

2012-01-01

Androgyny and Musical Identity: Glitz, Glamour, and Everything in Between

Tanya Yvette Flores

University of Texas at El Paso, tanyaflores0@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.utep.edu/open_etd



Part of the [Mass Communication Commons](#), and the [Music Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Flores, Tanya Yvette, "Androgyny and Musical Identity: Glitz, Glamour, and Everything in Between" (2012). *Open Access Theses & Dissertations*. 2086.

https://digitalcommons.utep.edu/open_etd/2086

This is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UTEP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Open Access Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UTEP. For more information, please contact lweber@utep.edu.

ANDROGYNY AND MUSICAL IDENTITY: GLITZ, GLAMOUR, AND
EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

TANYA YVETTE FLORES

Department of Communication

APPROVED:

Richard D. Pineda, Ph.D., Chair

Roberto Avant-Mier, Ph.D.

Ann B. Horak, Ph.D.

Benjamin C. Flores, Ph.D.
Interim Dean of the Graduate School

Copyright ©

by

Tanya Yvette Flores

2012

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my grandfather, Raul Cano. He died March 13, 2012. The most adamant of all family members who believed that school is the most important decision in life. He believed in me, he supported me; he pushed me, and taught me to be a human being that believes only in love, kindness, and compassion. Throughout his struggle, he told me to keep on. Not knowing where I was in this academic process, he knew and would tell me that my finish line would come as glorious as his. I miss him dearly, and I know that he has had a hand directing mine on this computer. Te amo Papi.

ANDROGYNY AND MUSICAL IDENTITY: GLITZ, GLAMOUR, AND EVERYTHING IN
BETWEEN

by

TANYA YVETTE FLORES, Broadcast Journalism

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at El Paso

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Communication

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

May 2012

Acknowledgements

I want to thank the people who have helped me travel as far as I have. First and foremost I offer my sincerest gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Richard D. Pineda, who has supported me throughout my thesis with his patience and knowledge while allowing me the room to work in my own way. I attribute my graduate career to his encouragement and effort and without him this thesis, too, would not have been completed or written. One simply could not wish for a better or friendlier supervisor.

My two committee members, Dr. Roberto Avant-Mier, and Dr. Ann B. Horak, who guided me and my ideas to bigger and better heights. They offered much advice and insight throughout my work. I cannot find professors who have such a great taste in music. My research would not be possible without their help.

Dr. Stacey Sowards and Dr. Samuel C. Riccillo, who from the very beginning of my graduate career guided my interests and gave excellent advice on the future passion of my studies.

I would like to thank the Department of Communication for always providing opportunities to further my interests. Particularly, the 2010 trip to Rwanda, Africa to study Rwandan university students who have interest in pursuing master's degrees. I carry that trip in my heart.

In my daily work I have been blessed with a friendly and cheerful group of fellow students, known as the UTEP Grad Peep cohort. I would like to thank the numerous amounts of friends who have encouraged me, who believed that I was doing the right thing, and who kept me on track.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my parents, brother and sister who have given me their unequivocal support throughout, as always, for which my mere expression of thanks likewise does not suffice.

Abstract

Discourse of androgyny and how it functions and how it is constructed will be central to analyzing how it is utilized in popular music and how artists, particularly androgynous artists, use it to complicate their expression of identities. Androgyny is described as a mixing of both male and female genders, where there can be distinct lack of coherent gender identification. Androgyny has been revealed as an identity that neither men nor women are born with, but embody through time. It is important to illustrate a growing recognition of androgynous artists to offer us an opportunity to glimpse the spectacular evolvement of sexual identities. It is important to understand the internal motivations that these artists have and how central the communication of these motivations and differences they portray. It is also vital how discourse is part of that musical identity and the purpose it serves. It is also very important to understand that it is when we put gender into play; it is when we question the binary, it is when we break the rules and keep calling attention to the fact that the rules are breakable.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
Chapter	
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Rationale.....	3
1.2 Emergence of “Glam”.....	5
1.3 Research Questions.....	8
1.4 Method.....	8
1.5 Conclusion	10
2. Literature Review	12
2.1 The (Pop)ular and Scholarship	13
2.2 Punk-ified: 1967 to 1984.....	20
2.3 1 st Wave: ‘Shiny, Shiny Piece of Leather’	21
2.4 The Emergence of Glam.....	26
2.5 A Tear In Your Pantyhose	30
2.6 Gender Identity in Popular Music.....	31
2.7 Queer Voices: ‘Sounding Like a No-No’	32
2.8 Voicing Androgyny	35
3. Methodology.....	39
3.1 Data Collection	39
3.2 Methodological Assumptions	42
3.3 Limitations.....	44
3.4 Summary.....	45
4. Findings	47
4.1 Lyrics	49
4.2 Shining in the Night, Princess by Dawn.....	50
4.3 John, I’m Only a Queen.....	56
4.4 Images.....	60
4.5 Janelle Monáe and Annie Lennox: Queen or King?.....	61

4.6	Performance	66
4.7	Lady Gaga's Monster	66
4.8	David Bowie's Alien	69
4.9	Alice Cooper's Killer	71
4.10	Prince's Lover	74
5.	Conclusion	79
5.1	Significance	80
5.2	Limitations	85
	References	87
	Appendix	92
	Vita	93

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Ordinary life is so dull that I get out of it as much as possible” Steve Jones, a Sex Pistol.

Music comes from everywhere, from every part of your being. Androgyny in popular music has become its own cultural movement. Like punk rock, it takes root in the rebellion that seeks to shock conventional mainstream sensibilities, acquiring through the years its own set of characteristics. There are opposite ends of the spectrum in the way androgynous popular artists tend to display their masculine and/or feminine traits, and within those opposite ends lie a whole range of visual, lyrical, cultural, and performative personas. Androgynous artists mesh various styles and are very diverse musically. The history of androgyny in popular music is as colorful, flamboyant, and complex as any other musical genre, but at the same time silent in scholarship. What is most attractive about these artists is the depth and range of their personal struggles to adapt and yet differentiate their identities. The way these artists pick and choose from styles of life, different styles of music, and different styles of identity and still make it their own, is what makes them fascinating. The waves of youth subculture and the histories of its origins in youth rebellion have constructed musical genres that are always intersecting and interweaving with the day and time of that decade.

My earliest memory of rock and roll music was hearing “Genius of Love” by Tom Tom Club on my father’s record player when I was four-years-old. It was the perfect introduction of popular music to a four-year-old. Poppy-reggae guitar and a hoppy bass line? Yes, I was a happy four-year-old shaking my bum in my living room. Of course I was not aware of the lyrics. I was barely old enough to understand Sesame Street’s songs about brushing your teeth and the consequences of not doing so (teeth will fall off if I remember correctly). The only thing that

mattered was the beat; if it made me move any of my appendages, it was good in my book. But I was six-years-old when I realized that music could affect me in more ways than being able to move my feet. Everything that I had heard up until then were songs about love, about being happy in love, about kissing and hugging. Gross! Why? Why do people have to sing about kissing and hugging? It did not make sense to me, in fact, it made me angry. It made me angry to know that all the songs I would ever hear on the radio would be about love. I specifically remember sitting in the back of my parents car one afternoon and hearing “I Just Called to Say I Love You” by Stevie Wonder on the radio. I asked my mother, “Mom, who is he calling?” She lovingly responded, “The lady he loves, he loves her and he wants her to know that.” What? That was the dumbest thing I had ever heard in my six years of existence. I could not believe it. Adults spend all day long telling me what to do, and they spend their time calling each other for love? My six-year-old brain could not understand and refused to. Then, one day, I heard it. I heard the march of the bass guitar. I heard the paranoia. I heard the dark tale of someone wanting to get away. I had heard “Psycho Killer” by the Talking Heads. My little six-year-old mind was blown away. For the first time I felt something when listening to a song. I was not angry because it was not another sappy love song. The song scared me and thrilled me at the same time. Here is someone not singing about love, I had heard something completely opposite of that. It was the first time I was able to feel and experience everything in a song; I knew what David Byrne was singing about. Well, at least I thought I did. It was at this moment that my love affair with music began. It was when I realized that music could be fun, and scary, and exciting. But why? Why did I feel this way? How can such a strange song be able to communicate so many different

feelings? My love affair consisted of looking for more music that made me feel that same way I had first heard “Psycho Killer,” and continues to this day.

Rationale

Within this thesis, discourse of androgyny and how it functions and how it is constructed will be central to analyzing how it is utilized in popular music and how artists, particularly androgynous artists, use it to complicate and communicate their expression of identities. Music is a means for people to relate to music as an outlet for their feelings. It is how we are able to communicate through different media and are able to find common ground. The study of human communication allows for the study of creating and interpreting messages elicits a response. Whether those responses are emotional or behavioral is one issue this project will address.

I will next be concentrating on the literature of the research. The literature review will be concentrating on popular music scholarship, the history of punk rock, the growth and development from punk artists into androgynous artists, and the mediated construction of gender. From the literature review, I will propose my research questions. After that, I will explain the method on how I will be continuing with the research. I will analyze several artists from several decades, their cover albums, song lyrics, and their interpretations of androgyny.

I will use the literature review to explain how popular music and communication are important in our society and outline the history of androgyny in music and the important figures of this genre. Music is an integral part of human life. Popular music is shaped by us and at the same time we have the potential to shape social, cultural and behavioral patterns because of it. Music produces and re-produces meanings. It has shown us different ways of how human

communication works without the use of our voices. Sociologist Simon Frith says that, “Music gives us a way of being in the world, a world of making sense of it” (Frith 1996, p. 272).

