



## Sex Stereotyping towards Black Gay Man in Moonlight Movie: A Queer Study

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### Abstract

This study seeks to find sex stereotypical on black gay men from Berry Jenkins' *Moonlight* (2016) using the Queer perspective. Sex stereotyping is an act when someone has a preconceived conception of how someone should be, act, or behave based on that person's sex. *Moonlight* discusses Chiron's struggles with sexuality and personality, including his increasing physical and emotional violence. By adapting queer theory perform by Judith Butler's book *Bodies That Matter: In the Discursive Limit of "Sex"* it answers the aim of the study. In their book, Butler explains and breaks down the performativity of sex and body and how culture shapes them. In doing this study, both textual and film visual analysis will be applied to the following discussion: 1) determine forms of sex stereotyping in *Moonlight*; 2) reveal sex stereotyping towards black gay men exist in society in *Moonlight*. Throughout the analysis, stereotypical sex that happened toward Chiron struggling to cope with his culture as a black gay man formed Chiron's alienation, heteronormativity, and homophobia. This act of stereotypical sex based on their skin color represent a backlash against their people.

**Keywords:** black identity; queer : sexuality; stereotype,

## **Introduction**

People of color have significantly resisted the existence of various social ideologies that call into question basic norms. According to the additive approach, inequality grows proportionally as each stigmatized identity is added (Preddie, 2020). For instance, by mixing race and sexual orientation, Black gay men will be undoubtably marginalized. We face difficult compatibility and preference challenges if we break from this norm, challenge the notion that sexuality represents its ideals and priorities. In the current time, we live in a society where everything should be labelled. Otherwise, people will consider them as unusual and peculiar. According to UT Dallas a Student Counseling Centre, sexual identity is multi-dimensional; it occurs on several levels, each of which encompasses infinite diversity and possibility.

The increasing number of people in the LGBT spectrum who are less aware of their sexual orientation and the mixed understanding of race, differences in skin colour have ultimately made several communities such as Asians, Mexicans, and even Blacks become easy targets for sexual violence. In this study, the form of sexual violence can be performed through mental and physical. Several researches explore gender study and identity study; however, the lack of literary study that conveyed sexual stereotype within the community is why this study is purposed. Jared Hudson's "Why All the Limp Wrists? Black Gay Male Representation and Masculinity in Film"; a journal article by Christopher D. Petskoa, and Galen V. Bodenhausen "Racial Stereotyping of Gay Men: Can a minority sexual orientation erase race?" and "Masculinity Research and Global Change" by Raewyn Connell. From these previous studies, the depiction of race and sexual orientation issues can lead to stereotyping of sex. Black gay men tend to get unhealthy behavior such as heteronormativity, toxic masculinity and so on from outside and within their community. Through these research journals, further study can be carried out using the perspective of sexuality. These journal articles will also be used to help corroborate the arguments in this study. Therefore, applying a new perspective to black gay men and sex stereotypes' issue, this article uses queer theory to approach any kind of sex stereotyping and black gay men affiliation. This study then proposes a queer analysis to determine and reveal why sex stereotyping happen towards black gay men in their society.

Sex stereotyping on black gay men in films cannot be underestimated because they are forms of cultural representation, and people's reactions toward sexual behavior by a person will influence people's actions in the future. The stigma of sexual preference has been a means to limit people to an understanding of sexual behavior. In *Moonlight*, a coming-of-age movie, Barry Jenkins reveals how sex stereotyping upon black gay men. Several issues are depicted in the movie through a queer perspective and therefore affect black men's sexuality. Hence, being a queer as black gay men these days were obstacles to being accepted by societal norms. Examining sex stereotyping through movie, this study aims to raise awareness and erase the stigma of heteronormativity and homophobia toward people of color. This

action consciously or unconsciously stereotypes people of color especially on their sexual orientations, preferences, and their behavior.

Since this study will depict masculinity and heteronormativity as the main results, Raewyn Connell's theory of men and masculinities will be applied as well. Connell's thoughts regarding gender and masculinity have been elaborated to a broader view. He stated that hegemonic masculinity is still valid, but it should not be linked with violence. We must pay close attention to inconsistencies in hegemonic masculinity's definition which is still essential; however, it should not be used to justify others' sexual preference, behavior, and orientation which result in injustice or improvement (Connell, 2012). Using Connell's insights of masculinity, this article will acknowledge some proofs on how sex stereotyping could form heteronormativity which in fact is influenced by masculinity among black gay men.

