

**Gender Portrayal in Popular Music Videos:
A Comparative Analysis of India and Canada**

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Abstract

Popular culture is a powerful form of public pedagogy (Giroux, 2004a; 2004b). That is, people learn from pop culture even when they think they are just being “entertained.” Considering the prevalence of media in the current context, popular culture may serve as a more influential pedagogue than official curricula or teachers (Moore, 2014). Grounded in feminist and queer media literacies, this study used critical content analysis and QSs to analyse popular music videos from Canada and India. The analysis considered: a) the ways that gender is constructed through popular music videos in two distinct contexts; b) the potential messages about gender communicated in music videos; and c) the way popular music videos could be used in formal classroom spaces to ground broader conversations about gender. The critical content analysis and qualitative survey revealed the presence of gender stereotypes and heteronormative representations within most character relationships with power lying in the hands of male characters. This research created a Basic Inclusivity Audit Survey (B.I.A.S) to observe and practice gender-based analysis of media texts for further discussions on the portrayal of gender in Media.

Keywords: media literacy, music video, public pedagogy

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Popular (pop) culture is a powerful form of public pedagogy (Giroux, 2004a; 2004b) That is, people learn from pop culture, even when they think they are just being “entertained.” Media re-presents¹ the world and in turn forms the world. For example, media re-presentations of gender inform audiences’ understandings and performances of masculinities and femininities. Put simply, popular culture can teach the “supposed to be” of gender and what it means to be a girl or a boy. Considering the prevalence of Media in students’ lives, popular culture may serve as a more influential pedagogue than official curricula or teachers (Moore, 2014). It is precisely because popular culture is already teaching students about gender that it should be engaged as a pedagogical tool. Through this study, I investigated how popular culture can be used to reveal/expose constructions of gender and sexuality. Specifically, I used critical media literacy (Kellner & Share, 2019) to analyse music videos from India and Canada in order to explore how gender is constructed across these two contexts.

Gender equity and gender re-presentations are deeply personal to me due to the narrow, essentialist, and dehumanising gender representations and stereotypes I saw in my surroundings in India, including in the media, school, and society. Popular media in India often sexualised females as objects of desire for men. A woman was often portrayed as the “damsels in distress” that needed knights-in-shining armour. As a child, I was confused about how I should act as a female. My parents encouraged me to voice my opinions and be independent; however, the Media and the broader cultural environment expected me to be quiet, well-groomed, and agreeable in order to be identified as a woman. As a female, I felt preyed upon by these stereotypes and gendered forms of socialisation to try and “fit in.” Moreover, growing up I realised that my environment was gendered within a binary. I was

¹ The hyphenation of this term is used to intentionally indicate the way media constructs and presents, rather than reflects, identities and lived experiences.

either a stereotypical female as defined by society, or I was manly—a “tomboy.” Identifying anywhere on the spectrum besides the two binaries was a legal crime in my home country for most of my life (Indian Penal Code, 1860). Therefore, even today, as a brown, pansexual, 25-year-old female in a same-sex relationship from a middle-class family, I do not see myself represented in mainstream popular culture. Neither my experiences nor my identity was reflected in mainstream Media. In the same way that popular culture constructs, reinforces, and legitimises narrow, fixed re-presentations of gender and sexuality, decoding media texts can be precisely the place to provoke this “naturalisation.” With this study, I have created a framework for breaking down popular culture and making meaning of it in the classroom, specifically in regard to re-presentations of gender.

Rationale

In many countries, including the UAE, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, and Lebanon, it remains illegal for any citizen to self-identify as a transgender person (Wareham, 2020). Florida’s “Don’t Say Gay” bill bans talk about gender identities and sexual orientation in the classroom (Associated Press, 2022). In 2023, the “1 Million March 4 Children” or “Parental Rights Movement” gained traction all over Canada, demanding the elimination of sexual orientation and gender identity curriculum, pronouns, mixed bathrooms, and so forth (Council of Canadians, 2023). Amidst increasing enforcement of a discourse of “nature” or “biology,” it is crucial to challenge efforts to stifle conversations about the social construction of gender.

Beyond the increased policing of gender, the past two to three years of a global pandemic have been significantly disrupting for most people around the world, especially children who have lost their daily routine and structure. Online media consumption within the youth demographic was already high prior to the pandemic (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012). In the 1990’s, 98% of sixth graders listened to popular music, 72% of them on most days or

every day (Christenson, 1992). In the 2000s, 8–10-year-olds listened to music at least one hour a day (Roberts et al., 2005). During the pandemic, these numbers only increased. Research revealed that both music and online engagement were used as a coping mechanism for student stress during the COVID-19 pandemic (Vidas et al., 2021). These numbers reveal that youth engagement with music makes it a relevant form of public pedagogy (defined below).

Russell et al. (2017) found that many adolescents and youth spend several hours watching music videos every day, totalling almost 20 hours a week. At this level of consumption, music videos become a source of persuasion and pedagogy; that is, all media contains messages, and as youth spend ever more time with media, they are also consuming the messages contained within them (about gender ideals, sexuality, consent, race, class, consumerism). It was also found, in the same study, that youth immerse themselves in the music video content, which was evident from their receptiveness to the embedded messages about substance use. For instance, the research found a single exposure to smoking in the media led to strengthening positive associations with smoking (Russell et al., 2017). That is, attitudes towards substance use showcased in music videos were directly proportional to the consequences of such a use as depicted in music videos.

Audiences, often subconsciously, can be highly influenced by popular culture. Because popular culture actively constructs societal understandings of gender, it can provide a rich tapestry for these discussions with students. That is, if gender is also “done” through popular culture, it can be the very text to “undo” concrete understandings of gender (Butler, 1990). This qualitative study invited questions about how youth explore and develop their own gender identities alongside/against popular culture.

Research Questions

1. How is gender portrayed/constructed in popular music videos in India and Canada?

2. In what ways do music videos impact youth's understanding of gender?
3. How could music videos be used as a pedagogical tool to generate dialogue about gender with youth?

I chose to focus on music videos in two distinct contexts in order to engage with the (potentially) varied re-presentations of gender. That is, as gender is socially constructed and mobilised/naturalised through popular culture, it is important to examine/reveal how these constructions vary across contexts. Surfacing (putting on display) these potential differences can give educators/scholars insights into how masculinity and femininity are socially constructed, perpetuated by popular culture, consumed by youth, and concretised as societal norms. In this way, critical media literacy involves decoding media and using media to expose how societal norms are constructed.

This study contributes to the field of media education. It aims to help educators consider how powerful forms of public pedagogy, like music videos, should be engaged within formal classroom environments. Moreover, it aims to offer various pedagogical tools to initiate and explicitly teach media literacy, thereby encouraging learners to critically engage with the messages in Media that can define and confine humanity. As Butler (2004) pointed out, for many people the matter of increasing the possibilities of gender “is not a luxury, it is as crucial as bread” (p. 29).

Terms

In order to ground this thesis in a common understanding of terms, I will outline my understanding of “gender,” “media,” “media literacy,” “popular culture,” and “public pedagogy.”

Gender

Gender is a social construct that is often categorised within a binary, male and female. Following Langer (2019), gender is not just the physical embodiment; rather, it is a complex

composition of visual representation, behaviour, and the experiential, the latter being known and understood only by the subject themselves. Therefore, gender can be anything on a spectrum, not just the dominant binaries. However, societal expectations and perceptions influence how one understands and does gender. As Butler (2004) wrote, one does not do their gender alone. For example, parent's attitudes towards gender roles and stereotypes, including gender differentiated parenting itself, can impact a child's expression and behaviour (Endendijk et al., 2017). Moreover, performing gender in a "correct" way in society is often recognised and rewarded with what may be seen as a "happy ending" in a Disney movie. In Disney's *The Little Mermaid* (Musker & Clements, 1989), for instance, the two lead roles, Ariel and Eric, are rewarded with their happy ending for fitting into the gender roles and expectations society had set for them; however, Ursula, with her short hair, plus-size figure, deep voice, dark skin, and makeup that reminds one of drag queens (who in a patriarchal, heteronormative world do not fit into the societal norms of gender and are therefore villainised and punished; Allen, 2023), is the antagonist whose downfall leads to Ariel and Eric's happy ending. This example demonstrates the constructedness of gender (and of femininities specifically), the way society rewards and endorses particular performances of gender, and the way mainstream Media reinforces and naturalises these norms through representations and storyline (Kellner & Share, 2019). Societal norms lead people to perform gender, at all times, even to an imaginary audience, as we come to regulate our expressions through these norms (Butler, 2004).

Media

Media is defined as any source (medium) that is used to pass on a message (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012). In this way, media is the plural form of medium. Yet, it is also a reference to Media as an industry, the Mass Media. "Media" or "the Media" is often used to speak about the media industry or broader/popular forms of media. For example,

people say “the News Media” when they are speaking about the broader news industry or mainstream news. Throughout this thesis, I use media (all lowercase) to represent the plural form of medium, and I use Media to represent the industry.

Media Literacy

For one to be media literate, one must be able to identify language specific to a particular medium, interpret (analyse) various mediums, and produce media texts (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012; Kellner & Share, 2019). Media literacies are explored in more detail in the literature review ([Chapter 2](#)).

Popular Culture

Popular culture is a piece of media that is popular among the dominant class, and therefore produces normative/common societal understandings (Fiske, 2010; Hall, 1981). While there may not be a single dominant class, as there are many communities and demographics, mainstream Media within a community can influence broader understandings and values. Drawing on Fiske (2010), in this thesis I regard popular culture as always being in flux, as it is run by profit-making industries but also caters to the interests of the people.

Public Pedagogy

Drawing largely from the work of Giroux (1998, 2003, 2004b, 2011), it is suggested that any medium available to the public can become a tool of public pedagogy. Giroux wrote:

“The concentration of control over the means of producing, circulating, and exchanging information has been matched by the emergence of new technologies which have transformed culture, especially popular culture, into the primary educational site in which youth learn about themselves, their relationship to others, and the larger world.” (Giroux, 1998, p. 253)

That is, there is instruction and pedagogy in everything, everywhere. For instance, even how the classroom is structured teaches students. If the desks are aligned in rows, and there is a

raised platform at the “front” of the classroom for the teacher, this demands structure and subordination to the authority, the teacher. However, if the classroom is arranged in collective tables, this gives the message of a democratic environment with equal rights and voices for everyone. Similarly, each object or action sends a message that becomes instructive.

Theoretical Framework

Media texts are the vehicle through which all information is carried. They influence how the audience understands the messages these texts are trying to convey; following McLuhan (1964), the medium is the message. That is, the vessel or package that carries information impacts the way a message is received. In this way, there are important considerations about the production and influence of Media on consumers and how it mediates their understanding of societal norms and values. As previously stated, media texts are a powerful form of public pedagogy (Giroux, 1998; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012) that reinforce normative understanding of gender. As Giroux (1998) stated, “corporate culture is rewriting the nature of children’s culture [...] the boundaries once maintained between spheres of formal education and that of entertainment collapse into each other” (p. 253). That is, children and youth are learning how to be “boy” and “girl” and how to see/regulate “boy” and “girl” from popular culture. Also, the binary understanding of gender fuels and reinforces heteronormativity. In the case of gender, popular culture naturalises gender norms through popular forms of entertainment.

While gender theorists have recognised gender as socially constructed (Butler, 1990, 1993), the binary construction of gender as masculine and feminine leads to power imbalances within a patriarchal society; that is, although gender is socially constructed, it has material impacts. Children and youth could be watching cartoons that expose them to gender as a binary, to particular performances of masculinity, and to males in positions of power. Like cartoons, music videos are also a powerful form of public pedagogy. These media texts

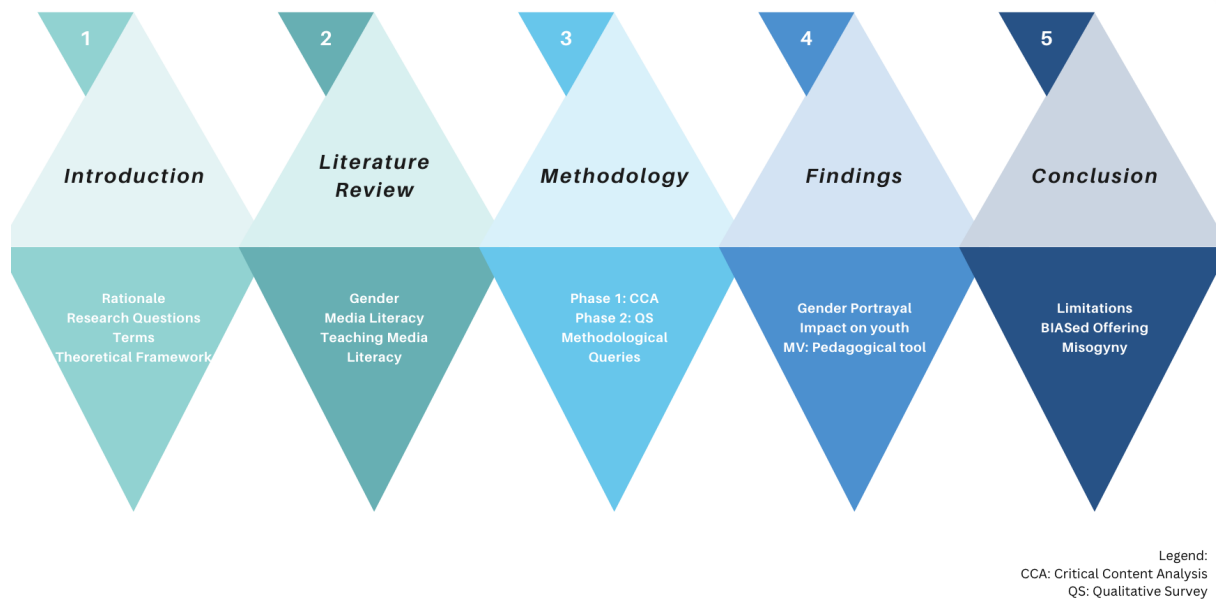
should be approached with criticality because of their broad consumption and because they are presented as entertainment. Yet, embedded within this entertainment are powerful messages about men and women, about love and healthy relationships, and about livability and grievability (Butler, 2016). It is also worth recognising whom this propaganda affects the most. As Adorno (1941, p. 207) wrote about a pre-television generation of young people, “Individuals of the rhythmically obedient type are mainly found among the youth—the so-called radio generation. They are most susceptible to a process of masochistic adjustment to authoritarian collectivism.” Adorno’s condescending view of youth/audiences has been widely challenged by Hall and Whannel (1965), with their belief that youth are actively participating in media by creating products and moving towards expressing their interests. However, Adorno’s underlying criticality about the potential influence of Media on audiences who engage with popular culture without criticality stands. Therefore, for this study I drew from works of critical media scholars who have advanced the work of early critical theorists (Buckingham, 2010, 2015, 2019; Giroux & Masullo, 1998, 2003, 2004b; Hobbs, 1998, 2013, 2014, 2021; Poyntz & Hoeschmann, 2012), queer media literacies (Gilley, 2022; Gray, 2009; Johnson, 2013; van Leent & Mills, 2018), and critical feminist perspectives (Carter, 2004; Hobbs, 2013; Orner, 1992).

The critical feminist theorists dissect and present an important perspective on daily practices we often take for granted. Following the work of Carter (2004), Crenshaw (1989), Orner (1992), and Hobbs & Rice (2011), critical feminists look at the intersectionality of class, sex, gender, race, and ability among other elements that strengthen the power structures of patriarchy. For this study, therefore, critical feminist perspectives were used to dissect and display patriarchy with these interlocking elements in popular music videos in the two studied cultures. Also, following the works of Butler (1990), Foucault (1978), Miller (2015), and van Leent and Mills (2018), queer media literacy enabled me to look at media texts while

analysing gender-normative and heteronormative assumptions. For this study, queer media literacies challenged this gender-normative lens to get a deeper look into gender representations in popular culture, more specifically music videos.

Figure 1.

Thesis Roadmap



Through this thesis, I share the construction and findings of a study that was motivated by the rationale and theories that filled the introductory chapter. In Chapter 2, I engage in the literature concerning this research: I begin with the literature related to “Gender” (which is further subdivided into gender in society, gender in schools, and gender in media), move to “Media Literacy,” and finally bringing them together with “Teaching Media Literacy.” In Chapter 3, I discuss my methodology for this research: Phase 1 explores the Critical Content Analysis (CCA) used to analyse the selected music videos, and Phase 2 explores the Qualitative Surveys (QS) used to gather data on youth perceptions on gender portrayal in popular Music Videos (MVs). Finally, I conclude Chapter 3 by voicing some of my methodological questions. In Chapter 4, I discuss the findings of this research, categorised as per each of the three research questions. This thesis concludes with Chapter 5, which

discusses the strengths and limitations of this research as well as further directions and implications.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this literature review, I consider the theories that inform media education and the varied interpretations within the field. Through this consideration, I offer my understanding of media literacies and media education. I also explore the intersection of media literacies and gender, specifically how media education theorists speak about gender representation in media. Using these broader themes, I explore gender in music videos, namely how gender is portrayed or represented in these mainstream Media texts in Canada and India. This review of the literature is organised through the following themes: gender in society, schools, and Media; media literacies; and teaching media literacies.

Gender

Gender is constructed through many systems (language, for example) and many institutions (schools and Media). In the “terms” section in my introduction, I outlined my understanding of gender as a social construction (Butler, 2004); I also spoke of the ways that media constructs and reifies normative understandings of gender. Through this literature review, I want to speak to the way gender is currently un/done in schools. I do this because this research aims to create pedagogical understandings about how educators can engage media (specifically, music videos) to incite conversations about the confines and harms of gender norms.

Gender in Society

Gender as a social construct is all around us, presented overtly or covertly in the society we live in. It is expressed in traditions and rituals, professional and personal expectations, laws, and so forth. Besides the society at large, every social institution, be it school, church, or law enforcement, teaches people how to “do” gender (Blackmore, 2007). For instance, the fact that childcare and early child education is a female-dominated profession covertly strengthens stereotypes about the female being the nurturer and carer

(Cushman, 2012), while wrestling and carpentry being male-dominated fields (Baruah, 2010) strengthens the “rough, macho, boys-don’t-get hurt” ideal in people’s minds. Societal norms and expectations therefore play a critical role in each individual’s gender identity. For this reason, it is crucial to understand how gender is being “done” in Canadian and Indian societies at large. As Dasgupta put it, “Identities are complex to begin with and become more complicated when relating them to nation and sexuality” (Dasgupta, 2011, p. 651). It is worthwhile to note that there are some significant ways in which genders have evolved and exist in the two societies. It would be interesting to compare the celebration of, say, a national day parade and a pride parade in the two countries in terms of the kind of Media coverage they receive. Indian sexual identities are the product of “[...] multiplicitous effects and perceptions of tradition, modernity, colonization and globalization” (Dasgupta, 2011, p. 651), which are more often in conflict with each other than in a harmonious synthesis.

According to research done by Young and Shipley (2020) on identity construction, youth traced their understandings of gender to their parents (88.5%) and to a slightly lesser extent to their friends (82.3%). “Several of our interviewees had become well-informed about sex so they could help their peers. They developed their expertise through serious attention to research, particularly on the internet” (Young & Shipley, 2020, p. 76) Parents, friends, and the internet then have become a major influence on the gender identities of children in Canada.

“India is currently at the crossroads where its traditional gender norms intersect with egalitarian aspirations” (Woetzel et al., 2015). In a research study by Siddiqui (2021), it was found that socio-cultural contexts played a huge role in the construction of gender. “Society accentuates the biologically inherent differences and creates gender norms around these differences” (p. 3). Given that, while in Canada, “homosexual”² acts were decriminalised in

² The term “homosexual” was diagnosed as a mental disorder by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, which pathologized and criminalized the community. In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed the diagnosis of “homosexuality” from the second edition of the *DSM*, and the term was thus reclaimed by the members of the community; however, the term continues to have certain stigmas attached to it in several parts of the world.

1969, but in India they were decriminalised in 2018, it is then safe to say that popular media representations categorising “normal” and “abnormal” sexuality into legitimate and illegitimate queer subjectivities and authentic and inauthentic queer experiences (Chattarjee, 2018), especially with respect to power and hegemony, have probably been different in both the countries. Therefore, along with other influences, law enforcement has also had a huge influence on Indian citizens and residents in exploring their gender identities. Indian LGBTQ+ youth “often experience[d] alienation and stigmatization both at home and in diaspora” (Woltmann, 2020). However, while unavailable in mainstream Media, work challenging gendered norms are being produced by other forms of media, unveiling what was hidden behind the curtains to perhaps a more rigid audience. Indian poet and Nobel Prize winner Rabindranath Tagore published many works queering normative spaces and accommodating reversed gender roles, for instance in his novels ‘*The Editor*’ (1893) and ‘*The Housewife*’ (1891).

In the contexts of both India and Canada, society (which includes a child’s immediate environment), school, teachers, parents, and friends, along with the internet, play an important role in children’s lives, influencing their understanding of gender and their own gender identities. As such, I want to consider how education about gender is already taken up in schools.

Gender in Schools

Studies have shown that there is a gap in understanding among teacher educators and teachers regarding gender equity broadly, or in regard to pedagogical materials surrounding gender equity—even amongst educators who may be interested in bridging this gap (Erden, 2009; Essary & Hoot, 2017; Zittleman & Sadker, 2002). Simmonds (2017) suggested that this gap can be bridged through critical analytical tools in curriculum leadership that is collaborative and democratic. Alternate assessments for learning (Kreinberg, 1989) can also

be used to disseminate useful resources and raise consciousness amongst educators on gender equity in teaching and learning. Amongst these studies, the theme of gender inequity, a social phenomenon shaping the ways in which people navigate gender as a binary and cis-heteronormativity, appeared repeatedly. Thus, this study expands the state of knowledge on gender representation and its implications for pedagogy. Education, as Fielding and Moss (2011, p. 46) identified, is “a process of upbringing and increasing participation in the wider society, with the goal that both the individual and the wider society flourish.” “However,” Warin and Gannerud (2014, p. 196) argued, “it is not enough to merely recognize and affirm this value. We should let it inform policy on the curriculum, on *what* we teach as well as *how*.” There are many reasons why educators shy away from initiating such discussions, including school reforms and fear of parent opposition. In particular, teachers responsible for sexual health education emphasise that fear of parental or community reprisal can be a major deterrent to the comprehensiveness of their instruction (Cohen et al., 2011). At the same time, research shows that parents rarely, if ever, initiate or follow through on meaningful discussions about sexual health with their children (Malacane & Beckmeyer, 2016). It therefore becomes the responsibility of schools and teachers to provide the opportunity and safe space for students to question and learn about their rights. Spade (2012) also provided some basic tips for teachers to rethink conversations about gendered bodies and make them more accessible.

Goldstein et al. (2019) addressed this issue in ‘*Teaching Gender and Sexuality at School: Letters to Teachers*’ in the form of letters written to teachers on how they can approach such obstacles and gain support from the community. Specifically, the letter that reads “Listen to the Kids” spreads a very powerful message to teachers and schools all over. The authors argue that, in the process of doing right by the system, the policies, the parents, and other stakeholders, teachers often lose sight of their own students, when they should be

the priority of educators. Sometimes the simplest solutions come staring educators in the face if they just listen to the kids and address their challenges.

While the views of gender in society and in schools is as described above, the literature review below tries to make sense of gender portrayal specifically in Media.

Gender in Media

My rationale for this study is that students are already learning a multitude of lessons about gender from the Media; therefore, media is precisely the tool to engage discussions of gender in formal classroom environments. Many researchers have found that gender roles are highly stereotypical with females being nurturers and/or sexual objects and males being re-presented as aggressive (Mendes & Carter, 2008; Meyerding, 2021; Miller, 2015; Saeed et al., 2013; Wallis, 2010). It has been found that different forms of media highly influence the way children perceive their reality. Giroux (1998) wrote, “The concentration of control over the means of producing, circulating, and exchanging information has been matched by the emergence of new technologies which have transformed culture, especially popular culture, into the primary educational site in which youth learn about themselves, their relationship to others, and the larger world” (p. 255). For instance, Banet-Weise (2004) and Robillard (2012) discussed how young girls, uncritically, have been viewed as consumers in a capitalist society selling them various goods and services through advertisements, television series, movies, and other forms of media. Banet-Weise (2004) acknowledged female children as consumers and citizens when analysing Nickelodeon’s shows and news programmes with politically influenced messages that often expect females to be strong, independent, and assertive but also demure, weak, and beautiful. Such articles have helped me to understand how children engage with media and to question how educators can incorporate gender discourses in popular culture into their own curriculum embedded in every subject and theme.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the representation and social implications of the portrayal of Ariel, Eric, and Ursula in *The Little Mermaid* (Musker & Clements, 1989), and the way the Media representations reward their characters for sticking to the social norm. Growing up with the idea of “a love interest sneaking into your bedroom to watch you sleep” and “men forcing themselves on you because they are interested” as romantic (Beck, 2018) and not creepy or criminal was probably one of the first and most rudimentary issues displayed in the Media that re-wired the ideas of love and relationship for countless children and young adults around the world. That is probably how the infamous “her no, actually means a yes” (Walker, 1997) disturbed the idea of consent in all our minds. Music videos like Jamie Foxx’s (2008) *Blame It* and Robin Thicke’s (2013) *Blurred Lines* also continue to display this behaviour as acceptable and “hip.” The literature also highlighted gender roles on a performative level in music videos (Godlewsky, 2019; Kelly & Currie, 2021; Lukic-Krstanovic, 2021; Saeed et al., 2013). However, it is interesting to note that music videos were not considered a part of the mainstream Media until the 1980s. It was only in the mid-1970s that music videos started spreading widely as they became a part of television in Australia and then worldwide. Also, in 1982, MTV banned its first video *Body Language* by Queen due to not enough clothing being worn. Yet, be it the Mycenaean female figurines that dictate just how a female should look according to Mycenaean female personhood and identity (Steele, 2020) and convey gender ideals and social norms. Even a Disney princess like Elsa who represents another “variation on the archetypal power-hungry female villain whose lust for power replaces lust for a mate and who threatens the patriarchal status quo. The only twist is that she finds redemption through gender-stereotypical compassion” (Streiff & Dundes, 2017), the portrayal of females, even in seemingly women-empowered media texts, centres around men, contributing to himpathy.

As the Media upholds ideologies and societal norms, critical media literacy is necessary within schools. The literature provides evidence of the gap between theory and practice. That is, much has been done regarding gender performativity in the Media, but its implications for the pedagogy in Canada and India are yet to be explored.

Media Literacy

Media literacy focuses on the analysis of media content by decoding different elements of a medium to interpret and understand it through critical lenses (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012). Although encoding or production is a part of media literacy, such aspects may not be critically explored in classrooms, which reduces media literacy to only fact-checking for students. That is, educators may ignore discussions of social construction, re-presentation, ideological motivations, and social justice implications in favour of source verification. For example, a lot of media literacy in schools focuses on fake news rather than re-presentations of race, gender, and sexuality (Moore, 2024). However, media literacy is not just limited to fact or fake news verification; it is much more. As Hoechsmann and Poyntz (2012, p. 1) defined it: “Media literacy suggests a capacity or competence to do something with media, whether to make sense of it, to produce it, or to understand its role in our societies.” Every decision, every move, and every strategy people use in the workspace or even in their individual lives is political, and therefore politically influenced by undying messages present in the media, whether it be about which soap to use, what scent to wear, what car to buy, or whom to vote for. None of these decisions are of an individual alone, and the media play an excruciatingly vital role in selecting what messages to pass to the public using criteria that might not be very different from “what sells.” Why then is an important skill such as how to produce and how to read media not a prerequisite in every compartmentalised subject educators teach their students at school? While Media Literacy or Media Education (as popularly used by Indian scholars) has been largely taught since the 1970s (Kumar, 1987), it

has unfortunately been looked at as a subject outside of the “regular” school curriculum for the most part. Moreover, the recent pandemic has made it all the more relevant, as people’s lives are becoming increasingly digitised and lived online. It is time to realise the education system may not have evolved as fast as economic, political, social, and cultural environments have (Kellner & Share, 2019). Media literacy should already be a well-established element of every school curriculum due to the increased media exposure that young children have in the 21st century (Buckingham, 2010, 2015; Kellner & Share, 2007, 2019). While one has a range of resources available in the form of media that can simply be used as/for public pedagogy (Giroux, 2011; Schultz et al., 2010), it is, without a doubt, very challenging to teach something as dynamic as media and media literacy in the ever-evolving field (Christ & De, 2020). Further, one might need a higher understanding of and respect for different philosophies, ideologies, and perceptions to adapt and inculcate the various elements of media literacy (Hobbs, 1998, 2014; Kellner & Share, 2007; Share, 2015).

In different contexts, (here) in Canada and in India, the term “media literacy” may be understood differently. Paul and Alex (2022, p. 5) analysed media literacy practices in a southern state of India and concluded that “except for Hamilton (2000) and Peterson (2003, 2010) scholars have not employed literacy practices as theorized in New Literacy Studies for analyzing media.” A lot of the focus of many critical media literacy theorists has remained on helping the general public identify fake news and particularly on news literacy (Chakrabarti, 2018; Guess et al., 2020; Peterson, 2010). While mass involvement with media generation and widespread sharing has increased significantly, it is almost as if media literacy has been marginalised by market factors and media bias (Nagaraj et al., 2014). Media is being sold as a commodity that voices only the issues of the dominant group. Therefore, the worthy or dominant “[...] growing corporatization of the Indian media is manifest in the manner in which large industrial conglomerates are acquiring direct and indirect interest in media

groups” (Thakurta, 2012, p. 1). An understanding of global and specific contexts helped me to analyse samples from each country in this study in their context and to understand how they are useful for teachers to implement in their classrooms.

The United Nations Children’s Fund’s “Children As Media Producers” (UNICEF, 2014) suggested that even children who lack resources can explore and engage with media technology, provided they are supported with the crucial tools of critical literacy. The New Education Policy 2022 of the Indian government gives a great opportunity to focus on media literacy. It places high emphasis on “higher-order” cognitive abilities including critical thinking and problem solving. However, the use of “digital literacy” only occurs once in the policy, and social media literacy is completely ignored (Bhati et al., 2022). The government of India; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE); and the National Council of Education, Research and Training (NCERT) need to further work towards more practical ways of implementing and spreading media literacy to the masses and in school education.

While there have been multiple views about the key concepts of media literacy, I relied on the six conceptual understandings and questions of media literacy shared by Kellner and Share (2019) to frame this research:

- 1) Social Constructivism: Media literacy is informed by a constructive view where all media/information is co-constructed by people (often groups of people in a social context). Social Constructivism questions who these people might be, who makes these decisions for everyone, and who helps in the creation of the text.
- 2) Language/Semiotics: In addition, each medium has its own language/codes/semiotics that influence the way the media are delivered or accessed. For example, films use specific film language (camera angles, shots, sound effects, music, background, costuming, etc.).

3) Audience/Positionality: While different audiences may receive the information from the media in different or similar ways based on the context, this principle focuses on how media are understood differently by different audiences.

4) Politics of Representation: Every medium takes with itself biases that either confirm or challenge the existing power structures. The Media upholds particular ideologies and norms in society, and therefore media literacy should promote critical understandings of this. It is crucial then to question what ideologies the text/medium highlights and/or misses.

5) Productions/Institutions: This concept challenges organisations and/or institutions that are interacting with media to understand the purpose and profit behind the creation of the medium. That is, this concept considers who produced a medium (individual, group, or company) and the motivation of the production (to sell a product or an idea, for example).

6) Social and Environmental Justice: This concept challenges positive and/or negative ideas in the media culture. It attempts to understand how different groups are being portrayed and to which groups the medium provides an advantage and/or disadvantage. It involves critically engaging with messaging and media and using media to advance social environmentally just causes.

In addition to these six concepts, Kellner and Share (2007) also discussed how to teach media literacies in the classroom. They argued students of all ages should engage with media literacy across various subjects. They advocated for teachers to become educated in media literacy to better equip and support their students. Finally, they explored how media literacy is also important in teaching students to disrupt and challenge dominant forms of ideology and social control:

“Critical media literacy not only teaches students to learn from media, to resist media manipulation, and to use media materials in constructive ways, but is also concerned with developing skills that will help create responsible citizens who are motivated and competent participants in social-political life.” (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 6)

Critical media literacy, as Kellner and Share (2007) pointed out, develops “skills that will enhance democratization and participation” (p. 6). Therefore, for this research, besides the six key principles, I relied on the two key elements of critical media literacies, politics of representation and social and environment justice, for my analysis of popular music videos.

Teaching Media Literacy

The Media is a crucial part of our contemporary society. Also, bringing together in-class and out-of-class activities has been a major contribution of educators like Dewey (1943), Comenius (Norlin, 2020), Pestalozzi (The Academician, 1819), Fröbel (1911), and so on. Even Gandhi (Kabir, 1949) was determined to bridge the chasm between the two worlds through the practical working out of a “basic education” in which study, worship, and work had their proper place (Kumar, 1988; Ramanathan, 1962). Especially in the last few years, the pandemic made reliance on media stronger than ever before. It is then safe to say that children and youth are not immune to the messaging of media, and nobody should assume that, because youth consistently engage in media and popular culture, they are automatically literate (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012). My review of this literature supported several claims made above; youth media literacy is overestimated, and the effects on youth learning are underestimated (Bragg, 2002). Oftentimes teachers focus only on fake news (Buckingham, 2019) and the various way that students can verify and validate sources, rather than challenging and exploring larger issues connected to media and popular culture (Baker-Bell at al., 2017; Buckingham, 2019; Hobbs, 2013, 2014; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2017), for

example, re-presentation of race, gender, sexuality, and class in popular culture. Yet, these re-presentations in the media impact societal understandings and need to be interrogated.

Since media are a form of public pedagogy (Giroux, 2011), whether they be films, music, dance videos, advertisements, and so forth, any source from the media culture, especially popular culture, becomes a medium of public pedagogy reaching millions with just a few clicks. With such wide access, according to a study conducted in 2010 (Noyce, 2012), children between 8 and 18 years old spend 53 hours a week engaged with some form of media. “The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM, 2015) found, in a study on children’s social media habits with 4,750 parents in metropolitan cities, that 95% of teens surveyed used the internet, 81% used social media, and 72% logged into social media more than once a day. It also showed 65% of kids under the age of 13 used social media” (Sarwatay et al., 2021, p.2). Another study on youth engagement with music videos found they spent at least 20 hours a week (Russell et al., 2017), and according to 2017 and 2018 Nielsen Ratings, Americans spend about 11 hours a day using media (Hobbs, 2021), which is almost half a day of passive engagement with countless forms of media without much criticality about how gender is represented. These very forms of public pedagogy are shaping and re-shaping our ideas about race, sexuality, and inequality at multiple levels all the while “othering” countless people and groups. Hoechsmann and Poyntz (2012) have stated that “media plays a central role in the socialization, acculturation, and intellectual formation of young people” (p. 59). How have media, a crucial resource to produce and/or reproduce the ideas of how people define or identify themselves in the world, not been more widely adopted in schooling and education?

There are commonly two opposite takes on media and their teaching, especially in schools. There are the Protectionists, who have been in favour of “killing media” as a solution to all problems of the 21st century; they often resort to putting cell phones away in

the classroom and prohibiting use of any digital media to ensure their students are protected from “the big bad world” out there. Then there are those who believe in play, who, very much in line with the Piagetian concept of play, want to use digital media as another resource and let children explore it at their own pace and use free play on it without worrying about the consequences. It has been debated what the “correct” response here is, if there is any.

