Gender and Sexuality
in Hard Rock and its Sub Genres

An analysis of image, queerness and the femme fatale idea in glam, sleaze, hair metal and related genres

Vanessa Floréal
Master English 2009-2010
Ghent University

Promoter: Prof. Dr. Gert Buelens

The image above represents the much talked-of American hard rock band KISS in the company of their so beloved women.
Acknowledgements

I would like to show my gratitude to professor Gert Buelens for his interest in my subject matter, his suggestions and the very useful feedback that I have got over the last few months. Without his support this dissertation would not have been possible. I also want to thank Ruben De Baerdemaeker for sharing his thoughts on my ‘pretty glam boys’ and discussing Butler’s *Gender Trouble* with me. ‘Tack så mycket’ to Lisbeth Hellman for helping me out with Freudian and Lacanian theories. I also want to thank Bob Ruysschaert from the KULeuven and Aurora Van Hamme for their comments and advice. Many thanks also go to librarian Mario Floryn from the department of Art, Music and Theatre Sciences at the UGent. I want to thank my friends Sjar and Staffan for their support, and Jon for transcribing some song lyrics for me. Last but not least I thank Liz from Leaded Fuel and Autostrada Outlaws, G.A. Sinn from Cyanide 4, Lizzy from Lizzy Borden and all the guys from Frenchkiss for talking about their music with me. You guys rock hard!
Table of Contents:

0. Introduction 4

1. Gender and Normativity 8
   a. Gender Trouble 9
   b. Masculinity and femininity in Western culture 17
   c. Power relations 25

2. Sexuality in Hard Rock Music 34
   a. What is Sexuality?
      ° Sexology 35
      ° Psychoanalysis 37
      ° A battle of life and death 40
      ° Michel Foucault 42
      ° Following Foucault 43
   b. Expressing sexuality
      ° Sexual explicitness in hard rock lyrics 45
      ° Case study: Dee Snider in court to defend his music 48
      ° Sexual explicitness in the image of hard rock 49

3. Gender, Image and Sexuality 62
   a. Love, lust and the image of women in hard rock
      ° The femme fatale idea 63
      ° Love, lust and murder of passion 72
      ° Female-fronted and all-female hard rock bands 82
   b. Construction of image
      ° Fashion and the construction of identity 87
      ° Women in hard rock bands 100
      ° Contrast between stage image and lyrical content 102
      ° Androgyny and the tendency towards bisexuality 106

4. Conclusion 113

Bibliography 116

Appendix
   ° Lyrics of W.A.S.P.’s album the Crimson Idol
0. Introduction

In this dissertation I would like to tackle hard rock, glam and sleaze music from an angle that has not yet been very widely used to research and discuss hard rock music, namely the angle of gender and sexuality. In the context of hard rock and its sub genres I will be mainly dealing with the glam and sleaze genre. I will discuss these often overlooked musical genres, on which one can for the most part only find fan-based writings such as reviews and biographies, by using gender and queer theory as well as fashion criticism.

The few works that can be found on gender in rock music do not usually discuss hard rock as a separate genre from other sorts of heavy music. Moreover, these works hardly deal with glam rock, and surely not with the genre of sleaze. Simon Reynolds and Joy Press’s book The Sex Revolts\(^1\) for example deals with gender and rebellion in rock and roll, but makes no distinction between sub and related genres of “RnR”. The Sex Revolts deals with glam rock as far as Marc Bolan is concerned, the front-man of the successful glam rock band T.Rex from the 1970’s, who is mentioned on barely two pages in this rather thick book. Glamorous yet sleazy rock bands such as Mötley Crüe, Cinderella or Poison, who were very popular back in the 1980s and still are today, are not even mentioned at all. The popularity of these bands these days can be proven by the fact that Mötley Crüe will be touring Europe and the USA from 31st July till 24th August 2010, even playing in a ‘not so glam rocking’ country as Belgium on 2nd August\(^2\). Also Bret Michaels, the singer for Poison, was in the news as recently as April 2010 when he was rushed to the hospital twice that same month\(^3\). Cinderella will be touring the USA between April and September 2010\(^4\).

One may wonder, why has the hard rock scene been overlooked in several ways for many decades? First and foremost rock music in general has ever since the early days been a way to rebel against and distort the social norms and order. As hard rock music comes across as very powerful and its fans seem to reject decency and social prestige this musical scene is easily seen as a threat to society. As a result both the music and the people following this music’s philosophy were marginalized out of fear for this disturbance. This marginalizing is for the

---

\(^2\) [http://www.motley.com/](http://www.motley.com/)
\(^4\) [http://www.cinderella.net/08_index.html](http://www.cinderella.net/08_index.html)
most part an unwarranted assumption that lives in our society without being explicitly stated. However, a quick search on resources such as the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia or fan-based websites may show the existence of such assumptions. Wikipedia for example states that “the contrast between parental and youth culture exemplified by rock and roll was a recurring source of concern for older generations”\(^5\). Parents were afraid that rock and roll music and its culture would lead their children to delinquency and social rebellion, especially because the rock and roll culture was shared by different racial and social groups. Another issue why hard rock was to be ignored according to some people is because they see these hard rock artists as nothing else but a bunch of long-haired men – usually drunk, stoned or both – singing about women and sex, and thus unworthy of much attention. But according to me it is not quite as simple as that, as I will try to point out in this dissertation.

But why then did I choose to use sexuality and gender theories to approach my material? As we can read in Wikipedia’s article on rock ’n’ roll, American rock and roll songs from the 1950’s described subjects that most listeners could relate to from some point in their lives. Moreover, rock and roll music introduced the subject of sex, which had up to then not been covered in music. From the beginning rock music has tried to break boundaries and express the real emotions that people were feeling, but did not talk about. Rock and roll also gave rise to many other musical styles, such as hard rock, glam rock and heavy metal amongst others. Hard rock songs, especially in the glam and sleaze genre, often have a sexually loaded content. Sex-appeal is part of the image of a band. Their image is created by outrageous stage-clothing, wild hair and make-up. To outsiders this may come across as ‘gay’ or at least ‘queer’. A peek at Wikipedia’s article on glam rock verifies this social assumption. In this article we can read that “the flamboyant costumes and visual styles of glam performers were often camp or androgynous and have been connected with new views of gender roles.”\(^6\)

Another example is in the picture representing the band Poison on page 18. Examples can also be found in discussions on social networking websites such as Facebook, where one could find expressions such as “I NEED METAL: all that gay glam here, I need a dose of good, real MUSIC”\(^7\). However, as we will see, the philosophy of many bands in the genre is that they can get more women looking the way they do on stage. This visual androgynous tendency

---


\(^7\) This line is taken from my friend Suzanne’s Facebook wall on 20th May 2010 when she explained why she was going to Graspop Metal Meeting in Belgium in June. Suzanne is currently living in Stockholm – nowadays the capital of the New Wave of Glam and Sleaze.
was already noticeable in earlier rock bands and glam visuals peaked from the 1970’s onwards with artists such as David Bowie, Roxy Music, New York Dolls and T.Rex. The image of these artists was gendered as queer in a way because they looked more feminine than was expected from a man at that time. Still these artists were sexually straight, by which I mean that they did not out themselves as being homosexuals, and this is also the case with most of the 1980’s hard rock artists that I will be dealing with in this dissertation. However, in the revival of 80’s glam and sleaze there seems to be a tendency towards self-identified bisexuality.

In addition to theories of gender and sexuality I will also use fashion criticism in my approach to hard rock. The first thing that strikes people when seeing a hard rock band or their fans is undeniably their striking appearance and alternative fashion. Because of their outrageous stage-clothing, many hard rock bands may come across as rude, bold and insensitive, which can stand in sharp contrast with the content of ballads and love songs. In that type of songs the male singer seems to take on a more feminine outlook on matters of the heart. The image of glam and sleaze bands takes a special place in the hard rock scene because those glam and sleaze rockers are the ones pushing the limits of heteronormative dress and appearance.

In its essence rock music is a way of withdrawing from mainstream society by means of shocking outfits, explicit lyrics and flirting with gender boundaries as established by our society. On the other hand hard rock musicians confirm society’s stereotypes about gender, for example in the way that they see women as sexual objects and femmes fatales and how they, male rock stars, are out to sleep with as many women as possible. In that perspective they seem to fail in their withdrawal from our western society and remain in a way attached to it as chasing love is not exactly taboo. Also they cannot but use what is accepted in our society in order to poke fun at it by using it in a reversed manner (think for example of men wearing lipstick while performing masculine gender identity). However, the explicit way in which they sing about their sexuality is taboo-breaking and a man’s fantasy of lesbian love is not always too far away.

I will test my hypothesis by reading through the lyrics by different hard rock bands and will in this context mainly be dealing with glam and sleaze bands. When reading through the lyrics I will pay specific attention to the use of imagery and metaphorical language and search for recurrent ideas about sexuality and women.
To analyse the image of the artists in the hard rock scene I will have a look at band pictures and performances in both video clips and live shows and compare the images of the bands among themselves. I will examine how they bring about a shock effect by means of style and clothing, how radiating sex seems to be their aim and how male artists portray themselves and women in the hard rock scene, where the latter are often presented as ‘femmes fatales’.

In the first chapter of my dissertation I will discuss gender roles using Judith Butler’s work on gender and performativity as introduced in *Gender Trouble* and the more discourse-oriented analysis presented in the reader *Language and Masculinity*, edited by Sally Johnson and Ulrike Hanna Meinhof.

The second chapter deals with sexuality and sexual explicitness in both lyrical content and the images on album covers. Psychoanalytic theory (Lacan) will serve me here, as will Foucault’s work on power and representation.

In chapter three I will analyse the image of women in hard rock and its sub genres, and discuss how male rock stars portray women in lyrics, video clips and album covers as well as how women in hard rock portray themselves. I will also compare all-female bands with female-fronted bands and look for recurrent patterns there. This chapter also deals with stage-image and fashion that makes hard rock artists appear as ‘queer’. Valerie Steele’s texts on fetish and fashion will be discussed here and I will also refer to Diane Crane’s work on gender, fashion and identity. Finally, the tendency towards bisexuality will be discussed.
1. Gender and Normativity

Hard rock artists Lisa Dominique (singer) and Pepsi Tate (bass player in Tigertailz, †2007) in hard rock magazine Kerrang around 1990.

Hard rock artists Lisa Dominique (singer) and Pepsi Tate (bass player in Tigertailz, †2007) in hard rock magazine Kerrang around 1990.
1. a. Gender Trouble

According to Sandra Lee Bartky, Judith Butler’s path-breaking work *Gender Trouble* (1990) is accountable for one of the most authoritative attacks on the ‘naturalness’ of gender to date. In her preface to *Gender Trouble* from 1999, Judith Butler explains that she aimed at opening up the field of possibilities for gender and sought to oppose those views that restricted the meaning of ‘gender’ to settled notions of masculinity and femininity. Just like Foucault stated that a binary view is not satisfactory to analyse the complex field of sexuality, so Butler argues in a similar way that the breakdown of the binary view on the notion of gender is not to be avoided. Indeed, that the past distinction between gender and sexuality is blurring and we are now dealing with intertwined fields of research. This does not mean that gender and sexuality are just synonyms, entirely interchangeable. We could consider male and female as the key notions, which are still seen as ‘inborn’ or ‘given’ by society, and masculine and feminine are concepts that could be attributed to either of those key notions. But according to Butler, the notions of male and female are also constructed: society tells us not only to act either in a feminine or masculine way, but also to consider certain physical-material traits significant in differentiating among the group of human beings, and others not. Therefore, Butler states that gender can be rendered ambiguous without disturbing normative sexuality, i.e. a ‘natural’ male and female split. There is no necessary connection between drag and sexual practice: a man acting as a woman does not necessarily (only) have sex with men.

Butler then also explains that, in her wish to counter presumptive heterosexual normativity, she seeks to ‘denaturalise’ gender so that people who do not meet up with society’s heteronormativity can live a ‘normal’ life, without being condemned as social outcasts. Many hard rock artists and fans have throughout the years been turned into social outcasts as well, although this had nothing to do with their deviant sexual orientation, but everything with their visible rejection of heteronormative attire and appearance. Using Butler’s theory, we could say that these artists were ostracized for failing to conform to heteronormative imperatives. They look androgynous, therefore society assumes that they must be ‘queer’, i.e. either gay or bisexual, or worse. However, Butler questions such presumptive links between gender looks and sexual orientation. And indeed, what many male artists within the minority group of the glam and sleaze rock scene do is use their drag, which is generally perceived as a hypergay

---

image by our society, to be attractive to women who approve of their rebelliousness and counternormativity. That way their rebellious behaviour towards heteronormative society is rewarded. This attractiveness is mainly aimed at women within the hard rock scene and not at the majority of the population: the majority of women would not be attracted to gay-looking rockers whereas women in the hard rock scene would be attracted to effeminate rockers but not to a man who is just gay. Consequently, the glam or sleaze look has nothing to do with displaying softness or tenderness but mainly with breaking or toying with rules. The ‘hypergay’ image of glam and sleaze rockers is a parody, but it is not meant to make gay men look ridiculous. According to Butler, gay men would not present themselves so boldly anyway.

Judith Butler then turns to the discussion of drag and mentions how we often observe the way people dress in our society in a heteronormative way – think of expressions such as a man dressed as a woman, or a woman dressed as a man. We take the first term of the simile for the ‘reality’ of gender, but this gender ‘lacks’ reality and thus a misleading appearance is created. When analysing how many rockers in the glam and sleaze genre dress, I will be dealing with men dressed ‘as women’, referring to the cross-dressing tendencies – almost exclusively by guys – in the scene. The image of some male glam and sleaze rockers can be taken to such extremes that one may wonder for a moment if they might perhaps be girls, and it certainly gives rise to the mystery of their sexual orientation. According to Butler, it is here that the reality of gender is put into crisis, because what is real and unreal becomes unclear due to our ‘naturalized’ knowledge of gender. The point of her text is then to illustrate that this naturalized knowledge of ‘gender norms’ is in its essence a violent description of gender reality. The fact is that, by means of prohibitive rules in order to make gender comprehensible, gender norms establish what is and is not acceptable or to be considered as ‘real’ in our culture. What many artists, and consequently their fans, in the hard rock scene (and in particular in the highly style-driven glam and sleaze genre) seem to do is transgress these compulsory heterosexual norms of acceptability in an act of rebellion against those prescribed boundaries of ‘what is male and female’ in Western society. However, they also need these compulsory norms in order to perform their rebellion and consequently it is quite striking how they cannot truly escape from these boundaries. For example, if they want to (hyper)perform masculinity they do so in a way that is generally considered to be feminine. Examples of men who hyperperform masculinity are the actor John Wayne (†1979), who often played the role of a macho cowboy in western movies, or Motörhead’s frontman
Lemmy Kilmister. However, the image of glam and sleaze rockers is very different. One could note that these hard rockers look like the male version of a femme fatale as their ‘queer’ image combines feminine features – such as make-up and jewellery – with (playful) darkness. Gender subversion is in this context used as a way to shock people. The ‘queer’ image of these rock stars is a mixture of homo- and heterosexual features that does not want to be pinned down.

In rebelling against society’s prescriptions these hard rockers also provide this society with the following message as sung of by the American glam band Cinderella: “If you don’t like it, hit the road ‘cause I just-just-just don’t care!” Ironically, as they are rebelling against norms of acceptability, they do care what other people think – this is why they rebel against normativity in the first place. They want to test how far they have to go before people are shocked. They want to point out how ridiculous certain ‘rules’ are and for this they cannot but work with the generally accepted norms. Judith Butler looks at acts of subversion rather than acts of rebellion, but in the context of hard rock these acts work in similar ways. They are parodic acts that make society aware of its ridiculous regulations and assumptions. As mentioned before, the glam and sleaze look is not meant to poke fun at gay men, but is a rebellious means to attract a certain type of woman – or in the case of female rockers, to attract that certain type of man in the glam and sleaze scene.
Butler winds up the preface to the second edition of *Gender Trouble* explaining her view on the concept of performativity, which she derives from speech-act theory. According to her, gender is performance; it is a bodily act with linguistic consequences and it thus contains both linguistic and theatrical dimensions. In connection to this view Butler presents the following question: is gender something that we ‘have’ or something that we ‘are’? Butler points out that feminist authors tend to claim that gender is constructed by our culture, and in that respect we would merely carry out a cultural law. But the way that Simone de Beauvoir states it, there is an agent involved who could in fact take on another gender. This suggests that gender is in a way ambiguous and a matter of choice. De Beauvoir claims that becoming a woman involves cultural compulsion, but nowhere does she state that the person becoming a woman is necessarily female. Going further in the same vein, some theorists, such as Wittig, would conclude that there is only one gender, that is to say the feminine. Masculine is not a gender because it is the general, and consequently only the feminine is marked. Going back now to Butler and her initial question, it is her opinion that gender is acted out by conscious agents, or to say it with Deborah Cameron’s words: men and women are active producers rather than passive reproducers of gender behaviour. Gender is not something that we are or have, it is an effect that we create by the things we do. These repeated acts are displays of gender and in their turn produce cultural norms of masculinity and femininity. Also in “Performing Gender Identity”, Deborah Cameron adds that as these cultural norms are historically and socially constructed they are inevitably variable and they have to be constantly reaffirmed, or as Butler puts it: ‘gender is the repeated stylisation of the body’. This also explains why after several decades the appearance and attire of several sub cultures – of which the hard rock scene and its sub scenes is only one group – is still being exploited and in some cases even reinvented to counter those particular aspects that have become more acceptable over the years.

In the second chapter of *Gender Trouble* Butler explains the Lacanian view on the concept of the phallus, which I will also describe when discussing the contribution of psychoanalysis to the development of sexuality in the next chapter of my dissertation. Butler describes how according to Lacan ‘being’ and ‘having’ the phallus define sexual positions or non-positions.

---


‘Being’ the phallus implies being the signifier of desire of the other, and thus being the object, representing the other’s desire. If a woman ‘is’ the phallus, then she is the expression of phallic power and she thus confirms the power of the male subject, who ‘has’ the phallus. She appears to be the extension of his phallic masculinity. Christianity surely promotes the objectification of women in our culture, as according to the Old Testament God created Eve out of Adam’s rib. She is thus a part of him and consequently an object – his object.

The exclusive positions of ‘having’ the phallus for men and ‘being’ the phallus for women provide cultural intelligibility, again by means of compulsory norms. But to render men the position of the subject and women that of the object does not mean that women become insignificant at all. The object’s role is to reassure the subject of the power of his masculinity and to construct his illusory autonomy. This important role of women in constructing this autonomy is at the basis of the subject’s dependency on the object of his desire. The objectification of women is a very recurrent theme in both music and dance, and not least in hard rock and heavy metal songs which often thrive on sexual connotation, as will be discussed later on in this dissertation. Moreover, male hard rock artists tend to make their desire for a woman – or several women – pretty much explicit, but also female artists express their desire, be it usually in a less explicit manner.

Lemmy Kilmister, singer and bass player for the heavy metal band Motörhead, with rock ‘n’ roll singer Lisa Dominique around 1990.
Lacan then argues that the positions provided by ‘being’ or ‘having’ the phallus lean on nothing but a comedic failure. Consequently, a woman ‘is’ not the phallus, she only ‘appears to be’ and according to Lacan this is done by means of masquerade. As women are said not to have the phallus, this lack needs to be masked. Lacan’s idea of the masquerade involves two things, namely on the one hand that if her being is nothing but appearing, then every form of being is nothing but appearance, and on the other hand masquerade suggests that there is a pre-existing feminine being underneath that mask. To this Luce Irigaray then responds that “the masquerade is what women do in order to participate in man’s desire, but at the cost of giving up her own.”

The former part of this quotation points out that there is a slippery distinction between ‘appearing’ and ‘being’, while the latter part would then suggest that there is a feminine desire to be unmasked; a desire that has been constantly suppressed by society’s omnipresent phallocentrism. But then what is it exactly that is masked? Here Butler draws on an essay by Joan Riviere, titled “Womanliness as a Masquerade”, published in 1929. Riviere wrote that in everyday life both men and women cross paths with people that display features of the opposite sex, but according to Butler this does not imply homosexuality in the sense of sexual orientation. The masked woman has a wish for masculine identification; a wish for recognition of being a man’s equal. Just as in Lacan, the notion of lesbian as it is meant here has an asexual position and does not refer to sexual orientation. It may be fruitful to apply this approach to the idea of men who display femininity in glam rock. Is this a similar kind of masquerade that theorists like Lacan and Riviere refer to? Is the glam and sleaze rock masquerade then a reversal of Riviere’s concept, and thus a man’s attempt to be woman’s equal; a wish to be the display of sexual desire himself – hers, his or both? The fact that these rock stars look androgynous does not necessarily imply that they are homosexual in their orientation. However, in the case of the revival of 80’s glam and sleaze in the 2000’s there is a notable tendency in certain of these new bands towards bisexual orientation – whether this is reality or merely an act is not very clear as these artists seem to hold up the mystery about their orientation, sometimes pretending not to know whether they are hetero-, bi- or homosexual. We could thus state that their image is queer to the extent that they display an unidentified fluid orientation that does not want to be pinned down. I will come back to this issue in the section on the construction of image in the third chapter.