Moreover, because the essence of this study discusses the sexual identity of a character in the *Moonlight* film, the writer adopted the Queer theory from Judith Butler and analyzed the issues using film language considering that the data collected from the *Moonlight* movie itself. Butler's ideas in her *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* are used to strengthening arguments about sex stereotyping on black gay men in *Moonlight*. Butler's view of the body, sexual orientation, and people's views on sex stereotyping can explain that these problems occur because of the subjectivity factors of individual social life, culture, and mental support. Butler's *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* underlines the body's problems through sexuality lens. Butler also explained several aspects that lead to stereotyping of sex is resulted by how bodies are intertwined with race and sexual orientation. In the book's introduction, Butler stresses that sex is not just a factual or common category but also a normative one. Further, this book will also help determine the impact of each stereotype that *Moonlight* has depicted by understanding race and sexuality altogether. Individual bodies have been found valuable, according to Butler (e.g., gay/Black ones). Two senses of "matter" are fundamental to their account: the matter (materiality) of the body and the question of which bodies matter. Thus, Butler's book will validate the argument made in this study as legitimate proof.

## **Method**

This study is a literary review that uses a literary contextual approach. A context-based literary approach considers that a certain question discovered in literature research can be interpreted from a point of view taken from another discipline. Also, the data collected comes from the movie's scenes; this analysis also employs visual analysis. Body language, gaze, cinematic language, and a conversation between the main character to others. The data from the movie source

will then be analyzed using queer theory written by Judith Butler. The author will be performing three steps to achieve the answer to research questions:

1. Watching Moonlight thoroughly which movie scenes are supposed to have a criterion needed.
2. A close examination in selected scenes related to sex stereotyping towards black gay men
3. Discuss related scenes using film language and applied the above theories as needed.

The term sex stereotype concerns stigmatizing people towards different sexual behaviors, sexual orientations, and gender-related problems. Queer perspective is a critical theory framework developed in the early 1990s out of queer studies and women's studies. The study also addresses intersex, cross-dressing and sexuality, gender ambiguity, and surgery to affirm gender (Miller, 2019). Simply put, queer study is a framework that addresses the oppressive power of dominant norms, especially those relating to sexuality, and the misery they cause to those who are unable or reluctant to live according to those norms. Butler's theory about body and sex through queer perspective and Mulvey's understanding of language of cinema through "Visual Pleasure" and Connell's understanding of Masculinity are used to analyzing sex and the affiliation of culture and skin color. Since it is difficult to decide an individual's sexual orientation without first determining the individual's sex, sexual orientation discrimination is often "because of sex." (Debbie & Kaminer, 2020) This study conveys stereotypical sex that occurs within gay men and the black community. The representation of black gay men in Moonlight has brought the stigmatization of people of color widen. Their urge to accept societal norms in their community has decreased and many aspects formed through this action.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Sex Stereotyping and Chiron's Alienation***

Numerous films involving black gay people are often depicted with the same view: they are frail, submissive, and, above all, effeminate. This portrayal further oppresses an already oppressed community by turning the black gay individual into a stereotype, which ignores the various identities of those men (Hudson, 2019). Moonlight is a story of a sensitive young black man (Chiron) who feels pressure by his hyper-male Miami environment to deny his sexuality and actual self. Therefore, a stereotyping act is very likely to draw our attention to the way persons and communities are portrayed, but the term cannot also operate in the capture of the meanings associated with absence, exclusion, or even inclusion (negative). The film stands out for its form and content, how it has been made, what the story is about, and the seamless way to combine that "how" and "what" together. The film has

drawn such sober and praise from critics and audiences.

Moreover, sex is a biological division of the type of sex. For example, men and women have different reproductive organs, both from inside and outside, and the types and levels of hormones in men and women's bodies. These are called primary sex characteristics. Simply put, sex is genitalia that determines whether someone is or not male or female. Therefore, sex stereotyping is an act to categorize this sex merely because of the physical appearance and behavior (Miller, 2017). This study found continuity between the actors' performances, yet they are not the same person to an external observer. The choice discusses the link between the external persona and the inner self. Chiron's personality is continually influenced by how his culture perceives and labels him and how he reacts to that communal understanding.

Sex upon this side, according to Butler, is not merely a factual/normal category. Butler suggests that some bodies (for example, those heterosexuals, white) were made valuable, while others were created like objects, such as gay/black ones (Itulua-abumere, 2015). On one hand, this perspective of gender and the body is uncertain since gender is pictured "absorbs and displaces" sex. Butler, on the other hand, continually insists that the concept of sex itself is problematic (Butler, 1993, p. 29). Sex is not a fixed entity but a perfect construct. Because of how the perception was put into Chiron's life, he cannot express himself as a black gay man. There is a link between race and sexual orientation that does not meet society's norm, leading to alienation. In phase I, little Chiron is trying so hard to fit in yet failed. Chiron is black yet still got the stereotype and discrimination treatment from his community because he looks and acts, unlike other black people.