Media culture is a type of pedagogy that teaches proper and improper behaviour, gender roles, values, and knowledge of the world. Individuals are often not aware that they are being educated and constructed by media culture, as its pedagogy is frequently invisible and subliminal (Kellner & Share, 2007); however, that does not make it any less meaningful or necessary today. In the current media landscape, there is less of a singular mainstream Media. Digital tools have become highly accessible, thereby letting people reach communities and corners of the world that they were not even aware of before. As a result, the media have diversified and can potentially reach across political borders. The Media now includes more issues, opinions, perceptions, and representations from diverse communities. Baker-Bell et al. (2017), for instance, gave examples of using different forms of media to explore, dismantle, and re-write Black perspectives in mainstream media, which are popularly White. Giroux (2011) discussed the usage of film to dissect popular opinions that are being re-produced around the world. It is interesting to note here that current media education theory recognises the role of the audience in making meaning. Locating this in the Indian context, many movies such as *Sholay* (Ramesh, 1975), *Silsila* (Chopra, 1981), *Hum Apke Hain Koun* (Barjatya, 1994), and other similar ones have had queer readings now that were overlooked as “homosociality” (Gabriel, 2014; Sedgwick, 2003) between members of the same sex by the audience when they were originally released. This runs counter to many early Frankfurt school critical theorists, who held patronising views about mass audiences and mass culture. For instance, Horkheimer and Adorno (2020) perceived media to be a mass

production that is monopolised by the culture industry, thereby producing a mass culture. The Media is used over and over again to re-produce and strengthen ideas about gender, as evident from the lack of or misrepresentation of different genders in popular culture. For instance, advertisements have portrayed women as submissive wives and mothers in the domestic sphere, and men's magazines at the same time have fetishised women's bodies to assert male power and authority; similarly, men on television are portrayed to be dominant, aggressive, rational, and competent, with the opposite portrayal for women (Mendes & Carter, 2008). Further, music videos promote males as aggressive and females as sexualised objects (Wallis, 2010), while video games sexualise female characters with their clothes, dialogue, roles, and/or powers/traits (Miller, 2015).

While mainstream Media may uphold particular ideologies, as evident from the data above, there is also a proliferation of Media when previously marginalised groups produce their own media. For instance, Candice Breitz used metalepsis in video art to challenge stereotypes of gender and gender-power-related structures in the popular South African TV show *Generations* (Meyerding, 2021), and systematic issues of race have been discussed using racial media literacy and (socio)political consciousness in the social studies classroom about elections (Busey, 2016). However, the proliferation of media has not meant that previously marginalised groups now re-story how they are seen. Proliferation can appear to be a choice and can seem to present variety despite similar messaging. Therefore, mass culture theories are still relevant today.

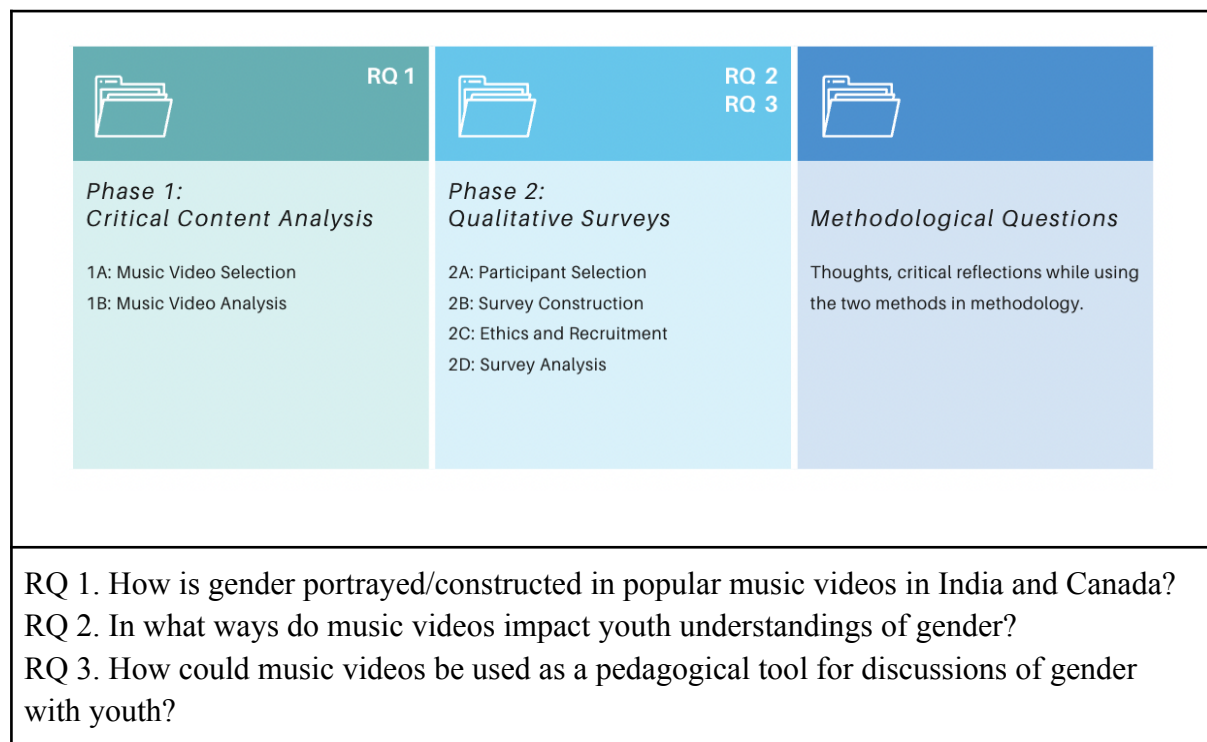
Scholarship is clearly polarised on children's media use, access, and influence on identity formation as well as holistic development (Nicha et al. 2017; Sampasa-Kanyinga et al., 2020; Shychuk et al., 2022). While media literacy entails discussions of challenges to many dominant ideologies of social power with respect to race, gender, sexuality,

socio-economic status, ability, and other similar constructs, as well as their intersectionality, this study particularly looked at gender portrayal in media and its impact on youth.

In conclusion, there seem to be many gaps in the existing literature. Outside of academia, even in the 21st century, gender seems to be understood as a binary by most, and therefore most research has highlighted gender roles as stereotypical for the binary. Similarly, mainstream Media representations of gender also seem to lack appropriate or enough queer content (Dasgupta, 2018; Faiman-Silva, 2007; Paul & Alex 2022). Moreover, the current literature also left me wondering how media literacy is understood and used in practical life amongst youth, if at all, or whether the current focus on media literacy is relevant to youth engagement with the media. Moreover, specifically with regard to music and music videos, stress is often given to rap culture and how it influences the negative understanding of binary gender amongst the audience. While there have been numerous studies and discussions around the same in academia about the representations and dismantling of stereotypes associated with a particular race (Busey, 2016; Kajikawa, 2015; Rose, 1994; Williams, 2020), the focus on rap, race, and crime unfairly suggests this genre is guilty of perpetuating sexist, binary understandings of gender; however, gender is constructed in all music videos. While designing this study, I wondered how the rest of popular music culture portrays gender and how it influences youth as a form of public pedagogy.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research is based on a qualitative design and uses *critical content analysis* (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Krippendorff, 1980; Neuendorf, 2002, 2017; Rosengren, 1981; Wallis, 2010) and *qualitative surveys* (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Braun et al., 2021; Davey et al., 2019; Toerien & Wilkinson, 2004) to explore the common understanding and messages expressed through popular music videos in India and Canada. The methodology for this research was divided into two phases. In Phase 1 of the research, I used critical content analysis to understand the portrayal of gender through popular music videos in India and Canada. In Phase 2 of the research, I invited three youths from India and three from Canada to complete a qualitative survey on gender portrayals in popular music videos [[Appendix B](#)]. Through this chapter, I explain my rationale for using critical content analysis (CCA) and qualitative surveys (Qs) to respond to the research questions that ground this study, the theories that ground the use of CCA and QS, and the process of analysis used in these two phases of the research. [Figure 2](#) below explains the four steps of the methodology and the corresponding research questions they answered.

Figure 2*Steps of Methodology***Phase 1: Critical Content Analysis**

While it has recently become a very popular method of research with the immense growth of media and mass communication, content analysis is a concept that can be dated back to the 18th century (Rosengren, 1981). The objective of CCA is “to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p. 314). Content analysis has a history of analysing political speeches, advertisements, newspapers, and so forth in the 19th century (Harwood & Garry 2003). Today, it is widely used in communication, sociology, nursing, journalism, psychology, and business (Neuendorf, 2002) and is widely accepted across fields. Content analysis is a research method for making replicable and valid inferences from data about a broader context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts, and a practical guide to action (Krippendorff, 1980). In this study, CCA of lyrics as well as transcribed elements of

videography (music design and video design) highlighted the themes and different representations of gender in Media. That is, CCA places these elements on display to expose elements that might otherwise remain hidden. CCA is a method designed to identify and interpret meaning in recorded forms of communication by isolating small pieces of data that represent salient concepts and then applying or creating a framework to organise the pieces in a way that can be used to describe or explain a phenomenon (Kleinheksel, 2020; Kolbe & Burnett, 1991). This makes latent content analysis (i.e., making sense of the underlying meaning of content—in this case, lyrics, videography, cinematography, camera lens, and so forth) the best approach to analysing, interpreting, and understanding the data's deep, implied meaning and representations, which sometimes can be hidden behind mental schema, theories, and lenses (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). While a majority of content analysis studies are expected to use quantitative design (Neuendorf, 2017), this research used critical content analysis within a qualitative design to explore and understand better the elements of gender portrayal in Indian and Canadian music videos popular among youth.

1A: Music Video Selection

Many music videos are released every year. The music industry is growing like never before with more and more digital platforms and resources arising, making access to content and even content generation easier every day. However, with so many resources and platforms out there, it was crucial to find the most appropriate choice for this study.

This research initially focused on the top three most popular songs from 2020 to 2022, as per the year-end music record charts of Canada and India. The record charts used to identify top global popular songs each year were from Spotify. According to *Music App Report 2023*, Spotify is the most popular music streaming platform in the world, with over 350 million users and 150 million subscribers (Curry, 2023). Therefore, Spotify was a great choice for understanding the popularity and awareness of pop music around the world. Going

further into the research, YouTube views for these top three most popular songs between 2020 and 2022 were observed to select four top music videos based on the highest number of YouTube views in that year and then across all three years to pick the top two for each respective country. YouTube is one of the most famous open platforms with a vast variety and diversity of music videos easily accessible to all. Kretschmer and Peukert (2020) found that music discovery is affected by its availability on YouTube, which means a music video's popularity on YouTube is proportionate to the consumer awareness of that video. Therefore, using the views on YouTube showed me a clearer picture in real time of the exposure of the music video to users.

Spotify Playlist. Since Spotify has increasingly become the largest music streaming service in the world with the maximum number of overall subscribers, I also looked at the top Spotify music trends, which use Spotify data to analyse and come up with Spotify's own year-end music charts.

YouTube. YouTube was used to view the official music videos and analyse them further based on their views worldwide.

Together, Spotify charts and real-time YouTube views helped indicate the most popular music videos that the masses engage with regularly. Spotify releases year-end playlists all over the world according to the top streams or artists specific to geolocations. For this project, these playlists helped determine the top streams in Canada and India for each year, while YouTube views helped determine the popularity of a music video amongst the masses all over the world. [Table 1a](#) below uses the Spotify playlist to collect data about the top three music videos in each country in each year between 2020 and 2022, irrespective of the language. While arranged as per the Spotify data, it also provides the YouTube views for each music video to provide the exact number of times the video had been streamed

worldwide. Further down, [Table 1b](#) shows the top four selected music videos based on their YouTube views.

Table 1a

Music Video Samples: Spotify 2020–2022

Year	Canada	India
2020	Blinding Lights The Weeknd YouTube Views: 685M Lyrics	Shayad <i>Arijit Singh, Pritam, Irshad Kamil</i> YouTube Views: 272M Lyrics
	The Box Roddy Ricch YouTube Views: 475M Lyrics	Falling Trevor Daniel YouTube Views: 326M Lyrics
	Roses (Imanbek Remix) SAINT JHN, Imanbek YouTube Views: 258M Lyrics	Ghungroo <i>Arijit Singh, Shilpa Rao, Kumaar; Vishal-Shekhar</i> YouTube Views: 413M Lyrics
2021	Drivers License Olivia Rodrigo YouTube Views: 433M Lyrics	Raatan Lambiya <i>Asees Kaur, Jubin Nautiyal, Tanishk Bagchi</i> YouTube Views: 783M Lyrics
	good 4 u Olivia Rodrigo YouTube Views: 423M Lyrics	Ranjha <i>Jasleen Royal, B Praak, Anvita Dutt</i> YouTube Views: 305M Lyrics
	Stay <i>The Kid LAROI, Justin Bieber</i> YouTube Views: 700M Lyrics	Brown Munde <i>AP Dhillon, Gminxr, Gurinder Gill, Shinda Kahlon</i> YouTube Views: 606M Lyrics
2022	As It Was Harry Styles YouTube Views: 455M Lyrics	Excuses AP Dhillon YouTube Views: 300M Lyrics
	Heat Waves Glass Animals	Pasoori <i>Ali Sethi, Shae Gill</i>

	YouTube Views: 498M Lyrics	YouTube Views: 530M Lyrics
	Cold Heart (PNAU Remix) <i>Elton John & Dua Lipa</i> YouTube Views: 407M Lyrics	Kesariya <i>Pritam, Arijit Singh, Amitabh Bhattacharya</i> YouTube Views: 422M Lyrics

From this initial data, the four music videos selected with the highest YouTube views across the three years are listed below:

Table 1b

Music Video Samples: Spotify & YouTube

Canada	India
Blinding Lights <i>The Weeknd</i> YouTube Views: 685M Year released: 2020 Lyrics	Raatan Lambiya <i>Asees Kaur, Jubin Nautiyal, Tanishk Bagchi</i> YouTube Views: 783M Year released: 2021 Lyrics
Stay <i>The Kid LAROI, Justin Bieber</i> YouTube Views: 700M Year released: 2021 Lyrics	Pasoori <i>Ali Sethi, Shae Gill</i> YouTube Views: 530M Year released: 2022 Lyrics

1B: Music Video Analysis

For this qualitative research, a part-to-whole CCA for both Indian and Canadian top pop music was done for the four selected videos from the three selected years. Like most content analysis, this study's analysis took place in three phases: preparation, organisation, and result (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Within the study, I used iterative thematic inquiry to code, categorise, and construct themes that could best describe the patterns observed. The headings below outline the process I used to analyse the music videos, beginning with segmentation:

Data Segmentation. Once the data was collected in the form of transcribed lyrics and videography, different data segments were formed (Elo and Kyngas, 2008; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Segments can be sentences, paragraphs, and so on. Here, given that most of the data was in the form of lyrics, the data segments were in the form of sentence segments based on each line of each stanza.

Data Matrices. With sentence segments, the data was thus coded deductively based on existing frameworks (preset codes and categories—Lap 1) as well as new opportunities (inductive codes and categories added according to the data—Lap 2) that had repetitive patterns. A deductive approach towards coding allowed the data to be organised (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this research, after segmenting the data as per the lyrics and videography, the codes for each were put into a matrix based on the deductive and inductive framework prepared using themes based on the research questions.

Coding. One of the most crucial steps of CCA is to be able to code raw data in conceptually congruent categories (Elo and Kyngas, 2008; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). The method used to code and analyse the data was a deductive framework of coding. This method allowed data analysis using a framework based on my research questions. First, I analysed the lyrics as shown in [Table 3](#) (below) of each song based on the framework described above. I then analysed the lyrics and visuals of the music videos ([Table 4](#)) using the same framework.

Laps and Codes. In order to explore the way that the four selected music videos from India (2) and Canada (2) portrayed gender, I chose to isolate the lyrics because most listeners mindlessly listen to lyrics as a stand-alone over and over again on music streaming applications. For effective and efficient analysis, I added multiple laps that structured the coding of the collected data. Laps, here, very much like the racing term (one complete trip around the race track), are one complete trip of analysis through all of the collected data using different lenses each time. Laps, therefore, were an ongoing process of continuous,

rigorous, back-and-forth analysis that enabled me to reflect on my own analysis and, with every additional lap, to cater to any layer or aspect that I may have missed before. In Lap 1 of my analysis, I initiated the coding process with codes that came from theory. In Lap 2, I tried to bridge the gaps between theory and what I actually observed, which the theory was not able to pick on and identify yet seemed relevant for the study. For the analysis of both the laps, I first started with just the lyrics and then focused on the ways that all three elements (i.e., the sound, visuals, and lyrics of the music videos) affected the representations of gender. This was different from the first lap since it looked at the three elements separately and at how they came together. After isolating the lyrics, I turned to the music videos for each song, and, considering various visual and aural elements, I started looking at representation (Kellner & Share, 2019), specifically the representation of gender. While I went into my initial analysis of the lyrics and music video with a set of codes, I was open to more themes that might emerge along the way, creating an amalgamation of a top-down approach (Lap 1, i.e., codes originating from the researcher's theoretical understanding) as well as a bottom-up approach (Lap 2, i.e., codes originating from the data) approach ([Table 2](#)), while recognising, of course, that the top-down and bottom-up codes were both imposed and recognised by the researcher and did not “appear” fully formed in the data. Instead, I use this distinction to recognise that I began my analysis with some codes in mind; however, through the process of analysis, I identified several additional codes.

In the third stage of my analysis (Lap 3), of which I talk more about in the next subsection on CCA, I collated all the coded data from Lap 1 and Lap 2 using Lyrical Data Analysis [[Appendix D](#)] and Visual Data Analysis [[Appendix E](#)] sheets as per the songs as well as thematically based on the codes. [Table 2](#) below outlines the process of analysis; the codes used for analysis are outlined in the section that follows.

Table 2*Laps and Codes*

Laps	Codes
Lap 1: Theoretical Codes	Analysed a) First, only lyrics [Appendix D: Lyrical Data Analysis] b) Second, aural (sound and lyrics) and visual (cinematography and setting) together [Appendix E: Visual Data Analysis]
Lap 1a: Initiation	This lap had preset codes based on a top-down approach. Relying strictly on the theoretical framework and literature review, the following codes were established: 1) Stereotypical Gender Traits 2) Gender Fatalism 3) Gender Expression 4) Gender Clothing 5) Gaze 6) Objectification Theory
Lap 1b: Revisiting Theory	Additional literature was reviewed, to include more global (instead of only Western) researchers, specifically Indian scholars. As a result, I created additional codes. These were as follows: 7) Homosociality 8) Friction 9) Matrix of Domination
Lap 2: Bridging Theory and Praxis	Analysed: a) Appendix D: Lyrical Data Analysis b) Appendix E: Visual Data Analysis After Lap 1; 1a and 1b, analysis for all song lyrics [Appendix D: Lyrical Data Analysis] and aural and visual elements of the music videos [Appendix E: Visual Data Analysis] the data had some gaps. Themes that seemed to emerge but did not have a corresponding code to it. To bridge this gap between the theory and practical data, new codes emerged based on the bottom-up

Laps	Codes
	approach. The codes emerging in this lap are as follows: 1) Gender Codependency 2) Moral Policing 3) Agency 4) Hegemonic Relations 5) Machiavellianism 6) Parasitism 7) Social Norms
Lap 3: Cumulative Analysis	
Lap 3a: Collective Song Analysis	The coded Appendix D: Lyrical Data Analysis and Appendix E: Visual Data Analysis for each song was brought together to add researcher memos and analyse each song. Each Code as coded in all songs was compiled together to analyse how each code is viewed and observed in the music videos.
Lap 3b: Collective Thematic Analysis	

Lap 1a: Initial Codes. The initial codes were developed in response to the current literature surrounding gender and media literacies. These codes were not formed in response to the data; rather they were based on the key concepts around gender emerging from previous research and theory. These were the analytical codes that I constructed prior to my analysis. As they were prevalent in the literature I had reviewed, I had expected to identify them in my analysis. Below, I explain the initial codes used and the literature that informed my development of each code.

1. **Stereotypical gender traits:** Stereotypical gender traits can be defined as characteristics or behaviours that society has historically associated with a particular gender, often reinforcing traditional gender roles and expectations. These stereotypes are generalisations and do not accurately represent the diversity and complexity of individuals' personalities and experiences. For instance, all males are stereotyped to be aggressive, assertive, interested in sports and technologies, and so

on, while all females are stereotyped to be nurturing, submissive, expressive, and focused on their appearance and beauty. I relied on queer theory and queer theorists (Sedgwick, 1990); Spargo, 1999; Warner, 1991) to guide the discussion of traits associated with heteronormativity and gender binaries as mentioned above. This code highlights the generally expected traits of males and females as described above and the universalisation of such an expectation across the geographical areas of this study.

2. **Gender Fatalism:** Gender fatalism refers to the belief that traditional gender roles and norms are fixed and unchangeable, and that individuals are inherently bound by these roles based on their assigned sex at birth. This perspective assumes that certain behaviours, roles, and expectations are predetermined by one's gender, and there is no room for deviation or change. Gender fatalism can be a harmful belief system because it can reinforce rigid gender stereotypes and limit opportunities for individuals to express themselves authentically or pursue their interests and goals outside of what society deems appropriate for their gender. Drawing on Sarah Ahmed's (2017) work, gender fatalism here entailed how certain gender discourses are harmful. For instance, "boys will be boys": a) encourages and permits sexist and misogynistic performances of masculinity and b) excuses such behaviour, misunderstood as natural. Gender fatalism evidenced in "boys will be boys" rhetoric endorses, naturalises, and then ultimately excuses the unacceptable behaviour of a particular gender, mistaking it for a natural occurrence rather than a profoundly social construct. This code thus highlighted such behaviour, which may often go unquestioned otherwise in view of general social acceptance.

3. **Gender Expression:** Gender expression here refers to the way in which an individual presents their gender to others through their appearance, behaviour, clothing, hairstyle, voice, or other means of communication. It is a

personal and external codependency of one's gender identity, which is how an individual personally identifies their own gender, whether as male, female, both, neither, or something else entirely. Gender expression can vary widely from person to person and may not necessarily conform to societal expectations or stereotypes associated with one's perceived or assigned gender. Some people may express their gender in ways that align with traditional norms, for example, a person assigned female at birth wearing dresses and makeup, while others may express their gender in more gender-neutral or nonconforming ways, such as a person assigned male at birth wearing clothing typically associated with females. It is important to note that gender expression is distinct from both gender identity and biological sex. Gender identity is an individual's internal understanding of their own gender, while biological sex³ refers to the physical and genetic characteristics typically associated with being male or female. Gender expression is a form of self-expression and may or may not align with one's gender identity or biological sex (Gordan et al., 2021; Wylie et al., 2010). This code highlighted actions, behaviours, mannerisms, interests, appearances, and so forth that question the degree to which an individual is perceived to conform or not conform to societal expectations of masculinity and femininity.

4. **Gendered Clothing:** Gendered clothing refers to clothing items and styles that are traditionally associated with a specific gender, often reinforcing binary gender norms. In many societies, clothing has been assigned gendered labels, such as "men's clothing" or "women's clothing," based on cultural expectations and historical practices. Gendered clothing can include a) dresses and skirts: traditionally considered women's clothing and often associated with femininity; b) pants and trousers: historically seen as men's attire and associated with masculinity in many cultures; c)

³However, as Butler (1990) stressed, "biological sex" is also a construction; that is, we have placed societal meanings on body parts and hormones.

suits: formal suits, typically consisting of a blazer, dress pants or a skirt, and a dress shirt or blouse, traditionally worn by men but also worn by women today, or specifically in the Indian context, a type of traditional attire that has a long (knee-length) shirt with loosely-fitted trousers that is also called a “suit” and is worn by women. It is important to note that gendered clothing is a social construct, and these associations are not based on the inherent qualities of the clothing but rather on cultural and historical norms. In recent years, there has been a significant shift toward gender-neutral or unisex clothing, and more people are challenging and redefining traditional gender norms in fashion. Many fashion brands now offer inclusive clothing lines that are designed to be worn by people of any gender identity. Often, the clothes worn by males and female characters in music videos are stereotypical, reinforcing gender notions and power relations. Judith Butler is a prominent philosopher and gender theorist known for her work on the concept of “gender performativity.” Butler’s (1990) theory challenges traditional notions of gender as something innate or biologically determined and instead suggests that gender is performative, meaning it is something that individuals actively do or enact rather than something they inherently are. Butler’s central idea is that individuals “perform” their gender through their actions, words, and appearances. By conforming to or subverting societal norms associated with gender, people continually create and maintain their gender identity. Therefore, based on Butler’s (1990) idea of gender performativity, this code specifically referenced the clothing and attire worn by characters that was determined by or strengthened stereotypes.

5. **Gaze:** The “male gaze” is a concept in feminist theory that refers to the way in which visual arts and media depict the world and women from a predominantly male perspective, often objectifying women and presenting them as

objects of male desire. It draws from Mulvey's (1989) theory of the male gaze, which reveals the way that gaze is encouraged by the camera through angles, shots, pans, and close-ups. In a patriarchal society, the target audience is males and therefore their perceived (stereotypical) viewpoint is prioritised. As a result, the audience is encouraged to see everything through this male gaze—it can impact the perceptions of the broader audience. In this thesis, this code was used to dissect each of the music videos to understand what gaze the camera follows and which audience it tries to appeal to most.

6. **Objectification Theory:** Objectification theory is a psychological framework that examines the consequences of treating individuals, particularly women, as objects rather than as whole and autonomous beings. It explores how the objectification of individuals, often through the portrayal of their bodies in the media or through interpersonal interactions, can contribute to negative psychological outcomes, body dissatisfaction, and the perpetuation of gender inequalities. The theory is particularly focused on understanding how the portrayal and treatment of individuals as mere objects can impact their self-esteem, mental well-being, and societal roles. Individuals are in such a case treated as a body or an assemblage of body parts (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997; Lindberg et al., 1996). Objectification theory primarily defines how individuals are compared to objects for others' use instead of being treated as individuals with unique personality traits. For instance, in “Raatan Lambiyan” by Asees Kaur, it was observed how the female is remembered and sung about for her “usefulness” to the male character in “spending nights,” among many other things. The objectification theory helped in observing and highlighting if and how particular genders might be objectified to specific things, confined to specific roles, and so forth.

Lap 1b: Revisiting Theory. On presenting my thesis proposal to my committee, I realised with the help of my advisor and my committee members that my literature review along with the codes I had prepared for the sample were based majorly on Western theory and somehow lacked Eastern perspectives, specifically Indian theory on gender and its representations in the media. Based on these suggestions, I revisited my original literature review to add to it existing Eastern perspectives on gender, therefore helping the formation of the following codes focusing on more global as well as Indian contexts to enrich the stage of analysis.

7. **Homosociality:** It can be defined as social bonds and interactions primarily occurring between members of the same sex, typically among individuals of the same gender. It describes relationships, activities, or spaces that are characterised by same-sex connections and are often distinguished from heterosexual or mixed-gender interactions. Homosociality does not necessarily imply a romantic or sexual orientation; rather, it focuses on social connections and affiliations based on gender. In the field of sociology, the concept of homosociality describes socio-bonds between people of the same biological sex (Lipman-Blumen, 1976; Sedwick, 1990). In India, as has been observed in popular culture such as in cinema, music videos, and so forth, given the ban of homosexuality under colonial rule, homosexual behaviour often has gone unacknowledged and misunderstood as homosocial behaviour, for instance in the movie *Yaarana* (Chhavi et al., 2022; Merchant, 2011). Many Bollywood films have been said to have used homosociality as a way of covering up the “invisible” queer narratives that are present in society. In the same way, these narratives also sneak into music videos but often stay invisible, out of plain sight, and fall under the umbrella of homosociality as a way of keeping even the idea of queerness under wraps. This code helped me observe and analyse the data from the

perspective of homosociality imposed on ambiguous or clearly queer behaviour to conform to acceptable societal norms.

8. **Friction:** Anna Tsing's concept of "friction" refers to the awkward, uneven, and unpredictable interactions that occur when different cultural, social, or ecological systems come into contact. In the context of gender, applying the concept of friction might involve examining the tensions, conflicts, and complexities that arise in the interactions between different gender norms, roles, and expectations. For example, within a multicultural or global context, different societies may have distinct expectations regarding gender roles and behaviours. When these expectations come into contact, there can be friction—disagreements, misunderstandings, or challenges. Additionally, within a single society, there can be friction between traditional gender norms and evolving notions of gender equality. Tsing's concept of friction encourages an exploration of the dynamic and contested nature of gender in various contexts, recognising that gender identities and roles are not static but are subject to negotiation and conflict when different cultural or social systems intersect. It underscores the importance of understanding the complexities and challenges that arise when diverse gender ideologies and practices encounter one another. In the study of ecological movements and ecofeminism, Anna Tsing (2016) conceptualised the idea of "friction" between conflicting forces such as environment and social justice. Gender is also made and remade through its engagement with global–local forces. While reading about this concept, I wondered whether the engagement of environment, gender, and other current co-existing issues can be seen in the media and how they may overlap. Also, how do the overlapping ideas of gender in our current society co-exist and rub off on each other? With that understanding of "friction," this code was used to look at

the interconnections and collisions of gender with global–local forces in each of the socio-cultural contexts of the music videos.

9. **Matrix of Domination:** The “matrix of domination” is a concept in feminist and critical social theory that refers to the interconnected systems of oppression and social categories. It highlights how these systems interact and intersect to shape individuals’ experiences and social structures. The matrix of domination emphasises that various forms of oppression are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, creating complex and layered systems of power and inequality. The phrase “matrix of domination” or oppression was originally coined by Patricia Hill Collins, as a sociological paradigm that talks about the interconnection between the different classifications of oppression and dominance, for instance, gender, race, class, and so forth (Flores et al, 2018; Gouws, 2017). Gender is definitely not the only form of discrimination faced in society today. Therefore, this code highlighted the overlaps and interlinks, if present, between the various forms of other oppressions with respect to gender or even within gender and how they might be presented in the media.

Lap 2: Bridging the gap between theory and praxis. While analysing first the lyrics and then the music videos themselves, I identified the emergence of themes such as gender codependency and moral policing. These codes resulted from the practice of labelling during my analysis of the lyrics, sound, and visual elements. While some of the lyrics, sound, and visual elements aligned with my predetermined codes, there seemed to be gaps that contained themes that connected to gender but were not encapsulated by my existing codes. In these cases, I created new codes to explain particular aspects of the music videos. In some cases, this required that I returned to the literature to help articulate what I was seeing; in other cases, what I was seeing reminded me of concepts I had previously engaged with.

10. **Gender Codependency:** For this study, the term was employed to represent how genders co-exist or become codependent with respect to one's own gender identity. What makes a particular gender dependent on another? Are there any patterns to be observed, or is it individualistic? Do the patterns portray gender stereotypes? Is dependency one-sided in a relationship, or are all parties involved equally dependent on each other for co-habitation? I drew on feminist theories (Dear & Roberts, 2002; Irvine, 1995) to understand the co-dependence of heteronormative gender binaries and how they "should" co-depend to co-exist. For instance, while analysing and coding the lyrical data for "Blinding Lights," I observed the repetition of the female's "touch" being a necessity for the male; "*No, I can't sleep until I feel your touch*"; "*I can't see clearly when you're gone*." These lyrics showed a gap in the theory from a gender standpoint: I had read and made codes for how genders are presented, what stereotypes are attached, what lens is looked at, and so forth, but I had coded nothing much about the relationship between genders and if and how they are dependent on each other. This code helped look at exactly that and how that might be represented in a music video.

11. **Moral Policing:** This term refers to the enforcement or imposition of a particular set of moral or ethical standards by individuals, groups, or institutions on others. It often involves monitoring and regulating the behaviour, dress, speech, or actions of individuals to ensure they conform to the perceived moral or cultural norms of a given society or community. Drawing on the ideological state apparatus as defined by French Marxist Louis Althusser (i.e., subjugation to ruling ideology; Althusser, 2001) moral policing involves moral grounds defining right and wrong for a person. As social beings, our ideas of "wrong" and "right," how they are defined, who falls under them, and so forth are influenced by social forces around us.

Institutions such as schools and law enforcement play a vital role in forming these concepts. For instance, in the music video for “Blinding Lights,” the visual, lyrical, and sound elements at 00:01:13 feature a glimpse of a female and the screen shifts to the singer in the middle of a three-way empty road where he dances and sings “I look around and see, sin city’s old and empty, no one’s around to judge me[...]”: The lead singer defines morals and their relationship to the city and the female. This led me to the analysis of moral policing in music videos and their relationship to different genders. This code helped me bring a theoretical perspective to analyse the use of morals playing around with the idea of genders.

12. **Agency:** In the context of gender, “agency” refers to an individual’s capacity to make independent choices, take intentional actions, and exert influence over their own life and circumstances. Agency (here) specifically relates to the ability of individuals to navigate, negotiate, and shape their experiences within the framework of gender roles, norms, and expectations. It emphasises the power of individuals to act autonomously and make decisions that impact their lives, including choices related to identity, relationships, and societal roles, within the context of the broader gendered social structure. I drew on feminist theories (Bowden & Mummery, 2014; Dumitru, 2018) to identify gender agency in music videos. For this thesis, agency was therefore understood as the capacity of each individual (or of each character portrayed) to have control over their actions and achieve their own potential in a music video using music, lyrics, setting, cinematography, and so forth. It was interesting to note, as I analysed the first sample, “Blinding Lights,” that the song talked about and showed glimpses of a female, yet the female had no voice or agency to put forth her perspective. The narrative of the song is strongly controlled by the

male lead. This code thus helped me analyse who held the agency in each of the music videos and how gender played a role with respect to it.

13. **Hegemonic relations:** This term refers to power dynamics in which one group or ideology, known as the “hegemon,” exercises dominance and influence over others within a particular social, political, or cultural context. This dominance is often achieved and maintained through a combination of coercion, consent, and the establishment of norms and values that benefit the dominant group. In the context of gender, for instance, hegemonic relations might involve the dominant influence of traditional gender norms and expectations over individuals and society. Hegemony is defined as leadership or dominance of one group over the other (Apple, 2009; Giroux, 2023). In the field of gender, society has primarily been regarded as patriarchal and therefore usually dominated by heteronormative males. The females are often dominated along with others who do not identify within the heteronormative paradigm. First observed in “Stay” by Kid LAROI, this code refers to the relationship between the two groups of the dominant and the dominated. In the music video by Kid LAROI, the two male leads seem to have dominance over their female counterparts, evidenced by the fact that the female(s) have little or no screen space or voice to share a narrative from their perspective. This code therefore provided an opportunity to observe and highlight hegemony and hegemonic relations between genders presented in the music videos.

14. **Machiavellianism:** This term refers to a personality trait characterised by cunning, manipulation, and a strategic approach to achieve one’s goals, often at the expense of ethics and moral considerations. The term is derived from the political philosophy of Niccolò Machiavelli, who advocated for pragmatic and sometimes unscrupulous methods in politics. In psychological terms, individuals with high levels

of Machiavellianism are often described as being manipulative, opportunistic, and focused on achieving personal objectives, even if this involves deceit or manipulation of others. Machiavellianism, therefore, is a personality trait that describes the ability to manipulate and use any means necessary to get one's way (Bereczkei, 2017). This code represents the use of words and/or actions to show manipulation between genders to get one person to do what the other wants, first observed in "Stay". In the music video by Kid LAROI, the two male leads are seen using words and phrases to please the female(s) they seem to be with in order to make them stay: "*I feel like you can't feel the way I feel*" and "*Oh, I'll be fucked up if you can't be right here.*" The song uses a lot of gaslighting and manipulation to make the female succumb to the will of the lead singers. This made me question what such behaviour means in terms of the relationship between different genders, a line of thinking that gave birth to this code.

15. **Parasitism:** This is a biological relationship between two organisms of different species in which one organism, called the parasite, benefits at the expense of the other organism, known as the host. In this interaction, the parasite derives nourishment, protection, or some other advantage from the host, often causing harm or negatively impacting the host's fitness or well-being (Westwood et al., 2010). For this thesis, this biological concept was adapted to gender studies to observe and understand whether there were any instances where the relationship between genders depicts any similarities with that of this symbiotic relationship. This code was created after the first observation of such parallels in the lyrical analysis of the song "Pasoori," which includes the lyrics "*Zehar bane haan teri, pee javaan main poori nu*" (*If your love is poison, I'll drink it in a flurry*). These lyrics made me question who sings them, what they want to express, and whether there are any instances where in

the interaction among genders there is a negative relationship in which one benefits at the cost of the other. This code thus helped me question the harmful relationships between different genders. I used this concept of symbiotic relationships to draw parallels with the relationship between genders as often portrayed in popular culture and how that impacts people's understanding of gender.

