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# "YOU SPURN MY NATURAL EMOTIONS, YOU MAKE ME FEEL I'M DIRT, AND I'M HURT." NEW WAVE, NEW MEN AND FRAGILE MASCULINITIES

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## Abstract

This paper will argue that the post-punk new wave movement represents a stepping stone between the cock-rock masculinism (Brittan, 1989) of 1970s' rock, the aggression and military imagery of punk (Hebdidge, 1978; Savage, 1991) and a more feminised (Cohan, 1993) angst-ridden set of masculinities at work in the music of the early 1980s. This ranges from the indie guitar rock outlined by Bannister (2006), Orange Juice, providing a good example, through middle ground artists such as The Smiths to mainstream acts drawing on the Motown tradition of songs about heartbreak such as ABC. Admittedly, visual representations of gender fluidity (Whiteley, 1997) were at work in the early 1970s' glam movement (David Bowie, Marc Bolan and Roxy Music provide authentic examples) but the post punk movement saw the emergence and representation of a fragile set of masculinities.

Set within the context of literature on men and masculinities (Whitehead, 2002; Hearn, 2004) and masculinities and popular music (Frith and McRobbie, 1990; Whiteley, 1997; Bannister, 2006), the paper will examine the relationship between these developments and the emergence of 1980s' "new man" discourses (Nixon, 1997). The paper will examine three texts from the summer of 1978 (both audio and visual), a moment identified by the author as a key transitional point from punk through new wave to indie pop. These are *Jilted John* (1978) by Jilted John, *Love You More* (1978) by the Buzzcocks and *Down in the Tube Station at Midnight* (1978) by the Jam.

Musically and lyrically these texts reference early 1960s' Beatle-based pop music (Macdonald, 1994; Inglis, 1997). The boy-loses-girl angst of Jilted John (1978) with its 'girly' backing vocals (performed by men) is redolent of the early Beatle girl-group cover versions such as *Devil in Her Heart* (1963) and *Boys* (1963) [Bannister, 2000; Warwick, 2000] and its camp-but-not-gay vocals emphasise a return to the gender fluidity at work in much 1960's pop music (Whiteley, 1997; King, 2013). Buzzcocks' singer and composer Pete Shelley's 'out' gay-ness is expressed in a matter-of-fact way, contained as it is within the context of the classic pop group line-up. *Love You More* (1978) represents a return to the two minute pop angst and fragility of The Beatles or Smokey Robinson. Paul Weller's *Down in the Tube Station at Midnight* (1978) with its McCartney-esque narrative structure and content marks the start of Weller's Beatle-rifling period (*All Mod Cons* [1979]; *Sound Affects* [1980]) as well as signalling a transition from the masculinist (Brittan, 1989) anthemic aggression of songs like *In the City* (1977) to a more personalised and crafted approach associated with the more feminised (Cohan, 1993) singer-songwriter genre (King, 2013). Weller's juxtaposition of the song's main male character with men who "smelt of pubs and Wormwood Scrubs and too many right wing meetings" provides an interesting starting point for analysis.

The paper will also argue that Nick Lowe's *So it Goes* (1976) is a major candidate for the source of 1970's new wave and that the early work of the Stiff label, as well as being an obvious starting point for what was to become '80s' indie pop, marks a significant development in the transition from masculinist (Brittan, 1989) rock and militaristic punk (Hebdidge, 1978; Heylin, 2008) to a return to more fragile versions of masculinities at work in popular music (Whiteley, 1997; King, 2013). This is in spite of its beginning in the highly masculinised pub-rock scene of the mid '70s. In addition to Lowe's single, which launched the label, the boxed set of the first ten Stiff singles includes the *All Aboard with the Roogalator EP* [with a sleeve which mimics *With the Beatles* 1963)] and a single by '60s psychedelic stalwarts the Pink Fairies, while the early works of Elvis Costello and Ian Dury represent a return to a more feminised (Cohan, 1993) singer-songwriter approach (King, 2013) wrapped up in visual representations which provide a challenge to the traditional masculine rock star persona (Frith and McRobbie, 1990).

## Prologue

Unlike Simon Reynolds, whose *Rip it up and Start Again* (2005) has provided valuable background information for this paper, punk didn't pass me by, although I was, I admit, like many others outside of London, a victim of the declaration by St Tony and St Julie of the NME that if you weren't at the Roxy at the right moment it was all too late. It was Christmas 1976 before I heard *New Rose* by the Damned at a party and heard *Anarchy in the UK* playing in W.H. Smith of all places, immediately hooked into the enthusiasm and anger of a musical movement that seemed to be in direct opposition to the pompous route that '70s' rock seemed to have taken. Going to see The Clash, The Damned, The Jam, Television, Blondie, Talking Heads et al. in 1977, it didn't feel like those of us in the North of England had missed it all. However, what did seem to emerge from the initial rush of punk was a more interesting complexity, beyond what Heylin (2007:458) has defined as "Ramonesitis", i.e. fairly traditional blues based chord structures played at high speed with angry shouting over the top. In my head I have always thought of new wave as referring to those bands that emerged with a more interesting, complex sound or those that took the revolution of punk as an opportunity to return to the melodic three-minute pop song. Television/Talking Heads would be an example, for me, of the former Blondie/Nick Lowe/Elvis Costello of the latter. Some, like The Jam and The Buzzcocks seemed to move from punk to new wave as '77 became '78.