Scholarship of popular music has illuminated how we can study pop music through cultural studies. At its core, popular music is engaged more aggressively by younger people. In the age of the internet and .mp3s, where anyone owning a simple music program can technically release an album, we look towards popular music scholarship to explain why the idea of “creative amateurism” is embraced by young people (Frith, 1992, p. 174). Social anthropologist Ruth Finnegan made three general points about young people’s involvement in popular music: 1) involvement rests on a substantial body of knowledge, and musicians and audiences have an active choice and understanding of genre rules and histories. 2) Young musicians place the highest value on originality and self-expression as a means of defining one’s individual identity. 3) Live performance is, for virtually all young rock bands, still the focal point of their work (as cited in Frith, 1992, p. 175). There it is, plain and simple, the knowledge of the music you like, strive for a unique identity, and a stage to perform it all. For all rock bands that have started out in garages, dingy bars, clubs and other meek places, this is the foundation of popular music and its musicians. This significance of knowledge, expression, and performance is central to popular music.

Finnegan (as cited in Frith, 1992) goes on to explain:

Perhaps the most prominent single characteristic of the preoccupations of rock players...was their interest in expressing their own views and personality through music-making: a stress on individuality and artistic creation which accords ill with the mass cultural theorists’ delineations of popular music. (p. 174)

The groundwork of popular music scholarship is where these three points are acted out in enthusiastic fervor and where I will use Finnegan's second point, further explained above, to base my research questions about androgynous identity in popular music.

To address issues raised about gender and androgynous identity and the complications of expression of those identities, I will examine several songs and albums from different artists that are considered androgynous.

Emergence of Glam

The first important wave that leads to the growth and development of androgyny in popular music is the beginnings of the punk movement that derived from the clean-cut rock and roll of the 1950s into the cultural revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. A second important wave is later in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Punk rock's roots began as a youth subcultural movement in the early 1960s moving against the standard mode of production of youth culture. The early 1960s brought out a youth revolution that became the founding core of the punk aesthetic of the 1970s. "A turn to the 1960s raised some interesting problems, since the 'decadence' of the 1970s is rooted in some of the dominant musical genres of the 1960s" (Bennett, 2001, p. 26). Some eccentric performers of the 1950s, such as Johnnie Ray, were seen as corrupters of youth by including blues mannerisms in singing and live performances to achieve mainstream commercial success with white and black audiences (White, 1984, p. 85), the same can be said about Elvis Presley. This is but one example of artists rebelling against the norms of the times. Sociologist and Culture Studies Professor Dick Hebdige (1979) detailed a case study of punk's early movement in England and said:

In punk, alienation assumed an almost tangible quality. It could almost be grasped. It gave itself up to the cameras in “blankness”; the removal of expression (see any photograph of any punk group), the refusal to speak and be positioned. This trajectory-the solipsism, the neurosis, the cosmetic rage-had its origins in rock. (p. 28)

Hebdige says that we are always able to track the course of music: The histories of the generation before always seem to ring a little bit louder. Later in the 1960s, “garage bands” would be the predecessors of punk music. Garage bands were a collection of different bands from different genres such as surf music, the British Invasion, and “San Jose groups.” The latter were a collection of not-too-well known bands from San Jose, California. They were one-hit wonders who combined “rank amateurism and aggression”. Back then they were called “garage bands,” but according to some rock critics they can be called early punk bands (Gendron 2002, p. 232). According to Frith, he explained that punk rockers were, “singing in their own personas, from their own experiences” (Frith 1996, p. 186). His definition of *persona* uses the artist who “took themselves and their bodies as the objects or sites of narrative and feeling”. This is the kind of persona that is being observed about artists in the late 1960s to 1970s (Frith, 1996, p. 205). The early punk aesthetics of the 1970s are born with the essay Lester Bangs wrote for the magazine *Creem*. In it he wrote that there are three themes of a punk aesthetic: sheer aggressiveness, the element of physical, and loudness (Bangs, 2003, p. 136).

From here, the punk aesthetic moved into the seedy clubs of New York City, into the brains of teenagers who needed an outlet and did not know how to control their youth angst, and it makes its *Village Voice* debut in a June 1972 headline “When Punk Met the Vietcong.” The Velvet Underground and Andy Warhol’s Factory were churning out artists like Lou Reed, Iggy

Pop, and Jonathan Richman who all three are considered Godfathers of punk. This “new” term makes its way into musical circles around cities like Los Angeles and New York City, with emerging glam bands such as the New York Dolls from New York City and Zolar X from Los Angeles, California. The emergence of the New York Dolls acquired a loyal following, they were stylistically different. They expressed a certain “new york-ness” that brought in glam and glitter mixed with arty bohemia, and they emphasized gritty look and attitude as they were first labeled as a “transvestite rock” band. The New York Dolls were five men from different corners of New York’s underground music scene who loved fashion, rock and roll, and had a “plan to set it back [Rock ‘n’ Roll] on a course involving not just an impulsive overdose of glamour but a return to its musical roots” (Fletcher, 2009, p. 308).

Around the same time of the New York Dolls in New York City, a semi-famous London artist named David Bowie made his debut with his alter-ego: Ziggy Stardust. Bowie has credited two men with serving as his inspiration for creating Ziggy Stardust. One was the man he met and spoke with after attending his first Velvet Underground concert, Lou Reed. The other man was Andy Warhol, inspired by his unrestrained, reinvent-yourself, gay positive glamour of New York City. Here, Bowie embraced the identity of an androgynous alien from Mars. He is probably the most important androgynous icon because he embraced it wholly and deeply. He was a performer who took his music very seriously, often crediting inspiration from Lou Reed. His “performance” of “tight body suits, hair colored in unnatural hues, and his stare into the camera like a femme fatale...tapped into this postmodern stance in identity” (The Pop Cult, 2005, p. 3).

According to Anne Fausto-Sterling, labeling someone a man or woman is a social decision, our beliefs about gender—not science—can define our sex (Fausto-Sterling, 2000, p.

3). Sex and gender are topics that will be central to this thesis; it will force me to analyze the boundaries between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and where those boundaries are blurred (Goulding & Saren, 2009, p. 33). Gender is culturally constructed whereas Sex refers to biological differences, and according to Butler, gender is neither the casual result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex (Butler, 1990, p. 327). So in popular music, androgynous artists, through their multi-faceted gender performances allow themselves to subversively play with gendered meanings and in doing so, show how they can be re-signified (Butler, 1990). And it is within this androgynous and “multi-faceted space”, gender differences can blur.

I will present an argument on analyzing music, lyrics, and live performances from androgynous artists from the late 1960s to present time that will address how androgyny works within popular music, its effect on society, and how it functions to use gender as a way of expression. Other studies by scholars have focused on the impact of these androgynous artists of the past three decades on new artists. With that literature, I will use all by focusing on lyrical and visual markers; I will also research several gender issues, sexuality, and even issues of “camp”.

Research Questions

RQ1: How are the characteristics of androgyny communicated in popular music?

RQ2: What is the discursive impact of androgyny in popular music?

Method

The purpose of this thesis is to find gaps between the musical dimension and social dimension of androgynous identities in popular music and how they work, but also to be able to bridge or link that gap by finding out what it accomplishes. The study of androgyny identities in popular music will be researched through musical and social measurements, but as the research

expands, there are categories in androgyny (particularly visual markers, lyrics, and persona) that will pay some attention to important social areas of history in popular culture, such as the punk movement, and gay culture. Through the literature that is being researched, I have come across past work that has studied the importance of communicating identity and its implications on society. Androgyny in popular music has a colorful and important past and I believe that there are certain markers found in its history that I can identify as the idea of difference. Difference, is the ability to see something unusual and/or discernible and be able to share that information to point out and link together those differences. It holds power because it sets apart, and is able to distinguish characteristics between two things.

I have mapped out a brief historiography of punk and androgynous artists and their influences starting from the late 1960s to present day. I will use different artists and their interpretations of androgyny to address the arguments and research questions in this essay. This is the most appropriate method to address my research questions, because by using visual text, lyrical text, and issues of gender and sexuality I will approach these discussions of theories and of androgyny identity. I will specifically analyze lyrics of four songs: David Bowie's "John, I'm Only Dancing" (Jones, D., 1972) and "Queen Bitch" (Jones, D., 1971), Grace Jones' "Walking in the Rain" (Jones, G., 1981) and "King For a Day" (Armstrong, 1997). I will also look at androgynistic images music videos project; videos from Janelle Monáe "Many Moons" (Irvin & Monáe, 2008), and the Eurythmics "I Need a Man" (Lennox & Stewart, 1987). I will also be examining images, videos, lyrics, and overall performative personas from artists such as David Bowie, Alice Cooper, Lady Gaga, and Prince (See Appendix).

Rock critics, composed of an overlapping network that comprises those connected with college radio, record collectors, local music scene participants, musicians and various record company employees, among others, influence the attitudes of the taste community of which they are a part of (McLeod, 2001, p. 47). David Bowie released his first album *David Bowie* in 1966, to unsuccessful reviews but none the less a cult favorite of die-hard Bowie fans. He did admit to Britain's *Mojo* magazine that the record "seemed to have its roots all over the place, in rock and vaudeville and music hall. I didn't know if I was Max Miller or Elvis Presley" (Anderson, 2011).

The New York Dolls released their self-titled first album in 1973, and unlike Bowie's first album, it was "a strange combination of high pop-star drag and ruthless street arrogance" (Glover, 1973). Their first album was filled with raunchy lyrics, hard guitar riffs and according to Glover, they played it with a refreshing and sardonic sense of humor (1973).

Lou Reed's first studio album, *Transformer* (Reed, 1972), came about after Reed's split with the band the Velvet Underground. He worked with producer and guitarist Mike Ronson and David Bowie where, according to Reed wanted to part ways with the Velvet Underground sound, "I couldn't be in the direction of Velvet Underground 'cause only the Velvet Underground could make that sound (Smith, 2001).

