shifts in gendered stereotypes of men and women occurred more frequently during the period from 2010 to 2020 compared to 2000 to 2010. This suggests that, over the past decade, traditional gender stereotypes have increasingly evolved into more fluid and non-fixed representations of gender, contrasting with the more rigid frameworks observed in the earlier decade.

As previously analyzed, the gendered stereotypes of men and women from Maroon 5's songs can be seen as a transformation reflected in binary opposition: the submissiveness of men versus the dominance of women. This transformation results in men willingly embracing submissiveness, while women take on dominant and empowered roles in the relationship.

Through these portrayals, Maroon 5 songs could subtly deconstruct gender norms and encourage listeners to reconsider rigid cultural assumptions about emotional resilience. The band's influence, particularly as these songs have topped charts, may encourage societal shifts in viewing male or female traits as a shared human experience. This analysis supports the view that gender traits are fluid, not fixed, allowing for a reinterpretation of traditionally gendered traits across contexts. Maroon 5's reinterpretation of these stereotypes through male perspectives offers a broader reflection on evolving societal views surrounding gender roles.

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