Elsewhere (King, 2013) I have examined The Beatles as a 1960s' "text" through which to examine changing representations of masculinity in that period in terms of making visible different ideas about masculinity, reflecting some of the social changes of "the sixties" and providing a different version of masculinity from which men may have drawn new ideas about masculine identity. This will be explained in more depth later in this paper. It is the intention here to apply some of these ideas to what has been termed the post-punk period (Reynolds [2005] defines this as 1978-1984), and to look at how new wave "texts" contained further representation of different or resistant versions of masculinity, acted as a backlash against the masculinism (Brittan, 1989) at work in '70s' rock, for example, and paved the way for the indie scene of the early 1980s.

I have argued elsewhere (King, 2013) that The Beatles, resplendent in satin bandsmen's uniforms on the cover of *Sgt. Pepper*, at the peak of what Inglis (2000:1) refers to as their "men of ideas" incarnation, redefined what it meant to be an Englishman at that time. Equally John Lydon or Joe Strummer's anti-establishment sneering, Joy Division's dark, brooding intensity and the jangling optimism of the racoon-hatted Orange Juice all contained ideas about being a man that was oppositional to what Carrigan et al., (1985) have termed hegemonic masculinity, i.e. the accepted ways of being masculine, and its relationship to societal norms and power structures.

As with the work on The Beatles (King, 2013) I have chosen to work around the mainstream rather than the fringes of the post-punk/new wave moment, using examples that were seen on *Top of the Pops*, when Thursday nights provided a shared pop experience for millions in the UK. This discussion is located within my own individual experiences of the period and the ways in which I feel that ideas about male identity played out for me through the ideas contained in these "texts". Reynolds (2005) sees 1978 as the beginning of post-punk based mainly, it seems, on the implosion of The Sex Pistols and the emergence of PIL as something quite different in terms of sound and image. In this paper I use four examples from the period to examine the ways in which the post-punk movement provide a challenge both to the hegemonic structures of work in the music industry in the 1970's (Gramsci, 1971) but also to the re-emergence of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al, 1985) at work in the 1970s' pop-star.

The paper will, therefore, look at the rise of Stiff records in the mid-'70s' and three new wave "texts" from the Summer of '78 through which to examine the ways in which the emergence of "new men" and fragile masculinities can be read through the new wave movement.

## Men and Masculinities

As Hearn (2004:49) has stated "studying men is, in itself, neither new nor necessarily radical". Hearn (2004) and Kimmel et al.(2004) provide a comprehensive guide to the development of gendered work on men, what Collinson and Hearn (1994:2) refer to a "naming men as men". This idea, originally advanced by Hamner (1990), refers to the way in which excavation of how masculinity operates within wider society takes place.

The multi-disciplinary nature of this work often transgresses traditional academic venues (King and Watson, 2001) and the study of men in the arts generally, and in popular music in particular, has developed as an emergent area of study in its own right (Hearn, 2003).

Much of this work has focused on the ways in which men in popular music, particularly through their representation in the mass media, have either colluded with or provided a challenge to dominant versions of masculinity at work in Western society in particular. Connell (1983) and Carrigan et al., (1985) were the first to introduce the concept of hegemonic masculinity, drawing on the work of Antonio Gramsci (1971), arguing that dominant conceptualisations of masculinity were reproduced through key institutions such as the state, education, workplace, the family and the mass media. Carrigan et al., (1985) explain how hegemonic masculinity is not just about men in relation to women but is a particular type of masculinity. They characterise hegemonic masculinity:

> "not as 'the male role' but a variety of masculinity to which others – among them young and effeminate as well as homosexual men – are subordinated"
>
> (Carrigan et al., 1985:586)

A key feature of hegemonic masculinity is that it s explicitly heterosexual (Butler 1990). Carrigan et al., (1985) see hegemonic masculinity as the way in which men reproduce their dominance, through particular groupings of powerful men. The importance of this theoretical development cannot be underestimated. It is their introduction of Gramsci's (1971) cultural-Marxist perspective which examines notions of class and power along with gender that is particularly important. Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony is summarised by Bocock (1986:63) as:

> "… when the intellectual, moral and philosophical leadership provided by the class or alliance of class factions which is ruling successfully achieves its objective of providing the fundamental outlook of the whole society."