Conclusion

The significance of studying androgynous identity in popular music is important in understanding and identifying differences in expressions of identity. I have the research to distinguish unusual and/or discernible characteristics of androgyny identity and be able to share that information to point out and link together differences of androgyny expression. In androgynous musical identity there are characteristics that I will map out in this thesis that are

completely set apart from another, one is physical, another is internal, but being able to connect the differences gives androgynous identity a life completely all its own. But at the same time it is not so different from other musical identities. I will present an argument that will serve to illustrate a growing recognition that subcultural contexts offer us an opportunity to glimpse the spectacular (Penazola, 1998). It is important to understand the internal motivations that these artists have and how central the communication of these motivations and differences they portray. It is also vital to figure out in this thesis how communication itself is part of that musical identity and the purpose it serves. I will use different characteristics from the analysis of androgyny and examine them separately and re-connect them and intersect them, but it is also important to examine the way communication as an academic study is able to figure out why and how these performers want to and are able to balance two genders.

My thesis will consist of five major chapters. Chapter one will be the introduction, I will set up issues of gender and popular music and how androgyny fits into, or does not fit into, popular music, scholarship and the complications of identity. Chapter two will be the literature review; here I will lay out all of the research pertaining to popular music, a brief history of punk rock, and issues of sex and gender. Chapter three will consist of the methodology used to address androgyny, gender, and popular music and the significance in cultural studies. Chapter four will be used for the analysis of the thesis questions and be used to try to clarify my research questions by analyzing my body of work. My last chapter is the conclusion, I will bring to a close all of the issues I will analyze and help the reader understand the significance and the importance of further study of issues of androgyny identity.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Music is an integral part of human life. Popular music is shaped by us and at the same time we have the potential to shape social, cultural and behavioral patterns because of it. Music produces and re-produces meanings. Sociologist Simon Frith says that, “Music gives us a way of being in the world, a way of making sense of it” (Frith 1996, p. 272). The use of music is important to social relations and operations of people, although circumstances vary from culture to culture; it is created and used to inform meaning of the world. The participation of an audience is experienced in more ways than one: physical, emotional, and cognitive. “Listeners create imaginative, personal and social uses of music...because music is available in so many varieties and situations” (Lull, 1987, p. 141).

The first section of this chapter introduces the term popular music and highlights the emergence of Pop Art in the U.S. With Pop artists as Andy Warhol and the Velvet Underground at the helm of a new subculture, these artists were able to relate the term Pop between music and visual presentation. This section will also focus on discourse regarding “performance.” I will also examine the differences between Frith’s definition of performativity and Butler’s definition. Since the 1960s, popular music has been a predominantly “heterosocial” discourse in which female, gay, queer and androgynous bodies have been largely absent in the discourse of music, and from the conversation about gender identities found in popular music. The second section follows a brief history of the punk movement throughout England and the United States. This section follows the importance of the punk subculture. The third major chapter deals with the emergence of glam onto the music scene with artists like New York Dolls, David Bowie, and Alice Cooper and how the significance of the spectacle they put on. The fourth section, I reveal

how gender identities in the discourse of popular music are presented through physicality's of musicians. That section continues with a sub-section of queer voices. In this section I provide few examples of how the term "queer" is sometimes synonymous with homosexual, gay and lesbian studies, however can also be found between bodily spaces. The last major section lays out the etymological foundation of the word "androgyny" and how the word is synonymous with sexual identity. Here, I compare two completely different singers and critical and marginal representation of voice is able to take an artist to different ends of the popularity spectrum.

The Pop(ular) and Scholarship

Popular music, in a general description, is defined in relation to "the ordinary people" (Shuker, 2008, p. 6). Popular music is accepted widely by audiences, but as Shuker adds, a pure musical definition is not enough; "Since a central characteristic of popular music is a socio-economic one: it is mass production for a mass, predominantly youth, market" (p. 7). However, popularity can differ from country to country, even region to region. What is popular varies from person to person, and music with limited appeal may not be considered by the popular music industry.

Pop Art arose in in Great Britain and New York in the 1950s and 1960s through several channels of art and commercial imagery. British critic Lawrence Alloway defines it as, "[Pop Art], in its original form, was a polemic against elite views of art in which uniqueness is a metaphor of the aristocratic, and contemplation the only response to art" (Cagle, 1995, p. 49). Although Alloway is referring to late 1950s British Pop art, his definition can be used to outline how popular art and music tie in with youth subculture and the relationship between the two. Youth subcultures have always been sites of struggle where "resistance through rituals, dressing

strangely, striking bizarre attitudes, breaking rules, breaking bottles, windows, heads, issue rhetorical challenges to the law” (Hebdige, 1988, p. 18). Popular music, like Pop Art, is a sphere where we can see those challenges come alive. Andy Warhol is famously associated with the Pop Art movement of the 1960s. But Pop Art was a movement that was not totally accessible to everyone and was not necessarily popular. It was disruptive, and was filled “with a double-edged sense of irony, metaphorical quotes within quotes, and riddle-like dilemmas that are amusing on the surface yet, underneath, decidedly (and deadly) serious” (Cagle, 1995, p. 2). Warhol professed that the PopArt mentality was something one must earnestly acquire. In fact, “‘getting’ Pop was akin to gaining membership in a secret society” (Cagle, 1995, p. 5). Warhol adds, “Once you ‘got’ Pop, you could never see a sign the same way again. And once you *thought* Pop you could never see America in the same way again” (p. 5).

The same can be said about youth subcultures. Frith defines a subculture as “the particular pattern of beliefs, values, symbols and activities that a group of young people are seen to share” (Frith, 1985, p. 310). Most people that associate with certain subcultures can say that there is common mindset; there is a common idea of “I get it.” But “getting it” does not necessarily mean to be embraced by fans. Cagle (1995) uses avid fans of the glitter movement who were not necessarily seduced by Bowie and glitter artists to understand how these fans were able to see beyond the obvious titillation:

Others didn’t necessarily need grasp such connotations: glitter’s style produced a discourse that was metaphorically translatable without referents. In other words, no matter the background or location of fans, glitter’s most pertinent motifs made possible a collective liberatory reprisal that reversed dominant conceptions of sexuality, mainstream style, and commercially informed fandom. (p. 98)

Scholarship of popular music has illuminated how we can study music through cultural studies. At its core, popular music is engaged more aggressively by younger people. In the age of the internet and MP3s, where anyone owning simple music software can technically release an album, we look towards popular music scholarship can explain why the idea of “creative amateurism” is embraced by young people (Frith, 1992, p. 174). Social anthropologist Ruth Finnegan (1992) made three general points about young people’s involvement in popular music:

One: involvement rests on a substantial body of knowledge, and musicians and audiences have an active choice and understanding of genre rules and histories. Two: Young musicians place the highest value on originality and self-expression as a means of defining one’s individual identity. Three: Live performance is, for virtually all young rock bands, still the focal point of their work. (as cited in Frith, p. 175)

The engagement of popular music is the knowledge of the music you like, it is an attempt to possess a unique identity, and it is a stage from which to perform it all. For all rock bands that have started out in garages, dingy bars, clubs and other meek places, this is the foundation of popular music and its musicians. This significance of knowledge, expression, and performance is central to the study of popular music.

Finnegan (1992) goes on to explain:

Perhaps the most prominent single characteristic of the preoccupations of rock players [...] was their interest in expressing their own views and personality through music-making: a stress on individuality and artistic creation which accords ill with the mass cultural theorists’ delineations of popular music. (as cited in Frith, p. 174)

The groundwork of popular music scholarship is where these three points intersect. I will use Finnegan’s second point, explained above, to base my research questions about androgynous identity in popular music.

Performance, as explained by Frith, is the central “ritual” to rock and roll, in performance and being live on stage where the experience of achievement is felt the most (Frith, 1992, p.

175). A sense of achievement can be equally important to a musician as songwriting or instrumental achievement. At the local level, a band can simply be made up of a school group or a garage band where the set of tasks and relationships are the same as in the pop music world and classical world, or simply the musical world in all. Where one group learns through a “high-cultured” set of musical criteria of elites, the other “low-cultured” cluster learns through the self-taught environment of their garages, friend’s basements, and local rock shows. But as Frith explains, there is not a lot of difference between the two at a basic level. “High culture” is usually associated with the refined, educated, or wealthy. It usually is associated with small groups of people, and not popular with the masses. “Low culture” is usually associated with the common people, those less educated, and possibly with what now can be recognized as popular culture. Both groups are self-taught, both put in rigorous amounts of time into practicing their talent and instruments, and both have a hard work ethic to “master” performance. But, sometimes the “high” can become “low,” and vice versa. “Popular culture, then, can apparently be transformed into ‘high’ culture by a simple act of appropriation [...] so insecure are these categories that the popular culture of one decade can easily become the high culture of the next” (Brottman, 2005, p. xiii). Brottman continues by raising the question of how “popular” is to be defined and who exactly is doing it and how. By challenging the authenticity of “low culture,” a structure is being put into question. One example of “low” becoming “high” is to be found in the musical career of David Bowie, an artists discussed in the following chapters.

When Bowie first arrived onto the music scene, he had produced albums with such bizarre arrangements of styles that both of his first albums failed to gain popularity. Now, he is regarded as a pioneer of glam rock, and his innovative songs and stagecraft brought a new

dimension to popular music in the early 1970s. He is a premier artist that many musicians today hope to replicate and went from “low culture” to “high culture” in a span of 30 years. Frith also raises questions about the authenticity of performance. First, he asks how performance is understood, what its conditions of existence are, and what kind of space it occupies in the “high-brow” and “low-brow” musical world of the popular (Van Der Merwe, 1992, p. 3).

Many rock musicians have embraced the iconic rock persona of shock and awe and self-destruction. Iggy Pop poured hot wax on his chest during live performances, and cut himself with broken glass. David Bowie, during his Ziggy Stardust phase, crawled and clawed on stage in eccentric costumes in an erotic manner, and Alice Cooper often remembered for his famous “chicken incident,” where Cooper’s fans threw several chickens on stage. The birds were retrieved by Cooper who tossed them into the crowd where the birds were immediately ripped apart by crowd members who attempted to catch the birds in flight. In developing shock and awe tactics, these artists specifically found themselves at the forefront of a then-unclassified trend: glitter rock (Cagle, 1995, p. 109). Glitter rock emphasized accessibility and fun, it celebrated those aspects of performance, and glitter rock musicians addressed its audience as individuals with the power to transform. And the list can go on and on of “low-cultured” artists “performing” to the most extreme.

