

Stony Brook University



OFFICIAL COPY

The official electronic file of this thesis or dissertation is maintained by the University Libraries on behalf of The Graduate School at Stony Brook University.

© All Rights Reserved by Author.

**Turned On: A Study of Sexuality in American
Counterculture Music, 1960-2016**

A Thesis Presented

by

Sean Burton

To

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

English

Stony Brook University

May 2016

Copyright by
Sean Burton
2016

Stony Brook University

The Graduate School

Sean Burton

We, the thesis committee for the above candidate for the

Master of Arts degree, hereby recommend

acceptance of this thesis.

Jeffrey Santa Ana

Professor, English

Susan Scheckel

Professor, English

This thesis is accepted by the Graduate School

Charles Taber

Dean of the Graduate School

Abstract of the Thesis

Turned On: A Study of Sexuality in American

Counterculture Music, 1960-2016

by

Sean Burton

Master of Arts

in

English

Stony Brook University

2016

Since the 1960s the American counterculture has been stoked by socio-political and lifestyle movements with a mix of noble ideas, rebellious fervor, and at times even a degree of madness. These movements have correctly been attributed to events worthy of protest and activism, such as the Vietnam War, racial injustice, sexism, and economic inequality, as well as less noble and less developed concerns. However, the power of counterculture music is that it links these causes to a much more universal element of life: sexuality. From the outlandishness of the music of the 1960s, came the trend of sexuality being part of all things worth talking about and doing something about, a source of salvation from the horrors of the reactionary politics exhibited by the far right. As years went on, artists who came about on the wave new movements built upon this important foundation, and continued to galvanize righteous unrest, with sexuality as an all-inclusive form of rebellion, and a focal point for other causes.

Dedication

I have many people to thank for their help in the completion of this work, and putting my gratitude in words is not easy. I am grateful to my father who instilled in me a strong work ethic, and a deeply analytical mindset, for better or worse. I am grateful to my mother, who instilled in me a voracious love for and interest in music. Without her this project would not exist. I am grateful to the countless educators I have had over the years, all of whom I have learned unforgettable lessons from. And I am eternally grateful to my friends whose company, comfort, and support have proven invaluable beyond measure.



Table of Contents

	Page
Title Page	i
Signature Page	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	iv
Frontispiece.....	v
List of Figures.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
The Manufactured American.....	2
The Beatles: A Slow Trip	7
Pretty Little Reagans in a Row.....	12
Are You One of Them...?.....	16
The Queer Empowerment of Disco.....	17
Complexity and Contradiction: Donna Summer and the Gay Community.....	20
A Gendered Pageant: Enter Ziggy Stardust.....	28
“Are there any queers in the audience tonight?!” Roger Waters and the Wall of Masculinity....	31
Punk Politics and the Evolution of Counterculture.....	39
Kurt Cobain and Grunge Sexuality	42
Courtney Love and Pussy Riot: The Female Body in Rebellion.....	47
Conclusion-It is not dying.....	54

List of Figures

	Page
Figure 1	1
Figure 2	22
Figure 3	23
Figure 4	29
Figure 5	29
Figure 6	36
Figure 7	37
Figure 8	43
Figure 9	46
Figure 10	47
Figure 11.....	48
Figure 12.....	53

Introduction

Beginning with the explosion of the 1960s the American counterculture has levied attack after attack against the edifices of conservative society with mixed results. From symbolic protest, to drastic lifestyle changes, to outright sabotage, those who stand against the status quo have used a vast variety of methods to overturn established social and political orders. The American counterculture has used various means of appealing to the populous in order to wrangle common opinion to its side. Ultimately the most effective of these appeals addressed one of the most basic and personal of human elements: sexuality. And in the rise of the American counterculture in the 1960s, no medium of expression was more powerful than the infectious and intoxicating medium of music. The music adopted or created by the American counterculture since the hippy movement of the 1960s, has featured songs with themes of great political and social importance, but these have not come about in a vacuum of pure activism. To make such activism enticing for the audience of each generation, artists have used the politics of their songs alongside themes of sensuality, romance, and loving human relationships, even as the definitions of these things have changed over the years.

In the following work I examine the issue of sexuality in counterculture music, and explore how it permanently transformed the socio-political landscape of the United States and the nature of individuality in the American mindset. I examine specific artists as examples of sexualized counterculture music for each decade, since covering every artist of every genre and decade would prove beyond the scope of this project. For the 1960s I consider selections from the Beatles' extensive trove of love themed music, with an emphasis on certain songs that feature strong political content. For the 1970s I trace the advent of disco in conjunction with the gay liberation movement of the time, the advent of the punk movement, and arrival glam rock's most

famous gender-bending icon, David Bowie. For the 1980s I investigate Pink Floyd's notorious rock opera *The Wall* as it relates to masculinity and chauvinism. For the late 80s to 90s I study feminism in the grunge movement as displayed by Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love. And to bring all of these themes together in the 2000s, I look at the current influence that the Russian feminist punk band Pussy Riot has had on the LGBT movement and on social issues worldwide, and especially in the United States. Throughout my analysis I argue that counterculture music entwines activism to sexuality, and motivates people to question the societal status quo based upon one of the most basic principles of human nature.

The Manufactured American

America in the 1950s saw the construction of a cultural apparatus that was simultaneously prosperous and dysfunctional. Scores of American soldiers returned triumphantly to the United States for well-deserved praise, having saved the fate of democracy and American capitalism from Axis barbarism and domination. In the face of this shift a desire for tranquility and sameness became a paramount theme to the American mindset, and from that mindset new cultural edifices emerged. A new ecosystem of American life was invented in the form of the suburb, and with it came a fantasy realm of supposed domestic bliss. Gerard J. DeGroot in his book *The Sixties Unplugged: A Kaleidoscopic History of a Disorderly Decade*, describes the optimism that many felt about this new environment while recognizing the myth of the ideal it espoused. "Happy suburbanites, freed from the dark recesses of the city, entered their version of paradise. They wanted uniformity, be it in houses, burgers, or beer" (De Groot 12). DeGroot briefly psychoanalyzes the suburban mindset, and its justification of uniformity. "If their houses were all alike, that hardly mattered, since so too were their ambitions," states De Groot, adding the following critique from Billy Graham: "We are inclined to think like the Joneses, dress like

the Joneses, build houses like the Joneses, and talk like the Joneses” (DeGroot 12). What must be noted in these descriptions of the suburban mindset, is the emphasis on sameness, and its connection to safety, regardless of the fact that assimilation could be easier said than done. What came about was a culture that wound up not only accepting the status quo, but worshipping it as a form of salvation from uncertainty and chaos.

This was especially true for those fortunate enough to inhabit the greater economic landscape of a robust American economy, rejuvenated from winning a war that ultimately struck the final blow against the Great Depression. The suburbs were a bastion of middle-class white America, and the power center of this realm was undeniably patriarchal. Women were ushered or encouraged back into the home after serving the war effort faithfully for years (DeGroot 10). Women were supposed to perform the patriotic duty of managing the “home front,” doing their part to keep the new America running. DeGroot comments that female empowerment “frightened those who worried about social stability,” and that society relegated women to the responsibility of “saving the family” from the possibility of decay and disaster (DeGroot 10). For many women “motherhood seemed an affirmative gesture in harmony with the desire to build a new world” (DeGroot 11). As women were pushed back into the home, so were men pushed into the business sphere. William Whyte used the term “Organization Man” in his book of the same name, to denote the struggle of men to remain individuals while having to work within the confines of the modern industrial and corporate economic world, which he labeled the “Organization.” Men of the working world occupied a difficult position, one that Whyte notes as being simultaneously beneficial and problematic for the individual. “We do need to know how to cooperate with The Organization but, more than ever, so do we need to know how to resist it” (Whyte 12).

The fallacy of the supposed domestic utopia of the 1950s was that finding contentment in sameness was often easier said than done. The suburban dream, while indeed tranquil, was lacking in substance for many people, and this led to dissatisfaction with the myth. For women especially, the case was grim. “Fathers went off to work, children went off to school, but mothers stayed in identical boxes, making frozen cakes and burning frozen steaks” (DeGroot 12).

This flawed tranquility was to become even more problematic in the face of greater conflicts that would arise from the burgeoning Cold War. The paranoia of the times grew to insane degrees because the long-standing threat of Communism was now stronger than ever. The first defense against such a threat was the ability to militarily contain it. Such was the logic for participating in conflicts like the Korean War, and disastrously the Vietnam War. American capitalism was supported by an aggressive foreign policy, which acted as the protector of Whyte’s “Organization”: the machine that the individual had to work with, be it business or government. And at the center of it all was the American home, as DeGroot puts it, the “main battleground” in “a war for the soul of America” (DeGroot 13).

Fighting for the soul of America at home of course meant enacting public and foreign policy that would be punctuated by an increased polarization of the country, and the establishment of a binary political system with black and white morality. Eric F. Goldman in his book *The Crucial Decade-And After: America, 1945-1960*, tells how Dwight Eisenhower defended the use of the word “conservative” as acceptable when discussing political vitriol between the left and the right (Goldman 260). But the conservatism of the times lent itself to a very dirty moment in American history: while his career ended in disgrace, Joseph McCarthy’s short lived reign of terror deeply upset the American mindset, filling it with paranoia and creating a political rift that would haunt the nation for decades. As Goldman states that

“McCarthyism was permeating every state and every occupation, sometimes ridiculous, sometimes frightening, sometimes bordering on incredible” in its never ending purge of supposed commies (Goldman 258). And while he ultimately sided against McCarthy, Eisenhower’s Administration only compounded this problem. “With the exultant thrust of the right-wing Republicans and with the way the Eisenhower Administration reacted, some Americans worried that the word would not be simply conservative but reactionary.” (Goldman 260). Such a term would become all too applicable later on, when the Republican Party would summon one of the most reactionary enemies of the American counterculture, Ronald Reagan.

Evolving from all of this toxic political dialogue came an American archetype that few could completely live up to, but that everyone felt it was their patriotic duty to pretend to be. I propose that these changes in American life created the myth of the Manufactured American, an ideal American who embodied all that was deemed to be right with society, and functioned as a product in the form of a model citizen. Where Whyte’s Organization Man occupied a curious space of individualism working both with and against the machine of government and business, the Manufactured American wedded organization to individual. He or she (and I use the gender binary with special purpose) knew and loved their place in society, be it at home, at school, or at work, supported the rampant free market dynamo that made it possible, and would do his or her patriotic duty to support the government of that dynamo.

