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IT'S NOT A FASHION STATEMENT.

*AN EXPLORATION OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN CONTEMPORARY EMO
MUSIC.*

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Abstract

Masculinity and femininity can be performed in many ways. The emo genre explores a variety of ways in which gender can be performed. Theories on gender, masculinity and femininity will be used to analyze both the lyrics and the music videos of these two bands, indicating how they perform gender lyrically and visually. Likewise a short introduction on emo music will be given, to gain a better understanding of the genre and the subculture. It will become clear that the emo subculture allows for men and women to explore their own identity. This is reflected in the music associated to the emo genre as well as their visual representation in their music videos. This essay will explore how both a male fronted band, My Chemical Romance, and a female fronted band, Paramore, perform gender. All studio albums and official music videos will be used to investigate how they have performed gender throughout their career. Looking for trends, similarities and differences between the bands and within the band's career.

Keywords: *Gender, Masculinity, Femininity, Representation, My Chemical Romance, Paramore, Emo, Music, Lyrics, Videos*

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Introduction

When one thinks of rock, one often thinks of masculine men with guitars and long hair. However, this image of rock has changed over the last three decades with the emergence of emo music. Emo emerged out of hardcore in the 1980s and it became mainstream in the early 2000s. It has many similarities with rock music, but the music is considerably more emotional, hence the term emo. The general audience often regards male musicians who are active in the emo genre as non-masculine. Does this indicate that masculinity is indeed in crisis? Recent studies by Emily Ryalls and Sam de Boise on emo music and masculinity have shown that masculinity is not in crisis in the emo genre. The lyrics often tend to be misogynistic (Ryalls 94). Sam de Boise argues that emo masculinity “represent continuity rather than challenges to traditional forms of gendered practice” (238). In addition, they both refer back to multiple masculinities instead of one masculinity, indicating that the perception of masculinity is broader than often believed by the general audience. Both Ryalls and de Boise have analyzed lyrics from emo bands and have stated that emo music may be sensitive and emotional, yet their behavior toward women is far from sensitive and emotional. Rather, through misogyny, they are strengthening their masculine position. Yet what they fail to identify is that role of women in the emo genre as well as the looks of emo musicians.

The emo subculture has a specific style that may indeed be playing with gender expectations. The members in this subculture are moving the boundaries of gender expectations, by taking elements of the opposite gender and making it their own. The males wear tight skinny jeans and eyeliner, while the girls adapt a more masculine look by wearing jeans and a t-shirt. That is why I do not only want to look at lyrics but also at the representation of a band in their music videos. What is masculinity? What is femininity? How do bands represent themselves lyrically, musically and visually? And most importantly: How do emo bands perform masculinity and femininity?

To understand the current debate of why masculinity may be in crisis, one first needs to understand the concepts of gender, masculinity in femininity. This theoretical background will show how gender is not as static as it is often believed to be. Many scholars, such as Judith Butler, Chris Brickell, Anna Livia and Kira Hall, have written about gender performativity and performing gender. These scholars will give an insight how gender is perceived and formed and how it is acted out. In addition, theories on masculinity and femininity will give an insight on what is considered feminine and what is considered masculine. The works by Chris Barker, Robert Heasley and Chris Brickell will explain the various concepts of masculinities. Whereas scholars such as Karen Green, Lynn Carr, Traci Craig and Jessica LaCroix will provide a theoretical framework on femininity. Both the concepts of masculinity and femininity will help in analyzing how musicians represent themselves in both their music and their videos.

Before diving in the realms of gender representation in emo music, I will also provide a background on the emergence of emo. This theoretical background will show that emo is a genre with a specific subculture. In addition, it will become clear that there are certain ways of representation within that subculture, which may indeed interfere with one's masculinity or femininity.

The theoretical outline, as outline above, will be used as a basis for the chosen case studies. These case studies are two bands who have been heavily linked to the emo genre. The first one is the male fronted band My Chemical Romance. The second one is the female fronted band Paramore. Both bands have been around during the mainstream days of emo, while they have also been around when emo was in decline. Their music as well as representation will indicate these changes. Both bands will be analyzed not only by lyrics and musical style, but also in how they are represented or represent themselves in their music videos. It will be interesting to find out how they changed in line with the way in which emo's

popularity has changed. A band's musical style and accompanying lyrics can already indicate whether a band represents itself as masculine or feminine. Paramore is one of the few female fronted bands in the emo genre. It will be interesting to see how they band represents itself in this masculine genre, as indicated by Ryalls and de Boise. Does having a female in the band make the band more feminine? Or does the female in the band represent herself as being more masculine?

What this essay will show is that the emo genre plays with the boundaries of gender representation rather than it only displays continuities as argued by de Boise and Ryalls. By including a female fronted band, I will also be able to show how a female adjusts to this masculine genre. The looks and representation of My Chemical Romance and Paramore in their videos will also show that there are changes that are in accordance to the changes of the emo genre. As time progresses their lyrical representations of gender, as well as their visual representations will change towards are more acceptable gender representation. Furthermore, it is not only the representation of masculinity that changes, but also the representation of femininity by frontwoman Hayley Williams will change.

The first chapter will consists of theoretical background on gender, masculinity and femininity. In addition, it will explain how gender can be regarded as a performance. The theoretical backgrounds will be used as a foundation for analyzing the bands in how they perform masculinity and femininity in both their lyrics as in their visual representation in their videos.

The second chapter will consists of a theoretical background on the emo genre. It will become clear that emo is more than just a musical genre, as it is also a subculture. In addition, this theoretical background will also show that emo is a genre that contains different musical styles as well as a specific way of representation.

The third chapter focusses completely on My Chemical Romance. The first part of this chapter will focus on the lyrics. Each studio album will be analyzed on content that is related to gender, masculinity and femininity. Additionally I will provide a little background information on the band as well as on each album in regards to their musical style and origins. The second part of this chapter will focus on their official music videos. Each video will again be analyzed on aspects of gender, masculinity and femininity. The focus will be on how the band represents itself visually. Each part will end with a small conclusion.

The fourth chapter will have the same approach as the third chapter. However, this chapter focusses on the female fronted band Paramore. This chapter will also consist of two parts. The first one will again look at the lyrics in how the lyrics represent gender, masculinity and femininity. The second part will again focus on their music videos and the visual representation of the band. Each part will end with a small conclusion.

The conclusion will reveal the similarities and differences between male and female fronted bands as well as how each of these two bands represents itself to the world. It will show how emo bands perform gender in their lyrics as well as in their videos.

1. Theories on Gender, Masculinity and Femininity

1.1. Gender

Gender performance and gender performativity are two well-discussed terms in the field of gender studies. These terms may look alike, but they are different. Yet, to be able to discuss these two terms, one first needs to understand what gender is. Gender and sex are often used interchangeably, while studies have shown that these two are indeed different. The difference already became clear in 1955 when psychologist John Money coined the term 'gender' (Halberstam 116). "[H]e used the term to formalize the distinction between bodily sex (male and female) and social roles (masculinity and femininity), and to note the frequent discontinuities between sex and role" (Halberstam 117). The discontinuities become clear

when a person does not live up to gender normativity. The general audience has certain expectations in regards to gender and behavior. “[G]ender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self” (Butler, “Performance Acts” 519). What Butler thus indicates is that being a male or being a female comes with a certain appearance that one has to adhere to, to fit the spectrum of gender normativity. This process of gendering starts from the moment one is born, as many theorists have argued (Halberstam 117). Cahill has analyzed a group of preschool children in the process of looking for their gender identity:

[T]he experiences of preschool children using a social model of recruitment into normally gendered identities. [He] argues that categorization practices are fundamental to learning and displaying feminine and masculine behavior. Initially, he observes, children are primarily concerned with distinguishing between themselves and others on the basis of social competence. Categorically, their concern resolves itself into the opposition of ‘girl/boy’ classification versus ‘baby’ classification. (qtd. in West and Zimmerman 141)

In addition West and Zimmerman argue that “[b]eing a ‘girl’ or a ‘boy’ then, is not only being more competent than a ‘baby,’ but also being competently female or male, that is, learning to produce behavioral displays of one’s “essential” female or male identity” (142). From an early age, children learn how to behave like a boy or like a girl. If one learns to act in a certain way, does one then perform gender?

Many scholars in the field of gender studies have studied both gender performance and gender performativity. Scholars such as Judith Butler, Erving Goffman, Harold Garfinkel, Suzanne Kessler, Wendy McKenna, Candace West, Don Zimmerman, Anna Livia and Kira Hall. They have all shared their own ideas and theories in relation to gender performance and

gender performativity. They have taken on each other's work and continued from there. The first seven scholars have looked at how people behave and represent themselves in public and private spaces, while the last two have looked at how linguistics play a role in gendering.

Judith Butler is one of the most prominent scholars when it comes to gender. In her essay "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory", she explores the ways in which we act out our gender. Simone de Beauvoir claims that "one is not born, but rather *becomes* a woman" (qtd. in Butler 519). Butler has mentioned the following in regards to de Beauvoir's claim:

In this sense, gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather it is an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of abiding gendered self. (519)

What Butler indicates is that gender is not a single act, but it is a repetition of acts. These acts can and will change over time. This would furthermore indicate that one does indeed become a woman, rather than being born as one. A person first needs to know how to act according to their gender to be seen as either a boy or girl or man or woman. The repetition of acts that one needs to learn, and adhere to, are based on a set of cultural norms through which a person will act out his or her gender. These are visible in gender roles and gender expectations. If one acts out of line, one is regularly punished (522). One is punished,

[b]ecause there is neither an 'essence' that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires; because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis. (522)

An example is how some homosexuals and lesbians behave. They do not behave according to the gender norm, and thus they act out of line. In addition, the general audience often punishes or bullies them because they do not fit the gender norm. According to Butler, gender can thus be seen as a social construction. “[T]he gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives” (526). Each culture or social group has rules and limits as to how a male or female should behave to fit a norm. This indicates that gender is, in a way, scripted, and that one has to adhere to these scripts in order not to be punished. In addition, Butler adds that

[g]ender is not passively scripted on the body, and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy. Gender is what is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure, but if this continuous act is mistaken for a natural or linguistic given, power is relinquished to expand the cultural field bodily through subversive performances of various kinds. (531)

According to Butler gender is performative in the sense that one has to act out certain scripts to come across as either a man or a woman, furthermore she indicates that it is a social construction as without the scripts there would be no gender.

Erving Goffman’s *the presentation of self in everyday life* looks at how others influences the way a person behaves and represents oneself. “Sometimes the individual will act in a thoroughly calculating manner, expressing himself in a given way solely in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke from them a specific response he is concerned to obtain” (3). The individual thus acts (or performs) in a certain way to get a certain response from another individual. They are trying to live up to the gender expectations. According to Goffman “there is the popular view that the individual offers his performance and puts on his show ‘for the benefit of other people’” (10). Furthermore,

Goffman also makes a difference between a 'front' and 'back' performance. Brickell explains this phenomenon as follows:

The public performance takes place up 'front' under the scrutiny of others, while impression-management and performance techniques are practiced out 'back', screened from the view of others. While an actor might 'appear' as a coherent gendered man or woman in the public street, he or she would prepare appearance, emotions and deportment in the privacy of the home, for example. (Brickell, "Performativity or Performance" 160)

In Goffman's later work, Brickell observed that: "[a]ccording to Goffman, individual actors are not free to frame experience as they please. Frames are properties of the social order and organize subjective experiences by providing the meanings governing interpretations of social events" (160). This means that there are certain frames to which one has to act by. "Goffman suggests that gender schedules frame gendered performances" (160). Each gender has specific frames, which could be the frames of masculinity and femininity. A man has to act according to a masculine frame and a female according to a feminine frame. Thus, according to Goffman gender is a performance.

Harold Garfinkel does not differ too much from Goffman. In his article, Garfinkel discusses the case of Agnes who was "an intersexed person who was assigned to the 'male' sex at birth on the basis of possessing a penis and testicles.... Accordingly, the penis was removed and a vagina constructed at age 17, with Agnes reassigned to the female sex. This reassignment marked a turning point: Agnes had to learn how to 'accomplish' femininity" (Brickell, "Performativity or Performance" 161). By receiving a vagina, she now truly was a female and had to act accordingly. Being a female comes with certain gender expectations, because "[f]rom the standpoint of an adult member of our society, the perceived environment of 'normally sexed persons' is populated by the two sexes and only two sexes, 'male' and

‘female’” (Garfinkel 122). There is no in-between in gender, and therefore Agnes did not only need the operation but she also needed to learn to behave as a female.

Garfinkel and Goffman’s work overlaps on the following two points: One, “Garfinkel argues... that for all of us gender is managed and routinized accomplishment involving particular constraints of self and our representation of these to others” (Brickell, “Performativity or Performance” 161). Two, they both do “not draw a distinction between sex and gender, regarding genitalia as symbols with which both are socially constructed” (161). Having female or male body parts means that one has to adhere to a certain self-representation to others. Gender is again regarded as a social contrition. They do however also differ on a point, which is the duration of the representation of the self. Goffman looked at “how the self and its impressions are managed in particular contexts” (162), while Garfinkel noticed that “Agnes’ accomplishments of her ‘new’ gender were ongoing rather than episodic” (162). In addition, Garfinkel “raises the possibility of a socially constructed gendered self with a biography” (162). Thus, Garfinkel also sees gender as a performance, but he sees it more as an ongoing process than as an episodic one as mentioned by Goffman.

Suzanne Kessler and Wendy McKenna are two scholars who focus on the gender attribution process:

The gender attribution process is an interaction between displayer and attributor, but concrete displays are not informative unless interpreted in the light of the rules which the attributor has for deciding what it means to be female or male. As members of a sociocultural group, the displayer and the attributor share a knowledge of the socially constructed signs of gender. They learn these signs as part of the process of socialization (becoming members). In our culture these signs include genitals, secondary gender characteristics, dress and accessories, and nonverbal and paralinguistic behaviors. (175)

They indicate that gender is a social construction, which is more than just a performance as there are signs and elements, such as make-up, a person can add to oneself to come across as male or female. The gender attribution process is a process that starts from birth. The parents see the genitals of their newborn and they start to dress the newborn according to the gender. This is possible because some things are regarded as feminine while other things are regarded as masculine. The parents initiate the process of gendering, who are thus trying to adhere to the socially constructed gender norms and expectations.