Moreover, the act of sex stereotyping can form a social alienation. Oxford Language defines alienation in the psychiatric field as depersonalization or loss of identity. The self seems unreal, believed to be triggered by social problems and the resulting prolonged suppression of emotion. The community's behavior towards Chiron is a valid reason why Chiron kept distancing himself from them. Recognizing the varying standards to which men participate against replicating dominant forms of masculinity and thus overcome the cultural acceptance of gender approach (Wedgwood, 2009). Hence, his community did not even guide and enlighten him but instead alienated him as if he was not one of them. Even in phase I, Paula, Chiron's mother, realized that her child was different from the others from the way he walked. However, unlike a mother, Paula distanced herself from her child and chose to use drugs to escape.

Moonlight continuously works to convey from moment to moment the inner

world of Chiron. Moonlight uses circular shots to indicate a part of the feeling. Early on there is a scene of boys playing on a field to exuberant classical music. The smooth circular camera captures their feeling of relief and happiness within the group. The scene then breaks off to see Little, who does not feel part of that group. Chiron is constantly excluded from kids his age; he felt like he does not belong. That act of alienation also came from sex stereotyping act in why the community knows things about Chiron before he knows them about themselves (BARRY JENKINS — With the team that made Moonlight | TIFF 2016 - YouTube, 2016). From there, not only does he feel even more alienated he also feels insecure about himself.

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*SCENE 1. Chiron is continually isolated from kids his age, making him feel as though he doesn't belong.*

This act of alienation paused when Kevin entered Chiron's life. Kevin pursues a significant change as Chiron grew. Before emerging into Chiron's teenage life, there was one beach scene where Juan and Chiron talk about life. Juan teaches Chiron to swim; there, we can see that the camera motion act like a wave that washes away Chiron's inner anxiety. Afterward, there is this monologue of Juan advising Chiron:

"In moonlight black boys look blue, you blue. At some point, you got to decide for yourself who you're gonna be. Can't let nobody make that decision for you" (Blue et al., 2016)

Thus, being said by Juan, as Chiron's role model, can be depicted that in light of moonlight, with "night" acting like a shield or mirror, Black men, or Chiron in this case, can only give up their true self and throw away their unnecessary masculine personalities whom black people must use to survive every day. Chiron has to deal with any questions regarding his sexuality, even at such a young age. Typically, kids his age should not be known to the word "faggot." Insofar as a hegemonic straight culture can feminize black queer men, there is an adequate functioning of that feminization in the performative component of the ball, an aspect of the already established identity of faggots and women, the feminization of the faggot, the

feminization of the black faggot, which is the black feminization (Butler, 1993, p. 132). Hence, the word 'faggot' among the black community is more offensive and shameful than the 'N' word. Black people frequently use the 'N' word as a pride over their race that outsiders cannot use it. It is different from the word 'faggot', which people commonly used as a derogatory sentence to gay men. However, in Chiron's case, the use of the word 'faggot' makes Chiron, an outsider from his community. They consider Chiron as feminine and do not belong to black culture.

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*SCENE 2. Chiron asking Juan if he is a faggot. the word 'faggot' makes Chiron, an outsider from his community*

Nevertheless, even though Kevin is another person who can somehow make Chiron a little more accepted, there are still factors that destroy it. Onto phase II, the alienated begins again when Chiron loses Juan, his father figure, and his mother getting so much worse. For example, it can be seen that Chiron has to deal with pain and anxiety again. In a scene of him standing after the blue stripes wall, he shines blue. The blue stripes symbolize his despair, as to why Chiron seems to be haunted by that color ever since Juan told a story that "Black boys look blue..." Moore strives to prove that this alienation is a global victim of Black people.

Another example is when the young bully Terrell engineers hit Chiron and pressing Kevin to hit him, the circular shot comes back again. The circular shot is menacing as the camera focuses on Terrell; it can be seen that the in-crowd's peer pressure can be a terrifying damaging force. Connell saw sex as a social disparity mechanism or system, with its interpretation and inner difficulties (Connell, 2002). As a result, being identifiably black for black men includes black male characters who are frequently influenced by stereotypically rugged masculinity. According to the additive approach, social inequality increases with each negative stereotype because race and sexual orientation profoundly oppress a Black gay man (Preddie, 2020).