---

In the second chapter of *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler also advances Freud’s view on bisexuality – in which there is no homosexuality involved, but rather a combination of two heterosexual desires within one person. According to Freud every human being is in his or her origin bisexual. Boys and girls who have a ‘normal’ childhood will learn that they have to repress same-sex desire in adult life and consequently, only opposites attract. Freud does not deny the existence of adult bisexual desire, but in his opinion bisexuality is nothing but a psychological neurosis\(^\text{13}\). Although not exactly pursuing Freud’s thesis on the matter, a similar view on bisexuality will be put forward in Otto Weiniger’s idea of ‘living in a permanent bisexual condition’ which I will explain in the section on sexology in the second chapter of this dissertation. But going back now to Freud’s concept of bisexuality, I suppose that indeed there is a dynamics between the masculine and the feminine in each and single one of us and it is by means of other people’s displays of gender norms that we create our own notion of gender that we would like to present to the world. We can either choose to conform to these norms, or counter them in an attempt to be cut loose and free from society’s prevailing normativity. Whether this is only done appearance-wise, or also sexual orientation-wise is in my opinion a matter of personal choice. The fact that looking gay is still being associated with practically being homosexual says a lot about the society that we live in. Today the spirit of the times is still too much attached to the prevailing gender norms as established by our Western culture so that the majority of people leave no room for a different interpretation of gendered appearances. Of course no one could deny that a binary view on gender is the easier way out to make our daily environment comprehensible. This ideological binary scale interprets gender as a social division but also makes society perceive gendered behaviour according to those binary norms. This is also why those male artists in hard rock, glam and sleaze bands – with their wild hair, eyeliner, lipstick, nail polish and eccentric outfits – and with them their fans are to this day still perceived as homosexuals by many outsiders; or also by insiders even, as far as artists and fans of other rock and metal genres are concerned who at times tend to mock those glam guys with their ‘poofy’ appearance.

In the third chapter of Butler’s *Gender Trouble*, Foucault’s path-breaking *History of Sexuality* is discussed. As I will elaborate on Foucault’s work as discussed by Joseph Bristow in the next chapter on Sexuality, I will leave it at this as far as Judith Butler’s work *Gender Trouble* is concerned. The key point that I take from Judith Butler is that we should not make a clear-

\(^{13}\) http://www.glbtiq.com/social-sciences/bisex.html
cut distinction between gender and sexuality, as I hope to have proven through reference within this excerpt to other parts that supposedly deal with sexuality instead of gender in this dissertation. Besides, as the artists in the musical scene that I am dealing with are mainly men, it is important to take masculinity into account, and not just femininity. In the introduction to *Language and Masculinity*¹⁴, Ulrike Hanna Meinhof and Sally Johnson explain that in both mainstream and feminist writings many aspects of male behaviour and speech have for a long time retained the status of the ‘unproblematized norm’ and social change remained a female accomplishment. Therefore academic literature focused mainly on female speech and behaviour and tried to explain it in relation to men. As Vivian de Klerk states in “The Role of Expletives in the Construction of Masculinity”, “masculinity does not exist in isolation from femininity – it will always be an expression of the current image men have of themselves in relation to women”¹⁵. Consequently, I agree with Ulrike Meinhof and Sally Johnson that problematizing masculinity is an interesting angle to approach gender. The next part of this chapter will therefore mainly deal with the adjusted view on gender relations as it appeared in the reader *Language and Masculinity*, published in 1997 and edited by Meinhof and Johnson.

---


1. b. Masculinity and femininity in our culture

In “Theorizing Language and Masculinity”¹⁶, Sally Johnson claims that by the time she was writing her essay masculinity had not been thoroughly studied yet and the notion of male dominance still seemed to be taken for granted. For too long, gender studies has been associated with the study of women, thus signalling that women are in greater need of being studied than men. But in Johnson’s opinion, men could be victims of society’s hegemonic masculine dominance as well. She remarks that gender roles do not only put pressure on women, denying them to freely express their needs and desires, it puts the same pressure on men in our society. Men can, just like women, feel intimidated by the competitive masculine ethos in our Western society. Moreover, quoting Seidler¹⁷, it is due to the patriarchal society’s pressure that men feel that they are supposed to be rational and unemotional. We could consequently argue that, because of this opposition of the rational and the emotional, gender becomes constructed by the society that we live in, as is also stated by both Johnson and Butler. Being masculine would thus imply that men are unable to express their feelings with the same distinctness as women can. The consequence of this would then be that in artistic spheres, where a man could express himself as an emotional being, his creativity would easily be associated with effeminacy or queerness. Johnson states that there is nothing that prevents men from changing this binary view on gender roles in our society, but the reality is that many are afraid to lose the privileges given to men within a patriarchal society. This idea creates an image of an at first sight rational male who is hiding his emotional self from society, perhaps waiting for his humanized environment – or as Sally Johnson suggests: read ‘women’ – to uncover his masked emotionality. Maybe this could explain why in a rebellious genre such as hard rock (of which the listeners, both male and female, have always easily been designated as rude and uncaring, and consequently as unemotional by outsiders, mainly because of their image) male artists tended to appear more and more feminine as the genre developed into several sub genres throughout several decades, with glam rock becoming the most effeminate style of them all. By looking more and more feminine these hard rockers distance themselves from the rational/emotional dichotomy and consequently their message would run as follows; that it is not forbidden for a (heterosexual) man to be emotional at times, and that with their effeminate look they seek to reject gender roles as imposed by society without necessarily being gay. This concept makes room for new forms of

masculinity, and therefore the socially constructed notion of masculinity needs to be deconstructed.

I thus agree with Sally Johnson that there is more than one kind of a man, and in order to uncover these different masculinities we should distance ourselves from the idea of there being only one single form of masculinity. As gender is socially constructed and contextualized there must be room for fluidity within masculinity. Similarly, feminist theories have pointed out that there is a diversity of femininity according to class, race and sexuality. The concepts of masculinity and femininity are thus not straightforward oppositions, and what men say or do is not merely a mirror image of what we understand by femininity. In fact, masculinity and femininity are mutual constructs rather than opposites. To explain this, Sally Johnson draws in Lacan’s phallus theory in a similar way as Judith Butler (see above). Johnson states that women have traditionally been seen as ‘minus male’, but what has been overlooked is that men are dependent on women in order to confirm their masculinity. Still we perceive masculine and feminine as essentially different, but their relationship is dialectical. Men are in constant need of demonstrating their contrast to femininity in order to bear out their masculinity. Therefore Johnson states that gender roles are not fixed or static, thereby claiming that gender roles are not characteristics or social roles that we learn as we grow up but ongoing social processes in our lives, and as a result gender is a ‘verb’ that can be performed in every social situation. Consequently, according to Arthur Brittan, every social situation is an occasion for identity work. Gender is thus a series of practises and becomes a sort of culture on its own and within this culture we perceive what is and what is not appropriate for one sex or the other, be it language or conduct. These gender expectations also create our opinions about how men on the one hand and women on the other are supposed to dress. These opinions and values are not usually openly asserted but simply taken for granted. So when male artists in the hard rock scene dress in a feminine way, they are doing identity work and they are crossing society’s gender expectations. But however feminine they may look, they still remain masculine to the extent of lyrical content. In general, the way they sing about women still shows how they construct their dominance as the desiring subject and the women remain objects of desire. Among the most effeminate-looking bands in glam rock we can for example count New York Dolls, Pretty Boy Floyd and Tigertailz. Notwithstanding their queer looks, they make their heterosexual desire very clear.

---

in their lyrics. An example to illustrate this is taken from another band. I hereby include the lyrics from ‘I Want Action’ by Poison.

Long legs and short skirts, these girls hit me where it hurts
I can’t wait to get my hands on them, I won’t give up till they give in
Now I’m not looking for a love that lasts, I need a shot and I need it fast
If I can’t have her, I’ll take her and make her

The image above shows the band Poison in the 1980s
From left to right:
Bobby Dall (bass), Rikki Rocket (drums), C.C. Deville (guitar), Bret Michaels (lead vocals)

In “Performing Gender Identity”, Deborah Cameron outlines the stereotypical notions of men’s and women’s talk. Men’s and women’s speech are usually organized as oppositions of competition and cooperation, status and intimacy, report talk and rapport talk. However, the use of these conventional oppositions is at some point problematic because we tend to fixate on the speaker’s gender, which causes us to predestine our interpretation of what is being said. We thus have to be careful according to Cameron not to categorize men engaging in conventional women’s talk or behaviour as ‘feminine’. As men and women are not living on different planets, they can learn a broader set of gender roles and out of those they can produce their own behaviour to perform gender. If we keep that notion in mind the use of gender stereotypes is nevertheless a useful way of analysis.
In order to discuss male and female roles in our society Jennifer Coates makes use of the conventional oppositions as described by Deborah Cameron. Coates states that ‘women tend to interact in ways which will maintain and increase solidarity, while (especially in formal contexts) men tend to interact in ways which will maintain and increase their power and status’\(^\text{19}\). Indeed hard rock and its related genres are styles that are very high on radiating power, but not only men want to obtain it. Women in hard rock also come across as powerful. They stand up for themselves and are able to defend themselves when necessary. This forms a sharp contrast with the general normative idea of women standing in a horizontal relationship with each other and striving for equality with other females. Just like what is to be usually expected from males, these women are competitive and dominant towards the world and the people around them.

In a way these women in the hard rock scene remind of the gypsy girl Carmen in Bizet’s opera of 1874; they are brutally honest women with a free spirit that, together with the men in hard rock, create a sharp contrast with the tight-lipped upper-class people in our society who set up social rules, values and prohibitions for the rest of us. From this we can thus conclude that ‘popular music’, and consequently hard rock, is a function of both gender struggle and class struggle. Moreover, as stated by William Washabaugh in “Music, Dance and the Politics of Passion”, ‘music was the only and proper form of religion once religion itself had been discredited’\(^\text{20}\). When music takes the place of religion, this also implies that music becomes accessible, as is the case with religion, to all ranges of the population. This includes that the marginalized and downtrodden communities got access to power, wealth and fame as well as the possibility to become emotionally rich through music.

An example of how a boy from a middle-class family works his way up into the music business to become a wealthy rock star is to be found in W.A.S.P.’s album *the Crimson Idol*, which tells the story of Jonathon, a teenage boy from a broken family who runs away from home after his elder brother, his parents’ favourite son, died in a head-on collision. On his lonely journey towards the top he also encounters a mysterious gypsy woman who wants to look into his future. She tells him to be careful what he wishes for, for it may come true. By telling him this, she is already predicting the flip side of his success: his downfall when the


crowds are gone. When he is at the peak of his career he realises that he misses love as well as his family. He did them wrong by running away and never giving them a sign of life anymore or letting them know that he has made it in the music industry. He then decides to call his parents after another wild night of chicks, booze, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll. His mother answers the phone, but all she has to say to him is: “We have no son”. It is here that he comes to realize that his acts of rebellion have led to a tragic life, a life without real love and without a family to take care of him when he needs someone. The complete text of the album is included in the appendix section at the end of this dissertation. Another example of the downside of working yourself up to become part of the rich group of people is to be found in Uncle Sam’s ‘Dreams of Money’.

Pull the shades and blind me babe, take a trip with me
Give it all up for the money
Money changes people, cities split in half
Money changes people and the laughs never last

Women in hard rock could be said to come across as masculine in their behaviour because they seem to radiate power over solidarity. This would mean that we have to do with gender transgressiveness as described by Jeffrey Tobin in “Tango and the Scandal of Homosocial Desire”. If the woman in hard rock is a masculine woman, independent from her man and capable of defending herself, then we also have to do with a feminine man who is concerned with his ‘dandyesque’ appearance\textsuperscript{21}. Indeed, for many hard rock bands the looks are very important and especially in the glam and sleaze genre we can come across several bands whose image could be said to remind of dandyism.

\textit{Alice Cooper sometimes appears as a dandyesque rock star on stage with tailcoat, top hat and walking cane.}

On Wikipedia we can read that the dandy or beau from the late 18th and early 19th century was very concerned with his physical appearance. The dandies created a ‘cult of the self’ and consequently they had a big ego. Their aim was dressing up to impress as many women as possible by imitating the image of the aristocratic upper-class, even though they usually grew up in middle-class families themselves. When we compare this to men in the hard rock scene, and foremost in the glam scene, we come across the same ideas about appearance, impressing women and of course their ego. A striking example of this ego is to be found in a song by Amaze Me, titled ‘God’s Gift To Woman’, in which the title of the song reflects the way the guys in the band think about themselves. In this song the rockers’ vanity is also displayed in the line “Every time I see myself in the mirror I fall in love”.

The way glam, sleaze and hard rockers dress is not exactly that of a dandy, but the philosophy behind it remains the same: they dress to impress, and in doing so they look pretty much eccentric. As these men place so much importance upon their looks, they easily come across as vain. As vanity about clothing is a typical feminine feature in our Western society, these artists could consequently easily be seen as queers. One example of how vain glam rockers can be, especially when it comes to their hairdos, is shown in the lyrics of ‘Don’t mess with my hair’ by Jet Boy:

I’m walking down the street tonight and my hair is standing high
Took me an hour just to get outside, had to wait till the fucking spray was dry
Every time I go in public someone comes along and has to have a feel
Why can’t they keep their hands to themselves, they gotta find out if it’s real
Don’t mess with my hair, don’t mess with my hair
You better just be beware if you fuck with my hair

A remarkable dissimilarity with the dandy’s lifestyle in 18th and 19th century Britain lies in the pursuit of love and sexual desire. For the perfect dandy this was something that was not done, but for the members in hard rock bands it appears to be one of their favourite pastimes. Moreover, their pursuit of sexual desire is one way of radiating a certain power. In contesting society’s taboo on sex, especially the taboo of ever-varying sexual relations, they create a powerful individualistic identity which may come across as a threat to society. The same could be said about their image and the way they dress, which to many comes across as indecent and outrageous. This is also a resistance to society’s ‘dress code’ and it can in the same way come across as threatening to outsiders. Actually there has always been a strong sense of rebellion against culturally instituted norms in most kinds of rock music. Rebellion against these norms is clearly stated in several songs by CrashDïet, a Swedish band who heralded the new wave of sleaze in the 2000’s. After a period of time where glam and sleaze was completely out of the picture, they came – to put it in their own words – ‘Straight Outta Hell’ and marked the revival of the 80s hair metal. Their rebellion against social norms is especially manifest in songs such as ‘Knokk ‘Em Down’ and ‘Riot In Everyone’. For example, the lyrics of the latter go as follows:

They say you should live as you are told to
I say you gotta be strong and make up your own mind
Be yourself, not a puppet in their freak show
Coz that’s the way you’ll end up when they beat you blind
Won’t take shit for no one, never played by the rules
Coz we’re the kids of the underground
[...] Our time, our ways, we’re the wasted generation
Our life we pay with our nasty reputation
We will always be living free, always on top of our misery
To live hard is a luxury, and to die of our prophecy

The second part of the lyrics as transcribed above gives rise to another reason why these hard rockers come across as frightening towards society, namely the fact that they want to live free
and independent from society’s rules. The fact that this gives them a bad reputation is to them just another conquest over a socially established regimen. The lower they sink in society’s opinion, the higher they rise in their very own underground scene. The very same idea is also present in the film *Easy Rider*, which dates from 1969. *Easy Rider* was one of the very first films that raised the matter of a protesting youth culture. This road movie tells the story of two long-haired bikers travelling across the United States of America on their choppers in search for freedom. Because of their long hair and outrageous clothing they strike people with dread and aversion. On their trip they meet a lawyer who also appears to be the ‘local drunk’. This lawyer observes that Americans talk a lot about freedom, but that they are afraid of people who furnish proof that real freedom can truly be achieved. At the end of the story, the two bikers cross paths with a pickup truck on the highway. The men in the truck mock them and one of them is pretending to shoot the bikers down, whereupon one of the bikers shows him the middle finger. This reaction enrages the men in the truck and they shoot the biker, who gets a mortal wound. As his companion want to go and get help, he also gets shot by one of the men in the pickup truck, who want to clear him away because he is a witness. And so the two bikers pay for their urge for freedom not only with their nasty reputation, but also with their lives.

Another act of rebellion against instituted norms is visible in the spelling used in glam and sleaze rock song titles. This is not only the case with present-day bands such CrashDïet, but also with bands from the 1980s, for example Tigertailz, where not only the song titles contained ‘spelling mistakes’ but also the band name itself. Most present-day glam rock bands use ‘spelling mistakes’ to make their band name stand out and appeal to their new and younger audience. It seems that in recent years the genres of glam and sleaze, which have been very underground for many years, have found their way back to the surface of our Western society.
1. c. Power relations

As mentioned already in the previous section of this chapter, both men and women in hard rock and its sub genres come across as dominant and powerful, which can have an intimidating effect on outsiders to this subculture. In her contribution to Meinhof and Johnson’s reader on Language and Masculinity, Vivian de Klerk wants to show us, by means of analysing attitudes towards gender-related use of expletives, that power relations between the sexes are changing. De Klerk states that biology predisposes but it does not predetermine. This implies that different kinds of both men and women can be developed in interaction with social environments. As mentioned already in the previous section of this chapter this is also how Sally Johnson looks at this matter. Our Western society tends to observe the male as the strong and the female as the docile gender. However, that same society underlines that men are not supposed to show docility; they have to be a man – they should not cry and have to be tough. This would imply that men have the option to choose between being hard or soft as they grow up. However, the equivalent choice is not usually mentioned for women.

It is generally accepted in our Western culture that ‘to be a man’ carries stereotypical features with it, such as dominance, power, challenge and being direct. When we transfer this pattern into the hard rock scene, one would soon enough observe that these masculine notions also hold good for women. Of course one could easily find powerful and dominant women outside the world of hard rock and heavy metal too. Similar to Sally Johnson’s view, Vivian de Klerk notes that linguistic styles, such as powerful speech, are nothing but options and thus they are only meaningful within given social circumstances. Consequently, dominance and powerful speech are more than just typical male features. De Klerk then brings in Kreckel’s theories, stating that there is a potential to change normative interaction when males and females with different norms or conventions come together. The discourse of these groups can be seen as representing a ‘social power struggle’, which may lead to change in discourse, but also in social and cultural domains. This is exactly what one could observe in the sub culture of hard rock and its sub genres; think for example of the road movie Easy Rider through which a manifesting youth culture found a way to express their urge for social change. The music used

---


in this film is mainly early hard rock by bands such as the Jimi Hendrix Experience and Steppenwolf representing a ‘counter-culture’; and this is what hard rock bands have kept doing until today. Vivian de Klerk notes that in order to participate appropriately in our community we tend to stick to the ‘common sense’ of communication. This reinforces existing norms and power relations and consequently we limit the potential for change. Her question is then if the use of expletives is an indication of power and masculinity, and to what extent the ‘common norms’ are accepted by all the members of a community.

De Klerk states that the majority of the middle and upper classes in our society perceive swearwords, slang and taboo subjects as unacceptable. These days slang is coming closer to the acceptable range of words, but taboo subjects such as sacred beliefs, excretion and sex are still regarded as unacceptable in most societies. De Klerk observes that in Western cultures the functions of expletives are complex. Expletives are an extreme form of slang and they are typically used to break norms, to shock people, to show disrespect for authority or to be witty.
Moreover, the use of expletives is an act of daring to violate a certain ‘code’ and it reinforces ‘group membership’ as it is a sign of shared interest. Because of their norm-breaking character, expletives have become associated with the expression of power and masculinity in Western cultures in which men’s language is generally perceived as coarser and more direct than women’s. According to De Klerk, this indicates the existence of the stereotyped norm that “nice girls don’t swear but nice boys can (and ought to?)”. As already mentioned in the section 1.b, men could, just like women, feel intimidated by the pressure to live up to society’s expectations about their behaviour. Men feel in a way obliged to use expletives because this would display their masculinity – that they are strong and powerful – and conform to society’s expectations about ‘being a man’. Again this shows how male hard rock artists singing about taboo subjects (such as sex or excess drinking) fail to break with society’s norms: in order to break the ‘rules’ they cannot but apply certain generally accepted norms. Of course not everyone conforms to these hegemonic norms and De Klerk observes that with shifts in power, norms and habits of expletive usage are being challenged. Studies dating from the 1970s, for example by Oliver and Rubin, Bailey and Timm and Staley have indicated that there is a growing resistance by women to stereotyped norms regarding the use of expletives representing masculinity.

For her study, De Klerk compared responses by a group of adolescents, both boys and girls aged between 12 and 18, to ten different situations in which the use of expletives could occur. She remarks that even though most of these adolescents perceived that the use of expletives is more acceptable for males than females, it is notable that by comparison with the gender stereotype the female scores are significantly higher than one would generally expect. This shows that not everyone wants to accept and follow society’s conventional gender norms. De Klerk adds however that the girls in her study tended to reveal a small measure of guilt and self-condemnation vis-à-vis their use of expletives. Similarly, women in hard rock bands will use less expletives than male artists. I will come back to this point when discussing the status of women in all-female and female-fronted hard rock bands in the third chapter.

Following Connell\textsuperscript{27}, De Klerk then explains that the social construction of masculinity is not a simple re-enactment of a pre-existing norm. She remarks – similarly to Sally Johnson and Arthur Brittan as seen in excerpt 1.b above – that gender identity is accomplished by ‘doing’ gender in social situations and consequently we can no longer perceive the distinction between gender roles as clear-cut. Even though we take certain stereotypes about gender roles for granted, we are always in the business of creating our own sense of gender identities. De Klerk’s study shows us that gender role theory cannot account for the current use of expletives to display masculinity and that there is a flexible role challenge between the two gender groups. She notes that “each individual must go through the process of working out for him- or herself whether expletives suit his or her image”. The use of expletives to break society’s ‘rules’ and thereby make an anti-authoritarian statement clearly suits the tough image of hard rock bands, whether it concerns males or females. Also, as stated before, the use of expletives creates a social bond of shared interests. This creates a group membership and connects the men and the women within one scene. De Klerk winds up her study noting that the use of expletives should no longer be regarded as a way to display masculinity, but rather a means to symbolize power more generally and equally available to both gender groups. She adds that the gap between the two gender groups is closing and that new ways of doing masculinity are needed if gender division is to be maintained. Indeed, in hard rock bands consisting of both male and female artists, there is no clear-cut distinction between what is feminine and masculine. Even though the female artists in mixed-gender bands look quite feminine, they could be perceived as ‘one of the boys’ as far as their gender roles and behaviour is concerned. Again, this notion will be elaborated on in the third chapter of this dissertation.