Carrigan et al., (1985:179) discuss how "***particular*** groups of men" (emphasis in original) come to hold power and this is important in starting to unpack the grand narrative of patriarchy, for example, and begins to unravel the complexities at work where gender and class intersect. It is a concept which encompasses the notion of power being contested between groups (Gramsci, 1971; Foucault, 1980) and Connell (1995) builds on this idea and advances the notion of resistance and change. He argues that "many men live in some tension with, or distance, from, hegemonic masculinity" (Connell, 1995:3) and that hegemonic masculinity is supported by the collusion of dominant forms of femininity. Whitehead (2002:90) advances the view that it is the "nuanced account" offered by the debate around hegemonic masculinity and its ability to signal the contested nature of male practices within a gender structure that distinguishes it from, and makes it a more useful concept than, patriarchy.

The debate around hegemonic masculinity then has become central to the field of critical studies of men (Kimmel, 2000). Hearn (2004:57) has argued that, as definitions of hegemonic masculinity have developed, they have come to incorporate a relationship between "the cultural ideal and the institutional power as in state, business and corporate power." Earlier critiques such as those by Donaldson (1993), who saw the concept as obscuring economic and class issues, and Whitehead (1999:58), who saw it as unable to explain "the complex patterns of inculcation and resistance

which constitute everyday social interaction", or the different meanings attached to "masculinity", have been absorbed into an ever changing conceptualisation of hegemonic masculinity.

Brittan's (1989) concept of masculinism provides a complementary approach, one which explicitly accepts that "both masculinity and femininity are continuously subject to a process of reinterpretation" (Brittan, 2001:51). Brittan (2001:53) warns against "confusing masculinity with masculinism, the masculine ideology", an ideology which justifies male domination, sees heterosexuality as "normal", accepts the sexual division of labour and the fundamental differences between men and women and, therefore, underpins men's dominant role in the world of politics and business.

Brittan's (1989) ideas allow for the emergence of plural masculinities or different versions of masculinity which challenge the masculinist ideology. Writing in 1989, he identified David Bowie's early 1970's flirtations with androgyny and presentations of self, which revelled in gender fluidity (Whiteley, 1997) as an example of this, thus seeing popular music and its representation in the mass media as a space in which dominant versions of masculinity may be resisted and undermined.

## Representations of Men and Masculinities

> "Representation is the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system) to produce meaning. Already this definition carries the important premise that things, objects, people, events in the world – do not have in themselves any fixed, final or true meaning. It is us in society, within human cultures, who make things mean, who signify"
>
> (Hall, 1997: 61)

Hall's (1997) work on representation, a development on his work at The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at The University of Birmingham in the UK in the '70s and '80s, draws heavily on the work of Gramsci (1971) and Foucault (1972; 1980; 1984) in arguing a social constructionist (Burr, 2003) position on the debate about the relationship between the mass media and "reality". The representation of different groups or issues has become a key focus of study for scholars of media and cultural studies (Hall, 1997; Gripsrud, 2002) and the question of whether the media reflects or constructs reality is central to the debate on representations. Branston and Stafford (1996:78), for example, claim that the "reality" represented in the media is "always a construction, never a transparent window", while Kellner (1995:117) argues that within media culture "existing social struggles" are reproduced and that this has a key impact on the production of identities and the ways in which people make sense of the world.

Gripsrud (2002) argues that the media plays a crucial role in the self perception or identity of individuals and groups, creating imagined communities and presenting new ideas, new (and old) "stuff" from which: "we simply have to form some sort of opinion about where we are located, so to speak, in the complex landscapes presented to us."Gripsrud,2002:5).Dyer (1993) is clear in his belief that the media representation of groups in particular ways has an impact on public perception and social policy: "… how social groups are treated in cultural representation is part and parcel of how they are treated in life, .... that poverty, harassment, self-hate and discrimination…. are shored up and instituted by representation."(Dyer.1993:1).

This idea incorporates Berger and Luckman's (1967:127) notion that "he (sic) who has the bigger stick has the better chance of imposing his definitions of reality" and there would, of course, be no body of work on representations of men and masculinity had it not been for feminist analysis of the ways in which women's representation in TV and film played out in the reality of oppression (Screen, 1992: Brunsdon, 1997; hooks, 1997). Much of this work examined the stereotyping of men and women into traditional and widely accepted roles/positions on the screen, seeing stereotyping as a way in which power relations could be reproduced.

Lippman's (1956) notion that stereotyping was originally used in film and TV as a short cut or ordering process, what he called "our own sense of our values" (Lippman, 1956:96), can be read within this context, with Hall (1997) later arguing that it provides a normal/deviant axis with an emphasis on dominant value systems.

