

Emotional Manipulation in the Name of Love: A Feminist and Hyperrealist Analysis of “Treat You Better”

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Abstract

This study explores gender dynamics and emotional manipulation in Shawn Mendes’ song Treat You Better through the lens of feminist theory and Baudrillard’s concept of hyperreality. The lyrics center on a male persona who asserts that he can treat a woman better than her current partner. While this narrative appears empathetic and caring, it subtly conveys a form of benevolent coercion, in which the man positions himself as morally superior and thus more deserving of the woman’s affection. This analysis employs qualitative textual methods to examine the linguistic structure and implicit meanings embedded in the song’s lyrics. The findings reveal that expressions of concern are often framed as emotional domination, cloaked in seemingly affectionate language. Baudrillard’s hyperreality theory is used to illustrate how media representations of romantic love contribute to distorted ideals of relationships, obscuring the boundary between genuine care and controlling behavior. The study concludes that popular media, including songs like Treat You Better, may perpetuate patriarchal norms and emotional manipulation under the guise of romantic concern. By critically examining such portrayals, this research underscores the importance of media literacy and gender awareness. It reinforces global efforts toward achieving SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 4 (Quality Education).

Keywords: Benevolent Coercion, Emotional Manipulation, Feminist Theory, Hyperreality, Sdg

INTRODUCTION

Media holds a crucial influence in shaping societal perceptions of gender roles and romantic relationships. Popular music, as a widely consumed cultural medium, often conveys implicit messages about power dynamics and emotional intimacy, reinforcing traditional gender norms (Frith, 1996; Lieb, 2019; Glantz, 2011; Wang & Horvat, 2019). Recent scholarship highlights how such representations frequently position men as protectors and decision-makers, while women are depicted as passive recipients of affection, perpetuating patriarchal power imbalances (Bourne, 2020; Sergeant & Himonides, 2023; Smith et al., 2023; Davies, 2019; Gill, 2007). These portrayals not only mirror but also actively shape social attitudes by normalizing gendered patterns of care, desire, and control (Kanougiya et al., 2021; Beckwith et al., 2023; Motschenbacher, 2016; Connell, 2005).

Building on these discussions, a growing body of research has shifted from examining overt misogyny in music lyrics (Avery et al., 2016; Aubrey & Frisby, 2011; Epps-Darling et al., 2020) to investigating subtler forms of coercive control embedded in seemingly affectionate narratives. This form of abuse, characterized by manipulation, surveillance, and emotional coercion, is particularly insidious because it often masquerades as care or devotion (Stark, 2007; Bancroft, 2002). Recent studies argue that such portrayals contribute to the normalization of possessiveness and male entitlement in romantic relationships, making them more difficult to identify and challenge (Nevala, 2017; Hamberger et al., 2017; Dichter et al., 2018; Connell, 2005). Moreover, systemic gender-based disparities in the music industry—such as the underrepresentation of women in production and songwriting roles—further amplify the dominance of male perspectives in popular music narratives (Smith et al., 2023; Bain, 2019; Wall-Andrews & Luka, 2022; Epps-Darling et al., 2020; Raine & Strong, 2018).

A prominent narrative device that reinforces this dynamic is the male savior trope, which depicts men as benevolent rescuers of vulnerable women. This trope both weakens women's

agency and reinforces the belief that women's well-being is contingent upon male intervention (Coy & Garner, 2012; Myhill, 2018; Glantz, 2011; Davies, 2019; Fairclough, 2015; Gill, 2007). The male savior trope operates in tandem with coercive control, where acts of protection or devotion obscure underlying patterns of manipulation and emotional dependency (Stark, 2007; Bancroft, 2002). Fairclough's (2015) critical discourse analysis further demonstrates how such narratives subtly reinforce hegemonic masculinity through linguistic and structural choices, shaping public perceptions of gendered power dynamics. Additionally, Baudrillard's (1981) theory of hyperreality offers a valuable framework for understanding how media representations construct idealized visions of love, promoting unrealistic expectations in which male devotion is equated with women's happiness (Kellner, 1995; Lieb, 2019). This concept of hyperreal romance further complicates the perception of romantic relationships, blurring the line between genuine care and emotional manipulation in ways that are difficult to discern for both audiences and the female subject represented in the narrative.