16. **Social Norms:** These are widely accepted rules and expectations within a society that guide and shape individuals' behaviour. According to Rivera (2020) and De et al. (2021), these norms define appropriate conduct and help maintain social order by establishing shared standards of behaviour, values, and beliefs. Violating social norms may lead to social sanctions or disapproval. This code was first used in the visual analysis of "Raatan Lambiyan" at 00:00:24 where the guy chases the girl and the girl simply blushes, and at 00:00:49, where the male is seen having fun, listening to music, and pranking his mates, while the very next shot shows the female in front of a mirror decorating herself. This code talks about the acceptance of various cultural norms in different contexts as standards and how, if there is any deviation from cultural norms, does society "deal" with it. In the music video *Raatan Lambiyan* by Asees Kaur, many acts serve the audience as an obvious course of action based on their gender. For instance, while both the male and the female lead study at the same university, presumably doing the same course of study, years later the female is shown restricted to the confinement of the house while the professional journey of the male is traced to show his growth. This made me create this code to observe and highlight the many acts that music videos take from our society, present as the "norm," and therefore impact the way the general public understands the conceptualisation of gender, gender roles, gender responsibilities, and so forth.

After the analysis of the lyrics, various other aspects of a music video(the music—music style, design, lyrics—as well as the video—video style, design, setting, cinematography, editing, etc.) were analysed, as done for the sample in [Table 4](#) (below). These elements, although holding significant value separately, make or change the meaning of the music video as a whole. Thus, Table 4 looks at these elements individually but also at how they correspond to each other and then re-codes the entire video using the same method described above. The table is divided into two broad titles: sound design and visual design. Further, the sound design looks at the music style and lyrics, analysing how the music, in general, is made sense of. The video design looks at the setting (including the plot and costume) and cinematography (including editing). The setting and cinematography look at the visual aspect of the music video and what it portrays. Finally, the last column provides a summary of how the music and video (the audio and visual aspects) meet, which was then coded using the same process as described above.

I thus coded the raw data collected in the form of lyrics and transcription of videography of the music videos while focusing on the existing framework of gender projections and gender roles, as well as the camera's gaze, to understand the content youth engage in as per popular music charts. This guiding framework, though, was completely alterable to be able to test, adapt, expand, and, in general, improve upon the relevance and validity of the existing framework (Finfgeld, 2003; Zimmer, 2006). Being able to create an alternate framework by adding codes, as they appeared in the data, that differed from the pre-existing ones helped me not overlook opportunities to expand or challenge existing theoretical findings (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Lap 3: Cumulative Analysis. After the songs and videos were coded based on Lyrical Data Analysis [[Appendix D](#)] and both aural and visual data [[Appendix E: Visual Data](#)]

[Analysis](#)], the codes were collectively analysed based on the songs and the themes occurring in the codes.

Lap 3a: Collective Song Analysis. For each song, the data collected, analysed, and organised in [Appendix D: Lyrical Data Analysis](#) and [Appendix E: Visual Data Analysis](#) for all aural, lyrical, and visual elements was collated and analysed together as a whole for every subsequent code. Along with the coded analysis, I drew on my memos (which I will further explain) and theoretical frameworks to analyse how each song represents different genders vis-a-vis the codes and how it impacts the larger view of gender in the society.

Lap 3b: Collective Thematic Analysis. After all the data analysis for each video was collated in themes, the collective data for each code and its reference in every song was collated to analyse the progression and portrayal of similar elements with respect to the formulated codes [see [Appendix F: Critical Content Analysis of Codes](#)]. This analysis further helped bring in data from all music videos about each and every emerging code to collectively observe patterns that might overlap or stand out.

Memos and Synthesis. Memoing is a process used to organise, integrate, and interpret, and therefore making findings clear (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this research, after coding using the deductive approach, I placed themes/codes in the matrix and added memos to organise and integrate the codes better. The memos included my initial thoughts as I collected and analysed the music videos and were recorded in the videography chart based on my understanding, what I saw, how I felt about it, my reflections, and so forth.

Field notes were included in the memos. The synthesis thus became an ongoing and iterative process throughout analysing my reflections and theorising them with critical media literacy theories and queer feminist theories.

Memoing was an ongoing process in the engagement with data in Laps 1 and 2. The emergence of Lap 3 was based on integration of all data from Lyrical Data Analysis

[[Appendix D](#)] and Visual Data Analysis [[Appendix E](#)] along with memos and initial researcher notes based on each song for all of the coded data. The analysis in Lap 3 thus consisted of a) Collective Song Analysis (Lap 3a) where, for every code in a particular song, the data was collated adding theoretical frameworks and my analysis as a researcher and b) Collective Thematic Analysis (Lap 3b) where each code for all songs was analysed collectively vis-a-vis theory and my analysis. For both Laps 3a and 3b, I colour-coded the compilation to ensure I brought in the data in harmony with the literature and theoretical work along with my analysing voice for a deeper understanding of what it meant to use each of the codes in the given data, how the themes might shape the understanding of gender for the audience viewing the music video, and how, by extension, they might influence the audience's understanding of gender in society.

Table 3

Excerpt from Lyrical Data Analysis [[Appendix D](#)]

“Blinding Lights” by The Weeknd (2020)

LINE #	LYRICS	CATEGORY	CODES
	[Pre Chorus]		Moral Policing
	I look around and Sin City's cold	Commit sin= cold,	
12	and empty (Oh)	barren, alone	Stereotypical
	No one's around to judge me (Oh)	female being	Female traits
13	I can't see clearly when you're gone	judgemental	
		Dependency on females	Gender Codependency
	[Bridge]		
	I'm just calling back to let you know (Back to let you know)		
28	I could never say it on the phone (Say it on the phone)	Favour	Agency
	Will never let you go this time		Hegemonic Relations
29	(Ooh)	Holding on	Gender Codependency

Table 4

Excerpt from *Visual Data Analysis* [[Appendix E](#)]

“Blinding Lights” by The Weeknd (2020)

Music Design		Video Design		Coding	
Music Style	Lyrics	Setting	Cinematography	Memo	Codes
The Weeknd’s vocals enter the mix, singing the first verse over the pulsing synth and drum machine.	[Intro] Yeah	The surreal imagery in this section features distorted images and colours overlaid on the footage of The Weeknd driving through the city. The camera shakes and tilts to convey the chaotic feeling of the driving sequence.	The camera cuts between shots of The Weeknd driving and shots of the city at night, with neon signs and billboards passing by in the background. The camera is mostly stationary, with occasional tilts and pans to follow The Weeknd’s car. The camera then cuts to a close-up of The Weeknd’s face as he sings the opening lines of the song, with the camera slowly pulling back to reveal him behind the wheel of a gray sports car.	The music and corresponding video presents distortion and chaos while the singer, seemingly confused, demands for love.	Agency Gender Codependency Stereotypical Male Trait (Entitlement)
	[Verse 1] I’ve been tryna call				
	I’ve been on my own for long enough				
	Maybe you can show me how to love, maybe				

Music Design		Video Design		Coding	
Music Style	Lyrics	Setting	Cinematography		Codes
The lyrics describe the singer's feelings of loneliness and isolation.	I'm goin' through withdrawals			This section in the lyrics highlights	
	You don't even have to do too much		The scene shows a traffic light, and The	loneliness and isolation with cold and	
	You can turn me on with just a touch , baby		Weeknd's is shown dancing in different parts of the city in	emptiness while the video contrasts with	
	[Pre-Chorus] I look around and		different points of time and in different	neon and flashy lights during the night. The	
	Sin City's cold and empty (Oh)		conditions, freely, without care , before	abstract imagery therefore shows freedom and	Moral Policing
	No one's around to judge me (Oh)	The scene takes place at a red light, where The Weeknd's car comes to a stop.	cutting back to	breaking free from morals or	Stereotypical Female Traits
	I can't see clearly when you're gone		The Weeknd as he recklessly drives away.	societal pressures while seemingly enjoying it.	Gender Codependency

The above samples are provide insight into what the process looked like for each music video at the time of proposal. First and foremost, this sample helped me understand how I needed to keep an open mind while coding and not restrict myself to the predetermined codes so as to gain insights from what I found in the data. Secondly, this sample helped me understand what the whole process might look like. I myself, as the researcher, am amazed at the various intricacies that make up a music video of (usually) 3–4 minutes.

These processes helped me understand the purpose, messages, and impact of music videos. The analysis included usage of deductive codes to analyse the lyrics and videography [see [Appendix F: Critical Content Analysis of Codes](#)]. These categories were also later compared with the analysis of the youth in the surveys and used to answer the broader research questions [see [Appendix G: Survey Analysis](#)].

Given that I worked on music videos from two different contexts, it was interesting to see overlaps or a lack thereof between how gender is portrayed in the two settings (this

distinction is explored in the subsequent chapter, [Chapter 4: Findings](#)). Since both the countries for this research are multicultural countries with a diverse set of students in terms of class/race/ethnicity/religion, this study is helpful for students and teachers in understanding differing perspectives and how they can be inculcated in the classroom. Finally, this process of analysis helped extract general codes from popular music videos in both the countries for the participants in the QS to review and provide a fresh perspective.

Having the codes and categories from both the countries, I wondered what reflections would come to the surface in terms of the perceptions about similar codes and how popular culture in both countries contributes to the ideas formed around gender. At first glance, the top three music videos in both the countries between 2020 and 2022 had absolutely no overlaps, yet I wondered if there would be overlaps in the perceptions. I also wondered how the participants would react to popular music videos from the other country and perceive gender portrayal for the same.

Phase 2: Qualitative Survey

For the second phase of the methodology, I chose to bring in some additional youth perspectives to the data and analysis using a QS. Given the age group of the participants (18—5-year-olds), the most suitable methodology was a QS for the flexibility it offered the participant(s) to work at their own pace and at their preferred time. Moreover, a survey also ensured that the participants' opinions about the music videos were not infiltrated or influenced by that of others (other participants or the researcher) since they completed the survey by themselves. This made using a QS easier and more efficient for the purpose of this research. Below I elaborate more on QS and how it was used in this research.

Understanding how youth reflect on their current and past perspectives helps educators in using music videos as a resourceful tool for public pedagogy. While surveys are often considered to be not adequate for collecting reasonable data for a qualitative study and

are often supplemented with interviews to get more in-depth understanding, there are some counter arguments about the potential of surveys (Braun et al., 2021). QS databases can in fact provide richness and depth about the topic in question by giving participants the opportunity to reflect and express their ideas at their own pace without any external influence from the researcher or other participants. A QS is able to provide a wide-angle lens (Toerien & Wilkinson, 2004), especially with the diversity of populations (Braun et al., 2017) and samples it can reach in very little time; however, it also provides a very focused, rich, and complex result (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Davey et al., 2019) if the questions are open-ended and appropriate to the research questions. In particular, I sought youth voices to see: a) how often youth participants engaged with music videos; b) how their analysis compared to my own. In this way, I gained an understanding of how one might use this method of analysis in the classroom based on the understanding the youth participants had of media literacy. In addition, a greater understanding of how youth read gender in music videos was developed.

The participants for the survey were recruited through online communities on popular age-appropriate social media platforms in both countries. Facebook and Instagram are the two most popular platforms. As of January 2023, 8.9%–12.6% of the global audience between ages 18–24 used Facebook, and 78.1% of Facebook users also used Instagram (Kemp, 2023). In both Canada and India, Facebook has been rated as the top social media platform overall. However, Snapchat and Instagram seem to be more popular among young adults. Through these social platforms, participants from diverse backgrounds under the age bracket participated in the survey using Google forms. As per the selection criteria, the first six participants who met the study criteria and submitted signed consent forms became study participants.

2A: Participant Selection

As discussed above, the survey was particularly used to answer the second research question, which sought to gather the perspectives of youth on how gender is being portrayed in popular music videos. Therefore, to gather youth perspectives, I chose participants between the ages of 18 and 25 years. The general conception of “youth” is the age between childhood and adulthood. While there is no internationally agreed upon age group of “youth,” nevertheless, as per statistics, the member states of the United Nations define youth as persons between 15 and 24 years of age. According to Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child, a “child” is defined as a person up to the age of 18 years of age (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). It is also to be noted that both Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2019) and India (The Indian Majority Act, 1875) recognise children as persons up to 18 years of age. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the participants recruited as youth were between the ages of 18 and 25 and citizens or residents of Canada or India (three from each country). Since it was the aim of the research to understand student perceptions of gender and to find better ways to include media literacy with a gendered lens as part of the school curriculum, the participants were also required to have completed high school. [Table 5](#) below lists the inclusion and exclusion criteria for survey participants.

Table 5

Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria for Survey Participants

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1. Age (18–25 years old)	1. Younger than 18 or older than 25 years
2. Citizenship or residence (three participants from India and three participants from Canada)	2. Non-citizens or non-residents of India and Canada
3. Completion of high school	3. Non-completion of high school

4. Submission of informed consent
(first three to submit surveys)

4. Non-submission of informed consent

2B: Survey Construction

A qualitative survey was prepared to understand youth (age 18–25) perspectives on music videos. The youth indulged in a similar process of analysis of popular music videos in their context to help me understand how they interpreted them and whether there were any overlaps. This study approached youth aged 18–25 who were high school graduates, as young adults step into the real world and imbibe a sense of freedom, making their own meaning and opinions as seem fit to them. The participants being adults also made the ethical process easier to carry forward for a study like this in a short period of time.

For the purpose of the survey themes emerging from the initial coding, sample music video analysis was taken and questions were formulated based on this. The survey comprised seven questions and three sections to be completed by each participant [see [Appendix B: Survey](#)]. Section 1 of the survey simply asked participants to read all the instructions and to sign consent for taking part in the survey. Section 2 involved general questions based on participants' experiences with gender and media and how these experiences made them feel. Section 3 asked participants to choose their own music video (out of the four selected MVs in phase 1 of the research) and to answer a three-part open-ended survey [[Appendix B: Survey](#)] about both the lyrical and visual aspects of that particular music video.

2C: Ethics and Recruitment

Participants were recruited through targeted social media ads [[Appendix C: Advertisements](#)] and snowball methods. The participant selection criteria was based on four main factors, as presented above in [Figure 5](#): the participant's 1) age; 2) citizenship or residency; 3) completion of high school; 4) submission of informed consent. Participants

completed their informed consent prior to completing the survey. The survey was conducted through Google forms.

Potential participants were recruited using advertisements that were posted on popular social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok using my personal social media accounts and institutional email account. Additionally, I shared the same with my networks of friends and peers through social media and word of mouth. The first three potential participants to fulfil the inclusion criteria were recruited for the research.

When interested participants clicked on the link in the advertisement, they read and reviewed the consent form [see [Appendix A: Research Participant Information and Consent Form](#)]. The informed consent form included my contact details and the contacts for my research supervisor, Dr. Shannon Moore. This way, interested people reached out if they had any questions or concerns about the consent process or the survey. Interested youth completed the informed consent form directly through the survey platform. Once the informed consent form was complete, participants completed the survey. At the beginning of the survey, and before participants pressed “submit,” they were reminded that this survey was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point before they pressed “submit.”

After collection of the responses from all six participants, the data were coded. The participants provided their responses to the survey, which was then coded by me to remove direct identifiers such as the participants’ names; coded names were used to protect participants’ confidentiality. All references to participants in subsequent knowledge mobilisation used these pseudonyms. The six randomly chosen gender-neutral names were: Participant 1: Charlie; Participant 2: Blake; Participant 3: Quinn; Participant 4: Jessie; Participant 5: Alex; and Participant 6: Grey. The data collected using Google forms on the password-protected Google drive on my personal computer was transferred to SharePoint, the password-protected, dual-authentication, cloud storage platform that is hosted by the

University of Manitoba. Consent forms and all data from the surveys will be destroyed by July 2028.

QSS helped me reach the target audience, youth in the two diverse contexts (India and Canada), in larger numbers, in less time, and from more diverse backgrounds. I received many inquiries and queries to be a part of the survey from the target age group; however, many of these potential participants could not take part given their geographical location.

2D: Survey Analysis

After completing Phase 1 (Critical Content Analysis Laps 1, 2 and 3), advertisements to take part in the QS were posted on the media platforms Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok, and Snapchat. The surveys were collected through Google Docs and closed after receiving all six responses (three from India and three from Canada). Before analysis, the identification markers (only available in the form of email ids, which often gave away the names of the participants) were removed, and the participants were given six gender-neutral names as described in the previous section on ethics. The process of analysing the data received from the qualitative surveys then began. The analysis took place in three laps. Lap 1 consisted of Participant Analysis, Lap 2 of Thematic Analysis, and Lap 3 of Song Analysis [see [Table 6](#)]. Lap 3 will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, as it brings in conversation the first and the second phase of analysis and forms a major part of the findings.

The responses from the participants of this study were analysed with respect to their understanding of media literacies and their significance in education with the use of music videos as public pedagogy. Common themes from the CCA were used to code and categorise responses from participants, which were simultaneously compared to the CCA I did using codes to understand whether there were overlaps and how these common points could be discussed in relation to pedagogical solutions.

Table 6*Laps and Analysis*

Laps	Analysis
Lap 1: Participant Analysis	Responses of each participant were analysed, that is, how did each participant analyse the music videos?
Lap 2: Thematic Analysis	Data were analysed based on the following four themes around which the questions in Section 2 were created: a) Representation in music videos (MVs) b) Discomfort with gender portrayal in MVs c) Portrayal of gender roles and identities in popular MVs d) Impact of popular MVs All of the qualitative survey responses were analysed for their engagement with each of the above themes.
Lap 3: Song Analysis	Data were analysed for each of the selected songs, that is, in this lap the analysis was song-centric instead of theme-centric. The participants' responses were compared with the tools used by the researcher to analyse the following songs: a) "Blinding Lights" by the Weeknd b) "Stay" by Kid LAROI c) "Raatan Lambiyan" by Asees Kaur d) "Pasoori" by Ali Sethi

Methodological Queries

In completing this research, I was left with many methodological queries about the limitations and potential of using a survey and CCA in order to respond to my specific research questions, in particular the question about using music videos as a pedagogical tool. While I do offer substantiated conclusions about how one might use music videos in formal classroom environments, neither a survey nor CCA uses these tools out in a classroom environment with students. Having said that, as a researcher, trying these tools myself has

helped me understand their intricacies and to suggest more effective strategies and pedagogical tools for the classroom.

Besides practice in the classroom, the usage of the two methods in this research also raised a lot of queries in my mind. With the use of CCA as one of my methods of data analysis, throughout the different stages of coding, I kept questioning whether I was enough of a subject expert to be the one selecting codes from the literature and/or creating codes. My analysis was supposed to be a baseline for the creation of pedagogical tools for teachers to use in the classrooms in the future, and while this was not an exhaustive list at all, I still wondered if I, as an individual, was able to do justice to the creation of what could, in the future, be a preliminary list of codes for classroom analysis. While Lap 1 of Phase 1 (CCA) of my research entailed selection of codes from literature and theory to analyse gender portrayal in popular music videos, I as the researcher still had the very crucial role of selecting, choosing, and appropriately adapting the codes to analyse the popular music videos. The very name “Laps” for coding in the first phase of research suggests the continuous and ongoing back-and-forth analysis I did to check, re-check, and reflect on my own process and to look for any missing connections or loose ends. The existence of Lap 1a and 1b further shows the addition of new theoretical codes on finding a gap. I do believe that, in the end, this very scepticism made me a better researcher for being my own harshest critic. It was, however, difficult for me to not spiral and trust my knowledge and understanding of the field to then, in Lap 2, create appropriate tools where I believed there was a need to bridge the gap between theory and collected data. I do acknowledge this was not an exhaustive list of codes, and I do not generalise that they and only they should be use while analysing any popular music videos.

As for the usage of surveys, it resulted in me being able to reach a wider audience in a very short span of time and getting great responses from participants of both countries (and

even those outside these countries). Given the fact that the participants were recruited through social media platforms, even though I did not collect any personal markers like age, gender, and so forth, such information was available to me through the participants' social media handles when they had any enquiries. I wonder whether having the knowledge of such information influenced the analysis with any personal prejudice or bias I as an individual possess. Also, while I used markers before analysing the responses received from the participants, a part of me wondered whether having all that information might have enriched my data analysis to better understand the factors influencing my participants' responses and any interesting overlaps that could have taken the findings to a whole new level. That is, could I have analysed how/whether female participants noted elements male participants did not? Yet, given that this research included such a small number of participants (only three from each country), I can definitely not make any generalised claims about the music videos or their impact on particular audiences. Moreover, I would not want my analysis to reify the very categories I am trying to challenge by suggesting anything about "males" and "females."

With surveys, it was also very difficult, as was predicted, to get each participant to answer all questions or elaborate more where their responses could be elaborated to understand their viewpoints better. It was also impossible to clarify a question for the participant in case they did not understand it completely. I stand by my decision of using surveys, given the number of participants I could reach out to in such a short span of time and their willingness to be a part of the study because they could simply write it out in their own time. (Quite a few interested participants who unfortunately could not be a part of the study, as per the criteria, wrote to me wanting to be a part of the study since the topic not only piqued their interest but also majorly because it was a survey instead of a "rigorous" interview that would take a lot of their time). However, as a researcher, if I could go back and change anything, I would want to add an optional 10–15-minute interview after filling out the

survey, not to ask all the questions from the participants but in order to clarify any gaps, if there were any, to understand their perspectives better. As an alternative, I would ask participants to use the created tool(s) in the form of laps and codes to decode and identify gender portrayal in, say, a one-minute lyrical and visual analysis of any song of their choosing. I believe the addition of these steps would bring in some very interesting viewpoints and act as a simulation to try with teachers and students later on as a media literacy activity to engage participants as critical thinkers.

Chapter 4: Findings

As discussed in the previous chapter, in the first phase of this research, the data were collected and coded in two documents, namely, Lyrical Data Analysis [[Appendix D](#)] and Visual Data Analysis [[Appendix E](#)]. These documents were coded in three laps.

Lyrical Data Analysis [[Appendix D](#)] entailed segmenting lyrical data line by line and coding each line from a gendered perspective. Lap 1 of the data analysis (theoretical codes) brought into focus several gendered elements that did not have an exact theoretical equivalent to be coded; however, their presence in the collected data encouraged me to look into similar theories in literature not restricted to gender studies. This gave birth to Lap 2 of the data analysis (codes created to bridge the gap between theory and praxis), which helped theorise and rationalise different aspects of gender observed in the popular music videos. As a researcher, I reflected on my process of identification and observation to juxtapose the different observations from all the song analyses next to each other and with respect to the societies the songs were first released in.

Visual Data Analysis [[Appendix E](#)] entailed segmenting both lyrical and visual data, juxtaposing the segments with each other, and coding them separately as well as collectively. Similar to Lyrical Data Analysis [[Appendix D](#)], the first two laps of Visual Data Analysis helped in the process of reflection and creation of more codes across fields that aligned with the gender perspectives from the music videos. However, in Visual Data Analysis [[Appendix E](#)], the further comparison of lyrical and visual data highlighted the often differing views and ideas projected separately by the lyrical and visual and how they might or might not align when looked upon as a whole. This brought a very crucial point forward: Not only does each individual perceive different meanings within a medium, each medium may also project different perspectives and or meanings to its audience (McLuhan, 1964).

In Lap 3, the codes were brought together, collectively analysed across all songs, and colour-coded as per the theoretical frameworks guiding each of the codes. This round of analysis not only focused on, each of the songs but also on my analytical perception of how they might collectively impact the general audience and their understanding of gender [[Appendix F: Critical Content Analysis for Codes](#)].

In this chapter, I articulate my findings, which are primarily based on Lap 3 from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the research. This chapter is further divided into three sections. In the first section, I reflect on the findings related to the first research question, which addresses gender portrayal in popular music videos and corresponds to Phase 1 of the methodology, CCA. In the second section, I reflect on the findings related to the second research question, which addresses the perceptions of youth about gender portrayal in popular music videos and corresponds to Phase 2 of data analysis, Qs. In the third section, I reflect on the third research question, which addresses the pedagogical inferences of this research and brings together the collective analysis from both Phase 1 (CCA) and Phase 2 (Qs).

Gender Portrayal in Music Videos

This study sought to explore the way gender is portrayed in popular music videos. Additionally, this study considered the way gender in music videos is read and understood by youth. My first research question addressed the portrayal of gender in popular music videos in India and Canada. Through critical content analysis of selected popular music videos from India and Canada between 2020 and 2022, I found consistent reliance on stereotypical gender roles and traits within all of the studied music videos.

Most Prominent Codes

During the collective song analysis, I found the repetition of four themes across each of the selected songs: gender codependency, social norms, agency, and hegemonic relationships. Due to their presence within each of the music videos used for this research, I

consider them highly significant themes for analysis. Their persistent occurrence within all the four songs collected as data for this research also indicate their existence in society and the way it becomes naturalised, that is, constructed as natural. In what follows, I outline the way these prominent themes emerged across the music videos.

Gender Codependency. In this study, the term Gender Codependency was informed by feminist theorists Irvine (1995) and Dear and Roberts (2002). I use “Gender Codependency” to encapsulate the ways genders co-exist or become codependent with respect to one’s own gender identity. Females, as gender minorities, are often assumed to be dependent, with unhealthy relationships, emotional resilience, and enabling behaviour towards their male partners in a patriarchal and heteronormative relationship. For instance, in “Love the Way You Lie” (Eminem, 2010), the lyrics say, “*Just gonna stand there and watch me burn? Well, that’s alright, because I like the way it hurts,*” and in “Bleeding Love” (Lewis, 2007), they read, “*You cut me open, And it’s drowning all of me.*” These songs both present the female as an emotionally dependent participant in a toxic, unhealthy relationship, enabling their abusive partners further. This code therefore was used to understand codependent relationships and their relation with gender.

Throughout the process of coding, I used this code to understand the codependence of heteronormative gender binaries and how they “should” codepend to co-exist. The gender codependency between males and females in most of the song analyses does not appear to be two-way. In the Weeknd’s *Blinding Lights* (2020) and Laroï’s *Stay* (2021), the relationship is presented to the audience through the male perspective. Both English songs, which topped the music charts in Canada, have no female perspectives. The male controls the narrative and presents himself as vulnerable and hurt while asking for forgiveness for his sins. *Stay*’s lyrics give a great example of this without even an apology: “I realize the time that I wasted here, I feel like you can’t feel the way I feel, Oh, I’ll be fucked up if you can’t be right here” (Laroï,

2021). The male singer here is observed asking and even demanding (in several instances) that the female stay with him with a sense of entitlement, guilting the partner into taking responsibility for his well-being instead of apologising for the mistakes he made that resulted in the partner's leaving. The narrator presents this behaviour as acceptable and normative by patronising his partner into "staying" with him for his own state of well-being and welfare, irrespective of the consequences that should follow his actions and his contribution to the relationship. This particular gender expectation in terms of dependency in relationships is often normalised and extensively seen with the use of the expression "manchild" and the association of the females in any relationship with being the nurturers, caregivers, and 'mother-ly' to suit and fulfil the needs of the males.

In Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) and Sethi's *Pasoori* (2022), on the other hand, while both male and female perspectives are presented, the male perspective dominates the screen. Especially in Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021), the female is dependent on the male both physically and emotionally, evident from her often resting her head on the male lead's shoulders (00:09, 01:14, 01:33) and eagerly waiting for his call when she is at home (00:49, 01:04), or even writing him letters (00:04) when he goes to military. This is not reciprocated by the male for he is seen as the breadwinner, unemotional, and a pillar of strength, indicating traits of toxic masculinity instead of codependency in a relationship. These instances are observed in each of the selected music videos, showing a very rigid ideology of a heteronormative relationship and what is expected and accepted from every male and female participant in one. Any idea beyond this heteronormative paradigm is frowned upon, criticised, and even unacknowledged as stupidity, crazy ideals, and/or non-existent. Therefore, they define the very way to be "masculine" or "feminine."

In Sethi's *Pasoori* (2022), the audience sees a mutual form of codependency between the male and female performers who often compliment each other's works to make a

symphony, and all performers complement each other to form the final art piece, the song. While *Pasoori* (Sethi, 2022) represents a more equal form of codependency than the other music videos, the codependency between males and females still reifies heteronormativity. Gender codependency, therefore, in these popular music videos in Canada and India between 2020 and 2022 represent an unequal level of codependence or co-existence between the binary genders of the heteronormative paradigm. It is often normalised to see females as weak and absent while we are made aware of the male perspective and see through their lens. Moreover, the men continue to lead the relationship as de-humanised partners. For instance, *Work From Home* (Fifth Harmony, 2016) portrays males as having no human feelings or emotions and being responsible for guiding the relationship and helping it through real practical life while females are seen as passive followers or vulnerable partners who are meek, weak, and need support or convincing that they should follow the male. In other cases, like in *Blinding Lights* (2020), male partners are seen exerting emotions like betrayal and/or anger, further strengthening negative behavioural stereotypes about women, for example that they cannot be trusted, and therefore justifying violence against them as well as codependence. These depictions of gender and dependence between gender binaries concretise the idea of gender as a very rigid concept unable to undergo any change in a heteronormative and patriarchal society.

Social Norms. This theme refers to the development of acceptable social and cultural expectations in different contexts. Social norms specify actions that are regarded as proper or correct, or improper and incorrect (Coleman, 1990). Therefore, social norms influence every individual's behaviour in the social body or social network. Additionally, the theme considers how deviations from norms are dealt with in society. Often, this means that, as a society, people find ways to make sure that the person who deviates is brought back to their rightful path, one that is generally acceptable within patriarchy. For instance, if a woman does not

conform to the generally expected and accepted clothing for females in that society, she is shamed for dressing indecently until she does conform to the generally accepted expectations. Wells (1970) explained, “These formal and informal social rules define social structure (p. 3), while De et al. (2021) wrote, “These rules or social institutions are social norms or conventions. They define human behaviour by constraining unfettered human desire for maximization of self-benefit.” For instance, Rivera (2020), in a study on traditional masculinity, found that, “Traditional masculinity rewards men who conform to social norms with power; men who do not conform are not masculine and are punished physically and emotionally by other men” (p. 6)

The Weeknd’s *Blinding Lights* (2020), Laroie’s *Stay* (2021), and Kaur’s *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) all show acceptance of social norms that include stereotypical traits, behavioural characteristics, and expectations in the form of gender roles and requirements. In *Blinding Lights* (Weeknd, 2020), at 00:37, the male lead is observed smiling at what he plans to do next, which is to drive rashly on the roads; this depicts males as reckless, restless, and brave in the sense that they embrace danger. Viewers continue to see how the male has no respect for laws or any other life while he is seen lighting a cigarette and throwing it, still lit, outside the car and wearing his shades, looking elsewhere and not at the road while driving (01:07 and 01:11). These instances depict the general male’s persona as someone with no regard for anyone or anything but himself. We see similar examples in *Stay* (Laroie, 2021, 00:15) where the female is seen crying; throughout the video, she lacks voice and remains frozen. In *Raatan Lambiyan* (Kaur, 2021, 00:51), the female is smiling at her own reflection while she dresses up for the male. We see very predictable and stereotypical roles assigned to both male and female characters in these music videos so that they become societal norms and remain unquestioned.

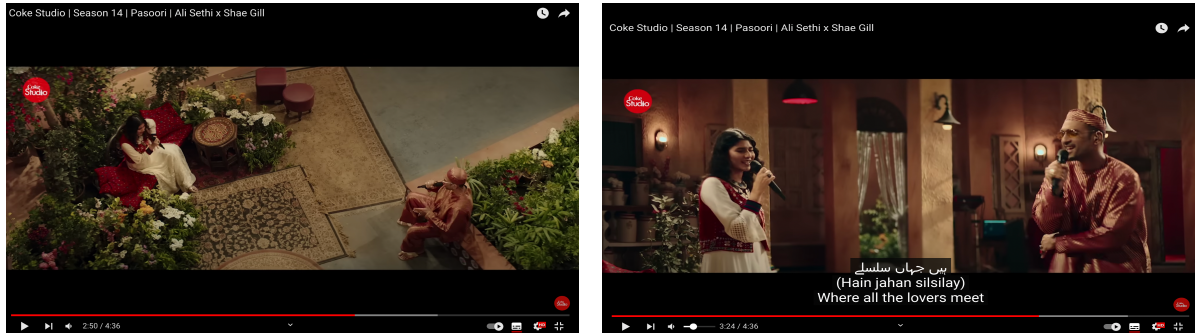
However, Sethi's *Pasoori* (2022) challenges these norms, as observed in the music video through the variations in clothing (mixing up traditional and Western standards), roles (both girls and boys can dance, and they do), and face makeup and body jewels among many other things. These gender depictions shape and conceptualise the very ideals of people across generations about what gender is and how one "should" present it in oneself. Therefore, such gender constructions as shown in *Pasoori* (2022) give the audience a safe space to personally connect with and find a reflection of themselves in a media text.

Agency. I draw on feminist theories (Bowden & Mummery, 2014; Dumitru, 2018) to highlight the code of agency. Here, agency is understood as the capacity of each individual to have control over their actions and achieve their own potential. In a music video, this manifests through music, lyrics, setting, cinematography, and so forth. Both the Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020) and Laroi's *Stay* (2021) give complete agency and authority to the male lead singers to tell their narrative and be in control; the females are only part of the video as a prop to support and highlight the stance of the male. For example, in *Blinding Lights* (2:04), the female is presented as an object of desire and want with close-up of her face and her wearing a dress and posing seductively (see [Figure 4](#)). It is ironic to see how she is a singer as portrayed in the music video; however, viewers do not hear her sing or express herself throughout the video. She remains inaudible even in the scenes in which the camera focuses on her. Only her body and the way she moves is brought into focus; her voice and/or her words are not considered to be important enough to be heard. She remains but a thing of beauty to be admired. Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) shows both female and male singers having a voice, yet the male voice is more dominant, while the female focuses on the male being the centre of her universe with the following lyrics: "I couldn't survive without you. Please never abandon me. You are my sole aid" (original lyrics: *Tere bina mera howe na guzara, chhad ke na jawin mainu tu hi hai sahara*). Sethi's *Pasoori* (2022), on the other hand,

has both the male and female lead singers sharing the narrative and harmonising together (see [Figure 3](#)); even the other characters in the music video enjoy shared screen space without segregation or discrimination based on gender as evident in the figures below:

Figure 3.

Glimpses from MV of Pasoori



Hegemonic relationships. Hegemony is defined as leadership or dominance of one group over the other. In this study, this code referred to the relationship between the two groups, the dominant and the dominated (Apple, 2009; Giroux, 1983). The field of gender has pointed out that societies have primarily been patriarchal and therefore usually dominated by heteronormative males. The females are often dominated along with others who do not identify with the heteronormative paradigm. With the presence of agency, gaze, gender fatalism, and codependency, the hegemonic relations between the two groups within the heteronormative binary are clear. We observe hegemonic relations between males (the dominant) and females (the dominated). In the Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020), this is evident in the absence of the female voice in the lyrics and in the male's control of the narrative, as well as the way that the female body is shown in the camera shot from 02:01-02:08. The camera angles are low and close to the ground, which gives a sense of intimacy and immersion [[Appendix E](#)]. They also follow the female's movement closely, closing up on her face and her body moving seductively to the beat of the song (see [Figure 4](#)) while the drums and synths become more intense, creating a sense of urgency and excitement

[[Appendix E](#)]. Hegemonic relations are also evident in the male lead's facial expressions and body language. He is disinterested, concentrated on smoking a cigarette, and closed off until he reaches the stage where he pulls the female closer and has a wide smile of mischief at 02:10 and 02:19. Laroi's *Stay* (2021) depicts hegemonic relations with the frozen female at 00:37 with no words or control over anything, while the males in the music video has the freedom and taken-for-granted privilege from 00:57–01:27 to express his opinion and move around the streets while others are clearly frozen.

[Table 7](#) below picks out specific examples from the four music videos to show how they portray the four most prominent codes in this research.