The scholars Candace West and Don Zimmerman also indicate that gender is a social construct. They argue that “gender is not a set of traits, nor a variable, nor a role, but the product of social doings of some sort” (129). What West and Zimmerman try to show is that one is ‘doing gender’. “Doing gender means creating differences between girls and boys and women and men, differences that are not natural, essential, or biological. Once the differences have been constructed, they are used to reinforce the ‘essentialness’ of gender” (137). One of the examples that they give is the division in public restrooms, there is one for the ladies and one for the gentlemen (137). In the public sphere, there is a cultural division between males and females. In addition, they add “gender differences, or the sociocultural shaping of ‘essential female and male natures,’ achieve the status of objective facts. They are rendered normal, natural features of persons and provide the tacit rationale for differing fates of women and men within the social order” (142). Gender could thus also be seen as a means to create a difference and a hierarchy between men and women. “Given that the very methods of attaining gender competence reinforce ideas about the naturalness of predominant gender arrangements, doing gender legitimates the hierarchical arrangements of male domination” (Brickell, “Performativity or Performance” 165). According to West and Zimmerman, doing gender is more than a performance and a social construct, as it also allows for male domination.

Anna Livia and Kira Hall look at gender in a linguistic context. They do not only look at the performativity of gender, but they also look at the role of language in the process of gendering. Livia and Hall look at the “discursive construction of gender” (11). With a combination of theories by J. L. Austin and Judith Butler, they try to show how language influences or steers a person’s behavior. Livia and Hall observe the following:

As Butler asserts, gender is performative because it calls itself into existence by virtue of its own felicitous pronunciation. This pronunciation is felicitous, as we recall from Austin’s little book, if it is made in the required social circumstances. A marriage is successfully performed by the declaration ‘I now pronounce you man and wife’. ...

The declaration is performative because it is by the pronunciation of the words that the marriage is performed. ‘I now pronounce you man and wife’ is not a commentary on a marriage; it is the marriage itself. (11)

Words contain an element that ask for a certain frame or behavior. As an example they use Butler’s example of ‘it’s a girl’, one that “initiates the process by which a certain girling is compelled” (Butler, “Bodies that Matter” 232). The word girl does not only mention the gender of someone, but it also has certain connotations in relation to behavior and gender expectations. Moreover, they Livia and Hall argue that:

[g]ender, then, is said to be performative because, at with the classic utterance ‘it’s a girl,’ statements of gender are never merely descriptive but prescriptive, requiring the referent to act in accordance with gender norms and, moreover, to create the appropriate gender in every culturally readable act she performs, from the way she combs her hair to the way she walks, talks and smiles. (12)

The linguistic ‘male’ or ‘female’ gender thus have prescriptive elements. These elements are scripts, or as Livia and Hall argue, gender norms, to which one has to adhere. From birth, by being proclaimed as either a boy or a girl, prescriptive norms will influence the way a person

will act throughout their lives. In other words, language prescribes the way one has to act as it contains prescriptive elements.

What these scholars indicate is that gender is shaped by cultures. Cultures have certain expectations of males and females, such as behavior, appearance and representation. These can be considered as certain norms or frames in which one can act without being seen as different. A person has to perform gender in a way that it is acceptable by the larger audience. Furthermore, this gendering starts from birth, by proclaiming that someone is a boy or girl, he or she is represented as such. This is because of the prescriptive elements in words and languages, which makes gender performative.

1.2. Masculinities

Rock music is often seen as masculine. However, this does not always seem to be the case. Emo is a subgenre within rock music, but scholars have argued that masculinity may be in crisis in this genre. In order to understand whether masculinity is in crisis one first has to explore the concept of masculinity, or perhaps even the concept of masculinities, because as Connell states, “not all men are the same” (qtd. in Barker). Because there are many types of men, there are also multiple masculinities, which will be discussed in this subchapter.

Gender is a social and cultural construction and the various types of masculinities are part of these constructions as well. These constructions differ per culture, “[s]ince what it is to be male varies across time and space so ‘masculinity’ can be understood as a cultural construct” (Barker 311). Barker also mentions what the traditional masculinity encompasses and devalues in Western societies:

In general terms, traditional masculinity has encompassed the values of strength, power, stoicism, action, control, independence, self-sufficiency, male camaraderie/mateship and work, amongst others. Devalued were relationships, verbal ability, domestic life, tenderness, communication, women and children. (312)

The traditional masculine male thus celebrates independence and control over his life, while he does not want to settle down and start a family.

Another type of masculinity is hypermasculinity. Hypermasculinity indicates an exaggeration of male stereotypical behavior. Mosher and Sirkin take the macho man as a measure for hypermasculinity (162). According to Mosher and Sirkin a macho man: “enjoys exciting activity, especially if danger is involved, and does not avoid risk of bodily harm” (162). He “enjoys combat and argument and is sometimes willing to hurt people to get his way or to ‘get even’” (162) and he “is expected to relate to sexual aggression, especially rape and probably wife and child abuse” (161). A hypermasculine or macho man believes that violence and they show dominance over girls and women. That hypermasculinity and machismo are closely linked can also be seen in the dictionary description of machismo: “a strong or exaggerated sense of manliness; an assumptive attitude that virility, courage, strength, and entitlement to dominate are attributes or concomitants of masculinity” (“Machismo”). Both hypermasculine men and machismo men are considered as manly men. In addition, machismo is also often associated with the responsibility to protect loved ones.

What becomes clear when looking at the traditional masculinity is that it focusses on the heterosexual male. However, as indicated earlier, not all men are the same, that also means that it should include the non-heterosexual males as well as the heterosexual males who do not fit the traditional gender norms. Robert Heasley explored the varieties of queer masculinities of straight men. In his opening lines he states the following: “[m]any straight men experience and demonstrate ‘queer masculinity,’ defined here as ways of being masculine outside hetero-normative constructions of masculinity that disrupt, or have the potential to disrupt, traditional images of the hegemonic heterosexual masculine” (Heasley 310). What this indicates is that if a male has the possibility to disrupt the ideals of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity, he can still be considered as masculine. The traditional form of

masculinity then may indeed be in crisis. However, these men outside the heteronormative norm can still be considered as masculine. Heasley depicts two types of males: one, the traditional male, and two the nontraditional males:

‘Traditional males,’ on the one hand, are the ones society understands; even if there are problems associated with the image, there is acceptance and legitimacy accorded to the typicalness of the presentation. The ‘non-traditional’ male, however, presents an unknown, unfamiliar package; even if qualities the male exhibits are desirable, his difference demands justification, explanation. (Heasley 311)

In addition, Brickell uses theories by Goffman and Butler, as discussed previously, in order to show masculinity’s subversive performances. In a study by Redman, who looks at a group of “young men who engage discourses of romantic love as they negotiate their own identities in relation to masculinity, heterosexuality, social class, and the disciplines of schooling” (qtd. in Brickell, “Masculinities, Performativity, and Subversion” 38). It becomes clear that:

[t]he young men are constituting and constituted simultaneously as they negotiate the frames and gender schedules delimited by the cultural context in which this negotiation takes place. As these frames and schedules condition masculine selves and the actions undertaken by these selves, they filter upward into hegemonic masculinities and, hence, wider social processes of resistance and accommodation to male domination. In such a context, subversion may involve the introduction of new discourses of romance and (hetero) sexuality that challenge domination and encourage the young men to resist or work against it. (38)

The interaction between males, as well as the interaction between males and females, shape the performance of the gendered selves, which can change accordingly. These changes in social interaction may even challenge the dominant traditional masculinity. However, as

Brickell notes, this is only first acceptable at the microlevel of society (40), which is usually within a small group with shared meanings and interactions.

Heasley and Brickell both illustrate that it is possible for males to be non-conform and non-traditional. In his essay, Heasley exemplifies five different types of queer masculinities, which are 1) straight sissy boys, 2) social-justice straight-queers, 3) elective straight-queers (or the elective queer), 4) committed straight-queers, and 5) males living in the shadow of masculinity (315). Straight sissy boys are males who, according to Heasley, cannot 'do' straight masculinity (315). They present themselves to other as queer, but it is not intentional and not part of their identity (315). In addition, they choose to distance themselves from the dominant male culture and often have many female friends (315). The social-justice straight queers take their actions publically (316). These men are risk takers, as they are perceived as gay (316). "A key element in this category is the public expression by straight males, verbally or through action, in ways that disrupt both heterosexuality and masculinity" (316). These males thus take a risk by acting gay in public, even though they are not, as a means to disrupt the dominant male culture. The elective straight-queers "can be seen as straight men performing queer masculinity" (316). They do this "as a means of liberating the self from the constrictions of hetero-normative masculinity" (316). This can be seen as a performance because they take on queer characteristics and additionally they can move back and forth between performing queer masculinity and the hetero-normative masculinity. The committed straight queers also perform being queer just as the elective straight-queers. However, they have a different motive. Committed straight-queers "practice at being queer with the intention of benefiting from moving toward queerness as an integral aspect of their sexuality and their masculinity" (317). The committed straight queer explores his sexuality and masculinity in public and in private. The final type of queer masculinity is the males living in the shadow of masculinity. These males might "support feminism as well as gay rights" (317), but they

“remain behind the scenes when it comes to changes for themselves in the presentation and experience of heterosexual masculinity of public advocacy and support for changes in the system” (317). These men do not appear to be gay and neither do they do straight hegemonic masculinity (318). The only times they may act queer is when in private, in public they will do only as much to pass the normative hetero-masculine expectation (318). What Heasley has shown with these types of masculinity is thus that males can be seen as masculine without fitting the hetero-normative masculine norm.

There is a hetero-normative norm that fits most men, there are however a number of men who do not fit that norm, they can be considered as non-normative. This non-normative norm does not imply that they are not masculine, but that they can fit a different category of masculinity. As Heasley has shown, there are varieties of queer masculinities that may fit these non-normative males. All males are different and they all have different core values. They themselves decide what they value and devalue and they decide how to perform their masculinity to the outside world. Men do not have to fit the hetero-normative masculine norm to be considered as masculine, because of the wide array of masculinities.

1.2. Femininity

What is true for men is also true for women, not all the women are the same. The two main categories of femininity that will be explained are the girly-girl and the tomboy. These two types of femininity are often seen as opposites, mainly because the girly-girl can be seen as the ultimate feminine woman, while the tomboy could be seen as a more masculine type of woman.

Karen Green, who is a feminist scholar, offers an explanation as to why women might lean toward a more masculine identity.

Within the male cent[e]red conception of the world, woman is Other, that against which the transcendence of the male subject is contrasted, an immanent thing, a body,

an object characterized by its sex. A woman who wants to be a woman is condemned, but this masculine economy, to the status of passive object and her destiny appears to be mapped out for her by nature, of which she is taken to be a part. Yet a woman who attempts to affirm her status as a transcendent subject confronts the temptation of theorizing herself as masculine and denying her status as woman. (85)

Throughout her essay, Green reflects on the work of Simone de Beauvoir. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, "develops a view of woman's history and situation founded on the recognition that woman is Other" (Green 85). Women are considered as the second sex, they are the other. In addition Roger Horrocks has noted that, within philosophy, "'men' and 'women' are portrayed as eternal forces forever doomed to struggle against each other, with women the perennial victim of male power" (7). Women are thus subjected to male dominance. They are the second sex, the other. *The Second Sex* first appeared in the 1940s and a lot has happened since then, especially to women and women rights. Whereas first women's main goal was to live the domestic life, now they seem to have more freedom in choosing which life they want to live. Green observes:

[s]ince we are embodied beings, experiencing ourselves in particular historical circumstances via the meanings available to us, our subjectivity is subject to historical change. For generations, woman's reality was dominated by the tyranny of pregnancy. Her values, her projects, her sense of herself grew out of reality. Now that our situation has changed, woman's past subjectivity is no longer ours. (Green 95)

Women have accumulated more freedom than in the past, which allows them to explore their own identity, without being downgraded to the Other. Women have tried to be recognized as woman in the eyes of males, they no longer want to live in the shadow of the male as the other.

Two identities that are important for this essay are the tomboy and the girly-girl, which will be explained next. The tomboy identity for women portrays a woman who may come across as masculine. There comes a time in a young girl's adolescent or prepubescent life where they choose masculinity and reject femininity (Carr 121). Carr has found three types of masculine enactments: "preferring male friends and company, selecting masculine dress and appearance, enjoying masculine activities" (124). These girls are often considered as 'one of the guys'. The tomboy identity gives women "protective access to male privileged spaces, activities, and conversations" (Craig and LaCroix 450). Tomboys are often seen as women "who eschew femininity or who have masculine interests or activities that occur in stark relief to some underlying femininity. Tomboy is often used to convey not only a generic masculinity but a particular masculinity focused on skill or competence rather than appearance" (451). Many tomboys dress more masculine than the average girl might, mainly because this attire is more practical as "wearing jeans affords one the freedom to engage in activities that would be made difficult by heels and a skirt" (451). However, "[t]he essence of tomboy style was to wear a masculine item of clothing (i.e., a blazer or tie), balanced with adequate feminine accessories" (Skerski 473). Tomboyism is often seen as a phase in a woman's life, it is something that they will grow out of (Holland and Harpin 297) "Tomboy identity is meant to be a youthful phase for girls, and she is encouraged to cease her masculine behaviors as she grows older" (Skerski 468). Skerski thus indicates that it is okay for a pre-pubescent girl to act masculine as long as she becomes more feminine during puberty, as she then "becomes an object of male desire" (468). What has become clear, in regards to the tomboy identity, is that it is most often short-lived, a phase in a girl's life, as a means of often becoming 'one of the boys'. Additionally, a tomboy may reject femininity completely or have feminine accessories part of her masculine outfit.

The girly-girl could be regarded as the prototype feminine girl or woman. She is in many ways the opposite of the tomboy identity. It is often the girly-girl identity “that many women are keen to distance themselves from” (Holland and Harpin 293). However, the parents, especially the mothers, may often discard the tomboy identity as a temporary phase. They would prefer the girly-girl identity for their daughters (293). Holland and Harpin define the girly-girl as “hyper-feminine, passive and mostly sedentary focusing on her appearance as a leisure activity” (294). Paechter indicates that the “girly-girl discourse refers to the specific embodiment of an ideal or exaggerated performance of femininity” (qtd. in Holland and Harpin 298). In addition Driscoll argues that “[w]hilst the girl-girl appearance (about which we think glitter, pink and fluffy) may be much sought after for some girls, less desirable are the connotations linked to girl behavior which translates as helplessness or submissiveness; as a lack of personality or intelligence which is enacted through weakness” (qtd. in Holland and Harpin 298). Driscoll takes into account the power relations that emerge with the differentiation between men and women. This girly-girl’s connotation with weakness places her in a submissive role. She is downgraded to the Other, whilst the tomboy identity claims a space in the male domain. Another difference between the two female identities is that the tomboy may be ‘one of the boys’ the role of the girly-girl is different. “She represents a version of a ‘perfect’ feminine embodied sexuality, difficult to attain and maintain, which could explain her position as an object of both desire and resentment” (307). To boys, the girly-girl is more an object of desire than the tomboy is. Furthermore, the girly-girl dresses more feminine, which can often be seen in dresses that she wears. Color wise, the clothes may often contain the color pink or they may contain glitters or other sparkling elements. The girly-girl opts for a more feminine attire, whilst the tomboy chooses practicality over looks. Acting and dressing as feminine define a girly-girl, which leads to being both an object of desire as well as an object of resentment.