Although existing studies on gender representation in popular music tend to focus on explicit misogyny or female objectification, they often overlook how benevolent depictions of male protectors can perpetuate coercive control under the guise of care and devotion (Nevala, 2017; Coy & Garner, 2012). Furthermore, while recent scholarship addresses coercive control in media narratives (Davies, 2019; Beckwith et al., 2023; Gill, 2007), limited research examines its connection to hyperreal romantic ideals in contemporary music texts. This study addresses these gaps by offering an interdisciplinary approach that combines feminist media theory, coercive control theory, and hyperreality theory to critically examine *Treat You Better*. Against this backdrop, this study critically analyzes the gender dynamics embedded in Shawn Mendes' *Treat You Better* (2016), a widely popular song that ostensibly advocates for a healthier romantic relationship. However, beneath its surface, the song's narrative perpetuates coercive control, the male savior trope, and hyperreal romantic ideals. The lyrics present the male speaker as a benevolent protector who promises to rescue the female subject from an unsatisfactory relationship—an articulation of the male savior trope that reinforces the notion of women's dependence on male intervention (Coy & Garner, 2012; Myhill, 2018). This construction risks perpetuating the idea that women's agency is contingent upon male validation, thereby obscuring the underlying mechanisms of coercive control, which often operate through manipulation, surveillance, and emotional coercion rather than overt violence (Hamberger et al., 2017; Dichter et al., 2018; Putri, 2021; Connell, 2005).

Through qualitative content analysis, this research explores how the lyrics reinforce patriarchal norms by positioning the male speaker as a benevolent protector while marginalizing female agency—a pattern well documented in studies of gender representation in romantic music (Madanikia & Bartholomew, 2014; Rasmussen & Densley, 2017; Click & Kramer, 2007). These portrayals align with broader structural patterns of gender inequality, as emphasized in comparative regional analyses across Europe (di Bella et al., 2023). The significance of this study stems from its intersection of media criticism and social critique, linking the analysis to global efforts such as SDG 5 and SDG 4 (UN, 2015). By emphasizing the role of media literacy education in fostering critical engagement with popular music (Hobbs, 2010; Mihailidis & Thevenin, 2013), this paper advocates for empowering audiences, particularly youth, to challenge harmful media representations and promote more equitable gender norms (Banet-Weiser, 2018).

This research addresses the following questions: (1) How does *Treat You Better* reinforce the male savior trope and traditional gender roles? (2) In what ways does the song's narrative reflect coercive control and emotional manipulation? (3) How do hyperreal romantic ideals perpetuate unrealistic expectations in romantic relationships? (4) What are the broader social implications of such representations, and how can media literacy education contribute to promoting gender equality? By deconstructing the song's ideological messages, this study aspires

to enrich the broader conversation on the function of popular music in defining social norms and advocating for more critical and equitable media consumption.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative content analysis method to investigate how *Treat You Better* by Shawn Mendes represents gender dynamics, emotional manipulation, and hyperreal romantic ideals. Qualitative content analysis enables a comprehensive exploration of the song's lyrics by interpreting their underlying meanings and social implications (Mayring, 2000). This method is suitable for identifying recurring themes and examining how media texts reinforce or challenge dominant social norms (Krippendorf, 2018).

The main source of data for this study includes the official lyrics of *Treat You Better*, obtained from the artist's official website and verified lyric databases. The analysis focuses on the linguistic choices and narrative structures present in the lyrics, with attention to how they construct gender roles and power dynamics. Secondary data includes scholarly articles, books, and reports on gender representation, coercive control, hyperreality, and media literacy. These sources provide the theoretical framework for analyzing the song's ideological messages.

The analysis follows three stages. First, thematic coding was conducted, where the lyrics were systematically coded to identify key themes such as gender representation, emotional manipulation, and hyperreal romantic ideals. In the second stage, interpretative analysis, each theme was examined through the lens of gender studies and media theory to explore how the lyrics reinforce or challenge social norms. Finally, in the social critique integration stage, the findings were connected to SDG 5 and SDG 4 by highlighting the song's implications for media literacy and gendered power relations.

This study relies exclusively on publicly available materials, with no direct involvement of human participants. Proper citation of all sources was maintained to uphold academic integrity. By employing qualitative content analysis, this methodology provides a comprehensive framework for examining the song's socio-cultural implications and advocating for more critical engagement with media representations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings underscore the function of media representations in shaping social norms and emphasize the significance of media literacy in fostering more equitable understandings of gender and power, as summarized in Table 1. The table encapsulates how the analyzed themes collectively contribute to the reinforcement of patriarchal norms in popular media while emphasizing the need for media literacy education to promote gender equality.