The introduction to this paper began to outline the ways in which dominant and resistant versions of masculinity, Carrigan et al.'s, (1985) hegemonic masculinity or the values of Brittan's (1989) masculinism, have played out within the arena of popular music through representation. Frith (1978) and Whiteley (1997) have argued for the importance of the role of music and performers in relation to identity while Gripsrud (2002) sees sports and pop stars, their lives and achievements made visible by the mass media, as individuals who reproduce or reinforce ideological positions in wider society. He also advances a strong case for seeing the media as a site where gender is constantly under scrutiny and construction, with the concept of similarities/differences as a key binary at play within media texts.

Hearn (2003:145) acknowledges a change in writing on men and masculinities with an increasing emphasis on the role of representation of masculinities:

> "If one is interested in social change in men and gender relations, it is necessary to attend to changing images of men which appear to have shifted considerably in recent decades".

A number of authors have written on the subject of the masculine and masculinist (Brittan, 1989) nature of the music scene, (Frith and McRobbie, 1990; Cohen 1997; Whiteley, 1997; Brocken, 2000). Rob Reiner's *This is Spinal Tap* (1984) satirizes this rather well. Within this masculinist (Brittan, 1989) scenario the feminine or the female represents a threat to the male gang or the homosociality (Sedgewick, 1985) based on close male friendships, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the "Yoko broke up The Beatles" discourse with which most people (in the UK, if not the world) are familiar, a scenario reflected in *Spinal Tap* by the interloper girlfriend coming between Nigel Tufnell and David St. Hubbins' John and Paul type relationship.

Marwick (1998), Sandbrook (2005; 2006) and others have documented the social changes of "the Sixties" and the rise in the importance of popular culture in this period as an influence in social change. There is a particular emphasis in this work on the role of poplar music in general, and The Beatles in particular, as being key to this in terms of high-profile and an increased visual representation due to the rise in popularity of TV in the home and the resurgence of the British film

industry in this period (Sandbrook, 2006). There is also a well documented debate about the importance of the arts in general as a key influence of the social changes of "the Sixties" (Shulman, 1973; Martin, 1981; Moore-Gilbert and Seed, 1992). MacDonald (1994) presents a convincing explanation around The Beatles' symbiotic relationship with "the Sixties" while elsewhere (King, 2013) the author has documented the ways in which they became synonymous with resistance and challenge to a particular set of values (often conceptualised as "the establishment" [Sandbrook, 2005, 2006]) and to what had previously seen to be intransient rules about male identity and masculinity. These include an ever changing and increasingly feminized (Cohan, 1993; Bruzzi, 1997) appearance, their juxtaposition to masculinist (Brittan, 1989) male characters (particularly in their films), queer codes (Shillinglaw, 1999) and a child-like playfulness at work in their film work, their status as "men of ideas" (Inglis, 2000:1), which went beyond expectations of the "normal" pop-star role, and their relationship to their female fans. The examples discussed here provide an examination of the influence of this period and builds on this work..

In the next section it will be argued that the new wave moment of the late '70's and early '80s represents both a return to some of the ideas and challenges outlined here and, also a development of the same, particularly in terms of the representation of a more fragile version of masculinity which contrasted sharply with much of the masculinsm (Brittan, 1989) of other cultural products of the decade, within the pop star persona.

## Oh Cock-Rock, up Yours!

"The words 'masculinity' and 'rock and roll' commonly conjure up screaming, hip swivelling singers, virtuosos with medallions banging on their hairy chests and an electric guitar glued to their hips, groupies, sex and drugs – the whole 1970's, decadent Spinal Tap trip"

(Bannister, 2006:x)

In this extract from Bannister's (2006) *White Boys, White Noise* the link between hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985) and Brittan's (1989) masculinism is neatly summarised. Amps that go up to 11, a claim to have armadillos in their trousers and songs with titles like *Lick my Love Pump* exemplify the way in which Rob Reiner's '80s' spoof "rockumentary" has come to represent the űbermasculinity at work in 1970s' rock (and its descendents in subsequent decades). Here it is the intention to illustrate the ways in which the post-punk movement provided a challenge to this idea. John Lydon, aka Rotten, is cited in Heylin (2007:424) as stating: "Punk is against the unacceptable face of capitalism."