Girls explore femininity before puberty. They may lean more towards male friends or male activities and opt for a tomboy identity. This is often seen as a temporary phase. When a girl is opting for a tomboy identity, she rejects the girly-girl identity. The girly-girl is the hyper-feminine identity. These girls find their looks important, often play with Barbie's, and prefer female friends. These two opposing identities are not fixed as a girl or woman can and most often will transcend from one to the other. It can be said that a woman will become more feminine over time and she will thus transcend from the tomboy identity to a more girly-girl identity.

2. The Emergence of Emo Music

The emo music genre is hard to define as it has changed over the years. The one thing that scholars seem to agree on is that it emerged from hardcore (Greenwald 9). Stephen Blush describes hardcore as “the suburban American response to the late-seventies punk revolution” (qtd. in Greenwald 9). Greenwald describes the emergence of hardcore as follows:

At the beginning of the '80s, the first wave of punk had shot its bolt. It had been replaced in the natural consciousness by its earlier stepson, New Wave, co-opted by big business and major labels, and flattened by disco. ... [T]here was a generation of disaffected kids on the outskirts of the country's cultural capitals seething with resentment and untapped energy. Hardcore pushed punk's intensity to the breaking point—far, far past style, convention, and, oftentimes, past melody. (9)

One of the most prominent hardcore acts that emerged in the 1980s was Minor Threat. They originated in Washington, DC. Their music borrowed elements from punk, such as the rage against “the establishment, against the cops, against apathy and each other” (9) and they turned it into “fuel blistering, ferociously short sharp sonic shocks in the form of songs” (9). “The beats were monochromatic and the instruments were raced as fast as they possibly could go—the goal was catharsis through the passionate expenditure of energy” (9). While the lyrics

“were didactic and instructive” (9). What became most important in this genre was the interaction between the band and the fans (10). Minor Threat broke up in 1983, but this was not the end of the genre as they “hadn’t transformed the world, but it had put the world on notice” (11). Minor Threat put hardcore on the map.

Guy Picciotto was a fan of Minor Threat and formed his own band called Rites of Spring (11). Minor Threat may have inspired him, yet his music was different. Rites of Spring broke “free of the rigid, self-imposed bonds of hardcore, the guitars careened dramatically and melodically across the songs like paintbrushes on canvas, the rhythms enlivening and varied” (12). Not only the music they played was different, the lyrics also underwent a metamorphosis. As a singer Picciotto was “heroically, desperately impassioned, screaming and moaning, often refusing to sing at band practice so that he could more fully unload onstage” (12). The lyrics “were like nothing ever heard before in punk rock: majestic, poetic, indulgent, ecstatic” (12). The lyrics made the audience feel emotional, especially with a charismatic, dramatic lead singer such as Picciotto. Rites of Spring did not last long, but other bands followed his lead. These new bands also “explored similar themes of self-searching and emotional release” (14). By 1985 the term ‘emo’ came into common practice, yet the origins are not completely clear (14). What was clear is that “[t]he bands that earned the emo-moniker addressed politics in relatable ways; they preached local and practiced it as well” (15). Emo music spoke to fans, yet the real meaning of the term ‘emo’ was still only used locally in the underground scene.

During the 1990s, the term ‘emo’ as well as the emo genre underwent some changes. The term was still used mainly in the underground music scene, and it did not mean the same in each city.

As far back as the early ’90s, the term ‘emo’ was plastic, one that stretched and changed shape as it was applied to different bands from different corners of the

underground. At the time, it was more of an adjective than a genre name, a descriptor applied to underground bands of all sorts of stripes. In that pre-internet era, local scenes were often insular, and it often seemed each city had its own idea of what 'emo' might be. (Richman par. 8).

It was also in this era that many bands explored with new sounds. In San Diego, and later more of the East coast, the 'screamo' genre emerged, which is characterized by "spastic yelping and coruscating howls" (par. 9). Screamo is a heavier version of emo with more screaming and yelling. While screamo emerged in the eastern regions of the US, grunge took center stage in Seattle. Sunny Day Real estate, a Seattle based band, "welded the suddenly-everywhere sounds of grunge and alternative rock to sweeping melodrama and searching lyrics" (par. 10). Furthermore, in San Francisco, pop-punk "exploded into national prominence" (par. 11). "Beginning in 1994, the American indie-rock and punk underground that had existed since the early '80s was overrun, strip-minded, and changed forever.... Over the next decade emo would retreat again, reform, and be reborn both as a national subculture and, eventually, as something even greater" (Greenwald 33). During the 1990s, many bands on the East coast explored the emo genre. It still differed from city to city, but this would change in the late-1990s.

During the late-1990s, emo became a more prominent genre as it spread across the US. During the mid-1990s, emo had gained many young fans, but it had not entered the national consciousness yet (Greenwald 42) "Emo began to coalesce, with city scenes forming a national scene in the late '90s in what's become known as emo's 'second wave'" (Richman par. 13). The music that was known as emo also changed.

Emo has become a broader genre that now encompasses acoustic rock, thrash, metal, rap, and country. Exploring the addition of instruments like acoustic guitars, pianos, even violins and cellos, evocative sonorities like major seventh chords, and deceptive

terrace dynamics, emo began to expand the musical possibilities for punk and hard rock genres. (Williams, “Oh Boy!” 153)

According to Tyrangiel, the lyrics started to focus on “general pain of being an outsider to the specific hurt of a bad relationship” (qtd. in Williams, “Oh Boy!” 153). “[Emo] was the voice of disempowered, misunderstood teenagers across the country. In blunt, nonpoetic terms, the mission of the emo artists was to articulate the collective shortcomings, fears, and miseries of the masses through their music” (Williams, “Oh Boy!” 153). Emo spoke to the teenagers as the bands used their own personal history in their lyrics, because:

Emo is teen-centric. Regardless of the lead singer’s age, the desired vocal timbre is a slightly prepubescent nasal quality with a diaphragmatic push that resembles the arrogant vocalizations of British punk. Emo music videos depict teen rites of passage such as proms, house parties gone wild, and anxiety over graduation. (Williams, “Oh Boy!” 153)

Teenagers could relate to this genre and that is why during the late-1990s emo’s popularity grew, but not everyone enjoyed this:

As the '90s wore to a close, the music that was being labeled emo was making a connection with a larger and larger group of people. the aspects of it that were the most contagious—the sensitivity, hooks, and average-guy appeal—were also the easiest to latch onto, replicate, and mass market. As with any phenomenon—exactly like what happened with Sunny Day [Real Estate]—when business enters into a high-stakes, highly personal sphere, things tend to go awry very quickly ... As fans threatened to storm the emo bandwagon, the groups couldn't jump off of it fast enough. The popularity and bankability of the word—if not the music—transformed an affiliation with the mid-nineties version of emo into an albatross (Greenwald 119).

The late-1990s did open the doors for many emo bands as record labels saw potential in the genre, but it was not until the 2000s that emo entered the mainstream.

The year 2002 is when the emo scene really started to take off. It could now be considered as the third wave (Connick par. 9). Its rise to fame is linked to the 9/11 attacks of 2001. According to Greenwald the media was looking for the ‘next big thing’ in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, this would be emo:

The media business, so desperate for its self-obsessed, post-9/11 predictions of a return to austerity and the death of irony to come true, had found its next big thing. But it was barely a ‘thing’, because no one had heard of it, and those who had couldn't define it. Despite the fact that the hedonistic, materialistic hip-hop of Nelly was still dominating the charts, magazine readers in the summer of '02 were informed that the nation was deep in an introverted healing process, and the way it was healing was by wearing thick black glasses and vintage striped shirts. Emo, we were told, would heal us all through fashion. (Greenwald 69)

Emo managed to fill a void for many people. These were people who felt hurt and empty after the terrorist attacks. Many bands that made non-mainstream pop music were branded as emo (68), even though they could also have been labeled as being pop-punk, rock or alternative.

That is why the emo genre is as broad as it is. Emo bands “all sound wildly different from one another. The sonic palette of emo is widening as quickly as outside influences can be embraced” (Richman par.17). The music brought people together through the sense of sameness. This is why fashion became an important factor within this subculture. Emo’s did enjoy spending their money at Hot Topic as they sold everything that fit the emo lifestyle.

This emo lifestyle consists partly of tight skinny jeans (boys and girls), eyeliner (both boys and girls), and a lot of plaid, stripes and black. According to Leslie Simon and Trevor Kelly, there was a whole emo fashion scene with a specific clothing style and look:

[E]mo chose to draw upon many different subcultures from the past. Stylistically, it employs certain elements of the dress styles of indie-rock fans of the late 1990s, e.g. vintage track jackets, t-shirts, black-rimmed glasses, sneakers or training shoes, mid-length hair. These were combined with elements characteristic of goth and punk subcultures, with their strong preference for black or neon bright colors (particularly pink), hand warmers, slim-fit trousers (often in plaid, characteristic of punk), as well as specific clothing adornments (skulls and crossbones, black and white or black and red stripes). With respect to appearance, one should also mention the tendency to dye hair (black or neon hues, or a combination of both). They often sported an androgynous look; for example, men sometimes used makeup, particularly eyeliner. (qtd. in Miernik 179)

Teenagers did not only listen to the music, they also wanted to be part of the larger scene, so they had to get the specific emo fashion. This resulted in emo being a commercial force by 2005 (Richman par. 19). Warped tour was the go to music festival, even though it was once punk-centered (par. 19). The commercial success of emo music can also be seen in the record sales of emo bands. Many bands ended up signing to major labels, who brought them worldwide commercial success. Emo even entered the billboard charts with bands such as Fall Out Boy, Panic! At the Disco, Paramore and My Chemical Romance. From the mid- to late-2000s emo music thrived, but since the early-2010s emo has been on a decline. Either because bands broke up or moved away from their emo root, which marks the end of the third wave.

The fourth wave, which is also known as the 'emo revival', is a "is a 2010s development in the genre in which bands have taken inspiration from the sounds and aesthetics of emo from the '90s and early '00s" (Maria_Pro par. 7). This emo revival are an underground phenomenon (DeVilleville par. 2). Emo has gone back to where it started. Each wave takes something from the wave(s) before and tweaks it into something new. Another

surprising element of this fourth wave is that there are more women involved in the genre. According to Max Quinn, “[i]t’s women who are at the forefront of this movement” (par. 37). Women were present in the third wave, but they are claiming their position in the fourth.

Emo is thus not a static genre. It has a variety of subgenres, which is why many bands can be labelled as emo, as it has taken from hardcore, punk and rock. Emo is also more than just a music genre, as it became a popular subculture in the 2000s. The people being part of this subculture dressed alike. Many American teenagers spent their money at Hot Topic or went to Warped Tour. These heydays of emo may be over, but the remains are present in the underground emo revival.

3. My Chemical Romance

My Chemical Romance was formed in New Jersey in 2001. Eyeball Records first signed My Chemical Romance in 2002 and they recorded and released their debut album under that record label. They signed for a major label called Reprise Records in 2004. They stayed with Reprise until they disbanded in 2013. They released three studio albums under Reprise Records. This chapter will focus on how My Chemical Romance performs masculinity, both in lyrics and visual representation. At the end of the chapter, it will become clear how My Chemical Romance performs masculinity and how this fits into the emo genre. This chapter contains two parts, first a lyrical and musical analysis of a song by My Chemical Romance and finally an analysis of the visual representation of My Chemical Romance in their official music videos.

3.1. Lyrics and Musical Style

3.1.1. *I Brought You My Bullets, You Brought Me Your Love* (2002)

I Brought You My Bullets, You Brought Me Your Love was My Chemical Romance’s first album, which was released in 2002. Geoff Rickly, the lead singer of the band Thursday,

produced the album. The album was released by the underground record label Eyeball Records, which gave them a promising start in the underground scene. Eventually the radio and other record companies could no longer ignore their fame.

The album covers a variety of genres, such as punk, hardcore and even heavy metal. The combination of these genres along with the themes of the songs, places this band in the emo genre. Themes that are found on the album are vampires, love, hurt and death. One of the main inspirations as to why this band was formed is because of the 9/11 attacks. Lead singer Gerard Way was working as an intern for Cartoon Network in New York when the terrorist attacks took place (“Gerard Way”). After witnessing these attacks, he returned home and started to write songs. This would be the start of My Chemical Romance.

The album can be seen as a concept album as it focusses on a relationship between a boy and a girl. This relationship is an unhealthy one. They make each other’s lives miserable. Their story will continue on their second album *Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge*.

The song “Honey, This Mirror Isn’t Big Enough for the Both of Us” seems to be about drugs and alcohol. The first line of the song is “The amount of pills I’m taking, counteracts the booze I’m drinking”, which indicates the addictions the main character suffers. However, as the song progresses a she appears. She is the girlfriend of the main character and she is making his life miserable. She is controlling the way he has to live his life. He does not want to be controlled, as he is the male in this relationship. His girlfriend wants him off the drugs and live a sober life together. He does not want this life: “lets me live my life like this” and “Well I’ll choose the life I’ve taken”. The role of the male can be seen as hypermasculine as he wants to be superior of the woman in his life. He is living a dangerous life, with wrong friends, drugs and alcohol. Furthermore, he is not the one who is showing emotions, it is only the woman who is showing emotions: “And you can cry all you want to, I don’t care how

much / You'll invest yourself in me, we're not working out". She wants him to show emotions too. She wants to be let in on his life and his feelings:

And well I find it hard to stay, with the words you say

Oh baby let me in

Oh baby let me in

He does not want this to happen and he basically tells her that is better to break up. He has taken his stance and no one is able to change that. He would rather live his dangerous drug and alcohol filled life than trying to solve the issues with his girlfriend. The woman is thus the emotional one, subordinated to the will and dominance of the male, as she cannot change his mind. The male is trying to keep the hierarchy intact, as he takes on the role of a hypermasculine male.