Furthermore, the absolute alienation comes from Kevin himself. In the beach scene where Kevin approached Chiron, who is also in despair. The deep talk occurs between them, accompanied by the breeze and moonlight blue undertone. This breeze summons the feeling of relief from the daily routine of placing a person on himself and allowing one to breathe. The breeze comes in the early scene when Chiron starts to connect with Juan at the beach. The breeze is heard again from the first time Chiron is touched by another person, Kevin.

“Sometimes along the way where we live, you can catch that same breeze. It just comes through the hood and it’s like everything stops for a second, because everyone just wants to feel it. Hell, shit make you want to cry, it feels so good.”  
(Moonlight, 2016)

Later that night, after the intimate beach scene, Chiron expects something from Kevin, yet he still gets the same treatment in which Kevin still calls him ‘black.’ From that point on, Chiron feels even more alienated because his only companion that he is about to lay himself into is no less stereotypical than the rest of the community. Sexual attraction, according to Connell, is “emotional energy attached to an object.” (Connell 1995, p. 74). Kevin pictured Chiron as his ‘object experience’ while Chiron does not. While taking Butler’s point of view refers to the affiliation of sex stereotype and black gay men, the racial part is coded in ugliness classification, since beauty is traditionally characterized in terms of a white, upper-class concept, as Butler has said, sex is used to control “which bodies matter,” and appearance is used to control “which individuals’ matter.” This stigmatized image occurs from the viewer’s eye that black culture does not appreciate male and male intimacy and, therefore, acts as casual (Butler, 1993, p. 4). Kevin acts this way because he knew if he grew feeling towards Chiron and later the community found out, that would not be a good outcome for them. While Chiron wanders upon the alienated feeling even more, that he feels neglected. Thus, Kevin act as the fundamental factor of Chiron’s alienation without Kevin acknowledge it.

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*SCENE 3. Kevin pictured Chiron as his ‘object experience.’ Kevin act as the fundamental factor of Chiron’s alienation without Kevin acknowledge it.*

Other forms of sex stereotype came from Terrell and his friends, who are Chiron's schoolmates. They bully Chiron, knowing he is gay before he has time to figure it out himself. At that point where Chiron no longer put his trust in Kevin because he is aware no matter how good he acted around Kevin he still chose to do what the community told him to do. The climax upon an alienation act is in phase II, where Chiron has to deal with his 'death' when Kevin punches Chiron; the breeze, which typically follows the two boys together, is not heard instead followed by utter silence. Silence in the scene looks like a death; it is so silent that it almost sounded like death has occurred. After trying so hard to fit in yet still failed to do so, this alienation came from Chiron's inner persona. After this symbolic death, we can see an entirely different person in phase III who has suffered a great deal but has not yet resolved his identity or family issues. Thus, the presence of diverse social identities that contradict simple binary conventions has been brought into sharp relief by people of color (Preddie, 2020)

Symbolically, white gay men are drawn wider than gay black men are in the film and have become the face of the queer society (Hudson, 2019). The overrepresentation of white gay males in the group is unsuitable because heteronormativity excludes other identities. People try to categorize Chiron before he even knows what that means. In Chiron's struggle for self-awareness, this concept exposes a universal seed. Simultaneously, there is an essential story of a young black gay man deceived by his society's masculinity assumption. In contrast, he escapes of force in his true persona, thanks to a few who throw him salvation.

### ***Sex Stereotyping and Heteronormativity Through "Black" Lens***

The majority of stereotype research focused on particular identities, such as those of an oppressed racial or ethnic group or gender group (Rosenthal & Lobel, 2016). In the early scenes, Chiron attempts to find out who he is when coping with bullies in school, who torment him relentlessly with homophobic names and physical abuse. The one thing that is "equally frustrating and equally complicated" sees his torn relationship with his mother deteriorate even more (Keenan, 2018). In African America, heteronormativity existed mainly because of its rigid adherence to religious values, which adversely affect the relationship between the group and Queer Black men and women (Hudson, 2019). Queer Black men and women continue to fight for a position and a voice to oppose homophobia in the Black Community, both consciously and unconsciously.

Moonlight presents us with a hyper-masculine African-American in the Miami neighborhood where all men have to be rugged and masculine; otherwise, they will not fit in. As the main character Chiron enters three phases of life, we, as

viewers, witnessed the stereotype of sex forming a heteronormativity. Heteronormative is an ideology that holds two distinct genders, each with natural roles that correspond to their assigned sex and that heterosexuality is a given (Toorn, Pliskin, & Morgenroth, 2020). As mention earlier, Paula is the main reason why Chiron feels excluded from the community. Paula confronted Juan about how Chiron's walk and behave is legitimate proof of why he constantly gets bullied because Chiron does not represent the 'heterosexual' norm.