Table 7

Most Prominent Codes

Code	<i>Blinding Lights</i>	<i>Stay</i>	<i>Rataan Lambiyan</i>	<i>Pasoori</i>
Gender Codependency	We hear the male protagonist sing, "I've been tryna call, I've been on my own for long enough," "I can't see clearly when you're gone," and "I can't sleep until I feel your touch."	The men describe the women as people who can be relied upon ("Ain't no way that I can leave you stranded, 'Cause you ain't ever left me empty-handed,") whereas the men do not seem to stand true to their words ("I told you I'd change, even when I knew I never could").	The male lead is seen chasing the female. The female seems especially dependent on the male for support, as she leans into him when they are walking by themselves.	While the song opens with the male singer leading the stage and bringing all the different characters in, once the female singer starts singing, they come to the same level and harmonise together.
Social Norms	Although portrayed negatively, with dark lights and	The male lead is presented as reckless and carefree	The male lead grows in power professionally; however, the female is	While dance is still considered to be feminine (where the MV was released),

Code	<i>Blinding Lights</i>	<i>Stay</i>	<i>Rataan Lambiyan</i>	<i>Pasoori</i>
	flashy red colour to depict danger, the male lead is shown and accepted to be irrational, reckless, and careless with his own life as well as those around him as he is seen driving rashly, running around and dancing on highways and roads, and getting in fights.	(jumping in the streets, giving the middle finger, etc.), while the female protagonist is emotional and silent. The juxtaposition depicts the associations and abides by the social “norms” that have become acceptable and even expected from a male and female respectively.	confined to the boundary of her house and the males in her life. When not with her partner, she is seen at home with her father. Again, abiding by the “norm” or standard set under the rule of patriarchy, the female is dependent emotionally, physically, and financially on a male figure.	especially a folk or classical dance form, yet this MV celebrates all its artists, singers, dancers, and theatre actors alike, irrespective of their gender identity and expression. In doing so, this MV takes a huge stance on inclusion, diversity, and expression and therefore challenges locally as well as globally accepted social norms.
Agency	The male lead takes control of the narrative and the female, telling her what to do even when he is under the influence of a substance. The female, sober but not in control, is a performer pleasing others. Also, even though she is a singer, no voice is heard from her in the MV.	The female has no voice in the MV and is frozen, a passive participant with little or no agency in the narrative. The MV only shares the male perspective even though the song seems to have been sung for/to the female: “When I’m away from you, I miss your touch (Ooh), You’re the reason I believe in love, It’s been difficult for me to trust.”	The lyrics have a male voice for most of the song except for one verse that is sung by the female. As for the visuals, the female lead in the song is confined to a patriarchal society and comes from a conservative family where the female always has a male around to protect her, either the father or the boyfriend.	Although not equally, in this music video, both the male and the female characters hold authority and agency over their own actions and in their lyrics. Both male and female lead singers have a voice and share their narratives, harmonising together as well as with the other instrumentalists and dancers collectively working for the song in the music video.

Code	<i>Blinding Lights</i>	<i>Stay</i>	<i>Rataan Lambiyan</i>	<i>Pasoori</i>
Hegemonic Relations	We observe the female depicted as someone delicate and vulnerable in the music video with the way she moves and has men (male guards) protecting her. The male is depicted as someone with a free will while the female seems to be controlled even though she is on stage.	The MV portrays a hegemonic relationship between the male (LARO) and his partner, the female frozen in the cafe with no rights to share her opinions or respond to what the male lead asks of her and/or tells her. The male lead uses a demanding tone to dictate what he needs, showing a strained and unequal relationship between the two.	The music video normalises the hegemonic relations between the male and the female leads. The female seems to be dependent on the male for support as seen in the video when she leans over while walking or even sitting together. When not with her partner, the female lead is shown under the influence of (and scared of) her father, the dominant figure in the family.	Hegemonic relations are challenged in this music video since all groups of people coming from different genders, races, ethnicities, and cultures are given an opportunity to express themselves however they prefer. Moreover, there is no visible discrimination against any group based on their gender, caste, creed, religion, race, culture, etc.

Unusual Codes

While the four codes outlined above came across as the most prominent ones, given that they were observed in all four music videos, this was not a quantitative study. That is, it was not based on the premise that certain aspects matter more because they are counted most often. Instead, something could occur once and still be symptomatic of an important theme. Therefore, below I highlight three more codes that may not have been observed the most times or seen consistently across all songs yet were unusual and unexpected. Although these codes are not present in the scholarly literature (except the code of “male gaze”), they add an interesting perspective that has further scope for media literacies and gender studies. Therefore, even though they are not as prevalent in the existing literature, they popped up

during the song analysis and are symptoms of gender construction, heteronormativity, and patriarchy.

Parasitism. Parasitism is a symbiotic relationship in which a symbiont lives all or part of its life in or on its living host, usually benefiting itself while harming the host (Westwood et al., 2010). *Pasoori*'s translated lyric "If your love is poison, I'll drink it in a flurry" (*Zehar bane haan teri, pee javaan main poori nu*)" is emblematic of symbiotic relationships. Here, the female, while singing the lines above, portrays how her own needs are not of relevance; rather, she keeps the male lead as the centre of her world and her priorities, so much so that even if being with the male endangers and/or harms her, she is willingly happy to do so. The characters in these music videos portray parasitic behaviour when they talk about self-harm physically, mentally, or emotionally. The singers express how they are willingly open to self-harm and destruction to satisfy or please their partners. They portray highly toxic and parasitic relationships instead of one with codependence and mutual satisfaction.

Although not commonly associated with gender studies or media literacy, I observed this code to be prevalent in music videos. Once I noted it in the media texts that I examined for this study, I noted its prevalence in other popular lyrics: Miley Cyrus's "Wrecking Ball" (2013): "All you ever did was wreck me"; Lauren Spencer-Smith's "Narcissist" (2023): "Feels like you're dying on a bathroom floor... It feels like shit, but that's just how it is when you love a narcissist"; or even Taylor Swift's "I Knew You Were Trouble" (2012): "And when I fell hard, you took a step back Without me, without me." All these songs glorify parasitism, somehow making it acceptable and normative for their audience instead of questioning this toxic behaviour in relationships. The viewers therefore are made to believe a relationship that agrees with social norms requires them to fulfil the wishes of their partners and to become the reason for their happiness at the cost of themselves even if this means they

self-harm or become collateral damage in the process. Hence, it is crucial that people learn to identify and put such behaviour on display as toxic and unacceptable.

Machiavellianism. Machiavellianism is a personality trait that describes the ability to manipulate and use any means necessary to get your way (Bereczkei, 2018). Here this code represents the use of words and/or actions to show manipulation between genders to get one person to do what the other wants. For example, the Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020) uses Machiavellianism: "I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights, No, I can't sleep until I feel your touch, I said, ooh, I'm drowning in the night, Oh, when I'm like this, you're the one I trust." That is, by expressing how it becomes difficult for the male lead to function without the female lead, the female is coerced by dominance, sympathy, unapologetic forgiveness, and anything the male can use at his disposal to convince the female to take care of the male. Laroi's *Stay* (2021) also uses this trait in a very familiar fashion by pointing out the mess the male would be in if his partner were to leave him: "*I know that I can't find nobody else as good as you.*" This line does not express appreciation for all the female has put up with in their relationship, but instead centres the relationship around himself; he is egocentric and points out how he might not find another partner that is as good as the one he has now, the female lead. Continuing, he sings: "*You're the reason I believe in love, It's been difficult for me to trust (Ooh), And I'm afraid that I'ma fuck it up.*" Notice how, in the entire paragraph, the word "you" only appears once; however, "I"/"me" appears four times. Once again, the male continues to be egocentric and makes the relationship all about himself, irrespective of what the female might think or feel about the whole situation—he just wants her to stay. Kaur's *Raatam Lambiyan* (2021) uses the same theme when it points out how spending a night without his partner is nearly impossible for the male lead. The presence of Machiavellianism in three out of the four popular music videos chosen for this thesis presents how commonly this behavioural trait is used by male leads in pop culture and resultantly is

normalised in our culture. The capitalist society of countries like Canada and India is built on the very premise of production and consumption and therefore uses any means possible to achieve its goal of profit making. Therefore, based on the very underlying principles of functioning in this day and time, it is natural to see commodification of the existing “weaker” or more “vulnerable” section of society and using any means possible, largely in the form of soothing and/or pacifying words, to have one’s own way; after all, “‘It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife’” (Austen, 1813, p. 1).

Gaze. Mulvey’s (1989) theory of the male gaze highlights the camera’s view with its angles, close-ups, and perceived audience. In a patriarchal society, the target audience is male; their needs are always a priority. Most popular music videos, as observed in the analysis, use the male gaze as theorised by Mulvey (1989). In the Weeknd’s *Blinding Lights* (2020), as well as Laroi’s *Stay* (2021), the camera follows the female body closely and seductively (see [Figure 4](#)) from various angles, enticing the male audience. As Mulvey (2013) explained, “The close-up, specifically the close-up of the female star, played its part in the development of the cinema as an industry and as a set of conventions” (p. 52) The result of the male gaze on audiences is that everyone starts to see women as sexualised objects. That is, because the male gaze is prevalent in popular media, audiences can start to adopt this gaze: “This concept of modernity included a troubling new discourse of sexuality, projected onto the iconography of the ‘new woman’” (Mulvey, 2013). Kaur’s *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) does not necessarily follow the characters with the male gaze in terms of objectifying the female body, yet it does define the female by her looks and the efforts put into her “dressing up” (see [Figure 5](#)) as she adds jewellery, ornaments, and so on at 00:51 while the male takes on more crucial roles and other stereotypical characteristics such as being carefree and unrestricted.

Figure 4

Glimpses from MV of Blinding Lights

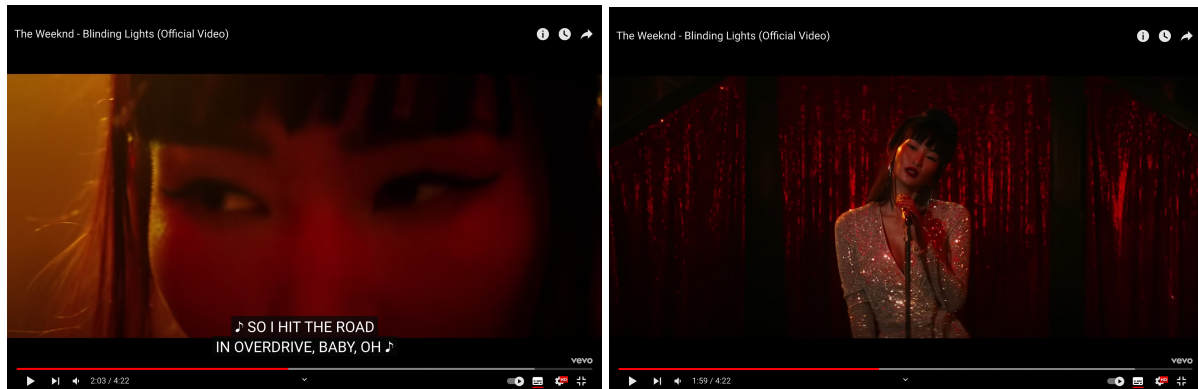
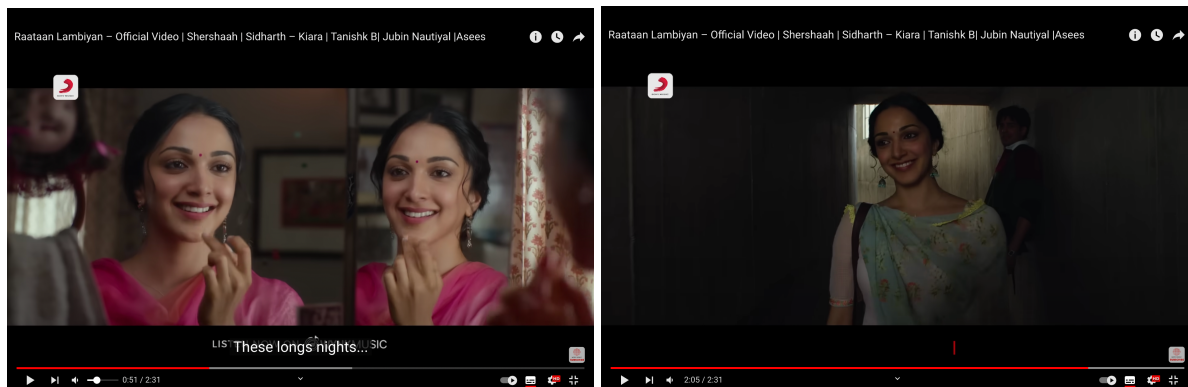


Figure 5

Glimpses from Raatan Lambiyan



In [Table 8](#) below, I list the particular examples of when the music videos portray these peculiar codes.

Table 8

Unusual Codes

Code	<i>Blinding Lights</i>	<i>Stay</i>	<i>Rataan Lambiyan</i>	<i>Pasoori</i>
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Parasitism	“I’m running out of time, ‘Cause I can see the sun light up the sky, So I hit the road in overdrive, baby, oh”: While this particular behaviour may be self-destructive, it corresponds to a point in the video when the male lead is fixated and obsessed with the female on stage.	The MV portrays the relationship between the leads as extremely toxic and parasitic in the sense that none of them seem to be happy; the female is seen crying and silent, while the male is running around town, expressing using his words and non-verbal expressions how he thinks it is indefinite that they will fall into the same patterns again but nevertheless begging his partner to stay since he is dependent on her, needs her, and thinks he will not find someone else “as good as” her: “I do the same thing I told you that I never would, I told you I’d change, even when I knew I never could, I know that I can’t find nobody else as good as you, I know that I can’t find	N/A	The lyrical analysis of this music video seems to suggest traces of parasitism. Although seemingly self-imposed and not forced by external societal pressures, the singers (both male and female) talk about self-harm for “love”: “If your love is poison, I’ll drink it in a flurry” (<i>Zehar Bane Haan Teri, Pee Javaan Main Poori Nu</i>). This music video therefore depicts parasitism in its song lyrics sung by both the male and female leads.
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		nobody else as good as you.”		
Machiavellianism:	“I said, ooh, I’m blinded by the lights, No, I can’t sleep until I feel your touch, I said, ooh, I’m drowning in the night, Oh, when I’m like this, you’re the one I trust”: These lines use Machiavellianism, expressing how it becomes difficult for the male lead to function and do daily mundane tasks without the female lead and thereby almost forcing her using dominance, sympathy, unapologetic forgiveness, and anything the male can use at his disposal to convince the female to take care of the male.	Here in this music video, even after all the unequal and hegemonic relationships, the lead male singers seem to be singing to their female partners whom they agree they have let down by going back on their promises, yet they use words/phrases to convince them to “stay,” for instance, even telling them that they can’t live without their partners and that they “will be fucked up” without their partners; “Oh, I’ll be fucked up if you can’t be right here.”	“That I couldn’t live without you, and you couldn’t live without me... Oh beloved, how should I spend my nights? Oh, crazy lover, I can’t live without you” (<i>Tere Bin Main Na Rahun Mere Bina Tu... Kaatun Kaise Raatan Oh Saawre, Jiya Nahi Jaata Sun Baawre</i>): The song lyrics suggest that the male needs the female to stay with him for her company at night, which is otherwise too long and lonely for him to spend and uses phrases and promises to convince the female about the same.	N/A

Gaze	In this MV, while the male lead seems to be having fun and enjoying himself just dancing recklessly and moving to his own tune, the female is a performer for an audience. She appears as an object of desire with close-ups on her hands that hold the microphone delicately and sensually and with focus on her movements; her body, her shimmery dress, and a close-up of her face, her eyes, and her lips make her into a sensual object and not an individual person. She is juxtapositioned next to the male lead, who moves to his own rhythm and is in control even while being out of control.	The male singers and characters are shown to be carefree, with spilled coffee and milk and unmade beds, as well as brave, with Bieber performing on the edge of the roof while LAROI dances in the middle of the streets. The female in comparison is a silent, passive participant, without even a word to add, react, or respond. She is also shown being vulnerable in a public place where the camera goes for a close-up and focuses on a tear dropping from her eyes with a "beyond appearance" look on her face. The camera gaze therefore follows the gaze of the male singers.	The female in most acts is seen all dressed or getting dressed in traditional attire with makeup and jewellery on, while the male is shown getting "work" done or travelling for work, etc. The female therefore is only recognised for her beauty, which is given an irrational amount of screen time, while, for the male, viewers observe practical, workable professional aspects of his life. The gaze and perspective therefore seem to be that of a male.	N/A
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Additional Codes

Besides the four prominent and three unusual/unexpected codes above, I considered nine more codes for the analysis of each of the songs. The codes briefly explained below were not prevalent in all the song analysis; therefore, they are not a part of the prominent group. They also are not completely unequal or unexpected, and therefore not part of the second group either. However, these codes, most of them expected and very common in gender studies, were a very significant part of the data analysis of both lyrical and the visual data [[Appendix D](#) & [Appendix E](#)].

Gender Expression. Gender expression highlights actions, behaviours, mannerisms, interests, appearances, and so forth that question the degree to which an individual is perceived to conform or not conform to societal expectations of masculinity and femininity (Gordan, 2021; Wylie et al., 2010). Most music videos in this research conform to the heteronormative idea of gender; however, Sethi's *Pasoori* (2022) gives the space to its performers to express themselves the way they are comfortable and not to conform to gender norms dictated by society. The extensive use of traditional clothing, unisex clothing, makeup, and jewels helps performers artistically express their gender. A presentation like this provides the viewers with an opportunity to accept differences and find spaces in between where they can find mirroring reflections of themselves in popular media and become comfortable with their own gender identities as well as of those around them.

Gender Fatalism. Drawing from Sarah Ahmed's (2017) concept, this study regarded gender fatalism as demonstrating how certain actions and performances are aligned with gender, that is, the expectation that "boys" and "girls" should, and do, act differently. This places gendered expectations around bodies that limit their capacity to become otherwise. For instance, "boys will be boys" is often used as both an expectation and an excuse. This encourages harmful behaviour and excuses it by suggesting that boys cannot help themselves,

as they are controlled by their nature. Resultantly, poor behaviour is given a free pass. The Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020), for instance, portrays men as rash, out of control, and reckless while Laroi's *Stay* (2021) portrays men as impulsive, carefree, and not standing by their promises. In both cases, the characteristics are believed to be a natural part of them about which nothing can be done. Moreover, the male leads urge the female(s) to accept these traits and support them while they continue objectifying females. Ahmed (2017) described this as the expectation that female characters accept the advances of males. Again, this bolsters the idea that males cannot change their behaviour, and docile women should accept that.

Stereotypical Gender Traits. This code highlighted the heteronormative behavioural characteristics expected from the gender binaries: female as nurturing, accommodating, and/or submissive, and males as aggressive and/or strong. I relied on queer theory and queer theorists (Sedgwick, 1990; Spargo, 1999; Warner, 1991) to guide the discussion of traits associated with heteronormativity and the gender binaries. For instance, in the Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020), the man is rash and aggressive and needs the female who is the only one he trusts to calm him down with "just a touch" (Weeknd, 2020) for she is the nurturer and caregiver in their relationship. Laroi's *Stay* (2021) and Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) are also not very far off from these stereotypes. Even music videos and songs outside this research show many examples of stereotypes being reinstated and promoted through them. For instance, *Mere Wali Sardarni* (Jugraj Sandhu, 2018) celebrates the female roles of being confined to a kitchen and serving a husband and his family to be treated well and financially supported by the husband in return. Sethi's *Pasoori* (2022), however, does not particularly confine itself to these gendered stereotypes. Therefore, while most of the music videos popular in India and Canada between 2020 and 2022 do portray stereotypical gendered traits, there are also those that may not.

Gender Clothing. Often, the clothes worn by males and female characters in music videos are stereotypical, reinforcing gender notions and power relations. Again, drawing from Butler's (1990) idea of gender performance, this code specifically focused on characters' clothing that is determined by or strengthens stereotypes. The Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020) shows the male character in a red formal suit, representing both a man of class yet a man free and unapologetic, even aggressive. The female, however, is placed in front of an audience as a performer, glittery and shimmery, with the sole purpose of pleasing her audience and catching the attention of the male lead. Laroi's *Stay* (2021) shows the male leads sporting hoodies and casuals in typical GenZ fashion, while the female sports a dress. Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) shows the male character in various sorts of attire and uniforms, from casual to formal to a soldier's uniform, while the female is always seen wearing traditional women's wear (a female suit with a dupatta).

Moral Policing. French Marxist Louis Althusser described moral policing as subjugation to ruling ideology (Althusser, 2001). In turn, the ideological state apparatus becomes the moral grounds for defining right and wrong for a person. The Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020) uses terms like "Sin City" and "No one's around to judge me" using religious institutions and their teachings to define what a "sin" is or what are the morally right and wrong things to do. The artist therefore uses these as his primary justifications and labels Los Angeles as the "sin city" for its adult-themed entertainment including gambling and prostitution. The viewers, however, also witness the relationship between moral policing and gender in this instance. The singer drives rashly and hurts himself as well as others throughout the entire music video, while his lyrics suggest his morals are (or were) governed by his female partner whom he no longer has by his side and who is thus affecting his sense of moral values. Therefore, even though he is the one to commit "sins," he blatantly blames his partner for leaving him and being the cause of what he has become, which he by the way

enjoys, as observed in the music video. It was interesting to note the way morals and gender collide in this music video. Even *Stay* (Laroi, 2021) suggests the male's partner is the one who guides him, as he says, "I'll be fucked up, if you can't be right here" (Laroi, 2021). In both these instances, as well as many seen beyond the scope of this research, such as *Yeh Jo Halka Halka Saroor* (Khan, 1988), *Misery* (Maroon 5, 2010), and *Kill for you* (Grey & Eminem, 2016), gender plays a well-defined role as one gender is shown to be the moral compass (usually the female) and the other as the one who easily strays away from morals (usually the male). I wonder how this impacts the audience, especially a younger, more naive audience that is made to believe an institution, or a person outside oneself, decides the idea of right and wrong for an individual and that it is okay to be led astray in the absence of this physical moral being. I think it is crucial for educators to address this misinformation and misconception and help students find their own moral grounding instead of misplacing it with the ideals seen in mainstream Media.

Matrix of Domination. The matrix of domination or oppression posited by Patricia Hill Collins (2000) is a sociological paradigm that talks about the interconnection between the different classifications of oppression. While the interconnections between gender and other types of discrimination hardly cross paths in these popular music videos, in Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) viewers see one rare example where male dominance under the rule of patriarchy is apparent. Viewers see the matrix at work when a clash between the father of the girl and her boyfriend comes in one frame, readjusting the rules of patriarchy and dominance. While the father is the head of the family and "responsible" for his daughter within the four-walled house and up until she is married off (a popular cultural belief), the boyfriend is responsible for her outside the confines of the house (in college, on dates, etc.). In the music video, viewers see the two men "sharing" custody in different spaces, "taking care" of the female and her needs and protecting her. However, at 01:03, a clash between both

males sharing the screen space is observed, as the boyfriend calls the female at her house, but the father picks up the call instead. In the presence of the father, therefore, it is observed that the boyfriend takes a step down, as he is not yet legally married to the female artist and therefore has no legal “rights.” While such a matrix is often observed between different classifications of oppression and their intersections such as race, class, ethnicity, cultures, gender, and so forth, its presence can also be observed within the same oppression group. That is, even in the presence of two participants of the dominant group, the frames of dominance and patriarchy readjust, forming a matrix of domination. However, irrespective of the matrix, the female remains the dominated one while other genders often go unacknowledged.

Homosociality. In the field of sociology, the concept of homosociality describes social bonds between people of the same biological sex (Lipman-Blumen, 1976; Sedwick, 1990). In India, given the ban on homosexuality under colonial rule, homosexual behaviour often goes unacknowledged or is misunderstood as homosocial behaviour. This is evident, for instance, in the movie *Yaarana* (Chhavi et al., 2022; Merchant, 2011). The film prominently portrays the strong and deep bond of friendship between Babu and Raja. The narrative emphasises their loyalty, support, and emotional connection to each other, and it is believed that the female lead was added only to lessen the homosexual sting. However, homosociality is not just an Indian concept, *Girl Crush* by Little Big Town (2014) also shows the concept of homosociality. While it was celebrated as the first mainstream song that made people question same-sex love, it also has been highly controversial for twisting the lyrics into jealousy by a female for a man: “*I want her long blond hair, I want her magic touch, Yeah, ‘cause maybe then, You’d want me just as much.*” Therefore, while both these examples of a Hindi film and a popular American country song have elements of homosexuality and may even be read as queer media texts through the lens of queer media literacies, they have been

understood as homosocial relationships between same-sex persons. While homosexual (particularly male) relationships are often not considered “acceptable,” homosocial bondings are also used to create and present opposition (particularly females) as the enemy. *Girl Crush* (Little Big Town, 2014) is often misunderstood as faux female attraction in order to attract a man; however it resumes the original play of homosocial behaviour where, even though the female is attracted to the other female, she softens the homosexual blow by bringing in the man and covers up her longing for the other female as a tool to get to the man. Homosocial behaviour therefore furthers misogyny, not only by males but by society as a whole, for in each case the female is presented as the enemy trying to break pre-existent happy bonds.

None of the popular music videos selected from India and Canada between 2020 and 2022 for this analysis used this particular code. I wondered whether that means this sociological concept may no longer be valid or may be reduced or unpopular within pop culture today. I also wondered whether that means there is a higher rate of acceptance of homosexuality in society or whether, unlike Hollywood bromances that rely on homosocial bonding, music videos do not use this particular relationship, for the lyrics most often talk about love and relationships and the brevity of the music videos may not allow enough time to explore complexity within them.

Friction. In the study of ecological movements and ecofeminism, Anna Tsing (2016) conceptualised the idea of “friction” between conflicting forces such as the environment and social justice. Gender is also made and remade through its engagement with global–local forces. With that understanding of “friction,” this code considered the interconnections and collisions of gender with global–local forces in each of the socio-cultural contexts of the music videos. Most music videos do not integrate environmental forces; however, *Pasoori* raises global and local issues about the conflicts between the two neighbouring countries of India and Pakistan. Although appearing to be a brawl between two lovers, the song actually

draws parallels with the wars and global conflicts the two countries have faced even after the history they share.

Objectification. The objectification theory primarily defines how individuals are compared to objects for other's use instead of being treated as individuals with unique personality traits. Individuals are, in such a case, treated as a body or an assemblage of body parts (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997; Lindberg et al., 1996). Most music videos analysed in this thesis objectify the dominated group, females. The Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020) objectifies the female singer who has no voice, but the camera captures different angles of her body, fixating on different body parts. Laroi's *Stay* (2021) does something similar by making the female an inanimate object frozen in time and space with the inability to move or speak. Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) does that to the female lead while glorifying her moments of dressing up and not associating any other characteristic with her.

Even in the 21st century, female voice in popular music videos continues to stay subservient while the male voice stays dominant, as was apparent in the collected data. Even harmful gender-stereotyped behaviour and traits continue to be justified in these music videos with the general attitude of "boys will be boys." While the sample size taken was too small to make any generalised statements, the analysis of (these) top music videos from India and Canada suggests many emerging themes related to gender, most of which depict a conventional/ stereotypical idea of binaries (with no mention of any other gender). The male seems to dominate the screen space as well as aural space, while viewers see little or no space given to the female to share her feelings, thoughts, or perspective about any matter at hand. Also, while viewers see the patriarchal dominance between male and female, they see absolutely no presence of or reference to a non-binary person or a person belonging elsewhere on the gender spectrum. Therefore, with respect to gender, the majority of the

segments of the selected music videos showed a heteronormative (sometimes even homophobic) perception about gender.

Impact of Music Videos on Youth's Understanding of Gender

The second research question addressed the way in which popular music videos impact youth's understanding of gender. Through the analysis of surveys collected from three youths (18–25-year-olds) from India and three youths from Canada, the four major themes emerged and are explained below. The six participants in the survey were Charlie, Blake, Quinn, Jessie, Alex, and Grey. Please note all the names listed above are gender-neutral pseudonyms with no implication of a participant's gender, sexuality, nationality, and so forth. All identity markers were removed.

Representation in Music Videos (MVs)

(Q: Do you feel you are represented in music videos?)

The responses to this question ranged. Many participants felt represented by the use of their language or connected with the artists and the messages their videos communicate. In particular, participants felt represented by videos with a strong feminist lens or with more acceptance and representation of different body types. Alternatively, others did not feel represented. For example, one participant mentioned how females in music videos are often portrayed as powerless, thoughtless, or even gold diggers, representations they did not relate with. According to participants, music videos also lack representation of the neurodivergent and queer communities. As a researcher who had seen very little feminist representation or body diversity in the music videos that were analysed within the CCA, I was surprised to hear participants say that they did feel that was a positive in music videos. I can think of music videos (beyond those used in my study) that could be considered feminist or body-positive, for instance, *All About That Bass* (Trainor, 2014) *Me Too* (Trainor, 2016), *Beautiful* (Aguilera, 2009), *Perfect* (P!nk, 2010), *Scars to Your Beautiful* (Cara, 2015), and so forth. Yet

even these feminist anthems can still fall prey to the male gaze, objectification, heteronormativity, and the gender binary. The youth perspectives through the qualitative survey therefore offered new analysis I had not considered, particularly around neurodivergence. This is important, as it demonstrates the elements that any one researcher or educator might ignore when they only invite analysis through their own perspective. However, the perspectives of the youth in this research helped me look further into representations like that of the neurodivergent community. According to a study on “Neurodiversity in Media” (Association for Electronic Music, 2022) in which 137 participants were polled, 58% had a neurodivergent condition, yet only 19% thought that the music industry supports neurodivergent people. It is fair to say, then, that the music and film industries in general in both the studied countries have become more accepting of emerging worldviews and diversity; however, they have a long way to go for many, many communities are yet to feel represented in popular mainstream media consumed by large masses.

Discomfort with Gender Portrayal in MVs

(Q: Have you ever been offended/uncomfortable by the way gender is portrayed in a MV?)

It is really interesting to note that, even though the participants varied in ages across the 18–25 age category, and in terms of their backgrounds, the country they lived in, the kinds of music they listened to, the languages they spoke, their gender identities, and many other factors, all participants agreed the portrayal of women or females in music videos made them uncomfortable. Portrayals of women in music videos as “submissive,” “sexual objects,” “limited to particular body types,” “existing within stereotypical gender roles,” and “treated as armrests,” as well as music videos’ “materializing or overly sexualising them” unsettled all the participants in this research ([Appendix G](#)). There are too many videos around the world portraying females in essentialist, dehumanising ways that contribute to how women are viewed in society. I wonder then, given that the participants were a representation of youth in

India and Canada, and each of them felt uncomfortable with the portrayal of women in music videos, how and why do music videos like this sell? According to my own analysis, the camera lens follows the male gaze to appeal to the target audience, men. The objectification of the female body then must appeal to a majority of the audience to sustain and make profits from such depictions in a capitalised industry. Jessie used the phrase “sex sells” to describe this mindset that is therefore prevalent in both Canadian and Indian societies as per the participants’ responses. However, that would mean the underlying message the youth and the younger audience who largely contribute by consuming such media take away is that “sex sells,” and in order to make something of yourself, you must appeal and conform to these social norms set for each gender. These portrayals of discomfort therefore need to be put on display and brought into discussions to make informed decisions and better express oneself.

Portrayal of Gender Roles and Identities in MVs

(Q: Do popular MVs reflect the diversity of gender identities and expressions in your country?)

All participants believed that popular music videos are unfortunately not the greatest examples of portraying gender roles and identities in their country. While some agreed that the state has improved in the last decade, with a much broader range of gender roles becoming acceptable in a few places, gender is still understood in heteronormative terms with discrimination and hegemonic relationships highlighted between males and females. Grey pointed out that males are presented as “strong, masc, macho”; they are glorified for being a womaniser, while females are portrayed as “meek, shy, vulnerable, weak, overly sexualised and materialized.” As Charlie quipped, “Females in music videos are presented as objects.” As an example, Charlie mentioned that they are often seen dancing around male singers. Therefore, as described by the participants, the female artists in music videos seem to fall prey to objectification theory when they appear as mere objects to please or be of some use to

their male counterparts, and that, as per the participants, is not a correct representation of gender diversity in their country. This viewpoint overlapped with my own analysis, which found that popular music videos help strengthen gender stereotypes instead of challenging harmful gender associations. With the help of the QS, I understood youth perspectives that were being voiced about the same issues. This finding therefore shows that different gender identities are not appropriately represented in music videos and thus are not reflective of the current society's gender diversity, presenting a gap between demand and supply.

Impact of Popular MVs

(Q: How do you think the messages in popular MVs impact the idea of gender for the wider culture and society? Did it impact your own gender identity and expression?)

As discussed above, popular music videos do not seem to be a great representation of gender diversity in the two countries (India and Canada). They do, however, even in their current state, impact audience's understandings of gender. Most participants suggested that music videos have a huge influence on their audience, especially the younger generation. Blake shared how music videos can be empowering for those who see themselves but also very rigid for those who do not see themselves and can cause them self-doubt. For instance, Quinn and Grey both shared that they experienced a lot of acceptance and growth in the content available; however, Quinn, while growing up, never related to any character from a music video due to a lack of representation. Grey found that it boosted their confidence whenever they were represented. In Jessie's experiences, though, popular music videos try to mould their viewers into the norm; as a child, they felt they needed to be more sexual or get into relationships with men in order to be accepted and liked—since that is what they took away from popular music videos or artists they liked. Charlie pointed out how representation in music videos has been restricted to gender binaries. These examples from the participants portray how they themselves were affected by music videos and how the younger generations

might thus be affected by popular music videos. While music videos may help some boost their confidence and validate what they are going through, for others they might represent rigid lines and boxes they are confined to and make them feel uncomfortable about never being able to reveal their true selves. For another percentage of people, music videos might mislead them into becoming something they do not want to be but think they should be in order to be accepted in society.

From the collected data, it was found that all of the six participants, irrespective of the country they belonged to, their age, their professions, or their own sexual identities, were uncomfortable with the portrayal of women in popular music videos they had come across. All participants also believed that the popular music videos did not do a great job at expressing the gender identities of the masses in their country. Popular music videos therefore only support and reinforce the ideologies of the dominant class and gender, often invalidating any other ideology or perception about local–global issues including that of gender. Not only do they mislead and misinform the youth for whom music videos have become a huge resource to gather information about their surroundings and society, but also they reinforce traditional practices and stereotypes. The participants therefore seemed divided on the impact of music videos on their audience, especially the younger generations.

Youth Perception of Popular MVs

Lap 3 of data analysis of Phase 2 of this research placed the participants' analyses in conversation. That is, in this section, I consider the participants' analyses in relation to one another and in relation to my own analysis.

Blinding Lights. The participants discussed extensively the stereotypical role of a male and female in this song. They said the Weeknd's song "defines toxic masculinity; a narrow and repressive description of manhood, designating manhood as defined by violence, sex, status and aggression. Wherein manliness is defined by emotional toughness, and

showing emotional vulnerability is seen as a weakness.” The stereotypical idea of men therefore is conveyed in the music video; drug abuse, rash driving, and so forth are a few things that are considered “cool” when being done by a man. Analysing the gender roles portrayed in this song, a participant highlighted the lyrics “Maybe you can show me how to love” and analysed its implication as “a woman’s job [being] to teach men how to love and care.” The participant therefore recognised “the stereotypical role of women (highlighted in this music video) as the caregiver or someone who is expected to love and forgive.” They further went on to explain, “Stereotypes of any kind can be damaging to society. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women’s and men’s capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and/or make choices about their lives. It gives off this idea or a given path that women ought to follow.”

I found some overlaps between the participants’ responses and my own analysis of the video in terms of a) stereotypical gender traits, in which the male is shown as reckless, carefree, a rash driver, “macho,” and also under the influence of a substance while the female is portrayed as delicate, seductive, meek, and supposedly the caregiver for the male’s needs and wants; b) gender fatalism, where not only does the society associate specific stereotypical traits with each gender but also it normalises certain harmful behaviours by simply justifying them for what they are, for instance, saying “boys will be boys” if they are seen speeding or catcalling; and c) objectification theory, in which, while the viewers see the camera lens follow the male and show the rush of lights and sound as he races his car, they see the female’s body in focus wearing a glittery dress with her lips and hand moving seductively, and the video depicts her making the man fall under her spell.

Stay. The maximum number of participants, with a mixed group of Indians and Canadians, decided to analyse this song. There were two conflicting views presented on it, though. A majority thought that there is no specific representation of any gender or gender

roles in it and therefore it is inclusive of all genders and for all genders to listen to.