Table 1. Summary of Findings

Theme	Thematic Description	Implications
Male Savior Trope	The speaker positions himself as the woman's savior	Reinforces traditional gender roles
Emotional Manipulation	The speaker uses subtle coercion to influence the woman's decision	Undermines female agency
Hyperreality	The song idealizes romantic rescue as a solution to emotional struggles	Perpetuates unrealistic expectations
Media Literacy	Critical engagement with media texts	Promotes gender equality and critical thinking

Source: Data summarized from the author's research (2025)

This table presents four key themes identified in *Treat You Better* and their broader social implications, particularly regarding gender roles, emotional manipulation, and media literacy. Each theme reveals how the song reinforces certain narratives that shape audience perceptions of romance and relationships.

The male savior trope highlights how the speaker positions himself as the woman's rescuer, implying that she needs saving from her current relationship. This reflects a traditional gender dynamic where men are portrayed as protectors and women as passive figures requiring male intervention. By reinforcing this trope, the song upholds patriarchal norms that limit female agency and suggest that a woman's well-being is dependent on male support. Such narratives contribute to the cultural expectation that men should take charge in romantic relationships, while women should be receptive to their guidance and decisions.

The theme of emotional manipulation is evident in how the speaker subtly pressures the woman into leaving her partner by framing himself as the better choice. Rather than respecting her autonomy, he employs coercive tactics disguised as concern, suggesting that he alone can provide her with happiness and safety. This manipulation undermines female agency, as it disregards the woman's ability to make her own relationship decisions. It also normalizes a form of control where affection and concern are used as leverage, making it harder for individuals to recognize and resist emotional coercion in real-life relationships.

The concept of hyperreality, drawn from Baudrillard's theory, is reflected in how the song idealizes romantic rescue as the ultimate solution to emotional struggles. The narrative presents an exaggerated and unrealistic portrayal of love, where a perfect partner can "save" someone from their difficulties. This perpetuates unrealistic expectations about relationships, leading audiences—particularly young listeners—to internalize the belief that love should always be dramatic, all-consuming, and capable of solving all personal problems. Such portrayals can distort perceptions of healthy relationships, making real-life partnerships seem inadequate when they do not meet these hyperreal ideals.

Finally, the theme of media literacy emphasizes the importance of critically engaging with media representations of gender and romance. Encouraging audiences to analyze song lyrics and their underlying messages can promote gender equality and critical thinking. By integrating media literacy into educational frameworks, individuals—especially youth—can develop the skills to recognize and challenge problematic narratives in popular culture. This can foster healthier, more realistic understandings of relationships and empower individuals to resist coercive or manipulative dynamics in their own lives.

Overall, the analysis of these themes reveals how *Treat You Better* subtly reinforces traditional gender norms and emotional manipulation under the guise of romantic concern. Addressing these issues through media literacy education is crucial in challenging harmful representations and fostering more equitable social norms.

A. Gender Representation and the Male Savior Trope

The analysis reveals that the lyrics of *Treat You Better* align with the male savior trope, where the male speaker positions himself as the superior option to the woman's current partner. The line "*I know I can treat you better than he can*" constructs the male figure as a protector, strengthening traditional gender roles by portraying women as vulnerable and dependent on male intervention. (Bourne, 2020). This trope diminishes the woman's agency, framing her happiness as dependent on the male speaker's actions (see Table 2 for a detailed breakdown of gender representation and the male savior trope).

Table 2. Gender Representation and the Male Savior Trope

Theme	Thematic Description	Illustrative Lyric Example
Male Savior Trope	Men depicted as protectors	" <i>I know I can treat you better.</i> "

Female Vulnerability	Women as passive recipients	<i>"And any girl like you deserves a gentleman."</i>
Hegemonic Masculinity	Men as decision-makers	<i>"I'll stop time for you."</i>

Source: Data summarized from the author's research (2025)

The male savior trope identified in the song perpetuates traditional gender roles, portraying women as submissive and reliant on male intervention. This portrayal aligns with the (Coy & Garner, 2012) argument that popular media frequently presents women as helpless individuals requiring male protection. Such representations contribute to gender inequality by limiting women's agency and reinforcing the notion that male figures are inherently more capable of providing care and security.

Moreover, the invalidation of the woman's emotional experiences, as seen in the lyric *"Tell me, why are we wasting time on all your wasted crying?"* echoes patriarchal discourses that prioritize male rationality over female emotionality (Bancroft, 2002). This dynamic not only marginalizes women's voices but also normalizes emotional manipulation as part of romantic relationships.