In a way, these musicians can also be called performance artists; “Artists using their bodies, themselves, as the material for their art [...] they themselves matter because they become the medium” (Frith, 1996, p. 204). The term “performative” is defined as a social, and, especially, a communicative process (p. 205). It engages the audience because the artist is speaking only to them at that very moment, in turn, the audience communicates back their

relation, and the narrative becomes two-way. The performance artist is not a theater actor, although most of the time they involve a performance of theatrics. Their “performance” involves a rhetorical form of gestures, body movements, signs and signals. But most importantly, the artist relies on the audience to interpret the performance through the audience’s own experiences, “its (audience) own understanding of seduction and pose, gestures and body language” (p. 205). A common theme found in the performance of glitter rock artists is rock theatricality.

Rock theatricality has its foundation in the Warholian underground. With themes of flamboyance, style and image construction, polymorphous sexuality, and background multimedia montages as performance art, artists like the Velvet Underground, the Stooges, Bowie, and Cooper were able to dissolve the boundaries between audience and performer “through impulsive physical confrontations within the stage arena” (Cagle, 1995, p. 96). Rock theatricality embraced Warhol’s notion of fame resulting from the self-creation of a particular style and persona. Proposing that musical performances need not have a straightforward narrative, glitter rock (rock theatricality) cut up performance styles both on and off stage.

But gender performance is distinguishably different from gender performativity, in which identity is passed or brought to life through discourse (Butler, 1996, p.1). Butler writes that gender identities are brought to life through repetitious acts of bodily gestures, movements, and actions that solidify the gender. Through performativity, the “actors” are repeating gestures and actions that have been in existence and have been established even before the actor came onto the scene. It is through their repetition, that gender is once again legitimized. Through the publicized and reiterated “acts” of artists, their identity is reinstated in the public sphere. The

identity of Neither is seemingly accepted, and “the playwrights of gender become engrossed by their own fictions that they truly believe in its necessity and naturalness” (Butler 1996, p. 3).

A recent occurrence of a gender performance act in the popular music world happened as Jo Calderone, the fictional male alter-ego created by Lady Gaga in 2010. Lady Gaga has made a career of being unpredictable with her ever changing alter egos and on and off-stage personas. This time, she kept with the “performance,” first starting with a photo shoot for *Vogue Japan*, and continuing with multiple appearances in the media. Lady Gaga relies on her audience, which she has named her “little monsters,” to interpret her message, her set of signs and signals she communicates through her alter-egos. Her identity is enacted, accomplished, and managed in her daily life and interactions. Her video, “You and I,” was Gaga’s (as Jo Calderone) first publicly commercial appearance. In a winter issue for *V* magazine in 2011, where Gaga was a guest columnist, she explains where the idea of Jo Calderone was first created, how the construction of his persona was developed, and how his “performance” can change the idea of fantasy of “performance”:

Beginning as an invention of my mind, Jo Calderone was created with Nick Knight as a mischievous experiment. Nick and I began to wonder: how much exactly can we get away with? [...] How can we remodel the model? In a culture that attempts to quantify beauty with a visual paradigm and an almost mathematical standard, how can we fuck with the malleable minds of onlookers and shift the world’s perspective on what’s beautiful? I asked myself this question. And the answer? Drag. Would it be convincing? What was the purpose of the piece? And if I were to do it, what would its significance be in relation to my work as Lady Gaga? Yes, this is me, but in the fantasy of performance I imagined (or hoped) the world would weigh both individuals against one another as real people, not as one person playing two. Lady Gaga versus Jo Calderone, not Lady Gaga “as.” (Gaga, 2011)

How is Gaga challenging gender roles in mainstream popular music that artists like Madonna or Prince already have done in the early 1990s? Gaga has created this other person entirely and has

legitimized that person through several channels. So has Madonna, but not to a certain extent. Goffman (1959) said in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, that identity is not something one has, but it is something one works on. “Social actors often present themselves in a manner designed to impress others around them; their presentation of self changes depending on the audience and the social context” (as cited in Brekhus, 2003, p. 21).

Punk-ited: 1967 to 1984

In this section I present a small and specific historiography of the punk rock movement that is important to the narrative of the androgynous pop artist. The discourse of sex and gender, and the presence of distinct performances of masculinity and femininity in punk are key to study. I emphasize the year 1967 (the debut of Iggy & Stooges) because I believe 1967 is the beginning of new primitive sound that shaped generations of artists that broke down barriers of what it means to be a rock and roll artist, of what it means to throw expected gender traits and identities out the window. In 1967 the Velvet Underground released its album *The Velvet Underground & Nico* (Velvet Underground, 1967), an album that is hailed as one of rock and roll’s most influential albums. The album was influential in its experimentalist performance sensibilities, and because of the content of their songs.

It is also important to briefly note that 1950s rock and roll, and the rebellion of that era led to surf and garage rock. From here, the 1960s proceed with underground nihilistic bands like Iggy Pop & the Stooges and the MC5, then progress to the post-punk era of bands in the early 1980s. The doors were kicked down of what rock and roll should look like, and what occurs is that many assumptions concerning the relation between music and visual presentation; at the same time, these artists were reconstructing methods of gender (re)presentation.

1st Wave: ‘Shiny, Shiny Piece of Leather’

The first important wave that leads to the growth and development of the idea of androgyny in popular music is the beginnings of the punk movement that derived from the rock and roll music of the 1950s. A second important wave is later in the 1980s where liberation of identities and a new sexual awakening were arising. Punk’s roots began as a youth subcultural movement in the early 1960s moving against the standard mode of production of youth culture. The term “punk” was not created yet, and it was simply called rock and roll. The early 1960s brought out a youth revolution that became the core of the punk aesthetic of the 1970s. “A turn to the 1960s raised some interesting problems, since the ‘decadence’ of the 1970s is rooted in some of the dominant musical genres of the 1960s” (Bennett, 2001, p. 26). A few of the early punk bands draw influence from the popular culture heritage that encompassed the bobby-soxed girl groups of the 1950s and the rough-and-ready surf and garage rock of the early to mid-1960s. Bands that took on early sixties rock imagery and characteristics were the Dictators, the Ramones, and Blondie, to name a few. But some eccentric performers of the 1950s, such as Johnnie Ray, were seen as corrupters of youth by including blues mannerisms in their singing and live performances to achieve mainstream commercial success with white and black audiences (White, 1984, p. 85). The same can be said about Elvis Presley, who influenced future generations of rock and rollers. These are two examples of artists rebelling against the norm of the times. With these new musicians parting from the music of their fathers and participating in “low-brow” music, a new subculture was born. A subculture not yet understood, and not yet fully evolved. Sociologist Raymond Williams defines culture as “a particular way of life, then a subculture is an alternative particular way of life that contrasts with the mainstream culture” (as

cited in Lull, 1987, p. 165). Members of a subculture carry out certain norms and behaviors that are patterns and that help define that subculture. For example, white musicians were taking on the blues mannerisms of African-Americans during the 1950s, and the punk kid adopted a purple mohawk in the punk rock of the 1970s and 1980s. Each subculture still encompasses aspects of social life, but they are put to use for that particular subculture.

Punk is personal. Punk is each person's unique story. Although punk encompasses several genres and sub-genres within itself, its foundation is centrally located in the attitudes and styles of teenagers who feel alienated from society. Hebdige (1979) detailed a case study of punk's early movement in England and said:

In punk, alienation assumed an almost tangible quality. It could almost be grasped. It gave itself up to the cameras in "blankness"; the removal of expression (see any photograph of any punk group), the refusal to speak and be positioned. This trajectory-the solipsism, the neurosis, the cosmetic rage-had its origins in rock. (p. 28)

Hebdige says that we are always able to track the course of music: The histories of the generation before always seem to ring a little bit louder. Later in the 1960s, "garage bands" would be the predecessors of punk music. "Garage bands" were a collection of bands from different genres such as surf music, the British Invasion, and "San Jose groups." The latter were a collection of not-too-well known bands from San Jose, California. They were one-hit wonders who combined "rank amateurism and aggression" (p. 29). Back then they were called "garage bands," but according to some rock critics they can be called pre-punk bands or proto-punk (Gendron 2002, p. 232).

Surf rock had a big place within youth culture of the 1950s, a genre that emerged from beach towns and suburbs of California. Surf rock king Dick Dale and his distinctive style spawned imitators all over the country. "Young surf bands found a niche playing at town dances

and ‘Battle of the Bands’ competitions, shopping malls, fraternity parties and high school hops” (Osgerby, 1999, p. 158). But by the late 1960s, surf music was fading away and the teenager of the time was aspiring to become a guitar legend. Preferably found in his garage – thus “garage” became the new loud and crude sound. Early garage bands such as the Standells, the Sonics, and the Kingsmen, whose hit “Louie, Louie” (Berry, 1963) are credited by many as the launching point of pre-punk bands. Many of these garage bands were rebelling against the bubble-gum, pre-packaged teeny bop artists such as Ricky Nelson, Pat Boone, Frankie Avalon, and Annette Funicello to name a few. Osgerby (1999) explains the turning of the tide:

Built around the simple images of sweet-toothed candy, zany cartoons and comic book romance, the soft-centered bounce of ‘bubble-gum’ was the purest manifestation of the American teen aesthetic. And it was from here that punk’s pop sensibility drew many of its motifs. (p. 159)

