Introduction

Hip-hop, a relatively new genre of music, has overwhelmingly taken control of the music charts over the last twenty-five years all over the world, but specifically within the United States. While there are artists from a variety of cultural backgrounds that identify as Hip-Hop artists today, the roots of the genre lie in the oppression and mistreatment of the African-American community, therefore classifying it as a genre with a historically African-American dominance. This African-American “dominance” within the genre posits Hip-Hop as a style of music that is filled with aggression, control and criminal activities, which can be seen all over music videos, song lyrics and even in the artist’s everyday lives. Pioneers of Hip-Hop include the Wu-Tang Clan, Run-D.M.C, and N.W.A, to name a few; each of the members possess a multitude of the same qualities: African-American men from lower class backgrounds seeking retribution from police brutality, oppression, and disenfranchisement. As a result, Hip-Hop/Rap has been historically referred to as an African-American male dominated culture even though recent artists from different cultural backgrounds have created revolutionary music for the genre and contributed to what Hip-Hop is today. This transition of hip-hop inspired my decision in working with something a little different. Throughout my paper, I will interpret the work of Logic, a White rapper, and his song, “1-800-273-8255.” Throughout the song, I will examine how Logic “strays away” from the stereotype that has been historically seen through the history of
Rap/Hip-Hop. Furthermore, I will argue that Logic uses the conventions of hip-hop to challenge hyper sexuality and black homophobia, thus redefining the parameters of black manhood.

**Methodology**

To analyze the song correctly, I will first look at Black manhood within Rap. My research will focus on the conventions of hip-hop mentioned earlier and on three different parts revealed within hip-hop and the last one within the song. There will be three parts of my research which include the hypersexuality, aggressiveness and “down-low” within the song and the genre of hip-hop/Rap. Through hypersexuality, we see how throughout music videos and lyrics, a personification of the “thug” is revealed. Hypersexuality is understood through drugs, women and more importantly, money. Women, are displayed as the factor missing looking at black fatherhood within the music video of the song. The father-son dynamic/relationship displays normative masculinity and displays a common response for the protagonists’ father’s reaction to his son showing his true self. This can be seen throughout the video as a scenario in which it is revealed that the protagonist is on the “down low”. The concept of the down-low in this particular scenario is the revelation of the protagonist coming out as gay within the music video. By coming out, the protagonist shows normative masculinity yet this may not be universally accepted as masculine. This difference is seen as the protagonist not showing any signs of being any less masculine of a heterosexual male yet, he is with a girl, he does not do drugs or aspires to make large amounts of money, he is romantic not sexual and he embraces his emotions. Throughout the video, the protagonist begins to show a tendency of sentimentality. The aggressiveness seen within hip-hop is related to masculinity within the stereotype that is seen in hip-hop, completely different from the down-low. The aggressiveness like hypersexuality,
focuses on having “lots of dudes” that take control and are extremely powerful. They take this control and obtain power through sex, drugs and money. These three components are a creative aspect within the politics where two create an egocentric trait and the other a more meaningful sentimental trait.

**Literature Review**

Analyzing Logics use of homosexuality within a black protagonist.

When looking at Logics music video, How does he use the male gaze?

How does Logic redefine Black Masculinity?

Since my research is more contemporary than others, the scholarship will also have a more current approach. The scholarship will not be so much theory based, rather it will consist of conversational research. For example, “The Placebo Politics of Pop” was shared on a platform/website that allows readers to comment at the end of the article in a facilitated forum. The article is also interactive in that it offers links to music and videos that are related to Logic’s music video. The scholarship I selected is especially important because it displays different views and opinions on the topics of the rap music genre, and Logic, a white, mentally stable privileged man’s perceptions of black masculinity, suicide, and homosexuality. This research will allow me to argue in favor of the theory that Logic’s “outsider” perspective on these topics is still somewhat convoluted but gets the message across that the stigmas of mental health and homosexuality need to be done away with. Chia-Hui’s article mentions the style of writing within hip-hop and getting “the message across”. This message is through the creativity of lyrics.
Logic uses this creativity, not through the hypersexualities we are used to seeing, but through meaningful issues within society.

In Rapping and Re-remembering History, we see how the article talks about monumental hip-hop songs and artists who have left a mark within the history of hip-hop and the hypersexuality, stereotypes we are used to seeing. “We Don’t Wear Tight Clothes” is an article that focuses on Gay panic and Queer style within hip-hop, catering to my research object. These two articles are on opposite sides of the spectrum, mentioning normality within hip-hop and discomfort.