B. Emotional Manipulation and Coercive Control

The lyrics portray elements of coercive control, a subtle form of emotional manipulation where the speaker seeks to influence the woman's choices. The recurring claim, *"I know I can treat you better,"* establishes a sense of superiority, subtly pressuring the woman to leave her current partner without providing concrete evidence of better treatment. This dynamic reflects the Katz's (2006) concept of benevolent coercion, where controlling behavior is masked as concern and care (refer to Table 3 for a comprehensive examination of emotional manipulation and coercive control).

Table 3. Emotional Manipulation and Coercive Control

Theme	Thematic Description	Illustrative Lyric Example
Coercive Control	Psychological manipulation	<i>"I know I can treat you better."</i>
Benevolent Coercion	Control masked as care	<i>"Tell me, why are we wasting time?"</i>
Undermining Autonomy	Limiting female agency	<i>"I just wanna give you the loving that you're missing."</i>

Source: Data summarized from the author's research (2025)

The repeated insistence that the speaker can treat the woman better creates a false binary, implying that her only viable option is to leave her current partner for the male speaker. This form of benevolent coercion manipulates the woman's decision-making by presenting the male figure as the rational and emotionally superior partner. The lyric *"Tell me, why are we wasting time on all your wasted crying?"* invalidates her emotional experiences, subtly coercing her to accept his worldview (Katz, 2006).

Moreover, the line *"I just wanna give you the loving that you're missing"* commodifies love, presenting affection as a transaction that must be rewarded with romantic reciprocation. This transforms emotional availability into a persuasive tool, leveraging guilt and obligation instead of mutual consent and equality.

These subtle forms of coercive control, while less overt than explicit abuse, normalize relational power imbalances and contribute to a cultural landscape in which emotional manipulation is misrecognized as care. Stark (2007) notes that coercive control involves strategic emotional influence aimed at undermining a partner's independence. The romanticization of such behavior in popular media risks perpetuating unhealthy relationship dynamics, particularly among young audiences with limited media literacy.

C. Hyperreality and Unrealistic Romantic Ideals

The song's narrative constructs an idealized vision of romantic rescue, reflecting Baudrillard's (1981) theory of hyperreality. The speaker's promises of better treatment create a fantasy where love is portrayed as a solution to emotional struggles. This representation fosters unrealistic expectations of romantic relationships, reinforcing the cultural belief that women's happiness depends on male devotion (Kellner, 1995) (see Table 4 for a detailed exploration of hyperreality and unrealistic romantic ideals).

Table 4:
 Hyperreality and Unrealistic Romantic Ideals

Theme	Thematic Description	Illustrative Lyric Example
Hyperreality	Blurring fantasy and reality	"I know I can treat you better."
Romantic Rescue	Love as a solution to problems	"Promise I'll never let you down."
Transactional Love	Love as a reward for devotion	"You should be with me instead."

Source: Data summarized from the author's research (2025)

By portraying love as a transactional exchange—where male devotion guarantees female happiness—the song fosters unrealistic expectations of romantic relationships (Kellner, 1995). These hyperreal depictions contribute to a broader cultural narrative that equates male protection with female fulfillment, perpetuating patriarchal notions of male authority. Such ideals distort young audiences' perceptions of healthy relationships, making them more likely to accept controlling behaviors as signs of love.

Baudrillard's (1981) concept of hyperreality reveals how *Treat You Better* constructs an illusionary world where romantic love is seen as the sole solution to emotional distress. The lyric "Promise I'll never let you down" contributes to this hyperreal narrative, erasing human imperfection and framing relationships as idealized rescues rather than mutual partnerships. This myth of a "perfect man" who can erase pain perpetuates distorted expectations about love, especially among impressionable listeners. As Kellner (1995) notes, media-saturated cultures often mistake simulated ideals for reality, leading to dissatisfaction and dysfunction when real-life expectations are unmet. The song's portrayal of romance as salvation replicates a toxic cultural script that equates possessiveness with passion and dominance with devotion, feeding into broader patriarchal mythologies that undermine emotional independence and healthy relationships.