Furthermore, calling black gay men "fags" is a direct example of this discrimination since it insults their identity and reminds them to be men. Indeed, bodies exist and die; eat and sleep; experience pain, pleasure; suffer from injury and struggle, and these facts cannot be dismissed as simple construction, one might skeptically claim (Butler, 1993, p. xi). However, their irrefutability does not indicate what it might mean to affirm and by what expression implies.

Chiron is harassed by his schoolmates when he suppresses his sexuality because it does not reflect heteronormative masculine behavior. The idea of masculinity has been criticized for being presented within a heteronormative gender paradigm that essentializes male-female distinction while ignoring difference and discrimination within sexual identities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2016; Wedgwood, 2009). In particular, black males are held to this heteronormative norm because they are still not what society expects of them by being black. Society assumes that they will be dominant, assertive, violent, and unemotional this is a primary factor in which heterosexuality and masculinity become connected in Western culture, with boys with heterosexual partners gaining status and sexual development portrayed as discovery and conquest (Connell, 2002, p. 7). On the one hand, it is automatically punished for being anything but what is considered "normal" for them. Some societies consider homosexuality to be contradictory to true masculinity. On the other hand, others conclude that no man can be a true man unless he has had homosexual relationships. (Connell, 2002, p. 24). On the other hand, Black men are often inherently blamed for their attributes and actions.

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*SCENE 4. Chiron is bullied by Terrell because he suppresses his sexuality, which does not represent heteronormative masculine behavior.*

Consequently, as they go to the world and connect with those complicated with heteronormativity, Black gay men can still defend themselves; this does not leave safe spaces that allow other bodies to become insecure or intimate (Butler, 1993, p. 80). In every sense of their life, Black gay men's lives are ignored and mocked when we understand the construction of homophobia among people directly related to constructing and preserving hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2012). The race bias that arises when authority is exclusively conceptualized in terms of sex disparity was criticized, laying the groundwork for challenging any universalizing arguments about the category of men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2016). Since heteronormativity values masculine behavior, those who do not fulfill heteronormative masculinity's standards, such as Chiron, are punished.

Throughout the film, Jenkins did not bother to put a coming-out storyline where the main character struggles to show the world that they are not straight. Instead, Jenkins put us through the pain of a black man who struggles to found out his true self. Ironically, while coming out is portrayed as a kind of empowerment, acceptance of one's true self, or critical activism, it puts many (young) people at risk of their bodies being transformed into a "spectacle of abuse" in a lethal declaration of heterosexuality (Petković, 2018). As a black and gay man, Chiron has to cope with mental and physical harassment because of his sexuality. He is marginalized since his sexual identity does not stand by the common sexual orientation, heterosexuality (Hudson, 2019). For example, his crack-addictive mother once treated him good for the sake of her own. Chiron's expression and his mother's disjointed dialog and camera movement were added to this scene, indicating his mother's act manipulated Chiron's inner persona as a person that should be the one guiding Chiron's confusedness. Chiron feels even more confused because he felt like he belongs to nowhere and to no one. The only person he feels belongs to is Juan and Teresa, who are counted as strangers, yet they still comfort Chiron's life.

In contradiction towards Paula's disjointed shot, instead of simply intercutting between single shots of Juan, Little, and Juan's girlfriend Teresa, the camera pans seamlessly between Juan and Teresa at the dinner table. The fluid transition informs the viewer of the couple's warmth and bond, conveyed by the camera through the spatial connection. It also gives the audience Little's point of view as he looks from one to the other. Emphasizes the secure bond he feels with them. As Juan talked to Chiron on the beach, the camera uses the same motion, connecting mentor to youth. So, again the audience feels the connection between the characters. Sex stereotyping is a textbook example of heteronormativity, inextricably linked to the use of aggression and murder as tools of dominance and self-assertion (Petković, 2018). The constructed-ness of gender, of course, is at the root of the problem; this arrangement is not "ontologically necessitated" and therefore requires

constant reinforcement (Butler, 1993, p. 33). *Moonlight* did not provide any of those through Chiron's character and self-development. Even in his adulthood, he still has to question whether being homosexual in the black community is 'allowed' or not. Connell's study shows how their sexualities originated from multifaceted negotiations in several areas, including emotional relationships at home and in the gay world, economic and employment connections, authority relationships, and friendships (Connell 1995, p. 16).

*Moonlight* uses the stereotype of black gay men as effeminate—hence the famous "fag" epithet—to give the impression that femininity is the only way black gay men identify (Hudson, 2019). Black gay men do not reflect what a black man (usually heterosexual) should be. Black gay men are perceived as not being "identifiably black" because of their sexuality and how they are constantly stereotyped in films. For black males, being authentically black entails black male characters that are often influenced by stereotypically rugged masculinity. It is also crucial to highlight that there are many masculinities within race and class identities (or that various stereotypes encompass a spectrum of masculinities absorbed under race and sexual orientation identities rather than a single "Black male masculinity" or "gay male masculinity.") (Dowd, 2008).