Additionally, according to this group, there are no stereotypes presented in this song and therefore it cannot be harmful to anyone. Another smaller section, on the contrary, seemed to believe the lyrics contain some pretty harmful tropes, including perpetuating men's toxic behaviour and the implicit assumption that their partners should put up with it. Overlapping with the codes I have used for my analysis, parasitism and Machiavellianism (explained in the next paragraph) were the traits highlighted by the participant here along with toxic behaviour that harms the other person in a relationship. Males were also seen as using manipulation to use any means necessary, in this case twisted words, to get their way, in this case, to make their partners stay with them. As a participant pointed out when analysing the lyrics of the song, "It's a pretty stereotypical portrayal of gender where a man tells his partner, who is presumed to be a woman, that he needs her and begs her not to leave. The narrator lists why his partner is hurt/frustrated/leaving him—he did 'the same thing I told you that I never would' so it can be assumed that he hurt his partner in some way. He also promised that he would change 'even when I knew I never could' which indicates his toxic behaviour. But he still needs his partner to stay because he 'can't live without [her].'" As observed here in the participant's analysis, claims of stereotypical gender traits, parasitism, Machiavellianism, and gender fatalism being presented in this music video were further strengthened. The participant believed that the music video is a typical representation of gender. The men are wearing jeans and t-shirts/jackets, and the women are wearing dresses. The Kid LAROI spends the music video essentially chasing the one who got away as he begs her not to leave him, which is a trope that can be seen in many music videos. The participant mentioned the use of gendered clothing in the music video to further strengthen stereotypes based on the heteronormative genders represented in this video along with stereotypical behaviour. Note the use of the word "typical" in "typical representation of gender" and

“chasing” in “[he] chases the one who got away as he begs her not to leave him” in the participant’s analysis. The typical ideas analysed by the participant conform to the social norms of a pretty standard heteronormative story of “boy meets girl; they fall in love.” The participant believed the target audience should be teenagers and young adults due to the use of slang and swear words. Given that this is what teens and young adults listen to and watch, the ideas of gender presented and overlooked by most (as represented by the majority of the participants in this study) may take some media literacy to be able to read, comprehend, and critically analyse.

Raatan Lambiyan. The participant(s) who analysed this song did not think the lyrics really portray gender roles and identities. They thought the lyrics can be viewed from any perspective and that this makes it seem as if the singers could switch parts and it would still be fine. They, however, did think one part could portray gender roles, the part where the female singer says, “I am following you.” They thought it is usually more expected that women follow men. As per my own analysis, an expectation like this falls under the themes of social norms and hegemonic relations, where society expects the female to “follow” the male for he knows better and will be able to protect the female from harm. We also see a matrix of domination when both the female lead’s father and mate come into the same frame and the viewers see the father superseding the authority of the mate. In both situations, however, we see the female as the shy, meek one while the males are strong, macho men. The participant was nevertheless not too sure how the video portrays gender roles. They felt that maybe, for women, it showed that dating is more strict and they cannot date whoever they want to, as shown in the part where the woman hides when her father answers the phone, while men have more freedom and are not as judged, as seen by the man openly talking to her on the phone at work. Men can have fun with dating while women have to date for marriage and to have a family. Overlaps again can be seen with social norms and hegemonic relations

between males and females as well as agency or authority throughout the song. The male is seen dancing, chasing, travelling, working, and living. However, the female, after her studies (which both seem to have completed from the same institution), is confined to the walls of her parent's house.

Nonetheless, while the participant pointed out some great observation points that one can discuss on the topic of gender, they did not think there are any gender stereotypes in the music video or that they can be harmful. Also, in terms of the target audience for this song, the participant thought it is "more for women from teens to adults." It seemed to them like a very sweet song about love that younger girls might dream of having and adults that might also dream of having or already have and thus relate the song to their own experience. They thought women also fantasise more about love and these types of situations than men do and thought that the video seemed to portray a relationship a lot of women dream of having.

My own analysis of the song on the contrary was quite the opposite to that of the participant, who highlighted only one or two odd instances where they felt uncomfortable with the clashes of genders and how they were represented. It is worth noting that the participant shared them as things that might happen, but they did not question them as being harmful or ineffective. They rather stated them as facts, as things that are socially accepted norms, and seemed to regard them with "it just is because it is" fatalism. This was very real-time feedback for me as a researcher as well as an educator, since what I as an individual see and analyse may not be the same as what my students, peers, or colleagues do. It therefore becomes crucial to engage in deeper conversations and present varied perspectives along with those from the cultural background of the media text to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct the notions of a concept and use various psychological, sociological, and philosophical lenses to form an opinion.

Pasoori. The participant(s) who analysed this song believed the lyrics were pretty gender-neutral and genderfluid. They felt that there is no commentary on any gender roles and that the video shows a bunch of artists of different age groups and artforms coming together to put their best foot forward. There are no stereotypes based on clothing, art forms, or the status of the artists in the video or gender stereotypes in terms of costume, storytelling, hierarchy of artists, or art forms. Therefore, the participant(s) did not think there were any harmful stereotypes in the music videos.

There were some overlaps that I found between the participant's analysis and my own. In terms of stereotypical gender traits, this music video seems to challenge many of them, especially in the culture where the video is shot and based. The male artists usually sing with females dancing around as has been noted in the analysis of many other music videos, but this is not something one sees in this video. While different art forms are represented in this video, so are different people, of different ages, and of different cultures taking part in different artforms irrespective of their gender. Also, in terms of gender expression, this music video encourages it for its audience by showing the characters challenging the traditional ways of expressing themselves. The costumes, cosmetics, makeup, and just the way each character presents themselves shows that the video is trying to be inclusive. The viewers therefore see an example here of how there have been some changes in the music industry and how a higher acceptance and a more inclusive perception is slowly but gradually coming forward. Not all this inclusivity has become part of the "popular media"; however, it seems to be on the rise. The participant seemed very intuitive and informed about different aspects of gender in the way they observed and highlighted them through the process of analysis with some scaffolding from the questions.

Music Videos as a Pedagogical Tool

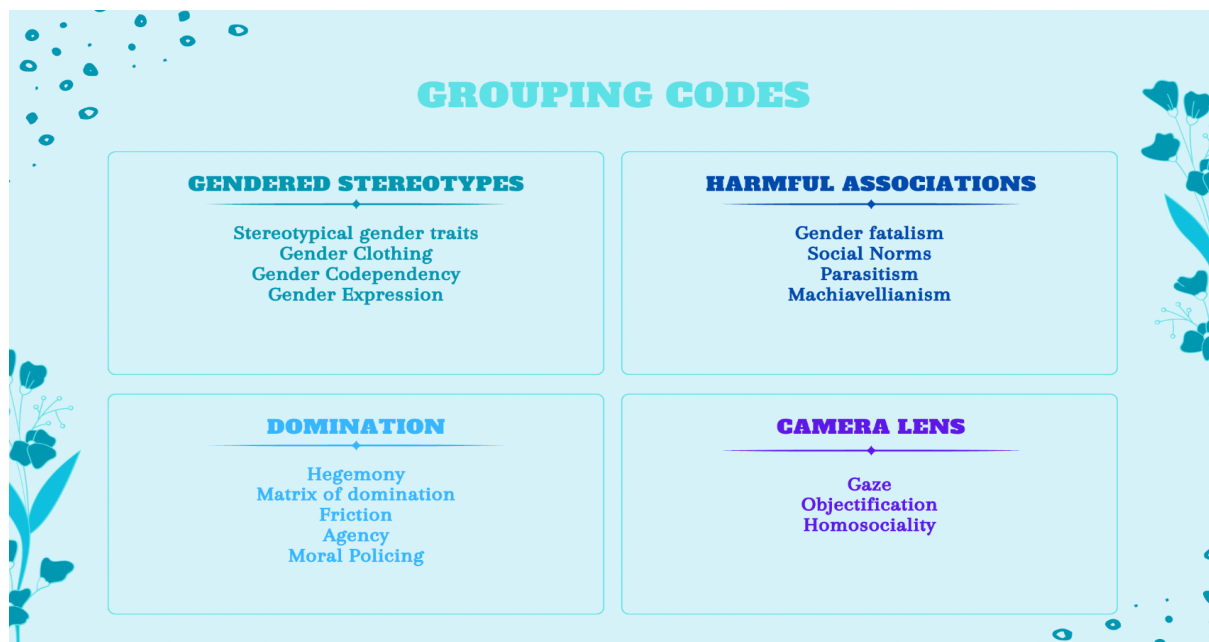
The third research question addressed possible ways to use music videos as a pedagogical tool to generate dialogue about gender amongst youth. In the previous chapter, I reflected on the usage of surveys as a methodological tool in this research and their shortcomings. I believe the qualitative questionnaire in the survey enabled participants to be clearer in the way they responded to each of the questions. However, having a rubric or a non-exhaustive list of relevant codes like the Basic Inclusivity Audit Survey (B.I.A.S) I developed for gender would help guide the process of deliberate and thorough analysis of media texts through a gender lens. (See more discussion on this tool below.) The intention of a list of codes is to enable children, youth, and teachers alike to identify and use media texts as a learning resource in the classroom. This should open a window to conversations that are otherwise brushed under the carpet or get lost under heaps of “syllabus” and “coursework” that can detach children and youth from the realities of what lies outside the four walls that are expected to confine their learning and knowledge. During my own data analysis in Lyrical Data Analysis [[Appendix D](#)] and Visual Data Analysis [[Appendix E](#)], I found the process of breaking the music videos into first lyrical and then visual data to be extremely helpful, given that both these mediums of the very same song are widespread and may have a different audience base. Secondly, further dividing a music video into lyrics, cinematography, setting, and music style gave me an in-depth perspective using various different lenses to dig deeper and wider across all these elements. As a teacher and researcher, although I myself have been interested in finding ways to use such easily accessible resources in the class to probe further discussions, until this research I had not been able to fully grasp the various elements such a piece of media entails.

With this research, I got the opportunity to look closely at these elements and understand how they all come together and impact our perceptions holistically.

Also, while I re-affirm the effectiveness of this method as a researcher and as a teacher, I understand how it may not be a feasible exercise to do with students every time a teacher decides to use a piece of media as a resource in the classroom to provoke discussions and conversations around gender. Therefore, based on my findings, I tried to cluster the different codes highlighted and observed during my analysis to form four major groups ([Figure 6](#)), which are further divided into generic questions that students and teachers can use for any piece of media to initiate similar conversations and observe elements that may be very prevalent as well as those that often go unnoticed. It is to be noted that the following list is just preliminary and based on my analysis, and therefore non-exhaustive. Users, teachers, and learners alike are encouraged to make their own connections based on the piece of media they are analysing and to add to this list.

Figure 6

Grouping Codes



For each of these codes, there are a few questions that can help students and teachers alike to break down a music video or any other form of media and analyse it through a gender lens. I developed an initial survey list from a gendered lens that I call the Basic Inclusivity

Audit Survey (B.I.A.S) that can be used in the classroom for discussions about gender portrayal in media.

Basic Inclusivity Audit Survey (B.I.A.S) for Gender

- ❖ How do you understand gender? How do you identify?
- ❖ Do you belong to a dominant group in your context?
- ❖ Do you feel represented in this media text? Are you comfortable with the representation?
- ❖ Do you see other groups (other than yourself) being represented in the media text? Do you think it is an appropriate representation?

Gendered Stereotypes.

- How are the characters dressed? Does this portrayal conform to stereotypical clothing standards of the geographical area it was released in? (Gender Clothing)
- What behavioural traits do the characters portray? How do these behavioural traits differ amongst different genders? (Stereotypical Gender Traits)
- How do the characters project or express their gender identities? Do they confine themselves to social norms or stereotypes often associated with their gender groups? (Gender Expression)
- How is the relationship between genders portrayed? How do the genders co-exist and codepend? (Gender Codependency)

Harmful (Yet Acceptable) Gender Associations.

- Does the piece of media portray and/or promote any harmful gender discourses? (Gender Fatalism)
- Does the piece of media socially accept harmful gender discourses? (Social Norms)

- Would you describe the character's behaviour as harmful to themselves or another person? (Parasitism)
- Does any character use words or behaviour to manipulate another character into doing something? (Machiavellianism)

Domination.

- Can you identify dominant and dominated group(s) in the piece of media? (Hegemony)
- What is the relationship between different dominant groups in the piece of media? Do you observe hierarchies within different dominant groups based on their genders? (Matrix of Domination, Friction)
- Do characters of different genders enjoy equal amounts of visual and aural screen time/ space? (Agency)
- Do the characters of different genders enjoy a similar level of authority and decision-making power? (Agency)
- Are there any societal or institutional values that the characters abide by? How does it impact the characters and those around them? (Moral Policing)

Camera Lens.

- What lens does the camera follow in the media piece? (Gaze)
- Are any characters objectified in the media piece? (Objectification)
- How is the relationship between same-sex characters perceived in the media text? (Homosociality)

The B.I.A.S can therefore be used independently by a teacher or even a student to initiate a discussion from a gendered lens for a CCA of any media text. As the name suggests, though, it should not be confused as containing the only set of questions or codes one can use

for analysis; it is instead only a basic list that is best used when customised as per need and the context of the examined media text and its audience.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Due to parental rights' rhetoric and claims of "gender ideology" in schools, there is increasing fear surrounding discussions about gender identities and sexuality in K–12 classrooms (Martino, 2022). Recognising this context, this study aimed to a) understand how gender is perceived in popular music videos; b) observe the way music videos impact youth's understanding of gender; and c) explore and or create pedagogical tools in which music videos could be used to anchor conversations about gender and sexuality. This research is grounded in queer media literacies, critical feminists perspectives, and critical media literacies. The understanding of "media literacy" for the purpose of this research was primarily rooted in the six key principles set out by Kellner and Share (2019): a) social constructivism, b) language/semiotics, c) audience/positionality, d) politics of representation, e) productions/ institutions, and f) social and environmental justice.

My literature review for this study made me realise the gap between representations of gender in theory and in practice. While academia has come a long way with tremendous work in gender studies and its understanding of gender as a spectrum, in practical life gender is still perceived as a binary social construct; despite the varied gender performances that exist in society, perceptions of gender remain fixed in a binary. The Media plays an undeniable role in constructing and perpetuating narrow, essentialist, fixed understandings of masculinity and femininity (Kellner, 2020). As such, media education has the potential to expose and unsettle deeply entrenched norms. With this theoretical understanding, I used Critical Content Analysis to code and analyse four music videos popular in India and Canada between 2020 and 2022. I then explored youth opinions about gender portrayed in the same popular music videos. While this study offered many answers to my initial queries, there were limiting elements.

Limitations

One key limitation of this study was that I did not collect the gender identities of the participants so as to understand where they came from and what influenced their understanding and perceptions of gender. While collecting “gendered” data may risk perpetuating the very binary that my research seeks to disrupt, I was also curious about whether gender may have impacted participants’ responses. That is, were those people constructed as male more or less likely to notice the sexualisation and de-humanisation of women in music videos? If that were the case, it could offer something to our understanding of media literacies. Male audiences may need to be encouraged to view music videos through a feminist lens. Of course, I may have also found that gender was not a determining factor in how participants noticed particular constructions. Other factors, such as previous engagement with gender theory or media literacies, could have impacted participants’ analyses and interpretations. Regardless, because I did not collect demographic data about the participants, I was not able to consider how the identities of the participants impacted their analyses.

In addition, while the surveys did offer ease to the participants in regard to completing the research on their own time, I did wish that I had had the opportunity to speak to the participants about some of their responses. Follow-up interviews with participants would have allowed me to probe and understand them better. For instance, collecting participants’ gender identities would have helped me observe and understand how different genders perceived gender and how their responses to gender portrayal in popular media were impacted by their own experiences. When the participants responded whether they felt represented or not, I would have liked to further probe them on how they saw (or not see) their reflections in media and how that impacted their own understanding of gender identities and their own gender identity. Given the chance, I would also have loved to see the participants use the tool I created using my own coded analysis to see how they used it to

identify gender-related themes in the music videos, since this could have generated great learning for further using this tool with teachers and students. Despite these study limitations, the data generated in this research make important contributions to the scholarship on media literacies.

Media Literacies: A BIASed Offering

Through this research, I found and developed 16 valuable codes that I believe have helped break down gender portrayal in a media text and aided in their analysis. Of these 16 codes, I found six of them to be widely used in the literature, namely, a) Stereotypical Gender Traits, b) Gender Fatalism, c) Gender Expression, d) Gender Clothing, e) Gaze and f) Objectification Theory; three of them to be prevalent in the literature but not used as much, namely a) Homosociality, b) Friction, and c) Matrix of Domination; and seven more that definitely exist in theory and even in society but are not so common in media or gender studies, namely, a) Gender Codependence, b) Moral Policing, c) Agency, d) Hegemonic Relations, e) Machiavellianism, f) Parasitism, and g) Social Norms. These seven codes specifically have been a huge addition to my own knowledge base as well as to the literature on media literacy and gender theories.

The process of the identification and formation of these codes, as well as visual analysis using them, helped me understand that not only does each individual perceive different meanings from a medium, but each medium may also project different perspectives and/ or meaning to its audience. Furthermore, I believe that going through the process of CCA myself, as a researcher and an educator, enabled me to have insights about different perceptions that may emerge through this process as well as the obstacles or challenges one might have to overcome in order to do such an in-depth analysis through a gender lens.

As an educator, I believe Media literacy needs to be explicitly taught to students and integrated across all subjects. When educators ignore media literacies, they are doing more

harm than good. Instead, as a practice, we need to do what we do best—use it as a resource to deliver our lessons. For this purpose, I devised the B.I.A.S. for gender to make it easier for teachers and individual students to identify and access the portrayal of gender in a media text and then start a discussion around how they perceive gender as an audience member for the media and analyse the text. This survey was created based on the 16 codes that emerged from the research; these codes have been grouped into four major areas. These four major areas are: Gendered Stereotypes, Harmful Gender Associations, Domination, and Camera Lens. Before diving into the four major areas, the B.I.A.S also asks the user to question their own positionality and how that impacts their gender analysis. Gender is a social construct, and a person's understanding of any concept, especially a socially constructed concept like gender, is never independent but rather built-in and interweaved through their own social networks since birth. Therefore, the very first segment of the B.I.A.S, reflecting on one's own positionality, allows the user to keep in mind where they come from and how that impacts their understanding, helping them further keep a broader mind and accept varied perspectives that may/may not differ from their own.

As a researcher, I believe the two highly unexpected codes that are not referred to in media and/or gender studies, Parasitism and Machiavellianism, add a unique perspective to the gender lens and definitely require further work. Parasitism has always been simply a biological concept, while Machiavellianism, although not noted in academia, can often be observed in conversations about toxic relationships. The presence of both these themes in popular music videos beyond 2020–2022, however, suggests their presence and maybe even acceptance in the larger society. I therefore think, as a queer feminist, that it is noteworthy to identify, observe, and analyse such behaviour to better inform as well as break societal acceptance of the same.

As an educator, it has always seemed to me that the production process is more valuable for creating learning than the assessment of the product. This means that, although I trust in the value of the findings of this research and the significance of using B.I.A.S for gender analysis of media texts to initiate conversations about gender portrayal and equity in media and our society, I believe a crucial next stage that would enhance the learning curve for students would be the opportunity to create and/or produce their own media texts through the lens of gender equity, as suggested in the last section on pedagogical considerations below. In subsequent research, I would like to engage in analysis of gender in music videos with students and also invite students to produce their own responses to music videos. Share (2015) said, “One of the best ways to teach students to critically analyse any media is through having them make media.” With that in mind, I offer the following pedagogical considerations based on the process and tools I devised and used in this research. These considerations can be used as tools or strategies, independently or in any order/combination, and adapted as per the learning goals of the students.

Selection of a Media Text

When selecting a media text as a resource for discussion or any other purpose in the classroom, media literacies with a gender lens can be practiced by being mindful about a few factors/questions that help initiate and guide otherwise difficult conversations. These questions can also help the teacher/parent/student make mindful choices when selecting a media text: a) Who chose the media text and what factor impacted their choice? b) Are gender stereotypes practiced in the media text? How or how not? What factors helped you decide? c) What traits are associated with different kinds of genders in the media text? Are they projected as acceptable or unacceptable in the larger society? d) What dominant groups are observed in the media text? What factors indicate their dominance? e) Whose perspective does the camera follow? Who would be the ideal audience for this media text?

Historical Contexts

Another useful pedagogical strategy to practice media literacy through a gender lens would be to question the historical contexts of various stakeholders for that media text. a) The person selecting the media text: Who selects the media text? Are they in a position of power? How does their own gender and experiences with it inform their choice? b) The artist(s) and/or director/producer: Who produced the media text? Do they belong to a gender-dominant group? How does that impact the text produced? What gender message does the artist project through their media text? How does it impact the general audience from different gender groups? c) Visual context: If the media text is visual in nature, what time period is it set in? What gender message do the visuals of the media text project? How does it impact the general audience from different gender groups? d) You: If you are not the person who selected the media text, how do your past experiences inform your understanding of gender through the media text?

Perception Drawing

One of the most useful considerations to apply, especially along with historical contexts, when studying and analysing media texts is what I call “perception drawing.” Besides considering where a media text comes from, it may be useful to explore how it is understood by different stakeholders and from different perspectives:

1. The artist(s) and/or director/producer: What were the intentions behind producing, directing, or creating the particular media text? What gender message did the artist/producer/director want the media text to project to its audience?
2. Culture: How is the gender message projected in the media text, and how was it understood by the culture and time period the media text was produced/created in? How will the media text be understood by the people

belonging to the culture today? How does your cultural understanding inform the gendered message of the media text?

3. Perception of the Camera: What gaze/perspective does the camera follow?

How does it agree/disagree with the dominant view? How does it agree/disagree with the perceptions of the dominated?

4. Audience: What target audience is intended to view the media text? How does the media text inform the audience's understanding of gender?

Lyrical Analysis

One of the major tools used in this research as a part of CCA was lyrical analysis. As a researcher and educator, I believe this to be a very effective pedagogical tool for teachers and parents as well as students who are trying to dissect lyrics or another written text in order to analyse it through a gender lens. A simplified version of the lyrical analysis done in this research is attached as an appendix ([Appendix H](#)) to be used in/outside the classroom. Also attached is a list of gender-relevant codes and categories ([Appendix J](#)) that were adapted and/or formulated from academic texts, theories, and real-life examples that may help the reader/user identify and understand gender as it is practiced in society.

Visual Analysis

Another major tool used for the purpose of this research was visual analysis of music videos. Although here it was practiced only for music videos, I believe it can be adapted to other media texts to break them down into smaller, more tangible pieces for the purpose of analysing them through a gender lens. A simplified version of the different categories and breakdowns is presented in an appendix ([Appendix I](#)) as an outline to be adapted in classrooms. In this version, the focus is distributed between written/spoken content in the form of the text (written/spoken/closed captions) and background sounds as well as the

content that is visually seen, the setting of the media text, and the cinematography and/or camera view it follows.

Comparative Analysis

While analysis is a complicated and tricky terrain, especially with younger students, comparison can often make the process easier by highlighting differences and similarities to compare and contrast. For instance, identifying and analysing texts from your own culture can often be complicated. One might also miss out on several norms socially accepted as part of one's own culture due to their vast acceptance in society. However, comparison with another context often calls attention to otherwise missed details and conventions.

Comparative analysis can therefore become an effective tool for learning about and assessing gender in media texts.

Creating a Media Text

Most learning theories, including Bloom's Taxonomy for the cognitive domain, regard creation and evaluation as being at the highest end of the learning curve and therefore as higher order thinking skills. Thus, as a pedagogical tool or strategy, the opportunity to create and evaluate a media text informed by media literacy and all the other learnings described in the preceding sections is also a great tool for learning and assessment.

Simplified Rubrics

One final tool to simplify the entire process of analysing gender in media texts as used in this research is a code-based rubric that can be presented as codes in [Figure 6](#) or as questions as presented in [B.I.A.S for Gender](#) in the previous chapter to be used independently by teachers/parents/students for the selection of appropriate media texts or the analysis of gender in any previously chosen media text as discussed earlier in this section.

Misogyny Wrapped Up in Feminist Anthem is Still Misogyny

I am a queer feminist, but, as a queer female I often feel undeserving of the professional success my male counterparts feel entitled to. I am a queer feminist, yet I am often guilty of centring men in my conversations with other female friends. In other words, I have persistently failed the Bechdel-Wallace test (Garber, 2015), the test asks whether a work features at least two female characters who have a conversation about something other than a man. Much like my own conversations with friends, most popular media still fails the Bechdel-Wallace test. Whether it be the famous *Beautiful Liar* (Beyonce & Shakira, 2006) or *Bang Bang* (J et al., 2014) or *WAP* (Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion, 2020), even supposedly empowering songs performed by women continue to centre men. These songs, which span three decades, continue to rely on the male gaze, gendered clothing, homosociality, and objectification even without the presence of a male lead in their music videos. I wonder then what exactly women's empowerment has come to mean to society over the last three decades and how it impacts youth and their understanding of the same. Whether it is the music videos and their portrayal of gender that has made harmful stereotypical depictions of domination socially acceptable or whether the societal values and ever-bending ideas of the dominant group to objectify and dominate the marginalised sections of society have continued seeping into media and popular culture remains unknown. However, it is clear to me as a female, queer person, researcher, student, teacher, and educator that the battles of gender identity and sexual orientation are far from over. While there are ever-growing methods to spread propaganda, maybe it is time for us to use the very technology that may be a tool to set standardised socially accepted norms to instead question every portrayal and expectation in society until everyone has the freedom to make an informed decision. Therefore, even with more and more feminist anthems released in mainstream media, most

may still be guilty of sexism and misogyny, making media literacy and gender education in K–12 more important than ever, along with future research in this area.

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Media Texts

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Movies

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Books

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Appendix A

Research Participant Information and Consent Form



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RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM (Youth: 18-25)

Title of Study: Gender Portrayal In Popular Music Videos

Participants: Youth (18-25 years old as of July 1st 2023) who are citizens or residents of India or Canada. The youth should have completed high school, and be willing to complete an online survey.

Principal Investigator: Ronika Budhiraja
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Research Supervisor: Dr. Shannon D.M. Moore
Assistant Professor
Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba
Phone: 204-XXX-X158
Email: shannon.moore@umanitoba.ca

Instructions for Consent Process:

1. Click on the link to the informed consent form.
2. Fully read all of the information. Do not hesitate to reach out to Ronika Budhiraja if you have any questions about participation or consent:
budhirar@myumanitoba.ca
3. Once you click "Yes, I agree", you are consenting to participation in this study. "Yes, I agree" acts in lieu of your signature.
4. If you do not submit a survey within one week of consenting to participate (by

clicking, “Yes, I agree”) I will assume you do not wish to continue in this study, and your consent form and any other correspondence with you will be deleted.

This informed participant consent (permission) form is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of the purpose of the study, the study procedures, and what your participation in the study will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of the Study: The overall goal of this study is to understand how youth in India and Canada understand gender portrayals in popular music videos. In addition, this study seeks to understand how analysis of music videos could be used to ground conversations of gender in the classroom context.

Participation Selection: Youth (18-25 years old as of July 1st 2023) who are citizens or residents of India or Canada. The youth should have completed high school, and be willing to complete an online survey.

Study Procedures: This study is divided into two phases. In Phase 1 of the research, I will analyze the ways that gender is constructed and portrayed in popular music videos in India and Canada. Through this phase I will employ and evaluate an analytical tool for music videos that I created. In Phase 2 of the research, I am inviting youth from India and Canada to participate in a survey about gender portrayals in popular music videos. This informed consent form involves participation in Phase 2, the online survey. The analytical tool employed in Phase 1 and the survey results in Phase 2 will both be used to inform discussions about the use of popular media in classrooms to ground discussions of gender.

Recording devices: All survey responses will be electronically stored on an external password protected drive (Google drive connected to PI’s personal Google account which will be transferred from the device to UM SharePoint). In addition, consent forms and survey results will be stored in Outlook and SharePoint, the password protected, dual authentication, cloud storage platform that is hosted by the University of Manitoba. All stored data will be destroyed/deleted by July, 2028, five years after the study begins. .

Risks: This study involves minimal risks to the participants as the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research.

As in all research, there is a duty to disclose information about the abuse of children or persons in care if such information is shared by the participant.

Benefits: There is no direct benefit to the participants taking part in this study. However, by engaging in this research, participants will help contribute to the literature on youth understanding of gender in music videos. Moreover, they will help in the development of a critical media literacy tool that could be used in the classroom to ground conversations about gender and popular media representations.

Costs: There are no costs to participants.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: Participant confidentiality will be maintained; the survey answers will use pseudonyms for participant names and other identifiers (e.g. names of schools, communities, etc.). Pseudonyms will be randomly assigned by the researcher, using gender neutral names (such as Charlie, Parker, Quinn, etc). Pseudonyms will also be used in subsequent reports, publications, or presentations of the study. The survey answers will be destroyed/deleted by July, 2028.

All email communication with study participants (including completed consent forms) will be conducted via Outlook, the password protected, dual authentication, cloud storage, e-mail platform that is hosted by the University of Manitoba. All email communication with study participants will be destroyed/deleted by July, 2028.

The relevant data will only be accessible by the Principal Investigator, Ronika Budhiraja and Research Supervisor, Dr. Shannon Moore.

Should a participant withdraw from the study, their consent form will be immediately destroyed. Their survey results will not be stored, as they did not press submit. Otherwise, all data will be destroyed within five years of the start date (July, 2028).

Compensation: No financial compensation will be provided.

Withdrawing: Participation is voluntary, and participants have the right to withdraw at any time during the research process without prejudice or consequence. When you submit your survey, by clicking submit on google forms, a copy of your responses will be emailed to you. If for any reason you decide you would like to withdraw your survey submission, you can do so within the week of your survey completion. After one week from the date of your survey completion, I will begin analyzing your survey responses, and you will no longer be able to withdraw from the study. That is, you have one week after the submission of your responses to determine if you would like to withdraw from the study. If you would like to withdraw your responses for any reason within the week of your survey completion, please contact the PI, Ronika Budhiraja by email budhirar@myumanitoba.ca. If the PI receives a request for withdrawal within a week of survey completion, all of the data connected to your participation in the study will be destroyed (consent form and survey responses). In addition, if you have not submitted a survey within one week of submitting your informed consent form, I will assume you have withdrawn from the study. In this case, I will also destroy all of the data connected to your participation in the study. (Please note: One week starts from the timestamp of when the survey was submitted.)

Dissemination: The results of this study will be shared for my thesis on MSpace and in national and international presentations. In all cases pseudonyms will be utilized to protect participant anonymity.

The participant observations are not intended to represent individual participant responses; rather, they are intended to encapsulate how youth participants (in general) respond to music videos. The analysis of gender portrayal in the music videos are the focus, rather than individual participants. Notes from my coded Survey results will mainly be shared as generalized summaries. If I share a direct quote from a participant, I will use the randomly assigned pseudonym in any presentation or publication about the study.

Consenting participants will receive a brief, non-technical summary of the research, approximately 6 months after the completion of all data collection, likely March, 2024. I will send this to the preferred email address that you record later in the survey.

Destruction of data: Consent forms and all data (specifically, the participant Surveys) will be destroyed by July, 2028

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time through the study process (as outlined above, until you press submit). Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at my research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry campus. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at (204) 474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca.

A copy of this consent form will be emailed to you to keep for your records and reference.

This informed consent letter can be submitted directly to the principal investigator submitted by email to: budhirar@myumanitoba.ca or signed before the survey.

Appendix B

Survey



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SURVEY

Sample Survey Google Form

<https://forms.gle/v3Rdy6HGZnXXDUAZ8>

Survey Questions:

1. How often do you watch music videos? What genre or artists do you like to listen to and/or watch?
2. Do you feel you are represented in music videos?
3. Have you ever been offended or uncomfortable by the way a music video portrayed gender? If so, which video(s) and why?
4. How do popular music videos in your country portray gender roles and identities? Does it accurately reflect the diversity of gender identities and expressions in the country?
5. How do you think the messages in popular music videos in your country impact the idea of gender for the wider culture and society? Do you think music videos impact the way you view your own gender identity and expression? How? Can you give some examples?

In this section the participants choose 1 music video out of 4 options given to them, two videos from each context, that are popular in the last two years. After they make the choice they will be taken to the next questions with a video of the lyrics of the song they chose and the music video of the same song.

6. After reading the lyrics of your selected song, please answer the following questions:
 - a) How did the lyrics of this song portray gender roles and identities? Give examples.
 - b) Do you think that the lyrics of this song reinforces harmful gender stereotypes? Please elaborate.
 - c) What do you think is the target audience for this song based on the lyrics? How can you say that?
7. Watch the music video and answer the following questions:
 - a) How does the music video portray gender roles and identities? Give examples.
 - b) Do you think that the music video reinforces harmful gender stereotypes? Please elaborate.

- c) What do you think is the target audience for this song based on the official music video? How can you say that?

Please note: Participation is voluntary, and participants have the right to withdraw at any time during the research process without prejudice or consequence before you submit your responses. If you wish to withdraw from the study, you can do so by not submitting your responses even after you have consented (if the form is not submitted after one week from the consent, it will be assumed withdrawn) or by contacting the PI, Ronika Budhiraja by email; budhirar@myumanitoba.ca.

Appendix C

Advertisement



Faculty of Education
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and
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ADVERTISEMENT

Inviting 18-25 year olds who are residents or citizens of India and Canada, who have completed high school, and who are willing to complete an online survey for a M.Ed thesis research at the University of Manitoba on gender portrayal in popular music videos. The objective of this study is to understand how gender is constructed within popular culture, and how popular culture texts might be used as a resource for critical conversations in the classroom. The survey has 7 open ended questions and should take about 30-40 mins to answer. Your participation will help the researcher understand youth perspectives on gender portrayal in popular culture and make pedagogical tools on media literacy. If you are interested in participating, please contact me, Ronika Budhiraja at budhirar@myumanitoba.ca or my advisor, Dr. Shannon Moore at shannon.moore@umanitoba.ca. If you would like to know more about the consent process, you can read the full informed consent form here.