Where the Manufactured American made one’s individuality political, so did the American counterculture, and it was in the personal arena that rebellion truly fermented, brought on in the form of new theories regarding sexuality and relationships in the hippy movement. These were departures from the forced and regimented binary of suburban living, and flew in the face of the Manufactured American’s view of the family as sacred, god-fearing, and carefully

segmented by gendered and familial roles. Leisure time created as much distaste for sameness in the eyes of the baby boomers as it did reverence for it in their parents. Michael Bronski in his book *A Queer History of the United States*, says that “the teen culture of the 1950s had by the early 1960s transformed itself into a new, vibrant national youth culture that was politically aware, responsive to social issues, and understanding of personal experience in a larger context” (Bronski 203). Later this would evolve into full on sexual liberation that awarded elective promiscuity over planned and organized matrimony, a far departure from the unsatisfying world of domestic staleness that DeGroot outlines in his description of the times, especially when dealing with suburbia. “As with drugs, promiscuity constituted rebellion. Those who worshipped ‘free love’ convinced themselves that they were doing their bit to overturn the repressive morality of their parent’s generation” (DeGroot 216). He adds “The mantra that ‘the personal is political’ meant that heretofore personal acts took on deep political meaning” (DeGroot 217). In terms of addressing one issue of the day, Lara Campbell echoes these sentiments in her piece “*Women United Against the War*”: *Gender Politics, Feminism, and Vietnam Draft Resistance in Canada* stating that “men’s and women’s bodies were at the [center] of antiwar activism and the politics of draft resistance” (Dubinsky et.al, 343). The war in Southeast Asia was only one of several important issues of the time, but it of course represented the disastrous trajectory that the country was headed in. What the hippies offered, while of course idealistic for the times, was a means of not only scrutinizing this trajectory, but overturning it and replacing it with a mindset that anything was possible, including a peaceful, loving world. While the hippy movement ultimately hit its high watermark and rolled back, the notion of free love exploded rigid traditions involving romance, and normalized the abnormal, opening the door for a whole new world of possibilities.

The Beatles: A Slow Trip

One of the biggest challenges to the false American ideal, came in the form of a British invasion of the musical kind. At first the Beatles' entrance onto the American music scene did not appear to threaten the edifices of conservative authority, or if it did, it was not enough to worry the majority of suburban squares. Simple love ballads like "I Want to Hold Your Hand" allowed the Beatles to spread far and wide in the American musical mindset. But what seemed harmless would soon threaten the status quo that made up the Manufactured American's value apparatus.

Though there is perhaps no date to which we can assign the Beatles shift to being full-blown counterculture rock, I propose the idea that it came about with *Rubber Soul* (1965) and soon after with *Revolver* (1966), which are together a strange combination of old-fashioned love songs and the free love songs of the hippies. Candy Leonard, in her book *Beatleness: How the Beatles and Their Fans Remade the World*, devotes a chapter to the influence of *Rubber Soul*, and makes the point that "although The Beatles were still love objects of teenage girls, it was becoming more of a stretch to pretend they were singing to you. Now, repeated listening was not merely a matter of enjoying the songs or fantasizing. These songs required 'work'" (Leonard 98). Leonard aptly observes, the Beatles "functioned as a Trojan Horse at the start of a culture war that would persist into the next millennium" (Leonard 128). While explicitly referencing the sexual nature of some of the Beatles' music, she still makes the assertion that by the time the Beatles had "let their hair down" so to speak, they had already influenced a massive cross-continent fan base with their music.

The tendency of a modern gender-politics savvy mind might be to immediately condemn the lyrics of early songs such as "What Goes On" and "Think for Yourself" as misogynistic

songs about petty women breaking the hearts of well-meaning and deserving male partners. There is no denying that the protagonists of each song feel as though they are being wronged through no real fault of their own, and are confronting the women who spurn their advances in heartless and cruel fashion. However, when examined in a larger cultural context, they are actually far more progressive than one might think and even go to the point of subverting the sexism that some historical scholars—DeGroot included—attribute to what they see as the one-sidedness of the sexual revolution. DeGroot, with a noted degree of distaste, brings up the perceived sexism of the times and how it permeated popular narratives, even at the height of the hippy movement. “The iconic films of the decade-like *Alfie*, *Room at the Top*, and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*- celebrated the sexual adventures of young males at the same time that they sneered at possessive females who tried to curb their swinging” (DeGroot 217). But DeGroot’s assertion about the popular mentality of hippy sexuality does not hold up when applied to a full exploration of the lyrics and track listing of *Rubber Soul*. The amorphous concept of “free love” was becoming the mantra of a new generation that was tired of traditional gender relations and traditional dating. What this rather nebulous term meant, was not simply an erasure of monogamy, or even of the kind of gender binary between men and women that had existed for ages. What it indicated was a greater emphasis on choice and self-care: sex for pleasure, not simply for procreation, or for the purpose of alleviating social pressures to join together in institutional matrimony.

Take, for example, “Norwegian Wood” where the opening lines effectively turn the idea of male adventurism around:

I once had a girl,

Or should I say, ‘she once had me?’

She showed me her room,

Isn't it good?

Norwegian Wood. (The Beatles)

The girl in the song may have “had” the narrator, in an episode of sexual adventurism, and this flips the gender stereotype of aggressive male and passive female. To use a crude allegory, the hunter is now the hunted. Alternatively, the narrator makes his female counterpart out to be unreasonable, possibly for refusing sex, but he in turn comes off as unreasonable and perhaps inebriated given the mention of wine. What should also be noted is the space that the two characters in the song occupy: the girl is from what the listener can tell, independent, as she has her own room, and there don't appear to be any adult chaperones or anyone of greater authority than her in “her room.” She displays ownership in her “showing” the room, and this implies mastery of her domain when she asks the narrator to stay (The Beatles).

In addition, the socioeconomic situation of the two people in the song is interesting because the girl is the one taking on responsibility for her wellbeing.

She told me she worked in the morning and started to laugh,

I told her I didn't and crawled off to sleep in the bath, (The Beatles)

The narrator “crawling” away while the girl prepares to rest up for work, implies a much more admirable trait on her part. “Crawled” implies defeat via a lack of sexual conquest, or actual sexual satisfaction. The staging of this scene places the male narrator on a physically lower level than the female object of his pursuit. It can be said that with the protagonist being motivated by defeat and thus embittered, his reliability comes into question. On top of that, his statement at the

end of the song “So I lit a fire, isn’t it good? Norwegian wood.” is very ambiguous, but may imply that the narrator actually burned the wood that the girl was so proud of. Whether or not this goes to such an extreme as arson, it still implies some form of damage to something belonging to the girl, out of spite brought on by her perceived prudishness (The Beatles).

The Manufactured American would of course have no place in this context: a sexual encounter between young people, out of the context of marriage is scandalous enough, but the implication of a one-night stand in which a woman takes what she needs and only what she needs, is completely divorced from tradition. Ownership of the female body by male sexual entitlement is the main target of the song’s satire. I dare say that songs such as this represent a replacing of overly formalized and institutionalized love, with momentary love based in a hook-up culture. It may also be worthy to note that the overall mood and tone of the song is peaceful, while the subject matter was for the times, very defiant. That peaceful tone normalizes the defiance, making it an alternative to the combative and tribal society of the Manufactured American.

While I stated that there is no set time to which we can attribute the Beatles’ full crossover to the counterculture side of the American music scene, I do feel as though the inclusion of “Tomorrow Never Knows” as the final song of *Revolver* was a hint of bigger things to come. Its lyrics show the beginning of the larger narrative that the Beatles had through the rest of their fireball of a career, a narrative of love as the answer to all things.

Turn off your mind, relax, and float downstream,

It is not dying... It is not dying...

Lay down all thoughts, surrender to the void,

It is shining...It is shining... (The Beatles)

Right at the beginning, it almost seems as though John Lennon is confronting the old world, not with a challenge of violence but with an outstretched hand to the listeners who are asked or invited to “turn off [their] mind”, implying that there is no need for the sort of hyperawareness and steadfast alertness that accompanies paranoia. Instead of military alertness and attention, the listeners must “relax” themselves, “lay down” and even “surrender” to some unknown force or entity. But the instance where sexuality truly comes into play is after the song’s bridge. The entire score of the song is noisy, fast, and a bit chaotic, becoming a sort of musical trip. The listeners feel as though they are floating quickly down the stream that Lennon has just told them to relax in. But after the song’s whining and warped bridge, Lennon’s voice becomes a bit harder to hear, even ethereal, as though he is now speaking of some higher mysteries that only those who have lasted this long are allowed to hear.

That love is all and love is everyone,

It is knowing...It is knowing...

That ignorance and hate may walk the dead,

It is believing...It is believing... (The Beatles)

Love, in these lines is said to be “all” and “everyone,” implying a destruction of factionalism, and replacing it with inclusion, all under the bigger philosophical umbrella of “love.” Love is the higher mystery, the cornerstone of this message, the “meaning of within” (The Beatles). On top of that, the listener hears that only through “believing” will “ignorance and hate” be defeated and “walk the dead,” implying not only the extinction of acts of hatred but of the idea of hatred itself. After that, and only after that, do we get more lines that pertain to a staple of the hippy culture:

John sings “listen to the color of your dreams,” which may pertain to the changes that occur in sensory perception and continuation while under the influence of L.S.D. (The Beatles). And so it is only after the listener has made the journey through the bridge in “Tomorrow Never Knows” and learned that love is the ultimate truth, that they can address societal issues such as hatred and the illegality of drugs.

Pretty Little Reagans in a Row

As the Beatles’ music became more and more extreme in its subject matter and psychedelia, so did the counterculture’s activism, especially with the growing momentum of the anti-war and civil rights movements. California in particular, became a battleground between counterculture hippies, and those who still believed in the ideals of the Manufactured American, and who sought to win this crucial battleground. For the counterculture, it is hard to imagine a more insidious nemesis than Ronald Reagan. The dogmas he stood for would remain in American politics and continue to lead to one shameful episode after another. But his trademark “straight shooter” style helped to galvanize his support base in the face of the hippy rebellion that characterized many antiwar protests. While many consider his campaign a bad joke at first, it soon became obvious that Reagan could tap into the well of conservative indignation at hippy cultural defiance and form it into a very real power base. “Student unrest brilliantly highlighted the populist themes of Reagan’s campaign: morality, law and order, strong leadership, traditional values, and, it must be said, anti-intellectualism” (DeGroot 402). In terms of gender binaries, Reagan was quick to use the counterculture’s defiance of gender aesthetics against itself. “On one occasion he described a bunch of protestors who “were carrying signs that said ‘Make Love Not War.’ The only trouble was they didn’t look like they were capable of doing either. His hair was cut like Tarzan, and he acted like Jane, and he smelled like Cheetah” (DeGroot 405).

The above commentary by Reagan mocked the popularized androgynous look of young hippy men which stood in the face of traditional machismo supposedly exhibited by those who served their country in the war. Jeremi Suri describes this growing divide in the example of the anti-war demonstrations at Berkley “that grew in size and frequency as American military activity escalated in Southeast Asia” (Suri1). And in many cases, protests from the androgynous left were beaten down violently by the masculine right, in the form of institutionalized muscle. Of course, the Beatles helped to immortalize the androgynous look that was so popular among young men in the 1960s, and when combined with their unique brand of groundbreaking strangeness it became all the more relevant to the gender discourse of the times (see Figure 1).



Figure 1 The Fab Four in Tittenhurst Park, 22 August 1969, sporting the long, unkempt, androgynous hair of the hippy movement. Note the bright floral patterns of Ringo Starr’s shirt. (Source: The Beatles Bible online- <http://www.beatlesbible.com/gallery/1969-photos/>)

In light of Reagan’s above comment and the gendered polarization of the Vietnam War, I wish to examine a Beatles’ song that many have claimed to have no proper meaning. “I Am The Walrus” released in 1967 (a year after Reagan’s ascension to his first political throne), is widely

regarded as surrealistic and drug induced. While I can deny neither of these things, I wish to take special note of a few carefully punctuated lyrics that add an element of politics and gender to the equation. Though each verse of the song ends with the iconic line “*I am the walrus*” the words building up to it have gendered connotations. Take for example the following:

Corporation tee-shirt, stupid bloody Tuesday

Man, you been a naughty boy, you let your face grow long (The Beatles)

The wording functions as a chiding remark directed at the listener, be he a hippy or otherwise. It is accusatory via the word “naughty”, but in a way that seems far more playful than actually angry. The listener, in this case a young man, is being chided for growing his face long, which could imply wearing a long beard. Such an image was a staple of hippy garb, going against the clean shaven work-oriented style of the traditional square. So, too, was the type of long hair that, according to Reagan, resembled Tarzan. This line is followed up later in the song with its counterpart “*Boy, you’ve been a naughty girl, you let your knickers down,*” (The Beatles). This line, coupled with the previous one regarding “growing one’s face long” twists gender performance and implies the idea of female nudity with the same pretend finger-waving. Later on in the song we are treated to more commentary on gender performativity:

Mister city, policeman sitting,

Pretty little policemen in a row!