The tone of voice also shows elements of hypermasculinity. Gerard's way of screaming and yelling indicate a type of aggression toward the female he sings about. There is a slight change in vocals in the chorus, as they become less aggressive, but that is only temporarily, as the screaming prevails.

The next song on the album is "Vampires Will Never Hurt You". There are multiple ways to read this song. The first one is that the song is criticizing society, as individuality seems lost: "We're hanging out with corpses, we're driving in this hearse". If he ever becomes part of this society, he would rather be dead: "And if they get me and the sun goes down into the ground / And if they get me take this spike to my heart". He also mentions that he does not want others to become part of the whole either: "I'll never let them hurt you, I promise". Yet this song could also be about love, which leads to a second interpretation. In this interpretation, the man in the song will do anything to protect the love of his life. He would be the one to save her from society and its bad influences: "And now the nightclub sets the stage for this they come in pairs she said / We'll shoot back holy water like cheap whiskey they're

always there”. They will fight and stand together. The man and the woman are on equal footing as they are protecting themselves from society. Furthermore, the man is in his protective role, protecting his female companion. He in return asks the same from his friend as he keeps asking her “Can you stake my heart? Can you stake my heart?” He is not sure whether the woman can deliver the same type of protection as he is giving her. He hopes that she can ‘man up’ and fulfill her duties when needed. He projects his sense of traditional masculinity on her. He seeks for equality in the relationship. The song demands equality between male and female, but he is skeptical of her abilities. The male complies with the gendered expectations by protecting his loved one. Additionally he also hopes that the female will also protect him. He is hoping that she can overcome gender expectations by return his favor.

In the song “Drowning Lessons,” the dominance of the man in this relationship becomes visible. He is in a destructive relationship with the woman he wants to marry, but instead he ends up murdering her. He hoped to show his love to her by murdering others. Before he murders her, the man had already murdered over a thousand people:

A thousand bodies piled up

I never thought would be enough

To show you just what I've been thinking

His violent behavior shows signs of hypermasculinity. He hoped that these bodies would prove his love for her, but for her it is not enough, so he will keep on trying to prove his worth to her: “And I'll keep on making more / Just to prove that I adore”. He has taken a subordinate position in the relationship, showing vulnerability toward her by taking his aggression out on others. Sadly, this was not enough for the woman and the relationship did not get better. This resulted in destructive behavior by the man who might have suffocated her: “Without a sound I took her down / and dressed in red and blue I squeezed”, before throwing her in a well:

I dragged her down I put her out
 And back there I left her where no one could see
 And lifeless cold into this well

The man's aggression is playing a huge role in this song. This again indicates hypermasculinity, even though he did try to mend his relationship by showing emotions and taking a secondary position in their relationship. The man's portrayal of hypermasculine tendencies became his downfall.

"Early Sunsets over Monroeville" continues with the vampire theme. The male figures as a protector as he wants to protect his girl from the vampires, indicating macho behavior. In the song, the vampires are a synonym for society. They ran away together to find a safe place to hide, but they were found anyway:

Running away and hiding with you
 I never thought they'd get me here
 Not knowing you'd change from just one bite
 I fought them all off just to hold you close and tight

The female was swallowed up by mainstream society. The male took on the protective role, but he failed. They went from the happy life, as seen in the movies: "Late dawns and early sunsets, just like my favorite scenes / Then holding hands and life was perfect, just like up on the screen", to a life in misery. He now had to make a decision whether to stay with her or break up with her. In this song, this becomes a matter of life and death:

Before I pull this trigger
 Your eyes vacant and stained
 And in saying you loved me
 Made things harder at best

He would rather kill her than letting her be part of society, because he believes that society is evil. He would rather return to the traditional masculinity values of power, control and independence than be in a relationship. Furthermore, he is taking control over her life, indicating a sense of hypermasculinity as he tries to dominate her with aggression. The aggressive act of killing is seen, in the eyes of the man, as a solution to the problems they are having. The man wants to be in a relationship but only on his terms, he does not want to talk about his issues, but instead he would rather let his actions speak for him. A different type of masculinity that is present in this song is the sadomasochist. The male is a victim, because his girlfriend has changed. He now tries to, as mentioned by Savran: “re-assert masculine dominance” (qtd. in Ryalls 92) by being the aggressor. He would rather be the one instigating pain than being in pain. Yet this has two sides, as he will be heartbroken after he kills his girlfriend, so he will end up being in pain after all. She then will no longer be the one who is inflicting the pain, but he will end up being both the victim and the aggressor.

The melancholy and sorrow in Gerard’s voice underline the struggles of the male in the song. The voice adds to the dimension and perception of the song as the heartbreak is felt throughout the song. Instead of confronting and admitting his failure, he would rather continue living his life alone. Perhaps the self-inflicted pain is better than the pain inflicted by others. He has taken control back over his life, which is what makes him masculine in the sense of traditional masculinity.

In the song “Demolition Lovers,” the male wants to commit to his girlfriend by contemplating a double suicide: “I’d end my days with you in a hail of bullets”. The male seems to have a romanticized idea of death, as he cannot seem to make the relationship work in the living world. Dying together is his way of telling her how much she means to him:

But this time, I mean it

I’ll let you know just how much you mean to me

As snow falls on desert sky
 Until the end of everything
 I'm trying, I'm trying
 To let you know how much you mean
 As days fade, and nights grow
 And we go cold
 Until the end, until this pool of blood
 Until this, I mean this, I mean this

He wants to be in control of her, as he wants her to join him in his plans. This would indicate that he would not end up heartbroken, as they will have an eternal love beyond death. The male shows both signs of traditional masculinity as well as sadomasochism. He takes action and control over his life by indicating that death is perhaps the best solution for their relationship, which are signs of traditional masculinity. Yet he also plays both the role of the victim and the aggressor, which are signs of sadomasochism. He is a victim of failing love and he thus wants to re-assert his dominance by taking both his and her life. He does not want to be the only one who suffers. By choosing love, and thus a woman, over life also indicates that he rejects traditional masculinity. Within traditional masculinity, women and relationships are devalued. In this song, the male takes from a variety of masculinities to fit his own needs, he shows that masculinity is not fixed.

3.1.2. *Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge* (2004)

A major record label released *Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge*, after their first album become an underground hit. “The underground reaction from fans and media plus radio play garnered by singles “Honey, This Mirror Isn’t Big Enough for the Two of Us” and “Vampires Will Never Hurt You”, was such that Warner Bros. soon snapped the band up” (Sharpe-Young 218). My Chemical Romance signed for Reprise Records, a label that is owned by

Warner Bros. By signing to a major label, My Chemical Romance would now be promoted to the general audience. Their songs and videos were heard on the radio and shown on MTV.

This album made them known by the larger public as it was their rise to fame.

“You Know What They Do To Guys Like Us in Prison” is a song about being on the road with the band. When a band is touring they are often cramped in a small van, especially when a band is new and not earning enough money to buy or rent a bigger vehicle. Being in a van is described as being in prison. Gerard Way describes his bandmates as cellmates: “My cellmate’s a killer, they make me do push-ups in drag”. While the drag is referring to the emo scene. In an interview, he once mentioned that “[t]he song is sort of relevant to all the new bands coming out, with guys wearing women’s pants and makeup and long hair. Music is evolving and it’s sexy and it’s getting dangerous again. And I like that. But if any of us went to jail, we’d have a really hard time” (qtd. in Haydn). He points out the changes the emo scene has made over time. It is now about wearing tight skinny jeans and makeup. The males have a feminine look, which could be considered, as mentioned in the song, as men in drag. As the song progresses, more queer elements appear:

Now, but I can't

And I don't know

How we're just two men as God had made us,

Well, I can't, well, I can!

Too much, too late, or just not enough of this

Pain in my heart for your dying wish,

I'll kiss your lips again.

The song is now depicting homosexual behavior of two men who have kissed before and who might kiss again. They are exploring their sexuality, but they are not sure whether they want to continue the exploration as indicated by “Well, I can't, well, I can!” and “Too much, too

late, or just not enough of this”. The combination of the lyrics as well as the looks of males in the emo scene indicates that these males are taking risks by appearing as such in public. They also risk being perceived as gay by their looks and perhaps by their acts as they might explore their sexuality publicly as well. They could therefore be considered both social-justice straight queers and the elective straight-queers. The title indicates that they might be abused in jail because of their looks as they are not adhering to the traditional masculine looks, which is why they are perceived as feminine and therefore the larger audience does not consider them as masculine in the traditional sense. According to My Chemical Romance, men in the emo scene do not live up to the gender expectations as set out by the general audience.

“I’m Not Okay (I Promise)” returns to the theme of heartbreak. The man in the song is in love with a girl who is in a relationship with another man. This man is not treating her well as he supposedly might have spread dirty pictures of her: “For all the dirty looks, the photographs your boyfriend took”. He is not protecting her, but he is controlling her instead. He both rejects and accepts traditional masculinity, as he is not mending his relationship, but he is in control. The main subject of the song is a male who wants to offer her a better relationship: “I never want to let you down or have you go, it's better off this way”. He does want what is best for her and actually protect her as a man is supposed to do. He tries to indicate this, but she keeps telling him that she is not okay:

What will it take to show you that it's not the life it seems?

(I'm not okay)

I've told you time and time again you sing the words but don't know what it means

(I'm not okay)

Furthermore, he does admit that his past was not perfect either: “You said you read me like a book, but the pages all are torn and frayed” but he also says, “I’m okay now”. He is okay now

and ready to be involved in a relationship with her. Additionally, he wants to show her that by turning to a hegemonic masculine role:

But you really need to listen to me

Because I'm telling you the truth

I mean this, I'm okay!

He is both controlling and demanding in his tone by telling her that he is okay and telling the truth. She should trust him and have faith in him. He is placing her in a subordinate position. He is legitimizing his dominant position by saying that he is okay now and she should therefore listen to him, as he knows what is best for her. This song indicates that masculinity is not fixed as the male shows different signs of different types of masculinities.

Another song dealing with love is “Hang ‘Em High”. This song takes inspiration from punk, as its raw and fast paced. The girl is unsure about his relationship with the boy. She keeps asking him questions such as “Would I lie to you?” and “Would I die for you?”. These questions indicate that the male is not truly committed to the relationship. By rejecting the relationship, he is adhering to traditional masculinity.

“It’s Not a Fashion Statement, It’s a Deathwish” is about revenge, which reflects the album title. Someone hurt him in his past, but he managed to stay strong. “This hole you put me in / Wasn't deep enough”. Someone in his past may have taken the life of his loved one, which is indicated by the manner in which Gerard sings about it. “Just know that I will remember you” and “then I will be with you / I will be there one last time now”. He wants to settle the score and find the one who indirectly hurt him. “And I'm climbing out right now/ You're running out of places to hide from me”. He was the victim but is now trying to re-arrest his masculinity by using violence. He wants to take a life: “I'm taking back the life you stole”. He has suffered and now he wants someone else to suffer too. The aggression and violence are signs of sadomasochism. Further signs that indicate sadomasochism are that he

changed from victim to aggressor and he would also enjoy inflicting pain on the person who hurt him. The male character in this song again shows that masculinity is not fixed as he transgresses from one type to another.

“I Never Told You What I Do for a Living” refers back to My Chemical Romance’s first album *I Brought You My Bullets, You Brought Me Your Love*. The leading man on that album was a murderer, but he never told this to anyone. He murdered others to prove his love to a woman. He reflects back on these events in this song: “It’s for the bodies I claim and those / Only go so far” and also in “I keep a book of the names and those / Only go so far”. He hoped that his display of hypermasculinity and sadomasochism would have been enough to prove his love to her, but that was not enough. They both have died a tragic death: “They gave us two shots to the back of the head / And we’re all dead now”. Their dangerous lifestyle is what killed them. Furthermore, he did not manage to protect her from evil, as she was murdered. He failed to protect her, which is harming his masculinity, as protecting a loved one is part of the gendered expectations of being a male who is in a relationship. If he had managed to protect his loved one, he would not have harmed his sense of masculinity.

3.1.3. *The Black Parade* (2006)

The Black Parade is another concept album by My Chemical Romance. The songs on this album revolve around a male character called ‘the patient’. He features throughout the album, reflecting back on his life and on death. This album was released in 2006 during the heydays of emo. With this album, they have strengthened their place in the emo scene as well as the global music scene and charts.

The first song on *The Black Parade* is “The End”. It can be seen as a song in which the main character of the album, the patient, is passing away. However, there are certain lines in the song that indicates their farewell to the emo scene. The band, as well as the fans in the emo scene are used to wearing makeup, but this song tells them

to wipe it off and leave it behind. “Wipe off that makeup, what's in is despair”.

Furthermore, the lyrics “Here's my resignation, I'll serve it in drag” indicate their farewell from the scene, even though he would serve his resignation in drag. Drag, as mentioned in the song “You Know What They Do to Guys Like Us in Prison”, indicates the feminine look of boys in the emo scene. This could either mean that he does not care about the feminine look that goes along with the scene or that this would be his final appearance as an emo. When analyzing the videos, it will become clear that the looks of My Chemical Romance had indeed changed to fit the storyline of the album. “The End” is not only a farewell to the emo scene, but it also shows a rejection of the perceived feminine look of the emo scene.

“This Is How I Disappear” returns to the relationship theme as seen on previous albums. In this song, the male has passed away and admits that he has hurt his girl: “I'm just a ghost / So I can't hurt you anymore”. The lyrics imply that he might have cheated on her, which she may have found out: “There're things that I have done / You never should ever know!”. As the song continues, it also becomes clear that she might not have been the best girlfriend either: “That all the good girls go to heaven / Well, heaven knows”. She too might have done things herself that harmed the relationship. The male is trying to justify why he hurt her by also explaining that she was not perfect either. He places her in a subordinate position, which can be regarded as hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, he has taken control back in his own hands by hurting her, which is a sign of traditional masculinity. By showing his power, he dominates over the girl, placing her in a subordinate position, by doing so he has reclaimed his masculinity.

In “The Sharpest Lives”, the male is showing his weakness and placing himself in a subordinate position. He can only survive because of the woman in his life: “A kiss and I will surrender”. He has no roof over his head because of his drinking problems: “Cause I've spent

the night dancing / I'm drunk, I suppose". He is asking the girl whether he can stay with her for the night: "If I crash on the couch / Can I sleep in my clothes?". He wants to leave his clothes on, suggesting he does not have sexual feelings for her. The song does however indicate that there are sexual tensions. He does try to take advantage of his subordinate position. The sense of sexual innuendo toward the woman may come across as hypermasculinity. The line "So why don't you blow me a kiss before she goes?" is sung in such a way that it ask for a sexual favor instead of for a kiss. There is a short pause after blow me, which changes the definition of the sentence. This hypermasculinity indicates that the thoughts and actions of the male are not as innocent as they may seem. He may portray the role of a victim, but he ends up taking advantage of this position. The male in the song is using his masculinity to his advantage.