On the face of it, given the initial furore surrounding punk and the media's representation of the movement as threatening to societal values, perhaps epitomised by The Pistols' *God Save the Queen* and its release in Jubilee week in 1977, this seems to be a reasonable statement. The political statements contained in much of the work of The Clash, combined with their angry presentation, still resound, over thirty five years on, for example. However Heylin (2007) argues convincingly around the idea of punk as elitist, London-centric, blues based, full of guitar histrionics and macho posing (Mick Jones of The Clash as Keith Richards wannabe, for example) and policed by "the leather jackets" (Heylin 2007:425) with a set of rules and regulations all of its own. There is militarism at work in the visual representation of punk that is also highly masculinist (Brittan, 1989). The other key point to make is how quickly the "anti-capitalist" punk bands signed to major labels. The Pistols made good publicity out of it, The Clash complained about CBS having "complete control" and Polydor used the marketing strategy developed for glam rock group Slade to sell The Jam to a wider audience. It can be argued, of course, that this was just what bands did, and that, at this point, there did not seem to be any other course of action. Heylin (2007) argues that this is one of the reasons for the emergence of the new wave or post-punk movement, something referenced against punk but growing out of punk, lacking the restrictions, both musically and visually, and opening the whole thing up to "men of ideas" (Inglis, 2000:1) [and women too], beyond Wardour Street (in the case of the UK), out to Leeds, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Manchester and beyond.

Reynolds (2005:517) describes the post-punk years as feeling "like one long rush of endless surprise and inexhaustible creativity". He sees punk as a blip in the development of music in the '70s; with the new wave movement (or moment) as a return to the early '70s' art-rock of Roxy Music, Bowie, Lou Reed and Iggy Pop, a scene in which influences beyond those traditional to rock and roll (similar to those at work in The Beatles mid-period [Inglis, 2000]) came together with interesting visual representations.

"In hindsight, it's punk rock that seems the historical aberration - a clear the decks return to basic rock and roll that ultimately turned out be a brief blip in an otherwise unbroken continuum of art-rock spanning the seventies from start to finish"

(Reynolds, 2005:xx-xxi)

It is no accident, it can be argued, that the artists listed by Reynolds (2005) as being influential in terms of the style and creativity that characterized the new wave movement also featured gender fluidity (Whiteley, 1997) as part of their approach. The term "rockism" was coined by Wah's Pete Wylie (Reynolds, 2005) and within this idea is not only contained a reaction to traditional musical forms but also traditional visual presentation. It is anti the groin-centred rock discussed by Frith (1978) and Bannister (2006) and it is, therefore, anti-masculinist (Brittan, 1989) and pro experimentation on a number of levels. This incorporates the discourses around music, the "other stuff" that goes along with it (Frith, 1978), incorporating Inglis' (2000:1) "men of ideas" notion and Hebdidge's (1978) ideas on the meaning of style. The signs and symbols of new wave, ranging from hair, through a return to '50s' and '60s' fashions, plus badge wearing and fanzine production represent, for men in the movement, an exploration of new versions of masculinity and male identity. Both Reynolds (2005) and Heylin (2007) outline a number of examples where musical creativity, the influence of other art forms beyond music and challenges to hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985) can be read through new wave "texts". These include Pere Ubu, Devo, James Chance and the Contortians and Television in the US and Gang of Four, The Pop Group, Joy Division and The Human League in the UK. Manchester impresario Tony

Wilson (cited in Heylin, 2007:461) claims the shift in approaches to and ways of writing about masculinity could be read through Joy Division : "instead of saying 'fuck off' they said 'I'm fucked!".

And while the original punk groups sold out to "the man", the rise of the indie label (Heylin, [2007] sees an article by Paul Morley in the NME in 1979 as the source of the term "indie" as meaning independent label based) represents an anti-hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971) gesture in itself. Rough Trade in London and Fast in Edinburgh spawned a number of smaller DIY ventures allowing post-punk product to be self-financed, produced and distributed beyond the boundaries of the hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985) at work in the music industry, as well as paving the way for later ventures like Factory and Postcard.

## If it ain't Stiff it ain't worth a f***

The establishing of the Stiff label in 1976 (pre-dating the sign up of the big punk acts to the majors) is highly significant in this sense. It provides an interesting example as it emerged from the highly masculinist (Brittan, 1989) pub-rock scene of the mid '70s', with something of a blokey-London-ness about it, yet, in its attempt to provide a home for "the sort of artist no-one would touch with a barge-pole" (BBC, 2010), it provided a sharp contrast to the hegemonic (Carrigan et el., 1985) pomp-rock of the early 1970's (BBC Four's *If it ain't stiff* documentary [BBC, 2010] opens with clips of Emerson Lake and Palmer in a stadium performing *Fanfare for The Common Man* and the fantasy worlds created by Yes and Genesis).