See how they fly like Lucy in the sky see how they run,

I’m crying, I’m crying, crying! (The Beatles)

Those involved in Vietnam War protests, when confronted with the strong-arm of authority, most often met with resistance from local police, who in the mid of the turmoil of the 1960s could be prone to acts of terrible violence. The line to this verse begins “Mister city” implying some strange amalgamation of authority with “mister” serving as an indication of propriety. I argue that the use of “city” is indicative of society itself, and the formal “mister” is thus applying masculinity to conservative society and concrete capitalistic, business oriented society at that. The city is and was after all, a place of business, and America’s business in the 1960s was a decidedly masculine sphere. Mister City can be read as “Mister Greed” or to a lesser extent “Mister Capitalism,” and is therefore the voracious side of the society that the Manufactured American belonged to.

Next, the description of the policemen has multiple meanings. They are first described as “pretty” then as “little,” neither of which are traditionally masculine traits and both of which serve to essentially pacify the hyper masculine nature of the police. They are robbed of the ability to appear violent and saying that they are “in a row” makes them seem like a series of products laid out on an assembly line: products used for order and control. This imagery, combined with the frequent connection made between policemen and the “pigs” that run and/or fly throughout the song, form a biting critique that robs a threatening, anti-counterculture force of its power. The most violent manufactured American is now innocuous, a buffoon to be made into the counterculture’s jape, in a uniquely American satirical fashion of lampooning dangerous enemies. And all of this is done with a mind for gender politics that called out the image of the red-blooded, commie-hating American male who would sooner die than allow for the withdrawal from a military occupation in Southeast Asia or an integration of schools and communities between blacks and whites.

One final thing to note about the politics of “I Am the Walrus” is that the opening line can actually be read as a call to action under the banner of the Beatles’ mantra of love between all peoples. John Lennon belts “*I am he, as you are he, as you are me and we are all together,*” (the Beatles). Who is the “he” in this line? The message, much like the one in *Come Together*, is one of unity, in this case against an oppressive masculine power propagated by organized society and helping to deepen the “us and them” rift that 1960s American society was so accustomed to.

Are You One of Them...?

To further examine the presence of sexuality in the Beatles’ lyrics, I find it necessary to analyze one of The Beatles’ least popular songs, “Within You Without You.” The song’s Eastern influence is very obvious, due to some extent to the band’s apparent religious relationship with the guru of the day, the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (Leonard, 158). The Maharishi’s spotty relationship within the Hindu spiritual tradition notwithstanding, the Beatles’ borrowing of Eastern-style music combined individualistic love-based hippy freedom with religious fragments of doctrine. “*We were talking about the love we all could share,*” croons George Harrison, making love seem as though it is truly an all-encompassing aspect of life, perhaps even the most important aspect of life. The lyrics become even preachier as they continue: “*With our love (with our love) we may save the world,*” and “*If they only knew!*” (The Beatles). Finally we get the almost accusatory line “*Are you one of them?*” asking if the listener will be part of this love revolution, or let themselves be one of those who will let their love go “*so cold*” (The Beatles). The song is not as catchy as some of the band’s more intoxicating tunes, and could even be considered “the one you skip” on *Sgt. Pepper’s*, for this reason. But it is the experimental nature of the song that makes it a very important piece of the Beatles’ treasure trove of hippy classics. Their universal accessibility came about because they redefined love. It was no longer well-

mannered courting between chaperoned companions at the drug store counter. It was evolving in the American consciousness along with disdain for pointless violence and backward racial injustice. As DeGroot mentions, borrowing a Feminist creed, the personal was undoubtedly political, perhaps the most political thing one could care about at the time, because the forces keeping young teenage and college age boys and girls apart, were the same forces keeping blacks and whites separate, and sending young men off to die at war (DeGroot 217).

The Queer Empowerment of Disco

When examining disco from a modern age it may seem like a long shot to think of Disco as registering on the American counterculture music spectrum. Compared to the radical differences between the 1960s rock and roll and the sanctimonious nature of the squares they rebelled against, it may seem that there was nothing particularly strange about the sounds, lyrics or moods invoked by the disco scene. But what truly made disco such a tremendous counterculture force in the 1970s, was the fact that it was distinctly separated from the seriousness of rock, and instead specifically celebrated a liberation of sexuality perhaps even on par with the counterculture's politicized free love movement. Alice Echols, author of *Hot Stuff: Disco and the Remaking of American Culture*, articulates this concept when she says: "Small but growing numbers of African Americans entered the ranks of the middle class, women moved into the workplace *and* into nightlife, and gays vacated the shadowy margins of American life. Disco's one nation-under-a-thump impulse sometimes gave way to tribal reversion, but it nonetheless succeeded in integrating American nightlife to an extent unthinkable just a decade earlier" (Echols, xxiii).

In this analysis, Echols demonstrates that the disco movement provided a new venue that merged a thriving new hookup culture based in personal liberation, with bigger social changes that held

much more gravity in the national mindset. Disco was to be a movement unlike any other in its incorporation of the sexual revolution with other forms and categories of liberation.

But before disco could become such a powerful force in American counterculture music, greater social change had to come about in a more dramatic and confrontational way. Based on Michael Bronski's writing about the period, I assert that two of the greatest steps towards the liberation of gay culture were the Stonewall Riots of June 1968 and the removal of homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in December of 1973 (Bronski 218). First, when examining Stonewall one must take into account the level of illegality that homosexuality still occupied at the time. Raids such as the one attempted on June 28 of that year were not only accepted, but common-place. But in the case of Stonewall what was supposed to be a simple matter of rooting out so called degenerates turned a defeat for the authorities that called into question the effectiveness of heterosexist power structures to remove the existence of a pocket social ecosystem it considered to be a threat. Physical force was intended to drag out the supposed deviants, and having dragged them out, isolate them from society in shame. What actually happened was that it only succeeded in dragging the issue of homosexual oppression into the mindset of America, to whatever extent America was able to grasp it at the time. "The larger culture of political militancy was evident in the slogans that emerged immediately after Stonewall, such as GAY POWER and, as someone chalked on the now closed Stonewall Inn, THEY WANT US TO FIGHT FOR OUR COUNTRY [BUT] THEY INVADE OUR RIGHTS" (Bronski 209).

Power was apparent in homosexuality's relationship to disco, because it was power of a multifaceted nature: the power to be seen in public (to some extent), the power to physically defend one's public presence, and the power to share in the traditional American masculine

identity that Bronski mentions as the American gender tradition. Echols poses that the homosexual acceptance of muscular, traditionally masculine images, unified the community and that “[t]he buff body was about style, but it also was critical to the reconfiguring of gay identity and desire. Before, gay men had often been ‘hunters after the same prey,’ recalls Mel Cheren, ‘rather than allies or perspective partners.’” (Echols 127). The power of Disco music was its ability to provide a sector of society, which was (though separate from larger straight society) still extremely powerful. It was an outlet for further open sexual exploration than the gay community had ever seen before, and the ability to be out safely in some circles was far ahead of the closeted nature of gay society in previous decades.

Even more interesting is how the gay disco scene had much in common with straight swinging society and how it bridged gaps of race and gender. Many favorite tracks for both straight and gay audiences featured themes of beauty and great pageantry. Abba’s *Dancing Queen* tells the story of a young girl going out to seek the man of her dreams. While the possibility of finding the “*perfect guy*” that Abba talks about could be an attractive idea for straight girls, the idea of being out and open enough to be out would have been an attractive option for newly out homosexuals as well. There is a tune of innocence and rebirth with the lyrics “*Young and sweet, only seventeen,*” (Abba). Even more poignant is the idea of essentially queering songs like *Dancing Queen*, by making it so that beauty is not exclusively female or heterosexual. “Sylvester notwithstanding, the biggest stars of gay disco were heterosexual African American women” (Echols 147). But despite this empowerment, Echols reiterates that the power of disco music was much more based in the “optimistic” music that “invoked the righteousness of love, equality, and community but without reference to any specific group, were massively popular in gay discos” (Echols 147). She states, “Even though disco was powered in

part by gay liberation, its deejays and dancer shied away from politically explicit music.” (Echols 147). The optimism of disco was in its normalization of good times for participants who were of multiple races, genders, and orientations. Nearly every song had an element of celebration (yes, including “Celebration” by Kool and the Gang): celebration of having a good time, being sexually open. This was extremely provocative in a culture where many could finally be optimistic about their desires. In effect, simple party music that lent itself well to sexuality, was a means for much bigger social change for the Gay community.

Complexity and Contradiction: Donna Summer and the Gay Community

In examining the gay empowerment that the disco scene offered, it is hard to find a figure more simultaneously uplifting and troubling than Donna Summer. Her role in disco was beyond groundbreaking because the themes expressed in her songs fit in perfectly with the new, empowering environment of the disco club. Summer’s work was additionally inspiring for women, especially women of color, as she not only turned male sexual adventurism on its head, but did so for a demographic that had been consistently marginalized for many years. This made it even more perplexing and heartbreaking, when Summer appeared to reject the largest contingent of the people who had labeled her an idol, due to her born-again Christianity. Accounts from both Summer and those who reported her commentary differ: Jeremy Kinser of *The Advocate* reports that “‘God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve,’ is one comment Summer, who’d recently announced she was a born-again Christian, was alleged to have said at a concert in 1983, as the AIDS epidemic had begun to wreak havoc on the LGBT community” (Kinser). Summer later both denied saying such things and apologized for any hurt feelings garnered from the things she supposedly said, which only lead to more confusion. Nevertheless, her influence is not to be disregarded as a musical force to be reckoned with on the disco scene.

Regardless of the rejection of her main fan base, Summer's participation in the unique, vibrant, and tragically fleeting counterculture of disco further complicated and wore down the edifices of the Manufactured American. Her starring in a production of the musical *Hair* was perhaps indicative of the heterosexual counterculture that Summer's music entailed (Echols 107). Where disco as a whole had provided gays with their place of refuge, Summer's music invited heterosexual love back into the spotlight, combined it with the sensuality of disco, and reemphasized the free love movement of the hippies in a new and decidedly capitalistic way.

Summer was a counterculture icon particularly engrossed in her own image and its potential misrepresentation. She feared that she would be typecast as a tramp perhaps even more than Kurt Cobain feared being labeled a sellout. She clearly aspired to fame and success but did so while demanding an image that was fitted to her exact standards and that adhered to her often mercurial identity. Her most famous song which spearheaded her career into sexualized fame, was "Love to Love You Baby." The conception of this disco relic was an interesting tale that would characterize the kind of duality with which Summer would approach her own sexuality through the rest of her career: open and empowered at some times, and reluctant or ashamed at others. Giorgio Moroder and Pete Belotte were the engine behind the recording, as Summer (in lower economic standing at the time) sang backup for Musicland Studios in Munich (Echols 107). "After some cajoling, Summer agreed to record a demo of the song – in a blackened studio, on the floor, without any crew members to embarrass her as she pretended to give herself over to orgasmic ecstasy" (Echols 108).