[<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LLR-qydxjr7hkJFBAQ1XrnduPwgNUnzgH99Vu9cf9gU/edit?usp=sharing>]

Please find attached the link to the advertisement that will be posted in the form of a video/reels on TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram:

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Appendix D

Lyrical Data Analysis

Table D1

Blinding Lights (The Weeknd, 2020)

#	LYRICS	CATEGORY	CODES
1	[Intro]		
2	Yeah		
3			
4	[Verse 1]		
5	I've <i>been tryna</i> call	Male putting/ making efforts	Gender codependency
6	I've been <i>on my own</i> for long enough	single/ Need for love	Gender codependency
7	Maybe <i>you can show me how</i> to love, maybe	To teach Love	Stereotypical Female traits
8	I'm going through withdrawals		
9	You <i>don't even have to do</i> too much	Not having to do much.	Stereotypical Female traits
10	<i>You can turn me</i> on with just a touch, baby	Sexual arousal- female's job	Objectification
11			
12	[Pre-Chorus]		
13	I look around and <i>Sin City's cold and empty</i> (Oh) No one's around to <i>judge me</i> (Oh) <i>I can't see</i> clearly when <i>you're</i> gone	Commit sin= cold, barren, alone female being judgmental Dependency on females	Moral Policing Stereotypical Female traits Gender codependency
14			
15	[Chorus]		
16	I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights No, <i>I can't sleep until I feel your touch</i> I said, ooh, I'm drowning in the night Oh, <i>when I'm like this, you're the one I trust</i> Hey, hey, hey	Dependency on females Trustworthy in need	Gender codependency Stereotypical Female traits
17			
18	[Verse 2]		
19	<i>I'm running out</i> of time 'Cause I can see the sun light up the sky	Rush	Stereotypical Male traits
20	<i>So</i> I hit the road in <i>overdrive</i> , baby, oh	Rashness in decisions	Stereotypical Male traits
21			
22	[Pre-Chorus]		

23	The city's cold and empty (Oh) No one's <i>around to judge</i> me (Oh) <i>I can't see clearly</i> when you're gone	Judgements	Stereotypical Female traits
24			
25	[Chorus]		
26	I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights No, <i>I can't sleep until I feel your touch</i> I said, ooh, I'm drowning in the night Oh, <i>when I'm like this, you're the one I trust</i>	Dependency on females Trustworthy in need	Gender codependency Stereotypical Female traits
27			
28	[Bridge]		
29	I'm just <i>calling back to let you know</i> (Back to let you know) I could never say it on the phone (Say it on the phone) Will <i>never let you go</i> this time (Ooh)	Favour Holding on	Agency Hegemonic Relations Gender codependency
30			
31	[Chorus]		
32	I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights <i>No, I can't sleep until I feel your touch</i> Hey, hey, hey, Hey, hey, hey	Female as sexual objects	Objectification
33			
34	[Outro]		
35	I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights No, I can't sleep until <i>I feel your touch</i>	Female as sexual objects	Objectification

Table D2

Stay (Kid LAROI, 2021)

#	LYRICS	CATEGORY	CODES
	[Chorus: The Kid LAROI]		
1	I do the same thing I <i>told you that I never</i> would	"oh well"	Gender Fatalism
2	I told you <i>I'd change</i> , even when I knew I never could		
3	I know that I can't find nobody else <i>as good as you</i>	good for me	Gender codependency
4	I need you to stay, <i>need you to stay</i> , hey (Oh)	demanding tone	Agency
5			
6	[Verse 1: The Kid LAROI]		
7	I <i>get drunk</i> , wake up, I'm wasted still	irresponsible	Stereotypical Male Traits
8	I realize the <i>time that I wasted</i> here		

9	I feel like <i>you can't feel</i> the way I feel	discrediting	Machiavellianism
10	Oh, I'll be fucked up <i>if you can't be right here</i>	demanding	Machiavellianism
11			
12	[Pre-Chorus: The Kid LAROI]		
13	Oh, ooh-woah (Oh, ooh-woah, ooh-woah)		
14	Oh, ooh-woah (Oh, ooh-woah, ooh-woah)		
15	Oh, ooh-woah (Oh, ooh-woah, ooh-woah)		
16	Oh, I'll be <i>fucked up if you can't</i> be right here		
17			
18	[Chorus: The Kid LAROI]		
19	I do the same thing I <i>told you that I never</i> would	"oh well"	Gender Fatalism
20	I told you <i>I'd change</i> , even when I knew I never could		
21	I know that I can't find nobody else <i>as good as you</i>	good for me	Gender codependency
22	I need you to stay, <i>need you to stay</i> , hey	demanding tone	
23	I do the same thing I <i>told you that I never</i> would	"oh well"	Gender Fatalism
24	I told you <i>I'd change</i> , even when I knew I never could		
25	I know that I can't find nobody else <i>as good as you</i>	good for me	Gender codependency
26	I need you to stay, <i>need you to stay</i> , hey	demanding tone	
28			
29	[Verse 2: Justin Bieber]		
30	When I'm away from you, I <i>miss your touch</i> (Ooh)	intimacy	Stereotypical Female Traits
31	You're the reason I <i>believe in love</i>		
32	It's been difficult for <i>me to trust</i> (Ooh)		
33	And I'm afraid that <i>I'ma fuck it up</i>	Self-expectation	Gender Fatalism
34	Ain't no way that I can leave you stranded 'Cause you ain't <i>ever left me empty-handed</i>	mutual benefits	Gender codependency
35	And you know that I know that <i>I can't live without you</i>	dependency	Gender codependency
36	So, baby, stay		
37			

38	[Pre-Chorus: Justin Bieber, The Kid LAROI & Both]		
39	Oh, ooh-woah (Oh, ooh-woah, ooh-woah)		
40	Oh, ooh-woah (Oh, ooh-woah, ooh-woah)		
41	Oh, ooh-woah (Oh, ooh-woah, ooh-woah)		
42	I'll be <i>fucked up if you can't</i> be right here		
43			
44	[Chorus: The Kid LAROI with Justin Bieber]		
45	I do the same thing I <i>told you that I never</i> would	"oh well"	Gender Fatalism
46	I told you <i>I'd change</i> , even when I knew I never could		
47	I know that I can't find nobody else <i>as good as you</i>	good for me	Gender codependency
48	I need you to stay, <i>need you to stay</i> , hey	demanding tone	
49	I do the same thing I <i>told you that I never</i> would	"oh well"	Gender Fatalism
50	I told you <i>I'd change</i> , even when I knew I never could		
51	I know that I can't find nobody else <i>as good as you</i>	good for me	Gender codependency
52	I need you to stay, <i>need you to stay</i> , hey	demanding tone	
53			
54	[Outro: The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber]		
55	Woah-oh		
56	I need you to stay, <i>need you to stay</i> , hey	demanding tone	Gender codependency

Table D3

Raatan Lambiyan (Asees Kaur, 2021)

#	LYRICS	CATEGORY	CODES
1	Teri Meri Gallan Ae Ho Gayi Mashhoor		
	"Our Tales" have grown in popularity.		
2	Kar Na Kabhi Tu Mujhe Nazron Se Door	depencyency	Gender codependency
	Please never let me be <i>separated from you</i> .		
3	Kithe Chali Ae Tu Kithe Chali Ae Tu Kithe Chali Ae Kithe Chali Ae	Authoritative interrogation	Agency

	Where are you going, girl? <i>Where are you going?</i>		
4	Jaanda Ae Dil Yeh Toh Jaandi Ae Tu		
	My heart understands and you are also aware of it,		
5	Tere Bin Main Na Rahun Mere Bina Tu		
	That I couldn't live <i>without you</i> , and you couldn't live <i>without me</i> .	dependency	Gender codependency Machiavellianism
	Kithe Chali Ae Tu Kithe Chali Ae Tu		
6	Kithe Chali Ae Kithe Chali Ae	Authoritative	
	<i>Where are you going?</i> Where are you going?	interrogation	Agency
7	Kaatun Kaise Raatan Oh Saawre	female as a sexual	
	Oh beloved, how should I <i>spend my nights</i> ?	object	Objectification
8	Jiya Nahi Jaata Sun Baawre		
	Oh, crazy lover, I <i>can't live without you</i> .	dependency	Gender codependency Machiavellianism
	Ke Raataan Lambiyan Lambiyan Re		
9	Kate Tere Sangeyan Sangeyan Re		
	The long nights flew by, while <i>you were with me</i> .		
	Ke Raataan Lambiyan Lambiyan Re		
10	Kate Tere Sangeyan Sangeyan Re	female as a sexual	
	The long nights went by, while <i>you were with me</i> .	object	Objectification
	Cham Cham Cham Ambran De Taare Kehnde Ne		
12	Sajjna		
	Twinkle, Twinkle say the stars in the sky.		

13	Tu Hi Chan Mere Is Dil Da Man Le Ve Sajjna		
	That you are my <i>heart's moon</i> . Oh dear, believe me.		
15	Tere Bina Mera Howe Na Guzara		
	<i>I couldn't survive without you.</i>	Survival	Machiavellianism
16	Chhad Ke Na Jawin Mainu Tu Hi Hai Sahara	"knight in shining	Gender
	Please <i>never abandon</i> me. You are <i>my sole aid</i> .	armour"	codependency
18	Kaatun Kaise Raatan Oh Saawre	female as a sexual	
	Oh beloved, how should I <i>spend my nights</i> ?	object	Objectification
19	Jiya Nahi Jaata Sun Baawre		Gender
	Oh, crazy lover, I <i>can't live without you</i> .	dependency	codependency
			Machiavellianism
21	Ke Raataan Lambiyan Lambiyan Re Kate Tere Sangeyan Sangeyan Re		
	The long nights flew by, while <i>you were with me</i> .		
22	Ke Raataan Lambiyan Lambiyan Re Kate Tere Sangeyan Sangeyan Re	female as a sexual	
	The long nights went by, while <i>you were with me</i> .	object	Objectification
24	Teri Meri Gallan Ae Ho Gayi Mashhoor		Gender
	"Our" tales has grown in popularity.	dependency	codependency
25	Kar Na Kabhi Tu Mujhe Nazron Se Door	Authoritative	
	Please never let me be <i>separated from you</i> .	interrogation	Agency
26	Kithe Chali Ae Tu Kithe Chali Ae Tu		

	Kithe Chali Ae Kithe Chali Ae		
	What are you going, girl? <i>Where are you going?</i>		
28	Jaanda Ae Dil Yeh Toh Jaandi Ae Tu		
	My heart understands and you are also aware of it,		
29	Tere Bin Main Na Rahun Mere Bina Tu		
	That I couldn't live <i>without you</i> , and you couldn't live <i>without me</i> .	dependency	Gender codependency Machiavellianism
30	Kithe Chali Ae Tu Kithe Chali Ae Tu Kithe Chali Ae Kithe Chali Ae	Authoritative interrogation	
	<i>Where are you going?</i> Where are you going?		Agency
32	Kaatun Kaise Raatan Oh Saawre	female as a sexual object	
	Oh beloved, how should I <i>spend my nights?</i>		Objectification
33	Jiya Nahi Jaata Sun Baawre		Gender codependency Machiavellianism
	Oh, crazy lover, I <i>can't live without you</i> .	dependency	
35	Ke Raataan Lambiyan Lambiyan Re Kate Tere Sangeyan Sangeyan Re		
	The long nights flew by, while <i>you were with me</i> .		
36	Ke Raataan Lambiyan Lambiyan Re Kate Tere Sangeyan Sangeyan Re	female as a sexual object	
	The long nights went by, while <i>you were with me</i> .		Objectification

38	Teri Meri Gallan Ae Ho Gayi Mashhoor		Gender
	" <i>Our</i> " tales has grown in popularity.	dependency	codependency
39	Kar Na Kabhi Tu Mujhe Nazron Se Door	Authoritative	
	Please never let me be <i>separated from you</i> .	interrogation	Agency
40	Kithe Chali Ae Tu Kithe Chali Ae Tu Kithe Chali Ae Kithe Chali Ae		
	What are you going, girl? <i>Where are you going?</i>		
42	Jaanda Ae Dil Yeh Toh Jaandi Ae Tu		
	My heart understands and you are also aware of it,		
43	Tere Bin Main Na Rahun Mere Bina Tu		Gender
	That I couldn't live <i>without you</i> , and you couldn't live <i>without me</i> .	dependency	codependency Machiavellianism
44	Kithe Chali Ae Tu Kithe Chali Ae Tu Kithe Chali Ae Kithe Chali Ae	Authoritative	
	<i>Where are you going?</i> Where are you going?	interrogation	Agency
46	Kaatun Kaise Raatan Oh Saawre	female as a sexual	
	Oh beloved, how should I <i>spend my nights?</i>	object	Objectification
47	Jiya Nahi Jaata Sun Baawre		Gender
	Oh, crazy lover, I <i>can't live without you</i> .	dependency	codependency Machiavellianism
49	Ke Raataan Lambiyan Lambiyan Re Kate Tere Sangeyan Sangeyan Re		
	The long nights flew by, while <i>you were with me</i> .	female as a sexual	

50	Ke Raataan Lambiyan Lambiyan Re Kate Tere Sangeyan Sangeyan Re		
	The long nights went by, while <i>you were with me</i> .		
52	Cham Cham Cham Ambran De Taare Kehnde Ne Sajjna		
	Twinkle, Twinkle say the stars in the sky.		
53	Tu Hi Chan Mere Is Dil Da Man Le Ve Sajjna		
	That you are my <i>heart's moon</i> . Oh dear, believe me.		
55	Tere Bina Mera Howe Na Guzara		Gender codependency
	I <i>couldn't survive without you</i> .		
56	Chhad Ke Na Jawin Mainu Tu Hi Hai Sahara		Hegemonic relations
	Please <i>never abandon</i> me. You are <i>my sole aid</i> .	dependency	Agency
58	Kaatun Kaise Raatan Oh Saawre	female as a sexual object	Objectification
	Oh beloved, how should I <i>spend my nights</i> ?		
59	Jiya Nahi Jaata Sun Baawre		Gender codependency
	Oh, crazy lover, I <i>can't live without you</i> .	depecency	
61	Ke Raataan Lambiyan Lambiyan Re Kate Tere Sangeyan Sangeyan Re		
	The long nights flew by, while <i>you were with me</i> .		
62	Ke Raataan Lambiyan Lambiyan Re Kate Tere Sangeyan Sangeyan Re	female as a sexual object	Objectification

	The long nights went by, while <i>you were with me</i> .		
64	Teri Meri Gallan Ae Ho Gayi Mashhoor		
	"Our" topic has grown in popularity.		
65	Kar Na Kabhi Tu Mujhe Nazron Se Door	dependency	Gender codependency
	Please never let me be <i>separated from you</i> .		
66	Kithe Chali Ae Tu Kithe Chali Ae Tu	Authoritative interrogation	Agency
	Kithe Chali Ae Kithe Chali Ae		
	What are you going, girl? <i>Where are you going?</i>		
68	Jaanda Ae Dil Yeh Toh Jaandi Ae Tu		
	My heart understands and you are also aware of it,		
69	Tere Bin Main Na Rahun Mere Bina Tu	dependency	Gender codependency Machiavellianism
	That I couldn't live <i>without you</i> , and you couldn't live <i>without me</i> .		
70	Kithe Chali Ae Tu Kithe Chali Ae Tu	Authoritative interrogation	Agency
	Kithe Chali Ae Kithe Chali Ae		
	<i>Where are you going?</i> Where are you going?		
72	Kaatun Kaise Raatan Oh Saawre	female as a sexual object	Objectification
	Oh beloved, how should I <i>spend my nights?</i>		
73	Jiya Nahi Jaata Sun Baawre	dependency	Gender codependency Machiavellianism
	Oh, crazy lover, I <i>can't live without you</i> .		

75	Ke Raataan Lambiyan Lambiyan Re Kate Tere Sangeyan Sangeyan Re		
	The long nights flew by, while <i>you were with me.</i>		Objectification
76	Ke Raataan Lambiyan Lambiyan Re Kate Tere Sangeyan Sangeyan Re	female as a sexual	
	The long nights went by, while <i>you were with me.</i>	object	

Table D4

Pasoori (Ali Sethi, 2022)

#	LYRICS	CATEGORY	CODES
1	<i>Agg Lavaan Majboori Nu</i>		
	Set fire to your worries		
2	<i>Aan Jaan Di Pasoori Nu</i>		
	To waiting and to hurries		
3	<i>Zehar Bane Haan Teri</i>		
	If your Love is poison		
4	<i>Pee Javaan Main Poori Nu</i>		
	I'll drink it in a flurry	toxicity	Parasitism
5	<i>Aana Si O Nai Aea</i>		
	He said he'd come, he never did	broken promises	Gender Fatalism
6	<i>Dil Baang Baang Mera Takreya</i>		
	My heart lurched and slid		
7	<i>Kaga Bol Ke Dus Jaave</i>		
	Let the crow tell me why		
8	<i>Paavaan gheyo dee choori nu</i>		
	And feast on sweet supply		

9	<i>Raawaan Ch Baawaan Ch O Nu Lukawaan</i>		
	I'll hide him and bide him in loving embraces	toxic positivity	Parasitism
10	<i>Koi Mainu Na Roke</i>		
	No one make me stop		
12	<i>Mere Dhol Judaiyaan Di Tenu Khabar Kiwein Hove</i>		
	My love how can you know what happens when we part?		
13	<i>Aa Jaave Dil Tera Poora Vi Na Hove</i>		
	I hope you fall in love, I hope it breaks your heart		
15	<i>Haan Baniya Banaiyaan Di Gal Baat Kiwein Hove</i>		
	How will the willing communicate?		
16	<i>Aa Jaave Dil Tera Poora Vi Na Hove</i>		
	I hope you fall in love, I hope it breaks your heart		
18	<i>Bhul Gei Majboori Nu</i>		
	I forgot about my chains	limitations	Social Norms
19	<i>Dunya Di Dastoori Nu</i>		
	And people's customs and refrains		
21	<i>Saath Tera Hai Bathera</i>		
	You're enough for me		
22	<i>Poora Kar Zaroori Nu</i>		
	Fulfil my destiny	dependency	Gender codependency
24	<i>Aana Si O Nei Aea</i>		
	He said he'd come, he never did	broken promises	Gender Fatalism

25	<i>Raasta Na Dikhlea</i>		
	I couldn't see, the we was hid	dependency	Gender codependency
26	<i>Dil Hamara De Sahara</i>		
	My heart gives solace		
27	<i>Khaahishaat Adhoori Nu</i>		
	To wishes unfulfilled	unsatisfied	Parasitism
28	<i>Waari Main Javaan Main Tenu Bulawan</i>		
	I dote on you, I call out your name	longing	Gender codependency
29	<i>Gal Saaree Taan Hove</i>		
	Let's have it out, for shame!		
31	<i>Mere Dhol Judaiyaan Di Tenu Khabar Kiwein Hove</i>		
	My love how can you know what happens when we part		
32	<i>Aa Jaave Dil Tera Poora Vi Na Hove</i>		
	I hope you fall in love, I hope it breaks your heart		
33	<i>Haan baniya banaiyaan di gal baat Kiwein Hove</i>		
	How will the willing communicate?		
34	<i>Aa jaave dil tera poora vi na Hove</i>		
	I hope you fall in love, I hope it breaks your heart		
36	<i>Mere Dhol Judaiyaan Di Sardari Na Hove</i>		
	My love, don't let this distance reign		
38	<i>Mere Dhol Judaiyaan Di</i>		
	My love what of this distance...		
39	<i>Mere Dhol Judaiyaan Di Sardari Na</i>		

	<i>Hove</i>		
	My love, don't let this distance reign		
40	<i>Dildaaraan Di Sub Yaaraan Di Azaari Na Hove</i>		
	Don't let these lovers be in pain		
41	<i>Dildaaraan Di Sub Yaaraan Di Azaari Na Hove</i>		
	Don't let these lovers be in pain		
43	<i>Aa Chalein Leke Tujhe</i>		
	Come let's go away		
44	<i>Hain Jahan Silsile</i>		
	Where all the lovers meet		
45	<i>Tu Hai Wahi Hai Teri Kami</i>		
	You're the one, it's you I need	dependency	Gender codependency
46	<i>Bana De Saja De Panah De Humain</i>		
	Give me life, give me love, take me in your arms	transferring authority, responsibility	Agency Gender codependency Hegemony
47	<i>Bana De Saja De Panah De Humain</i>		
	Give me life, give me love, take me in your arms		
48	<i>Agg Lavaan Majboori Nu</i>		
	Set fire to your worries		
49	<i>Aan Jaan Di Pasoori Nu</i>		
	To waiting and to hurries		
50	<i>Zehar Bane Haan Teri</i>		
	If your Love is poison		
51	<i>Pee Javaan Main Poori Nu</i>		
	I'll drink it in a flurry		

53	<i>Raawaan Ch Baawaan Ch O Nu Lukawaan</i>		
	I'll hide him and bide him in loving embraces	toxic positivity	Parasitism
54	<i>Koi Mainu Na Roke</i>		
	No one make me stop		
56	<i>Mere Dhol Judaiyaan Di Tenu Khabar Kiwein Hove</i>		
	My love how can you know what happens when we part		
57	<i>Aa Jaave Dil Tera Poora Vi Na Hove</i>		
	I hope you fall in love, I hope it breaks your heart		
58	<i>Haan Baniya Banaiyaan Di Gal Baat Kiwein Hove</i>		
	How will the willing communicate?		
59	<i>Aa Jaave Dil Tera Poora Vi Na Hove</i>		
	I hope you fall in love, I hope it breaks your heart		
60	<i>Poora Vi Na Hove</i>		
	I hope it breaks your heart		
61	<i>Poora Vi Na Hove</i>		
	I hope it breaks your heart		

Appendix E

Visual Data Analysis

Table E1

Blinding Lights (The Weeknd, 2020)

Time stamp	Music Design		Video Design		Coding	
	Music Style	Lyrics	Setting	Cinematography	Memo	Codes
00:33-00:57	The Weeknd's vocals enter the mix, singing the first verse over the pulsing synth and drum machine.	[Intro] Yeah [Verse 1] I've been tryna call I've been on my own for long enough Maybe you can show me how to love, maybe	The surreal imagery in this section features distorted images and colors overlaid on the footage of The Weeknd driving through the city. The camera shakes and tilts to convey the chaotic feeling of the driving sequence.	The camera cuts between shots of The Weeknd driving and shots of the city at night, with neon signs and billboards passing by in the background. The camera is mostly stationary, with occasional tilts and pans to follow The Weeknd's car. The camera then cuts to a close-up of The Weeknd's face as he sings the opening lines of the song, with the camera slowly pulling back to reveal him behind the wheel of a grey sports car.	The music and corresponding video presents distortion and chaos while the singer, seemingly confused, demands for love.	Agency Gender codependency Stereotypical Male Trait (Entitlement)
0:57-1:26	The lyrics describe the singer's feelings of loneliness and isolation.	I'm goin' through withdrawals You don't even have to do too much You can turn me on with just a touch, baby [Pre-Chorus] I look around and Sin City's cold and empty (Oh) No one's around to	The scene takes place at a red light, where The Weeknd's car comes to a stop.	The scene shows a traffic light, and The Weeknd's is shown dancing in different parts of the city in different points of time and in different conditions, before cutting back to The Weeknd as he drives away.	This section in the lyrics highlights loneliness and isolation with cold and emptiness while the video contrasts with neon and flashy lights during the night. The abstract imagery therefore showing	Moral Policing Stereotypical Female Traits Gender codependency

		judge me (Oh) I can't see clearly when you're gone			freedom and breaking free from morals or societal pressures while seemingly enjoying it.	
1:26 = 1:44	The chorus kicks in, featuring a catchy melody and a driving drumbeat. The synths become more layered, adding to the song's sense of energy and momentum.	[Chorus] I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights No, I can't sleep until I feel your touch I said, ooh, I'm drowning in the night Oh, when I'm like this, you're the one I trust Hey, hey, hey	The surreal imagery continues, with the camera cutting between shots of The Weeknd driving through a tunnel and shots of the city at night. The camera shakes and tilts, with abstract patterns and colors overlaid on the footage.	The camera work in this section is similar to the previous section, with dynamic camera movements and abstract imagery. The camera cuts between close-ups of The Weeknd and shots of the city at night, with neon lights and flashing signs adding to the visual spectacle.	The scene creates more confusion and distortion with shots changing quicker giving a sense of approaching doom. The main character, played by The Weeknd, seems disoriented as if under the use of substance.	Stereotypical Female Traits (Trustworthy, useful, helpful) Agency (Only male, no female agency or voice)
1:44 = 2:08	The second verse begins, with the Weeknd continuing to sing about his emotional struggles. The synth bassline becomes more complex, with additional notes and variations.	[Verse 2] I'm running out of time 'Cause I can see the sun light up the sky So I hit the road in overdrive, baby, oh	The surreal imagery continues, with the camera cutting between shots of The Weeknd driving through a the city at night. The tunnel is illuminated by neon lights, adding to the dreamlike atmosphere.	While the camera continues to be dynamic by shifting between The Weeknd's shots at numerous moments throughout the video. The later part of this section shows the Weeknd settling in a bar where he shares intense looks with a singer.	The scene creates a sense of calm, with minimal shifts of scenes coming to rest on an enigmatic singer.	Gaze (Objectification of Women) Stereotypical Male traits

2:08 - 2:31	The chorus repeats, with the addition of a guitar riff that adds to the song's retro vibe. The drums and synths become more intense, creating a sense of urgency and excitement.	[Pre-Chorus] The city's cold and empty (Oh) No one's around to judge me (Oh) I can't see clearly when you're gone [Chorus] I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights No, I can't sleep until I feel your touch	The scene takes place in a bar/casino where a female singer catches his eye.	In the bar he starts dancing on the dance floor and is shown going up to the stage called on by the singer. The bar is also full of neon lights. The camera angles are low and close to the ground, which gives a sense of intimacy and immersion.	The scene shifts in slow-mo, showing The Weeknd getting absorbed in the ongoing action, completely mesmerised.	Moral Policing Gaze
2:31 - 2:49	A bridge section enters, featuring a new melody and a breakdown of the song's instrumental elements. The synths become more atmospheric and dreamy, with a sense of floating in space.	I said, ooh, I'm drowning in the night Oh, when I'm like this, you're the one I trust [Bridge] I'm just calling back to let you know (Back to let you know) I could never say it on the phone (Say it on the phone)	The scene is back to The Weeknd in the car.	The camera work in this section becomes more frenetic, with the camera following The Weeknd's car as he drives through the city at high speed. The camera cuts between shots of The Weeknd in the car and shots of the city at night, with intense strobing lights and abstract patterns adding to the chaotic feeling.	The changes in lights and sound add the rush and intensity of changes and feelings that may be going inside the singer.	Gender Fatalism Hegemonic Relations Social Norms
2:49 - 3:23	The chorus repeats once more, with the addition of a saxophone solo that adds to the song's retro flavor. The Weeknd's vocals become more impassioned, reaching a crescendo at the end of the section.	Will never let you go this time (Ooh) [Chorus] I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights No, I can't sleep until I feel your touch Hey, hey, hey Hey, hey, hey	The scene takes place in a bar/casino where The Weeknd is seen performing on stage. The camera captures the energy of the crowd and the neon-lit atmosphere of the venue, with shots of The Weeknd singing and dancing on stage.	The camera focuses on the high speed continued by The Weeknd with cut shots from him getting into a fight with some other patrons at the bar/casino. The fight scene is shot in slow motion, which gives a sense of intensity and drama. The lighting is dark and moody, with flashes of neon light illuminating the action.	The scene focuses on the fight scene that has all guys, and "macho guys" focusing on the muscular bodies and showing domination.	

3:23 = 3:39	The outro section features a repetition of the chorus melody and a gradual fade-out of the instrumental elements.	[Outro] I said, ooh, I'm blinded by the lights No, I can't sleep until I feel your touch	The scene takes place outside the casino, with The Weeknd seen running away from the venue. The camera follows him as he runs down the street, with the neon-lit city in the background.	This scene shows the Weeknd running away from the different situations depicted in the video, the bas/casino fight, on a bridge, into the tunnel, etc. while his face is covered in his blood.	The rush continues as the singer tries to run away from all of it.	
3:39 = 4:22	The song ends the sound of cars and traffic in the background.		The final scene of the music video shows The Weeknd stumbling through the streets of Las Vegas, bloodied and battered from a night of wild partying and gambling.	The cinematography in this scene is gritty and raw, with handheld shots that emphasize the disorienting and chaotic feelings of the character's experience. He seems to be smiling while in emotional and physical pain inaudibly.		

Table E2

Stay (Kid LAROI, 2021)

Times tamp	Music Design		Video Design		Coding	
	Music Style	Lyrics	Setting	Cinematography	Memos	Codes
00:00 - 00:43		[Chorus: The Kid LAROI] I do the same thing I told you that I never would I told you I'd change, even when I knew I never could I know that I can't find nobody else as good as you I need you to stay, need you to stay, hey (Oh)	The video starts in Kid LAROI's bedroom where everything is frozen in time and space except him.	The camera opens with LAROI levitated above his bed	dependen cy, typical boy behavior, dark room- remorse,g loom	Gender codepende ncy Gender Fatalism

00:44 - 01:00	"Stay" is a fast-paced pop rap, pop rock, and synth-pop song.	[Verse 1: The Kid LAROI] I get drunk, wake up, I'm wasted still I realize the time that I wasted here I feel like you can't feel the way I feel Oh, I'll be fucked up if you can't be right here	The scene moves to an all white kitchen which is also frozen with spilt tea/coffee and milk.	The camera focuses on the frozen elements in the kitchen including spilt tea, milk, a fly, etc, while LAROI moves around the house levitating and then through the corridor looking at other people who had stopped in time.	light kitchen-acceptance, wanting to start over coffee-insomnia, reflection	
01:01 - 01:28	It is set in the key of D $\flat$ major and incorporates piano keys, heavy drums, and "splatter" synths.	[Pre-Chorus: The Kid LAROI] Oh, ooh-woah (Oh, ooh-woah, ooh-woah) Oh, ooh-woah (Oh, ooh-woah, ooh-woah) Oh, ooh-woah (Oh, ooh-woah, ooh-woah) Oh, I'll be fucked up if you can't be right here [Chorus: The Kid LAROI] I do the same thing I told you that I never would I told you I'd change, even when I knew I never could I know that I can't find nobody else as good as you I need you to stay, need you to stay, hey I do the same thing I told you that I never would I told you I'd change, even when I knew I never could I know that I can't find nobody else as good as you I need you to stay, need you to stay, hey	The scene moves out of the house through the hall in the apartment to the streets.	The camera follows LAROI outside who walks on the road while looking around at the frozen time around while everything has stopped, business, vehicles, everything. The camera also focuses on a girl who is supposedly LAROI's partner and in tears over whatever LAROI said he wouldn't do but did.	Contrast: Female-Crying, emotional Male-jumping in the streets, giving the middle finger	Social norms Stereotypical Gender Traits Gender codependency Agency Machiavellianism

01:29 - 01:50	The upward-darting keyboard riff, made on a Roland Juno-60 synthesizer owned by Slatkin, serves as the song's spine and eventually becomes the chorus melody	[Verse 2: Justin Bieber] When I'm away from you, I miss your touch (Ooh) You're the reason I believe in love It's been difficult for me to trust (Ooh) And I'm afraid that I'ma fuck it up Ain't no way that I can leave you stranded 'Cause you ain't ever left me empty-handed And you know that I know that I can't live without you So, baby, stay	The scene now moves to Justin Bieber standing on the roof of a tall building.	The camera zooms in and out on Bieber on the roof, dancing and jumping around while he sings.	Men in different stages of life and relationship, yet same/similar situations. female description- miss your touch, useful + trustworthy -> never leaves the singer empty handed, needed for survival -> singer can't live without	Gender codependency Stereotypical Gender Traits Hegemonic Relations Machiavellianism
01:51-2:37	Over a repeated melodic cell, Laroie and Bieber switch between head voice and chest voice on a minor sixth.	[Pre-Chorus: Justin Bieber, The Kid LAROI & Both] Oh, ooh-woah (Oh, ooh-woah, ooh-woah) Oh, ooh-woah (Oh, ooh-woah, ooh-woah) Oh, ooh-woah (Oh, ooh-woah, ooh-woah) I'll be fucked up if you can't be right here [Chorus: The Kid LAROI with Justin Bieber] I do the same thing I told you that I never would I told you I'd change, even when I knew I never could I know that I can't find nobody else as good as you	The setting changes to a closed landscape where both singers dance, vibe and sing together.	The pair meet at the song's high point, dancing and harmonizing through the final chorus, singing. LAROI peers into a diner's window where a presumed love interest stays frozen with tear-filled eyes and staring at a phone screen.	lead singers -> Male: reckless, rush, carefree, demanding, free bodied, demanding. The whole world stops for them, While the female leads life stops and pauses and is found in the same position, the same way as the starting of	Agency Gaze (Male) Matrix of domination Gender Fatalism

		I need you to stay, need you to stay, hey I do the same thing I told you that I never would I told you I'd change, even when I knew I never could I know that I can't find nobody else as good as you I need you to stay, need you to stay, hey			the video.	
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Table E3**Raatan Lambiyan (Asees Kaur, 2021)**

Ti m e s t a m p	Music Design			Video Design		Coding	
	Music Style	Lyrics		Setting	Cinematography	Memos	Code s
		Original	English				
00: 00 - 00: 11				The music video starts off at an army camp where the protagonist is reading his lover's letter.	The camera shows an army base camp with close ups on the protagonists and the letter passed between them and the flashbacks to when they first started dating.		Gend er Clothi ng
00: 12 - 00: 23	The music style of "Rataan Lambiyan" is predominantly Bollywood romantic.	Teri Meri Gallan Ho Gayi Mashhoor Kar Na Kabhi Tu Mujhe Nazron Se Door Kithe Chali Ae Tu Kithe Chali Ae Tu Kithe Chali Ae Kithe	We have become the talk of the town I don't want you out of my sight Where are you going?	The setting changes to an outdoor location where the couple seems to be on a date.	The camera follows the couple looking younger and seems to be on their first date showing a scene where the female protagonists grabs the male protagonists sunglasses and wears them instead while the male protagonists compliments her on the appearance.	possessions (sunglasses) shared?	Agenc y

		Chali Ae					
00:24-00:35	It features a blend of contemporary and traditional elements commonly found in Hindi film music.	Jaanda ae dil yeh toh Jaandi ae tu Tere bin main na rahun Mere bina tu Kithe chali ye tu Kithe chali ye tu Kithe chali ye jaan chali ye	My heart always follows you Neither can I survive without you Nor can you survive without me Where are you going?	The setting changes again to a street.	The male protagonist on the back of a motorcycle follows and finds the female protagonist in the back of a car, both with their respective friends. Both exchange a silent conversation with their eyes and movement of eyebrows while their friends overlook and smile.	Male follows Female. Male flirts, female obliges/shies away	Stereotypical Gender Traits Gender Clothing Social Norms
00:36-00:59	The instrumentation includes a mix of electronic and acoustic elements, with a focus on creating a melodic and emotionally resonant atmosphere.	Kaatun kaise raatan oh saavre? Jiya nahi jaata sunn baavre? Ke ratan lambiyan Kate tere sangayan Ke raatan lambiyan Kate tere sangayan re	How do I spend my days and nights? I cannot live without you These long nights Are meant to be spent with you These long nights Are meant to be spent with you	The setting shifts to the female protagonists home and the local neighbourhood of the male protagonist. Later it shifts to the street as well as the higher education institute both of them are studying in.	The couple is found holding onto the telephone, the female holds onto her home telephone and finds a place to sit and converse with the male protagonists who seems to be holding a public telephone from a local telephone booth while he finds a seat and grabs a drink from the local store. Both seem to be in high spirits giggling and talking. The female protagonist gets dressed in front of the mirror and is shown to adorn a face sticker ("bindi" on the forehead) while the male protagonist is shown having fun and pulling pranks with his friends in the higher education institution.	Male-happier, having fun, pulling pranks Female-dresses up	Stereotypical Gender Traits Gender Clothing Social Norms
1:00-1:01:34	The song's tempo is slow, emphasizing the romantic and soulful	Cham cham cham ambran de taare Kehnde ne sajina Tu hi chand mere is dil da Mann le ve	The shining stars Say my love You are my moon Believe me I cannot do anything without you Don't leave me	The setting in this scene starts with the male protagonist's office and the female's home and ends with the couple in a	It seems some time has passed and now the male protagonist has a job and calls from the office telephone to the female lead's house telephone. But this time the female's father picks up who is unaware of the relationship leading to	Father-figure of authority Female-leaning for support	Agency Gender codependency Stereotypical

	nature of the lyrics.	sajjna Tere bina mera howe na guzara Chhad ke na jawin mainu Tu hi hai sahara	You are my support	movie theatre with there friends.	them being unable to talk. The scene shifts to a theatre where the couple seems to have gone to watch a movie with their college/ university friends who tease them when they observe them sitting closed to each other and being intimate.		ypical Gend er Traits
01: 35 - 2:1 8		Kaatun kaise raatan oh saavre? Jiya nahi jaata sunn baavre? Ke ratan lambiyen lambiyen re Kate tere sangeyan sangeyan re Ke raatan lambiyen lambiyen re Kate tere sangeyan sangeyan re Ke ratan lambiyen lambiyen re Kate tere sangeyan sangeyan re Ke raatan lambiyen lambiyen re Kate tere sangeyan sangeyan re	How do I spend my days and nights? I cannot live without you These long nights Are meant to be spent with you These long nights Are meant to be spent with you These long nights Are meant to be spent with you These long nights Are meant to be spent with you	The settings change drastically with many locations the couple has had a date or visited together including monuments, cafe, carnival etc. The music video however ends with the setting of military cars driven on an unknown location.	The couple continues to date over the years and seem to grow closer, going on walks, visiting different places, sharing music, singing out loud, sharing food. The music video ends with the close up of the male protagonist dressed as an army officer on a street in an unknown location with a few military cars on the front and back of his.		