"I Don't Love You" is about being in an abusive relationship as the following lyrics show: "Sometimes I cry so hard from pleading / So sick and tired of all the needless beating". It appears to be the case that they are both abusive and they both use violence toward each other. However, as the song continues the lyrics are as follows:

But baby when they knock you

Down and out

Is where you ought to stay

This indicates that the male uses his power and strength to make her stay. He uses violence to indicate his masculinity, which is a sign of hypermasculinity.

In addition to hypermasculinity, the male also shows sign of rejecting traditional masculinity, as he might have gotten married. The couple might have been married as they have promised to be together for the rest of their lives: "Well, after all this time that you still owe / You're still a good-for-nothing I don't know". They are still young and there is a lot of time left in their life that they are supposed to live together, but as events have taken a wrong

turn, they owe each other that time. Perhaps one of them, or both, have only started to show their true colors after marriage, which is why they say:

I don't love you

Like I loved you

Yesterday.

Their lives used to be better when they were not married. The rejection of traditional masculinity might have made life harder for the male and he needed a way out. He needed to take control back over his life, which might have been the reason for the abuse and the switch to hypermasculinity. The male character's behavior again shows traits of multiple masculinities, again showing that masculinity is not fixed.

“Famous Last Words” is the last song on *The Black Parade*. The patient is about to pass away and proclaims his last words. He understands that he has not been the best man, boyfriend and husband that he could have been. He has made mistakes:

Now I know

That I can't make you stay

But where's your heart?

But where's your heart?

He now knows that he could and should now have let her stay because of the beating. He should have talked about their emotions and feelings instead. Yet, if he had done so, he would have rejected his masculinity as talking about emotions and feelings is not something men do. Traditional masculinity devalues communication and verbal ability. Yet the following lines show the positive outcome by communicating well in a relationship:

I see you lying next to me

With words I thought I'd never speak

Awake and unafraid

Asleep or dead

He is now speaking words he has not spoken before. He now shows emotions and does not turn to violence. It has been a long and hard process for him to realize how he should communicate in a relationship:

But can I speak?

Well is it hard understanding

I'm incomplete

A life that's so demanding

I get so weak

A love that's so demanding

I can't speak

He came to realize that both life and love are demanding and that communication skills are needed in both. He thus had to overcome traditional masculinity in order to understand it. Nevertheless, he has also come to realize that he does not always needs to be dependent as he can be on his own. He re-asserts his masculinity by showing independence: "I am not afraid to keep on living / I am not afraid to walk this world alone". He thus has learned to find a compromise between the various masculinities. He now knows that he should not always comply with the general ideas of masculinity, but draw his own path. He also hopes for forgiveness: "Honey if you stay, I'll be forgiven / Nothing you can say can stop me going home". He would rather be with her than without her, thus once more he is rejecting traditional masculinity.

3.1.4. *Danger Days: The True Lives of the Fabulous Killjoys* (2010)

Danger Days: The True Lives of the Fabulous Killjoys is the fourth and final studio album by My Chemical Romance. This is another concept album as it revolves around a group of outlaws called the Killjoys. There are also different themes on this album than on

previous albums, such as adventure, suicide and capitalism. The sound on the album is also less emo than previous albums. The band has now truly entered the mainstream, focusing more on rock and pop sounds than on the emo sound. It can be assumed that they wanted to broaden their fan base with a more diverse and approachable sound.

“Bulletproof Heart” starts with Gerard singing in a high-pitched voice, as if it is filled with pain and suffering. Slowly the song intensifies and the accompanying lyrics indicate a determined young man, Johnny, who wants to run away with a girl, Jenny. Johnny wants to be the savior of Jenny, by escaping their current way of living:

Run away like it was yesterday

And we could run away

If we could run away,

Run away from here

They both had their problems and issues in the town. They now want to destroy it and leave their past behind:

Let's blow a hole in this town

And do our talking with the laser beam

Coming out of this place

In a bullet's embrace

Then we'll do it again

Johnny takes the lead in this adventure. He is the one who wants to turn to violence, by doing so he shows signs of hypermasculinity. He tries to win the girl over by showing his manliness through violence. He also states that he cannot be hurt: “I got a bulletproof heart”, which is in line with the values of traditional masculinity. He is the one in control and not showing any emotions. Furthermore, as he wants to be the protector and savior of the girl: “Let me be the one to save you” also shows signs of machismo. Johnny sees his as his responsibility to

protect and defend his girl as “This world is after me, after you”. In the song, Johnny tries to convince Jenny to go with him by showing her his masculinity and manliness. Johnny therefore behaves in line with his gendered expectations.

The song “The Only Hope for Me Is You” is about 9/11. The album was released in 2010, 19 years after 9/11, but as Gerard Way witnessed these events and they are still fresh on his mind. The following lines of the song describe the events of 9/11:

Where were you when

All of the embers fell

I still remember them

Covered in ash

Covered in glass

Along with:

Many years after the disasters

That we've seen

What have we learned?

Other than people burn in purifying flame

Gerard is looking back on history and while doing so he is showing emotions such as pain and frustration. He is rejecting traditional masculinity by talking about his emotions. In addition, he is also devaluing independence. He cannot seem to deal with the emotions by himself as he has tried for years but failed. He has been dependent on someone else, and he now hopes that this dependency can be shared: “Can I be the only hope for you? / Because you're the only hope for me”. 9/11 has been a traumatic experience for Gerard, and he figured out that he needed someone else to be able to face his trauma. He had to reject traditional masculinity in order to confront his trauma.

“Save Yourself, I’ll Hold Them Back” is a song about suicide. My Chemical Romance has sung song about suicide before, as they are a band that do not encourage suicide. This becomes clear in this song. They take on a protective role. They are trying to protect their fans from attempting suicide as indicated by the following lines:

Get off the ledge and drop the knife

Not a victim of a victim's life

Because this ain't a room full of suicide

We're believers, I believe tonight

Their fans could be considered as family. The band sees it as their task to save and protect their fans. Therefore, this song can be seen as song that displays features of machismo.

“Vampire Money” is in stark contrast with the rest of the album, as it places the killjoys into a different light. Violence has the overtone in this song, rather than being the hero. The song was written “after turning down offers to contribute a song to the *Twilight* soundtrack series” (O’Donnell par. 10). They ridicule the *Twilight* series: “Sparkle like Bowie in the morning sun” and “Glimmer like Bolan in the morning sun”. As much as My Chemical Romance enjoys the vampire theme, they do not stand behind the portrayal of vampires in *Twilight*. Vampires are not supposed to sparkle. Besides ridiculing the movie there are also various instance of violence mentioned throughout the song: “Pick a fight at an airport bar” and “And get your finger on the trigger / Tap the barrel of a gun”. These are sign of hypermasculinity. However, a close reading of the song implies that one should stick up for oneself. Take control of your own life and do not be afraid. The band has taken matters into their own hands by rejecting money, so-called vampire money, from the movie industry. The band tries to show that being yourself and sticking to you own ideals is more important than anything else is. They can make their own singles and they do not need the help of a big

movie franchise. Valued are control and independence, which reveals traditional masculinity traits.

The lyrics indicate that My Chemical Romance represents itself as mostly hypermasculine. Their themes often include violence and aggression, which are in line with the description of hypermasculinity. In addition, many songs reveal that the women are placed in subordinate positions, because the male wants to be in control. There are however also instances in which they reject traditional masculinity, where love is chosen over solitude. Yet overall, they do value traditional masculinity aspects such as control and independence. In a few instances, My Chemical Romance also comments on the feminine look of emo men. They know and acknowledge that emo men contradict the masculine look. The emo look may contradict the general notions of masculinity their lyrics are not. The lyrics show a variety of masculinities, fitting the need of the male subject in the song.

3.2. The Visual Representation of the Band

My Chemical Romance has gone through quite a few changes throughout their career. They have had a few changes in their lineup and they have gone through stylistic changes matching their concepts and themes on their albums. The stylistic changes can be seen in their music videos, as they represent themselves in a certain way. The analyses of the videos will make the changes throughout the years visible, starting with the two singles “Vampires Will Never Hurt You” and “Honey, This Mirror Isn’t Big Enough for the Two of Us” from their 2002 debut album *I Brought You My Bullets, You Brought Me Your Love*.

In the “Vampires Will Never Hurt You” video, the band is playing their song while there are also two other people, a male and a female. At the 1:09 mark, the mise-en-scène is placing the woman in a subordinate position. She is placed in a chair in front of the man who is towering over her. This placement does turn out to be deceiving. She holds a box that shines bright when she opens it. She may actually be in control over the male because of this

box. However, at the 4:33 mark, the male is holding the woman in his hands, his scream is coordinated with the lyrics. Did he kill her? Did she kill herself? In the final 30 seconds, she can be seen opening the box further, which is making the male scream. She did not only control her life but also his. At 5:20, the screen lights up and they are both on the floor. They both could not handle what was in the box, which was probably sunlight. They ended like Romeo and Juliet, as they both ended up dead.

In the video, the band members are dressed in black suits, white shirts and matching black ties, which makes them look dapper and masculine. In addition, they sound and look quite aggressive when they are playing. They do however play with masculinity. Gerard is wearing black nail polish, and they have whitened faces and blackened eyes. However, they are not wearing the guyliner that would be common in the emo scene later. It was in 2002 when emo started to take off and they were only flirting with this genre both in sound and in appearance.

“Honey, This Mirror Isn't Big Enough for the Two of Us” again shows two things: 1) a man holding audition for dancers and 2) the band playing their song. The audition shows females dancing and talking to a male judge. He does not come across as being interested in what happens in front of him as he is yawning and smoking. As the video progresses, his real goal of the audition becomes clear, as he wants to date one of these women. He goes out on a date with one of them and they end up sleeping together. He is in control, as the woman might still believe that she might get a job by sleeping with him. He is mentally dominating these women. One of the woman can be seen in front of a mirror being sad and confused. She is the one who went on a date with the judge. He regrets going on a date with him and ends up drugging him in his apartment the next day. Once she drugged him she tortures him. He is not enjoying this, yet he now has been both the victim and the aggressor, which could indicate sadomasochism. Yet he is not able to re-assert masculine dominance and therefore this cannot

be regarded as sadomasochism. He gets what he deserves by luring innocent women into his bed. The woman undermines his masculinity by dominating and torturing him. In the final 2 seconds of the video, the woman can again be seen sitting in front of the mirror, this time there are two bags lying next to her, one of these bags is moving. She has put the tortured man in the bag, which is why he cannot reassert his masculinity. Considering the fact that there are two bags, she has done this before. She might be the one who is showing sadomasochist tendencies. She is taking the men down who are trying to take advantage of women. She is using her femininity to her benefit. She is portraying the femme fatale, who is destroying these male's manliness.

The band shows some significant changes in relation to their first video. They have discarded the makeup and let their hair grow. Mikey and Gerard have bangs that cover their forehead and eyes, which fits the emo genre. They do come across as being quite masculine as they are wearing regular colorful clothes and Gerard is wearing a Motorhead t-shirt, indicating the he enjoys the masculine genre of heavy metal. They still dress and behave in a way that is deemed masculine by the general audience.

My Chemical Romance released three singles from their 2004 album *Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge*: "I'm Not Okay (I Promise)", "Helena" and "The Ghost of You".

For "I'm Not Okay (I Promise)" there are two videos, one by Greg Kaplan and one by Marc Webb. The video by Kaplan is known as the first version and it shows the band on tour and at home. Their representation in this video do not differ much from the "Honey, This Mirror Isn't Big Enough for the Both of Us" video, but the video by Webb does show differences. The video by Webb is also known as the 'MTV version', indicating that it has been made for a wider audience.

Webb's version starts as if it were a movie trailer. The video is rated 'R' for 'Revenge', which is a reference to the album title. The members My Chemical Romance are

portrayed as outsiders in high school. They do not participate in sports, and sit alone at lunch. They are dressed in matching school uniforms, but somehow they still manage to stand out from the rest. They have a different hairstyle and do not belong to a specific group at school. Additionally Gerard is wearing makeup and leaning toward a more feminine look. He is disrupting the dominant male culture by having feminine characteristics such as having longer hair and wearing makeup. In the scene at the pool, he is standing on a diving platform between males in swimsuits, yet he is the only one in his school uniform. From a distance, he could also be recognized as a woman because of his long hair. He does not want to be part of the masculine world of sports, yet he does not act feminine either. His looks are what makes him look more feminine than what the general audience would consider as being masculine.

Frank also plays with his execution of masculinity. He is in a locker-room with a cheerleader. She has something in her eyes, as is remarked by Frank. She leans in for the kiss, but he does not go for the kiss but instead takes something out of her eye. He goes against the expectations. In addition, he does kiss Gerard on the cheek when the band is playing in the garage. Gerard and Frank do not fit the traditional sense of masculinity, instead they move back and forth between performing queer masculinity and the hetero-normative masculinity.

The video for "Helena" represents My Chemical Romance's sound and image the best. The band is at a funeral home with some other attendees. They are all dressed in black, which is not only common for funerals but also for emos. The band accessorizes their outfits with ties, either red or striped. These colors are common in the emo scene. Additionally both Frank and Gerard are wearing a lot of eye makeup. They are again playing with the limits of a masculine appearance. At a quick glance, Gerard could perhaps even be considered as being androgynous. His long hair, his makeup and his shaved face give him a feminine look than the others. The band, especially Gerard, plays with the expectations of masculinity in this video.

“The Ghost of You” shows a very different side of My Chemical Romance. The music is slower and more accessible and the band is almost unrecognizable. They have been transformed into military men from the 1940s. Their hair is slick and they are all wearing a brown military uniform. Being a male in the military is often seen as masculine. It is a masculine occupation, fits hegemonic masculinity and it fits the general expectations of being a man. A military man is often disciplined, tough, showing strength and willing to fight. This is in contrast with how the band used to represent itself before. Surely, Gerard and Frank appear to wear some black eyeliner and eyeshadow, but this is hardly noticeable due to the lighting in the video. What is noticeable is that camaraderie and protecting are important to these men. Gerard and his brother Mikey have both landed on the beach, and this is when gunmen hit Mikey. Gerard sees Mikey taking the hit. He has failed to protect his brother. Ray, who plays a medic, is trying to save him, but he fails too. My Chemical Romance show both signs of machismo and traditional masculinity in this video. They live for their work, leaving their women behind and thus choosing camaraderie over women. Additionally, they also try to protect each other, as this is their responsibility as military men. Therefore, it can be said that the men in My Chemical Romance show their masculine sides in the video for “The Ghost of You”.