Echols' depiction of Summer as a shy and reserved performer turned sex symbol by a single song and the eagerness of an executive to give her image over to a leering public is further emphasized by the supposed mental reorientation that Summer used to justify the role to herself.

She “got through” the song by pretending to be “Marilyn Monroe in the throes of passion,” (Echols 108). In a discussion of American counterculture music this aspect of her performance is particularly significant because of the fame that Monroe had received as a mainstream sex symbol. For Summer to call upon this popular sex icon would mean not only drawing inspiration from mainstream heterosexuality but bringing it into the new counterculture area of disco music. Glamor could of course be admired by people of all orientations as a common ground between gay and straight society whether one wanted to sleep with Marilyn Monroe or actually be her.



Figure 2 Donna Summer on the cover of her 1976 album “A Love Trilogy”. The pose she strikes for this album evokes both power and sensuality. (Source: <http://www.allmusic.com/> - <http://www.allmusic.com/album/a-love-trilogy-mw0000612584>).

Figure 3 Marilyn Monroe in her famous steam vent photograph. Note the similarity between Summer’s and Monroe’s dresses. (Source: biography.com- <http://www.biography.com/news/marilyn-monroe-seven-year-itch-dress-photos>).

A lyrical analysis of the song proves a complex task. It was Summer who wrote the lyrics after her studio suggested the premise for the song and Summer’s fake orgasm was no doubt bombastic to anyone who still saw fit to relegate sexuality – female or otherwise – to the private

sphere. The lyrics, in conjunction with Summer's various moans and sighs, make the song into a virtual sexual experience. It exports a sexual experience into the mainstream of music and in a way that makes the listener feel extremely close to the goings on of the song's narrative. It should be noted that the Beatles may have done something to this effect in a few of their songs including the famous counterculture rebellion song "Revolution," in which John Lennon and Paul McCartney grunt in a somewhat sexual fashion to the beat of the anti-hypocrisy tune. Whether this is truly the case or not, the comparison makes for yet another musical bridge between cultures and decades.

But other music performed by Summer has greater purely lyrical significance in tune with the sexual empowerment of "Love to Love You Baby." "Hot Stuff," a song that encapsulates female sexual adventurism, was ironically made not long before Summer's moral identity crisis of faith versus public image came to the forefront. The lyrics are tremendous in their empowerment of female sexuality in the world of disco culture. It should be noted that, although much of this song's strength comes from Summer's performance of it, it was actually written by Pete Bellotte, Harold Faltermeyer and Keith Forsey. And yet because Summer, an already sexualized figure lends herself to it, the song works to break down the idea of female passivity as a hopeless endeavor forever nullified by loneliness. Because of her position as an empowered sexual icon, the lyrics have intense power and put the narration of the song in a completely new context. The first verse makes this apparent:

Sittin' here, eatin' my heart out waitin',

Waitin' for some lover to call.

Dialed about a thousand numbers lately,

Almost rang the phone off the wall! (Bellotte et. al)

The song begins with a theme of idleness and makes the narrator appear sad and ineffectual as she remains idle and unfulfilled in her sexual appetites. One assumes from the lyrics that it is Summer placing herself in this context, and that adds an additional layer of complexity to the equation. An empowered figure like Summer, can also be made to feel lonely at times and must take matters into her own hands to remedy the situation. She “eats her heart out” which adds a level of visceral distaste to said loneliness. It makes waiting for a “lover” as she puts it, a task akin to a physical malady that one picks at, chews, and gnaws until it hurts. It hurts to wait and stay idle, as though gnawing at the problem substitutes actual physical sustenance.

On further examination, the word “waiting” is used not only twice but in rapid succession. It connects one line to another but also shows the passage of time that the narrator is experiencing while she “waits” for the man to come find her – to come and obtain her passive body. Sex is linked to hunger here and this means much more than one may think. It makes sex seem like a need that not only provides comfort and sexual release but survival itself. The term “lover” shows a connection back to the free love movement of the hippies and rekindles the strength of human relationships being based not in traditional monogamous relationships, but in a much more ambiguous type of setting. In addition, attaining a lover will not be done easily for the narrator, at least not in the passive way that she has been trying. I use the term passive because of the sexual and physical nature of the disco scene.

The song takes the idea of hunting for a lover in the disco scene even farther in the second verse, in which she makes an attraction between two people even more animalistic and primal.

Lookin' for a lover who needs another,

Don't want another night on my own.

Wanna share my love with a warm blooded lover,

Wanna bring a wild man back home! (Bellotte et.al)

The word “warm blooded” shows a common connection between her and her pursued man. Humans are after all, warm blooded – a trait that we share with the rest of our mammal associates in the animal kingdom. Men and women, like other animals, have needs, and it makes a female need for sex as relevant as a male need for it. But to make such a connection relates the power of human sexuality to the primal sexuality of other animals. We are placed on the same level as beasts in our sexuality, and one could even make this comparison between the animals and ourselves when examining the capitalist nature of disco culture and its sexuality. The free love of the hippies was still in force as Echols says but the “free” part was decidedly absent in an environment that required capitalism to go out into the dating ecosystem. Free love was moving from the fields of Woodstock and the communal haven of Haight Ashbury into the urban clubs of the disco scene, a space where capitalism was king.

The power dynamic in this second verse has shifted massively. The male pursuer, once applauded by society for his sexual exploits over female “prey” has now been caught by the narrator and is being brought home as a trophy to be collected. He was and is a “wild man,” perhaps a difficult person to catch. But for now he has been bested and will serve his female captor, ironically to the benefit of both.

It should be noted that the redefinition of “love” is further emphasized in the chorus of “Hot Stuff” which confines it to acts of a purely nocturnal nature. Summer sings of wanting a

sexual encounter in the context of momentary desire, wanting sex “this evening” or “tonight,” ending the chorus with “Gotta have some love tonight!” (Bellotte et.al). Sexual encounters that occur in the dreamy recesses of night are now the definition of love, reemphasizing the free love movement that the hippies were so adamant about. The scene is no longer the chaperoned 1950s drugstore or the sunny, handholding streets of quaint, manufactured suburbia. It is not the lively fields of a 1960s music festival, where inhabitants contemplate the greater issues of the day as free love reigns supreme. The narrative has been moved to the wild of the disco jungle and perhaps not even there for very long, before cutting to the chase and being refocused on the act of physical love itself.

This plays interestingly into the Beatles role in the redefinition of love. What does the song say by not only applying the principle of love, but doing so in the framework of disco? And is there any relevance to the idea of the narrator’s love being one of female aggression? To be sure, there have been numerous sources claiming that the hippy movement included a definition of free love that still favored male sexual aggression and female passivity to some extent, as DeGroot points out rather grimly. “Like the drug craze, the sexual revolution has often been seen by those who participated as something fun at the time, but in retrospect rather embarrassing, bewildering, and sordid.” (DeGroot 219). But DeGroot’s glib analysis of the free love movement does not fully articulate the complexities that led both young men and women in the baby boomer generation to reject the boring safety of the Manufactured American’s forced and sterile monogamy. DeGroot’s commentary that heteronormativity and heterosexism played a part in the hippy movement’s fascination with sexuality holds water, and there is no way to deny that strands of the old world’s gender binary pervaded the hippy culture to some extent. But it nevertheless weakened what was an undeniably male centered and male favoring system,

maiming heterosexism to some degree, as the hippy movement gave birth to other movements more centered on female empowerment. A woman can be every bit the sexual hunter as a man and should in fact be proud of it rather than ashamed. This is made all the more powerful because Summer is singing such a song in the male-dominated world of the music industry and taking what is essentially a male product and turning it on its head.

Echols also makes the astute point that disco changed the American counterculture music scene by not only building off of the sixties and the free love movement, but morphing it into a new, more materialistic kind of counterculture. “Although disco’s in-your-face sexuality would have been unthinkable without the sixties, the mirror-ball world dispensed with the naturalized version advanced by the counterculture. Sex wasn’t free; it was an exchange, brokered in singles bars and discos, with maximum orgiastic pleasure and minimal emotional engagement.” (Echols 111).

Echols shows how disco was brought into the mainstream and how it came to be considered not simply a homosexual phenomenon. After all, what could be more American than a healthy (or perhaps unhealthy) dose of capitalism to grow a niche phenomenon into a mainstream experience that the entire country could enjoy? Combined with the remnants of the free love movement of the 1960s – one thing that truly remained after the collapse of hippy culture – disco allowed for a new amalgamation of old and new counterculture elements.

However, this analysis does not fully take into account the coopting of disco away from being a purely homosexual experience. I cannot venture to say that to enjoy disco in the 1970s meant that one was culturally appropriating the homosexual community. But if the assumption is that disco began as a uniquely pocketed form of empowerment, it would only make sense that there would be some discomfort in the mainstream entering such a small space.

Perhaps it makes sense to compare the disco scene to a beautifully ornate and swanky nightclub: a fine place for its usual residents to engage in their unique style of celebration, with a healthy flow of non-regulars who visit frequently. But to bring it completely into the mainstream, especially as a counterculture element, was to leave it open to reactionary scrutiny, of the sort which would be made all the more vile as much of the nation stood by and watched the supposedly “gay problem” of AIDS unfold. To examine the AIDS epidemic and all of the tragedies that it encompassed goes beyond the scope of this work. However, it should be noted that facets of the Manufactured American’s society helped to frame the crisis in a way that levied undeserved blame on gay culture. If Summer’s slight was what many claim it to be, then one could see it as at best a unreasonable and incendiary comment, and at worst a full on and brutally insensitive denunciation of her most loyal fan base. The full intentions of her words may never be known, but their impact of what she said was certainly devastating.

A Gendered Pageant: Enter Ziggy Stardust.

On the subject of normalizing the so-called abnormal, it is hard to encapsulate how massively influential David Bowie was in his contribution to gendered counterculture music. He has been praised, especially since his recent passing, as a musician who broke new ground with his celebrity shapeshifting into the different manifestations from the flamboyant Ziggy Stardust to the peculiarity of the Thin White Duke. All of his personas metamorphosed under the greater irresistibility that was the true Bowie. And his inventively strange costuming and pageantry played a massive part in what made his music the stuff of legends.

Take for example the arrival of Bowie’s best known alter ego Ziggy Stardust in the songs “Life on Mars” and “Star Man.” The creation of Ziggy Stardust was not a matter of mere cross dressing and cannot be written off as such simply for the fact that the character wears copious

amounts of makeup and sings in a high, almost feminine tone. In the video for “Life on Mars,” Bowie, or rather Stardust, appears on a blank white plain donned in his trademark makeup, but dressed in a very specific way: Bowie is feminized from the neck up with intense red lipstick and striking blue blobs of eye shadow (see Figure 4). But the entire getup that he sports is one that mixes male and female clothes, for a persona that defies gender itself, because it mixes elements of masculine formal dress wear with feminine decoration, and combines the two with the pleasant outlandishness of Ziggy Stardust himself (see Figure 5).