In one scene, Chiron has an intimate moment with Kevin, which is considered inappropriate in society, especially in the Black community. Through a black rather than a white lens, this scene is saturated with bluish undertones that illustrate the dissolution of heteronormativity. These kinds of masculinities belong to white heterosexual males (Iroegbulem, 2019) and they enhance features like physical power, ambition, emotion-control, rejection of weakness, condemnation of feminine traits in men, homophobia, superiority, and so forth. The materiality of the body is consequently discursive. Thus, by replicating regulatory codes, the material body, its enclosed areas, and sexuality are all materialized (Butler, 1993, p. 10).

Chiron's behavior and the way he acts towards violence given by his surroundings do not match his culture; therefore, his society somehow disowns him as part of black people. Even until he reaches adulthood, he still conceals his sexuality from the fact upon his society's norm that being heterosexual is the only legit way to be pure black. This act of normalizing heteronormativity is continuing throughout the film. These patterns are all it matters. Butler stated, reviewed by Flourish Itulua-abumere, that significant behaviors are still recognized, or not the body's limits result from the societal norm (Itulua-abumere, 2015). Butler did not end here; they returned to the idea of performativity and had all reason to prove that frequently performed activities regulate a recognized gender, as well as the identity of race, class, and sexuality (Butler, 1993, p. 168). Discourse classifies some bodies as generally accepted, consequently marginalizing others (Butler, 1993, p. 53). Butler concluded that the oppressed bodies are associated with homosexuality during their study of Plato's work (*Timaeus*). Chiron represses his sexuality in the

film and controls his actions to escape the mockery and abuse he faces with his schoolmates.

In Chiron's life, this recurrent theme of heteronormativity shows its intimacy with other characters and how other attributes are intimate. When viewers are bombarded with the exact dry depictions of black gay men, stereotyping does little to pique their interest (Hudson, 2019, p. 12). After encountering an intimate moment with Kevin, Chiron dreamt about Kevin having sex in his backyard. Those scenes using the first camera point of view in which we play Chiron. We see how this man and woman having sex in the open is a casual norm for others to see. The tone of the scene is dark with a yellow undertone, not blue. Jenkins brilliantly uses color play to indicate the main character's feelings. The yellow undertone conveys Chiron's memories and awareness that he could never experience what he watched in his dream. Thus, the form of heteronormativity risen from Chiron's inner thought supported by the environment he lives in. Heterosexual privilege manifests itself in various ways, including legitimizing and presenting itself as the original and norm (Butler, 1993, p. 125).

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*SCENE 5. Chiron's dreamt about Kevin having sex with a woman knowing he would never do the same.*

Moonlight's fundamental concept of heteronormativity is how the main characters convey his lack of support system merely because he cannot control whom he is attracted to or how he behaves to an unavoidable conflict. For instance, after Chiron and Kevin reunited on phase III, Jenkins shows through the eye of Black (Chiron adulthood) how he changes into something his community expected him to be since the beginning. Even though Chiron confesses to Kevin that he has never been touched by anyone else ever, Kevin still finds it hard to believe; this is legitimate proof of why Chiron himself has been buried by the fact that he changes who he is at last. According to Butler (Butler, 1993, p. 93), The critical goal of denaturalizing sexuality and gender has been described as normative structures of

heteronormativity that work through the naturalization and legitimation of heterosexual stereotypes.

When identities are marginalized, black gay men are unable to be seen as anything more than stereotypes (Hudson, 2019, p. 9). When identities are suppressed, inequality prohibits black gay men from remain from being seen as anything other than stereotypes. The rest of their sexuality is not explored, and there is no midpoint between femininity and masculinity when this occurs. Throughout the film, Chiron cannot find a way to convey his sexuality or feelings, leaving him to fight with it by himself. The culture in which he was raised, the general concept that implies a 'man' and derogatory attitudes towards homosexuality, is the leading cause of this alienation.

### ***Sex Stereotyping and Rough Culture Influences Homophobia***

The relation between culture and nature that specific models of "construction" involve culture or a community of a social nature acts as a passive subject outside the social one, but still an essential counterpart (Butler, 1993, p. 4). Structurally, *Moonlight* conveys three distinct chapters that highlight the frailty, uncertainty, and complexity of a person's identity over time. Using three different actors to play three different versions of Chiron, the lost young "Little," whose nickname is an insult forced upon him and a "name" he must refuse. The teenager Chiron is dealing with his mother's worsening addiction. Lastly, the hard Black has repressed his true self and put on a gangster facade.