Early pre-punk, adopted the simple idea of teenage freedom and the mythologies and icons that had come to embody teenage suburban life. According to Frith, punk rockers were, “singing in and about their own personas, from their own experiences” (Frith 1996, p. 186). His definition of *persona* uses the artist who “took themselves and their bodies as the objects or sites of narrative and feeling” (p. 205). This is the kind of persona that is being observed in the late 1960s to 1970s. The early punk aesthetics of the 1970s are born with the essay Lester Bangs wrote for the magazine *Creem*, an American rock publication, in 1972. In it, he wrote that there are three themes of a punk aesthetic: sheer aggressiveness, the element of physical, and loudness (Bangs, 2003, p. 136). Punk down played musicianship while playing up the “antiestablishment” of youth. It was, and still is, an outlet for expression by people who were affected by social, economic, and political circumstances. Heylin chronicled the history of punk in the United States in, *From The Velvets To The Voidoids: The Birth of American Punk*. He identifies two separate

waves in the evolution of punk rock in the U.S. The first wave saw artists such as the Stooges, MC5, Television, Patti Smith, the Ramones and Blondie make their debuts in between 1967 to 1974 in New York City and Detroit. While in Cleveland, pre-punk bands the Mirror's, the Electric Eels and Rocket from the Tombs were taking stage. The punk aesthetic moved into the seedy clubs of New York City, and into the brains of teenagers who needed an outlet and did not know how to control their youth angst, and it makes its *Village Voice* debut in a June 1972 headline "When Punk Met the Vietcong." In the article, columnist Tom Smucker reflects on how the fantasy and illusion of safety in surf music of the 1960s was all a joke. The dream had been popped, and all there was left was the reality of a looming war and pop idols that felt too far back in memory to reach, Smucker (1972) writes:

Where was Surf City supposed to be? Nowhere at all. The fantasy embodiment of a bunch of straight male early '60s good times that never really existed. Just an excuse for a good song. Something humorous and grand, vulgar and totally lacking in pretension. Later that same year the words and music would be changed around and come out as the hit "Drag City." Proving that, surfing or cars, it didn't really matter at all (p. 45)

Detroit, Michigan was a focal point in the early days of punk rock. From here began the careers of proto-punk bands like the Stooges, and MC5 (short for Motor City Five). Iggy Pop formed the Psychedelic Stooges in 1967 with brothers Ron and Scott Asheton, and Dave Alexander joining on bass. Shortening their name to the Stooges, they played alongside fellow Ann Arbor anarchists the MC5. Both bands were uncompromising and controversial – a blunt contrast to the late 1960s ideals of peace, love and "flower power". The Stooges tapped into the true pulse of America's youth, not the glamorous hippies converging on Capitol Hill; but the kid down the street with nothing to do (Cagle, 1995, 104). Iggy Pop was influenced by the rock icons of the time, particularly the Doors and Jim Morrison's method of mesmerizing the audience and his

approach to making the audience angry. Iggy Pop was able to take some cues from him. Both Morrison and Iggy were known for their improvisational behaviors and sexually charged performances. During one performance (McNiel & McCain) that the Doors did in Michigan, Iggy said this about Morrison:

The gig only lasted fifteen or twenty minutes because they had to pull Morrison offstage and get him out of there fast, because the people were gonna attack him. It made a real impression on me. That's when I thought, 'Look how awful they are, and they've got the number-one single in the country! If this guy can do it, I can do it. And I gotta do it now' (p. 40)

MC5 formed in late 1964 while its members were still in high school in Lincoln Park, Michigan. A few of their influences were diverse, deriving as much from Detroit's R&B culture as from the British Invasion, like the Who and the Yardbirds. MC5 were known for their explosive performances, owing to loud sound and politically charged songs, and both bands toured in and around Detroit with their controversial reputations following them everywhere they went. As their popularity grew, so did their infamy. By 1968 they were Michigan's most talked about and feared band, even more so than Ann Arbor's Stooges (p. 69).

Up-and-coming musicians on the east coast at this time were able to cross paths at some point in their careers. The first time Dee Dee Ramone of the Ramones saw the Stooges perform was in 1971, three years before his band would hail the clubs of punk's glory days. The Ramones made their debut at CBGB's in 1974, and took their parody of American adolescent culture to the extreme. Spoofing boy band attire and personas of the 1960s like the Beach Boys and even the Beatles, the Ramones equipped themselves with matching leather jackets, pipe jeans, and dirty sneakers. They sang songs about girls, cars, mental illness, and other such curiosities of teenage life. Joey Ramone once said, "We wanted to write songs about cars and girls—but none

of us had a car and no girls wanted to go out with us, so we wrote about freaks and mental illness instead” (as cited in Osgerby, 1999, p. 150).

The Emergence of “Glam”

The Velvet Underground and Andy Warhol’s Factory were churning out artists like Lou Reed, Iggy Pop, and Jonathan Richman who all are considered godfathers of punk. Heylin’s second wave comes swiftly on their heels and centers on bands from New York. Heylin focuses on bands that “had been formed from fissures and splinters among the original trail-blazers—for example, the Heartbreakers, Richard Hell and the Voidoids, Pere Ubu and the Dead Boys” (p. 155). By now the term “punk” was making its way into the music scene around cities like Los Angeles and New York City, with emerging glam bands such as the New York Dolls from New York City and Zolar X from Los Angeles, California. In New York, the New York Dolls acquired a loyal following. They expressed a certain “new york-ness” that brought in glam and glitter mixed with arty bohemia and a little bit of punk, and they emphasized a gritty look and attitude as they were first labeled as a “transvestite rock” band. The New York Dolls were five men from different corners of New York’s underground music scene who loved fashion and rock and roll, and they had a “plan to set it back [rock and roll] on a course involving not just an impulsive overdose of glamour but a return to its musical roots” (Fletcher, 2009, p. 308). The New York Dolls were able to communicate glamour and vulgarity like no one before them. They wore lipstick as good as any woman, and were on the forefront of the fashion that inspired many of the glam and hair bands that followed in the 1980s.

Around the same time of the New York Dolls in New York City, a semi-famous London artist named David Bowie made his debut with his alter-ego: Ziggy Stardust. Bowie has credited

two men with serving as his inspiration for creating Ziggy Stardust. One was the man he met and spoke with after attending his first Velvet Underground concert, Lou Reed. The other man was Andy Warhol. Inspired by Warhol's unrestrained, reinvent-yourself, gay-positive glamour of New York City. Here, Bowie embraced the identity of an androgynous alien from Mars. He incorporated Broadway theater, rock and roll, and the more avant-garde formats associated with experimental theatrics. He is probably the most important androgynous icon because he embraced it wholly and deeply. His "performance" of "tight body suits, hair colored in unnatural hues, and his stare into the camera like a femme fatale...tapped into this postmodern stance in identity" (The Pop Cult, 2005, p. 3).

But before David Bowie was to become Ziggy, he was a folk/bohemian artist in London just reaching pop star status. To move forward into the legacy of Bowie's androgynous career, the narrative needs to return to the late 1960s, to Andy Warhol's Factory in New York City.

In the late 1960s, New York City was the center for any and all decadence, particularly the strange, weird, and discarded. Andy Warhol was churning out artistic hits with the bohemian artsy crowd downtown, and one particular individual was present to witness its history and keep it archived: Lee Black Childers. Childers is well known for his photography, and in the 1970s he captured the famous faces of music and nightlife. He managed several downtown punk bands, and he directed and co-starred in a few of Warhol's plays and films. He was particularly close to three drag queens of notoriety: Jackie Curtis, Holly Woodlawn, and Candy Darling, who are famously embodied in Lou Reed's song "Walk on the Wild Side" (Reed, 1972) a song recounting each one's sexual trysts. According to Lee Childers, he believes that the "glitter" movement in New York City began with John Vaccaro and the Theater of the Ridiculous. The

Theater of the Ridiculous was a main point of contact between the underground campy, queer sub-culture and the style of glam and glitter that dominated much of the 1970s, and Vaccaro was a director at the company. Childers (McNiel & McCain) said:

People had been wearing glitter for a long time and the drag queens were wearing it on the street, but I think “glitter” really took off when John Vaccaro went shopping for costume material and he came across this little place in Chinatown that was having a big clearance sale on their glitter. He bought it all...so it was because of John Vaccaro that glitter became synonymous with outrageousness (p. 89)

A gathering point for the Warhol crowd, underground musicians, and drag queens was the legendary club Max’s Kansas City. For around 10 years Max’s Kansas City was the beating heart for New York’s Pop sub-culture. As the music scene changed, so did the venues, and in 1974 the club closed its doors. But almost every night, Warhol’s crowd would have been found in the dark corners of the club. And it was from one of these nights that the play *Pork* was written. The play was constructed from different snippets of telephone conversations from Andy Warhol’s tapes. The play later ran six weeks in New York, and then six weeks in London. It was from this trip to London that Lee Childers, drag queens Jayne County, and Cherry Vanilla, who played lead character “Pork” in the play, first met David Bowie. Jayne County recounts her first impression of Bowie:

We’d heard that this David Bowie was supposed to be androgynous and everything, but then he came out with long hair, folky clothes, and sat on a stool and played folk songs. We were so disappointed with him. We looked over at him and said, “Just look at that folky old hippie!” (p. 95)

This was the summer of 1970. Jayne County claims that they had been the main influence on Bowie’s androgynous image from London to the U.S.:

Of course we influenced David to change his image. After us, David started getting dressed up. I’d gotten the shaved eyebrows thing from Jackie Curtis, and David started shaving his eyebrows, painting his nails, even wearing painted nails at nightclubs, like we

were doing. He changed his whole image and started getting more and more freaky (p. 95). Thus, it was through Childers and others in the music scene that Bowie made his way to the U.S. but before Bowie was to set foot in the U.S., Max's Kansas City played a vital role in creating the buzz around Bowie. His manager Tony DeFries, along with Cherry Vanilla, Childers, and Tony Zanetta (who became his tour manager) set up a management office called MainMan, and from here they heavily publicized Bowie's first appearance in the U.S. He would later make his debut in the U.S. in the back room of Max's Kansas City. Bowie was able to change the game of gender rock. He "was a connector, rock's greatest dilettante, forever chasing the next edge, always moving on" (Reynolds, 2005, p. 5). He integrated into popular music "unorthodox claims regarding sexuality, ones that eventually became central to the entirety of "glitter rock" (Cagle, 1995, p. 3). By openly announcing his bisexuality and by presenting androgynous images both on and off stage, Bowie helped to advance subversive propositions that eventually worked toward sexualizing the glitter movement in a way that was rare to rock and roll.