Figures 4 and 5 Bowie in the guise of Ziggy Stardust, wearing feminine eye shadow and striking a defiant pose in the video of *Life on Mars*. His strangeness is only accentuated by his one enlarged iris. (Source: DavidBowie.com - <http://www.davidbowie.com/>)

The entire performance takes the otherworldliness of Ziggy Stardust and shows what he might look like in a formal setting and, given the nature of the song’s lyrics, maybe even a senior prom or other chaperoned sanctioned event. And therein lies the real power in much of Bowie’s music: bending gender through clothing and style and putting that now bent gender in a comforting and almost conciliatory light. The opening lyrics to “Life on Mars” tell a story of a young girl who

seems to be stuck in a place of dissatisfaction due to parental disapproval and the drab nature of society itself.

But her mummy is yelling “no”

And her daddy has told her to go

But her friend is nowhere to be seen

Now she walks through her sunken dream, (Bowie)

The song begins with the aftermath of some sort of intergenerational dispute between a young girl and her parents, which shows an undoing of domestic tranquility. The use of the words “mummy” and “daddy” emphasizes the extent to which the protagonist is still considered a minor, and make the conflict seem so much more like an issue of youthful rebellion versus parental authority. The song then progresses further into a realm of escapism and isolation as the girl is unable to find the friend she was supposed to meet and instead enters an escapist, though unsatisfying world of fantasy. The fact that Bowie in the guise of Ziggy Stardust is telling the story while dressed in clothes that are simultaneously outrageous and formal, makes him seem not only sympathetic to the girl’s dejection, but also shows that to be misunderstood is normal. It is for this reason that Bowie is placed in a blank white background, and that his makeup is the first thing we see. It is a rebellion of imagery that queers formal dress, while still maintaining dignity and taste. Here stands an individual from another world who can understand and provide comfort to a misfit far better than an overbearing parent, and his defiant pose and finger pointing throughout the song adds power and bravery to his presence.

The lyrics to “Starman” continue in this theme. The song tells of a group of youths receiving a message from the “Starman,” an otherworldly being who communicates via music

sung by Ziggy Stardust. The message is received and must be conversed about in secret for fear of parental reprisal. The Starman's message comes through radio and television, and the kids remain indoors, eagerly awaiting an actual meeting with the otherworldly visitor. The lyrics "Don't tell your papa or he'll get us locked up in fright" have special significance because not only do they return to a theme of parental reactionary thinking, but allow the word "fright" to be interpreted in two ways: Will the father literally keep the children in because of his own fear of the Starman, or will his anxiety cloud their judgement and make them too afraid to receive this interstellar traveler and his intoxicating music? (Bowie) This issue causes the listener to not only question parental authority, but to also question their own timidity at being openly strange and different. In order to receive the Starman's message, a personal choice between obedient acquiescence and staunch defiance of patriarchal authority must be made.

"Are there any queers in the audience tonight?!" Roger Waters and the Wall of Masculinity.

Where disco broke new waves in American counterculture Music by tapping into celebration and joy, Pink Floyd did so by tapping into the far reaches of human misery, but did so in the best way possible. *Dark Side of the Moon* while meditative and beautiful, reflects on the finite nature of life and the sorrow that all we see will eventually leave us. *Animals* is built loosely around Orwell's allegorical fable and functions as a critique of the barbarism of rampant capitalism and institutionalized cruelty. But perhaps no album better expresses the dark side of the rebel mindset than Roger Water's brain-child *The Wall*. Waters' album and subsequent feature length film were extremely personal creations for him alone, and as some accounts of the production tell, a nightmare for those working with him. The narrative tells the story of a rock musician named Pink, as he plunges into a deep, self-destructive depression brought on by both

long term and short term trauma. But while Waters modeled Pink after himself in many regards, the horrendous journey that Pink goes on over the duration of *The Wall* makes many broader comments on sexuality, politics, fame, capitalism, and the interconnection between them all.

Pink's atrophy at the start of the film is a direct result of his romantic life and the fact that it has imploded only moments ago. While on tour in America, Pink learns that his wife back in England has apparently had an affair with an anti-nuclear proliferation activist. But this is only the final catalyst that detonates a long brewing problem in Pink's life. Pink's father tragically died in the Second World War (as did Water's father), leaving him with nothing but fragments of military paraphernalia and photographs, as well as a certificate detailing his father's bravery. The song "Mother" details the disturbingly oedipal solution that Pink finds for his lack of affection, and shows him to be emasculated and weak. Following this, his estrangement from his wife in "Don't Leave Me Now" shows that Pink's fragile and frustrated sexual persona tips him over the edge and sets him up to create the hyper masculine Fascist version of himself that he uses towards the end of the film.

The word "angst" comes to mind when examining the content of not only the album but the 1982 film as well. For the purposes of this examination, I will be looking at the narrative of the film because it adds a great deal to the story in terms of imagery and subtext. One could certainly say that the imagery of the movie is overtly blunt and analyzing it may seem like a foregone conclusion. However, to fully examine *The Wall* as an indicator of counterculture sexuality is to realize how it specifically attacks violent masculinity.

At the heart of many of the songs both in the film and in the album is a portrayal of masculinity that is decidedly complicated and at times problematic. Pink's various tribulations and shifts in identity all tie back to a peculiar underlying fact: one's personal masculinity is not

one's own. Take, for example, the opening song "When the Tigers Broke Free" which serves as the introduction and backstory to Pink's transformation. Its slow and undeniably dreary tone make it a poor choice for a radio station to play, and even die-hard Pink Floyd fans might write it off as unlistenable and grim, even by the standards of the rest of the album. But it provides a connection between Pink's masculinity, his father's masculinity, and masculinity on a national level. Pink's father dies holding a bridgehead during the Anzio campaign in Italy, along with the rest of his unit. Pink finds his father's old war memorabilia, along with the certificate of his death. But while this should seem like a scene of a young child admiring his dead father's patriotic sacrifice, the language Waters' uses is anything but reverent of the warrior persona.

And kind old King George

Sent Mother a note

When he heard that father was gone... (Waters)

This line indicates layered patriarchy, with King George as the father of the fatherland, performing the formality of informing Pink's mother of the death of her husband, who went to war presumably to defend his home, country, and family. To the Manufactured American, such a sacrifice, especially during the Second World War would be called noble and patriotic. Pink's mother, and indeed Pink himself, should feel a sense of pride at the sacrifice that Pink's father has made according to this narrative. But the lyrics here are made to sound so personal between King George and Pink's mother that it becomes ironic. The king probably did not specifically hear of Pink's father dying but more likely heard of causality numbers and responded in proper kingly fashion by signing massive numbers of death notifications. Such is the case in the next set of lyrics:

And I found it one day

In a drawer of old photographs, hidden away.

And my eyes still grow damp to remember

His Majesty signed

With his own rubber stamp... (Waters)

Pink's father's life, death, and membership in his own family are summed up in the form of a scroll with a rubber stamp, making his death seem all the more meaningless and the disruption of Pink's own masculinity seem much more flippant. His death came from the movements of unsympathetic military and government appendages, which asked for a masculine sacrifice from a man who gave his life for the greater good, and as such, forfeited his role as father for the sake of the state.

Pink's masculinity comes under scrutiny and control by his female relations as he grows up. The song "Mother" portrays Pink's mother as overly protective and fearmongering, and she functions as a feminine figure who nurtures Pink's hopelessness. Lyrics like "*Momma's gonna make all of your nightmares come true*" and "*Momma will always find out where you've been,*" create an air of totalitarianism surrounding Pink, crippling any sense that he is able to lead his own life, without this demanding and condemnatory figure (Waters). In addition, the lyrics "*Mother do you think they'll drop the bomb?*" show a fear of nuclear annihilation that was still very real (Waters). For a true political analysis of this song, it may be impossible to avoid comparisons between the song's release and the ascension of Reagan's long time cross-continental ally, Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher proved to be the perfect British complement to Reagan's law and order persona in the United States, and was elected in 1979, the same year that

“Mother” was released, and her right-wing rule became a popular target for the British counterculture. England even began flexing its colonial muscles for a brief instance when Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands in 1982 and England responded with the resounding patriotic war fervor to a conflict that ended three months later. This, combined with Thatcher’s conservative views and her exceedingly long term in office effectively placed her in a position of guardianship over a country still very much embroiled in Cold War paranoia in the 1980s. Thatcher and other government officials (the Gipper included) are even given dishonorable mentions in the song “The Fletcher Memorial Home” from Waters’ 1982 album *The Final Cut*.

“Don’t Leave Me Now” and “Young Lust” continue to harm Pink’s masculine identity, and make him out to be even more weak and childish in his dealings with women. “Don’t Leave Me Now” is perhaps the most depressing Pink Floyd song of all time due to Waters’ barking of lyrics that suggest not only infidelity, but masculine chauvinism and even violence on the part of Pink against his estranged wife. It is implied that Pink’s inner walls have caused him to become frustrated with the idea of love, romantic or otherwise, with his wife. He sees her more as an object to “*beat to a pulp on a Saturday night*” or “*put through the shredder in front of [his] friends*” (Waters). He then croons apologetically “*remember the flowers I sent?*” implying that their romance has been relegated to token gestures rather than actual love (Waters). In “Young Lust” Pink seeks out a groupie, or as the song puts it “*a dirty woman*” to “*make [him] feel like a real man,*” but once again he is prone to violence and trashes the hotel room, chasing his new partner away (Waters). In both songs, Pink seems to waver between a binary masculine identity of a helpless little boy and a violent brute. In both cases his violence is against women, and if we combine this with his status in “Mother” it becomes clear that Pink feels at once like a smothered weakling, and a rage filled bully.

That masculine bully persona reaches its climax when Pink literally sheds his weak and emaciated body to the song “Comfortably Numb” and then enters a Neo-Nazi style rally in his honor to part two of *The Wall*’s opening salvo “In the Flesh” (see Figure 6). Even as a powerful and cultish dictator Pink still seems pale and sickly, and he is surrounded by henchmen who look to be in much better physical condition than he is (Figure 7). Moreover, the degree to which his fame has worn upon him becomes all the more apparent, and perhaps there is something to be said of the kind of toll that the rock-star lifestyle can have on an otherwise sensitive male persona. As a child, young Pink is seen as caring and gentle, writing poems, and caring for a sick rat, even after his harsh mother tells him to abandon the creature. The monstrous transformation that he undergoes is deeply spiteful and based in his perceived failure to live up to the persona of a “true” rock star, who collects women like trophies and lives high above disposable fans.



Figure 6: Pink (Bobby Geldorf) melts away to the song “Comfortably Numb” as he’s dragged to his big gig by roadies. (Source: MGM Studios).



Figure 7: A metamorphosed Pink in his fascist demagogue form. Backing him up is a rally of hyper-masculine skinheads, who will soon unleash violence on the innocent and weak. While it has become a popular icon of Pink Floyd’s fandom, the symbol of the crossed hammers originated in *The Wall* in place of the Nazi swastika. (Source: MGM Studios).

Pink’s concert turned rally becomes very ugly, very quickly. The dictator Pink begins railing about minorities that he wishes to see dragged out from the crowd, opening with the line “Are there any queers in the audience tonight? Get em’ up against the wall!” (Waters) While he does mention other groups such as Jews as specific targets for his fans to attack, the fact that “queers” are the first group to be called out says much about the hyper conservative mindset that Pink is now channeling. He also makes a point of calling out those of the audience who “don’t look right” and implies that those with physical or perhaps medical ailments are to be targeted as well, yelling “and that one’s got spots!” (Waters). Bear in mind that *The Wall* came out as AIDS was just beginning to be recognized as a serious epidemic, at which point it was still considered a strictly homosexual disease, commonly referred to as “gay cancer.” The inclusion of “spots” could be an indicator of visible sickness, and could even be a reference to Kaposi sarcoma lesions, though this is only a hypothesis.