As Vivian De Klerk mentions in “The Role of Expletives in the Construction of Masculinity”, sex remains a taboo subject in many cultures. From this it is easy to derive that sexual explicitness, on which I will elaborate in the second chapter of this dissertation, is a stigmatised concept as the conservative sections of our society do not want to hear about sex. A similar attitude towards sexuality existed when sexology was about to make discoveries about sexual behaviour around the turn of the 19\textsuperscript{th} to 20\textsuperscript{th} century. It is clear that a hundred years later not much has changed in that respect.

In the hard rock genre one could easily find songs in which swear words are used. As we can gather from Vivian De Klerk’s research on expletives, hard rockers would use taboo words to display masculine power, but also to break social rules and to shock people. The word ‘bitch’ is one of the most frequently used to denote a woman in our society, and this is not any different in the world of hard rock. Examples in which a girl is referred to as a bitch are songs such as ‘Bad Bitch Broken Woman’ by Bittersweet, ‘Bitch Is Back’ by L.A. Guns, ‘Burn, Bitch, Burn’ by KISS (some parts of this song are rather vulgar to say the least), ‘She’s Such A Bitch’ by the Rods or ‘Wicked Bitch’ by Black ‘n’ Blue. Some bands combine two strong expletives in one song. In ‘Crazy Bitch’ by Buckcherry for example, the singer sings about ‘getting fucking laid’ and the chorus goes as follows:

Hey, you’re a crazy bitch
But you fuck so good, I'm on top of it
When I dream, I'm doing you all night
Scratches all down my back to keep me right on

Another example of a sleazy hard rock song in which both expletives ‘bitch’ and ‘fuck’ appear in combination with ‘ass’ as a third taboo term is ‘Fuck Her Up The Ass’ by the Hollywood rockers from Alleycat Scratch. It is very clear from the lyrics that this band rejects social order and decency in a very direct and rude way. The singer also admits in the song: “I ain’t got no class”. The first stanza of the song already combines all three swear words:

I am the fucking man
Ooh fuck me you bitch
Ah! listen darling
I’ll fuck her alone
I’ll fuck her up the ass

In his work *Swearing*, Geoffrey Hughes devotes a whole chapter to sexuality in swearing. He notes that the word ‘bitch’, recorded from the fifteenth century onwards, is rarely being used for a man, but “after centuries of feminine specialization, the word has started to be applied to things”,28 for example in phrases such as ‘life’s a bitch’; an expression which is also commonly used in the hard rock scene. The American band Hardline for example has a song with this very title, and Adam Bomb sings that ‘Life’s a Bitch, And Then You Live’. A

---

similar phrase in hard rock songs is ‘love’s a bitch’, for example in the songs with this title by Beggars and Thieves, Quiet Riot, Rock Goddess and Tora Tora; or in ‘Ain’t Love A Bitch’ by Virgin.

Dirty Looks replace the subject in the expression by an (im)personal pronoun in their song title ‘It’s A Bitch’. The neuter pronoun ‘it’ could in this case refer to life in general, but also to the (sexual) relationship with the girl they sing about in the song, or to sexual intercourse.

Don't you know, can't you realize
See the fire in your eyes again
When it's all said and done
And there's nothing left for you
Don't you scream it's a bitch
[...]
Far away, so far away
Your life, it starts again
Hold on tight, it'll be alright
Maybe someday, you're a friend

In the same chapter of Swearing, Hughes writes about the polar semantic fields of praise and abuse to denote women in what he calls the ‘angel/whore dichotomy’. Hughes also remarks that there are very few neutral words for ‘woman’, as even that very word itself loses its neutrality in expressions such as ‘this stupid woman’, or even in ‘that woman’. He notes that every term for woman has a strong moral or emotive implication. Hughes visualizes the variety of terms as clusters focussing on the diabolical woman, the angelic/divine woman, the woman as a pet, as an animal, as available object of delight, as object of revulsion and the largest category: the whore/harlot group. The opposition between the diabolical and the angelic woman – and in this case both features seem to be combined in one woman – is put into the following words by Alice Cooper in the song ‘Dirty Dreams’:

Sometimes you turn into a snake with long black hair
Then you turn into an angel, blonde and fair
You can turn yourself blue and I don't care
You can change your look, you can change your race
But it's always your touch and always your face
The dominant feminine archetypes are represented in an extreme dichotomy: the angel and the whore. According to Geoffrey Hughes, these role models originated from the religious figures of Eve and Mary and symbolize the opposites of the feminine character. The whore or Eve stands for the “disobedient, earth-bound, seductive origin of sin, suffering, guilt and shame”, while the angel or Mary represents “the submissive, ethereal, immaculate vehicle of the redemption”. In hard rock we can find several references to Eve and her inextricable role in the Fall from Paradise, for example in the shape of an apple or a snake. Examples are the album covers of *Killer* by Alice Cooper, *Innocence Is No Excuse* by Saxon, Snakes in Paradise’s self-titled album, *Fear No Evil* by Slaughter or *Lovehunter* by Whitesnake.

In Mötley Crüe’s song ‘Hell On High Heels’ the Serpent of Eden is referred to in the line “A serpent's tongue calculating mind”. The female sung of in this song is a prostitute but the very word is not used. Instead, the concept is spelled out as follows:

She's got no money, can't pay the rent
It's a sunny day now baby
Every night on her back that's spent
Honey, it's how you’re making money
Boys call you hell on high heels
Baby, the way you walk it, talk it
Town calls you hell on high heels

The opposite of the whore in Hughes’s extreme dichotomy is the angel or goddess figure, which is also referred to in several hard rock songs or represented on hard rock album covers.
However, the link with the virgin Mary is not usually apparent. The angelic women in hard rock tend to carry out ‘the seductive origin of sin’ rather than chastity and quiet piety. The angelic girl in ‘She’s An Angel’ by Love/Hate for example is referred to as a wild wind and a hurricane:

She is a wild wind blowing  
She's my thunder and rain  
She is a hurricane  
They think she's insane  
But she's an angel

Moreover, the angelic girl seems to lead a troubled life as we can deduce from the following lines:

Mommy takes the strings off your bass  
So you won't hang yourself  
[...]  
She's on drugs, yeah she's on fire  
They all say that she's a liar

In the song ‘Angel In My Heart’ by Britny Fox the angelic lady is portrayed as a femme fatale. She comes across as a woman who is very sure of herself and her impact on men.

Friday night I'm with the boys at a local bar  
Walks in this girl, so divine, I think I'm gonna stay a while  
She walked across the room with her high heels on  
She let her hair on down, down, down
At the end of this first chapter we can conclude that queerness means more than being gay; it can involve a gender that does not want to be pinned down to typically male or typically female features. Moreover, masculinity is not an exclusively male feature, nor is femininity exclusively female. Our patriarchal Western society makes us adopt certain assumptions about gender. These social prescriptions pigeonhole what is acceptable for males and females. Those who transgress these gender boundaries are generally perceived as ‘potentially dangerous’ because they can disturb the social order. Nevertheless, for many of those who are thus regarded as ‘dangerous’, it actually takes courage to break the social rules. The male/female dichotomy – which makes gender socially understandable – is broken down and consequently transgressing the social rules is an act of power, which not everyone finds it easy to undertake.
2. Sexuality in Hard Rock Music

Cover of the album Love At First Sting by the German hard rock band Scorpions, dated 1984.
2. a. What is sexuality?

**Sexology**

Before analysing sexuality in hard rock and its sub genres, we should ask ourselves the question: what is meant by sexuality? Does it refer to sexual desire and fantasy, or to male and female physiology? It is clear that both sex and thus also sexuality have dual meanings in English, as is also stated by Joseph Bristow in his survey work *Sexuality*\(^{29}\). Because of the dual semantics of the word theorists have ever since the Victorian age, during which period sexology – the science of sexuality – came into existence, found it hard to agree on the interpretation of sexuality. As Joseph Bristow states in his introduction, “there are many different kinds of sexed body and sexual desire inhabiting sexuality”.

In the first chapter of Bristow’s *Sexuality* it is mentioned that early sexology leant heavily on medical science and therefore certain sexual desires were categorized as illnesses and diseases. Early sexology sought to divide and classify sexual types of person (hetero-, homo-, bisexual and their variants) and forms of desire (fetishism, masochism, sadism …). At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century the scientific intent of sexology headed straight for a clash with the morality in our Western culture and was a major cause of anxiety in our society as many were afraid that their sexual identity and desires would be uncovered and they would thus no longer be regarded as respectable citizens. Also, sexology was about to reveal sexual truths that our Western society was reluctant to accept.

In the same chapter of his survey, Bristow cites the philosopher Otto Weininger: “The fact is that males and females are like two substances combined in different proportions, but with either element never wholly missing.”\(^{30}\) This implies that there is a dynamics in each person, man or woman, between masculinity and femininity – or as Weininger himself put it, between male and female conditions. According to Weininger, all human beings find themselves in a ‘permanent bisexual condition’. This could possibly lead to an explanation for the concept of androgyny. Yet, it is Weininger’s opinion that, in order to achieve Plato’s idea of the perfect society, all human beings must strive to become ideal types of men and women instead of living in a chaotic ‘bisexual’ order.

---


In connection to nineteenth-century Western culture’s tendency to make a division between virtuous angelic and vicious demonic types of women, Weininger draws the conclusion that the devouring passions of women are endangering all men constantly. He also adds that even respectable women are unable to ignore their all-consuming sexuality. These ‘bad’ women would haunt and poison men with their love and consequently men had to be careful not to become sexually enslaved by these women. The idea of being ‘poisoned by love’ can be found in the song of the same name by Gypsy Rose and the notion of enslavement is explicitly stated in the song Devil’s Child by Judas Priest. Moreover, in this song the drinking of the victim’s blood reminds of what the South African feminist writer Olive Schreiner, following Weininger’s idea on the draining force of female desire, calls ‘sex-parasitism’31.

You took my heart
And left it blown to smithereens
I gave my body as a slave
You cut my flesh
And drank my blood that poured in streams
I'm left here broken and ashamed

The song ‘Lovin’ You Is A Dirty Job’ by RATT is about falling for and becoming sexually enslaved by a difficult woman. In the first stanza the singing persona recounts that in the mornings he feels like he has had a heart attack, and he did not think that he would make it through the night. He thus admits that loving his lady is very hard indeed, but he would not want to let her go either, so he will not give up on her. She makes him a slave to her love.

You put me through the ringer and hung me out to dry
You licked me off your fingers just like a piece of pie
You break my heart in pieces, but I've got the glue to glue it
Girl loving you is a dirty job and I'm the man to do it
I'm gonna hold you till the end of time
I'm gonna love you 'cause it's now or never
I'm gonna kiss you till I make you mine, loving you is a dirty job

Weininger also insists that a woman is totally dependent on a man to satisfy her desires and consequently she weakens his instincts, which might even lead to madness. This reminds me

---

of the video clip for the song ‘In And Out Of Love’ by the American rock band Bon Jovi, where the singer is watching pretty girls go by and ‘shooting’ them with his water pistol. Then suddenly this ‘drop dead gorgeous’ blonde girl in a tight white mini dress walks by, upon which he symbolically ‘shoots’ himself in the head.

The idea of female desire being destructive to men makes every single woman look like a ‘femme fatale’, a woman with destructive and vengeful desires, and suggests the recurrent theme of the ‘fallen angel’ in hard rock songs. Bands such as Adam Bomb, Aldo Nova, Boulevard, Cobra, Fate, Masi, Ransom, Poison, Treat and many others have a song titled ‘Fallen Angel’, but also songs such as ‘Evil Angel’ by Cats in Boots, ‘Angel in Hell’ by Charade, ‘Devil’s Angel’ by Crash Alley, ‘She’s no Angel’ by D-Zire or Wrathchild UK and ‘Devil’s Daughter’ by Erotic Suicide refer to the notion of a harmful angel. A relevant example is the song ‘Fallen Angel’ by FM:

She knows I'm in way over my head
Gonna use me up, gonna leave me for dead
She's gonna use me up
With just one look I was hypnotised
I could not believe my eyes
She's no angel and I can't tell
Am I in heaven or could this be hell
She's no angel and I can't believe
What this woman is doing to me

Referring to the biblical fallen angel Lucifer, who had been banished from the heavenly spheres because of rebelling against the divine order, the Fallen Angel carries both angelic and demonic characteristics in her being. In Christianity, fallen angels are exiled from heaven to suffer for eternity because they have committed one of the seven deadly sins. A part of their suffering is caused by demons from hell punishing them by ripping out their wings as a sign of their insignificance.

Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis, invented by Sigmund Freud in the 1890s and further developed by his successor Jacques Lacan, shed a new light on the matter of sexuality in questioning how our
psyche organizes sexual drives in socially rebellious ways. Furthermore Freud stated that sexuality is to be dissociated and understood separately from the biological mechanism of reproduction. He illustrated his case by saying that kissing could, in what was seen as ‘normal sexual life’ in those days, be a type of perversion, because the lips are not connected to the reproductive organs. Also, Freud noted in his paper “Fetishism” (dated 1927) that body parts are not the only libidinal objects, and an inanimate object can take the place of a sexual object. In this respect he stated that perverse sexual behaviour is not an unnatural desire or illness, but part of all human sexuality.

One of Lacan’s most enduring elaborations on Freudian psychology lies in his analysis of psychoanalytical phallocentrism, in which he seeks to explain how human subjects take up a sexual position in relation to the phallus. In Lacan’s theory of desire, every subject is a subject of desire. In order to explain how a subject becomes sexed Lacan uses his phallus theory, drawing on Freud’s distinction of being and having. The Lacanian subject has to discover that the mother does not have the phallus, which stands for desire and paternal authority, and may thereupon seek to be the phallus to return the mother’s desire. That way the subject is creating a sexual identity. This theory is applied by Jeffrey Tobin in “Tango and the Scandal of Homosocial Desire” when discussing the primary relation in tango dance, which is not one between the heterosexual dance partners, but between the male dancer and the other men watching the dancing couple, which clearly indicates homocentrism. The homosocial desire is expressed by the display of women. It is the man’s job to make the woman look good – she is the phallus that has to be seen and he handles and guides her; he has the phallus. The spectators observe the woman in order to talk about the man. He is the Lacanian subject of desire and she is merely an object, the phallic display of the man’s desire. To illustrate this Lacanian idea I include a picture of Blackie Lawless, the singer from the American shock rock back W.A.S.P.. Blackie is surrounded by three attractive women, his ‘objects of desire’ who are touching him, but he is not looking at them. He looks the audience straight in the eyes and seems to be creating above all a homosocial bond with other males in the audience in the same way that the male tango dancers do as discussed by Jeffrey Tobin.

---

Similar patterns can be found in hard rock songs that express the praises of a woman. The narrator or singer wants to be seen with an attractive girl in order to become himself a desired subject and to show other men how he can get that girl. In this way of thinking, men have always been the subject, while women always took the place of the object. This is also clear in the depiction of (sometimes half-naked) women on for example the cover of a hard rock album, but it could as well be found in the lyrics of such bands. The man plays an active role as subject, while the woman is assigned a passive role. To illustrate this point I turn to the song ‘Burn, Bitch, Burn’ by KISS where the singer is clearly active and taking the lead while the woman he sings about is completely passive. Furthermore he refers to the fact that she is bound to play this passive role because of her physicality, and therefore he alone is the one to take up the dominant role:

So why kid yourself, it’s so cut and dry
Your body’s condemned, and figures don’t lie
[…]
Ooh babe, gonna put you in your place
So burn, bitch, burn!
Psychoanalysis has from the very beginning given rise to controversy. Feminist theory sought to give counterweight to, among other things, the phallus theory in drawing in the fact that psychoanalysis does not propose any models that could deprive the penis or phallus from its supreme authority. Furthermore, feminist authors such as Karen Horney claimed that Freud’s idea of girls’ penis envy was wrong, because men would likewise be envious of the fact that only women were able to give birth to children. Moreover, according to feminist writers, the girls’ envy is not directed towards having the penis, but towards the social authority provided by it. Continuing on the same line, we could thus say that a woman could possibly become the subject and the man the object, instead of the ‘universal’ other way around. I will examine this further in the section on female-fronted and all-female hard rock bands in the third chapter of this dissertation.

*A battle of life and death*

In the third chapter of *Sexuality*, Bristow throws light on how sexuality can be seen as a life-and-death struggle as it combines the dynamics of both creation and destruction. He therefore turns to the poetry of the metaphysical poet John Donne (1572-1631). In Donne’s collection *Songs and Sonnets*, the author frequently uses the verb ‘to die’ with a sexual connotation, namely to indicate that the lovers will reach an orgasm. During the Renaissance it was believed that reaching an orgasm would shorten your life, thus each time the lovers would climax, or experience a ‘little death’, they would come closer to their actual death. Even though Donne’s sexual pun long preceded the modern view on sexuality, this potential deadliness of sex is still reflected in horror and slasher movies and pornographic material – usually aimed at male consumers – showing scenes of sexual violence and simulated death to this very day. Bristow furthermore states that some twentieth-century critics go as far as insisting that certain desires, especially male ones, are in themselves murderous. This idea makes one think of the notion of ‘murders of passion’, on which I will further elaborate in the third chapter of this dissertation.

To explain the view on sexuality as a battle between life and death, Bristow draws in Freud’s model of the death drive as described in “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” (1920). In this work, Freud focuses on how male and female subjects manage their libido and how they experience pleasure and unpleasure. According to Freud, all subjects are driven by instincts, both compatible and incompatible. The latter are repressed instincts, split off from the ego and
causing libidinal tension, thus resulting in an experience of unpleasurable satisfaction. However, Freud was at that time still puzzled by how those incompatible instincts underwent a transformation from pleasurable to unpleasurable satisfaction. Trying to find an explanation for this matter, Freud stated that our instincts travel in two directions. On the one hand, there are instincts that lead to change and development, to reproduction or ‘the final aim of life’, while on the other hand, there are instincts that insist on returning to an earlier state and make a fresh start. From this Freud concluded that the project of life is burdened by the prospect of death. Bristow proceeds in explaining that reproduction, which is the result of the pleasurable moment of orgasm – or ‘little death’ – is thus inseparable from the notion of death.

Another model seeking to explain the battle of life and death is to be found in Georges Bataille’s *Eroticism* (1962)34. To describe the dynamics between desire and death, he refers to taboo and transgression on the one hand, and the friction between the sacred and the profane on the other hand. Following the anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1872-1950), Bataille writes that taboo serves to eliminate violence from our society and moreover it depicts sexuality as dirty, shameful and unclean. In sum, sexuality is a sin. However, a taboo can only persist if it is being broken or ‘transgressed’ by man’s natural impulses to violence and rebellion against restrictions and customs.Eroticism is therefore a means to keep a taboo alive, as sexuality involves a symbolic death. In *Gender Trouble* Judith Butler too argues that a taboo does not only prohibit certain forms of sexuality, it also gives rise to a variety of substitute desires by means of which the taboo can be transgressed. The idea of sexuality being sinful then leads Bataille to the institution of Christianity, which in his opinion is responsible for the association of sexuality with shame, filth and hatred. According to Bataille, the reason for this lies in the Christian ritual, in which the harmony of life and death is hard to discover. Christian rituals bear many traces of pagan civilizations where the organization of the sacred and the profane was represented through sacrificing a gift to a deity, thus representing how life and death go hand in hand. Practising Christians rarely admit that their rituals are nothing but a re-enactment of those ancient pagan feasts and, quoting Bataille, “however obsessive we find the symbol of the Cross, the Christian mass is not readily identified with the bloody sacrifice”. Furthermore, Christianity dissociates divinity from sexuality, and consequently taboo from transgression, and it can thus only bring the sacred and the profane together in severing religion from desire, because it is through piety alone, not sexuality, that man can

reach eternal life after death and moreover a union with God. It is therefore no surprise according to Bataille that women become derided and eroticised objects of desire. The taboo of (female) sexuality in connection to Christianity is undeniably apparent in the song ‘Christian Woman’ by the American metal band Type O Negative:

Forgive her, for she knows not what she does
A cross upon her bedroom wall from grace she will fall
An image burning in her mind and between her thighs
[...]
For her lust she'll burn in hell, her soul done medium-well
All through mass manual stimulation, salvation
Corpus Christi, she needs Corpus Christi

**Michel Foucault**

With *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault was the first intellectual to dispute earlier theories about sexuality as described in the fields of sexology and psychoanalysis. His work is the first to explain how the social order and power are established through discourse. It is Foucault’s opinion that our ideas of what is desirable and undesirable within a culture come into existence through verbal communication, and consequently have nothing to do with class struggle or the repressed unconscious. Foucault wonders how a society could be sexually repressed if, by means of enforcing censorship, it gives room to discourse on the matter. In order to enact a law, that which is being denounced has to be put into words and thus the more modern Western society discussed the taboo of sex, the more the scandal of sex became an open secret to the public domain.

Foucault also contested the binary ‘us-against-them’ view on power relations and suggested a more differentiating view. He argued that there is no such thing as a single locus of rebellion, but rather a plurality of points of resistance. Moreover, binary methods as used to analyse power relations could not but fail to understand and explain the complex phenomenon of sexuality.

As is the case with many theorists, Foucault’s work inevitably gave rise to debate. Even though his analyses were certainly path-breaking, there were several features that he completely ignored in his approach to sexuality. Feminist critics for example deplored his
insensitivity to gender and sexual difference. One of these feminists was Sandra Lee Bartky, who in her essay “Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power”, published in 1988, states that Foucault treats ‘the body’ as if it were one, and he consequently makes no distinction between how men on the one hand and women on the other hand experience sexuality. She argues furthermore that Foucault overlooks the subjection of the feminine body and thus keeps reinforcing sexism, which is typical for Western political theory, as his work continues the silence and powerlessness of women in our society.