European Institute for Gender Equality defines homophobia as an act of prejudice-based unreasonable fear and aversion to homosexuality, including lesbian, gay, and bisexual people (EIGE, 2019). *Moonlight* depicts homophobia from how supporting characters such as Terrell and the rest of the community treat Chiron's sexual orientation. They act tough and harassed Chiron violently because the rough culture has been imprinted on their thought to despise sexuality but heterosexuality. This absence fosters a system of heterosexual despair, as shown by the hyperbolic representations that affirm stereotypical heterosexual sexuality (Butler, 1993, p. 236). Connell suggests the assertion that the idea of masculinity marginalizes or exiles the body (because it is based on a sex-gender dichotomy) is the most surprising in the field of race and sexuality (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2016). *Moonlight* portrays a black community environment with its stereotype that this community holds a rough and imprinted culture explicitly. Black culture these days has been succeeded in removing the stereotype and act of discrimination against the community; nevertheless, not all people inside the community are willing to change their perspective towards the queer black man. As queer theory uses ethnicity but ignores racism debates, it validates racialized queerness as identification through the fetish of traumatized post-racialized racial oppression. (Reed, 2016, p. 53). It is undeniable that the thought of being gay as black people is caused by an inevitable

conflict that causes trauma, so they 'choose' the gay path.

The first scene from Phase I gives the audience the kind of slick swirling camera work. It tells us this character, Mahershala Ali's Juan, a big man in town and a drug dealer, is calm, relaxed, and has status. Like the camera, he is smooth. The following scene drives us into the opposite feeling; discomfort with the excessively shaky handheld camera; it tells the audience that this boy, Chiron nickname Little is unsure, insecure; his life is severe confusion. Thus, Butler acknowledged in particular not only the heterosexual bias involved in the sex understanding but also the need to reflect on the intent of the repudiation gained in the construction of identity (Itulua-abumere, 2015). Butler agreed that repudiation is an irreducibly differentiating factor. It will be necessary to trace the forms in which identity is implied in what it excludes and follow the inference lines for the potential group map that it may yield (Butler, 1993, p. 119).

**00:01:58**



*SCENE 6. Chiron's dreamt about Kevin having sex with a woman knowing he would never do the same.*

Throughout the film, shots from behind turn our ability to reach Chiron and his emotion. The audience is continually attempting to see the inside of him, just as he is attempting, and often failing, to see himself genuinely. The mainstream film depicts a sealed universe that magically relaxes and is oblivious to the audience. The viewers' position in the cinema is the violence of their voyeurism, according to Mulvey. Throughout, classical music represented Chiron's inner self, which was at odds with his chaotic outward culture and his desire for love and self-expression.

An excellent example of this is the scene when Paula yells at Chiron in the doorway, this shot is still, and the classical music plays as he disconnects from the disturbing external realities.

**01:06:27**



*SCENE 7. Paula yells at Chiron in the doorway, ashamed.*

Meanwhile, in the ocean scene with Juan and Little, the classical music and fluid motion are mixed with a low immersive camera, and it makes it appear the water washes over us. The audience is included in Chiron's baptism or initiation into some new part of himself. Therefore, taken from Butler understanding of heterosexist and culture through Lacan perspective stated that Lacan offers the assurance, upholding cultural heterosexist by relegating homosexuality to the unreal life of passing imagination. To acknowledge homosexuality's unrealizability as a sign of failure in that symbolic sphere is to misinterpret the symbolism's most insidious influence as a sign of its subversion (Butler, 1993, p. 111)

These stereotypes of black gay men may help mend up this so-called societal fracture by defining black gay men to a specific perception that does not allow them to prove other identities (Hudson, 2019, p. 2). Teenage Chiron has to deal with psychical and mental violence due to his lack of experience in the 'sex' field, which becomes his destruction. His culture (African-American) believes that by the age of 17, boys have to have sex; otherwise, they will get mock. The old pattern of black masculinity had been replaced by one aligned with the phase of proletarianization and more akin to the Afrikaner elite's European-derived masculinity: aggressively heterosexual, more likely to be violent, referring to women as economic dependents, and more unwilling to compromise on masculinity as physical dominance (Connell, 2002, p. 24). Chiron's character development has raised anxiety, introvert, and non-socialize boys.