My Chemical Romance’s third studio album *Welcome to the Black Parade* was released in 2006. The band has released four videos for this album: “Welcome to the Black Parade”, “Famous Last Words”, “I Don’t Love You” and “Teenagers”.

The first two songs that were released were “Welcome to the Black Parade” and “Famous Last Words”. These two videos represent My Chemical Romance as a band called The Black Parade. They are wearing black and white marching band outfits, still in line with the emo style. One of the most notable changes is Gerard’s hair. He has cut it short and died it blonde. He has truly created a new character. The others have not necessarily changed

their looks, but they do pretend to perform as someone else. They are The Black Parade here, and not My Chemical Romance.

From 1:04 forward, the band is playing on a float. On this float, the band is playing and singing “Welcome to the Black Parade”. They come across as a true rock band. There is no makeup and they are genuinely rocking out. Towards the end of the video for “Welcome to the Black Parade, Gerard can be seen smashing his microphone stand. This can be seen as a violent and aggressive act, indicating his masculinity. He, as being a member of The Black Parade, is no longer playing with the expectations of masculinity. A continuation of this behavior can be seen in the follow up video “Famous Last Words”.

“Famous Last Words” is a heavier song than “Welcome to the Black Parade”, which started with an introduction on the piano. “Famous Last Words” begins with guitars and a masculine low voiced Gerard. In this video, the float has caught on fire, and the band’s clothing is dirty. The band again comes across as a masculine rock band, especially with the added fire in the background, and the louder guitars and heavier drums. Their masculinity is further reinforced when they start to smash and demolish their instruments and the float at the end of the video. This act of violence can again be seen as a masculine feature. The band, as The Black Parade, is represented as more manly and masculine in contrast to their appearance as My Chemical Romance in their previous videos.

“I Don't Love You” is the third single of *The Black Parade*. In this black and white video, the band has left their The Black Parade look behind. The band is again dressed in black, in accordance to the emo genre, and Gerard is back to his black hair and wearing black nail polish and eye makeup. Furthermore, Frank is throwing his guitar through a glass panel, and other instruments are exploding. The overall vibe of the video and the behavior of the band is masculine. A little makeup does not make Gerard less masculine as long as his behavior fits the general expectations of masculinity.

In the video for “Teenagers”, the band is playing at a high school in an empty gym. Cheerleaders are surrounding them, making them look masculine in contrast to the feminine cheerleaders. As the video progresses the high school students, the teenagers, manage to break the lock and run into the gym. They eventually climb over the barricades that are there to protect the band. The teenagers flood the stage where the band is playing and they are drowning the band as the teenagers take their instruments and microphones away. The band is overwhelmed and they lost control. Moreover, the band does not resort to violence, and thus they fail to show their masculinity. In accordance, the video ends with the text that violence is not the answer. The band would rather reject traditional masculinity and hypermasculinity than be caught in a violent act.

“Desolation Row” is a Bob Dylan cover and it featured on the *Watchmen* soundtrack. Zack Snyder, who directed *Watchmen*, also directed the video for “Desolation Row”. My Chemical Romance has transformed Dylan’s song in a punk song. The punk aspects also return in the video. My Chemical Romance is playing in a venue and the crowd consist of punkers, who mosh and fight each other. The predominantly male audience is showing hegemonic masculine behavior by being involved in the moshing and fighting. Even the police and security are not safe. The band are also dressed in punk apparel, which is close to the emo look, but with more leather and studs. Gerard is again wearing eye makeup, but this does not interfere with his masculinity. The band produces a hypermasculine vibe, as there is violence and there is aggression in both image and sound, therefore the band affirms their masculinity in this video.

My Chemical Romance released four videos for their fourth and final studio album *Danger Days: The True Lives of the Fabulous Killjoys*: “Na Na Na (Na Na Na Na Na Na Na Na Na Na)”, “Sing”, “Planetary (Go!)”, and “The Kids from Yesterday”. The last two videos are

live videos and they do not show any specific aspects of masculinity or femininity, whereas the first two video do. Therefore, only the first two will be analyzed.

In the videos for “Na Na Na (Na Na Na Na Na Na Na Na Na)” and “Sing” My Chemical Romance are portraying The Killjoys. Gerard has dyed his hair red and Mikey has dyed his hair blonde to fit their characters. They are a group of outlaws who fights against Better Living Industries. The Killjoys drive in muscle cars, wear leather jackets, and have bright and colorful guns. In addition, they read magazines associated with manliness and masculinity, such as pornographic magazines and magazines related to gun use. A little girl, whom they are trying to keep out of the hands of Better Living Industries, also accompanies the Killjoys. The video for “Na Na Na” ends with a standoff between The Killjoys and associates of Better Living Industries. The Killjoys lose the fight and the girl is kidnapped. They did not only lose their fight, they also failed to protect the girl.

In the video for “Sing” their fight against Better Living Industries continues. They drive toward the headquarters of Better Living Industries in search for the girl. The viewer can already see that there also is another person involved, a woman who has presumably infiltrated at Better Living Industries. She is showing the girl that she has a weapon and that she is on her side. The Killjoys manage to beat the guards and get to the girl. Yet, as they are trying to escape, a fight ensues. The Killjoys are doing their very best to protect the girl, who is visibly scared. Gerard is then pushed against the wall, with a gun against his throat. His brother Mikey sees this and runs toward his brother’s attacker, but he is too late as Gerard is shot. Mikey also ends up being shot, while Ray and Frank are trying to escape the building with the girl. Yet Frank closes the door after Ray and the girl escaped. He is staying behind avenging the death of his friend by trying to stall and kill the remaining bad men. He does not shy away but instead tries to be the hero and the protector. Yet he fails and he too is killed. Ray may have made it to the outside, but he is also shot right before he and the girl would be

rescued. Other outlaws eventually rescue the girl. The Killjoys fought until the end, trying to protect and save the little girl. In these two videos, My Chemical Romance have shown their masculine side and ended up saving the girl.

The videos indicate that My Chemical Romance represents itself in line with the emo look. The videos portray instances in which a man is placed in a subordinate position, which is harming his masculinity. The first two videos of My Chemical Romance show a masculine side, the band members dress and behave mostly in a way that is deemed as masculine by the general audience. Gerard does start to look for the boundaries of masculinity as he is wearing nail polish in “Vampires Will Never Hurt You”. By 2004, both Frank and Gerard start to dress more emo. They start to move back and forth between queer masculinity and hetero-normative masculinity. In addition, Gerard starts to take on a more feminine look. He is wearing eyeliner and has longer hair. From a distance, he could be recognized as a woman. Gerard especially plays with the expectations of masculinity, looking for the boundaries and crossing them. In other videos such as “The Ghost of You”, “Welcome to the Black Parade”, “Famous Last Words”, “Teenagers” and “Desolation Row”, the band members are adhering to the gendered expectations of being a male. They dress and behave accordingly and have managed to reassert their masculinity in these videos. In “Na, Na, Na”, and “Sing” they move toward a more hypermasculine behavior as they are involved in fights. They do lose their fights, but they end up saving the girl, which results in them reasserting their masculinity. Thus, overall, the band members of My Chemical Romance do not differentiate much from what the general audience would consider as masculine, it is only Gerard who explored the boundaries of gender during the first few years.

4. Paramore

Paramore was formed in 2004 in Tennessee, when Hayley was only 15 years old. They managed to sign for the record label Fueled by Ramen in 2005, and have not left that

label since. The band has released five studio albums, which will be analyzed in this chapter. This chapter will focus on how Paramore performs both masculinity and femininity both in their lyrics and in their music videos. At the end of the chapter, it will become clear how Paramore performs masculinity and femininity and how this fits into the emo genre.

4.1. Lyrics and Musical Style

4.1.1. *All We Know Is Falling* (2005)

Paramore managed to sign for Fueled by Ramen in 2004. This record label managed and manages a variety of bands who are mainly linked to the emo genre. *All We Know Is Falling* is Paramore's debut album, but with songs such as "All We Know" and "Emergency" they skyrocketed to fame. Their videos were being played on TV and their songs were played on the radio. They managed to become famous in the heydays of the emo genre.

"All We Know" is the opening track of *All We Know Is Falling*. The song is written after the departure of Jeremy Davis (Munachen par. 2). The song itself may not come across as depicting either feminine or masculine aspects, but a closer reading does reveal some. The remaining band members of Paramore are wondering why he left: "Is this what you had waited for? Just to be alone?" This indicates that Jeremy might rather prefer solitude and being alone than be part of a group. They believe that he left because he would rather be alone, which is in line with traditional masculinity as part of his independency. The lack of communication within the band also poses a problem: "You never, you never said / This wasn't what you wanted, was it? Was it?" Jeremy might never have talked about his ideas and/or feelings. By doing so, he again shows sign of traditional masculinity as being vocal about certain emotions is not seen as masculine. Perhaps he did not want to be a part of the band at all, which is an aspect that will be unknown for the band, as Jeremy did not talk about

this or other issues. Jeremy, as discussed in the song by the band, could not reject his traditional masculine stance, which is why he chose to leave the band.

The song “Never Let This Go” demonstrates a difference between men and women. Men, in a traditional masculine sense, do want to be alone, whereas women would prefer company. This stereotypical behavior becomes clear in the song:

Please don't get me wrong
 Because I'll never let this go,
 But I can't find the words to tell you
 I don't wanna be alone,
 But now I feel like I don't know you

The woman does not want to be alone even though her partner has changed. She would rather hold on to this relationship than risking being alone. She is showing hyperfeminine traits, such as being native and accepting (“Planned Parenthood”). To an extent, she accepts that he does not talk about his emotions:

One day you'll get sick of
 Saying that everything's alright
 And by then I'm sure I'll be pretending
 Just like I am tonight

She would rather pretend that everything is all right than discussing the problems with her partner. She wants to be assertive but cannot find the words. She chooses emotional abuse by her partner over independence, and she is thus accepting her gendered stereotype.

“Conspiracy” could be about two things, either a failed relationship or a failed friendship. The lyrics indicate that there is a conspiracy against her or even them as can be seen in the following lines: “And they'll find out why we don't trust them,” “I need to know why we don't trust them” and “Explain to me this conspiracy against me / And tell me how

I've lost my power". She feels as if they are against her, as if she has done something wrong.

This in return makes her feel alone:

I thought that we'd make it
 Because you said that we'd make it through
 And when all security fails
 Will you be there to help me through?

She has lost the one she could always turn to, whether he was a boyfriend or a friend. She needs this masculine person in her life who tells her that everything will be all right:

Where can I turn? 'Cause I need something more
 Surrounded by uncertainty, I'm so unsure
 Tell me why I feel so alone
 'Cause I need to know to whom do I owe

She is dependent on this person as he provides security. She again leans towards hyperfemininity, as she cannot seem to be alone. She shows signs of weakness, as she does not confront the ones who have formed this conspiracy against her. She is again pushed into this feminine stereotype by her weakness and inability to be alone.

"My Heart" is again a song about dependency. There are signs that indicate that the girl did something wrong in her current relationship: "I am finding out that maybe I was wrong / That I've fallen down and I can't do this alone". She has come to realize that she cannot repair this relationship on her own, as she needs the help of her boyfriend as well. She might have been too young and naïve to be able to understand what it means to be in a relationship. She has come to find out that it is a two-way street and that is why he also has to cooperate to fix this relationship: "Stay with me, this is what I need, please?" She also admits that she might not have been the best listener in this relationship, which can be seen in the following lines: "This time I will be listening". He has taken the effort to talk to her and perhaps discuss his

emotions with her, yet she did not fully commit to this relationship. He has rejected traditional masculine features, yet she has dismissed him while he rejected these features. She was not the listening ear that most girls tend to be. They have both rejected masculine and feminine values.

The following lines indicate her dependency on him:

This heart, it beats

Beats for only you

My heart is yours

She cannot live without him. She needs someone in her life who, to an extent, adheres to the machismo values. She values protection and she places herself in a subordinate position by admitting that she needs someone like him in her life. Hegemonic masculinity is thus also reinstated in this song, as the male maintains a dominant role in this relationship. He is the one who can make it or break it as she has already admitted that her heart is his. “My Heart” shows that females are looking for masculine traits in men.

4.1.2. *Riot!* (2007)

Riot! is Paramore’s second album. Paramore had already gained significant attention by the larger audience with their debut album, yet this album broadened their fan base. Their lyrics and musical approach indicate growth in both musical talent as in age. The band has matured significantly in the past two years.

The opening track for *Riot!* is “For a Pessimist, I’m Pretty Optimistic”. The song is about putting your faith in someone and then you are being let down by that person:

I put my faith in you, so much faith

And then you just threw it away

You threw it away

There is always the hope that everything will be all right, which could be seen as being naïve. However, the band has grown quite a bit since they released their debut album, as they can now see past this. They have overcome their naivety:

I'm not so naive
My sorry eyes can see
The way you fight shy
Of almost everything
Well, if you give up
You'll get what you deserve

Hayley rejects hyperfemininity by admitting this. If someone or something is not worth fighting for, that person should be let go. As a woman, one should not always be in a subordinate position in a relationship, but one should also be able to take action, especially if a man refuses to do so:

You were finished long before
We had even seen the start
Why don't you stand up, be a man about it?
Fight with your bare hands about it now

The man never was committed to this relationship, which fits in with traditional masculinity as he devalued relationships. In addition, he never talked about this or addressed the issue, which shows a lack of communication. Communication is something that women value and traditional masculine men devalue. The woman has figured out that is okay to let go and take control. Therefore, this song indicates both a rejection of hyperfemininity and hegemonic masculinity. "For A Pessimist, I'm Pretty Optimistic" shows that women can take control and elevate themselves from a subordinate position in a relationship.

“That’s What You Get” continues with the theme of hyperfemininity. The song starts of by rejecting hyperfemininity:

No sir, well I don't wanna be the blame, not anymore

It's your turn, to take a seat we're settling the final score

And why do we like to hurt, so much?