Bristow too states that, probably because of Foucault’s defiance of psychoanalysis, he pays little attention to gender, or the cultural construction of masculinity and femininity, and ignores the differential impact of power on men and women. Because Foucault approaches sexuality in such a generalized manner, he makes it hard to discover the inequalities between men and women as established in Western culture. Also, as described in Bristow, Foucault pays little to no attention to the subject’s relation to emotional response. The subject has thus no psychological depth and Foucault consequently rejects the realm of the unconscious as discussed by Freud. Bristow continues to argue that Foucault’s subject lacks several features associated with the humanist subject such as psychology, intention, motivation, thought and feeling and we are thus left with a subject that is unable to be an agent of social change.

Following Biddy Martin’s critique in Feminism, Criticism, and Foucault, Bristow then also draws in the argument that we cannot be dissociated from phallocentrism in our patriarchal society by just discourse.

**Following Foucault**

One of Foucault’s notable followers in analysing sexual oppression and injustice is Gayle Rubin. In her essay “Thinking Sex” she explains how Western culture establishes the ideas we have about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ sexuality. By ‘good’ sexuality she means ‘normal’ sex, among which heterosexual, married, monogamous and reproductive relations that occur at home. Under ‘bad’ sexuality she puts abnormal, sinful, ‘way out’ sex and groups such as transvestites, transsexuals, fetishists and cross-generational sexual relationships. Between these two poles she situates her ‘major area of contest’. It is here that we can find how morals

---


and attitudes towards sexuality shift. In this zone we find unmarried heterosexual couples, promiscuous heterosexuals, masturbation, stable same-sex relationships, and closer to the degree of ‘bad’ sexuality lesbians and promiscuous gay men in public places. Rubin observes that relations purely based on sexual gratification tend to be situated at the bottom of her diagram. This is thus also where most of the sexuality as sung of by most hard rock bands would get a place. The idea of having one-night stands and similar ‘short-term’ sexual relations, merely for getting laid, is prominent in songs such as ‘Tonight (We Need A Lover)’ by the notorious L.A.-based hard rock band Mötley Crüe:

This deadly sin is all we know
Pleasure victim, who's next to fall
The question is will you please us all tonight?
Tonight, tonight, tonight
We need a lover tonight

Another example where the idea of having sex for sex’s sake, thus without a stable relationship, is even more explicitly stated is Uncle Sam’s song ‘Crystal’, where the lyrics go as follows:

I don’t really want to have no relationship
I only want to get along
[…]
I ain’t really asking for everything baby
I only want my piece of the pie

Rubin furthermore explains how sexual relations between a man and a woman gain a higher status than those involving what she calls sexual dissidents. However, she adds that her diagram is not a static model of how sexuality is established in our Western society and that unmarried couples living together, masturbation and some forms of heterosexuality are getting more respectability these days. Herein we might find an explanation for the tendency towards bisexuality in the glam rock bands from the 2000’s. If promiscuous heterosexuality and ‘looking’ queer without necessarily being gay is gaining more acceptance in our culture today, then these bands would have to continue on the same line and cross new gender boundaries that remain taboo in order to still ‘shock rock’ the people in their rebellious ways.
2. b. Expressing sexuality

*Red shirt means you love me, short skirt means be quick*

*We’ll sneak into the backroom before the second trick.*

*[...]*

*Then one day when the boss walked in, he was red with disbelief,*

*I was making love to you, with the Xerox underneath.*

*Now we spend our time together in bed every day,*

*Imagine me making love to you, while collecting unemployment pay.*

- ‘Red Shirt’ by Uncle Sam

**Sexual explicitness in hard rock lyrics**  
As mentioned already in the introduction to this dissertation, the lyrics in hard rock and its related genres are often sexually loaded. The bands’ explicitness in their songs is, just like their apparel, again an act of rebellion; sexual anarchy against society’s normative decency. These artists like to wear heterosexual sex on their sleeves and this way they radiate a sex-appeal that stands for (male) power and dominance. The power of sex is defined as the power of conquest. Masculinity is to be obtained through competition with other males and must be proven by (sexual) actions. One way of doing this is by boasting about how many girls they could get to bed, or at least get their interest and admiration for the rock stars that they are and thus flatter their usually rather big ego. An example of gentle voicing of boasting could be found in the chorus of ‘Steal Your Heart’ by the British band Magnum:

*Baby, yes I*

*Steal your heart*

*And you'll never recover*

*Steal your heart*

*You won't look to another*

This part of the text implies that the singer is the alpha-male that no lady could ever resist. She would have no reason to ever search for another man anymore because he is confident that he is the best a woman could ever get. Ironically, the other stanzas in the song indicate that it was in fact the lady who captured his heart from the very beginning and made him a slave to her love, and not the other way around:
I never had a chance
Once I put my eyes on you
[...]  
You had me from the start
Doesn't matter wrong or right

The concept of the alpha-male being irresistible to women in general is also clearly present in Autograph’s song ‘Blondes in black cars’, in which the title is completed by “and they’re here for me”. The girls are not there for having fun per se, but to please his eyes, his mind and perhaps also his body; they are there for him to confirm his masculinity. This is clearly a reflection of his ego and the women in question are there to reassure him of his position.

These women ‘are’ the phallus and they augment his phallic power, dominance and illusory autonomy, which brings us back to Lacanian phallus theory as described in Judith Butler’s Gender Trouble. To ‘be’ the phallus means to recognize the subject’s power. Women ‘are’ the phallus in the sense that they maintain the man’s subject position, but the notion of ‘being’ the phallus also implies a ‘being for’ a masculine subject; a man who wants to see his identity confirmed by the object of his desire. In being the phallus, women thus guarantee the continuity of patriarchal society in which men are said to ‘have’ the phallus, but they could never ‘be’ it.

Another way of radiating sex is by using sexually explicit lyrics. Among the front runners of the display and explicit wording of heterosexual sexuality would be bands such as Mötley Crüe and W.A.S.P. (which in this case would not stand for White Anglo-Saxon Protestants, but for We Are Sexual Perverts – and proud of it). With these bands it is also hard to ignore their perverted stage-image, reminding us of and referring to the fetish scene with tights, pieces of clothing in fishnet, lingerie, chains and high-heeled boots. One example of how explicit these bands can be is the following excerpt from Mötley Crüe’s ‘Piece Of Your Action’:

Tight action, rear traction
So hot, you really blow me away
Fast moving, wet and ready
The time is right, so hold on tight
Live wire, night prowler
Lay back and take me inside
Similar lyrics that leave nothing to the imagination of the listener can be found in the case of less well-known bands as well, for example in the song ‘I Can’t Wait’ by Q5:

- Soon I'll be inside of you
- Well I can't wait, I can't take it
- Got to hold you
- You and me, passion’s free
- The heat running down your sweet skin
- Fantasies rage inside a cage
- That quivers as I'm coming in
- Don't take it away, I love how we play
- On each other's emotions in tune
- I need you so bad, it's driving me mad
- I've just got to make love to you

In connection to the bands’ heterosexual image I would like to insert a little case study here on the lyrics of a song called ‘Look what the cat dragged in’ by Poison. A part of the song is usually transcribed as follows:

- I got a girl on the left of me, a girl on the right
- I know damn well I slept with both last night

In my opinion you could as well use ‘them’ instead of ‘damn’ in the last line, which would make the pun more interesting as it would be a marked choice, knowing that ‘damn well’ is a commonly used expression in English. Furthermore, using ‘them’ in the second line would give the song text a new dimension; namely that not only has the male persona had sex with both girls but also that this is all there is to know about them anyway.

When it comes to sexual explicitness in female bands we could find a similar pattern of heterosexuality, however the explicitness would sooner be found with female-fronted band than with all-female bands. I will come back to this point in the third chapter of my dissertation. As for now one example of how explicit female rock stars can be is the following chorus from Lee Aaron’s song ‘Rock Candy’.

- But you're rock candy baby - rock Candy
- You're hard, sweet an' sticky
Case Study:

Dee Snider in court to defend his music

In the 1980’s, the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) attacked the artistic freedom of rock music because of its explicit sexual and violent lyrical contents. On 19th September 1985, a Senate Hearing on record labelling was held. As we can read in a paper by Mathieu Deflem, “the purpose of this hearing was to discuss rock music that dealt explicitly with sexual topics and the glorification of violence”\(^38\). The purpose of the hearing was not to change legislation concerning popular music, but to bring the issue to the attention of the population. The PMRC wanted to introduce a rating system for records so that consumers would know what they were buying. John Denver and Frank Zappa were at the Senate Hearing to represent the musicians’ case. Zappa claimed that the rating system would stigmatise certain musicians, and that it would “open the doors to an endless parade of moral quality control programs based on things certain Christians do not like”. Dee Snider, the singer and songwriter of the hair metal band Twisted Sister, also went to Washington, D.C. to defend his music and fight censorship. The PMRC stated that the songs by Twisted Sister were about sadomasochism, rape and abuse. Dee Snider replied that his songs were misquoted and misunderstood, and that “it is the parents’ job alone to take full responsibility over their children’s upbringing”. Gortikov, the president of the Record Industry Association of America (RIAA), also testified at the Senate Hearing. He said that in this case rock music was unfairly singled out and that music reflects rather than introduces social values. In 1990, a few years after this case was started, the RIAA decided that a uniform label with the text “Parental Guidance: Explicit Lyrics” was to be put in the lower right corner of sexually explicit records. Again the PMRC claimed that they did not want to change legislation, but music was to be put under control of the law.

\(^{38}\) http://www.cas.sc.edu/socy/faculty/deflem/zzcens97.htm
Sexual explicitness in the image of hard rock

In the hard rock scene, in which many songs are about girls coming of age and desirable femmes fatales, it is not rare for attractive women to appear on the covers of albums. The relation between Lacan’s phallocentrism and the image of women in hard rock is never too far away as it is a common fact that women in hard rock (but also in other musical genres) are objectified. The objectification of women on hard rock album covers gives this genre and its sub genres an extra sexual dimension. I will discuss a small selection of album covers, but of course many more examples can be found within the genre of hard rock, glam and sleaze.
The combination of women and knives – sexuality and danger – on the covers for Power And Passion by the Northern Irish band Mama’s Boys, dated 1985, and Stick It To Ya by the American band Slaughter, dated 1990.

Playing with double meanings on Spread Eagle’s cover for their first self-titled album, released in 1990.

Victory’s self-titled album, dated 1985. A woman’s spread legs symbolizing the V of Victory and thus sexual conquest by the male subject.
As stated before, sexual conquest mirrors power and dominance, which is very clear when one observes the cover for the album *When The Mirror Cracks* by Q5. The cover of this album shows a man looking at four television screens, each one of them advertising something that would increase his attractiveness for women. He smokes the same cigarettes, wears the same watch and shoes and drinks the same beer as shown in the ads. Moreover, three of the four advertisements display female sexuality. The screen in the left bottom corner shows two women at the feet of a man – a perfect representation of male dominance over his objects of desire in a patriarchal society.
Another example of sexual content on the cover of hard rock albums is Lizzy Borden’s *Love You To Pieces*. On the cover of this record we see a young woman with wild blonde hair lying down on a bed, wearing black lace lingerie. In the mirror next to the bed one sees the reflection of Lizzy, the singer in the band. The reflection is rather unclear, but you can tell that his hair is even wilder than the girl’s, that he is wearing a skin-tight black outfit, ripped at the arms and thighs, a large studded wristband and that he has an axe in his hands. His crotch is accentuated by a light-coloured ‘cache-sexe’, while the girl’s crotch is accentuated by the solid black G-string that she is wearing, which forms a contrast with her otherwise see-through lace attire. Remarkable might be that she displays no fear of the intimidating man with the threatening axe, which gives her the charisma of a femme fatale. She appears to like playing this dangerous game and the look in her eyes displays power and dominance.

![Album cover for Love You To Pieces, dated 1985.](image)

Just like we can see in the right top screen on the cover of *When The Mirror Cracks* by Q5, the woman does not always show her face. Several album covers display a woman’s dressed body or covered body part but leave the face out of the picture. Examples of this are the
album covers for *Devil in Disguise* by Hotwire, released in 2006, or *Lay Down The Law* by Keel, released in 1984. Note also in the latter’s cover picture that the handcuffs link the hands of the woman and the supposed man behind her together, suggesting dominance and submission. It is however unclear who is the master/mistress and who is the slave.

However, some bands go a bit further and display nudity ‘in your face’. Still somewhat covered but sexually suggestive, the cover of Waysted’s self-titled EP from 1984 shows a female chest with an ultra-short top – the girl in the picture is not even wearing a bra. Also the picture on the cover of the British glam band Girl’s album *Killing Time*, released in 1987 after the band quit, shows ‘covered nudity’, but in this case the girl is totally naked.

Another album cover for one of Waysted’s records shows two barely dressed women, which may remind one a bit of a lesbian tendency in male fantasy. On the cover for the record *Completely Waysted* we see a woman in an ultra short satin and lace baby-doll with stay-up stockings standing up with a large gun in her hand, but we do not see her face. The second
woman, only wearing panties, kneels before her and looks the audience straight in the eyes. She has her hands placed around the waist and her head against the tummy of the other woman. Ironically, both women are dressed in white, which is generally perceived as the colour of innocence.

A similar image is the cover for the album *Nice ‘n’ Dirty* by the band Rage, released in 1982. This cover picture also shows two women holding and touching each other, with one of them looking straight at the camera and thus the audience. Moreover, the blonde woman has her hand on the breast of the brunette woman, with her index finger slipping under the dress of the latter. Contrary to what is displayed on Waysted’s album cover, the women in Rage’s album picture are wearing total black leather attire and are adorned with studded wristbands, armbands and big earrings. The blonde woman on the cover, looking at the lens, seems to be more dominant than the brunette. The collar around the brunette woman’s neck reinforces this idea. This picture may remind the consumer of fetishism and I will come back to this idea in the next chapter of this dissertation. There is however a second cover picture for the very same album on which we only see the blonde woman, sitting down in her skin-tight black leather dress and looking at the camera. Moreover, that picture is slightly blurred by flashes of what seems to be fire. This album cover looks less provocative than the first picture that I have discussed and we could therefore be dealing with a sort of censorship.
Both album covers for the album Nice ‘n’ Dirty by the British band Rage, dated 1982.

A similar type of censoring is present in video clips too. Think for example of the video clip for Alice Cooper’s well-known song ‘Poison’, of which one can find both an uncensored and a censored version. The uncensored version features a brunette woman, topless and only wearing a black g-string, while the censored version shows the same woman wearing a black basque and regular panties that cover her torso and bottom completely. This may reflect the struggles that hard rock has been dealing with from the early beginning when the artists wanted to sing about something as common as sexuality and eroticism, or as we can read in Wikipedia’s article on rock music: “rock music in general has been noted and criticised for facilitating greater sexual freedom”\textsuperscript{39}.

Some bands (or their management) even go one step further and display completely naked women on the cover of albums. On the covers for Pink Cream 69’s self-titled album and Wicked World by Sun ‘n’ Steel we get to see completely naked female bodies, although the crotch is still slightly censored. On the cover of Pink Cream 69’s album however, the woman’s body is body-painted all over, as is the face of the other woman in the picture whose body we do not see. But perhaps one of the most sexually explicit pictures for a hard rock album is the cover for Sun ‘n’ Steel’s album Wicked World. The female object of desire on this album cover is completely naked with water or sweat running down her body. Nothing

\textsuperscript{39} http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_music
else hides her skin from our eyes. However, on neither of these two albums is the face of the nude woman shown. To my knowledge there are no other versions of these album covers.

The same story does not hold true for Uncle Sam’s cover for their album *Heaven or Hollywood*, of which there are three versions: one uncensored and two censored. Every version of the album cover focuses attention on a fit woman’s midriff, crotch and thighs. She has very long ‘feline’ red nails and holds a sharp shiny razor blade in her left hand, as if she is ready to shave. Her right hand rests defiantly on her hip. The uncensored version of this cover shows the woman’s bare (hairy) groin. To create a censored version of this picture a white circular space in which the band name and the album title appear was added to the picture to cover the woman’s bare groin. Still the woman ‘behind’ the white space is completely nude. Another censored cover for the same album then shows a different picture (not an edited version of the first uncensored picture) of a woman (probably the same model) in the same position as on the other two versions. However, this time the nudity is limited as the woman is wearing purple and black lace panties that cover her groin, but the idea behind the image remains the same.
Above you see the three versions of the cover for Heaven or Hollywood by the American band Uncle Sam. The album was released in 1987.

On the cover of Sex Crimes by the band Rio we see an object of desire adorned with angelic white wings, who shows her face, but wearing tanga style briefs and high heels she is not completely naked. Also the picture is rather dim which adds to the concealment of the nudity displayed. The white wings make the woman look like a heavenly spirit, but the dimness gives her the allure of a fallen angel. The white noose that she is holding in her hands also radiates a dangerous tension. Both the wings and the noose are in a ‘clair-obscur’ contrast to the rest of the picture, with the fiery to deep red background and the black-haired woman in black panties and black high-heeled pumps.

The objectified woman on Rio’s album cover is also wearing huge black earrings, which remind the viewer of African jewellery. Moreover, the woman appears to be of mixed race
herself. This mirrors the roots of early rock and roll, which was in essence a mixture of both white and black musical styles. This new style of music originated around 1950 in the southern states of the USA, an area where transatlantic African slaves and European immigrants lived closely together at that time. Different social and racial groups were united by means of rock music in what is described on Wikipedia as a ‘cultural collision’. Both black and white artists could perform this new genre of music and it started to pave the way for racial tolerance. Through rock music black musicians were able to reach a white audience, which inevitably also gave rise to protest and fear of social rebellion\textsuperscript{40}.

Concerning the display of sexual content on hard rock album covers we can conclude that when the desired woman’s body is completely naked, then her face is usually hidden. But when the face of a nude woman is shown this is compensated by part-coverage of her objectified body. Nevertheless she is usually a sexually seductive appearance, which can be connected to Jean Baudrillard’s concept of seduction\textsuperscript{41} as described by Joseph Bristow in \textit{Sexuality}.

According to Baudrillard our libidinal energy is ceaselessly productive and deludes us; it is precisely that productive nature of sex that makes us play the game of seduction\textsuperscript{42}. Baudrillard takes the same view as Freud, stating that sexuality is phallic, and that women are continually enslaved to that masculine order. However, Baudrillard notes that women’s movements seem uninterested in the feminine power of seduction. According to Baudrillard, women have the monopoly on artifice, appearance and illusions. Women can seduce with their bodies – their bodies communicate or ‘talk’ sexuality. In the song ‘Body Talk’ by the American glam metal band RATT, the body of the desired woman makes the man’s body talk in response.

\begin{verbatim}
Make no mistake, let's make it clear
You're speaking a language that's easy to hear
[...]
Body talk, I see your body talk
You make my body talk when you're next to me
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{40} http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_n_roll


In RATT’s song the term body talk also refers to sexual intercourse, which is also the case in the song ‘Body Talk’ by EZ Livin’.

Another American band, KIX, also has a song titled ‘Body Talk’. The concept of body talking is more elaborated here than in the song by RATT. The femme in KIX’s ‘Body Talk’ does not cover her inner feelings with too many clothes. She displays her skin in order to communicate – not just to the persona who sings the song, but to everyone around her – and body talk means more than just sexual intercourse here; it is about sexual attraction and seduction in the broader sense of the word.

She don't like to hide any feelings deep inside
And that's just what I need, something just like you to read
Anyway I can see there isn't any mystery
You don't have to read minds to know that you're my kind
They know that she talks body talk
Pictures I can see, she talk body talk
She talk body talk
Music I can see, she talk body talk
Talk to me!

However, the woman’s play of seduction in the song by KIX will eventually lead to sexual intercourse with the man who is most attracted to and attractive for her:

You're gonna feel my reaction tonight
Tonight we're gonna make this attraction tonight, tonight

In Baudrillard’s opinion women’s bodies symbolize more than men’s bodies do, and women can wear the mask of femininity to secure their place in a male-dominated world. Bristow adds that Baudrillard prefers femininity because it ‘blurs the distinction between authenticity and artifice’. The relevance of phallus theories as described by Freud and Lacan is visible on many hard rock album covers where the sexually attractive woman is objectified in favour of the male subject and an eager audience.

The examples of album covers discussed above are all records by all-male bands. But also on the cover of albums by all-female bands the band members may appear like seductive temptresses in the pictures. This shows how these women do not mind taking the role of the
femme fatale or desired object in a man’s world. Nude men do not usually appear on the cover of albums by female bands. However, one may then wonder: what about a nude man on the cover if the band is all-male as in Silent Rage’s album cover for *Don’t Touch Me There*? According to a feminist view on sexuality, the male on the cover would then represent the ‘victim’ and thus the object of desire to a female audience. Or perhaps – and probably – what we get to see is masculine macho behaviour. The masculine body is praised and feminine attention would caress the ego of the male artists.

![Phantom Blue's self-titled album from 1989](image1.jpg)

![Vixen's best of album Full Throttle from 1999](image2.jpg)


![Silent Rage's album cover for *Don’t Touch Me There*](image3.jpg)

*The cover of Don’t Touch Me There by the all-male band Silent Rage, released in 1989.*
In this chapter I have discussed the history of sexology and the development of the science of sexuality from the Victorian Age onwards. The dangerous aspects of women and their sexuality as described by Weininger are recurrent themes in hard rock songs. Women are often depicted as evil and poisonous creatures with destructive desires; they endanger men and are sometimes referred to as fallen angels. Nevertheless, many songs express the praises of women, and Lacanian phallocentrism is never too far off. The man is the desiring subject and the woman is his object of desire. She symbolizes and confirms his masculinity, but this also renders her a certain power over the man. Once she is aware of her importance, she can turn into a femme fatale; she can choose to accept or reject a man. The femme fatale is also a recurrent theme in hard rock songs, and female artists like to depict themselves as such fatal women.