All of these themes factor into the progression of the film to its grisly climax. Pink's tirade lasts into the next two songs "Run Like Hell" and "Waiting for the Worms" as he and his goons proceed to unleash a wave of violence on the community and commit various acts of violence such as lynching several people and looting businesses. At one particularly unpleasant scene during "Run Like Hell" Pink's thugs break into a car containing a black man and his white girlfriend. Pink's thugs drag the man out to be brutally beaten to death, and subsequently rape the girl. This horrific violence shows the most brutal sort of masculine control over a female body, and forcibly places a white male body in place of a black one with no regard for female autonomy. In "Waiting for the Worms", Pink once again calls out to his supporters to commit acts of violence, and in Gerald Scarfe's animated sequences, we see a young baby Pink instantly transform into a full grown Fascist beast, before bashing in the head of a sickly looking man. This hyper-masculine figure attacking weakness, and the fact that Pink calls out for homosexuals (among many other groups) to be put to death to the lyrics "*Would you like to see Britannia rule again?*" makes the violence seem at once hyper-masculine, imperialistic and homophobic. But all of this violence is ultimately shattered, when Pink's masculine façade is undone by his sickly and atrophied interior, as he yells "STOP!" to the horrific maelstrom of violence. What is Water's saying with all of this? His cartoonish violent façade, and the nastiness of its homophobia and bloodlust, is made to show the disastrous effects of a masculine identity that has gone awry. By emphasizing angry, authoritarian bigotry, he says to society "You want a hyper-masculine identity? Here's one times a hundred! You want imperialism? Here is what it yields!" With this Pink criticizes the idea of a masculine, chauvinist state, perhaps led by a woman who was frequently portrayed as being more of a man than any of her political opponents, and functioned as the strict caretaker of the British nation.

Punk Politics and the Evolution of Counterculture

The punk genre provides such a vast array of material for the study of sexuality on American counterculture music that covering it in its entirety would prove impossible in the space of this work. However, the genre itself is important to note based upon some of its fundamental connections to the counterculture sexuality of its predecessors. The punk movement made use of performance as a weapon as well if not better than past generations of counterculture music. According to *Punk and Its Afterlives* by Jayna Brown, Patrick Deer, and Tavia Nyong'o, punk "defined itself through music, dress, and alternative modes of communication (the zine, the flyer, the cassette, small record labels, distribution networks). All were specifically performative expressions of defiance, disobedience, and rebellion." (Brown et. al 2). While this was the case with the hippy and disco movements, punk was something very new because of how it applied to all of those factors.

At its core the punk genre actually owed much to the hippy movement, loath as its followers might have been to admit it: like the American counterculture movements of the 1960s, it represented a general rebellion against the basic norms of society under one general unifying force: rebellion for rebellion sake. Where the hippies wished to melt away the forces of old and evil through peaceful protest, sexual freedom, psychedelic drugs, a wider expansion of self-awareness, and personal realization, punks sought to smash the system to bits with metaphorical (and maybe even physical) aggression. It was an all-out ferocious reincarnation of the universal rebellion that struck the first great blow to the Manufactured American, a counterculture back from its supposed defeat at the end of the 1960s with a new, more bombastic creed. Evidence of this can be seen in James Meredino's 1998 classic *SLC Punk!* which tells the story of self-described anarchist Stevo and his punk tribe living against the grain of the uber-

conservative society of Salt Lake City. Stevo and his friends freak out the local squares, gobble LSD, and distinguish themselves through explosive outward identities. But Stevo makes a point of spitting on the fact that his former hippy-turned-square parents have fallen in line with the system. “I am the future of this great nation,” Stevo taunts, “which you, father, so arrogantly saved this world for! Look, I have my own agenda!” (Meredito)

The origins of punk were foreshadowed in the 1970s rock culture with icons such as Iggy Pop and the Stooges, whose intoxicating sound had a heavily sexualized sense of rebellion to them. Lyrics to songs such as “I Wanna Be Your Dog,” and “Gimme Danger” had a deliberately messy rock and roll sound, and featured lyrics that implied an exploration of strange and outlandish romantic situations, falling back on the defiance of convention that the free-love movement popularized. Iggy Pop’s collaboration with David Bowie produced magically rebellious pre-punk pieces, such as the legendary “Lust for Life” which includes an element of counterculture sexuality in the title alone. The lyrics are just as electric and wild:

Here comes Johnny Yen again

With the liquor and drugs

And the flesh machine

He's gonna do another striptease! (Iggy Pop, Bowie)

The brand of rebellion that Iggy Pop and David Bowie built with lyrics such as these shows a strong visceral sexuality implying exhibition and intercourse, all under the influence of “liquor and drugs.” Also the concept of a male-stripper bends that act of doing a strip tease away from it being purely female. So-called outlandish sexuality is further normalized with the lyrics “*Well*

I'm just a modern guy, Of course I've had it in the ear before", implying (probably sarcastically) that a modern sexualized body will have of course engaged in auditory-erotic behavior. After all, this sexualized music is entering the listener through the ear, and so it could be compared to a form of intercourse.

While punk espoused a wide range of rebellion, it could also be attuned to specialization based around specific themes. Two of the Dead Kennedy's greatest hits, "Holiday in Cambodia" and "Kill the Poor", have strong themes of criticizing global politics, economic inequality, and how those living in comfort are willing and able to turn a blind eye to the barbaric treatment of those who are far away and not readily visible. This specialization of punk's wider rebellion would become a key element in later musical groups' depictions of sexualized rebellion. Later groups would take great inspiration from the showmanship of Iggy Pop and his wild stage performances, when many performers began using their own bodies as equipment to make a statement. This concept of the body as a mobile, active sexualized item, steeped in individual rebellion, would be replicated by countless musical artists, and is still alive and well today.

While some might balk at the idea of Ke\$ha being included in this study alongside counterculture giants such as the Beatles and Nirvana, the type of performance she gives in the song "Dirty Love" definitely fits in with the use of one's body as an empowered sexual force being the center of a stage performance. Her heaving gyrations and intensely sensuous movements, nearly identically mimic Iggy Pop in many ways, not surprising as the two have developed a close relationship in recent years. This use of the body would become even more apparent in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the counterculture music scene gave birth to a new form of rebellion, grunge.

Kurt Cobain and Grunge Sexuality

In attacking the traditional gendered mindset, the American counterculture continued to blend gendered performance with activism. Such was the case for the grunge movement, and its most famous character, Kurt Cobain. Early on, Cobain displayed a sensitivity that would put him at odds with the remnants of the Manufactured American. His father was a blue collar worker, and according to Cobain, had a violent side when it came to disciplining his young son. Though emotional from an early age, most biographers would agree that one of the most significant catalysts for Cobain's angst came from his parents' divorce at age 8. What this represented for him was not the destruction of a moral ideal like the one espoused by the Manufactured American, but a tragedy on the level of an apocalypse, a destruction of one of the few safety nets that he had.

Cobain's angst would manifest itself in a variety of ways, particularly as he became older and began his career in petty delinquency. Cobain's outbursts were often directed at violent masculinity, the kind that Waters ironically lampooned in *The Wall*. He had no tolerance for the thuggery of authoritarian masculinity, attacking not only his own father's chauvinism, but perceived chauvinism in authority figures and cruel masculinity in general. His collected journals, among many other esoteric and bizarre snippets and musings, include the scrawled words such as "May women inherit the earth" and "Your government hates you." (Cobain-Montage of Heck). A particularly glaring critique of heterosexism comes in the form of a comic strip that Cobain drew prior to hitting it big, called "Mr. Moustache" (see Figure 8). In the comic, a muscular mustachioed man, fueled by beer and rage eagerly anticipates the arrival of a new born son whom he hopes will be a "100% pure beef AMERICAN MALE!" whom he cannot wait to teach "to work on CARS and exploit women!" (Cobain 24) Upon placing his head

against his pregnant wife's belly, Mr. Mustache has his head kicked in by his son's leg bursting forth from the wife's uterus (Cobain 24). While the comic strip has only become better known in the past two years due to its appearance in Cobain's collected journals and as an animation in the film *Montage of Heck*, it speaks volumes about his gender politics. Cobain viewed rampant and unchecked masculine aggression with a mix of fear and disgust, something that would help inspire some of his most bitter tunes as he grew more and more popular. Though hesitant to align himself or his band with any larger movement, he displayed an acute sensitivity to matters that touched him on a deep personal level. Small scale, scrapbooked art pieces such as Mr. Moustache, were the visual precursor to the kind of biting lyrics and jagged tunes that would formulate his unforgettable style.

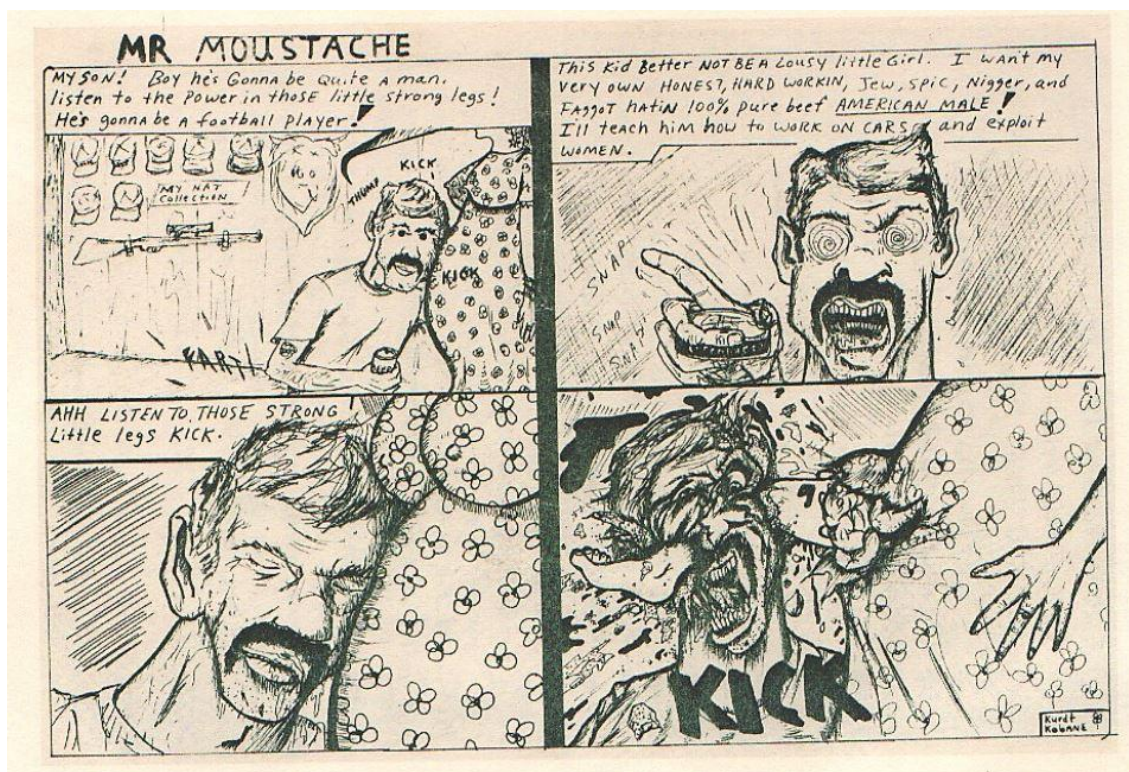


Figure 8: The chauvinistic Mr. Moustache meets a gruesome end in one of Cobain's doodles, pre-Nirvana. Note the psychotic look in Mr. Moustache's eyes in panel 2, as though his masculine fervor is driving him mad. (Source: Kurt Cobain's writings and Journals)

Grunge's main credo was authenticity, and Cobain espoused it better than most. In interviews he was casual and slovenly, giving an air of apathy and at times disdain for his own success, perhaps most obviously at the height of his fame and his turn in the public eye. He claimed that the inspiration for many of his more socially charged pieces came from writing not about particular movements or causes, but about things that angered him personally. This is even more apparent in an overt condemnation of sexism that came in the line notes of Nirvana's 1993 album *Incesticide*, where Cobain wrote: "At this point I have a request for our fans. If any of you in any way hate homosexuals, people of different color, or women, please do this one favor for us - leave us the fuck alone! Don't come to our shows and don't buy our records." (Cobain). In this fashion, Cobain's sensitivities often came into conflict with the mass audience that other rock stars would have pandered to. Statements like this, and incidents like Cobain's on/off feud with Guns N' Roses front man Axel Rose over the latter's perceived chauvinism, could be written off as deliberate attempts from a popular misanthrope to undo his own fame. But when looking at the lyrics to the band's songs that focus on relationships, it becomes more and more apparent that Cobain was a true believer in equality and tolerance.