D. Social Implications and Media Literacy

The problematic portrayals in the song highlight the need for media literacy education to foster critical evaluation of media messages. Media literacy empowers audiences to deconstruct dominant narratives and challenge idealized representations of romantic relationships (Buckingham, 2003). Integrating media literacy into educational frameworks supports SDG 4 and SDG 5 by fostering awareness of gendered power dynamics and advocating for more equitable social norms (see Table 5 for a breakdown analysis of the social implications and the role of media literacy).

Table 5. Social Implications and Media Literacy

Theme	Thematic Description	Social Implication
Media Literacy	Critical engagement with media messages	Encourages the questioning of gender norms
Gendered Power Dynamics	Awareness of coercive control in media narratives	Supports the promotion of gender equality
SDGs Integration	Connecting media literacy to broader social development goals	Aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality)

Source: *Data summarized from the author's research (2025)*

The problematic representations in *Treat You Better* highlight the urgent need for media awareness education as a strategy to promote gender equality and critical thinking. Media literacy empowers audiences to deconstruct dominant narratives, question idealized portrayals, and advocate for more equitable social norms (Buckingham, 2003). The United Nations (2015) emphasizes that fostering critical thinking and access to quality education is essential for promoting sustainable development and social inclusion. Integrating media literacy into educational frameworks aligns with SDG 4: Quality Education by providing individuals with the skills to critically analyze and engage with media texts. Furthermore, challenging the male savior trope and coercive control contributes to SDG 5: Gender Equality by encouraging conversations around power dynamics in romantic relationships. As Buckingham (2003) argues, media literacy not only enhances critical thinking but also fosters social justice by empowering marginalized voices.

E. Intersecting Oppressions: Gender, Media, and the Cultural Logic of Coercive Control

The findings of this study expand on the existing literature by revealing how coercive control, gender representation, and media influence intersect within the realm of popular music. While previous scholarship has thoroughly examined coercive control as a psychological and legal issue in the context of intimate partner violence (IPV) (Dichter et al., 2018; Myhill, 2018; Hamberger et al., 2017), much of this work treats coercive control as a private, interpersonal phenomenon. This study, however, demonstrates that coercive control also operates at a cultural level, particularly through music and visual media that normalize or glamorize dominance, surveillance, and manipulation in romantic relationships.

This work aligns with Hamberger et al. (2017) in conceptualizing coercive control as a multifaceted and deeply embedded form of domination. However, it diverges by locating coercion not just within private domestic spaces but within public media narratives, thereby expanding the framework for understanding how coercive behaviors are socialized and legitimized. The study also supports Nevala's (2017) argument that coercive control is linked to broader gender inequalities, showing how these dynamics are visually and sonically reproduced in the entertainment industry.

At the same time, this research builds upon media representation studies (e.g., Lieb, 2019; Avery et al., 2016; Bourne, 2020) by identifying not only the depiction of women through a lens of objectification and sexual appeal in music, but also the subtle narrative patterns that mirror coercive relationships—such as themes of control masked as love, possessiveness portrayed as passion, or surveillance framed as care. While Glantz (2011) debates whether such portrayals empower or exploit women, the findings here suggest that for many audiences, particularly younger ones, such portrayals risk normalizing coercive dynamics, especially when not countered by media literacy or critical engagement.

Furthermore, while gender disparities in music production and authorship (Bain, 2019; Smith et al., 2023) highlight the lack of female agency behind the scenes, this study contributes a content-level analysis, showing how these structural imbalances affect the narratives and images disseminated to the public. In this way, the study reinforces Wall-Andrews and Luka's (2022) call for inclusive arts entrepreneurship and connects it directly to the ethical responsibility of media producers in shaping cultural norms around relationships and gender.

Ultimately, this research suggests that coercive control should not only be addressed through legal and psychological interventions, as emphasized in IPV scholarship, but also through cultural critique and media reform. By incorporating media studies into the discourse on coercive control, the study underscores the urgent need for interdisciplinary solutions that span education, entertainment, and policy. Media literacy initiatives (Hobbs, 2010; Mihailidis & Thevenin, 2020) emerge as essential tools—not just for resisting harmful gender narratives, but

for empowering audiences to recognize and reject coercive dynamics disguised as romantic ideals.

F. New Insight: The Role of Media in Normalizing Coercive Control and Shaping Relationship Norms

While existing research extensively covers power imbalances in intimate relationships and the media's gendered representation of women, one critical yet underexplored intersection is how media itself can normalize and disseminate coercive control tactics under the guise of entertainment or romantic relationship dynamics. Popular music, film, and television often depict behaviors central to coercive control—such as possessiveness, constant surveillance, and emotional manipulation—as expressions of love, passion, or devotion. This portrayal, often framed as romantic or desirable, blurs the lines between healthy relationship behaviors and abusive ones.