The second part of this chapter dealt with sexual explicitness in both song lyrics and the image of hard rock. The sexual explicit lyrics in hard rock – but also the outrageous clothing of the artists – bring about a shock effect. Moreover, the songs are often about lust rather than love and have therefore been perceived as violent and inappropriate by many parents. In the 1980s, the rise of censorship endangered the artistic freedom of rap and rock bands, and certain rock artists, such as glam metal singer Dee Snider, went to court to defend their music. A few years later, the ‘parental guidance’ stickers appeared on the covers of albums with explicit content, but sexual explicitness is not only to be found in the lyrics of hard rock songs. We have also seen that quite some covers of hard rock, glam and sleaze albums display thinly clad and even naked women. The women who appear on these album covers are clearly objectified. On the more provocative album covers the face of the nude woman is often left out of the picture.
3. Gender, Image and Sexuality

The band Pretty Boy Floyd in the 1980’s:

Leather boys with electric toys,
long hair, jewellery and lipstick.
3. a. Love, lust and the image of women in hard rock

*The Femme Fatale idea*

*I know a thing or two about her*

*I know she'll only make you cry*

*She'll let you walk the street beside her*

*But when she wants she'll pass you by*

*Everybody says she's looking good*

*And the lady knows it's understood*

*Strutter!*

- ‘Strutter’ by KISS

In “Tango and the Scandal of Homosocial Desire”\(^{43}\), Jeffrey Tobin explains the association of early Argentine tango dance with whorehouses. In these brothels men danced with female prostitutes and that way they transgressed marital, class and racial boundaries. The female tango dancers were perceived as ‘femmes fatales’ and formed a sharp contrast with the dandyesque male tango dancers. In his essay, Tobin describes the dress style of some Argentine women in the 1990’s. Their attire reminded Tobin of the look that Madonna popularised in the 1980’s: the so-called ‘whore look’. The dress of these women did not come straight out of a video clip by Madonna, but Madonna’s 1980’s look certainly inspired them. Tobin describes this look as follows: “Typically, one of these women wore a see-through blouse that stopped above the navel and a skirt that began below, a black brassiere and fishnet stockings, high heels, and a belt of leather, chain, or silk hanging on the hips.” One who is familiar with hard rock will soon enough see the similarities between these Argentine women’s ‘Madonna look’ and the way women in hard rock tend to dress or are represented in songs and video clips. Women in hard rock are – just like a great many men in the same scene – ‘dressed to kill’. Typical for these women’s attire is high heels, leather, chains and lipstick to create a look that kills. These women are what many men would want to ‘die’ for (see above, sexuality as a battle between life and death). This style of dress and typical look is often sung about in hard rock songs, and certainly in glam and sleaze songs – think for example of songs such as ‘Lipstick and Leather’ by Y&T or ‘Looks That Kill’ by Mötley Crüe.

Inspired by popular artists, the dress of the Argentine women as discussed by Jeffrey Tobin is clearly constructed by the society that we live in. The concept of construction is also brought up in a very ironic literal way in Autograph’s video clip for the song ‘Send Her To Me’, in which the band members ‘order’ the girl of their dreams and a man in a warehouse puts these objects of desire together, upon which they are sent to the buyers where they come alive. Also the covers for the albums Sign In Please (on which the song ‘Send Her To Me’ appears) and That’s The Stuff mirror the idea of constructed femininity; or a female body only constructed to please a man. We see a similar ‘robot woman’ on the cover of the album Down For The Count by Y&T and also the eccentric Turkish hard rock band maNga, who took part in the Eurovision Song Contest for 2010, had a robot woman on stage during their performance. Towards the end of their song, however, the robot woman starts to undress and by taking off her metal armour she reveals the woman of flesh and blood who had been locked inside the ‘protective’ masquerade.
The covers for Autograph’s albums *Sign In Please*, dated 1984, and *That’s the Stuff*, dated 1985, show the hand and the body of the girl that the band members want to be constructed and have sent to them in the video clip for *Send Her To Me*.


In “From Wallflowers to Femmes Fatales”44, Marta E. Savigliano (Jeffrey Tobin’s wife) claims that in order to move out of a wallflower position and become a femme fatale, women must first become objects of desire. For female tango dancers this means that they have to

become the object of desire for both their male dance partners and the other men watching the dancing couple. When a woman becomes a femme fatale, this means that “she is the master of her own body’s seductive powers”. According to Marta Savigliano, the femme fatale is fatal because on the one hand she has shown that she is vulnerable herself when at first she accepted her wallflower position, but on the other hand she is fatal to men because of her competitive gift of intelligent manipulation: she has succeeded in making herself the object of collective desire. This status gives her a certain power. She can choose to refuse men or measure how much of herself she is willing to show or give to the desiring subject. Savigliano calls this the ‘sweet revenge’ of the femme fatale of the night. When she is moving on to the next man (or in Savigliano’s context to the next tango dancer) she can revert to her wallflower position and, if she is smart enough not to be tricked back by the man, move up to her position of the desired goddess again. One example of a song in which the idea of a femme fatale that several men want to be with is displayed, is the song ‘Beg, Beg, Beg’ by the contemporary Swedish band H.E.A.T., a band that got attention when they took part in the preselections for the Eurovision Song Contest in 2009. In this song the singer tries to convince the girl of his dreams to give him some attention; to show or give a little more of herself to him.

I can’t believe how we never get it on
Girl you are in my fantasies
I am on my knees
And I beg, beg, beg baby for your love

The concept of the innocent girl or wallflower in hard rock songs is represented by for example school girls, teachers or nuns. Bands such as Anvil (who are actually a heavy metal band), Damn Yankees, Bon Jovi and Britny Fox all have songs in which a teenage or school girl is the protagonist. Both Anvil in their song ‘School Love’ and Britny Fox in their song ‘Girlschool’ sing about young girls ‘breaking all the rules’ at school, which turns the girl into desirable objects for the men outside the school. Bon Jovi’s song ‘Runaway’ tells the story of a teenage girl who is trying to find her own way in life and create a personality of her own which is met with dislike on the part of her parents. As this girl is turning into a ‘rock and roll chick’ she becomes an object of desire to many hard rocking guys out there. Also the nun in Golden Earring’s well-known song ‘When the Lady Smiles’ moves from wallflower to femme fatale in the imagination of the protagonist in the song and the video clip that goes with it. This protagonist is head over heels in love with a red-haired woman and on the
subway he thinks that the nun is his lover in disguise upon which he assaults her and is
advised to go and see a psychologist. At the psychologist’s office he thinks that his lover is
disguised as the psychologist’s rather boring-looking assistant upon which he also assaults
this lady while Sigmund Freud witnesses the incident from a picture on the wall. Moreover a
part of the lyrics goes as follows:

   My friends tell me:
   ‘She's the beast inside your paradise
   I guess you’ve heard it all before
   A fallen angel that has got you hypnotized
   And that always needs some more’
   And I love it, yeah I love it

This reminds us again of Weininger’s concept of the dangerous sexuality of women as
discussed in the section on sexology. In Weininger’s opinion women can turn men to slaves
and this eventually drives these men mad. Also the lady in the song is referred to as a fallen
angel, a concept which I have already introduced in the same section of my dissertation.
Another song in which the destructive powers of female sexuality are highlighted is the song
‘Drive Me To Ruin’ by LIXX, in which the singer says: “My lady is driving me to ruin all
night long!”.

The song ‘Woman of Mass Destruction’ by shock-rocker Alice Cooper also portrays a woman
who endangers men. Even the castration complex is mentioned here.

   The first time I saw her she said she wants to date me
   The next time I come back she tried to castrate me

Castration anxiety is explained by Freud as a stage in the sexual development of children. In
this phallic stage little boys become aware that the mother does not have a penis.
Consequently, the boy becomes somewhat afraid that his penis might get cut off by other men
who rival for the same woman – in this case his father, who also desires the mother. In adult
life, the castration complex gets a metaphorical meaning and it then stands for fear of loss of
male power and dominance; fear of losing virility and not being able to conquer women.45

45 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castration_anxiety
In ‘Woman Of Mass Destruction’, the dark femme fatale is described as Alice’s equal: she has all the aspects that he has as a ‘dangerous’ man, for example to ‘love’ and then leave again without remorse. He mentions how he would rather stay away from dangerous girls, and it is thus quite surprising that he is together with such a woman now.

I'm a shock-rock Romeo, I like to leave them shattered
Oh, I can love them and leave them, it doesn't really matter
I never met my match until I met that lady
She hooked me, she cooked me
She practically filleted me
Some girls try and get you in bed
Some girls are like a kick in the head
Some girls make you wish you were dead
Some girls make you blue when you should be seeing red
She's a woman, some kind of woman
I got a woman, a woman of mass destruction

It is thus clear that the term ‘femme fatale’ reflects the dangerous aspects of woman; it implies that her sexuality is fatal to man. The femme fatale is in a vertical relation to other women instead of the usual horizontal one between women as culturally constituted in our patriarchal society, as was already mentioned in the section on masculinity and femininity in our society in the first chapter. The femme fatale radiates dominance; initially over other women, but also over men who become prisoners to her desire. The video clip for the song ‘Love’s A Loaded Gun’ by Alice Cooper objectifies the femme fatale. In this music video the woman’s sexuality is literally deadly because this vamp is actually a real vampire, sucking the blood of her male victims. Her victims get caught up in a life-and-death struggle, which reflects Freud’s idea that sexuality is linked up with death; a notion that I have discussed in the section on the development of the late-Victorian sexology in the second chapter (see pages 39-40).

During the 1980’s a German band called S.A.D.O. raised some hell, not only because they sang about sex, but also because of their provocative album covers. Their album Shout, dating from 1984, depicts four attractive women in lingerie. Within the hard rock scene this is not a very rare image. The cover of their second album from 1987 however is even more interesting for my dissertation. The cover of the album Circle of Friends shows three women playing
cards at a round table on which we see a bottle of liquor. The nun on the left in the picture is (still) fully dressed and sits saintly watching the table, holding cards in her hands. The nun on the right has passed out and has her thigh exposed so we can see that she is wearing hold-up stockings underneath her robe. Both nuns are dressed in vibrant red robes and are wearing white stocking and red high-heeled pumps. The woman in the middle of the picture is wearing total black. She is dressed in nothing but a thong, a basque with garters, stockings, high heels and a see-through blouse over her basque. Three nuns playing strip poker: so far the innocent image of the god-fearing nun.

The front cover of the album Circle of Friends
by S.A.D.O. from 1987

The cover of S.A.D.O.’s third album *Dirty Fantasy*, dated 1988, toys with the similar idea of converted innocence and presupposed decency. In the front we see a young female teacher in a black blouse and a beige skirt at knee length, her hair gathered up. She is wearing glasses and looks like the stereotypical wallflower. When one turns the LP cover around there is a picture of the same woman in the same class-room, only this time she looks nothing like a wallflower. In this picture she looks like a dominatrix from sadomasochist culture; a femme fatale in a black leather basque with garters and stocking, leather gloves, a leather studded collar, high-heeled ankle boots and a whip – all this to the excited delight of the male pupil in the front row.
The images above show the front and back of the album cover of *Dirty Fantasy* by S.A.D.O. from 1988.

The idea of uncovering the hidden sexuality of an at first sight decently dressed female teacher is also present in the video clip for the song ‘Hot for Teacher’ by Van Halen. In this video clip the singer speaks for the children who are wondering what the teacher is going to
look like this year. This question is followed by a series of fanciful assumptions of what she could look like. First we see a young woman in a blue bikini entering the classroom who looks like a participant in a beauty contest. The next fantasy shows a teacher in a very short black skirt with all the boys in the classroom staring at her as she walks towards the blackboard. The next imaginary teacher uses the desks for a catwalk, takes off her dress and dances wildly in front of the pupils in a cropped top, briefs and high heels.

In the examples above teachers and nuns as portrayed by these hard rock bands are reminiscent of the main character in Hall’s novel *the Well of Loneliness* (1928). Mainly the nuns are marked by a psychological conflict. On the one hand they are supposed to observe their physiological sterility, but on the other hand they are depicted as emotionally ardent and capable of lust and love. However, these women in hard rock do not display notions of same-sex desire. Moreover, they do not display psychological conflict themselves; rather, their role is restricted to an acting out of male fantasies.

The girl in the video clip for ‘Rainbow In The Dark’ by Dio – whose front man Ronnie James Dio sadly passed away on 16th May 2010 after a struggle against stomach cancer – is not a nun, teacher or school girl. She is merely portrayed as a young innocent girl with short red hair and a sleeved knee-long red polka-dotted dress in the style of the 1950s. She also wears a white shawl that covers her neck and possible décolletage. She appears to have a sneaky secret admirer who looks like the typical nerdy type of guy with his dark-framed specs and messenger bag. The secret admirer is following her through town, not knowing that she is on her way to meet her lover. On the way they pass by a sex shop, which gives the sneaky stalker an uncomfortable feeling as in his mind he links what he sees in the sex shop window up with fine meat products at a butcher’s shop. The girl in the video clip does not look like the typical hard rock chick, but she eventually hooks up with a long-haired guitarist in a leather jacket and skin-tight jeans anyway. Her lover is playing a mean red guitar, which seems to give the stalker a headache. The audience can clearly see the fear and terror in the stalker’s eyes when he sees his object of desire together with this ‘social outcast’. The stalker drops his messenger bag and runs off scared. Although the girl looks like an innocent wallflower, she turns out to be a femme fatale after all. This also gives her hard rocking lover a sort of ego-boost: he can turn any wallflower into an ardent and desirable femme fatale and, what’s more, he can make her want him too.
Love, lust and murders of passion

Love songs in hard rock and heavy metal are called ‘(hard) rock ballads’ or ‘power ballads’. The ballad\textsuperscript{47}, however, is a much older genre and has its origins in medieval Britain. It is traditionally a narrative song about a past event. The theme of a ballad can be religious, tragic, heroic, romantic or comic. The ballad usually consists of four-line stanzas of which the second and the fourth line rhyme (rhyme scheme abcb), but variations on this pattern occur – the length of the lines and the rhyme scheme can vary (for example abab), as well as the number of lines per stanza. As the medieval ballad was meant to be sung to a wide audience, the language was rather simple. The ballad had a catchy refrain and could therefore easily be remembered by the audience, which is also true for contemporary (and older) rock ballads.

Hard rock ballads often have four-line stanzas of which the rhyme scheme can be abcb or abab, but sometimes all the lines in a stanza rhyme. As an example of the latter type I include the first stanza of ‘Wait’ by the Danish band White Lion:

\begin{quote}
\hspace{1cm}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{46} http://www.sleazeroxx.com/news09/1125dio.shtml
Wait, just a moment before our love will die
Cause I must know the reason why we say goodbye
Wait, just a moment and tell me why
Cause I can show you loving that you won't deny

The four-line stanzas in ‘Eyes That Never Lie’ by Petr Elfimov, who took part in the Eurovision Song Contest in 2009 for Belarus, follow yet another rhyme scheme, namely aabc:

You’re my desert and well
You’re my heaven and hell
You’re my reason to be
My love song, my battle cry

However, there are also examples of rock ballads that consist of three-line (or even six-line) stanzas with rhyme scheme aab or abb. The following stanzas illustrate both rhyme schemes. The first example is taken from ‘Roses On My Grave’ by Alleycat Scratch. The second example is taken from ‘Valentine Lost’ by Eirikur Hauksson, the Icelandic participant in the Eurovision Song Contest in 2007.

1. Jesus gonna take me down
   To the other side of town
   Oh and you won’t see me slipping away

2. I'll let the music play while love lies softly bleeding
   In heavy hands
   On shadow lands
   As thunderclouds roll and sunset is receding
   No summer wine
   No Valentine

The second example above could as well be perceived as a four-line stanza with abac rhyme scheme. The second and fourth lines would then consist of rhyming half lines. From the examples mentioned above we can thus deduce that contemporary song lyrics often follow the form of a traditional ballad.
By the end of the eighteenth century, the term ‘ballad’ got the meaning of a slow popular love song. Today a ballad still refers to a sentimental song, although it is not always about love. ‘Les Morts Dansants’ by Magnum for example is a rock ballad about war and its casualties. Skid Row’s ‘18 And Life’ tells the story of a young boy called Ricky who received a prison sentence because he shot and killed his friend with a gun he thought was unloaded. The song is based on true facts\(^48\).

Most hard rock and power ballads are, however, songs about sincere feelings and finding true love. The song ‘I Could Never Be Without You’ by Enuff Z’Nuff for example is about a man displaying his true feelings, moreover admitting that he did not believe to ever find love before he met his current girlfriend.

I don't know how I ever found love
Right up 'til now there was no such
Please don't fear a thing about us, just believe in me
If you ever fear you doubt us, let me make you see
I could never be without you, I could never live alone


Another hard rock ballad about finding true love is ‘Love Of A Lifetime’ by Firehouse. This song is about finding mutual love that makes all your dreams true. Even though the singer admits to know that the road is long, he is still confident that he and his girlfriend will make it because their love is strong.

With you I never wonder - will you be there for me
With you I never wonder - you're the right one for me
I finally found the love of a lifetime
A love to last my whole life through
I finally found the love of a lifetime
Forever in my heart, I finally found the love of a lifetime

Also the British glam band Tigertailz – hailing from Wales – has a song about falling in love. The song ‘Fall In Love Again’ appeared as the last track on their first album *Young And Crazy*. This album was released in 1984 and has the English singer Steevi Jaimz on vocals. The albums released after that have the Welshman Kim Hooker on vocals. The song ‘Fall In Love Again’ forms a contrast with most of the other songs that appeared on the first album, as those songs are mainly about sexual conquest. Also, in ‘Fall In Love Again’ the singer notes that he never felt this way before about a girl – perhaps this was the reason for this song to be the last one on the record.

I hear you talking to me on the telephone
You light up my life as I stand all alone
Your voice so gentle as you whisper words to me
I feel so far away, I’m waiting patiently
Never felt this way before for someone, no
You got me begging, I want more than before
When I see you I’m gonna fall in love again
Emotion holds me as I fall in love again
Many hard rock songs deal with the subjects of sex and eroticism, but the idea of true love is often left out of the picture. The focus is on desire, eroticism and lust rather than on falling in love or starting a serious relationship. As mentioned already in the first chapter, sex – and consequently lust – remains a taboo subject in many cultures. In the preface to the 1990 edition of *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler mentions how Simone de Beauvoir explained that to be a woman equals to be a mystery for men. Consequently, starting a relationship might be a risky adventure. Moreover, Butler adds that according to Sartre all desire, presumed as heterosexual and masculine, was defined as ‘trouble’ and scandal. As rock and roll music was the first popular genre that introduced the subject of sexuality – and also lust – in music, it gave rise to controversy from the start.

In the song ‘I Think You’ll Remember Tonight’ by Axe, the singer admits that he is not the best looking man around, but if the girl – who seems to be pretty lonely – wants to, they can spend the night together and he will make sure that she will remember everything; however, perhaps not his name. The tone of the song is romantic and tender, though, rather than lustful.

I ain't special, baby, I'm just a man
Who don't look quite as good as I used to
I’ve been around, baby, I understand

---

You can see by my face all the wars that I’ve been through
You may not remember my name
But I think you'll remember tonight, if you want to
Don't have much, baby, here's all I got
And even that ain't gonna last forever
I ain't trying to be something I'm not
I just wanna spend the night together

The song ‘Sexpecations’ by Frenchkiss, a new glam revelation from France, clearly reflects that what is actually expected is sex rather than a relationship. No romance or tenderness in this song; what you get is straight in your face lechery.

Would you dare? Would you care?
Would you let me in anywhere?
I'll be nice, I swear – You bet!
Come on baby, I can't get enough
Take me to your limit, take me to the top
I want your scream to blow my ears off
We got Sexpecations, all night bad temptations
So tight, close to Heaven, so hot, hot, hot Sexpecations

*The young glam rockers from the French band Frenchkiss. From left to right:
Nick, L'Viet, Franky, Tamass and Ax'Hell.*
Sometimes the boundaries between love and lust become completely blurred, as is sung of in the song ‘Lust Or Love’ by the German band the Scorpions. In the first stanza the male singer is still looking for true love, but as the song continues, he begins to realize that what he is after seems to be lust rather than true love.

The innocence is gone, but still I'm holding on
Searching for love that lasts forever
[...]
Maybe it's time to draw the line
There's just one thing that's on my mind
Is it lust, is it love? Whatever it is, I can't get enough
[...]
Lovers come and go, sometimes it's hard to know
If this will be a night to treasure
When the damage has been done and the hurting has begun
You'll justify a moment's pleasure

Another example of a song in which lust or ‘sex without love’ is praised, is ‘Blue Eyes’ by the 1990s band Erotic Suicide. In this song the singer wonders: “Won’t you happen to be my weekend one-night stand?” Similarly, the song ‘Wild Women’ by After Hours is merely about having fun (involving sex and alcohol) rather than getting involved in a relationship with those women. Moreover, it does not even matter what the woman is like; the man will go with what she has got anyhow:

Whatever you sell, I’m buying
I’ll take what you’ve got
You’re setting my heart on fire
I want to get deep inside you
Wild women, whiskey and wine
Wild women make you feel fine

The pursuit of sexual desire and conquest could eventually lead to an aversion to love. Love is perceived as a frightening concept: you end up hurt, scarred and heartbroken; or as Pat Benatar sang, ‘Love is a Battlefield’. The same idea is clearly represented in the song ‘Soul [sic] Survivor’ by the sleazy glam rockers of Alleycat Scratch.
And hey, I'm a soul survivor
Running from the killing fields of love
And never looking back
And hey, I'm the soul survivor
Crown of thorns around my heart
To keep it from falling apart
'Cause I'm the soul survivor

In their song ‘True Love And Other Fairytales’, Electric Angels state that at the age of seventeen, this is something that the lovers in the lyrical story still believed in. They swore that they would never become like their neighbours; a husband and wife who were fighting daily. But the implication in the song is that as the lovers grew older they also grew out of this belief, and there is no such thing as real love.