Hayley does no longer want to take the blame anymore from males. She is taken an active role instead of a passive one. She no longer accepts being harmed by male, which is something that hyperfeminine girls do endure. Yet as the song continues, there are elements of doubt. She wonders whether she did the right thing by taking control:

I wonder, how am I supposed to feel when you're not here

'Cause I burned every bridge I ever built when you were here

I still try, holding onto silly things, I never learn

Oh why, all the possibilities I'm sure you've heard

She has been placed in a subordinate role for a long time and now she does not know how to live by herself. There still is a sense of passivity and naivety as she is trying to hold on to what she once had. She even concluded that she enjoyed the pain: “Pain make your way to me, to me / And I'll always be just so inviting”. The relationship shows hypermasculine elements as the male laid emphasis on physical strength as well as violence. He needed this to dominate the girl. She in return has grown up and decided that this is not how a relationship should be. She is no longer the innocent girl she was and therefore she is rejecting her hyperfeminine tendencies.

“Misery Business” shows the power a girl can have by using her sexuality. Diana Meehan has found a number of stereotypical images of women on screen of which one is ‘the bitch’ (qtd. in Barker 317). Meehan describes the bitch persona as “sneak, cheat, manipulative” (qtd. in Barker 317). This stereotype is also used in this song. The song is

based on real life experiences by singer Hayley Williams (“Redemption” par. 3). She had a friend who was in a relationship with a girl who can be described as a bitch as she used sex and her body as a tool:

She's got a body like an hourglass, it's ticking like a clock.

It's a matter of time before we all run out,

When I thought he was mine she caught him by the mouth.

Hayley, a devout Christian (Williams, “Redemption” par. 6), did not want to lower herself to that girl’s level as that goes against her religious beliefs. She did try to change her mind in regards to the girl, but “Second chances they don't ever matter, people never change. / Once a whore you're nothing more, I'm sorry, that'll never change”. Additionally she also condemns other girls who behave the way the girl in the song does:

Well there's a million other girls who do it just like you.

Looking as innocent as possible to get to who,

They want and what they like, it's easy if you do it right.

Well I refuse, I refuse, I refuse!

She refuses to play the role of the bitch and thus rejecting this stereotype. Furthermore, she indicates that this type of stereotype is breaking down a man’s masculinity. The male ends up being a broken human being. Someone who did not manage to protect himself. He was placed into a subordinate position in this relationship, which goes against hegemonic masculinity. Losing control, power and independence furthermore indicate a loss of traditional masculine features. In a way, it could be said that the bitch persona undermines a male’s masculinity.

In “We Are Broken” Hayley describes the world as a bad place. Too much has been going on in the world such as various wars. There are many people who are suffering on this planet, and that is now how we all should live:

My mouth is dry

With words I cannot verbalize

Tell me why

We live like this

She wonders why we live the way we live. The planet is not a good place to be. Many people have lost their possessions due to war, due to a bad economy, etc. Hayley and the rest of the band have seen this happen throughout the world, which leaves them wondering what could be done:

Cause we are broken

What must we do to restore

Our innocence

And all the promise we adored?

Give us life again

Cause we just wanna be whole

There are people in this world who have seen things that cannot be unseen. It has left them broken. The band themselves may also have gone through this. They may be broken as well. That is why they are looking for a safe place, for Hayley this can be found in a man:

Keep me safe inside

Your arms like towers

Tower over me, yeah

She is looking for someone who can protect her from the outside world. She needs someone with whom she feels safe. She is looking for male with machismo features, as they place a high value on protecting and defending family members. By indicating that she cannot provide for her own safe place, she takes on a passive role, which fits into the category of hyperfemininity. She does not try to break away from the stereotypes surrounding women. In

this song, she comes across as a damsel in distress who needs to be saved by a strong masculine male. The song reinforces the gender stereotypes.

4.1.3. *Brand New Eyes* (2009)

Their third studio album *Brand New Eyes* again shows signs of the band maturing. This is reflected in their lyrics, by taking on concepts and questioning them. They do not take anything for granted, but they are willing to investigate and explore things. *Brand New Eyes* reaffirms Paramore's place in the emo scene as well as the music scene.

"Playing God" is about being controlled by someone else. This someone could be a man, and if it is a man, he has placed the female in a subordinate position. The male displays a dominant role over the female, as she cannot think for herself anymore:

Can't make my own decisions
 Or make any with precision
 Well, maybe you should tie me up
 So I don't go where you don't want me
 You say that I've been changing
 That I'm not just simply ageing
 Yeah, how could that be logical?
 Just keep on cramming ideas down my throat

The male is completely in control of the female. He is the one who decides what is done and what is not. This places the woman in Meehan's stereotype of 'the victim'. The victim is "passive, suffers violence of accidents" (qtd. in Barker 317). The girl did indeed come across as helpless, until the chorus, which is when she realized the power she actually has. The female has come to realize that she does have a voice, and that she can stand up to the man:

I know you don't believe me
 But the way I, way I see it

Next time you point a finger
 I might have to bend it back
 Or break it, break it off
 Next time you point a finger
 I'll point you to the mirror

She is no longer the naïve young girl. Instead, she has grown up, and has become stronger. This makes it easier for her to stand up for herself. She does not have to be subjected to a male, as she can decide things for herself. She may have come across as helpless, but she is actually stronger than she realized. Therefore, she could also be seen as a 'decoy'. Meehan describes a decoy as "apparently helpless, actually strong" (qtd. in Barker 317). "Playing God" shows that a woman can fight and overcome a stereotype. Furthermore, it shows that it is okay for women to stand up and take control over their own lives and thoughts.

Every young girl dreams about living in a fairytale, however as "Brick by Boring Brick" will demonstrate is that fairytales are lies. The main character is a girl who is living her fairytale life:

She lives in a fairy tale
 Somewhere too far for us to find
 Forgotten the taste and smell
 Of a world that she's left behind

She has been absorbed by this life and she lost track of reality. She is living in a bubble, which she cannot seem to escape, until her prince comes around:

So one day he found her crying
 Coiled up on the dirty ground
 Her prince finally came to save her
 And the rest you can figure out

However, this is deceiving as the verse continues as follows:

But it was a trick

And the clock struck twelve

Well make sure to build your home brick by boring brick

Or the wolf's gonna blow it down

She thought she had met prince charming, someone who would protect her, but instead he is the one who made her life even more miserable. She now has to build a home of stone to protect herself. The girl believed that she could live this fairytale life with this man, but it all came crashing down on her, which is why she created her own reality:

Well you built up a world of magic

Because your real life is tragic

Yeah you built up a world of magic

She created her own reality to escape life, but she was never happy. She was naïve and this had led to a life dependent on her prince. She was absorbed by love and lost reality: “Keep your feet on the ground / When your head's in the clouds”. Young girls often believe in fairytales, as they are naïve, when growing older they realize that it is not like in the movies or in the books. Fairytales give a wrong view of women and relationships. They most often justify the subordination of women, which gives these young girls a deceitful idea of power relations and relationships. This song rejects gender expectations. From an early age, fairy tales become a part of a young girl. She hopes to live life as a princess and meeting prince charming, but this becomes an unreal expectation. Girls chase their dreams, but they will soon realize that a fairytale life is impossible. “Brick by Boring Brick” shows that fairytales make a girl naïve, which may influence her in her future.

4.1.4. Paramore (2013)

Paramore is Paramore's fourth studio album. Before they released this album, they had taken a short break. During this time, emo has left the mainstream as the third wave ended. Paramore left emo as well. Paramore have created a new sound for themselves, leaving emo behind and turning to pop music instead. With this album, they reaffirmed their place in the charts.

In "Ain't It Fun", Hayley places the male in a subordinate position. The focus had always been on the male, but the female stepped up:

Where you're from

You might be the one who's running things

Well, you can ring anybody's bell to get what you want

The female does no longer want to serve the male's needs. He needs to face reality that he cannot always get what he wants: "You see, it's easy to ignore trouble / When you're living in a bubble". He has been living like this for years, which meant both dependency and dominance. The male both values and devalues masculine traits. He asserts power of women, which means that he has become dependent on them. Traditional masculine males actually prefer being independent. He is now forced into an independent position and Hayley is wondering how he will cope: "So what are you gonna do when the world don't orbit around you? / So what are you gonna do when nobody wants to fool with you?" Will he be able to man up and take care of himself or will he find someone else to depend on: "Don't go crying to your mama 'cause you're on your own in the real world". He is forced into this traditional masculine role of being independent, because the woman in his life forces him to do so. He has gone from dominate others to being dominates by others to change. The female has taken control back over her life, indicating that she is no longer naïve. She shows signs of masculine features, indicating a reversal of gender roles. "Ain't It Fun" shows that a woman should not be confined to her stereotypical gender role, but she should challenge this instead.

“Proof” is about being away from a loved one. When the band is on tour they leave their loved ones behind. For Hayley this means she has to leave the masculine figure in her life. The one who is strong and protecting her. She values these masculine traits, which she has to miss on the road:

Yeah, that’s what I always

Loved the most about you.

You’re so strong

The masculine trait Hayley values the most is strength. This is why they can face the world together: “You’re so strong / The world can’t keep us down, hey!” She also indicates that she has both masculine as well as feminine traits:

Baby, if I’m half the man I say I am

(Whoa-oh-oh), if I’m a woman with no fear

Just like I claim I am, (whoa-oh-oh).

Then I believe in what you say

There’s nothing left for you to do

The only proof that I need is you.

She appreciates her masculine and feminine traits, which are not mentioned in the song. Yet, what is sure is that she needs him in her life. He needs to reassure her that he likes her just the way she is. It should not matter whether she fulfills her stereotypical gender expectations. The main message is to be who you want to be as there will always be someone out there who appreciates you for who you are.

4.1.5. *After Laughter* (2017)

After Laughter is Paramore fifth studio album. Their sound has again completely changed. They can still be considered as a pop band, but they have also taken ideas from different genres. What sticks out is the 1980s vibe. They are heavily influenced by 1980s new

wave and synth-pop, which shows in their music videos. With *After Laughter*, they appeal to a larger audience, which again reaffirms their place in the charts.

The song “Forgiveness” starts off as a regular pop song with nice beats, yet the lyrics are contradicting. The lyrics indicate suffering and emotional abuse, as it can be seen in these selected lines from the first verse: “You hurt me bad this time, no coming back / And I cried till I couldn't cry, another heart attack” and “Cause your voice is a gun / Every word is a bullet hole”. She was hurt by the words someone has spoken to her. It is when the second verse starts that it becomes clear who hurt her:

There's still a thread that runs from your body to mine
 And you can't break what you don't see, an invisible line
 If I follow it down will we just be alright?
 But it could take me all your life to learn to love

She is talking about a lover. He is the one who abused her emotionally and verbally. This could be a sign of hypermasculinity as his words may have been aggressive. Through these words, he placed her in a subordinate position. Now he wants her forgiveness, which is hard for her as she will not be able to forget what happened:

Don't you go and get it twisted
 Forgiving is not forgetting
 No, it's not forgetting
 No, I'll never forget it, no

The song thus shows the impact of male dominance over females. Even if a woman does get out of a situation as described in the song, she will be having a hard time forgetting.

“Forgiveness” indicates that females should reject hypermasculine traits in men, as they could have negative effects in a relationship.

The song “Pool” is about being cheated on and giving the other person a second chance. Hayley found out that her (now-ex) husband cheated on her with someone else, which probably was not the first wrongdoing by him as indicated by the first lines of the song:

As if the first cut wasn't deep enough
 I dove in again 'cause I'm not into giving up
 Could've gotten the same rush from any lover's touch
 Why get used to something new?
 'Cause no one breaks my heart like you

This behavior indicates hypermasculinity as he has sexual attitudes towards other women. Hayley could not understand why he would have to find someone else to get something that he could also get at home. When looking at traditional masculinity he could be in line with what is devalued by these men, as he rejects his relationships and his domestic life. She did however give him another chance, as she was perhaps naïve and still looking for her fairytale life:

And you kiss me, and you wish could see what happens next
 For a moment, I can forget what happens in my head
 If I doubt you, will you come through with a happy second chance?
 A happy ending
 But this time you don't leave me sinking

He may have had the dominant position in this relationship, which is why she wanted to give him another chance. She wanted to be a good wife with a happy marriage, which is in line with the traditional gender stereotypes of being a woman and a wife. She wanted to comply with the gender expectations, while he ended up showing signs of traditional masculinity. They both tried to adhere to their gender expectations, but for a males, this means rejecting relationships, while women value relationships. “Pool” thus indicates that to be in a happy

marriage, both male and female have to act accordingly meaning that they should leave behind certain gendered expectations.

“Tell Me How” could be about bassist Jeremy Davis leaving the band. She is in two minds about whether to stay in touch or to let him go. The lack of communication from his side is causing this doubt:

Tell me how to feel about you now

Oh oh oh oh, let me know

Do I suffocate or let go?

She does not hear anything from him at all:

Keep me up with your silence

Take me down with your quiet

Of all the weapons you fight with

Your silence is the most violent

Females value communication, while traditional masculine males devalue this. Hayley sees this silence as unacceptable as she does not know what to do with it. She does not want to lose him, but as long as he is sticking to his masculinity, she will feel as if she is losing him. The differences between men and women become clear in this song. The ones does value communication, while the other does not. “Tell Me How” represent the differences between the two genders and the complications that come along.

The lyrics indicate that Paramore takes a female point of view in the representation of masculinity in femininity. The lyrics show that females are looking for specific masculine traits in men, but only to an extent. Hayley also shows that it is okay to stand up to a man and confront him. A woman does not have to occupy the subordinated position. Women can reject their hyperfemininity and overcome gender expectations and stereotypes. The lyrics furthermore indicate that hypermasculinity should be rejected, as this leads to unhealthy

relationships. Furthermore, the songs indicate the differences between the genders. Males and females value different things in life, which makes it harder for them to be together. Paramore shows the influences the various types of masculinities can have on women. In addition, Paramore could teach young women to stand up for themselves and actually be themselves, as in no circumstances should a female be dominated by men.

4.2. The Visual Representation of the Band

Paramore has gone through significant changes throughout their career. Not only did their formation change over the years, their looks and their sound did too. When they released their first studio album, *All We Know Is Falling*, in 2005, the emo genre was still booming. They released three singles with accompanying videos for this album, which are “Pressure”, “Emergency” and “All We Know”.