Formed by stalwarts of the pub-rock scene Jake Riviera and Dave Robinson, Stiff's avowed emphasis on style, flair and talent resonates with Inglis' (2000:1) "men of ideas" concept in relation to the 1960s' pop-star. The idea of do-it-yourself (something The Beatles had dabbled with, albeit with huge financial resources at their disposal, with the *Magical Mystery Tour* film and the establishing of the Apple label and its associated business offshoots) represented a return to '60s' countercultural values (Marwick, 1998) but, in terms of the music industry represented a radical step forward in introducing the idea of DIY. The men of ideas (Inglis, 2000) concept was established not only through the choice of artists on the Stiff level but also a coherent visual image, established by artist Barney Bubbles, and a set of memorable slogans, t-shirts, badges etc. which came to characterize the new-wave movement in the UK. The release on Stiff of Nick Lowe's *So it Goes* in 1976 (a track which represents the return to a '60s' pop sensibility as new wave, discussed in the epilogue) is particularly significant in that it reveals an adventurousness and perversity that characterized the label in its early days, seemingly using "interesting" as its main criteria for releasing something. The choice of Lowe as someone to launch the label seems particularly defiant, given that Lowe had failed in a number of previous attempts at becoming a pop star (the bubblegum pop of Kippington Lodge and Brinsley Schwarz, the UK's answer to CSNY, being two examples). Described by DJ Charlie Gillett as "a loser on a big scale" (BBC, 2010) the lack of sales of S*o it Goes* seemed to confirm this. Even the choice of the name 'Stiff' (singles which failed to take off in the music industry are often described as having "stiffed") can be read as an act of defiance. However, his choice as house producer was inspired leading to a number of creative collaborations, must notably with Elvis Costello. Despite its masculinist (Brittan, 1989) beginnings Stiff gathered together a roster of artists who challenged pre-1976 hegemonic rock. The early work of Elvis Costello and Ian Dury represent a return to a more feminized (Cohan, 1993) singer-songwriter approach (MacDonald, 2003) wrapped up in visual representations which provide a challenge to the traditional male rock-star persona (Frith and McRobbie, 1990). Costello's incarnation on his first album was of heartbroken, angst ridden bespectacled geek while Dury was articulate and upfront about his disability (he contracted polio as a child), and made it part of the coolness of his persona. Often described as "an unlikely candidate" for pop stardom, the success of a 36 year old front-man with a disability remains, sadly, a rare event in a world where the pretty boy is still king. Dury can be read as the antithesis of '90's boy bands and the One Direction ethic that pervades 21st century pop. His witty narrative-based songs placed him firmly in the "men of ideas" (Inglis, 2000:1) camp along with '60s' luminaries Ray Davies and Steve Marriot. Initial releases by Stiff also included the *All Aboard with the Roogalator EP* (with a sleeve which mimicked *With The Beatles*), and a single by '60s' psychedelic stalwarts The Pink Fairies, again representing a diverse anti-rockist stance. The re-emergence of the pop single, as opposed to the album, as a central artefact is also highly significant as it paved the way for a spate of singles sleeves which were akin in their artistic creativity and artefact-ness to the late 1950s' EP sleeves which *Absolute Beginners* (1959) author, Colin Macinnes, describes at great length in that particular pop classic.

The angst and self doubt which emerged in Costello's writing was reflected in the writings of other men in the new wave movement (Ian Curtis providing, perhaps, the most obvious and most discussed example; dark thoughts combined with the eternal love triangle) and this was to prove influential as the '70s became the '80s, both in the indie scene and the mainstream. Early '80s Postcard band Josef K, for example, are described by Heylin (2007:351) as "high on anxiety, finding an odd giddy euphoria in doubt", outlining how books were as important an influence as other music and how they were anti-sexist. Orange Juice's Edwyn Collins is described as writing from the perspective of a "love sick schoolboy" (Reynolds, 2005:341) taking The Buzzcocks' gay, witty campness, mixing it with lovelorn Noel Coward-esque lyrics and producing a new pop masculinity which emerged beyond the "militant solemnity" (Reynolds, 2005:344) of bands like the Gang of Four or the "guitar guerrilla histrionics" (Reynolds, 2005:113) of The Clash. This crossed over into the mainstream where Martin Fry of ABC (drawing on his love of Bryan Ferry and retaining artistic control through the licensing of the ABC Neutron label) dressed as Billy Fury while musing on lost love and advancing heartbreak as male lifestyle, as Smokey Robinson had done twenty years before. Others, like The Smiths, straddled a middle ground, signing to Rough Trade, while combining Johnny Marr's '60s' chiming guitar with Morrissey's "Oscar Wilde meets Johnny Ray" version of masculinity, daffodils and all.

Despite the parting of the ways of founders Riviera (who left, taking Costello and Lowe to the newly formed Radar records) and Robinson, who was eventually seduced into a deal with "the man" in the guise of Island records, Stiff's legacy is important for the post-punk movement and the anti-masculinist (Brittan, 1989) challenges it provided. After having almost accidentally had the first punk hit with The Damned's *New Rose*, the label's continued success with singles from Dury, flirtations with US new wavers Devo and an attempt to establish an Akron scene all represent an

eschewing of the mainstream and a "men of ideas" (Inglis 2000:1) approach which would be taken up by men in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Manchester as the '70s became the '80s.