   We were so naive then, at seventeen
   Yeah, we believed in
   True love and other fairy tales
   Our bed of roses has become a bed of nails
   You keep the rainbow, tell everyone we failed
   So much for true love and other fairy tales

Similarly, in the song ‘Ball and Chain’ by the Canadian band Aldo Nova the singer tells the story of a painful break-up. He feels like he has been a fool to fall in love, and in the future he will be smart enough not to fall in love again. His girlfriend never showed him how much she loved him; she did not say the words “I love you”, which turned the relationship into a burden for the man.

   And how many times must I let the phone ring, just to get to you
   Could it be that now this love has long gone dead
   No oh no - Thought it hasn't been so long
   No oh no - I'm sure you're feeling's gone and then
   Love, love feels like a ball and chain
   What a fool I've been to fall in love again
   Love, love when will it ever end
   I don't think that I can ever love again
Another example of a hard rock song about love gone wrong is ‘Burning Our Bed’ by the well-known American artist Alice Cooper, whose real name is Vincent Damon Furnier. Just like in ‘True Love And Other Fairytales’, the relationship between the persona Alice and his girlfriend was close to perfection at first; Alice sings that “there used to be a time when you were everything, my flame through the night”. But then the girl lied to him and just like the singing persona in Aldo Nova’s ‘Ball And Chain’ he feels like he could not be together with a woman that he cannot trust anymore; he sings: “Well I used to think you were so fine, how could I be so blind?”. Even though his heart aches – “sometimes a man can bleed” – he still has his pride and he will never crawl back to her. He also adds that “You can hold my heart for ransom, but you'll never own my soul”. Burning their bed symbolizes the end of their love affair.

Baby, I might lose my mind
Maybe I might lose my head
One thing I got to do
Is torch those sheets and pillows too
Baby, I'm burning our bed

Some songs, however not that many, are about violence towards a girl, and more precisely about murder. In ‘Roses On White Lace’, Alice Cooper sings about a girl who hurt him:

You hurt me in the deepest way
I'm crippled inside

From the lyrics one could deduce that the girl rejected him to marry another man. In reaction to this rejection he visits her on her wedding-night and murders her in cold blood. Even though he kills her out of anger, he still seems to love her. She cannot fight him anymore when he wants to kiss her, or walk out on him once she is dead. Strangely, the groom is not mentioned at all in the song.

I saw you in your wedding gown, the prettiest dress
I came into your room that night and made such a mess
In my own way, I lovingly kiss the bride
With your ring in your hand
Your eyes and your mouth open wide
The song turns into a horror story in which a mentally deranged killer plays the leading part. The angry killer is driven to madness because he cannot have the girl that he is lusting after. He murders her in a passionate way, symbolizing punishment and forgiveness.

I took your evil skin away, it's all cut and dried
I saw you tonight and carefully took your hand
With some smears on my cheeks
I knew that you'd understand
In my eyes blood drops look like roses on white lace
They won't wash away
In my mind they're roses on white lace
Straight from the heart
So dead upon the bed, still searching for your head
They're never gonna find your face, it's hidden away
I found a very special place where you used to play

Another song that seems to depict a cruel murder of passion is a song by Lizzy Borden titled ‘Love You To Pieces’, which appeared on the album with the same name from 1985 (see picture on page 51). A similar idea as in Alice Cooper’s ‘Roses On White Lace’ is expressed here:

You can't walk out on me now
I couldn't let you go
If I can't have you, no one will
I see them all through the eyes
Through the eyes of a man

Also similar is how the psychopathic murderer still displays affection after he has killed his lover. Just like Alice Cooper in the song discussed before, the murderer thinks that the girl understands why he did what he did.

Forever you'll stay safe and sound
Buried deep into the ground
In the back yard sealed real tight
I know you'll never leave me now
Cause I know what's best for you
And now there's nothing you can do
So I think you understand
What I see, I see through your eyes

When this song was performed during the Murderess Metal Road Show Live, on 13\textsuperscript{th} December 1985 during the American tour to promote the album \textit{Love You To Pieces}, Lizzy murdered his object of desire with a huge axe. He decapitates his lover with the bloody axe, grabs her head and sings to her as if she can still hear him\textsuperscript{51}. As on stage this story is acted out with an axe, the ‘smoking gun’ in the opening stanza of the song could mean something else than the murder weapon, and refer – just like the phrase ‘love gun’ is the song of the same name by KISS – to the man’s penis.

Through my eyes I watch as you tried to run
Over you I stand with my smoking gun

\textit{Female-fronted and all-female hard rock bands}

Although most bands in the hard rock genre consist entirely of male artists, there are quite some female artists in this genre as well. These female hard rock artists can front an otherwise male band, but there are also bands that consist of women only. Women in hard rock bands often display themselves as desirable femmes fatales.

\textit{Chrissy Steele,}
\textit{the singer of the female-fronted band with the same name from the early 1990’s.}

We can make a distinction between all-female bands and female-fronted bands. The female-fronted band Cheetah has two women in the band, but they are both on vocals. Sometimes a

\textsuperscript{51} \url{http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNn1-C1UqcY}
male-fronted band consists of one or more women too, as is the case with the band Madam X, in which two band members are female (the sisters Petrucci on guitars and drums) and two male. Women in ‘mixed’ bands tend to come across as more direct and rude, and in a way thus more masculine than women in all-girl bands. Sally Cato for example, the singer and only woman in Smashed Gladys, appears to be ‘one of the boys’ in the band. She conforms to the expectations about guys in hard rock bands, or about men in general. Sally’s use of expletives and vulgar language, for instance singing about ‘getting laid’, is a typical example of masculine behaviour.

According to Vivian de Klerk, it takes considerable self-confidence to refuse to conform to the expectations that society has about females. So when female hard rock artists talk or sing in a way that society considers to be masculine, it gives them status and power.

In Fetish: Fashion, Sex & Power, Valerie Steele notes how not only our bodies are sexed, but also our minds. Consequently, women have different attitudes towards sex than men. Steele adds that perverse behaviour is more common among men than women. From a feminine perspective, sex without love would generally be perceived as an ‘empty experience’.

---


According to Steele, however, “attitudinal difference is not absolute” and “exceptions do not disprove generalizations”. One can notice that women in hard rock bands do not usually conform to the so-called feminine attitude towards sexuality, and the theme of desire and lust is often brought up in their songs. However, sexually explicit lyrics are more common for female-fronted bands, in which women present themselves as ‘one of the boys’, than for all-female bands.

Although the lyrics of all-female bands are less sexually explicit than those of female-fronted bands, these bands still sing about similar subjects. However, their attitude towards sexuality is more feminine and tender and involves falling in love rather than mere lust. One of the best-known all-female bands from the heydays of hard rock, glam and hair metal is Vixen. The band consists of four women. In the original line-up, Roxy Petrucci from Madam X played drums in this band. In Vixen’s song ‘One Night Alone’, the singing persona tells her lover that she loves him before they spend the night together again. The song ‘Only A Heartbeat Away’ is about two lovers who are afraid to give in to desire, but the female persona tells the man not to be afraid, because it is love rather than just lust.

We've been too scared of taking a fall
We're just a heartbeat away
From giving our all
It's only love, only love

In comparison to Smashed Gladys’s songs in which Sally Cato sings about getting laid and keeping the backseat of her car warm, the songs by Vixen come across as sentimental love songs. However, women in all-female bands still portray themselves as strong; they fall in and out of love but will not suffer too much from their broken hearts. They spread the message that a man cannot break them by dumping them; they will dry their tears, stand up again and go on with their lives. This message is clear in the song ‘Cryin’’.

The tears have fallen to the floor,
But you won't catch me cryin' anymore

Similarly, the song ‘Edge Of A Broken Heart’ is also about going through a break-up. The female persona realizes that her boyfriend does not care enough about their relationship. She is “living on the edge of a broken heart” while he is seeing another woman, so she decides to put an end to it.
I'll find someone else who's nothing like you
Two can play the game as well
And you're gonna be sorry baby, when it's over
I've been doing things for way too long
but baby that's over
It won't be easy but I gotta be strong
And if I wanna cry I don't need your shoulder

The all-female band Vixen in the late 1980’s. From left to right:
drummer Roxy Petrucci, singer Janet Gardner, bass-player Share Pedersen and guitarist Jan Kuehnemund.

It is thus clear that these women in hard rock bands portray themselves as both sexy and strong. They are women with a free spirit, moreover capable of dominance over men. This leads to the idea of the reversal of gender roles. Phallic displays are inverted: women in hard rock bands – especially in female-fronted bands – come across as desiring subjects whereas the men become their objects of desire. In the video clip for the song ‘Some Girls Do’ by the Canadian artist Lee Aaron for example, the male is clearly objectified54.

However, female hard rock bands do not objectify men on album covers. Female-fronted bands often have the singer alone on the cover. If the male band members appear on the

54 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVIFUX6nSM
album cover, they stand behind the lady. All-female bands usually have all the band members on the cover. Do these female artists devote themselves to the passive role of the object of desire in doing so? Or do these women take the dominant role upon them by leaving the men in the band in the background or completely out of the picture? Probably, it is a combination of both.

The albums Bodyrock by Lee Aaron, released in 1989, and Dangerous Curves by Lita Ford, released in 1991, only have the objectified singer on the cover.

On the album cover for Femme Fatale’s self-titled album, released in 1988, we see all the band members, but singer Lorraine Lewis stands in the foreground. Her prominent place in the picture makes her look powerful.
3. b. Construction of image

**Fashion and the construction of identity**

Valerie Steele begins her essay ‘Fashion, Fetish, Fantasy’ by saying that “fashion has often been thought of as a kind of mask, disguising the wearer’s ‘true’ identity”\(^{55}\). In hard rock and its sub genres, a specific fashion style is used to break social boundaries. Hard rockers use their image as an act of rebellion against society’s normativity rather than as a way to conceal who or what they are. In the song ‘Body Talk’ by KIX, which I discussed on page 61, the singer says: “You don't have to read minds to know that you're my kind”. What you see is thus what you get – but usually this also contains a sexual connotation. The girl’s attire in the song by KIX tells the male persona that she is like him – perhaps he can tell from her clothes that she is into hard rock music too, or perhaps she merely displays an ardent interest similar to his own in sexuality.

![Mötley Crüe in the 1980s](image1.png)

Remarkable in some bands, although not in all, is the fondness for items from fetish culture, such as thigh-high boots, high heels, (black) leather and latex items, chains and straps that remind of bondage. All this reinforces the power and dominance that the hard rock and metal

scene is notable for, as well as the shock effect that hard rockers want to bring about. Valerie
Steele mentions moreover that black is the colour of power, as in the biker’s black leather
jacket and the femme fatale’s little black dress. The sexually explicit song ‘Shock Me’,
written by Ace Frehley for his band KISS, makes reference to fetishistic black leather and
combines this with the power and shock effect that it creates.

Don't cut the power on me
I'm feeling low, so get me high
Shock me, make me feel better
Shock me, put on your black leather

Valerie Steele’s essay “Fashion, Fetish, Fantasy” and also her book Fetish: Fashion, Sex &
Power deal with fetish costumes for women. She explains how the body of the dominatrix is
“transformed into an armoured phallus” by means of hard leather or shiny wet-look latex.
Other phallic symbols worn by the dominatrix are high-heeled shoes or boots, gloves and
whips. However, Steele notes that some men also wear phallic clothing. According to her the
two most important icons within homosexual pornography are the cowboy and the biker –
icons that mirror the hyperperformance of masculinity. Cowboy boots, heavy belts, leather
chaps and motorcycle jackets have also become part of female fashion, but Steele adds that
this has not stripped these items of their macho aura. All of these macho pieces of clothing are
common in the scene of hard rock, glam and sleaze; and the image of the biker often consists
of cowboy and native apparel, such as cowboy boots, fringed jackets, conchos and Navajo
jewellery (for example on the cover of Don’t Touch Me There by Silent rage, see picture on
page 59).

The wild 1980s:
Blackie Lawless from W.A.S.P.
wear a black leather jacket and tights
adorned with shiny conchos and bright feathers.
Note the wild hair and heavy black eyeliner.

In *Fetish: Fashion, Sex & Power*, Valerie Steele notes that “fetishism is not only about sexuality; it is also very much about power and perception”. However, in the eyes of most people, fetish gear refers to ‘kinky sex’ and is therefore rather shocking.

Alice cooper in shiny black leather trousers and jacket, wearing gloves and heavy cowboy boots. He is clothed in power. The high-heeled pump in the first picture and the whip remind of fetishism and according to Valerie Steele these are phallic symbols, usually associated with the female dominatrix.

As shown in chapter two, women are objectified in explicit ways in hard rock music, both on album covers and in the lyrics of the songs. However, one would soon notice that there is a high preference with hard rock artists for women in stockings and high heels. Chapter four of Valerie Steele’s book on Fetish deals with (high-heeled) shoes and what these symbolize. Steele notes that because of the association of small feet with feminine beauty, high-heeled shoes play an important role in erotic imagination. Moreover, wearing high heels makes the hips and buttocks sway and it changes the posture of the wearer. The bosom is thrust forward and also the contour of the leg is accentuated. High heels also make the legs seem longer.
According to Steele, the significance of high heels (but also platform boots) is not merely erotic; these shoes can also signify a high status, but as men’s fashion is more subdued in our culture, high heels became associated with women and femininity. Steele adds that heavy leather boots became associated with masculinity, but also with powerful phallic femininity.

![Image of Blackie Lawless and Femme Fatale band members wearing boots]

*The left picture shows Blackie Lawless wearing black leather overknee boots during a live performance. These boots have high heels too. The right pictures shows the band Femme Fatale, who were popular in the late 1980s, with singer Lorraine Lewis in the middle. All the band members are wearing cowboy boots, but hers stand out most because of the vibrant red colour.*

In her chapter on shoes, Valerie Steele explains the relation between shoes and sex. A high-heeled shoe can symbolize the penis, but also the vagina into which the phallic foot slips. Moreover, high heels are usually linked up with dominance, which would then mean that women in high-heeled shoes have all the power. Besides, Steele notes that in our Western culture high heels are associated with sexually sophisticated women and this is probably why they are favoured by prostitutes and cross-dressers. On the contrary, low heels are associated with the absence of female sexual allure.

High-heeled shoes were in 1994 referred to as ‘cruel shoes’ in the fetish magazine *Bizarre*. Valerie Steele also notes how stiletto-heeled pumps are the classic ‘bitchy’ shoes. One may
wonder why so many women love shoes. Freud’s theories could only explain the thrills that men get out of seeing women in high heels, but they fail to explain why women love these. Following fashion writer Holly Brubach, Valerie Steele notes that “no woman with a normal, healthy shoe drive would content herself with a closetful of phallic symbols”. A man’s fascination for women in high-heeled shoes is clearly expressed in the song ‘High Heel Heaven’ – also note the nice alliteration in the title – by Heist.

![Hard rock album covers on which high heeled pumps appear. High Heel Heaven by Heist, dated 1989; She’s a Tease by Ana Black, dated 1987 and Step On It by Boss, dated 1984.](image)

Pornography on the one hand pictures women in high heels as sluts; these women display themselves as available sexual objects. Fashion magazines on the other hand focus on a fantasy of men worshipping women in high heels. Valerie Steele adds that shoes thus play an important role in the creation, but also in the violation, of gender stereotypes. Also in hard rock women in high heels are sometimes portrayed as vicious and nasty or cheap and easy in the sexual sense of the word. Examples are songs like Mötley Crüe’s ‘Hell On High Heels’ (see page 30) or ‘Murder In High Heels’ by KISS, in which there is also a reference to death:

She's a vision in leather
Like salt on a wound
Just a turn of a knob
And she's real fine tuned
But she's murder,
In high heels
The cover of the German metal band Accept’s self-titled album from 1992 portrays a dangerous woman in high heels.

The fifth chapter of Valerie Steele’s *Fetish* is about the fascination with underwear and lingerie as both fetish and fashion. Steele will also discuss underwear-as-outerwear, a phenomenon that also exists in the scene of hard rock and its sub genres. Think for example of garters and garter belts being visibly worn over jeans or tights by men as well as by women. Valerie Steele explains how underclothing takes a special place in the eroticism of dress because a person in underwear is neither dressed nor undressed. She also mentions how fashion writer Eric Pritchard argued that lingerie has something in common with religious beliefs, namely that the invisible is more important than the visible.

From left to right you see Peter London, Martin Sweet, Dave Lepard and Eric Young.

---

Underwear holds intermediate position between the poles of being naked or dressed. Moreover, underwear triggers one’s curiosity and interest in sexuality as it is only a small step away from being completely undressed as a prelude to sexual intimacy. Also, as underwear comes in direct contact with the skin the sexual power of the naked body rubs off on underwear.

Valerie Steele poses her readers the question which is sexier: with or without underwear? Of course not everybody would respond in the same way, but apparently most men find a partly dressed woman more alluring. Valerie Steele remarks how many men like to linger and observe a woman in undergarments before proceeding to undress further and go on to sexual intimacy. Hard rock album covers can confirm such assumptions. Besides, lingerie makes a woman feel like a woman and it also strengthens her position of power and control – she can take off several layers of clothing before she is completely naked before the man.
Above you see the covers for the albums *Invasion Of Your Privacy*, released in 1985 by RATT and *Let Them Eat Metal*, released in 1984 by the Rods. Both covers display women in undergarments, but RATT’s cover is more innocent than the Rods’.

In her discussion of women’s underwear, Valerie Steele also mentions the relevance of black stockings. She explains how the legs are the way up to the genitals and stockings help to guide the viewer’s eyes from the high-heeled shoes upwards. The most common colour for stockings is black, but white is not too uncommon either. Black stockings symbolize the sinful woman, whereas white stockings stand for purity. Also, black stockings form the best contrast on a white skin. The top of the stockings usually consists of an opaque band. This border creates a horizontal line across the thighs, not far below the genitals, as if it wants to say that this is as far as the gaze of the viewer can go. This also reflects a woman’s power to control sexuality.
Valerie Steele mentions how in the 1970s the punks liked to wear underwear as outerwear, especially shaping bras and girdles. This was a contrary reaction to the bra-less hippie generation before them. The concept of underwear-as-underwear, which also occurs in the hard rock scene, is to be seen as a taboo-breaking attempt to demystify sexuality in our culture. Moreover, Valerie Steele quotes the designer Josie Natori, saying that “lingerie-inspired clothing is here to stay, because it’s provocative in a positive manner”. Not only bras and briefs, but also slip dresses, nightgowns and negligees are associated with nudity and sexuality. Valerie Steele writes that women have become free to express themselves as women, but we cannot control how others read our appearances. The hookerish street look for example liberates the wearer in a way, but it is also still perceived by others as ‘the whore look’. Public display of underwear or lingerie-inspired fashion violates traditional taboos about the body and sexuality according to Valerie Steele. Traditional taboos make a distinction between those expressions of gender that are to be kept in the private sphere and those that are acceptable in public.

Chapter seven of Steele’s book *Fetish* deals with clothing that fits like a second skin. Skin-tight jeans and tights are typical hard rock apparel. Steele states that mainstream fashion too
has become more body conscious over the past decades and these days close-fitting attire is found attractive by a wider range of society. As the skin is one of our most important erogenous zones, skin-tight clothing brings out the sexual aspect of the body.

The picture on the left shows the 1990s band Bangalore Choir: every band member is wearing skin-tight jeans or leggings. The picture on the right shows Blackie Lawless from the band W.A.S.P. in a skin-tight tiger striped outfit. This picture appeared on the album cover for Inside The Electric Circus, dated 1986.

A fabric such as leather cannot only fit like a second skin, it is also the skin of an animal. Valerie Steele notes that motorcycles are associated with both leather garments and rough sex, but she adds that in reality, leather does not necessarily imply a connection to fetish culture or SM. Leather symbolizes a counterculture and a certain status. Punk fashion, just like hard rock and heavy metal, uses leather attire to create a powerful image. Nevertheless, leather outfits also became linked up with homosexuality, and Valerie Steele states that consequently leather gear became a synonym for ‘queer’. When leather became popular in the 1970s, this was because homosexuality and SM lost some of their taboo aspects and became more accepted at that time. Steele states that “by the early 1980s, leather was ubiquitous”. This period was also the heyday for hard rock and heavy metal and the 1980s are the pre-eminent decade for the sub genres sleaze and glam.
The American band Tuff, popular in the early 1990s, dressed in skin-tight leather. Valerie Steele states that “leather provides a reassuring symbol of virile male sexuality”.

The final section of Valerie Steele’s chapter on second skin fashion deals with tattoos and piercings. According to designer Jean Paul Gaultier, tattoos and piercings are not just a primitive thing. It is also about decorating the body. However, important is the shock effect created by these decorations. Valerie Steele writes that getting a tattoo or a piercing is often about ‘being in people’s face’; it is about telling people that you are not like everybody else. The shock value of this body art is directly related to the so-called ‘punk thing’. Many, if not most, artists in hard rock and related genres have tattoos and/or piercings. Valerie Steele ends the chapter stating that the most widely accepted form of skin decoration remains make-up, and then especially lipstick. Lipstick and eyeliner are, besides hairspray, the ‘bare necessities’ of glam and sleaze rockers.

Steevi Jaimz in his Tigertailz days (mid-80s):
Wild hairsprayed hair, black eyeliner, lipstick,
Pierced ears and a tattoo on the shoulder.
In the concluding chapter of *Fetish: Fashion, Sex & Power* Valerie Steele states that items such as high heels, leather, lingerie and whips foreground issues of sex and power. Many fashion designers use these items to create the image of a powerful and sexy woman on the catwalk. However, most of these ideas are taken from street fashion and subculture styles, of which the punk and hard rock scenes are striking examples.