The contempt shown for the prescribed national standard of sexuality of the Manufactured American is akin to the kind of blatant defiance that Cobain used when inking "Mr. Mustache." One such example can be found in the 1992 music video for the song "In Bloom". The song first appeared in 1991 on the legendary *Nevermind* alongside such classics as "Come As You Are" and "Smells Like Teen Spirit". The music video for "In Bloom" featured a critique of what many grunge fans considered to be the soullessness of capitalist influence on the music industry, and how that influence was said to have muddied the authenticity that grunge touted as its defining feature. Cobain and his bandmates responded with a video littered with

contempt for mainstream fanfare, and did so in a highly gendered fashion. The video opens up to a black and white parody of the Ed Sullivan show, likely intended to mimic the setting in which the Beatles originally made their big debut. An announcer (Doug Llewelyn) cheerfully applauds the last act before welcoming the next act which he describes as “three fine young men from Seattle” and “thoroughly alright and decent fellas,” (Nirvana 1992). Nirvana’s full complement emerges, dressed in proper looking suits and ties, with Kurt Cobain sporting a pair of thick Buddy Holly style glasses. The song of course, does not fit the setting, as prim young girls clad in 1960s dress scream gleefully to cutting lyrics such as “*Sell the kids for food, Weather changes moods*” and “*Spring is here again, Reproductive glands,*” (Nirvana 1991). Then, following the first chorus, Cobain visibly stops playing his guitar and yet the music continues while he aimlessly recites the lyrics to the crowd, who cheer on as though nothing has changed (Figure 9). When the chorus hits again the band members are suddenly wearing dresses and tearing apart the stage, as the song continues and the fans scream with joy (Figure 10). The remainder of the song cuts between the suit clad Nirvana playing music stiffly on an unspoiled stage, and the dress-clad Nirvana dismantling the decorations, knocking down the backdrop, and even miming sex acts with their instruments which includes a moment when Kris Novoselic and Kurt Cobain use their guitars as phallic objects. Perhaps a connection could be made back to Paul McCartney and John Lennon grunting in “Revolution.” Nirvana takes it one step further and actually shows a physical miming of sex, and this time specifically between two men. This can be seen as both a mockery and an homage to classic counterculture rock, as *The Beatles*’ influence on Nirvana was well known. But to be truly different, the next step had to be taken, if only to get more of a shock from the squares.



Figure 9: A fed up Kurt Cobain lets his guitar fall slack, to no visible change from his adoring fans. (Source: Geffen Records, 1992)



Figure 10: Kurt Cobain and his bandmates destroy their variety show stage, clad in dresses. (Source: Geffen Records, 1992)

This act of musical defiance could be seen as merely an attempt for the grunge band to shock the mainstream back into a state of confusion after grunge had become mainstream. But the use of cross-dressing here, and the lyrics of the chorus make it all the more probable to suggest Nirvana's (and most likely, specifically Kurt Cobain's) frustration at the fact that many fans ignored the subtext of Nirvana's messages in favor of enjoying the hypnotic rhythms of the songs. Cobain once again attacks the uber-masculine violence of the Manufactured American with the lyrics "*likes to shoot his gun,*" as though the unnamed subject of Cobain's ridicule would sing such a song as "In Bloom" while hunting or going to a shooting range (Nirvana). Additionally the use of the words "*pretty songs*" alters the perception of the song making grunge's anger and vitriol out to be simple and cute just like the policemen in "I Am the Walrus" when the reality of the musical movement's message was anything but pristine.

Courtney Love and Pussy Riot: The Female Body in Rebellion

Though often blamed as the harbinger for Cobain's final downward spiral, Courtney Love and her band Hole expressed grunge feminism as well as, if not better, than Nirvana. Returning to the tradition of Iggy Pop, Love at times seemed to imagine herself as a living, breathing art piece: Her concert antics of diving into the crowd, while not self-destructive on the same level as some other rock stars, were still notorious for the fact that they put a female body at risk to be pawed by a massive crowd of grungy concert goers already in a moshing fury (see Figure 11).



Figure 11: Courtney Love, donned in skimpy clothing, floats upon a frenzy of grunge concert goers. (Source: [noisy.vice.com-http://noisy.vice.com/blog/happy-birthday-to-the-queen-of-noise](http://noisy.vice.com-blog/happy-birthday-to-the-queen-of-noise).)

On one occasion, Love's antics led to an incident where she was stripped all but naked after jumping into a concert maelstrom clad only in a loose fitting dress (Brite 116). The ethical debate that arose from this act is a strange one, as Love herself took part of the blame for what happened while still noting the repugnance of the idea that she could be taken advantage of in such a way.

A rock musician being stripped naked at a concert was not new, as those familiar with the genre will recall the sideshow antics of short lived punk rocker G.G. Allin, who would not only strip naked but self-mutilate, attack audience members, and even defecate on stage. Allin, a staunch supporter of lethal chaotic violence with a disturbingly permissive attitude towards sexual assault embodied a warped, ultraviolet version of punk rock energy. But in the case of

Love's stage dive, her intentions were far more in tune with the type of listlessness that embodied grunge, and it would prove highly influential in later bands. Where Allin's body was used as an active weapon against those around him, Love's antics used passivity to make a point.

Pussy Riot's recent rise to international notoriety is perhaps the most explosive example of sexualized protest weaponizing the female body. While their music is of course not American, they have managed to join forces with the increasingly powerful American LGBT movement. Although LGBT Americans do not experience the same level of institutionalized oppression as their Russian counterparts, they can certainly feel some sense of international comradeship. Putin is a centralized quasi-Czarist ruler whose power is based in classic Russian despotism and archaic traditional bigotry, which equate homosexuality to pedophilia. But what is also fascinating about his image is that man and policy both embody heteronormativity at its most cartoonish. The photos of Putin during his "leisure time" are open and obvious propaganda, but propaganda of a hyper-masculine nature, because man and country are one and the same. He is supposedly what a man should be, something along the lines of Bronski's thoughts on how Theodore Roosevelt was perceived in his time as what Mr. Moustache would call "the 100% pure beef American male" (Cobain).

I believe the point can be made that Pussy Riot represents a full realization of the kind of discourse that the American left has used to make sexuality the gateway to revolution. One of their most noticeable callbacks to the past is their use of the female body as a weapon in protest. Pussy Riot managed to not only weaponize their own bodies, but do so in a much more explosive fashion, and with much heavier political significance. Courtney Love's stunts were perhaps done at the height of her concerts' frenzies, unplanned up until a few moments before they were executed, though it should be noted that stage diving was a common tradition on the grunge

scene. The activism, to some extent, came afterwards when she spoke out about stage diving, particularly about the incident where she was groped. Pussy Riot takes the concept of putting the female body in jeopardy by coming into contact not with a torrent of out of control fans, but with the authorities of what I will refer to as Putin's "Manufactured Russian" meaning the god fearing, state-loyal, obedient servant to the new Czar. The group has been arrested and brutalized for speaking out against Russia's extremely homophobic laws, the latest of which "proposes fines of between four and five thousand rubles (US\$53-\$66) for 'the public expression of non-traditional sexual relations, manifested in a public demonstration of personal perverted sexual preferences in public places,'" and provides "additional penalty of up to 15 days of administrative arrest" for the demonstration of such preferences in an educational setting (Cooper 2016).

Pussy Riot's protests are tightly connected to the sort of activism seen in the United States in the 1960s: actual laws to fight against, which are backed up by reactionary values propagated by the government. Russia's homophobic bigots have much in common with those who opposed integration in the United States, and adhere to their strict and outdated version of the "way things should be." They fear the ruin of society, and believe that the current model of pushing a marginalized group further and further into obscurity will prevent such a ruin. The situation in Russia of course bears a striking resemblance to the laws that once prohibited homosexuality in the United States, and by relegating speech about homosexual relationships, Putin's government means to do the same thing: Pretend the LGBT community is non-existent, and you force it back into a metaphorical closet, literally putting it out of sight, and thus out of mind. And without a doubt, this barbarism on the part of the Russian government harkens back to the kind of masculine chauvinism parodied by Waters with Pink's fascist persona in *The Wall*.

The notion of state strength being linked to violence and specifically masculine violence, makes for a reasonable comparison between the fictional violence of Pink's concert, and the actual violence facing the LGBT community in Russia, where authorities have nearly literally placed offenders "up against the wall."

Nowhere is Pussy Riot's role as the vanguard of sexualized politics more apparent than in their protest of the Sochi Olympics in the winter of 2014, which became the basis for the music video of their song "Putin Will Teach You How to Love the Motherland." The Sochi Olympics were a show of force for the Russian nation and by extension Putin. They were a means to have the entire planet honor the impressive state that the Russian strongman rules over, making the whole event a celebration of masculine might. Throughout the video the members of Pussy Riot are viciously attacked by Sochi security forces to the repeated lyric "*Putin will teach you to love the Motherland!*" The lyrics that accompany each verse come at a rapid-fire pace but are indicative of the multifaceted nature of Pussy Riot's complaint.

In Russia, the spring can come suddenly

Greetings to the Messiah in the form of a volley from

Aurora, the prosecutor is determined to be rude

He needs resistance, not pretty eyes. (Pussy Riot)

These lyrics use various cultural elements that put Pussy Riot's activism into perspective. Their mention of the Messiah alongside the Aurora makes for a particularly interesting juxtaposition. Pussy Riot is bringing the Aurora—a famed ship from Russia's October Revolution of 1917—into conflict with the "Messiah." The use of the Aurora makes a reference to the beginning of the Bolsheviks' rise to power and their ensuing war against the traditional/conservative forces of the

right wing or “White” Army. Knowing this, the idea of a volley of shells from the Aurora levied against religion (“the Messiah”) makes the threat to Putin’s conservative government seem all the more real and exaggerates to an extreme degree in a form of parody. Pussy Riot also includes the mention of an unnamed “prosecutor,” who demands “resistance” to put down instead of submission. The use of the term “pretty” once again invokes a sense of meekness and delicateness to those being attacked, and implies that they are actually harmless. The prosecutor (presumably Putin) according to Pussy Riot, is an aggressor that for some reason must seek out an otherwise tame subject to harass, make violent, and then put down. He represents an authoritarian, masculine body that must prove its masculinity by demeaning a female body and crushing it by force.