Bowie would later have a hand in help releasing a powerful punk album by way of Iggy Pop. Iggy had recorded the album *Raw Power* (Stooges, 1973), and Bowie himself mixed and produced the record. One of the most untamed and powerful releases in rock history, was kicked off by the anthem and often-covered "Search and Destroy" (Pop & Williamson, 1973) now a punk rock manifesto (Osgerby, 1999, p. 36). But, as Bowie was producing more albums for Iggy, they released *The Idiot* (Pop, 1977), and a new tradition in rock shifted away from the U.S. and rock and roll, and toward Europe and new sound, a sound in which synthesizers played as much of a role as guitars.

A Tear In Your Pantyhose

By the late 1970s, punk was starting to become “a parody of itself,” what many of original participants had originally intended had turned into a commercial formula (Reynolds, 2005, p. 1). Many bands around this time began to move away from Americana-type bluesy melodies to a new kind of “modern” style that was influenced by modernist art and literature. The post-punk artists were committed to the idea of modern music. It was called post-punk because many artists saw rock and roll and the late 1970s as a chance to break with tradition. Influenced by world music as well, artists took on rhythmic guitar styles from reggae and funk and steered away from country, folk, and classic rock. According to Reynolds, this was a period of discovery and re-discovery, in which artists were drawing inspiration from the arty end of glam-rock that included Bowie and Roxy Music from rock eccentrics such as Captain Beefheart (p. 4).

Politics were also an influence and were being influenced by many post-punk artists. In the heyday of punk, its approach was raw power and protest, but it was too blunt and /or too preachy to the era of post-punk. Instead, a new alternative was to develop, a more sophisticated technique. These bands demonstrated that “the personal is political,” by illustrating the processes by which current events and the actions of government invade everyday life and haunt each individual’s private dreams and nightmares (p. 6).

Artists around the time that were labeled “art rock” were Devo, Talking Heads, and Gang of Four. Each band, in their own way, was departing from the earlier generations’ exploits and clichéd view of rock star abundance. This type of new sound and politics was being called “new wave.” The term became synonymous with the subversive sounds of the 1976-77 U.S. and

British punk rock explosions, but changed by 1978-79 when it was claimed as a safe harbor for those punk-related artists whose music derived from punk's caustic energy (Cateforis, 2011, p. 10). New-Wave was rendered more stylish and accessible, and its unified theme was its modern freshness and bravado, but also its separation from rock conventions. But the term "new-wave" was not relatively new. It had been used before, and was being applied to the late 1960s punk explosion of the avant-garde group the Velvet Underground, then later with the "glitter and glam" bands of Alice Cooper, New York Dolls and David Bowie.

Gender Identity in Popular Music

Since the 1960s, pop music has been a predominantly "heterosocial" discourse in which female, gay, queer and androgynous bodies have been absent in the discourse of music, and in the identities of gender found in popular music. I will begin with an introduction of the term queer and introduce the term "queer voices." This section will also present the need for and importance of examining the topics of gender, androgyny, music and communication. I will explain how popular music and communication are important in our society, and outline the history of androgyny in music and the important figures of this genre.

According to Fausto-Sterling, labeling someone a man or woman is a social decision. Our beliefs about gender—not science—can define our sex (Fausto-Sterling, 2000, p. 3). Sex and gender are topics that will be central to this thesis. It will force me to analyze the boundaries between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and where those boundaries are blurred (Goulding & Saren, 2009, p. 33). Gender is culturally constructed whereas sex refers to biological differences, and according to Butler, gender is neither the casual result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex (Butler, 1990, p. 327). Butler developed a "performative theory" of

gender suggesting that gender and identities are “performed” rather than “essentially there.” So in popular music, androgynous artists, through their multi-faceted gender performances allow themselves to subversively play with gendered meanings and in doing so, show how identities can be re-signified (Butler, 1990). And it is within this androgynous and “multi-faceted space,” that gender differences can blur.

Queer Voices: “Sounding Like a No-No”

What is “queer”? The term is usually synonymous for a homosexual, a modification of “gay and lesbian studies” (Jarman-Ivens, 2011, p. 14). It has become tied to sexuality, but has been used to signify the strange, bizarre, and weird. It can be understood as “a system of interrogating structures of sexuality as an expression of power and identity relations” (p. 16). It can be used to communicate the notion that identities, especially sexual identities, are not natural but constructed. Queer theory is used to help communicate the idea that identities are not fixed and do not determine who we are. Judith Butler’s work is focused on issues of gender, power, sexuality, and identities. In *Gender Trouble* (1990), she argues that sex (male, female) causes gender (masculine, feminine), but continues to state that identities are flexible.

How is the musicality of gender heard? Can it be interpreted? The voice is an important facet of the musician. But in the queer space, the queer voice handles moments of identification for the artist. Queer space is not physical; it is a field of possibility in a social space. It can be a person being “out and open” about their gender explorations. I use it to refer to social spaces with tolerance for ambiguity. So in the queer space, the voice is always of the body, and it leaves the body’s production and becomes part of the spaces in between. “On leaving the body, the voice acquires the power to roam at will and launch itself onto another body, forcing itself into

the passive, waiting ears, and thus becomes invader, intruder...contagion” (Jarman-Ivens, 2011, p.3). The voice is both material and immaterial. In the bodily materiality of the voice, the queer cab is most easily located (p. 4). It is in between these two spaces, what Jarman-Ivens calls the “third space,” between the voicer and the listener, which is the site for the emergence of “queer” (p. 3). Furthermore, she argues that in the bodily material of the voice, the “third sex,” that queer can be clearly located.

The queer voice can sometimes be thought of as the physical voice of a person sounding like the opposite sex. For example, a man sounding like a woman, in the case of a castrato; or a woman sounding like a man. Take for example, female impersonators of male artists, or a female Elvis impersonator. These are obvious examples of voice not matching body, of the relationship between pitch and sex, and yes, they can be called a “queer voice.” For the purpose of this essay, I will use Jarman-Ivens example of “queer voice.” She explains:

The voice resides in the “third space,” in between bodies and at the border of the body and language, another sense in which the voice holds queer potential is in its lying at the intersection of two interlinked facets of the voice: it is genderless, and it is performative. In this space is to be found the greatest potential for queer in the voice, because in the act of listening, an act of gendering also occurs [...] If gender involves “socio-culturally and historically determined categories” rather than “natural and unalterable” ones, then the same can apply to voice categories: ‘Thus it can be argued that voice categories (soprano, alto, and so on) are not sexually fixed categories but prone to choice as well.’ (p. 18)

Its bodily origin and destination, and its operations across borders and through them, as well as its traversal between two bodies, collectively give the voice a physical location in two bodies and in no body at all. She goes on to explain that the naturalness of the voice comes into question by the categorization of voices, by the categories being naturalized instead of natural. Then one can say that the voice can have a performative function as well. She (Jarman-Ivens) explains:

Certainly, the ideology of the natural voice is a powerful one, and it is intimately bound to two other important ideologies of the voice – that it is a signifier of a very core of the speaker, and that is individual, a unique sonic fingerprint. (p. 19)

She uses two examples of a voice executing two different forms of performativity. The first example by Wayne Koestenbaum explaining his love of Maria Callas:

Her operatic performances seemed real; her real life seems operatic. Even in private life, she painted her eyes in the Medea style: long kohl lines, like a latter-day Cleopatra. The excessive eyeliner proved that she was in charge of her image, that her face was a tablet on which she wrote her life, and that femininity was a lot of work. (p.19)

The second example is from Judith Butler on the construction and performance of gender:

If gender is drag, and if it is an imitation that regularly produces the ideal it attempts to approximate, then gender is a performance that *produces* the illusion of an inner sex or essence or psychic gender core; it *produces* on the skin, through the gesture, the move, the gait (that array of corporeal theatrics understood as gender presentation), the illusion of an inner depth. (p.19)

Jarman-Ivens suggests that the voice be included in the “corporeal theatrics understood as gender presentation.” It is less visible than gesture, move, gait, or eyeliner, but the voice is still complicit in the theatrics of gender. She finishes by saying, “if a voice that does not comply with the visible signs of gender, it is as disruptive to the performance of gender as any other, silent sign could be” (p. 20).

And within the theatrics of gender, the “queer voice” can be part of a bigger space, a space where the margins of sexual geography are blurred. It is part of the body, and apart from the body. The voice moves on, it becomes part of a bigger and more important space: physical space of human interaction. A space where the political and social interactions come together, carved out of a hetero world. It is a unique space where these places can foster cultural formations like an androgynous artist, where queer voices can be put to physical uses and

performances. I submit that that is such queer spaces that produce unique performative artists such as the androgynous artist.

Voicing Androgyny

Androgyny is the ability and creation of both masculine and feminine characteristics and traits within an individual. One definition states, “Androgyny is a term – derived from the Greek words ανήρ, stem from ανδρ – (anér, andr-meaning man) and γυνή (gyné, meaning woman) – referring to the combination of masculine and feminine characteristics. This can be found in fashion, sexual identity, sexual lifestyle and music, or it can refer to biologically inter-sexed physicality. It has come to be seen, in this day and age, as a normal sexual identity. But there has been little academic research in the field of androgynous identities in the musical sphere. I am interested in the complexity of the androgynous body and the transgression of gender identity in popular music.

Research on rock and roll from different eras is highly critical of the marginalized representation of women, in which bands such as the Rolling Stones have hidden behind a smokescreen of performed androgyny, while at the same time singing overtly misogynistic songs (Reynolds and Press, 1995). An artist of the early 20th century who challenged the traditional notions of masculinity was crooner Rudy Vallee.