Davey D within his article, “Why Rap is Important”, talks about issues and circumstances within hip-hop. His main point is that “rap has been a powerful tool that has slowly been finding its potential power either deliberately misdirected or slowly whittled down. What young brothas say has major influence. It's powerful. It's in synch with the concepts of the African Oral Tradition which by the way is rap as a manifestation”. This is an important combination along with masculinity within Rap. Caplan and his article, The Art of Rhyme Insult, mention this potential power and tool that hip-hop is to rhyme and insult. This art we see is mentioned and explained in Hirjee and Brown’s article. This article mentions rhyming and the “creativity and knowledge to put words that sound good after another with a meaning together”. This coincides with Daredevil’s article in which he mentions in his article how the “sound, rhythm and beat” all have to do with the “toughness and masculinity” of the artist. This toughness can be contradicted within Eguchi’s article stating that “gayness and rap” can still be combined and performed. Eguchi mentions that being gay changes no difference. This is opposing to many of the articles I used that talk about masculinity within hip-hop.
As I look to see how Logic uses his music video to define black masculinity, I first look at the article Measuring Masculinity in Men of Color by Derek Griffith and Deconstructing Tyrone by Hopkinson to see how masculinity amongst men of color is defined. The purpose of his study was to examine the “association masculinity of US men of color aged 18 years and older” (G 1). This included a measure of “masculinity and a measure of health behavior, mental health, or physical health” (G 1). This is extremely important when looking at my object because it is a song about mental health. Robertson's article, Black Masculinity and Surveillance, is similar. This article discusses “gender behavior that makes the black male” (R 270). This behavior is the same behavior seen in the protagonist of my object. His behavior or this behavior is no different within a straight black male which is interesting to see given the circumstances of the protagonist. In Deconstructing Tyrone, we see “male-bashing” and looking at black masculinity through a lens.

In A Daring Look At Hip-Hop and Crimes Behind the Rhymes, we see beyond the beats and rhymes and into the hypersexuality I mention in my methodology, violence. This violence includes stealing and slapping women around and controlling them. This article is related to the article, Academic view of Violence and Sexism in Hip-Hop. They both mention young black men and their tendencies when listening to hip-hop and even encouraging lyric writing by such acts. Acts not seen within my object. These acts are the acts discovered in the article, Reasons Behind the Rhyme. It is seen within the article that rhymes are created through real-life experiences and desires. These desires and experiences are the three hypersexualities I plan on analyzing within my methodology.
Katz article, “A depiction of White Manhood vs. Black Manhood”, is an article that looks at both “sides”. Within his article “Katz notes that masculinity is the privileged gender like white is the privileged race so the hegemonic constructs due to these categories normalizes white male violence in mainstream advertising and mass media”. These masculine figures displayed in the media are characters that are “idolized” within their line of work. Katz also mentions how the idea of “masculinity identity validation” is done “through the use of their body as an instrument of power, dominance and control” (Katz 351). These traits are seen within the stereotypical rap/hip-hop videos which show the usual hypersexualities I mentioned in my methodology.

Within Logic’s music video, we see how the protagonist is black and begins to have mental health issues and suicidal thoughts because of his sexuality. The protagonist was chosen by Logic and can be seen as having a “fractured childhood and a mixed-identity” (S 1) all while the trauma of his life and thoughts are included. In Jeffrey Q. McCune Jr’s article, he discusses coming out of the closet as, “a niche phrase to articulate the universal threshold experience of sexual self-discovery and self-fulfillment.” (M 298) McCune then describes being on the “down low”, meaning that an African American man is engaging is low-key sexual and homosexual activities. The protagonist in Logic’s music video uses this “down low” method to go about his ways of being gay. As the music video progresses, his use of being “down low” and method of survival quickly diminish. His secret and sexuality become revealed. McCune uses the term “Coming out” (M 299), as jeopardizing its utility for men of color. McCune mentions that Black men do not have a closet and it is unnecessary to come out as well. In my perspective, this is seen as difficult for the protagonist because the survival and discreteness he tries to use only exposes his true self more and more. Unfortunately, the protagonist is afraid to show himself and
feels shame in having others seeing his true self. Logic’s intent to use a black protagonist in his video was a decision that was unexpected, given his race and age, among other things. If we look at the peak of the rap genre, the timeline would likely place us in the 80s and 90s, so a black male that was homosexual seemed “impossible in the 80’s and 90’s,” according to McCune’s research (301). That specific era had homosexual and homoerotic pictures and it was dominated by the white male. In doing this, Logic shows how perspectives have changed overtime and developed into the diverse and unique world we live in today. My expectation with this research is to contribute to a growing method of conversation amongst scholars. Given the contemporary material, it can be difficult to believe that the theoretical approach is the best method for this particular research, however I do take into consideration the possibility that some form of theory is essential to posit the research in something concrete. Jasmine Cobb’s article discusses the gaze of the homo-thug. This article captures African-American men who appear to be “intimidating, strong”, (C 1) individuals who do not show who they truly are on the inside. This is the opposite of the protagonist in the music video. The protagonist does not come off as a thug or a strong intimidating individual, rather he comes off as a normal high-school student who has his true self revealed little by little as the video progresses.

Though this research focuses primarily on a male and his struggle to find acceptance after he comes out as gay, the genres of Rap and Hip-Hop have long displayed homophobic tendencies to men and women. Marquita R. Smith writes in “Or a Real, Real Bad Lesbian” that the genres have historically been defined as “hypermasculine and at times homophobic” and this creates a hostile environment for those who identify as gay. Even though Hip-Hop generally steers towards objectifying women as sexual beings, it also isolates gay men with lyrics that
discriminate against the LGBT community. Smith argues that in creating hypersexual and homophbic lyrics, the genre contradicts everything it represents, which is a group of disenfranchised people who found common ground in Hip-Hop.

Honor Code- I have acted with honesty and integrity in producing this work and am unaware of anyone who has not


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http://www.gsws.pitt.edu/blogs/ueo1/masculinity-depiction-white-manhood-vs-black-manhood


https://www.Peterlang.com/black/masculinity

“Mapping and Re-Membering Hip Hop History, Hiphopography and African Diasporic History.”