Pussy Riot takes the weaponized female body aspect of protesting to a whole different level with their song “I Can’t Breathe,” which departs from primarily protesting over homophobia and misogyny while ultimately letting larger movements speak for themselves, particularly the “Black Lives Matter” movement. The song itself is a far departure from the kind of high-speed punk rock songs that Pussy Riot is known best for, and instead takes on a very contemplatively ominous tone. The music is slow moving, foreboding, and even a little threatening, all of which contribute to making the listener feel unsafe and departed from their comfort zone. The video features two of the band’s chief members, Nadya Tolokonnikova and Masha Alyokhina, lying still breathing in a shallow grave of black dirt and wearing camouflage military uniforms emblazoned with the word “ОМОУ” (see Figure 12).



Figure 12: Pussy Riot’s lead singers are buried alive in camouflage with the word “OMOH”, as though they are fallen soldiers being stuck in a mass grave. Note that the eyes are some of the first spots to be covered in dirt. (Source: Pussy Riot-
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXctA2BqF9A>).

The lyrics are powerful and haunting, and instill paranoia and foreboding in the listener as they memorialize Eric Garner:

He's become his death

The spark of the riots

That's the way he's blessed

To stay alive. (Pussy Riot)

Each verse is punctuated with the line “*It’s getting dark in New York City*” and “*I need to catch my breath*” until the final verse—a haunting reading of Garner’s last words. Once again, an

individual body is the avatar of bigger things, in this case, resulting from a tragedy. Garner's death could be anyone's and Alyokhina and Tolokonnikova being buried makes a strong bond between those suffering from rampant homophobia in Russia and those suffering racial injustice in America.

Conclusion-It is not dying

While it can be said that the American counterculture music tradition has used sexuality as a rallying point for bigger issues, the ways in which this has been done have differed from decade to decade, and musical group to musical group. First however, I will list a few similarities that keep coming up: The rejection of the old attitude of the Manufactured American is always first and foremost in the work of these artists, even if the rebellion against that mindset varies from blatant protest to decorous aesthetic choices. When comparing the lyrical content of the Beatles to David Bowie, the subject matter of each may seem wholly different. The Beatles radically tackle injustice head on with the quintessential hippy mantra that love is the solution to all of society's problems. Bowie's songs on the other hand, have an abstract and deliberately ethereal tone and avoid blatant political messages. Still the Beatles poking fun at a "*pretty little policemen*" has something in common with the Starman waiting for his young disciples to throw off their parental restrictions. There is a deliberate and benevolent weirdness to each that redefines the meaning of the word and spins it into a positive. Rebellion can be fun and bombastic but also beautiful and composed.

Using the idea of the body or at times one's own as weapon of protest is another common theme in both the lyrics of American counterculture music, and in American counterculture singers themselves. The body to the counterculture American is theirs alone while the model of the Manufactured American demanded control and propriety, the latter of which was used as a

means to attach social stigma to all non-traditional relationships heterosexual or otherwise. To “make love not war” was to politicize the body of course, but it was the first step to taking control of one’s own life and eventually taking on responsibility for the benefits of society as a whole. Singers like the Beatles and Donna Summer did not take this to the same level as Kurt Cobain and Pussy Riot, and David Bowie was probably never violently accosted by a crowd of his own fans or struck by Sochi policemen while donning the guise of Ziggy Stardust, though he suffered attacks of many kinds. There is the common thread of the individual standing before society with an attitude that spoke either literally or figuratively, “come and get me.”

Of course the differences among all of these artists becomes much more apparent when one looks at their respective targets of ridicule. With the Beatles the twin demons of the Vietnam War and the backlash against the civil rights movement make their music and message much more applicable to the times because there were very visible problems of the day to be tackled. Because of this one might be inclined to label them the most important band listed above. But to do that sells short the messages that the other artists included in this examination. Each artist became mired in the troubles of their times and as a result their styles of protest matched their subjects of protest. The most amorphous example of this is most likely Nirvana, because the Grunge movement was built upon dejection and disillusionment with society as a whole, making for a broad target that encompassed more specific problems. In the case of Pussy Riot, a full on amalgamation of liberal causes have found solidarity with a band that began as an obscure band of Russian feminists fighting specific laws and a specific ruler.

At the risk of creating more loose ends, I pose one final assessment of counterculture sexuality and its perpetual state of rebellion. Laura Kacere of *Everyday Feminism* online

magazine speaks of the harmful effects of homonormativity on the current movement for further LGBT rights, especially in American culture. She states:

It addresses assimilation, as well as intersection of corporate interests and consumerism within LGBQ spaces.

It also describes the assumption that queer people want to be a part of the dominant, mainstream, heterosexual culture, and the way in which our society rewards those who do so, identifying them as most worthy and deserving of visibility and rights.

(Kacere)

Surely as was the case with disco and other forms of music from the American counterculture, to be coopted by straight, capitalist, white, clean-cut “decent looking” society would be a terrible fate, one that the counterculture has to some extent fallen to. But in other ways it has remained resistant by way of its purely artistic value. Though it may seem naïve to say so, the raw lyrical, performative, explosive power of counterculture sexuality is that even if it was more controversial at its creation as opposed to today, it still holds the power to shock when placed under close examination and remembered historically. The lyrics of the Beatles, Nirvana, Donna Summer and all the rest, address sexuality boldly. And though their music can be played at family gatherings, or their logos placed on t-shirts, the coopting of these elements into pop culture pieces only serves to hide the fact that they produce explicit, important, and challenging sexually based content. And take for example Pussy Riot, whose very existence is one of sexual protest. Their inclusion in the season three storyline of the Netflix series *House of Cards* may make them more mainstream, but in truth their raw punk sexuality will always be a thorn in the side of Manufactured American society, whatever form it takes on in the coming years. I pose

that in fact, these works have nothing to fear from Homonormativity if loyal fans pay close attention to their deeper meanings.

But what the ultimate legacy of American counterculture music will be is not the complete erasure of conservative society, but an evolution of society itself. The manufactured American is a myth that some still follow—chasing a fantasy of an America so great and terrible it could never have existed at all—but most realize this fallacy. The Cold War is long over and more and more it has become a historical launch pad for critiques of the kind of reactionary stuffiness that a glorious country is capable of when it is scared or angry—not a golden age to be revisited no matter how attractive the concept of atomic hegemony was. The Organization that Whyte described of course remains because we are society built around it for better or worse, and changing its nature to a more humane one will take a long time. But the exact hang ups that once bound the individual to a sterile, packaged model of relationships, sexual identity, and lifestyle are gone, probably forever. The counterculture was not destroyed by the failure of the hippy experiment, or the AIDS epidemic, or the deaths of so many talented individuals. It was not destroyed—period. It absorbed the Manufactured American, changed its composition, made Avant guard mainstream, and placed the American consciousness in a new place of self-realization and individual expression, while keeping the machinery of the Organization. What is to come is, at least to some extent, up to the individual. In the words of the Beatles, it is not dying, and tomorrow never knows.

Bibliography

"1969 Photos." The Beatles Bible. Web. <<http://www.beatlesbible.com/gallery/1969-photos/>>.

All Music. Allmusic.com. Web. <http://www.allmusic.com/album/a-love-trilogy-mw0000612584>

Abba, Arrival "Dancing Queen" Glen Studio 1976 CD.

The Beatles, "Norwegian Wood", *Rubber Soul* EMI Studios, 1965 CD; "Tomorrow Never Knows" *Revolver* EMI Studios, 1966 CD; "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds", "Within You Without You", *Sgt. Peppers' Lonely Hearts Club Band* Palaphone Studios, 1967 CD.

Bowie, David; Osterberg. James Newell, "Lust for Life", *Success*, RCA. 1977 CD.

Bowie, David. "Starman", *Suffragette City*, RCA. 1972 CD, *The Man Who Sold the World*. RCA. 1973 CD.

Brite, Poppy Z. *Courtney Love: The Real Story*. Simon and Schuster, Touchstone. New York 1999.

Bronski, Michael. *A Queer History of the United States*. Boston: Beacon, 2011. Print.

Brown, Jayna; Deer, Patrick; Nyong', Taiva. *Punk and Its Afterlives Introduction*. Social Text 116 • Vol. 31, No. 3 • Fall 2013 DOI 10.1215/01642472-2152900 © 2013 Duke University Pres.

Cobain, Kurt. *Journals* Riverhead Books: A Member of Penguin Putnam INC. New York 2002.

Cooper, Tanya. Human Rights Watch. "Dispatches: Jail Time for Being Gay in Russia"
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/14/dispatches-jail-time-being-gay-russia>

DavidBowie.com (Official Site) <http://www.davidbowie.com/album/hunky-dory>

DeGroot, Gerard, *The Sixties Unplugged* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London England, 2008).

Echols, Alice. *Hot Stuff-Disco and the Remaking of American Culture*. Norton & Company, New York. 2010 Print.

Goldman, Eric F. *The Crucial Decade-And After: America, 1945-1960* Vintage Books: A Division of Random House 1956, 1960. Print.

Hole. "Asking For It". *Live Through This* DGC 1994

Kacere, Laura. "Homonormativity 101: What It Is and How It's Hurting Our Movement." *Everyday Feminism*. 24 Jan. 2015. Web. <http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/01/homonormativity-101/>

Kinser, Jeremy. "EXCLUSIVE: Donna Summer Denied Making Antigay Remarks That Hurt Her Career." *The Advocate*. Web. <http://www.advocate.com/arts-entertainment/music/2012/05/17/exclusive-donna-summer-denies-making-antigay-remarks-hurt-her>

Leonard, Candy. *Beatleness: How the Beatles and Their Fans Remade the World*. Arcade Publishing 2014. Print.

Morgan, Brett. *Cobain: A Montage of Heck*. HBO Documentary Films, 2015

Nirvana, *Incesticide*, DGC. 1992 CD

Nirvana, "In Bloom" 1992 Geffen Records

Parker, Alan (Written by Roger Waters) *Pink Floyd: The Wall*. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer United Kingdom, 1982. Film.

Pussy Riot "I Can't Breathe".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXctA2BqF9A>

Pussy Riot "Putin Will Teach You How to Love".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjI0KYI9gWs>

Stevens, Melissa. "Behind-the-Scenes of Marilyn Monroe's Iconic Flying Skirt (PHOTOS)."

Biography.com. 15 Sept. 2014. Web.

Summer, Donna. "Hot Stuff" Bad Girls. Casablanca 1979

2014 "I Can't Breathe" 2015

Suri, Jeremi, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente*, First Harvard

University Press Paperback edition, 2005. Print.

SLC Punk! Dir. James Meredino. Perf. Matthew Lillard, Michael A. Goorjian, Annabeth Gish.

Sony Pictures, 1998. DVD.

Way, Mish. "HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE QUEEN OF NOISE." *Noisey: Music by Vice*.

Vice.com. Web. <http://noisey.vice.com/blog/happy-birthday-to-the-queen-of-noise>

Whyte, William H. Jr. *The Organization Man*. Simon and Schuster 1956. Print