From 1929 to 1931, Rudy Vallee was a top singing sensation in the U.S. Vallee was the nation’s first national star created by radio. He sang tender love ballads that “defined the romantic crooner of the day and made the term ‘crooning’ a household word in 1929” (McCracken, 2001, p. 105). Vallee was famous for his singing style: softly into the microphone [...] singing longing of love desired, love unrequited, and love supreme (p. 14). The term

“crooning” was first used to define performing minstrels: mammies who “crooned” to their charges (p. 111). Later, the term took on a more romantic notion, the way lovers sang to each other.

But Vallee was eventually condemned by critics calling him an, “emasculated, effeminate whiner” (p. 106). Because he didn’t “sound” masculine, he was tragically thrown from the spotlight and doomed to watch other artists who were similarly crooning their way to super-star status. McCracken suggests that because Vallee did not live up to the expected characteristics of masculinity, he represented a new idea of masculinity:

Crooners challenged traditional notions of the integrity of embodied white masculinity. At a time when a white man’s masculinity was defined by his physical vigor and muscularity, radio offered a disturbingly disembodied, artificially amplified male presence, one that competed with traditional patriarchal authority for the attention of the family. (p. 107)

But what does a traditional male sound like? Radio erased everything except the sound of the voice. In this era, the principles of singing for a man were only to “preserve one’s physical and emotional well-being through productive and controlled ‘release’ of pent up emotions” (p. 108). Singers in jazz bands were able to legitimize their masculinity through masculine banter with bands members, the use of blackface, or a focus on dance or holding an instrument. Through a disembodied voice through radio and with no band to confirm their masculine presence “these crooning voices began to provoke much more intense reactions from fans and detractors” (p. 112).

It is interesting to note how musical standards and narrow gender norms established, then demised Vallee’s career. The masculinity of the voice was lost to the audience because of

excessively expressed emotions, and because some crooner's appeared to both desire women and be able to identify with their feelings.

Far from the crooning of Vallee's sweet melodies of love is Suzi Quatro, crouching at her microphone in a black leather jumpsuit. Suzi Quatro landed on the British glam scene in 1973 with the hit "Can the Can." Clad in black leather and surrounded by three muscular male musicians, Quatro demonstrated a new definition of femininity that embraced androgyny that dressed down and de-glamorized herself. She dominated the London glam scene with "her masculine performance persona that made her identification as a glam rocker almost inevitable in the early 1970s" (Auslander, 2006, p. 194).

Quatro entered the male dominated glam scene in the 1970s. In order to distinguish herself from glam artists prancing in women's clothes and covered in glitter head-to-toe, Quatro went the opposite way. With rarely any makeup and a uni-sex, shag haircut, she claimed her musical space through unconventional female gender performance. "Quatro took advantage of the upheaval into which glam had thrown rock's gender norms to produce performances that destabilized those norms as effectively as Bowie's, albeit using somewhat different tactics" (p. 196). Quatro measured just over five feet, and as a bandleader surrounded by overtly macho musicians, her frame seemed diminutive, except when she screamed and growled vocal aggression into the microphone.

According to Auslander, one of the primary obstacles faced by women rock musicians is sexual objectification and a lack of interest in their ability as musicians. Quatro of course was no stranger to heckling by male fans yelling at her to strip and prance across the stage. As a female musician where the only rock idols at the time were all male, Quatro once said to "have been

inspired from the first to be a rocker from the Elvis, Little Richard school.” She explicitly looked to male musicians as models (p. 199). Her masculine image frequently portrayed her as a tough and masculine female. She once described herself as “a different kind of female altogether” (p. 200). She was a cock-rocker.

Women can play the role of tough rebel as convincingly as any man, but while doing this, they have done so at the expense of bringing anything new and different to rock (Reynolds & Press, 1995, p. 244). Graham calls this new type of woman “macha,” a simple inversion of the male “macho” (Graham, 1984, p. 3). “Macha” performers asserted that they have the penis, or that they were the penis. Quatro’s image was a no non-sense image that showed she was one of the boys.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research is a process of discovery. I am a fan of glam/glitter rock, but was not raised on these artists and was not present during the emergence of glam rock of the 1970s. What I grew up with was an evolved persona of the artist that embraced gender roles and challenged them. Artists that I have grown up listening to and able to observe were Prince, Madonna, Marilyn Manson, and Lady Gaga to name a few. These artists are three decades into the changing gender role narratives that artists of the 1970s started. I am interested in the performance of musicians and in finding ways of discussing what popular musicians do as performance artists; particularly through an analysis of discourse and performance of androgyny.

Communication offers the best foundation from which to analyze performative/discursive issues in popular music; and essential to my research in understanding performance analysis of androgynous artists is the concept of *persona*. Philip Auslander uses *persona* as a way of describing a performed presence that is neither a fictional character nor equivalent to the performer's "real" identity (Auslander, 2006, p.4). I am interested in how musicians portray gender identities and sexualities through the use of their voice, bodies, and song. In popular music, codes and meaning are found from the choice of clothing, to stage props, and lyrics and so on and so forth. Popular music is a space where musicians are able to challenge gender roles and norms by using the same social codes, and are able to construct unconventional representations of gender.

Data Collection

I have collected data that has laid out the narrative of punk and glam artists starting from 1967 to 2011. I created a list of four groups in which I believe there are important waves of

androgyny in music. Although I will not answer my questions strictly within these four brackets, I will present select data from these groups of artists, and their music videos, recordings of live performances, album reviews, interviews, and lyrics in order to answer my research questions.

The first group is what I call the Foundation, where artists first laid down primitive and narcissistic aggression that embraced shock and awe tactics through gender bending on-stage performances, songs of self-destruction, and audience confrontations with a new kind of sexuality. This group includes Iggy Pop and the Stooges, the Velvet Underground and Nico, T. Rex, Patti Smith, David Bowie, Alice Cooper, the MC5, and the Rolling Stones; that artists debuted between 1967 and 1971. These artists are important in the way they presented a new breed of musician and rock star. The impact of Andy Warhol's influence on these artists and rock and roll are first felt in these years. Warhol was able to demonstrate artists' ability to transform everyday life into an expression of a rock star ethos. Even though Warhol is not a musician, he had tremendous impact and influence on these artists. Warhol, in so many ways laid the foundation of future glam artists and how they would interpret and communicate gender and sexual identities through art, performance, and media manipulation. I believe that without Warhol and his Factory, there would be no glam and glitter revolution, and if there would be, that era would have been a lot less boring.

The second grouping is the Glam Era, between 1971 and 1975. These artists are knee deep in the androgynous lifestyle, whether that authenticity is in the form of overtly theatrical performances, or whether these artists demonstrated continuity through off-stage personas as well. In this group are artists that first emerged in the Foundation era such as David Bowie, Alice Cooper and Iggy Pop, and include new artists that emerged in these few years, New York Dolls,

Gary Glitter, Queen, Elton John, Suzi Quatro, and Lou Reed. These artists are important because they stressed visual presentation as much—perhaps even more than—the music. These artists “presented clearly staged spectacles and opened a gap between the figures on stage and the ‘real’ people performing them, foregrounding constructed performance personae that denied the spontaneity, sincerity, and authenticity expected of rockers” (Auslander, 2006, p. 38).

The third grouping I labeled as the Post-Glam Era from 1975 to 1981. After the decadence and excess of the Glam Era, musicians embraced a new idea of modern music and performance. Influenced by world music as well, artists took on rhythmic guitar styles from reggae and funk and steered away from country, folk, and glam rock. This era, from 1975 to 1981, was an era of discovery and re-discovery in which artists were drawing inspiration from the arty end of glam-rock, and took a turn toward a darker and doomy aesthetic of glam rock. “Rather, the overall vibe of debauchery focused on sexual fetishism and vampy attire—fishnet stockings, black clothing, and darker, witchy makeup” (Reynolds, 2005, p. 361). Artists include Kiss, Siouxsie and Banshees, Bauhaus, the Human League, Joy Division, and Adam and the Ants to name a few.¹

The last group has the most artists and covers over three decades, from 1981 to 2011, I label this era Neo-Glam. The term Neo-Glam has already been used for 1980s hair metal, but for the purpose of this paper, I use this term for this era because I believe that androgynous artists after the primary glam era of the 1970s have kept and evolved new ideas of gender identities and stylish excesses of 1970s glam. Neo-Glam is not recent or new, but I believe it is a modern form

¹ I will not however, include glam metal of the 1980s where, aesthetically, relied heavily on the glam rock or glitter rock of the 1970s. I will not fully discuss glam metal that appealed to music television producers, and particularly the early MTV generation. Artists often graced the stage with very long backcombed hair, use of bright make-up, gaudy clothing and accessories that consisted of tight denim or leather jeans, spandex, and headbands.

that has still yet to be contained, or yet fully explained. I include artists of this day and age as well. In this group, ideas of gender bending, gender blending, and breaking gender identities have broken down and redefined what it means to be a musician and rock star. This group includes major artists as the Eurhythmics, Culture Club, Dead or Alive, the Smiths, Grace Jones, Prince, Madonna, Placebo, Michael Jackson, Marilyn Manson, and Lady Gaga. Artists of the Glam Era had already prepared the way for the breakdown of a fixed notion of sexual identity. Neo-Glam Artists have continued to break down, expand, and redefine constructed images of masculinity, femininity, and gender identities.

Methodological Assumptions

I have come to describe androgyny as a mixing of both male and female genders, where there can be distinct lack of coherent gender identification. Through my research, androgyny has been revealed as an identity that neither men nor women are born with, but embody through time. Most importantly, I see it as a state of distortion that comes from combining them or negating them. Most musicians that are referred to as glam artists, use androgyny to add an extra erotic element to the performance. I have also come to find, historically, it has been offered to men first, then women. By deconstructing even the name androgyny, it places the masculine before the feminine. Andro- meaning man, gyny-meaning women. It is a combination of both male and female; it also a term that can be multi-dimension. By way that it can transcend boundaries because it is entirely unconcerned with sex or gender. With the deconstruction and reconstructed notion of gender found in androgynous artists of 1970s, there are some artists today that are devoid of the erotic, either through lyrics or performance. It can be argued that through the absent use of the erotic there can be opportunity for the performance to still be

sexual. The importance is the opportunity, not the actual absence. Through that devoid of the erotic, there leaves opportunities for the performance and the audience's relation to the performance. Artists that come to mind are Bjork and Radiohead.