“Pressure”, “Emergency” and “All We Know” all show similarities in relation to the emo genre and gender. In the videos, Hayley can often be seen in comfortable clothing, which can be regarded as a tomboy look. In the “Pressure” video, she is wearing a Philadelphia Flyers shirt, indicating that she might also be into sports. The “All We Know” video contains various images from different recordings, but overall Hayley is most often seen in comfortable clothing that fits the tomboy look. In “Emergency”, she can be seen wearing a dress and wearing more makeup than in the other two videos. She is showing a more feminine side of herself. Additionally, she is also experimenting more with her looks as she has dyed her hair in multiple colors. In these videos, Hayley is only fifteen, sixteen years old, trying to find her place in society, experimenting with her looks and femininity. She experiments with makeup, hairstyles and hair dye, which is leaning towards being a girly-girl. Furthermore, she has found her place in a men’s world. She has used her tomboy identity to gain “protective access to male privileged spaces, activities, and conversations” (Craig and LaCroix 450). In Paramore’s first three videos, Hayley is leaning more toward the tomboy identity than the

girly-girl identity. She has used her identity to become one of the boys, by whom she is accepted and respected.

The boys do not show particular types of masculinities. They do however take elements from the emo style, such as longer hair with bangs in front of their eyes, and a simple clothing style with skinny jeans and studded belts. Their shirts are more colorful and brighter than what could be indicated as being emo. They also do not wear guy-liner, which is often worn by males associated with emo. The boys do not deviate much from the normative masculine norm and could thus be seen as the average boy next door.

Paramore released their second album *Riot!* in 2007. They released four singles from this album: “Misery Business”, “Hallelujah”, “Crushcrushcrush”, and “That’s What You Get”.

“Misery Business” was the first single from this album. The video is set in a high school and it follows a popular girly-girl. This girl is bullying the other people in the school. She kisses a boy who was just talking to his girlfriend, she pushes cheerleaders out of the way and she cuts the braid of a girl’s head. She acts as if she owns the world. She shows a stark contrast with Hayley. Hayley is casually dressed in a top and skirt with bright orange makeup and hair, while the popular girl is dressing in a blue dress, styled hair and a lot of makeup. In the final scene, the girl and the band walk towards each other in the school hallway. They meet in the middle and this is where Hayley exposes the girl. Hayley takes the pads out of the girl’s bra and she wipes her makeup off. She is exposed as being a fake. This could indicate two things that 1) Paramore would their (female) fans to be themselves and 2) that they do not like popular girls, because they perform an act in public. The boys reject traditional masculinity as they value a friendship with a girl, in addition they do show signs of machismo by protecting Hayley when she stands opposite the popular girl in the hallway. The band’s

message could be that their fans should be able to be who they want to be, just be yourself, because there is a change that you will be exposed eventually.

The other three singles from *Riot!* also depict Hayley as a tomboy. She is still one of the boys, which can be seen in the “Hallelujah” video. This video again shows different recordings from the band both on and off stage. Hayley is dancing with the boys and goofing around with them. She enjoys being with them and having a good time. Besides still being one of the boys, she is also still experimenting with her hair and makeup, but her clothing style remains unchanged. She, as well as the boys, are actually showing a more recognizable emo look in these videos. Especially in the “Crushcrushcrush” video, the emo elements become apparent. They are wearing black, the occasional tie, tight black jeans and studded belts. This trend continues in “That’s What You Get”, which also shows a lot of black clothing, with the occasional checkered and striped patterns. The boys still refrain from wearing makeup, yet their overall looks still match the look that is common for emo bands in this era.

Paramore’s third album, *Brand New Eyes* was released in 2009. They released five singles from this album: “Ignorance”, “Brick by Boring Brick”, “The Only Exception”, “Careful”, and “Playing God”. During this time the first few changes surface. In “Ignorance”, and “The Only Exception” Hayley is still leaning to the tomboy look, with comfortable clothing and her signature orange hair. However, in the other three videos Hayley looks different. In “Brick by Boring Brick”, she is in a fairytale land resembling Alice in Wonderland. She has dyed her hair blonde and she wears a large, feminine white dress. She also refrains from doing the work, as Josh is the one who is doing the digging. She is not depicted as being one of the boys, but rather as a girly-girl who does not want to get dirty. Her appearance in “Playing God” is also leaning more to a girly-girl identity. She has pink hair, and wearing a plaid dress. The emo elements are still present in her clothing. This is also

visible in “Careful”, which is again a compilation of other videos on and off stage. This video also has images of the band doing photoshoots. During the photoshoots, it becomes clear that she is still one of the boys, yet she is wearing different clothing than she does throughout the other parts of the video. The style in the photoshoots is often slightly more feminine, while on stage she can be seen wearing a Minor Threat shirt and in the studio, she is wearing a sweater, indicating a more masculine look. There thus is a difference between the staged photoshoots and the other images of Hayley. The photoshoots are showing a more feminine side of Hayley than she does on stage and in private.

The videos for “Ignorance” and “Playing God” can be seen as one longer video. In “Ignorance” Hayley is the one who can be seen in a straightjacket looking jacket. She has gone crazy. The boys manage to tie her up with a cable. They are capturing the only woman and placing her in a subordinate position. In “Playing God” Hayley is getting her revenge. She has the boys tied up in her basement. She has tea with other friends and flashbacks show that she has drugged them before she could capture them. As the video comes to an end, the camera is following her as she leads the boys outside, yet once she is outside she throws the rope back and closes the door. She has placed the men in a subordinate position. She is portraying the bad girl in this video, which is in contradiction to her looks, as she comes across as feminine in her skirt. The video might indicate that power comes with femininity as she is more looking feminine than before, yet she is dominating the men.

Paramore released a single called “Monster” for the *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* soundtrack in 2011. In this video Hayley is back to her traditional look. In the opening scene, Hayley can be seen with her signature orange hair. She is floating on water in a dress, making her look feminine. As the video continues above water, she can be seen wearing comfortable clothing consisting of jeans and a t-shirt. The band is dressed alike. She is again one of the boys. Farther along the video, the band members, including Hayley, start to hit and kick the

walls, which can be read as a sign of violence and aggression. This does also make the walls shake in what seems to be a parallel world. The band members in the parallel world are scared of this and they end up protecting each other. So on the one hand they show signs of violence and aggression, while on the other hand they try to protect each other. These are both traits that can be found in masculinity, giving the video a masculine vibe. The opening scene may show a more feminine side of the video because of the representation of Hayley, yet this quickly changes to a more masculine vibe, as indicated by the clothing and behavior of the band, throughout the rest of the video.

For their fourth studio album, their self-titled one, they released four singles: “Now”, “Still Into You”, “Daydreaming” and “Ain’t It Fun”. In these four videos, Hayley still has her orange hair, yet slightly different shades.

In the video for “Now”, Hayley looks quite feminine because of her hair and makeup, yet she is still wearing her comfortable, baggy clothing. The opening scene shows a soldier who is throwing a grenade at Hayley upon which a fight erupts. Hayley ends up lying on the floor, while the male band members are trying to run toward her to save her. They take on a protective role, which indicates that they take on a machismo type of masculinity. The boys are trying to save and protect the woman. As only the boys are involved in the fight, it could also indicate hypermasculinity. Perhaps they see find this type of danger exciting, and additionally they can also prove their physical strength through violence. However, the male band members are beaten down themselves. They lost the fight with the soldiers. Once the boys are down Hayley manages to get up. Yet she cannot return the boys and is grabbed by soldiers. The soldiers also restrain the boys but they cannot escape their grip. Hayley thus seems to be the stronger one in this fight. When Hayley manages to escape, she runs toward the leader who wants to hit her. She does however not try to hurt him but she hugs him instead. She is not showing masculine traits, as she is not fighting. The other soldiers are as

surprised as their leader and they let go of the boys. This video thus shows that violence is not always the answer and that men do not always win. Masculine pride has taken a hit, as Hayley is the hero and not one of the men.

“Still Into You” opens with Hayley, Taylor and Jeremy on a boat in a living room filled with balloons. Hayley is seated in the middle, as if the two men surrounding her are protecting her. In addition, she is wearing a more feminine style clothing that fits a girly-girl. She is wearing a pink, blue and yellow dress and pink lipstick. The second scene continues with this girly-girl theme. She is sitting on a bed in a room filled with pink, purple and yellow cakes. She is now wearing a light pink shirt with a bright pink shirt and yellow leggings. Yet in the following scene, she can be seen riding a BMX with the boys. They are cycling around the house. She is wearing the same outfit as seen in the first scene, highlighting her femininity, yet she still manages to be one of the boys. In another scene, her femininity is highlighted even more, as ballerinas surround her and she is dancing with them. Ballet has always been regarded as something feminine, which is why it highlights her femininity. Hayley has thus shown that she is more feminine than the general audience may have regarded her to be in the previous videos, as she is a lead singer of an emo band. She can dress more feminine and still be one of the boys, transcending gendered stereotypes.

“Daydreaming” uses live material from a show in London, which is again showing her taking both elements from the tomboy and the girly-girl identity. She is slowly leaving the emo elements out of her style, which is also reflected in the music on *Paramore*. They are now playing more accessible music, by playing slower songs with influences from popular music. This coincides with the decline of emo music in the early-2010s. Paramore undergoes the same changes as the music industry does by slowly leaving the emo genre behind.

In the video for “Ain’t It Fun” the band tries to break a broad range of records. Hayley cut her hair, but she still looks quite feminine because of her clothing and her make up. She

still takes elements from both the tomboy and the girly-girl identity. She can be seen wearing a crop top with matching sweatpants, while wearing red and black striped socks in boots in one scene, and then wearing a white dress with orange dots. She has managed to create her own style. Moreover, she is still considered as one of the boys. They do everything together, from smashing alarm clocks with guitars to catching feathers and dancing. Most notably, Hayley is using a pink guitar to smash the alarm clocks, while the two men are using a black and orange one. The color pink is considered an indicator of being a girl, this starts from birth where baby boys are usually dressed in blue and baby girls are usually dressed in pink. The guitar is thus strengthening the stereotype that pink and girls go together. Hayley's appearance become more in line of what is expected of a woman. She is becoming more feminine.

Their fifth and latest album, *After Laughter*, was released in 2017. This album marked a significant change in sound and style. They have left their emo roots behind and instead they turned to 1980s new wave and synth-pop. These changes can not only be heard, but they can also be seen in the videos that have been made for this album, which are "Hard Times", "Told You So", "Fake Happy", "Rose-Colored Boy", and "Caught in the Middle".

"Hard Times" and "Caught in the Middle" have taken elements from the 1980s video "Take on Me" by A-ha as both feature animation elements and pastel colors. While the set from "Rose-Colored Boy" appears to be copied from a 1980s talk show. The boys have their 1980s style mustache and they are wearing a brown suit. Hayley is wearing a long sleeve red dress and her hair is big, which was a trend in the 1980s. They have all left their emo accessories and style behind. There are only a few subtle hints in these five videos that are a reminder of their emo past such as Hayley's black nail polish in "Told You So", Hayley's Converse All Star shoes in "Fake Happy" and her checkered Vans in "Caught in the Middle". Both Converse All Stars and Vans were often worn by emos, therefore this can be seen as a

reminder of their past. Furthermore, Hayley has also started to dress more feminine. She can be seen wearing various dresses and a cat suit. She has embraced her femininity and she is not afraid to show this. She is still fully accepted by the boys even though she does not completely fit into the tomboy category anymore. Hayley continues to transcend gendered stereotypes.

The videos indicate that Paramore started out as an emo band, but that they have also changed their style over time. Hayley is the one who has gone through the most changes. She started out as a tomboy, being one of the boys and wearing casual and practical clothes. From an early age, she does start to explore the world of makeup, which becomes her trademark along with her orange hair. As time progresses she starts to slowly leave her tomboy appearance behind and lean more towards a girly-girl identity. She starts to wear dresses and accomplishes a more feminine look. Yet she still manages to be one of the boys. She manages to transcend from a tomboy to a girly-girl but her status in the band remains. Hayley did not only manage to transcend and overcome gender stereotypes, she also shows that it is okay to be different.

The boys also show signs of changes throughout their career. They too started out as emo, yet they did not wear the eyeliner, which was common for males. Their clothing style did reflect their ties to the emo genre. In addition, the boys also showed signs of rejecting traditional masculinity, by being friends and hanging out with a girl. However, they also live up to the gendered expectations as they are protecting Hayley in multiple videos and showing signs of machismo behavior. Overall, the boys in the band do not differentiate much from their gendered expectations.

Conclusion

It has become clear that within the emo genre both males and females are playing with gender expectations. They are looking for the boundaries and cross them. This means that to

the general audience they may not come across as either masculine or feminine. Yet this is only temporary. The emo scene allows for both males and females to explore their own identity, it is acceptable as long as you are yourself. In addition, the lyrics of My Chemical Romance indicate a masculine band as they show signs of camaraderie, rejecting relationships, and even violence and aggression. Their music may indeed be emotional but overall it fits the norms and limits of masculinity.

Paramore has a different point of view, as it takes on a female perspective. This perspective shows the harm that comes with certain types of masculinity. In addition, Hayley advises her female listeners to go away from men with such behavior as these women are placed in subordinate positions. It is okay to stand up for yourself and thus transcend the gendered stereotype. She has rejected hyperfemininity multiple times, but the lyrics indicate that this comes with age. On the first album she came across as naïve and inexperienced, but this naivety and inexperience slowly disappeared on the later albums. She matured along with the lyrics and representation of the band.

The trends that these bands show in relation to gender and genre is that they have changed accordingly. To them, emo was just a phase, a temporary exploration of masculinity and femininity. The emo subculture has not only allowed them but also their fans to explore the limitations of gender. This is why it is often believed that in emo masculinity is in crisis. Yet what this essay has shown is that was only temporarily and only in their visual representation. The lyrics indicate that masculinity was never in crisis. My Chemical Romance has shown many masculine traits and Paramore has shown that females look for certain masculine traits in men. Furthermore, they both have also rejected masculine and feminine traits, again indicating that it is okay to differentiate from the gendered norms.

There are many more emo bands that rose to fame in the 2000s, which were left out of this study. Therefore, it is unclear to indicate that all bands have followed the same trends in

regards to looks and lyrics. Large varieties of bands have been researched in other articles, but these are also limited because they often use only one song to represent a band. This article has looked at multiple songs and videos, focusing on trends in the bands career, yet it is narrow as it only focuses on two bands who have to represent the scene.

Future research could focus on the fourth wave of emo, as there are more women active in this scene. A variety of elements could be researched, such as how these bands represent the emo genre, or how these bands perform masculinity and femininity. In addition, other music genres could also be explored. Surely, emo is not the only genre that explores the limits of gender. Besides there are also transgender musicians, who may perform gender differently altogether. It would be worth researching how they behaved and performed gender before their transition and after their transition. Are there any changes in relation to masculinity or femininity? Bands that could be researched are Life of Agony and Against Me.

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