## "You spurn my natural emotions, you make me feel I'm dirt and I'm hurt"

This paper draws to a conclusion with a discussion of three new wave "texts" from the summer of 1978 as examples of the way in which the new wave moment represents a return to more fragile masculinities (for example, seen at work in the early work of The Beatles and other '60s' pop artists) and can be read as a reaction to the cock-rock masculinism (Frith, 1978; Brittan, 1989) of '70s' rock or the militaristic aggression (Hebdidge, 1978; Heylin, 2007) of punk. Gender transgression, both in terms of visual appearance and lyrical content had been a key feature of pop music as the 1960s progressed. Rooted in the late 50s "crying" songs of artists such as Johnny Ray and Roy Orbison, in which male lyricists revealed a more feminised (Cohan, 1993) side, a stark contrast to the macho lyrics of late '50s rock and roll, the intellectual sensitive singer-songwriter genre was to develop over the next decade. This has been well documented in the work of The Beatles, for example, (Mäkelä, 2004; Stark, 2005; King, 2013) and Bannister (2000) and Warwick (2000) provide an excellent discussion of the way in which the influence of 1960s' girl groups on The Beatles' early stage persona was highly significant in terms of gender fluidity (Whiteley, 1997).

The methodology and analysis of the visual texts was informed by documentary analysis (May, 2003),using textual analysis within discourse analysis within a framework suggested by van Dijk (1993), Fairclough (1995), and McKee (2003). The work on representation, outlined previously, also formed part of the theoretical framework. Fairclough (1995) talks about examining the "texture" of texts, the combination of visual clues, words, ideological positions, circumstances of production and positions of power by the players within the text, and this idea has been applied to the following examples.

## Jilted John

*Jilted John* by Jilted John was released by Manchester's Rabid Records, and taken up by EMI International, becoming a hit in the summer of 1978. Produced by Martin Hannett (Zero) and based on a two chord punk riff, the record bridged punk authenticity and novelty hit.

Given that Jilted John was a persona invented by Manchester drama student Graham Fellows (over 30 years later to be seen advertising Yorkshire Tea in the guise of a later creation, John Shuttleworth) the "text" is interesting in that the character is an obvious social construction located within the punk milieu, yet the version of masculinity chosen is not that of angry militaristic punk but rather a fragile, feminized (Cohan, 1993) lovelorn male. The boy-loves-girl angst of the lyrics, with "girly" backing vocals (performed by men) is redolent of the early Beatle girl group cover versions such as *Devil in Her Heart* and *Boys* (Bannister, 2000; Warwick, 2000). The camp, but not gay, vocals delivering such lines as "he's more of a man than you'll ever be" also reflect a return to the gender fluidity at work in much 1960s' pop music (Whiteley, 1997; Mäkelä, 2004) and provides a stark contrast to the militaristic aggression of much of the punk oeuvre. A viewing of the song performed for the first time on *Top of The Pops* sees Fellows sporting a mushroom hairstyle, akin to a Beatle mop-top circa 1964, and an anorak, akin to Costello's geek chic, a stark contrast to The Clash's combat rock ensemble. The shirt and tie provide a nod to punk but the whole ensemble, and Fellows' youthful optimism, contrast with the older backing band's more '70s' "rockness". The whole lyrical pretext of the song, about a man/boy being jilted, harks back to the angst ridden ballads of the late 1950s and early 1960s, particularly the work of Roy Orbison and Smokey Robinson which, in turn, were highly influential on The Beatles' early work (King, 2013). Unlike Elvis Costello's work, in which rejection leads to anger, *Jilted John* reveals a fragile male persona, hurt and bemused ("they were both laughing at me"; "I was so upset I cried, all the way to the chip shop").

A YouTube viewing of Free performing *All Right Now* on *Top of the Pops* in 1970 – all beards, pelvic-thrusting, loon pants and lyrics in the vein of "I said hey what's your name baby?", or The Clash's live performance of *London's Burning* in Victoria Park from the same Summer as the release of *Jilted John* – all militaristic imagery, guitar histrionics and politicized shouting – provide contrasting examples of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) at work in pop. Along with Jilted John on *Top of the Pops* his infamous sidekick Gordon the Moron appears on backing vocals, sporting eye liner and a vest, bearing the legend "I taught Legs and Co to Dance". There is a campness and anti-masculinism (Brittan, 1989) evident in the visual presentation of the song, all of which produces a text which reflects fragile masculinites.

## Love You More

The Buzzcock's singer and compose Pete Shelley's "out" gayness made *Ever Fallen In Love* a text which transgresses gender boundaries. The single represented a chart breakthrough for a band that were always more new wave than angry punk, drawing on '60s'-like pop tunes and intelligent lyric writing, originally through Shelley's collaboration with Howard Devoto, another non-traditional pop star persona, who found the rules and regulations of punk too constraining and left to form Magazine as the new wave moment arrived (Reynolds, 2005). Shelley's lack of any particular allegiance to the "punk" tag was apparent in an interview given in 1978:

> "If punk is just a fashion that includes spitting routines, nazi salutes and a token Iggy and the Stooges number then we've nothing to do with it".
>
> (Heylin, 2007: 311).