As discussed before in this dissertation, women and their sexuality have ever since the Victorian age been described as dangerous because of their ability to enslave men. Steele adds that on an unconscious level, men are afraid of women and their sexuality. That is why men need phallic signifiers to be reassured of their own masculinity; in other words, men need a pair of high heels and stockings to pave the way towards that temple of doom called the vagina.

In the section ‘Clothed in Power’ Valerie Steele writes again how high heels are a sign of femininity and therefore one knows that the person approaching in high heels is a woman – unless it is a transvestite. If we link this up with glam rockers in high heels, this is not entirely true of course. These rockers are gendered as heterosexual, but their image is gendered as ‘queer’. They are not transvestites – they do not want to look exactly like a woman – but their image is one that does not want to be pinned down.

*The American rockers from the well-known band KISS in skin-tight outfits, make-up and high heels.*

In the same section Steele also mentions how the cowboy, the biker and the policeman or uniform look are phallic styles of dress that are associated with hypermasculinity. These looks seem to protect the wearer’s inner self, but at the same time they project an image of aggressive masculinity. In hard rock one could find examples of this attire galore: cowboy boots; leather jackets, sometimes fringed or adorned with conchos; cop hats; stylish blazer jackets and top hats are worn by many hard rock artists and fans. About the biker look Steele adds that the motorcycle itself may refer to the pounding rhythm of sexual excitement, because of it is a powerful machine with thrusting pistons and a roaring engine. Moreover, the association of motorcycles and bikers with hypermasculinity would denote that men are sex machines.

Left: Alice Cooper is his younger years on a motorcycle, bottle of beer in his hand – the display of virility. Right: Jan Kuehnemund, the female guitarist from the band Vixen on a heavy motorcycle – does she symbolize herself as a sex machine or is she merely acting out a man’s fantasy?

In the final pages of her book on fetish and fashion, Valerie Steele also brings up the aspect of rebellion against the social order. Someone who rebels against society’s normativity is seen as ‘culturally marginal’. A ‘sexual outlaw’ represents “radical, transgressive sexuality” and gains a certain status that is admired by some, if not many. Steele states, moreover, that “most people who wear black leather and fetish gear are not ‘into’ SM or fetishism”. With this she says that her book is not ‘just’ about fetish, it is about the display of sexuality and power in Western society in a broader sense, and her theories can therefore also be applied to other subcultures than fetishism.
Alice Cooper, dressed in fetishistic black leather and chains, is whipped by a masked dominant woman in black leather lingerie. This stage act displays both sexuality and power and ‘shock rocks’ the audience.

**Women in hard rock bands**

Women in hard rock bands dress in a similar way as male hard rockers do and wear ‘masculine’ attire such as leather jackets, heavy boots, belts and chains. They borrow the ‘macho’ cowboy or biker look and appear as fashionable cowgirls or female bikers who radiate power and dominance. Following fashion scholar Elizabeth Wilson, Valerie Steele writes that “self-presentation is about power, and this has often meant that women’s fashions have drawn on male prototypes.”

Consequently, when women wear these ‘masculine’ clothes, they become symbolically powerful. Moreover, this female power is reinforced by the use of sexually explicit themes in their songs (see section 3.a.).

---

In *Fetish: Fashion, Sex & Power*, Valerie Steele notes how women tried to avoid looking too feminine during the 1970’s and 1980’s – which were also the heydays of hard rock and heavy metal – because femininity was associated with powerlessness in those days, and consequently they would not be taken seriously. Female hard rock singers such as Lorraine Lewis from Femme Fatale, Lee Aaron or Lisa Dominique look more feminine than Sally Cato from Smashed Gladys does. Still, their image also has masculine aspects such as leather biker jackets and cowboy boots. What these women in hard rock do is ‘power dressing’. Valerie Steele explains that women do not want to have the phallus, but they want what it symbolizes in a patriarchal society: power. Nevertheless, women in hard rock often combine masculine garments with provocative women’s attire, which gives them ‘sexual power’ and thus also a sense of freedom. Steele recounts that, in the past, conservative men wanted women’s bodies to be controlled and concealed. As women became more independent they started to wear both masculine and body-revealing pieces of clothing to express their freedom.
Contrast between stage image and lyrical content

The use of sexual explicitness in lyrics, stage-image and behaviour all adds up to the shock effect that glam, sleaze and hard rockers alike create in order to rebel against society’s boundaries of heteronormative gender norms such as ‘decent’ fashion and omission of sexuality in public spheres. In an act of rebellion against these social rules, rock bands have from the very beginning stigmatised themselves by means of their looks; think for example of the ‘sexually subversive’ long hair that was so not done on men until the Beatles became popular with it. If it weren’t for these early rock ‘n’ roll bands, the follow-up generation of rock musicians would not have been able to look the way they did or still do. The exploitation of image is the key to expanding their musical genre.

In the chapter ‘Men’s clothing and masculine identities’\textsuperscript{60}, Diane Crane writes that music subcultures adopt flamboyant and unconventional styles of dress that draw on theatrical traditions, but certain pieces of clothing, such as the blue jeans and leather jacket, have continually recurred. Crane explains that the meaning of these popular garments has evolved since the 1950’s, but they are still associated with rebellion and non-conformity.

In an interview from the early 1970’s, Marc Bolan talks about the evolution in rock ‘n’ roll music. Marc Bolan was one of the pioneers of British glam rock in those days. He explains to the interviewer that “certainly, there’s been a change in England in two years and we are part of the change, I mean guys now can wear make-up, they can shout and scream”. Bolan also adds how remarkable it is for a rock star to be interviewed in a news programme, to be allowed to share his mind with a wide audience because he is now a famous person. He says: “Two years ago I couldn’t have done. And I can even swear a little bit or show my leg or something, you know which I couldn’t have done before. But every five years something like this happens.” He then goes on to explain that what his band is doing, is what the Beatles have started before them. Marc says: “We play for the kids that never saw the Beatles, never saw Jimi Hendrix. They are seeing us as their sort of people. Because they didn’t see, they weren’t around then. But the world’s changed in ten years you know, people like me are being interviewed which wouldn’t have happened ten years ago.”

Marc Bolan was a popular artist in the 1970’s, known for his striking appearance.

In another interview from the same era, Bolan denies that he is the successor to the Beatles. The Beatles were one thing, and the Rolling Stones were another, and his band is something else again – he calls it “70’s rock as opposed to the early things”. However, his music (and

---

61 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoQbDP3W8OE&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoQbDP3W8OE&feature=related)
62 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZ6PxuhnGUg&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZ6PxuhnGUg&feature=related)
63 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYrXkLXdQnA&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYrXkLXdQnA&feature=related)
appearance) is constructed by other artists that he likes, such as Bob Dylan. Bolan tells interviewer Russell Harty that he perceives himself as ‘sort of’ a cross between a lot of people, media-wise, but he does not like being pigeonholed.

In the same interview, Russell Harty confronts Marc Bolan with the opinion that he is “a superstar projecting not sex, but romance; sex is a part of it but it is sex by courtesy of the magic prince, who is going to deflower the young virgin in an atmosphere of blissful romance.” This outlook on sexuality often clashes with the defiant image of rock stars in general. And indeed, Marc Bolan adds, addressing the interviewer, “you know better than that right?”. Still, as we have seen in section 3.a. above, these outrageously dressed rock stars also write ballads about sincere feelings. These hard rockers appear as a ‘youth gone wild’ who rebel against social norms and sexual taboos, but the male singing persona can display himself – and consequently the other guys in the band – as a more sensitive, caring and emotional character through love ballads and other emotional songs, thus taking a more feminine position or role.

*Blackie Lawless from W.A.S.P. in the wild 1980’s.*

*Sexual explicitness was not only to be found in the lyrics, but also in the band’s shocking image.*

---

64 There is also a song with this title by the American hard rock band Skid Row, who were very popular in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s with singer Sebastian Bach.
Black Lawless from W.A.S.P. (left picture) and Mötley Crüe do not look like the typical writers or performers of sensitive ballads and love songs.

Even the most extravagantly dressed bands in the hard rock scene, such as Alice Cooper, KISS, Mötley Crüe and W.A.S.P., write and sing sensitive ballads; not only about love, but also about tragic events, dysfunctional households, heartache and so on. As mentioned above, these themes often clash with the rebellious looks of hard rock bands. Because of their image, these bands appear as violent, uncaring, non-conformist and incapable of true love. However, hard rock bands usually gain popularity with a wider audience once they appear in the hit charts with a ballad or catchy love song. One of W.A.S.P.’s best-known ballads is ‘the Idol’. As the band’s most popular song, it is performed during each live show. ‘The Idol’ appears on the album *The Crimson Idol* from 1992. On this album, the mood and tone of the songs are mutually contrasted just like the band’s image forms a contrast with the sensitive content of the ballads. Up-tempo songs about corruption and decadence in the music industry, such as ‘Chainsaw Charlie’ and ‘Doctor Rockter’, alternate with ballads such as ‘The Idol’65, a song about the flip side of a rock star’s success, and ‘Hold On To My Heart’66. The acoustic

---

65 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zh-OJdAkKV1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zh-OJdAkKV1)
66 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRjyISMxZM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRjyISMxZM)
opening of the ballads and the way the songs are performed in the matching video clips also add to the emotional impact of these sensitive songs.

The otherwise stately Blackie Lawless looks rather vulnerable in the video clips for the ballads “The Idol” and “Hold On To My Heart”. Barefooted with an acoustic guitar in his hands and amidst hundreds of white candles.

In an interview from the early 1970’s, glam rock pioneer Marc Bolan said: ‘Rock ‘n’ Roll is magic. The elements are magic. What is magic is the power of the human being to relate to another human being. Two human beings contact each other, the electricity creates a bondship, and that can move tables, or minds, or people’s hearts. When you fall in love that’s magic.’ And this is exactly what hard rock bands do. Even the most overdressed bands can write and perform magical songs that touch people’s hearts. Think for example of KISS and ‘Everytime I Look At You’, Mötley Crüe and ‘Without You’, Tigertailz and ‘Heaven’, KIX and ‘Don’t Close Your Eyes’, Twisted Sister and ‘The Price’; all these outrageously looking bands have recorded one or more touching ballads or love songs.

**Androgyny and the tendency towards bisexuality**

As we have seen before, hard rockers tend to be pretty vain when it comes to their clothes and hairdos. The outrageous image that they thus create is intensified by the (sometimes excessive) use of make-up. The bare necessities of glam and sleaze rockers are their big can of hairspray and black eyeliner. Lipstick and glittery make-up are next in line. In Wikipedia’s

---

67 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoQbDP3W8OE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoQbDP3W8OE)
article on Glam Rock, a genre that has its origins in 1970’s Britain, we can read that the extensive use of theatrics, outrageous stage-clothing, make-up and hairstyles renders glam rock artists an androgynous look. Showing off this ambiguous or ‘queer’ look, these rock artists have manipulated gender identity from the early beginnings of this sub genre\(^68\).

As stated before, queerness does not equal homosexuality, but glam rock artists have for many decades been perceived as ‘gay’. In “Performing Gender Identity”, Deborah Cameron notes that “what people categorize as ‘being gay’ does not always have to do with that person’s sexual preference but rather with their failure to measure up to the people’s standards of masculinity and femininity”\(^69\). The notion ‘gay’ would then refer to ‘insufficiently masculine’ appearance, clothing and speech. As interest in fashion and appearance is generally seen as a feminine feature, it is obvious why society interprets glam rockers as ‘queers’. However, from the male glam rocker’s perspective they do get more women looking the way they do.

The band Madam X around 1984, pretty wild and dressed to kill.
The female and the male band members dress to impress in a very similar way.

In *Fashion and its Social Agendas: Class, gender and identity in clothing*\(^70\), Diane Crane also notes that men who are interested in fashion and clothing behaviour – such as male glam and


sleaze rockers – tend to be interpreted as effeminate. Besides, some of these ‘queer heterosexual’\(^{71}\) bands have songs that refer to androgyny and transgender. The song ‘Dude Looks Like A Lady’ by Aerosmith for example, is about a man who thought to have sexually conquered a pretty lady, but she then turns out to be an effeminate male.

   Backstage we're having the time of our lives
   Until somebody say: “Forgive me if I seem out of line”
   Then she whipped out her gun and tried to blow me away
   (That, that) Dude looks like a lady
   So never judge a book by its cover, or who you're going to love by your lover
   Love put me wise to her love in disguise
   She had the body of a Venus, Lord imagine my surprise

The Norwegian hard rock band Da Vinci also ridicules the concept of androgyny in their song ‘She’s A He’, which is also about hitting on an attractive girl who then turns out to be a guy.

\[^{71}\text{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queer_heterosexual}\]
Although the queerness of hard rock bands does not necessarily imply same-sex desire, some bands like to toy with the idea of bisexuality. Some artists in the sleaze and glam rock genre like to play with the mystery of their sexual orientation, think for example of Crashdïet’s cross-dressing bass-player Peter London, who wears short skirts on stage and pretends not to be sure about his orientation. Also the way in which Crashdïet singer Dave Lepard addresses the audience during a live performance of the song ‘Queen Obscene’ in 2005 shows how these artists like to toy with the concept of bisexuality. Before playing the song, Dave Lepard asks the audience: “Are there any lovely ladies here tonight?”, upon which the audience remains rather quiet. But when Dave Lepard asks: “Are there any lovely BOYS here tonight?”, the audience starts to cheer. Dave then continues: “Yeah, this one’s for you!”

Bass-player Peter London is also wearing a black miniskirt during this performance.

Reference to same-sex desire can be found on hard rock album covers – think for example of Rage’s cover for Nice ‘n’ Dirty as described in chapter two (picture on page 54) – but also in the lyrics of certain songs, such as ‘Same Ol’ Situation’ – or ‘S.O.S.’ – by Mötley Crüe. However, both these examples involve same-sex desire between women, and not men. The lyrics of ‘Same Ol’ Situation’ allude to a lesbian relationship between the object of desire and her Philipino friend. At first, the singing persona did not realize that these girls were lovers. When he finds out about their sexual relationship he realizes that “it’s the same old situation” and he has bad luck again with women.

She's got a Philipino girlie she claims is her friend
I tell you boys, you just gotta laugh
[...]
I really used to love her, then the kitty she discovered
It's got to be a sexual thing
[...]
Introduced me to her lover in a cellophane dress
Then they bid me a sweet farewell
Last time I saw them they were kissing so softly
To the sound of wedding bells

72 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wcjl6VxWYNy&playnext_from=TL&videos=P3xEWENZFac](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wcjl6VxWYNy&playnext_from=TL&videos=P3xEWENZFac)
As the song ‘S.O.S.’ dates from the late 1980’s, gay marriage was not legal at that time. However, the wedding bells could in this context symbolize lesbian love or refer to a customised ceremony.

Singing about homosexuality brings about a shock effect because same-sex desire remains oppressed and stigmatised at many levels of society until today. Moreover, in dressing up the way sleaze and glam rockers do, these hard rock artists shock society twice about sexuality: once by looking ‘gay’, and twice by wearing (heterosexual) sex explicitly on their sleeve and turning out to be very male in bed. And what is even more, these hard rockers are so proud of their sexual conquests that they change sexual contacts on a regular basis. They do not care about being monogamous themselves and do not seem to mind if the girls they are seeing have other lovers too, as is sung of in the song ‘Our Love’ by Krokus:

Our love will never die
Don't know why
It's a feeling inside
We both had lovers out of town
Both like fooling around
It doesn't really matter
Because we'll never fall apart again

Other examples of hard rock songs about girlfriends with multiple lovers are ‘My Girlfriend’s Boyfriend (Isn’t Me)’ by Autograph and ‘AC-DC’ by Sweet. Moreover, the objectified girl in Sweet’s ‘AC-DC’ seems unsure about her sexual orientation:

She got girls, girls all over the world
She got men every now and then
But she can't make up her mind
On just how to fill her time
But the only way she can wind
A.C. D.C. – she's got some other lover as well as me
A.C. D.C. – she's got some other woman as well as me

The first part of this chapter dealt with women in the hard rock scene and how they are visualized in hard rock. Women in hard rock are often portrayed as powerful femmes
fatales or portray themselves as such. We have also come across some examples of wallflowers, such as the schoolgirl, the nun and the teacher in hard rock songs. However, the implication made is that even innocent girls are sexually ardent women who can move from a wallflower to a femme fatale position and, as Weininger stated, their desires can endanger men and eventually drive them mad. I have then compared all-female to female-fronted bands. Although both female-fronted and all-female bands sing about similar subjects, sexual explicitness will sooner be found with mixed-gender bands. Women in mixed-gender bands tend to come across as ‘one of the boys’; they are more direct and thus rather rude. Generally speaking, women in hard rock bands are both sexy and strong. Gender roles can be reversed and women in hard rock can become the desiring subjects. In some video clips by Lee Aaron for example, the male is objectified. However, female artists usually objectify themselves on album covers.

The second part of this chapter dealt with the construction of identity through clothing. The typical image of hard rock, which consists of quite some phallic attire as seen in fetish subculture, creates a shock-effect and is used to break social rules and norms. High heels, boots and leather clothes – worn by both men and women in the hard rock scene – are phallic symbols, but they also radiate power and dominance. Another fetish item used in the hard rock image is lingerie or underwear-as-outerwear. As it comes in direct contact with the skin, the sexuality of the body rubs off on underwear. Valerie Steele also notes that lingerie and stockings symbolize power and control: the wearer can remove several layers of clothing before being naked before another person, and stockings guide the viewer’s eyes upwards but the top of the stockings creates a clear border just below the genitals. Wearing underwear as outerwear, but also skin-tight clothing, is taboo-breaking and aims at demystifying sexuality. According to Valerie Steele, the so-called ‘whore look’ liberates the wearer from social restrictions and sexual taboos. Hard rockers, and especially glam and sleaze rockers, rebel against what society perceives as ‘decent fashion’ and express their freedom through their alternative sense of fashion.

In this chapter I have also discussed how hard rock ballads and love songs are quite similar to traditional ballads in both rhyme scheme and content. However, many hard rock songs are still about lust, eroticism and sexual conquest. Moreover, love is perceived as a frightening concept: it leaves you heartbroken and scarred. Even though
the rebellious image of hard rock bands often displays sexual perversity, hard rock artists appear as sensitive, caring and capable of love when performing power ballads. With their sensitive songs these outrageously dressed hard rock bands can touch people’s hearts and gain popularity to some degree. But not only the lyrical content of power ballads clashes with the shocking image of hard rock artists. Some glam and sleaze rockers like to toy with the concepts of androgyny, cross-dressing and bisexuality. Glittery outfits are combined with wild hairdos and make-up to create a ‘queer’ image. Queerness does not equal homosexuality, but society still perceives glam rockers as ‘gay’. This has more to do with the ‘insufficiently masculine’ appearance of glam artists – in the opinion of a heteronormative society that is – than with their sexual orientation. Some bands ridicule this social assumption in songs about hitting on a pretty girl who then turns out to be an effeminate male instead. Again the aim is to bring about a shock effect.
4. Conclusion

At the very beginning of my dissertation I wrote that the hard rock scene has been ignored in several ways for many decades and how hard it was to find appropriate works on gender and sexuality in the context of hard rock. With their outrageous appearance and perverted song texts, hard rock artists and their fans have been perceived as a threat to the understandable heteronormative social order. Society’s unwarranted assumptions about the hard rock genre are that it consists of nothing but drunk or stoned, and moreover ‘gay-looking’ long-haired men singing about booze, drugs, women and sex. Indeed, the image of hard rock artists comes across as extreme and rebellious, but it also takes considerable courage to break social rules and transgress sexual taboos. This courage renders these rebels a certain status as breaking the rules is an act of power.

In the first chapter I have discussed Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* and agreed that ‘queerness’ does not equal ‘gayness’. Queerness can involve a gender that does not want to be pinned down to typically male or typically female aspects. Also, masculinity is not merely a male feature, nor is femininity merely female. The queer image of hard rock artists makes clear that they do not want to be pinned down to society’s assumptions about acceptable displays of gender. However, in order to ‘shock rock’ society about its compulsory norms, hard rock artists have to use what is accepted in our culture and reverse it with the purpose of ridiculing it. Consequently, they remain in a way attached to mainstream heteronormative society.

One of the reasons why hard rock and its followers are to be avoided according to society is because of the sexually explicit and sometimes violent content of the songs – think of the section on murders of passion. As we could deduce from a few examples in the second chapter of this dissertation, quite some hard rock songs deal with lust rather than with sincere love. Glam metal artist Dee Snider went to court in the 1980’s to defend his music and preserve the artistic freedom of musicians in general. But sexual explicitness goes beyond lyrical content. Also hard rock album covers display explicit images. Women are often objectified on these covers. We have also seen how some hard rock album covers display scantily dressed or even completely nude women. Also, some album covers display male fantasies of lesbian desire, which again creates a shock effect.
At first my intention was to mainly focus on hard rock lyrics, but my attention shifted in the course of my research. The most important point of my dissertation has become the image in hard rock, and especially in the sleaze and glam scene, which I have discussed in the third and longest chapter of my work. In hard rock lyrics, women are usually portrayed as desirable, yet dangerous femmes fatales. These women are aware of their seductive powers and their importance to a man to confirm his masculinity. Once she is aware that she has this power, the femme fatale can turn a man to a slave and choose to either accept or reject him. When she turns to another man she will fall back into her wallflower position only to become the desired goddess again. When supposedly virginal figures, such as nuns or schoolgirls, are portrayed in hard rock songs, the implication is usually that each of these wallflowers are sexually ardent women who can turn into femmes fatales just like any other woman. Of course, the idea of sexualising nuns and teenage girls is a concept that can also be found in other musical genres and cultures.