Moreover, due to his lack of 'sex' experience, he has to endure his surroundings' expected norm, including his mother. In this context, the argument that the classification of "sex" is an instrument or consequence of "racism" does not mean that we can never use such words as if they could only and still reincorporate the repressive structures of power that they spawn (Butler, 1993, p. 123). Homosexuality and feminine acts are seen as a challenge to their male character by Men who are involved in promoting hegemonic masculinity and pressuring them to behave in the only "appropriate" way as men — by actions of agreement or intimidation. That is why Kevin acts towards Chiron aggressively at the end of phase

II, even though he does not feel that way emotionally. Just like all the other people, including Chiron himself, knew, Kevin weakens his masculinity, as his schoolmates see him with weakness or vulnerability.

It appears critical to oppose the power model that establishes racism, homophobia, and prejudice as parallel or experiential relationships. (Butler, 1993, p. 18). In the end, Chiron, who has turned into a tough and resilient “Black,” has been accepted by his society. He ultimately becomes the pure black people his society expects. However, despite being “pure black,” Chiron still has to deny that he is gay. By wearing loose apparel and deals drugs, he conceals his sexuality away until he reunites with Kevin. Therefore, the audience could feel that Kevin plays a disclosure on Chiron’s life.

**01:31:43**



*SCENE 8. Paula yells at Chiron in the doorway, ashamed*

Quoted from Ituala-abumere’s review on Butler’s book “Bodies That Matter,” she concluded that “...act as if she did this oppressed black gay subculture a favor by taking their perspective to a wider audience.” Moreover, in the sense of performativity, the ball is a significant part of this sexualization, a profession of identity already made between faggots and women is a feminization of the faggot, sexualization of the black faggot, which is the black heteronormativity, as long as the black men are Queer who are men in hegemonic straight culture (Butler, 1993, p. 132). The masculinity of a black man leads to his integrity as a character; a rough, violent, and in-charge black man makes him authentically black.

Homophobia is often manifested as the reference of damaged or otherwise deplorable sex to homosexuals. Maintaining a theoretical apparatus to answer for how sexuality is regulated by gender stereotyping and shaming remains critical (Butler, 1993, p. 258). Other than being rough and imprinting a hetero norm, black culture in Moonlight also conveys an unhealthy neighborhood where its people deal drug, using violence as an everyday thing and consider them normal. They included the blurring of action and norm, the position concept’s homogenizing effect, and its complexities in adjusting for control (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2016). Butler

contends that this is not an abuse of majority culture to remain subservient to its terms, but rather exploitation that seeks to remake the concepts of domination, a remake that is itself a form of agency (Butler, 1993, p. 131). Overdetermined blackness fantasies, as an open-source of white fears, anxieties, and wishes, overdetermined blackness visions are the disastrous results of a culture that cannot comprehend it without theoretical figurations of so-called whiteness. (Reed, 2016)

## **Conclusion**

Movies about depressed parts of society or people living in poverty or hardship tend to be told in a specific common language. Think of social realism, harsh camera, naturalism, a stripped-down look, severity, grim visual, loud noises. Jenkins is not interested in a social realist harrowing portrait of Miami. What significant and that Jenkins is disrupting the formula of how a story about a young black man in a poor neighborhood is often told, here it is not with hip-hop music, not with traditional narrative trajectory, not with only the jarring depiction of misery or outer chaos. *Moonlight* succeeded in depicting the sex stereotype of a black gay man through the eyes of a young black gay man who does not acknowledge his sexuality because of societal norms. Jenkins compose *Moonlight* with a harsh environment and culture due to them expecting their people to be tough and walk in a heteronormative rather than being queer and black. Through non-black people's point of view and queer perspective, Chiron has been a mean as an example of a black gay stereotype. Given a harsh treatment from his environment, body language, and demeanor discomfort himself throughout his phases of life. Thus, the forms of sex stereotypes are depicted through the main character's surrounding on how they act and react to indifferences.

The treatment of the black community towards their people in *Moonlight* has legitimate proof that getting discriminated against because of different sexual orientations is possible. This treatment is then followed by other sex stereotypes, including heteronormativity, in which society expects that black men should not be gay. The stereotype of sex also forms the main character's alienation that his society contemplate. Lastly, a rough culture and hyper-masculine Miami neighborhood also influence a homophobic act, resulting in a massive gap in the main character's sexual identity with his inner persona. He ought to fight the societal norm, but his lack of support brought him to conceal himself and become whom he expected as a black person.

In this study, the author limited the research study only to sex stereotypes towards black gay men in the *Moonlight* movie. However, the author found that other focus studies could be researched for the development of further studies in the field of literature, such as social criticism in films to dismantle the culture and social situation of the people represented in the movie, as well as phenomenological studies related to the characters that appear in the films so that they can bring out the fundamental social realities of the people that are shown in the movie.

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