Table E4

Pasoori (Ali Sethi, 2022)

Ti m e s t a m p	Music Design			Video Design		Coding	
	Music Style	Lyrics		Setting	Cinematography	Memo s	Codes
		Original	English				
00:00-00:45				The song is set in a courtyard in a traditional house with different characters of different ages, genders and ethnic backgrounds.	The song opens with the introduction of the different characters. The camera zooms in on different people part of the video while frozen in different costume, of different ages, different interests and different gender expressions. The elderly woman dressed in sari (traditional clothing) opens with classical dance (bharatnatyam) hand movements welcoming	Representation of various, genders, identities, races, expressions, age and ethnicities.	Gender Expression Agency Friction
00:46-01:40	Uses assorted instruments as the acoustic guitar, the synth, the bass and the electronic octopad that blend harmoniously with the baglama (a Turkish long-neck lute) and the mandolin, besides the sound of rhythmic clapping reminiscent of Flamenco.	[Verse 1: Ali Sethi] Agg Lavan Majboori Nu Aan Jaan Di Pasoori Nu Zehar Bane Haan Teri Pee Jaavan Main Poori Nu Aana Si Oh Nahi Aaya Dil Bang Bang Mera Takraya Kaga Bol Ke Dass Jaave Paawan Gheyo Dee Choori Nu [Pre-Chorus : Ali Sethi] Ranwan Ch Banwan Ch Oh Nu	[Verse 1: Ali Sethi] Set fire to You Worries To Waiting and To Hurries If Your Love is poison I will Drink it in a Flurry He Said He'd Come, He Never Did. My Heart Lurched and Slid Let the Crow Tell me Why and Feast on Sweet Supply [Pre-Chorus: Ali Sethi] I Will Hide Him and bide him in Loving Embraces No One Make me Stop [Chorus: Ali Sethi] My Love How can	The setting remains the backyard of the traditional house. With zooming out, the audience sees more part of the house and different musicians in different parts of the house and different floors all coming together	The camera focuses on the protagonist in this part of the video, the singer; Ali Sethi who is followed by the camera from what appears to be a washroom where he looks at his reflection and comes out with a mic and from there sings while coming to the centre of the location the house. The camera also zooms in on the elderly singer dancing in the classical dance form of India Bharatnatyam, and another character who is reading a magazine or a story book of sorts that has two women dressed in traditional clothing seated over tea. The camera zooms in on this character's hands	This particular segment opens with highlights on the male players, taking centre stage and being active participants in the performance. Males-Singer, instrumentalist Female s-	Agency Gaze Hegemonic Relations

		Lukavan Koyi Mainu Na Roke [Chorus: Ali Sethi] Mere dhol judaiyaan di, tenu khabar kivein hove Aa jaave dil tera, poora vi na hove Haan baniyan banaiyaan di, gal baat kivein hove Aa jaave dil tera, poora vi na hove	You Know what happen when we part. I Hope you fall in love, I Hope it breaks your Heart. How will the Willing, Communicate I Hope you fall in love, I Hope it breaks your Heart.	as one act.	that are wearing a nailpolish and ring along with some traditional hand jewellery (bangles) and jewelled heena on hand (hand tatoos) commonly adorned by women on special occasions. Later in this section the camera focuses on this character again; who appears to be a young women, studying; this time showing the audience the whole person and not just their hands. Another character, sitting by themselves on a yellow couch in solitary is shown with their hair let down and a fan pointing towards them.	dancing , reading , sitting	
1: 40 - 2: 39		[Verse 2: Shae Gill] Bhul gayi majboori nu Duniya di dastoori nu Saath tera hai bathera Poora kar zaroori nu Aana si o Nai aaya Raasta na dikhlaaya Dil humara de sahara Khaahishaa t adhoori nu [Pre-Chorus : Shae Gill] Waari main jaavan, main tenu bulavaan Gal saari taan hove [Chorus:	[Verse 2: Shae Gill] I Forgot about my Chains and Peoples Refrains You are Enough For Me. Fulfil my Destiny. Hw Said He'd Come, He Never Did. I Could not see the way was Hid. My Heart Gives Solace to wishes unfulfilled [Pre-Chorus: Shae Gill] I Dot on you , I Call Out Your Name Lets have it out, For Shame. [Chorus: Shae Gill] My Love How can You Know what happen when we part.	The setting further continuing in the backyard, focus on the lead female singer and other characters.	The camera shifts focus to the female lead singer seated on a couch in the backyard and sheds light on some other characters including a braided young girl with nose chain looking at the camera in the mirror, a male character emerging out from a room with neck jewellery and face stickers and jewels, another character seated in a room with red drapes and a female in sari seated inside another room with face stickers along with different musicians and instrumentalists in different parts of the house and two male folk (Jhoomer) dancers dancing at the centre.	Female brought into focus, however she remains sitting while the male lead singer is standing in contrast . Power dynamics? A couple of females - wearing jewellery, putting	Agency Hegemonic Relations Stereotypical Female Traits Challenged: Gender Expression Social Norms Gender Clothing Stereotypical Gender Traits

		Shae Gill] Mere dhol judaiyaan di, tenu khabar kivein hove Aa jaave dil tera, poora vi na hove Haan baniyan banaiyaan di, gal baat kivein hove Aa jaave dil tera, poora vi na hove	I Hope you fall in love, I Hope it breaks your Heart. How will the Willing, Communicate I Hope you fall in love, I Hope it breaks your Heart.			makeup in front of the mirror More charact ers briught in with various forms of express ion breakin g social norms, gender ed clothing , and gender express ion.	
2: 40 - 3: 44		[Bridge: Shae Gill & Ali Sethi] Mere dhol judaiyaan di, sardaari na hove Mere dhol judaiyaan di Ahhhhhaaaa aaa Mere dhol judaiyaan di, sardaari na hove Dildaaran di, sab yaaaran di, aazaari na hove Dildaaran di, sab yaaaran di, aazaari na hove Aa chalein le ke tujhe	[Bridge: Shae Gill & Ali Sethi] My love, don't let this distance reign My love, what of this distance My love, don't let this distance reign Don't let these lovers be in pain Don't let these lovers be in pain Come let's go away where all the lovers meet You are the one, it's you I need Give me life, give me love, take me in your arms Give me life, give me love, take me in your arms		The camera then comes back to the centre where the two singers sit face to face and harmonise continuing the song. The camera also shifts to some other characters both males and females in different attires and from different parts of the sub-continent, also going back to some characters that were seen before in the song.	Both lead singers levelled - come on the same level while harmon ising and singing togethe r. Also in the frame come the other passive charact ers that challen ge the social norms and	Agency Friction Social Norms Gender codepe ndency Gender clothing Gender Express ion

		Hai jahaan silsilay Tu hai wahi, hai teri kami Bana de, saza de, panah de hume Bana de, saza de, panah de hume				limitations they have on expressing their identities.	
3:45 - 4:36		Agg lavan majboori nu Aan jaan di pasoori nu Zehar bane haan teri Pee jaavan main poori nu [Pre-Chorus : Ali Sethi] Raawaan ch baawan ch o nu lukawaan Koi mainu na roke [Chorus: Ali Sethi & Shae Gill] Mere dhol judaiyaan di, tenu khabar kivein hove Aa jaave dil tera, poora vi na hove Haan baniyan banaiyaan di, gal baat kivein hove Aa jaave dil tera, poora vi na hove [Outro: Shae Gill & Ali Sethi] Poora vi na	Set fire to your worries to waiting and to hurries If your love is poison I will drink it completely [Pre-Chorus: Ali Sethi] I will hide him and bide him in loving embraces No one makes me stop [Chorus: Ali Sethi & Shae Gill] My love, how can you know what happens when we part, I hope you fall in love, I hope it breaks your heart How will the willing, communicate I hope you fall in love, I hope it breaks your heart [Outro: Shae Gill & Ali Sethi] I hope it breaks your heart I hope it breaks your heart	The whole backyard as a whole is brought into perspective with different parts of given a close up more to bring in all characters.	The camera slides over all characters looking into the camera from their respective places in the house and the active characters playing their part by singing, dancing or playing the instrument on the beats of the song.	While the harmonising continues the male singer somehow seems to take lead again while he stand and the female lead sits back down. He singer and she listens or harmonises to his solo acts.	Hegemonic Relations Social Norms Agency Matrix of Domination

		hove Poora vi na hove					
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Appendix F

Critical Content Analysis of Codes

Individual Code Analysis

Song: Blinding Lights (Weeknd, 2020)

Gender codependency - The gender codependency in the song are such that the relationship between the male and the female do not appear to be two-way. The perspective presented is of the male singer alone where he shares all that he has been doing and all he would like the female to do for him, while the female stays absent from the vocals entirely and only has one very passive scene in the visuals. We hear the male protagonist sing “I’ve been tryna call, I’ve been on my own for long enough”, “I can’t see clearly when you’re gone” and “I can’t sleep until I feel your touch”. The male thus is able to put forth his reasoning and his expectations in the relationship, while we do not get to hear anything from the female. Feminist theorists like Dear & Roberts (2002) have identified co-dependency of heteronormative binaries, however this music video fails to show codependency from both perspectives and portrays only the male’s need to co-depend and co-exist. Which is highlighted in the lyrics when he asks the female to stay only using “I” to put forth the narrative and does not consider the perspective of the female or even gives her a right to actively participate and/or share. Moreover the tone used by the male here is demanding; “I’ve been tryna call, I’ve been on my own for long enough” and seems to invoke guilt in the person it is sung to. Even with the visuals, the male protagonist is seen doing all the action, moving around, going places getting things done, while the female stays rooted to a stage. The irony is, while the female character seems to be the performer, we hardly see her performing or getting the center stage. In this song, Weeknd stands true to the words of Shakespeare, “All the world’s a stage” and thereby in his life story, Weeknd does all the performing.

Gender Fatalism - In ‘*Blinding Lights*’ by Weeknd (2020), the changes in lights and sound add the rush and intensity of changes and feelings that may be going inside the singer. The music video portrays the male lead as someone who makes rash decisions, drives recklessly, is high, is covered in blood, smokes and throws away the bud. Towards the end of the music video he is also seen trying to run away in the chaos not taking any responsibility for his actions and not even feeling the urge to. He shows self-destructive behaviour with no value for his own life or that of someone else’s. These traits are glorified as something boys portray naturally and can not be questioned. Gender Fatalism as Sarah Ahmed describes it in *Living a Feminist Life* (2017) is defined by ideas of nature as well as time. “What will be” is dependent on “what is” and therefore the characteristic idea of gender fatalism or commonly understood idea of “boys will be boys” comes forth because boys are boys and specific characteristics or behaviouristic traits are associated with them today which are acceptable as is.

Social Norms - Following Gender Fatalism and Stereotypical gendered traits, this music video portrays gender stereotypes as social norms and acceptable behaviour in the society. For instance, in this music video the Weeknd is shown to be irrational, reckless and careless with his own life as well as those around him as he is seen driving rashly, running around and dancing on highways and roads, getting in fights. The music video actually depicts all these

scenes as negative behaviour as they play with the black and darker lights, random movements and especially the colour red often associated with danger and things to evade from. Yet, it also presents it as normal and acceptable as well as applicable to gender fatalism, thereby justifying these acts as the social norm.

Agency - The male lead takes control of the narrative and talks about how he needs the female to be around since she's "the one I [he] trust" when he is out of control and reckless. He therefore is in control of the situation and the female telling her what to do even when he is under the influence of substance and thereby 'out of control'. Ironically, the female, seemingly sober and therefore should be in control, is evidently not given control of anything and is instead a performer controlled by the will of others. Yet another irony is that she plays a singer in the music video, using her voice and words to win over her audience along with our lead male character, yet in the entire song, the audience does not get the opportunity to hear her voice or any words from her while the male continues being in control of the narrative.

Gaze - Deriving from Mulvey's (1989) theory of Male Gaze, this code looks specifically at the camera lens to where its focus lies to come to an understanding of who the potential audience for a song may be. In this music video, while the male lead seems to be having fun and enjoying himself just dancing recklessly and moving onto his own tune the female is a performer for an audience. She appears as an object of desire with closeups on her hands holding the mike delicately and sensually, her movements being focussed; her body and the shimmery dress, a close up of her face, her eyes, her lips making her into a sensual object and not an individual person juxtapositioned next to the male lead who moves on his own rhythm and is in control even while being out of control. While the female character seems to be viewed in this male gaze and seen through a sensualised lens as an object, the male continues getting headshots, shown with a drink or a cigarette, dancing, driving wildly with a sky shot of him enjoying his luxury ride, mercedes.

Stereotypical Gender Traits - The song *Blinding lights* (2020) shows a lot of stereotypical gender traits. The lyrics specifically uses terms and phrases like "show me how to love" "turn me on with just a touch", "don't have to do too much", "judge" and many more to associate with the female as obvious female or feminine traits. The visuals of the song further strengthens these traits of the female as someone judgy, sensual, lovely. While there are not many shots of the female, she only seems to appear as an object of desire for the male lead. It is to be noted that while the male lead seems to be singing the song about a female, she is hardly present in the video and not at all in the lyrics. The male therefore also portrays stereotypical traits of being in command and as someone with some authority or entitlement to make demands of the female. According to Queer theorists Sedgwick (1990), Spargo (1999), Warner (1993), the gendered traits are based on heteronormativity and gender binaries.

Hegemonic relations - Hegemonic relations are observed between the dominated and the dominant groups in the society (Apple, 2009). In this music video the male and female share a hegemonic relationship. In the way that the male calls out to, demands and expresses his desires to his female counterpart show his dominance over her. Moreover, in the music video, his behaviour, expressions and actions add to this general dominance that 'he' as the man feels towards her, 'the woman'. We observe the female depicted as someone delicate and vulnerable

in the music video with the way she moves and has men (male guards) protecting her, while the male lead has no bounds. The male is also depicted as someone with a free will while the female seems to be controlled given that she is a performer trying to please her audience which includes the male lead.

Parasitism - As observed in many of the codes above, in this music video, the male character presents his own perspective where he demands, expects and puts his step down while we never hear the female. This behaviouristic characteristic here where one individual may gain at the expense of another is parasitic. For instance, the specific lyrics sung by our lead singer suggest parasitic behaviour, "I'm running out of time, 'Cause I can see the sun light up the sky, So I hit the road in overdrive, baby, oh" While this particular behaviour may be self destructive, the video correspondence where the male lead is fixated and obsessed with the female on stage.

Moral Policing - Louis Althusser (2001) defines Ideological State Apparatus as the ruling ideology becoming the moral grounds for right and wrong. This music video uses a lot of phrases that touch upon the moral policing of the characters in general and different groups. Phrases like "Sin city", "no one's around to judge..." suggest the existence of a higher religious power that defines morals for the lead character, who while in all his acts realises what he does, his actions will be labelled as wrong in the eyes of that higher power.

Song: Stay (Bieber, 2021)

Gender codependency - The music video shows the perspective of two men and their take on their respective relationships. The woman in the music video is absent from the lyrics and stands frozen in a position throughout the song. This seems to show that the woman is passive and has no perspective or a perspective not important enough to voice, while the males both share screen time and the tone used by the men is demanding and the relationship described by them is that of imbalance with respect to the efforts put into it by the different parties involved. As described by the men themselves, the women seem to be the ones that can be relied upon, whereas the men don't seem to stand true to their words. Feminist theorists have extensively written about codependency especially in heteronormative relationships, however, in this music video, both the aural and the visuals seem to show a lack of codependency. The relationship here seems to be unequal for the parties involved.

Gender Fatalism - The music video portrays the lead singers (males) observing typical male traits which they present to the audience as something that is obvious to their essence. "Ain't no way that I can leave you stranded, 'Cause you ain't ever left me empty-handed" These lines suggest that the man is promising to pay off his debts (as is assumed he obviously does, even when the narration suggests otherwise). And only because the female has always been open in giving since she never leaves him "empty-handed". The music video also suggests the behaviour on the part of the male protagonist(s), for instance dishes lying around, the house as well as bedroom unkempt and untidy, advocating gender fatal behaviour associated specifically with boys/men. According to Gender Fatalism by Ahmed (2017) therefore, this behaviour is categorised as that portrayed by men because they simply are men and one can do nothing about it because it is the most natural thing in the world.

Social Norms - The behaviouristic traits portrayed in this music video by both the male and female protagonists, align with the stereotypical heteronormative social norms. For instance, Kid Laroï is presented as reckless, carefree; jumping in the streets, giving the middle finger, etc, vis-a-vis the female protagonist being emotional and crying while looking at the phone screen. The juxtaposition clearly depicts the association of various behaviouristic traits with particular gender as the both Kid LAROI and Justin Bieber (the two male characters in the music video) seem to portray similar rash-ness, recklessness while the female remains absent, emotional and silent throughout abiding by the social 'norms' that have become acceptable and even expected from a male and female respectively.

Agency - This music video only has a male voice. While it has two perspectives, both are sung by men in different stages of life. The female has no voice in the video and for the most part of the music video stays frozen in a particular stance, therefore, being a passive participant and having little or no agency in the narrative. Similar to '*Blinding Lights*' by the Weeknd (2020), '*Stay*' by Kid LAROI (2021) also only shares the male perspective even though the song seems to have been sung for the female, "When I'm away from you, I miss your touch (Ooh), You're the reason I believe in love, It's been difficult for me to trust." The female seems to be unaware of the song being sung by the male characters too.

Gaze - As mentioned in the codes above, this music video has no narrative besides the one presented by the male singers, on similar lines, the camera follows the male leads around further strengthening the stereotypes associated with different gender under the paradigm of patriarchy. This can be seen by the showcase of the male singers and characters being carefree and dangerous evident from the view of LAROI's house; spilled coffee and milk, undone beds; as well as Bieber's performance on the edge of the roof and LAROI's dance and movements across the streets. While the female in comparison is a silent, passive participant, without even a word to add, react or respond. She is also shown being vulnerable at a public place where the camera goes for a close-up and focuses on a tear dropping from her eyes with a looking beyond appearance on her face. The camera gaze therefore follows the gaze of the male singers while also focusing on them as they sing towards the camera.

Stereotypical Gender Traits - Stereotypical traits are often associated based on the gender of a person, but especially observed and analysed in a character or artist as portrayed in a public event, movies or videos. Here, in this music video also stereotypical heteronormative traits are portrayed by the males and the female artists in the video. The male artists portray recklessness and dependency in the lyrics "Oh, I'll be fucked up if you can't be right here." And "I need you to stay, need you to stay, hey (Oh)" and the visuals depicting an unkempt bed, on the female to help them through difficult times while the female is unresponsive, overly emotional, vulnerable.

Hegemonic relations - This music video portrays a hegemonic relationship between the male and female characters for the female character that the male leads are talking, singing, demanding, are either not visible on the video or do not have the privilege to speak, or even move. One of the female characters (supposedly in a relationship with Kid LAROI's character) is shown frozen in time like everybody else and has no authority to speak or present

her point of view to the male or anyone else. This thus portrays a hegemonic relationship between the male (LARO) and his partner, the female frozen in the cafe with no rights to share her opinions or respond to what the male lead asks of her and/or tell her. The male lead(s) uses a demanding tone to dictate what he needs showing a strained and unequal relationship between the two.

Machiavellianism - Machiavellianism is a personality trait that is used to describe the ability to manipulate using words and phrases. Here in this music video, even after all the unequal and hegemonic relationships, the lead male singers seem to be singing to their female partners who they agree they have let down and go back on their promises, yet use words/phrases to convince them to “stay”. For instance even telling them that they can’t live without their partners and that they “will be fucked up” without their partners; “Oh, I’ll be fucked up if you can’t be right here.”

Parasitism - Parasitic characteristic here is defined as a relationship where one member is benefiting while harming the other person in the relationship. This music video often uses lyrics and visual representation to show how the male characters are trying very hard at their own expense, and at the expense of their physical and mental wellbeing to satisfy their partners. The music video portrays the relationship between them extremely toxic and parasitic in the sense that none of them seem to be happy; the female is seen crying and silent, while the male is running around town, expressing using his words and non-verbal expressions, how he thinks it is indefinite that they will fall into the same patterns again, however begging his partner to stay since he is dependent on her and needs her and thinks he will not find someone else “as good as” her. For instance, the following lines in the lyrics; “I do the same thing I told you that I never would, I told you I’d change, even when I knew I never could, I know that I can’t find nobody else as good as you, I know that I can’t find nobody else as good as you”

Song: Raatan Lambiyan (Asees Kaur, 2021)

Gender codependency - In this music video, gender is manifested using stereotypical gender traits. The male lead is seen chasing the female while the female, although reluctant at first, seems to give in and seek support from the male seen both in the lyrical and visual analysis. The female seems especially dependent on the male for support as she leans into him when walking by themselves, and not always because she needs support, but because that makes the male lead happier. While co-dependency may be important in any relationship, the two parties in the relationship depicted in the music video do not seem to be in a relationship of equals. For instance, while both the characters seem to have graduated from the same university having done the same course, the camera focus with respect to the female has always been on her beauty and her relationships with others, while that of the male has been depicted with respect to his professional growth, and through their journey, we see how that impact their relationship and the dependency of the female character (first on the father- a male figure and then) eventually on the male lead character.

Social Norms - The music video normalizes various social expectations and day-to-day activities under patriarchy. For instance, the male character is shown to grow in power as his journey from university to work life and finally to being a soldier in the army are explored,

however the female is confined to the boundary of her house and the males in her life. When not with her partner, she is seen at home with her father. Again, abiding by the 'norm' or standard set under the rule of patriarchy the female is dependent emotionally, physically, financially on a male figure in her life, first her father and later on her lover.

Agency - In this music video, while both male and female leads have screen time in the video and both are part of the lyrics, the on screen time is different. The visuals show more or less equal screen space, the lyrics however have a male voice for most of the song except for one verse that is sung by the female. There are other female singers that sing in the background harmonizing with the male lead but only one verse sung by the female alone and once the chorus sung by both the male and female singer.

As for the visual analysis on agency, the female lead in the song confines to a patriarchal society coming from a conservative family where the female always has a male around to protect her, either the father or the boyfriend. She hardly ever has a stance of her own or even a scene of her own where she isn't getting dressed but has no male around her. This clearly depicts no agency in the hands of the female and the male being in control of both himself and the female character. The female artist also seems to have no agency when it comes to making decisions for most part of the music video.

Male Gaze - The gaze observed in the music video seems to be a patriarchal lens where the roles defined and described through the video are set within the patriarchal paradigm of what a male and female human can and cannot do. Mulvey (1989) came up with the theory of Male gaze which was defined by the way women were objectified in hollywood movies given that it was the men in charge of the production processes. While here, we don't see objectification as vividly as Mulvey described at the initiation of the theory, other factors contribute to justifying the use of this theory in this music video. For instance, the female in most acts is seen all dressed or getting dressed in traditional attire with makeup and jewellery on, while the male is shown getting 'work' done or travelling for work, etc. The female therefore is only recognised for her beauty giving an irrational amount of screen time on that while for the male we observe practical, workable professional aspects of his life. Similarly when it comes to the lyrics the female's value comes down to *"Oh beloved, how should I spend my nights? Oh, crazy lover, I can't live without you. The long nights flew by, while you were with me."* These instances clearly portray that the female is objectified for her beauty and use to the male and not for who she may otherwise be as a person since the camera does not bother to show such scenes where who the female is or could be, is explored.

Matrix of Domination - Many groups are dominated by the most dominant ones in the society. However, there seems to be hierarchy even between the dominated groups. This forms the matrix of domination. This hierarchy of domination seems to be clearly described through action and physical build in the video where the males are always the dominant group, however even amongst males the dominance seems to subside with introduction of different characters. For instance, the male dominance is established with the male lead who also happens to be a love interest of the lead female. However, with the introduction of the female's father we see a change in the equation of domination between the characters. As seen in the music video, the girl's father supersedes her male partner. This was depicted in the

music video where the partner calls the female at her home phone but instead gets her father and therefore has nothing to say or do and gives in with no conversation.

Stereotypical Gender Traits - Every social construct has stereotypes attached to it, gender being one of them. This music video seems to highlight various stereotypical gender traits among the male and female leads as well as the father. These stereotypes include usage of gendered clothing, behaviour, relations between the characters, etc. in the music video. For instance, the father, being a male becomes a symbol of authority as seen in the video at 01:04 when he picks up the call intended for the female lead and both the lead characters seem to visibly stress out as if they were caught doing something wrong. Other instances of stereotypical traits include the lead female character's clothing which is a traditional attire depicting a grounded female or otherwise popularly termed as "marriage material" in the society as well in major movies seen by millions across the country. And while the female focus on dressing in the traditional attire and dolling up with jewellery as well as other accessories (including bindi- a face sticker worn on the forehead by Indian females) the male lead was shown getting jobs and progressing in his career. The repeated depiction of such traits in popular music videos like this one further strengthens gender stereotypes in the society.

Hegemonic relations - Hegemony or the domination of one group over the other is a widely seen phenomenon. In this case the hegemony is visible in interactions and relationships between genders. The music video normalises the hegemonic relations between the male and the female leads. The female seems to be dependent on the male for support as seen in the video when she leans over, while walking, or even sitting together. When not with her partner, the female lead is shown under the influence of (and scared) of her father, the dominant figure in the family.

Gendered Clothing - Clothing is a major theme in this music video. Set in the backdrop 1990's leading to the Kargil war, the music video makes use of highly gendered clothing. For instance, the female supports traditional female clothing and is also seen wearing accessories to beautify her appearance, as per a blog on Kerelamarriage.com a renowned marriage portal in South India, females should use the traditional, mythological 16 ornaments to dress to be marriage material (Solah Shringar of a Hindu Bride). However, there seems to be no such male counterpart for the same and as seen in the music video, the male supports different casual attire as per his needs and comfort. This sharp contrast in reference to clothing between the male and female leads also draws on the societal pressure a female feels to get dressed and doll up in order to impress or please her lover/mate.

Song: Pasoori (Ali Sethi, 2022)

Gender codependency - In this music video, gender codependency take the form of dependency of both male and female singers on each other or the two parties they represent. In contrast with other music videos, this particular music video depicts a co-dependency between the male and female singers and characters where both sing the same lyrics and it isn't categorized based on their genders. For instance, while the song opens with male singer leading the stage and bringing all the different characters in, once the female singer starts singing, they come to the same level and harmonize together. The gender codependency

depicted in this music video seems to put both the male and the female lead at equal par showing a healthy relation between all characters of different genders.

Gender Expression - Gender expression is defined here as an expression of self however it feels natural, it has nothing or little to do with one's biological sex. Gender expression in this music video is varied and creatively portrayed beyond the boundaries of the heteronormative binary. In this music video we see how different people wear different attires blending the traditional and the contemporary clothing to express themselves however they like. We also see in the music video the characters expressing themselves by accessorizing their face and body using a mixture of traditional and unconventional accessories, stickers, etc. This music video therefore challenges many gender stereotypes and the "conventional" or "standard" way in which gender is presented and expressed in society.

Gender Fatalism- Gender Fatalism as defined by Ahmed (2017) is the idea of associating behaviouristic traits to a gender and then normalizing and/or justifying it by using phrase such as "boys will be boys". This music video however challenges gender fatalism and the gender traits associated with different sexual and gender orientations. In the music video we see the presence of different genders and different gender expressions. We further see different people from different genders spread out and indulge in different art forms according to their liking.

Social Norms- the social norms in terms of behavioral characteristics, stereotypical traits, and the holistic view of gendered groups and these codependency are also being challenged in this music video. While in the society this music video was released to, parts of the community still think is feminine to dance, especially to a folk or classical dance form, yet, this music video celebrates all its artists, singer, dancers, theater actors alike, irrespective of their gender identity and expression. In doing so, this video takes a huge stance on inclusion, diversity and expression and therefore challenges locally as well as globally accepted social norms.

Agency- The agency, although not equally in terms of symbolic representations (the height at which the two singers stand at different points in the video) and screen time (the male lead singer gets more screen time as compared to the female lead, however the female dancer gets more screen time in comparison with the male dancers), has been divided between the male and female lead singers as well as other performers of different orientations and identities. In this music video, both the male and the female characters hold authority and agency over their own actions and in their lyrics. Both male and female lead singers have a voice and share their narratives, harmonizing together as well as with the other instrumentalists and dancers collectively working for the song in the music video.

Matrix of Domination - Matrix of domination as first given by Patricia Hill Collins in 2000, includes how different sects of the society that are dominated also have a hierarchy and matrix between themselves to exist among themselves and with other sections of the society. These sects are usually dominated groups based on gender, race, etc. This music video portrays traces of different genders, race, ethnic backgrounds and cultures and the intersections between them. By bringing all these forces in a single video with scenes and camera gaze falling on the different artists in the video without showing any domination of any group or

person over the other and giving each the freedom to express themselves however they wish to, this video challenges the matrix of domination as we understand it in society.

Hegemonic Relations - Hegemonic relations as this paper codes is understood as the relationship between any two groups where one dominates the other. Hegemonic relations are challenged in this music video since all groups of people coming from different genders, race, ethnicity and cultures are given an opportunity to express themselves however they prefer. Moreover there is no discrimination between any group based on their gender, caste, creed, religion, race, culture, etc.

Parasitism - Parasitism can be observed if one party seems to benefit at the cost of harming the other. The lyrical analysis of this music video seems to suggest traces of parasitism. Although seemingly self imposed and not forced by external societal pressures, the singers (both male and female) talk about self harm for “love”. *If your Love is poison, I’ll drink it in a flurry (Zehar Bane Haan Teri, Pee Javaan Main Poori Nu)*. This music video therefore depicts parasitism in its song lyrics sung by both the male and female leads.

Gender Clothing - Clothing is very uniquely portrayed in this music video. And while the music video shows many traditional attires, the way that the artists modify it or carry it is unique and ungendered. This music video has a varied set of artists and performers from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. While many artists wear traditional gendered clothing, several are also seen supporting gender neutral clothing, makeup, jewelry, etc. This music video therefore does a great job at questioning what gendered clothing is if each individual has their own style of wearing it and expressing themselves.

Friction- This music video portrays traces of different genders, race, ethnic backgrounds and cultures. By doing so, not only does this video challenge the matrix of domination but also creates a friction between the social issues of how gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, etc are perceived.

Collective Code Analysis

Gender Codependency: For this study, the term is coined to represent how genders co-exist or become codependent with respect to one’s own gender identity I draw on feminist theories (Irvine, 1995; Dear & Roberts, 2002) to understand the co-dependence of heteronormative gender binaries and how they ‘should’ co-depend to co-exist. The gender codependency between males and females in most of the song analyses do not appear to be two-way. The relationship seems to be explored and shared with the audience from just one perspective in Weeknd’s *Blinding Lights* (2020) and although multiple but just male perspectives in Laroi’s *Stay* (2021). Both English songs topping the music charts in Canada have no female perspectives. The male(s) controls the narrative and presents themselves as vulnerable and hurt while asking for forgiveness for their sins. In Kaur’s *Raatan Lambiyan* (2020) and Sethi’s *Pasoori* (2022), on the other hand, while both male and female perspectives are presented, the

male perspective seems to dominate the screen. Especially in Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021), the female appears to be dependent on the male both physically and emotionally. In Sethi's *Pasoori* (2022) though the audience sees co-dependency between the male and female performers, often complimenting each other's works to make a symphony. Gender codependency therefore, in these popular music videos in Canada and India between 2020-2022 majorly represent an unequal level of co-dependence or co-existence between the binary genders of the heteronormative paradigm. It is often normalised to see females and weak and absent while we are made aware of the male perspective and see through their lens.

Gender Expression: A person may choose to express themselves however feels natural to them even if not commonly expected as the norm in the society. This code (for this study) highlights actions, behaviours, mannerisms, interests, appearances, etc that question the degree to which an individual is perceived to conform or not conform to societal expectations of masculinity and femininity (Wylie, 2010; Gordan, 2021). Unfortunately neither of the two videos analyses from the popular music videos in Canada between 2020-2022 emphasise on gender expression or challenge the existing gender norms. Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) from India also conforms to stereotypical gender binary norms further strengthening them instead of encouraging gender expression. However, Sethi's *Pasoori* (2022) depicts various characters in the music video that explore their gender identity and therefore gender expression through dance, music, cosmetics and jewels. The audience sees an extensive use of traditional clothing along with unisex clothing and makeup, jewels, etc to artistically show the feelings and expressions of different people who are not restricted to do so just to conform to gender norms dictated by the society.

Gender Fatalism: Drawing from Sarah Ahmed's (2017) work and how she describes this term, Gender Fatalism entails how certain gender acts are harmful. For instance, "boys will be boys" is just an excuse with a stamp of social acceptance that is breeding non-acceptable behaviour by associating it with a particular gender to somehow make it a natural occurrence giving a free pass with no opposition from society. This code highlights such behaviour which may often go unquestioned otherwise in lieu of general social acceptance. As observed in the music video analysis for the popular ones in India and Canada, many of them strengthen gender fatalism. Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020) portrays men as rash, out of control, reckless while Laro'i's *Stay* (2021) portrays men as impulsive, carefree, not standing by their promises and in both cases the characteristics are believed to be a natural part of them about which nothing can be done. Moreover the music video itself as well as the male leads urge the female(s) to accept these traits and support them while they continue objectifying the females.

Stereotypical Gender Traits: This code highlights the generally expected traits of a female in current society; nurturing, accommodating, submissive, etc. And those of a male human in the society; aggressive, strong, etc. This specifically caters to heteronormative behaviouristic characteristics associated with the gender binaries in the music videos in lyrical and visual aspects of songs through verbal and non-verbal behaviors. I rely on queer theory and queer theorists; Sedgwick (1990), Spargo (1999), Warner (1993), to guide the discussion of traits associated with heteronormativity and the gender binaries as those mentioned above. Even in the 21st century, it is apparent that these stereotypical traits are not only still associated the same way in the heteronormative binary system but also selling while being glorified to form

the very definition of what it means to be a man and a woman in society. As observed in Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020), the man is rash and aggressive and needs the female who is the only one he trusts to calm him down with "just a touch" for she is the nurturer and caregiver in their relationship. Similarly in Laroi's *Stay* (2021), the men in the music video seem to mess up yet demand the female(s) to Stay by their side and help them through their difficult times. Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) is also not very far off with these stereotypes. The man ultimately becoming the breadwinner and the female being restricted to the confines of her house (even when both received their education together). We also observe in this music video the role of the father as the patriarchal figure who is feared and is in control of things that happen in and around his household. Sethi's *Pasoori* (2022), however, doesn't particularly confine to these gendered stereotypes. In this music video we observe the presence of both the male and female lead singers sharing the screen space along with other artists. We also do not observe inequality in terms of the singers active presence in the video while they harmonise together. Therefore, while most of the music videos popular in India and Canada between 2020-2022 do portray stereotypical gendered traits, there are also those that may not anymore.

Gaze: Drawing from Mulvey's (1989) theory of the Male gaze highlights the lens and gaze the camera follows with its angles, close-ups, etc and the aimed audience. In a patriarchal society the target audience is males and therefore their needs are always a priority. This code shall dissect each of the music videos to understand what gaze does the camera follow and which audience does it try to appeal to most. Most popular music videos, as observed in the analysis, use the male gaze as theorised by Mulvey (1989), to follow the camera lens. Weeknd's *Blinding lights* (2020) as well as Laroi's *Stay* (2021) both have only male perspectives and the female(s) has no voice, yet the camera does follow the female body closely from various angles enticing the male audience. Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) does not necessarily follow the characters with the male gaze in terms of objectifying the female body yet it does define the female by her looks and the efforts put into her "getting ready" while the male takes on more crucial roles and other stereotypical characteristics such as being carefree and unrestricted.

Gender Clothing: Often, the clothes worn by males and female characters in music videos are stereotypical, reinforcing gender notions and power relations. Again, drawing from Butler's (1990) idea of gender performance, this code specifically caters to the clothing and attire worn by characters which are determined by or for strengthening stereotypes. Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020) shows the male character in a red formal suit representing both a man of class yet a man free and unapologetic, even aggressive, the female however is placed in front of an audience as a performer, glittery and shimmery with the sole purpose of pleasing her audience and catching the attention of our male lead. Laroi's *Stay* (2021) observes the male leads supporting hoodies and casuals, being the GenZ, while the female supports a dress. Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) observes the male character in various different attires and uniforms, from casual to formal to a soldier uniform, while the female is always seen wearing a traditional woman wear (female suit with a dupatta).