The normalization of these behaviors in the media can subtly influence public perceptions of what constitutes an acceptable relationship. For younger or more impressionable audiences, this romanticized portrayal may lead to the internalization of coercive behaviors as normative, making it harder to recognize abuse when it occurs in real life. Such depictions can condition viewers to view controlling behaviors as signs of affection, reinforcing unhealthy relationship dynamics.

Building on the works of Hamberger et al. (2017) and Glantz (2011), future research should explore how repeated exposure to these romanticized narratives affects both perpetrators and victims. It is crucial to understand how this portrayal may help perpetrators justify their controlling actions while preventing victims from recognizing abusive behaviors in their relationships. Moreover, integrating insights from media psychology into intimate partner violence (IPV) research could shed light on how visual and auditory cues—such as possessive jealousy in lyrics or the constant surveillance depicted in music videos—reinforce traditional gender roles and disempower women under the cultural radar.

This insight underscores the importance of broadening the scope of interventions. Efforts to reduce coercive control must go beyond legal reforms and media literacy programs. Media creators, producers, and platforms must be held accountable for the harmful narratives they perpetuate, and their influence should be critically examined. A multifaceted approach, engaging legal, media, and cultural sectors, is essential to dismantle the cultural foundations of coercive control and gender inequality. Only through a concerted effort across these areas can we challenge and reshape the unhealthy relationship tropes that continue to pervade popular media.

G. Limitations and Implications for Future Research

This study provides significant insights into how *Treat You Better* reinforces gender stereotypes, emotional manipulation, and hyperreal romantic ideals. However, its scope is confined to a single song, potentially limiting its ability to represent broader patterns of gender representation in popular music. Future research could expand this analysis by examining multiple songs across various genres and cultural contexts to identify recurring tropes and power dynamics. Additionally, exploring audience interpretations would offer a more comprehensive understanding of how media consumers internalize or challenge such portrayals, emphasizing the importance of media literacy in fostering critical engagement.

By linking the findings to broader theoretical frameworks and the SDGs, this study highlights the function of media literacy in promoting gender equality and social justice. The study advocates for integrating feminist media critique into educational practices, encouraging audiences to question dominant narratives and advocate for more equitable representations. Future research could further explore how media literacy initiatives across different communities contribute to dismantling harmful portrayals, ultimately fostering more inclusive and critical media consumption.

CONCLUSION

This study has critically examined *Treat You Better* by Shawn Mendes to uncover how the song's lyrics perpetuate gender stereotypes, emotional manipulation, and hyperreal romantic ideals. The analysis reveals that the song reinforces the male savior trope, portraying women as passive figures whose well-being depends on male intervention. This dynamic not only marginalizes women's agency but also normalizes coercive control as a form of affection. The findings highlight how media representations play a crucial role in shaping societal norms and relationship expectations, particularly among young audiences. By framing controlling behavior as an act of care, the song contributes to the broader cultural narrative that equates male protection with female happiness, perpetuating patriarchal power structures. In light of these findings, the study emphasizes the significance of media literacy education as a means to challenge harmful media portrayals and promote gender equality. Incorporating media literacy into educational curricula can empower individuals to critically engage with media texts, question dominant narratives, and advocate for more equitable social norms. This approach aligns with SDG 4 and SDG 5, contributing to the broader goals of sustainable development. Furthermore, these findings have significant implications for the music industry, media producers, and educators. The study calls for more responsible media production that challenges gendered power dynamics and promotes diverse, empowering portrayals of women. Media literacy campaigns should also be implemented to raise awareness about the subtle forms of coercive control embedded in popular media, fostering a more critical and equitable media landscape. In addition to its social and educational implications, this study enriches the field of literature by demonstrating how popular song lyrics function as cultural texts that both reflect and perpetuate societal power dynamics. The analysis highlights the interdisciplinary potential of literary studies, particularly in examining contemporary media through the lens of feminist and hyperrealist critiques. By engaging with popular music as a form of narrative, the study reinforces the relevance of literature as a tool for social critique. Moreover, this research underscores the importance of expanding the literary canon to include non-traditional texts such as song lyrics, which are widely consumed yet often overlooked in academic discourse. Future literary studies could further explore how popular music serves as a vehicle for ideological messages, offering new perspectives on the intersection of art, power, and social change.

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