It is, however, the two minute splendour of *Love you More*, another hit from the Summer of '78, that provides the third example.A performance from *Top of the Pops* in that year exemplifies the way in which new wave marked a return to a sixties' pop sensibility. The classic two guitar, bass, drums line up of The Buzzcocks, with drummer and bassist placed on risers, recalls a 1964 Top-of-The-Pop-ness associated with The Beatles and fellow Mancunians The Hollies. Shelley faces and pouts at the camera, more in the style of 1964 McCartney (a hero of Shelley's) than the "out" gay men in pop who preceeded him (Mercury) or followed (Boy George; Mika). Shelley's is a matter-of-fact-gayness, made

explicit in interviews but contained in classic pop group format. His lyrics, as those on *Ever Fallen in love*, transcend gender, dealing with love, like *Jilted John*. Incorporating backing vocals akin to those of '60s' girl groups, and emphasising the fragile vulnerable male ("why would I cry if you ever left me, may be 'cos you're all I'm living for"). The final line of the song, however, ("until the razor cuts") signposts the darker side of fragile masculinities to be epitomised, perhaps, by fellow Mancunians Joy Division in the not too distant future.

## Down in the Tube Station at Midnight

Heylin (2007:448) describes The Jam's cover of Ray Davies' *David Watts* as "a reclamation of the quintessentially English strains of pop-rock first alchemized on The Kinks' *Something Else*" and sees *Down in the Tube Station at Midnight* as a further development of this move away from the masculinist (Brittan, 1989) anthemic aggression of their first album. He sees *Tube Station* as relating to "The Who circa '66" (Heylin, 2007:448) and as a development of Paul Weller's writing, "turning everyday experience into art" (Heylin, 2007:449). 1978/9 certainly marks the beginning of a period of song writing on which his later "modfather" status is based. While showing an affinity for The Who and a return to the subtlety and subversion (Hebdidge, 1978) of mod as a representation of his own sharply-attired version of masculinity, it can be argued that *Tube Station* marks the start of Weller's Beatle-rifling period (*All Mod Cons* [1978]; Sound *Affects* [1980]) and that the experience into art narrative of *Tube Station* is McCartney-esque in its construction. It's storyline, based on the everyday experience of the ordinary, links it to *Eleanor Rigby* or *Penny Lane*, the latter providing a good example of the "experience into art" (Heylin 2007:449) process. McCartney's use of the barber "showing photographs", as in a gallery, is a nice illustration of this (The Beatles, 2003). The lyric of *Tube Station* challenges the idea of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985) as something which makes all men, all powerful and, as such, challenges the idea of patriarchy at a time when the idea was about to become a shared currency for many. Weller writes about the threat of violence in public spaces and the way in which many men experience fear and learn to be on their guard against it. The lyric builds tension and Weller's juxtaposition of the ordinary man on his way home to his wife with a takeaway curry with men who "smelt of pubs and Wormwood Scrubs and too many right wing meetings" represents two different versions of masculinity in evidence at a time when the political right seemed to be in the ascendent. It is reflective of the rock-against-racism, anti-National Front stance taken by many young men as Thatcherism approached, told in a style which harks back to the "men of ideas" (Inglis 2000:1) of another era – Ray Davies, McCartney, Pete Townsend – Weller's pop heroes. Weller's smart mod hairstyle and attire visible in a *Top of The Pops* appearance from 1978 intersect with the melody, accompanying bass and guitar lines and smart storytelling to present a "text" produced in the crafted, personalised style of the feminized (Cohan, 1993) singer-songwriter genre. His throwaway line towards the end of the song – "they took the keys, she'll think it's me" causes the tension to rise again and is a reflection on the dark side of masculinist (Brittan, 1989) behaviours.

## Epilogue

In this paper I have drawn on compelling evidence which suggests that the new wave moment which followed punk drew on and continued to develop some old ideas while cutting and pasting together a range of influences, sounds and textures not previously seen before in the particular shapes and forms they took. I have argued that, within this process, new ideas and challenges around masculinity occurred, drawing on previous challenges to the traditional or hegemonic (Carrigan et al.,1985) while developing new versions of fragile masculinities which would provide a template for a new kind of male pop star persona in the 1980s and would engage with the new man discourses (Edwards, 1997; Nixon, 1997) that would emerge in that decade.

Interestingly, though, the examples presented here pre-date these culturalist approaches to masculinity (Edwards, 2003) and provide further examples of the way in which the arts can influence social change (Moore, Gilbert and Seed, 1992) and the way in which pop music, in particular, provides a space in which notions and conceptualisations of gender are challenged.

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