Social Norms: This code talks about the acceptance of various cultural norms in different contexts as standards. And how, if there is any deviation, do we as a society 'deal' with it.

Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020), Laroi's *Stay* (2021) and Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) all observe acceptance of social norms which include stereotypical traits, behavioural characteristics, holistic view of a gender and expectations in the form of gender roles and requirements. However, Sethi's *Pasoori* (2022) quite a number of times challenges these norms with the clothing being gender neutral with an amalgamation of modern and traditional on a number of places, the roles not defined but challenged (both girls and boys can dance, and they do), free to express using face makeup and jewels, body jewellery, etc.

Agency: I draw on feminist theories (Bowden & Mummery, 2014; Dumitru, 2018) to highlight the code of agency. Here, agency is understood as the capacity of each individual (of each character portrayed) to have control over their actions and achieve their own potential in a music video using music, lyrics, setting, cinematography, etc. Both Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020) and Laroi's *Stay* (2021) give complete agency and authority to the male lead singers to tell their narrative and control it with the female not being a part of it at all, even with the music videos, the females are only part of the video as props and objects not as individuals with a mind of their own. Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021), observes both female and male singers having a voice, yet the male voice being more dominant, while the female focusing on the male being the centre of her universe. Sethi's *Pasoori* (2022) on the other hand has both the male and female lead singers sharing the narrative and harmonising together, even the other characters in the music video enjoy shared screen space without segregating or discriminating based on gender.

Moral Policing: How the ideological state apparatus as defined by French Marxist Louis Althusser, i.e, subjugation to ruling ideology (Althusser, 2001) becomes moral grounds defining right and wrong for a person. Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020) uses terms like "Sin City...." "No one's around to judge me.." using religious institutions and their teachings to define right and wrong. The artist therefore using these as his primary justifications and labelling Los Angeles as the "sin city" embarks on committing a sin given no one is present to judge him.

Matrix of Domination: The matrix of domination or oppression given by Patricia Hill Collins (2000) is a sociological paradigm that talks about the interconnection between the different classifications of oppression. While the interconnections between gender and other types of discrimination hardly cross paths in these popular music videos, in Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) we see one rare example where while the male dominance under the rule of patriarchy is apparent, we see the matrix at work when a clash between the father of the girl and her boyfriend come in one frame readjusting the rules of patriarchy and dominance.

Hegemonic relationships: Hegemony is defined as leadership or dominance of one group over the other. Here, this code refers to the relationship between the two groups, the dominant and the dominated (Apple, 2009; Giroux, 1983). In the field of gender, our society has primarily been patriarchal and therefore usually dominated by heteronormative males. The females are often dominated along with others that do not identify in the heteronormative paradigm. With the presence of Agency, Gaze, Gender Fatalism and codependency, the hegemonic relations between the heteronormative binary are clear. We observe hegemonic relations between males (the dominant) and females (the dominated). In Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020), with the

absence of the female voice in the lyrics and the male being in control of the narrative as well as the female body (evident from the camera lens and the male lead's facial expressions and body language). Laroi's *Stay* (2021) depicts the hegemonic relations with the frozen female with no words or control over anything, while the male(s) in the music video has the freedom to express his opinion and move around while others are frozen.

Parasitism: Parasitism is a symbiotic relationship in which a symbiont lives all or part of its life in or on its living host, usually benefiting itself while harming the host (Westwood et al., 2010). I use this concept of symbiotic relationships to draw parallels with the relationship between genders as often portrayed in popular culture. In the music videos of Laroi's *Stay* (2021) and Sethi's *Pasoori* (2022) the characters portray parasitic behaviour where they talk about self harm physically, mentally or emotionally. The singers express how they are willingly open to self-harm and destruction to satisfy or please their partners. They portray highly toxic and parasitic relationships instead of one with co-dependence and mutual satisfaction.

Machiavellianism: Machiavellianism is a personality trait that describes the ability to manipulate and use any means necessary to get your way (Bereczkei, 2017). Here this code represents the use of words and/or actions to show manipulation between genders to get one person to do what the other wants. Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020) uses Machiavellianism by expressing how it becomes difficult for the male lead to function and do daily mundane tasks without the female lead. Laroi's *Stay* (2021) uses this trait by pointing out the mess they will be in if their partner were to leave them. Kaur's *Raatam Lambiyan* (2022) uses the same to point out how spending a night without their partner is nearly impossible for the male lead. The presence of Machiavellianism in three out of the four popular music videos chosen for this thesis presents how commonly this behaviouristic trait seems to be used by male leads in pop culture and therefore perhaps in our surroundings as well.

Homosociality: In the field of sociology the concept of homosociality describes socio bonds between people of the same biological sex (Lipman-Blumen, 1976; Sedwick, 1985). In India as has been observed with popular cultures such as in cinema, music videos, etc, given the ban of homosexuality under the colonial rule, homosexual behavior often goes unacknowledged and misunderstood as homosocial behaviour, for instance in the movie '*Yaarana*' (Gabriel, 2013; Raj, 2017). None of the popular music videos selected from India and Canada between 2020-2022, for this analysis used this particular code. I wonder if that means this sociological concept may no longer be valid or reduced or unpopular among pop culture today. I also wonder if that means a higher rate of acceptance of homosexuality in society.

Friction: In the study of ecological movements and ecofeminism, Anna Tsing (2016) conceptualised the idea of 'friction' between conflicting forces such as environment and social justice. Gender is also made and remade through its engagement with global-local forces. And with that understanding of 'friction' this code will look at the interconnections and collisions of gender with global-local forces in each of the socio-cultural contexts of the music videos. Most music videos do not integrate environmental forces, however *Pasoori* (Kaur, 2022) raises global and local issues about the conflicts between the two neighbouring countries India and Pakistan. Although appearing to be a brawl between two lovers, the song actually draws

parallels with the wars and global conflicts the two countries have faced even after the history they share.

Objectification: The objectification theory primarily defines how individuals are compared to objects for their use instead of being treated as individuals with unique personality traits. Individuals are in such a case treated as a body or an assemblage of body parts (McKinley and Hyde, 1996; Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997). Most music videos analysed in this thesis objectify the dominated group; females. Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020) objectifies the female singer that has no voice but the camera captures different angles of her body fixating on different body parts. Laroi's *Stay* (2021) does something similar by making her an inanimate object frozen in time and space with the inability to move or speak. Kaur's *Raatan Lambiyan* (2021) does that to the female lead while glorifying her moments of dressing up and not associating any other characteristic to her.

Appendix G

Survey Analysis

Participant Analysis (Horizontal):

Participant 1: Charlie

The participant, Charlie is exposed to songs in English and Punjabi language and in those feels represented with respect to the language. Language here is probably representative in terms of the widespread use of the language that is used in songs, and is also used in real life and their environment. They feel uncomfortable with music videos that portray females as being submissive. It is their belief that females are presented as objects in India and many music videos have females dancing around the singer, who I believe is a male singer. It is interesting to see how Charlie mentions the gender of the background dancers but does not do so for the singer. It is also interesting to note that by default when Charlie mentions singer or a lead role, they presume it will be obvious that the gender will be male. Charlie believes that such a representation impacts the way the younger generation. Charlie also points out that according to his exposure of Indian music videos in Punjabi language, other genders, besides the binary, are never discussed.

Charlie analyzes the Music Video *Stay* by Kid Laroi and Justin Bieber. According to Charlie the lyrics of the song and this music video does not represent any specific gender and is inclusive of all gender. Charlie thinks instead the video portrays a generic person and not a specific gender. Charlie also believes that the video has no gender based stereotypes. It is interesting to note how Charlie earlier in the first section mentions the lack of representation of different genders (in Indian music videos) yet while analyzing the chosen music video; *Stay* believes it is inclusive of all genders even when this music video itself only has one perspective; that of the male lead(s). Noteworthy is also the opinion that there are no gender stereotypes in the song. Charlie fails to analyze the way the characters speak, the lyrics itself, the passive/ almost non-existence of the female character, etc. I believe Charlie perhaps connects personally more with the video in the sense of two gender neutral partners separating and therefore the act of missing an ex-partner than dive deeper in the analysis of the multi-layered themes presented in the music video, which as Charlie mentions, would impact the minds of the younger generation, I would say also impact every other generation.

Participant 2: Blake

Blake watches music videos biweekly and prefers pop and rock. Blake mentions not feelings represented in music videos however, doesn't clarify further on why they don't. They write about how they feel uncomfortable with the way gender is represented for instance while watching the explicit and graphic content available to everyone in a Nicki Minaj music video. It is interesting to note how Blake lists a female artist and the "graphic/explicit" content available on the internet when asked what makes them uncomfortable. Further, Blake disagrees about the accuracy of music videos in reflecting the diversity of gender identities and expressions in the country. And believes music videos have the potential to influence the way one's own gender is perceived. Blake chose Kid Laroi's *Stay* to analyze which they think does not portray any gender roles or categories related to gender. I believe Blake may need some scaffolding with respect to the terms or themes that they might look at to analyze. While

they seem to catch onto some things they may not have the appropriate words or theoretical knowledge to express it and might also not be aware of their own prejudices.

Participant 3: Quinn

Quinn does not listen to or watch music videos often, when they do it is usually pop. They feel represented in certain aspects and not in some. They feel represented as they think the western media is becoming more accepting and representative of plus sized bodies, however they don't feel representative since there is a lack of representation of neurodivergence and queerness in mainstream media. Quinn feels uncomfortable with most music video releases in the early 2000s due to a lack of diversity in body size. It is fair to assume here that Quinn does not feel like they belong to the mainstream ideas or social norms set in their society regarding their gender identity, physical appearance and mental abilities. They therefore have been made to feel like an outsider or the "dominated" and may have found themselves in the middle of a matrix of domination making them more aware of and sensitive about gender representations along with friction with other social issues in the society. They believe that "Portrayal of women in music videos has improved to capture a broader range of gender roles, but representation for more expansive gender identities and expressions (ie, trans and nonbinary individuals, feminine presenting men, masculine presenting women, androgyny, etc) is still missing from mainstream media, or at least is not as commonplace as it could be. They also believe that a broader representation of gender roles, identities and expressions in the media reflect a growing awareness and acceptance. Quinn doesn't think their concept of gender was impacted but they think that could be due to a lack of representation in their growing years. They think the first time they felt represented was in 2014 when Megan Trainor released all about that Bass" but Quinn is not a fan of that song and therefore doesn't listen to it or watch it. And while I understand that song was one of the firsts to revolutionize or try and change a mindset, it is equally important to note even while promoting different body types, it has lyrics like "Yeah, my mama she told me don't worry about your size, She says, boys like a little more booty to hold at night" feeling good about your body still seems to have something about how it can be used or be useful to "boys".

For the song analysis Quinn picked Kid Laroi's *Stay*. Quinn thinks that "the lyrics contain some pretty harmful tropes, including perpetuating men's toxic behavior and the implicit assumption that their partners should put up with it." They think that "It's a pretty stereotypical portrayal of gender where a man tells his partner, who is presumed to be a woman, that he needs her and begs her not to leave. The narrator lists why his partner is hurt/frustrated/leaving him - he did "the same thing I told you that I never would " so it can be assumed that he hurt his partner in some way. He also promised that he would change "even when I knew I never could" which indicates his toxic behavior. But he still needs his partner to stay because he "can't live without [her]". Quinn believes that "It's a typical representation of gender. The men are wearing jeans and t-shirts/jackets and the women are wearing dresses. The Kid Laroi spends the music video essentially chasing the one who got away as he begs her not to leave him, which is a trope we see in many music videos." Notice the use of "typical representation of gender" and the stereotypes attached to the traits, the clothing and what may be called a social norm. Guy chasing a girl who got away and begging her to not leave somehow is the typical view giving birth to stereotypes such as "mean, drama-queen, emotional, manipulator, even toxic" for females and "romantic, kind, gentleman" for the males.

Quinn does not think the video had any harmful stereotypes. I believe with a better scaffold, and more theoretical phrases Quinn may be able to express in more detail what they already have and then connect their own understanding and experiences while analyzing this music video or anything around them on gender. Quinn sure is aware of many gender based issues around them, they need a general push to understand and express their apprehensions better. And the target audience for the music video according to Quinn should be “Teens and young adults due to the young actors and the styling of the artists (very gen z with them wearing baggy shirts, baggy jeans, and puffy jackets)”

Participant 4: Jessie

Jessie does not watch many music videos and is more indulged with music on tiktok. Jessie likes many different genres but currently is drawn towards “indie, dream pop, and classical music.” Jessie feels like they are represented in music videos and listen to many women artists that they connect with and feel the video sends an appropriate message. Jessie thinks “overly sexual music videos by male artists where the men are dressed up while the women are half naked make me uncomfortable especially when it’s clear that the “sex sells” mindset it used. There are videos that are about being proud and owning your sexuality and having nudity but it showing different bodies and people and/or telling a story where nudity isn’t only being for sexual/objectifying purposes that I’m not uncomfortable with. I think it’s just seeing so many videos where it’s women basically being sexual objects that make me uncomfortable since there’s not as many videos like that about men (or there wasn’t as much more than a couple years ago when I would watch some music videos) and they are not as expected to do that in videos. “ Jessie points out objectification theory that suggests using people as objects or assemblage of objects that have a purpose to fulfill for other parties. McKinley and Hyde (1996) and Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) describe the theory as Individuals treated as a body or an assemblage of body parts. Exactly that happens with the females as described by Jessie when discussing the general state of artists or character in a music video. Also to note here is the Gaze that Jessie refers to, Mulvey’s (1989) theory of the Male gaze highlights the lens and gaze the camera follows with its angles, close-ups, etc and the aimed audience. In the patriarchal society we live in, the gaze followed is that of a man/male. Therefore when Jessie refers to the females bodies being sexualised and/or nude, not to celebrate it or empower them but to attract a male audience and adapting the “sex sells” mindset Jessie refers to. While Jessie listens more to the songs than watch their videos, they think, music videos would impact the way I think about my gender identity and expression because if it’s a popular video it can make it feel like this is the way things have to be since it’s so popular with many people. For example some years ago there were a number of very popular videos at one time that showed women being very sexual and it made me think that I as a woman also needed to be very sexual in order to be liked, desired or to find relationships with men. As for the song analysis Jessie analyzes Asees Kaur’s *Raatan Lambiyan*. While for the most part Jessie thinks the lyrics can be switched to any gender, they think one part could portray gender roles and it’s where the female singer says “I am following you”. I think it’s usually more expected that women follow men. Jessie also highlights a crucial underlying message put forth through the video that “Men can have fun with dating while women have to date for marriage and to have a family.” This sentiment throws light on gender codependency, i.e., how gender co-exist and co-depend as well as the idea of gender fatalism, i.e., certain gender acts being harmful yet accepted. While men are “allowed” to have fun and mess around, the

general social ideas about females who may do so are very different. Such females would be name-called, compared with sex workers (not that there's anything wrong with being one, however the social outlook unfortunately, even in the 21st century is to use a professional business as an insult for any woman walking out of the so-called line). Therefore if a male decides to do something “casually” it is acceptable, however in the case of a female it is not. Jessie thinks “the target audience for this song is more for women from teens to adults. It seems like a very sweet song about love that younger girls might dream of having and adults that might also dream of having or already have and relate it to their experience. I think women also fantasize more about love and these types of situations than men do. Even after pointing out some wonderful instances where one might question how gender is represented in this video, Jessie terms the video as “romantic”. I believe Jessie may not be able to overcome their own worldview and preconceived notions to express what they see and analyze it with respect to gender.

Participant 5: Alex

Alex watches music videos quite often and usually engages with pop songs/artists. Alex does not feel represented and thinks most women are depicted as powerless, thoughtless or straight up gold diggers. According to Alex, most of the time the portrayal of gender in music videos is either stereotypical with respect to "gender roles" or outrightly sexist and misogynistic. There are a bunch of music videos by Indian singers such as Badshah and Honey Singh where they treat women as armrests for the entire duration of the song and nothing more. Alex here reflects on gender roles (the singer as a professional takes the lead whereas the females appear as the “oomph” factor in the background all over the male to depict his sex appeal), gender clothing (The males could be spotting casuals, be in traditional wear, be formally dressed in suits or anything that goes well with the setting, and what the song is about, but the female will always be wearing short dresses or crop tops, etc and dance seductively, whether it be on a dessert, the ocean, on icebergs or middle of nowhere), gender fatalism (The male will act as “boys” do and just be passed off as something acceptable including catcalling, chasing girl(s) etc), gaze (the camera always follows a male gaze, zooming in on the bare or naked skin of the female from different angles or showing the females wrapped around the male), agency (the female will have little or no voice, her job is to dance around the male while the male takes over the singing), hegemonic relations (the male and female always seem to have a relation based on hegemony, hierarchy. The male gets more screen time and the female must follow his lead), and objectivity theory (the female is treated as an object to be used when and where required and not a unique individual with their own need). Alex further explains how most music videos in my country are focused around heteronormative love stories where the guy is chasing the girl in order to impress her or crying about losing the love of his life to a guy who has more money or power than him. It doesn't specifically care about gender identities and gender roles and their impact on the audience. They further clarify that most songs in my country rarely care about social messages and their impact on society at large since their focus is strictly to make a catchy tune that can make a hit song. They don't care if women are portrayed in a regressive manner or not. Non binary or transgender folks get absolutely no representation in the music videos in our country. Songs are an integral part of the culture in our country and have a huge potential to impact the society and bring positive changes, but unfortunately they rarely take charge. A lot of new singers independently try to create videos that are more focused on the song and less on the prevailing marketing trends for the song, but

those rarely get as many viewers as the popular songs of Bollywood or other regional industries.

As for the song analysis, Alex chose the song *Pasoori* (Kaur, 2022). Alex thinks the lyrics were pretty gender neutral, and there was no commentary on any gender roles as per my understanding of the lyrics. The video shows a bunch of artists of different age groups and artforms coming together to put their best foot forward. There's no stereotypes based on clothing, art form or status of artists in the video.

They also don't think the video presents any gender stereotypes in terms of costume, story telling, hierarchy of artists or art forms and the lyrics are already pretty genderfluid as per their opinion so there don't seem to be any harmful stereotypes in the music videos. The bracket for the target audience is quite vast as per the understanding of Alex, the song is pretty genderfluid and doesn't portray any harmful stereotypes for the masses. They think almost everyone can enjoy this song.

Participant 6: Grey

The participant, Grey rarely watches music videos, and when they do they prefer rap/rnb/bollywood. Some particular artists they listen to are Kendrick, J Cole, Kanye, Zayn etc. Grey finds some particular songs with a GenZ vibe and a strong feminist foot to be relatable. Grey feels uncomfortable especially by the way gender is presented in bollywood, they feel like women are materialized way too often and that's too normalized in the society. All the "item songs" somehow always revolve around materializing women or overly sexualizing them which makes Grey uncomfortable and question the industry. For instance bollywood item songs, like 'munni badnam' and 'gandi baat' are cheap in how they portray women in the music videos. Grey here observes and points out many themes covered in this project, specifically gendered clothing in how the "item songs" have the females wearing traditional clothing in an unconventional manner exposing more areas on their body while the female runs around dancing with groups of men that are chasing her. "Item Songs" as popularly termed in the Indian movie industry are known as the songs where the female dances provocatively to upbeat and catchy tunes in order to attract the male audience. The song as a stand alone usually has no relevance to the plot. By the very nature of these songs the female lead in the song is supposed to be wearing revealing clothes. These songs have been a part of mainstream bollywood films since the 80's. Therefore objectification theory is an integral part of the whole concept of item songs since their very nature is to objectify females in order to sell the film to a larger audience. As a citizen of India, Grey finds discrimination between genders to be a prevalent topic. As for the music videos, Grey feels that the depiction of men somehow always revolves around how "strong, masculine, macho" those men are. The glorification of being a "womanizer" is very often done in movies in my country. And when it comes to women, they're shown as the "shy, meek, vulnerable, weak" character or they get overly sexualized and materialized in the next "item song". According to Grey that accurately depicts how people still view the two genders in the country. It is interesting to note how Grey points out the two genders and just the two heteronormative genders. Within this system of heteronormativity the gender codependency is described by Grey, male as the macho, strong, boys-don't-cry kind and females as "shy, meek, vulnerable and weak" therefore highly dependent on the male to protect them and keep them secure. We thus also see hegemonic relations where the male thus becomes the dominant and the female is dominated.

As per Grey the media or the entertainment industry is extremely influential. The younger generation tend to look up to it and even follow it or use that as a medium to base their own opinions and thoughts around things. Grey thinks the industry does have its good sides also, for instance the availability of content on topics like feminism, women empowerment, discrimination, awareness about certain problems. According to them, while slowly, there is a change in the way characters of different genders are being portrayed. Grey thinks music videos have helped them boost their confidence and expression.

As for the analysis, Grey analyzed Weeknd's *Blinding Lights* (2020). Abel's songs define toxic masculinity as "a narrow and repressive description of manhood, designating manhood as defined by violence, sex, status and aggression. Wherein manliness is defined by emotional toughness, and showing emotional vulnerability is seen as a weakness. Coming down to gender roles portrayed in this song, the lyric "Maybe you can show me how to love", trying to mean it's a woman's job to teach men how to love and care. The stereotypical role of women as the caregiver or someone who is expected to love and forgive is shown in the song. Stereotypes of any kind can be damaging to society. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women's and men's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and/or make choices about their lives. It gives off this idea or a given path that women ought to follow. Grey analyzes this song using many gender concepts. It is very important to note here that Grey seems to be well read on the issues about gender and seems to have a good theoretical base having appropriate vocabulary to express what they observe and keeping a keen eye about it too. Grey discusses gender codependency and hegemonic relations here in the form of the relationship between heteronormative genders and how females are dependent on males. They also point out Gender Fatalism and toxic masculinity being a great example of the same where men just go around to prove how masculine they are only to have that justified as a social norm or something men "just do".

As for the appropriate audience for this music video Grey thinks mostly male teens from the ages of 13 to 23. As per Grey, if you're talking about his old albums like *Trilogy* and *Kiss Land*, they tended to attract people who were maybe calm, collected and maybe had insecurities or were awkward. Much like the Weeknd himself who has admitted he used to be very awkward, anxious and insecure in his life. Fans of those albums really related to the Weeknd in this manner. Grey has seen many people say that the Weeknd's old music helped them get through tough times in their life and because of the dark, melancholy nature of his old music.

Thematic Analysis (Vertical):

Representation in Music Videos (MVs): Half the participants feel represented in language, or connecting with the artists and the message their video gives away or when the song has a strong feminist lens or with more acceptance and representation of plus-sized bodies. While the other half do not feel represented. A participant mentions how females in music videos are often portrayed as powerless, thoughtless or even gold diggers, something they do not relate with. According to participants, music videos also lack representation of the neurodivergent and queer community. It is fair to say then that the music and film industry in general in both the countries has become more accepting of emerging worldviews and diversity, however it has a long way to go for many many communities are yet to feel represented in popular mainstream media consumed by large masses.

Uncomfortable with gender portrayal in MVs: It is really interesting to note that even though the participants vary in ages across 18-25, in their backgrounds, the country they live in, the kinds of music they listen to, the languages they speak, their gender identities and as I am sure, many other things, all participants agreed the portrayal of women or females in music videos make them uncomfortable. Portrayal of women as submissive, sexual objects, particular body type, having stereotypical gender roles, treated as armrests, materialising or overly sexualising them in music videos unsettles all our participants. And the fact that there are too many videos all around the world portraying females as all the descriptive words mentioned above while males are not has certainly something to say about how women are viewed in the society. As Jessie writes the “sex sells” mindset is prevalent in both Canadian and Indian societies as per our participants.

Portrayal of Gender roles and Identities in popular MVs in your country: All participants believe that popular music videos are unfortunately not the greatest examples of portraying gender roles and identities in their country. While some agree that the state has improved in the last decade with a much broader range of gender roles becoming acceptable in a few places, gender is still understood in heteronormative terms with discrimination and hegemonic relationships highlighted between males and females. Males being portrayed as Grey points out “strong, masc, macho” and glorification of being a womanizer as a badge while females portrayed as “meak, shy, vulnerable, weak, overly sexualised and materialised”. As Charlie quips, “females in music videos are presented as objects.” As an example Charlie mentions that they are often seen dancing around singers who are more probable to be males. Therefore as described by the participants, the female artists in music videos seem to be a prey of objectification theory where they appear as mere objects to please or be of some use to their male counterparts and that as per the participants is not a correct representation of gender diversity in their country.

Impact of Popular MVs: As discussed above, popular music videos do not seem to be a great representation of gender diversity in the two countries (Indian and Canada). They do, however, even in their current state impact their audience and their idea of gender. While most participants think it has a huge influence on the audience, especially the younger generation who doesn’t know any better, not all think it is a positive impact. Blake shares how music videos can be empowering for those who see themselves but very rigid and put someone who doesn’t see themselves into self doubt. For instance, Quinn and Grey both share a lot of acceptance and growth in the content available, however Quinn growing up never related to any character from the music video due to a lack of representation. Grey found that it boosted their confidence whenever they were represented. In Jessie’s experiences though popular music videos try to mould you into the norm, for them, as a child they felt they needed to be more sexual or get in relationships with men in order to be accepted and liked since that is what they took away from popular music videos or artists they liked. Charlie points out how representation in music videos has been restricted to the binaries. These examples from the participants portray a great example of how they themselves were affected by music videos and how the younger generations might thus be affected by popular music videos. While it helps some boost their confidence and validate what they are going through, for others it might become some rigid lines and boxes they are confined to and feel uncomfortable about

never being able to reveal their true self. And for another percentage it might mislead them into becoming something they don't want to be but think they should in order to be accepted in the society.

Song wise analysis:

- a) **Blinking Lights:** The participant discussed extensively the stereotypical role of a male and female below Weeknd's "song defines toxic masculinity; a narrow and repressive description of manhood, designating manhood as defined by violence, sex, status and aggression. Wherein manliness is defined by emotional toughness, and showing emotional vulnerability is seen as a weakness. The stereotypical idea of men therefore drug abuse, rash driving etc, these are a few things that are considered "cool" when being done by a man. Coming down to gender roles portrayed in this song, the lyric "Maybe you can show me how to love", trying to mean it's a woman's job to teach men how to love and care. The stereotypical role of women as the caregiver or someone who is expected to love and forgive is shown in the song. Stereotypes of any kind can be damaging to the society. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women's and men's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and/or make choices about their lives. It gives off this idea of a given path that women are ought to follow."

I find some overlaps in my own analysis of the video in comparison to the participants analysis: a) Stereotypical gender traits: that sheds light on the male being shown as reckless, carefree, rash driver and "macho" also under the influence of substance while the female is portrayed as delicate, seductive, meek and supposedly the caregiver for the male needs and wants her to be that. b) Gender Fatalism where not only does the society associate specific stereotypical traits with each gender but normalise certain harmful behaviours by simply justifying it for what it is. For instance "boys will be boys" if they are seen speed driving or catcalling. And c) Objectification Theory: as we see the camera lens follow the male and show the rush of lights and sound as he races his car, while with respect to the female we see her body in focus wearing a glittery dress, her lips and hand moving seductively are also brought into focus while the video depicts her making the man fall under her spell

- b) **Stay:** Maximum number of participants, with a mix group of Indians and Canadians, decided to analyse this song. There were two conflicting views presented on it though. A majority think that there is no specific representation of any gender or gender roles and therefore is inclusive of all genders and for all genders to listen to. Additionally according to this group, there are no stereotypes presented in this song and therefore cannot be harmful to anyone. Another smaller section on the contrary seem to believe the lyrics contain some pretty harmful tropes, including perpetuating men's toxic behaviour and the implicit assumption that their partners should put up with it. Overlapping with the codes I have used for my analysis, Parasitism and Machiavellianism are the traits highlighted by the participant here where along with toxic behaviour that harms the other person in the relationship, males are also seen as using manipulation to use any means necessary in this case twisted words to get their

way around, in this case, make their partners stay with them. As the participant points out, “It’s a pretty stereotypical portrayal of gender where a man tells his partner, who is presumed to be a woman, that he needs her and begs her not to leave. The narrator lists why his partner is hurt/frustrated/leaving him - he did “the same thing I told you that I never would” so it can be assumed that he hurt his partner in some way. He also promised that he would change “even when I knew I never could” which indicates his toxic behaviour. But he still needs his partner to stay because he “can’t live without [her]”. Further strengthening claims of stereotypical gender traits, parasitism, machiavellianism and gender fatalism being presented in this music video. For the music video, the participant believes that it is a typical representation of gender. The men are wearing jeans and t-shirts/jackets and the women are wearing dresses. The Kid Laroi spends the music video essentially chasing the one who got away as he begs her not to leave him, which is a trope we see in many music videos. The participant mentions the use of gendered clothing used in the music video to further strengthen stereotypes based on the heteronormative genders represented in this video along with stereotypical behaviour. Note the use of the word “typical” in “typical representation of gender” and “chasing” in “[he] chases the one who got away as he begs her not to leave him” in the participant’s analysis. The typical ideas analysed by the participant conform to the social norms of a pretty standard heteronormative story of boy meets girl, they fall in love. The participant believes the target audience should be teenagers and young adults due to the use of slang and swears. Given that this is what the teens and young adults listen and watch, the ideas of gender presented and overlooked by most (as prevalent by majority of participants in this study) may take some media literacy to be able to read, comprehend and critically analyse.

- c) Raatan Lamiyan: The participant does not think the lyrics don’t really portray gender roles and identities. They think the lyrics can be viewed from any genders perspective and it makes it seem like singers can switch parts and it can be fine. They however, do think one part could portray gender roles and it’s where the female singer says “I am following you”. They think it’s usually more expected that women follow men. As per my own analysis, an expectation like this seems to fall under social norms and hegemonic relations, where the society expects the female to “follow” the male for he knows better and will be able to protect the female from harm. We also see a matrix of domination when both the female lead’s father and mate come in the same frame and we see the father supersiding the authority of the mate. But in both the situations we see the female as the shy, meak one while the males were strong, macho men. As for the video, the participant is not too sure how the video portrays gender roles, maybe that for women dating is more strict and they can’t date whoever they want to as shown in the part where the the woman hides when her dad answers the phone, while men have more freedom and are not as judged as seen by the man openly talking to her on the phone at work. Men can have fun with dating while women have to date for marriage and to have a family. We see overlaps again with social norms, hegemonic relations between males and females as well as agency or authority throughout the song. The male is seen dancing, chasing, traveling, working, living. However, the

female after her studies (which both seem to have completed from the same institution) is confined to the walls of her parent's house.

Nonetheless, while the participant pointed out some great observation points that one can discuss on the topic of gender, does not think there are any gender stereotypes in the music video or that they can be harmful. And for the target audience for this song, the participant thinks it is "more for women from teens to adults". It seems like a very sweet song about love that younger girls might dream of having and adults that might also dream of having or already have and relate it to their experience. They think women also fantasize more about love and these types of situations than men do. The participant also thinks the video seems like a relationship a lot of women dream of having.

My own analysis of the song on the contrary was quite the opposite. While the participant highlights one or two odd instances where they feel uncomfortable with the clashes of genders and how they are represented. It is worth noting that the participant shares them as something that may happen but they don't question it to be harmful or ineffective. They rather state them as facts, as something that is a socially accepted norm and just is, because it is, fatalism.

- d) Pasoori: The participant believes the lyrics were pretty gender neutral and genderfluid. There is no commentary on any gender roles and the video shows a bunch of artists of different age groups and artforms coming together to put their best foot forward. There's no stereotypes based on clothing, art form or status of artists in the video. gender stereotypes in terms of costume, story telling, hierarchy of artists or art forms. so I don't think there were any harmful stereotypes in the music videos. There are some overlaps that I find with the participant's analysis and my own. a) Stereotypical gender traits: This music video seems to challenge many stereotypical gender traits especially in the culture the video is shot and based. The male artists usually sing with females dancing around as has been noted in many other music videos is not something one sees in this video. While different art forms are represented in this video, so are different people, of different ages, different cultures taking part in different artforms irrespective of their gender. b) Gender Expression: This music video also encourages gender expression for its audience by showing the characters challenging the traditional ways of expressing themselves. With their costumes, cosmetics, makeup and just the way each character presents themselves the video is trying to be inclusive. We therefore see an example here of how there have been some changes in the industry and higher acceptance and a more inclusive perception is slowly but gradually coming forward. Not all become part of the "popular media" however it sure seems to be on the rise. The participant seems very intuitive and informed about different aspects of gender to observe and highlights them through the process of analysis with some scaffold with the questions.

Appendix H

Blueprint of Written Text Analysis

[illegible]

Appendix J

List of Gender related Codes

Codes	Meaning
Agency	Here, agency is understood as the capacity of each individual (of each character portrayed) to have control over their actions and achieve.
Friction	It refers to conflicting forces such as the environment and social justice. Gender is also made and remade through its engagement with global-local forces. Therefore here, 'friction' is understood as the interconnections and collisions of gender with global-local forces in each of the socio-cultural contexts of the media texts.
Gaze	The Male gaze highlights the lens and gaze the camera follows with its angles, close-ups, etc and the aimed audience. In a patriarchal society the target audience is males and therefore their needs are always a priority. This code dissects each of the media texts to understand what gaze does the camera follow and which audience does it try to appeal to most.
Gendered Clothing	Refers to the clothes worn by males and female characters in media texts that are stereotypical, reinforcing gender notions and power relations. This code specifically caters to the clothing and attire worn by characters which are determined by or for strengthening stereotypes.
Gender Expression	A person may choose to express themselves however feels natural to them even if not commonly expected as the norm in the society. This code highlights actions, behaviors, mannerisms, interests, appearances, etc that question the degree to which an individual is perceived to conform or not conform to societal expectations of masculinity and femininity.
Gender Fatalism	Gender Fatalism entails how certain gender acts are harmful. For instance, "boys will be boys" is just an excuse with a stamp of social acceptance that is breeding non-acceptable behavior by associating it with a particular gender to somehow make it a natural occurrence giving a free pass with no opposition from society.
Gender Codependency	This refers to how genders co-exist or become codependent with respect to one's own gender identity to understand the co-dependence of heteronormative gender binaries and how they 'should' co-depend to co-exist.
Hegemonic relations	Hegemony is defined as leadership or dominance of one group over the other. Here, this code refers to the relationship between the two groups, the dominant and the dominated. In

	the field of gender, our society has primarily been patriarchal and therefore usually dominated by heteronormative males. The females are often dominated along with others that do not identify in the heteronormative paradigm.
Homosociality	It describes socio bonds between people of the same biological sex. In many diverse cultures (and even in those that fully accept LGBTQ+ community legally) given the ban of homosexuality under the colonial rule, homosexual behavior often goes unacknowledged and misunderstood as homosocial behaviour.
Machiavellianism	Machiavellianism is a personality trait that describes the ability to manipulate and use any means necessary to get your way. Here this code represents the use of words and/or actions to show manipulation between genders to get one person to do what the other wants.
Matrix of Domination	The matrix of domination or oppression is a sociological paradigm that talks about the interconnection between the different classifications of oppression and dominance for instance gender, race, class etc.
Moral Policing	This refers to subjugation to ruling ideology becoming moral grounds defining right and wrong for a person.
Objectification Theory	The objectification theory primarily defines how individuals are compared to objects for their use instead of being treated as individuals with unique personality traits. Individuals may in such a case be treated as a body or an assemblage of body parts.
Parasitism	Parasitism is a symbiotic relationship in which a symbiont lives all or part of its life in or on its living host, usually benefiting itself while harming the host. Here, the concept of symbiotic relationships draws parallels with the relationship between genders as often portrayed in media texts of popular culture.
Social Norms	This code talks about the acceptance of various cultural norms in different contexts as standards. And how, if there is any deviation, do we as a society 'deal' with it.
Stereotypical male/female traits	It refers to the generally expected traits of a female in current society; nurturing, accommodating, submissive, etc. And those of a male human in the society; aggressive, strong, etc. This specifically caters to heteronormative behaviouristic characteristics associated with the gender binaries in the music videos in lyrical and visual aspects of songs through verbal and non-verbal behaviors.