In the third chapter I have also discussed that hard rock artists wear (heterosexual) sex on their sleeve and many hard rock songs deal with the pursuit of lust rather than with falling in love. Moreover, love is frightening because it leaves you scarred and it is thus sexual conquest that these artists are after rather than a serious relationship. When it comes to women in hard rock bands, sexually explicit lyrics and vulgar language will sooner be found in songs by female-fronted bands, in which women tend to come across as ‘one of the boys’, than in songs by all-female bands. Even though hard rockers are generally perceived as rebels who endanger the social order, these outrageously dressed rock stars can turn into sensitive personae when they perform touching ballads. The content of such songs about sincere feelings clashes with the artists’ shocking and taboo-breaking image.

I have used Valerie Steele’s work on fetish and fashion to discuss clothing in the hard rock scene because the hard rock image consists of several fetishistic pieces of clothing, such as leather jackets, cowboy boots, high heels, skin-tight attire and lingerie. According to Valerie Steele, all these items are phallic symbols. The rather extreme image of hard rockers, but especially the daring sleaze and glam rock style, is very body-conscious and radiates sexuality. It demystifies sexuality and is therefore shocking and taboo-breaking. The non-conformist image of hard rock artists is powerful as well as sexy. The female artists or femmes fatales of hard rock combine their feminine looks with masculine attire such as heavy
boots or biker jackets. The male artists wear eye-catching outfits, use make-up and have wild hairdos, which make them appear as ‘queers’. However, these artists are not gendered as homosexuals, but they push the limits of heteronormative appearance and toy with androgyny and bisexuality in order to shock people. They shock society yet again when they turn out to be very masculine in bed despite their ‘queer’ image. The androgynous look of male hard rockers and the whore look of women in the hard rock scene are expressions of power and sexual freedom. The aim is to shock people by throwing sexuality in their face and ridicule hegemonic social norms and restrictions, such as ‘decent’ heteronormative fashion and the omission of sexuality in public spheres.

As a final note we could say that what shocked people about rock music back in the second half of the twentieth century may still give rise to controversy today. However, these days some bands have begun to use more and more political subject matters. The American band W.A.S.P. for example no longer writes the same sexually explicit songs as they did back in the wild 1980’s and refer to the American government in their new songs. Nevertheless, the image of contemporary hard rock bands is still rebellious and shocking, and the artists still wear sexuality – in every sense of the word – on their sleeve in order to facilitate sexual freedom, break social rules and transgress hegemonic normativity.
Bibliography


Appendix

Lyrics
W.A.S.P.

*The Crimson Idol*

(1992)

Track list:

1. The Titanic Overture  3
2. The Invisible Boy  4
3. Arena Of Pleasure  6
4. Chainsaw Charlie (Murders In The New Morgue)  8
5. The Gypsy Meets The Boy  10
6. Doctor Rockter  11
7. I Am One  13
8. The Idol  15
9. Hold On To My Heart  16
10. The Great Misconceptions Of Me  17
11. The Story Of Jonathon (Prologue To The Crimson Idol)  20
1. The Titanic Overture

[Lawless]

I look at my face in the mirror
And I don't understand
Don't feel like a boy and it's not getting clearer
But I don't feel like a man

I'm seventeen and I'm somebody's son
My dad don't know where I stand
Cause when he looks at me
He don't like what he sees
He don't know what I am
2. The Invisible Boy

[Lawless]

[Jonathon]
I was the boy unwanted, a prisoner I'm born to them
My brother was the one, who couldn't do no wrong
And I was there dying in the shadow of him

[Jonathon to his father]
Red, crimson red, am I the invisible boy?
Feel the strap, across my back
Yeah I'm the new whipping boy

Who am I – the orphan son you would never need?
Who am I – 'cause I'm the boy only the mirror sees
Who am I – the slave you gave just the air I breathe?
Who am I – 'cause I'm the boy only the mirror sees

[Jonathon]
Oh I got the same old reruns, horror movies in my head
And I can't rest, they scare me to death
But if I'm not alive, how can I be dead?

[Jonathon to the mirror]
Oh, why me?

[The mirror]
Why him

[Jonathon]
Can you tell me?

[The mirror]
It's confession again?
Come talk to me, I see in your eyes
Titanic misery, ashamed that you're alive
I'm the face that you see
When the face isn't yours
I'm the mirror my boy

[Jonathon]
Who am I – the orphan son you would never need?
Who am I – ‘cause I'm the boy only the mirror sees
Who am I – the slave you gave just the air I breathe?
Who am I – ‘cause I'm the boy only the mirror sees

Some people never go crazy
What truly boring lives they must lead
Is there a love to shelter me?
Only love, love set me free
3. Arena Of Pleasure

[Lawless]

I don't know where I'm going, but I can't wait to get there,
All I know is, I'm just going

I ran away from home last night, gone forever
I was running for my life
And I've heard the words of what I should be
Live, Work, Die, I am the orphan of the night

Take me down, I'm coming home
The road to ruins, inside the pleasure dome
Take me down, I'm coming home
Arena of pleasures, where I belong

I'm in the eye of my rage, where no hurricane dies
I'm in the eye of my rage, where the hurricane lies
Oh, a storm is in my eyes
And like the beast that's in my soul, I'm the restless child
Ah mama, I'm running for my life

I was sixteen going nowhere
Will I see seventeen alive
And I was running from the nightmare
I stand at the promised land with fire in my eyes

I'm at the crossroad of my destiny and desire
Oh, God, what will I be
And my obsession is the gasoline to feed my fire
Oh it's burning in me

Don't waste the tears
On my wasted years
Mama I'm outta here!

They are poisoned snakes with double tongues
Horny hedgehogs who do their wrong
Deaf men and blind worms, they'll be not seen
They are pawns and rooks for a crimson king
They are a government with a parliament of whores
Can you hear the screams from the fame machine
Down in Chainsaw Charlie’s morgue?
4. Chainsaw Charlie (Murders In The New Morgue)

[Lawless]

[Charlie to Jonathon]
O.K. boy now here's your deal
Will you gamble your life?
Sign right here on the dotted line
It's the one you've waited for all of your life

[Jonathon to Charlie]
Ah - will it feed my hunger
If I swallow lies right down my throat?
Or will it choke me till I'm raw?
And tomorrow when I'm gone
Will they whore my image on?
I'll will my throne away, to a virgin heir and Charlie's slave

[Jonathon]
Murders, murders in the new morgue
Murders, murders in the new morgue
See old Charlie and the platinum armies
Making me their boy
Murders, murders in the new morgue
Murders, murders in the new morgue
He'll make you scream for the cash machine
Down in Chainsaw Charlie's morgue

[Charlie to Jonathon]
We'll sell your flesh, by the pound you'll go
A whore of wrath just like me
We'll sell you wholesale, we'll sell your soul
Strap on your six string and feed our machine
[Charlie to Jonathon]
Welcome to the morgue boy
Where the music comes to die
Welcome to the morgue son
I'll cut your throat just to stay alive
Ah, trust me boy
I won't steer you wrong
If you trust me son
You won't last very long

[Charlie to Jonathon]
I'm the president of showbiz, my name is Charlie
I'm a cock-sucking asshole, that's what they call me
Here from my Hollywood tower I rule
I'm lying motherfucker, the chainsaw's my tool
The new morgue's our factory, to grease our lies
Our machine is hungry, it needs your life
Don't mind the faggots, and the ruthless scum
Before we're done, son, we'll make you one
I'm the tin man, I've never had a heart
I'm the tin man, but I'll make you a star
I'm the tin man, I've never had a heart
I'm the tin man, but I'll make me the star
5. The Gypsy Meets The Boy

[Lawless]

[Jonathon]
The tarot is fate, said the Gypsy Queen
And she beckoned me, to glimpse my future she'd seen

[Gypsy to Jonathon]
She said: Do you see what I see, be careful to choose.
Be careful what you wish for, cause it may come true.
When I lay the card down will it turn up the fool?
Will it turn up sorrow? If it does then you lose.

[Jonathon to the Gypsy]
I'm the lost boy, can you help me
Yeah, I'm the lost boy, can you help me

[Jonathon]
Then the illusion was real, a crimson idol I saw
But the higher he'd fly, then the further he'd fall

[Jonathon to the Gypsy]
I'm the lost boy, can you help me
Yeah, I'm the lost boy, can you help me

[Jonathon to the Gypsy]
I just wanna be, I just wanna be, I just wanna be
The Crimson Idol of a million
I just wanna be, I just wanna be, I just wanna be
The Crimson Idol of a million eyes
Of a million
6. Doctor Rockter

[Lawless]

[Jonathon]
He's the king of sting, Mr. Morphine my friend
Uncle Slam, the medicine man
And I'm a junkie with a big King Kong sized monkey
Crawling up and down my back

[Doctor Rockter]
Oh, I'll help you son to rearrange your mind
Oh, I'll help you son, but you gotta buy this time
I'm your doctor

[Jonathon to Doctor]
Help me please, oh Doctor, help me please
Doctor Rockter, you know I need you
Doctor please, my M.D., fix me in my time of need
But, can you see the fire that's in my eyes?

[Jonathon]
It's the mirror from the wall
It's on the table
Feeding me little white lies
And I'm wasted in a waste land
I'm a junk man
I got tombstones in my eyes

Ah, help me Uncle Slam
The beast claims another man

Codeine, Cocaine, 714,
A tuinol blindfold just what I need
Help me, help me, help me
7. I Am One

[Lawless]

Demolition, mission-man
The old boy is hating me
I've become the one, they warned me about
Oh he's gonna die before me

Long live, long live, long live the king of mercy
Long live, long live
Is there no love, I am one
The side you see, is the nasty me
Oh I am one
Love, I am one
I got something to prove
And nothing to lose
Oh I am one

18 bloody roses, each a year that bled my soul
18 and numb, I'm somebody's son
Mama, look what I have become

Is there no love shelter me
only love, love set me free
Is there no love shelter me
only love, love set me free

Will he take me down to the gallows
And kill the boy inside the man
I'm just a rock and roll nigger
I know he don't know what I am

I don't see my face in the mirror
And more, or understand
Why am I the chosen one?

I'm the crimson man
Long live, long live, long live the king of mercy
Long live, long live
Is there no love, I am one
The side you see, is the nasty me
Oh I am one
Love I am one
I got something to prove
And nothing to lose
Oh I am one
8. The Idol

[Lawless]

Will I be alone this morning
Will I need my friends
Something just to ease away the pain
And now I never see the loneliness
Behind my face
I am just a prisoner to my faith

If I could only stand and stare in the mirror could I see
One fallen hero with a face like me?
And if I scream, could anybody hear me?
If I smash the silence, you'll see what fame has done to me

Kiss away the pain and leave me lonely
I'll never know if love's a lie
Ooh - being crazy in paradise is easy
Do you see the prisoners in my eyes?

Where's the love to shelter me
Give me love, come set me free
Where's the love, to shelter me
Only love, love set me free
Set me free
9. Hold On To My Heart

[Lawless]

There's a flame, flame in my heart
And there's no rain, can put it out
And there's a flame, it's burning in my heart
And there's no rain, ooh can put it out
So just hold me, hold me, hold me

Take away the pain, inside my soul
And I'm afraid, so all alone
Take away the pain, that's burning in my soul
Cause I'm afraid that I'll be all alone
So just hold me, hold me, hold me

Hold on to my heart, to my heart, to me
Hold on to my heart, to my heart, to me
And oh no, don't let me go 'cause all I am
You hold in your hands, and hold me
And I'll make it through the night
And I'll be alright, hold on, hold on to my heart
10. The Great Misconceptions Of Me

[Lawless]

[Jonathon to the audience]
Welcome to the show the great finales finally here
I thank you for coming into my theatre of fear
Welcome to the show, you're all witnesses you see
A privileged invitation to the last rights of me

[Jonathon to his mother]
Remember me? You can't save me
Mama, you never needed me
No crimson king, look in my eye, you'll see
Mama, I'm lonely, it's only me, only me

[Jonathon to all]
I don't wanna be, I don't wanna be, I don't wanna be
The Crimson Idol of a million
I don't wanna be, I don't wanna be, I don't wanna be
The Crimson Idol of a million eyes, of a million

[Jonathon to all]
I am the prisoner of the paradise I dreamed
The idol of a million lonely faces look at me
Behind the mask of sorrow, four doors of doom behind my eyes
I've got their footprints all across my crimson mind

[Jonathon to the king of mercy]
Long live, long live, long live the king of mercy
Long live, long live

[Jonathon to all]
There is no love, to shelter me
Only love, love set me free
No love, to shelter me, only love, love set me free
I was the warrior, with an anthem in my soul
The idol of eight thousand lonely days of rage ago
And remember me when it comes your time to choose
Be careful what you wish for, it might just come true

[Jonathon to the king of mercy]
[Jonathon to all]
[Jonathon to his father]
Red, crimson red, am I the invisible boy
The strap on my back
Red, crimson red, no I was never to be
Only one crimson son, no it never was me

[Jonathon to all]
Living in the limelight, little did I know
I was dying in the shadows and the mirror was my soul
It was all I ever wanted, everything I dreamed
But the dream became my nightmare and no-one could hear me scream
With these six-strings, I make a noose
To take my life, it's time to choose
The headlines read of my suicide, of my suicide

[Jonathon to the king of mercy]
Oh sweet silence, where is the sting
I am no idol, no crimson king
I'm the impostor, the world has seen
My father was the idol, it was never me
I don't wanna be, I don't wanna be, I don't wanna be
The crimson idol of a million
I don't wanna be, I don't wanna be, I don't wanna be
The crimson idol of a million eyes
[Jonathon to all]

No love, to shelter me, only love
Love set me free
No love, to shelter me, only love
Love set me free
11. The Story Of Jonathon (Prologue To The Crimson Idol)

I was born Jonathon Aaron Steel, to the parents of William and Elizabeth steel. I am a Leo, born under the sign of the lion and I was raised in a lower middle class family with only one brother Michael whom I love dearly. He was five years my senior. My father's nickname was Red which I could never understand why because his hair was sandy blond. Nevertheless, the name stuck. So when my brother was born my father became Big Red and my brother Little Red. I should have known from the first time when I realised their special connection, that I just didn't fit in to my father's plans. And as I grew older the constant comparison between my brother and myself left little doubt who was the image of perfection in my father's eye. To him, my brother could do no wrong and I became The Invisible Boy, the proverbial 'black sheep' and I soon figured out that red and black don't mix. The beatings I received became more and more frequent to the point where I would ask my father "Am I the orphaned son you would never need"? But oddly enough I worshipped the ground my father walked upon.

My brother and I were a strange mixture, as different as daylight and dark. Looking back, it's hard to imagine we came from the same parents. I sometimes wondered if we had the same father, but I always dismissed that idea as my mother was far too religious, my father as well, to ever even think of such a thing. But my brother who had always sensed my parent's instilled insecurities tried his best to encourage me. For I was born different and he knew it. He often told me when I was born an angel flew over my bed and christened me with a magic wand and said "You shall be the one". And I had no idea what 'The one' was, but as I grew older I began to understand. Most boys put their mother on a pedestal and worship them like the Virgin Mary but with her too my relationship was different and not for the good. She was opinionated, uneducated, sometimes prejudiced, overbearing, believed everything she read, true or not, and when it came to religion was over-zealous to say the least. A mind boggling combination but she was pretty, very pretty and I would often wonder, bordering on complete confusion, how a person of this description could rationalise life.
This was a series of characteristics that many times in my life I would look back on in bewilderment and the women I sought after when I was older would be nothing like her. In the pain of youth, the misery of my neglect, would manifest itself in many ways; depression - my enemy, fear - my friend, hatred - my lover, and anger - fuel for my fire. These four characteristics of my personality would become the guiding force of my life and would control everything I did or was to become. I shall explain later in the story about them which I call my Four Doors of Doom.

The mirror, the great plaything for man's vanity. The mirror was to become, at times, my altar of refuge and other, my alter ego and its magnificent obsession with a relentless pursuit of attention. It served as a chilling reflection of my own wretchedness and my greatness. It was the one place I could go to see inside myself, to find love, in an otherwise loveless household where I could be great, where I could be anything or anyone I wanted to be - one hundred percent pure escapism until I discovered its precious secret. The mirror lives, it breathes, it talks, it lies, it has a personality all its own. It is a genie that grants all the wishes you could ever dream, at least in my case - all except two.

It was my 14th birthday, the day that changed my life forever. My brother Michael, the one person who was my guiding light, my friend, my hero, was killed by a drunk driver in a head-on collision. He died instantly. I couldn't even bring myself to go to his funeral. My agony was so great I just couldn't come face to face with him that one last time. My failure to attend intensified my parents' resentment for me even more. But from that moment on, nothing seemed to matter, especially that living hell called 'home'. For one year after his death I roamed the streets in a fog barely conscious of anything or anyone. I discovered alcohol, and girls, drugs and in general a life I had never known which was exciting, frightening and wonderfully dangerous. And it was then as I staggered through a down town city street in one of my drunken rages I stumbled across a small music shop and in the window stood the instrument, the fiery tool that
would become the object of my new found desire. The instrument of my passion, my obsession, the blood-red six string. It was like I'd known the thing all my life.

I soon found it was the only way I could truly express myself. It was a way to vent all my frustrations and all my pain - completely opened all my Four Doors Of Doom and I found myself going to the mirror for counsel less and less. Because of this my songs seemed to write themselves and I knew my destiny was in my music but I was going to have to get out of this backwards town I was in if I was ever going to succeed. I was 16 going nowhere and the only thing my parents knew was 'live, work, die.' And if I stayed there that was exactly what was going to happen to me - I was gonna die. So I ran away to the big city with the lights, excitement and danger and a chance for me to finally live and do my music without the persecution I had known for so long. I hitchhiked all the way with a suitcase in one hand and my guitar in the other and as I stood at the edge of the city the magic of the place was incredibly intense. It was to be my new home the place I would call the 'Arena Of Pleasure'. I lived and struggled in the arena for two years trying to get a break in music and make a record and that's when I ran across a delightful business man named Charlie. He had been a lawyer for 25 years before he discovered he could fuck over more people in the recording industry then he ever could in a court of law and he was the president of one of the biggest record companies in the world. The music business to Charlie was nothing more than a sacrificial lamb to be led to slaughter and the weapon of choice was his record company that he'd wield like a mighty sword. The great tool he would lovingly refer to as 'The Chainsaw'. The morgue, Charlie said, was the music business where everyone sells out. Where all the artists will eventually whore themselves to commercialism, the place where the music comes to die. And through him I learned everything I needed to know about the music business and even things I didn't want to know. He said he could make me a star, one of the biggest things the world had ever seen. The big time was calling and I was on my way. He introduced me to an aspiring young manager named Alex Rodman and together we took on the whole
fucking world and kicked it square in the ass.

Just before the release of my first album I was sitting on the steps in front of my apartment when a gypsy woman passed by. She stopped and asked me if I would like my fortune read and I had never had it done so I was more than happy to say yes. She revealed a deck of Tarot cards and began to tell me of my past in which she went into great detail about the pain of my youth, my brother and my parents. She saw my present with my great struggle to succeed and fulfilment of my dreams and new found happiness but after about ten minutes she stopped and I wanted to know of my future and pleaded for her to go on and finally she spoke. She showed me a very disturbing vision of where I was going. I told her that I wanted a phenomenal wealth and fame and in the cards she saw a fallen hero and looked at me and said "Be careful what you wish for - it might come true, for the face of death wears the mask of the King of Mercy". I asked her if she was sure of what she had seen and with a blank stare she turned and walked away leaving me with the cards and a haunting that would follow me the rest of my life.

Success agreed with me with amazing ease. The more records I sold the more excess I had of everything - friends, money, women, cars, houses. It was at one of my nightly hedonisms where a flash individual entered the room. He introduced himself as the Doctor. I asked him what kind of doctor and he smiled and said, "meet my friend Uncle Sam". The mirror that was once on the wall, my alter ego, was now talking to me from the table and the next three years were a blur. Drugs became the new candy and alcohol became the new Coca Cola and Doctor Rockter was my new best friend and I never heard the mirror speak again until tonight.

I was at the peak of my career and the world saw me as I had always wanted it, The Idol, the Great Crimson Idol. Now I had everything it seemed, everything but the one thing that would have meant more to me than anything. The pain that manifested itself into my obsession, the acceptance of me by my father and mother, who I had not spoken to since
I had left home.

One morning my manager Alex came in and broke up one of our nightly Easy Rider Parties. An Easy Rider Party was when everybody would come over to my house, the band, the doctor, hot and cold running women etc. And we'd watch the movie and do everything going on the film only a lot more. And he threatened to leave me if I didn't clean up. It was not that he cared about me as a person he was only interested in my talent and what I could do to further his own career as a true showbiz mogul. But it was then I realised just how far things had gone. So I sat there alone in my palace of pain and I was just numb from the alcohol and the drugs but equally as intoxicated by my own fame and I had just enough courage to pick up the phone and dial the number. My mind went into a whirlwind thinking of what would happen and the fear overcame me and I started to put down the phone but before I could a voice at the other end rang out and it sent a chill through me that I had never known. It was my mother. It was hard for me to speak, my heart pounding out of my chest but when I did I did the best I could. She was very cold. But I knew the shock of suddenly hearing from me after all these years was overwhelming and I was hoping that all the time that had passed would heal the deep wounds between my parents and me but... I desperately wanted them to approve of me, to accept me - it was all I ever wanted. I hoped my success would finally prove my worthiness and they would welcome the prodigal son home. All I wanted was for them to be proud of me but less than 50 words were spoken. The last four were "We have no son".

Some wounds never heal and mine had scarred me for life. A great star fell from the sky that night and with its descent left a scorched path in its way - a great path of self-destruction before burning out. And on this night the great finale is finally here. 'Be careful what you wish for - it may come true. ' Long live, long live the King of Mercy.