Androgyny has also has a themes rooted in utopian concepts. It is a sexless state where both the feminine and masculine are used to harmonize one "whole" truth. Therefore it can be seen as liberation from traditional gender norms. Trans-gender Kate Bornstein makes a distinction between gender ambiguity and gender fluidity. Gender ambiguity is a refusal to fall within prescribed gender roles, and gender fluidity is the refusal to remain one gender or another (Bornstein, 1994, p. 51). Gender ambiguity is the ability to freely and knowingly become one or many of a limitless number of genders, for any length of time. Gender fluidity recognizes no borders or rules of gender. With the constantly changing identities of gender, how can someone shift and cross borders when the boundaries constantly change?

Androgynous artists of the late 1970s and 1980s are an alien concept. Still, in this day and age where a musician can strut the stage and television screen with nothing but meat on their body, they only get a blink-of-an-eye then the attention of the masses moves one to the next artist anomaly. But when an artist defies gender boundaries, there will still be animosity towards androgyny because, as discussed earlier, it is still foreign ground. If we look at the top ten songs popular today, many of today's music fans will search for someone that they can easily relate to, or at least sing along with. There are artists where they themselves, and their personas and performances are androgynous. Other artists, just their music can be labeled as androgynous.

The culture of rock and roll has been dominated by male presence, making it difficult for women to participate in rock culture. There are notable women in rock that have challenged that

same culture where they are trying to break social gender roles. Madonna, Annie Lennox, Grace Jones, Suzi Quatro are but a few of the notable women in rock who challenged gender roles in popular music and have each constructed a unique (re)presentation of what it means to be a woman in a male dominated culture, and who challenged masculinity while doing so. Usually, a woman musician in rock and roll was not singing light, romantic pop songs but was immersed in rock culture, and she was usually labeled as “one of the boys.” It did not help that the homosocial ‘boys club’ mentality of the rock press has been highly critical of female artists. Whether an artist is gender bending or blending, there is still the aspect of theatrical performance.

Rock theatricality was founded with Andy Warhol and his Underground Factory. Cloaked in silver foil, supermarket aluminum, and obvious rips and tears, revealing the dull dishpan paintwork that cowered underneath. Theatricality has had a presence in rock for many years. I will not list every artist that has used methods of flamboyance, performance, and sexuality, but for the purpose of this paper, I will focus on a select few of artists that will serve me best.

Limitations

Within the last thirty years of this phenomenon called glam music/androgynous aliens/glitter rock and discourse of rock and roll performance, there seems to be more literature of how and why artists challenge gender identities through their music. I have yet to come across literature that focuses on why not? Why not bend social norms to the point of breaking? Why not break rules of how a person should look like and sound like? Within the literature that I have read, most authors list and examine the foundations that gave rise to the genre of glitter rock. I have also come across personal stories of physical transformations of transvestites, and trans-genders who believe that they are not who they were born as, anatomically. So this got me

thinking how I can answer my research questions by composing and presenting to the audience ways that androgyny has popped up, developed, shifted, engaged, and weaved itself into the pattern of music, and culture. I will try to leave the reader with a bigger understanding of why these artists do what they do, and to ultimately ask themselves “why not”? Whether I answer the question of “why not” will be solely up to the reader. With five decades of musicians from so many genres to choose from, selecting artists that I believe are important will be a challenge.

Through my selection process, I know I am omitting other artists that other authors have written about time and again. Others may ask me why I did not include so-and-so band, again, with five decades of a seemingly small phenomenon, but not limited to one genre, the challenge of choosing artists that I believe are important in the narrative of gender identity in music, has not been an easy task.

Summary

Within this thesis, discourse of androgyny and how it functions and how it is constructed will be central to analyzing how it is utilized in popular music and how artists, particularly androgynous artists, use it to complicate their expression of identities. I will present an argument that analyzes lyrics, live performance, physical appearance, and received reaction of the masses from several androgynous artists from the late 1960s to present day that will address how androgyny works within popular music, its effect on society, and how it functions to express gender. Music is a means for people to relate, express, and used as an outlet for their feelings. It is how we are able to communicate through different media and how we are able to find common ground. The study of human communication is able to show us how the process of creating and

interpreting messages elicits a response. Whether those responses are emotional or behavioral is one portion this thesis will be addressing.

Chapter 4: Findings

I've always been a rebel. I never do things the way they're supposed to be done. Either I go in the opposite direction or I create a new direction for myself, regardless of what the rules are or what society says. (Grace Jones, Official Site: The World of Grace Jones: Rebel)

Androgyny has a long history in music. Recent examples of androgyny range from Little Richard to Lou Reed to Liberace to Lady Gaga. Many of these artists wear garish make-up, jewelry, and stereotypically sexy clothes including fishnet stockings and scarves, and sport “feminine” hairstyles. Some of its history has faded through time: some thought the Beatles’ hair threateningly androgynous in 1964. Elvis Presley in the 1950s received a lot of backlash with his ultra-erotic movements that simulated sexual gyration. Coupled with his looks, “there was something feminine about Elvis. His mouth formed the pout of a sullen schoolgirl; his hair was swathed in more chemicals than of a starlet’s; and his hips churned like a hooker’s in heat” (Fletcher, 2009, p. 45). Let us not forget Little Richard and his self-proclaimed “architect of rock and roll” (White, 1984, p. 17). With his eyeliner, vests covered with sequins of every color, tights, and a swirly permed hairstyle; Richards went several steps further than Elvis on the feminine scale.

The images of these sexual overtones from the 1950s segue into the following decade of sexual freedom with the hippie subculture of the 1960s. Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones was the perfect front man for the band; beautifully masculine with a girlish attitude. At the same time, the band was violent in hyper masculinity in the way they displayed these characteristics to the

crowd. The Rolling Stones used androgyny not because it came naturally, but more so to aggravate their adversaries.

I endeavor to use the past to configure a map of the characteristics of gender identity. My first research question is basic question but important; what are the characteristics? Is there a way to recognizing an androgynous identity? How can I recognize gender identities and sexualities through the use of a musician's voice, bodies, and song? To try to answer my research questions, I have separated three sections which I believe is central to authenticate the rock and roll persona: lyrics, images, and performance.

The first section will focus on the lyrics of four songs I have chosen. Three separate artists which I believe can shed a little more light on how androgyny is depicted in popular music. I have chosen "King for a Day" (Armstrong, 1997) by Green Day, "Walking in the Rain" (Jones, G., 1981) by Grace Jones, "Queen Bitch" (Jones, D., 1971) and "John, I'm only Dancing" (Jones, D., 1972) both by David Bowie.

The second sections I will analyze are images that musicians communicate through music videos. I have chosen two artists that use cross-dressing and ideas of glamour to communicate an overall androgynous image. Janelle Monáe's video "Many Moons" (Irvin & Monáe, 2008) and the Eurythmics "I Need a Man" (Lennox & Stewart, 1987).

The third and last section I will focus on the overall performances of four artists. The performances I will use will be Lady Gaga's Monster, David Bowie's Alien, Alice Cooper's Killer, and Prince's Lover. With these "set" identities, Reynolds & Press (1995) have said that rock and roll has always wavered between favored truths and acceptance of reinvention of self through glamour (p. 291).

How are the characteristics of androgyny communicated in popular music?

What is the discursive impact of androgyny in popular music?

Lyrics

There can be lyrical markers that distinguish artists from others. Because lyrics can be an intimate gateway into the lives of an artist, they carry heavy emotional weight for both artist and audience. Many songs are in contrast to the “hetero-normative” traditional of rock and roll, and for the purpose of this essay I have chosen four songs which communicate several types of androgynous characters, masculinity, and femininity. From Bowie’s jealous rage in “Queen Bitch” (Jones, D., 1971) to Green Day’s curiosity of wearing women’s clothing in “King for a Day” (Armstrong, 1997). All songs that I will analyze have central characters that sing in many voices and from many subject positions without identifying clearly with any of them. Frith (1996) says:

Tradition popular music has always featured the character song [...] the lyrical and narrative convention here is to use the song to portray a character while simultaneously drawing attention to the art of the portrayal. The singer is playing a part, and what is involved is neither self-expression [...] nor critical commentary. The art of this sort of singing becomes a matter of acting, and there is always a question concerning the singer’s relationship to his own words. (p. 171)

The songs I will analyze will help shed light on how ambiguous characters in these selected songs provide us different point-of-views of how simply stating your identity does not always correlate with the artists. Green Day’s overtly macho punk attitude does not come out in the lyrics to their song “King for a Day” (Armstrong, 1997). The narrator is telling the listeners about his cross-dressing hobby. The tempo is fast in a ska punk fashion with a full horn section. “Walking in the Rain” (Jones, G., 1981) is from Grace Jones’ album *Nightclubbing*. The lyrics tell the story of a lone person walking in the rain and contemplating how they feel and finally

“coming to conclusions” about themselves. This originally was a song by Australian band *Flash and the Pan*, and later covered by Jones where the song took on an entirely different meaning. The narrator, already living in a world where he/she is existing as an anomaly of gender; the narrator challenges others to “walk through the rain” with her. I will compare and analyze these two songs together because they both touch on different ideas of masculinity and femininity, and where those boundaries are set in the song’s worlds. Where one story tells the tale of curiosity and want, the other tells us of a life already lived beyond curiosity, and now lives out his/her ambiguous transformation. So how are androgynous characteristics and identities communicated in these two worlds?

The third and fourth songs I will analyze are both by David Bowie, “Queen Bitch” (Jones, D., 1971) and “John, I’m only Dancing” (Jones, D., 1972). Both songs are interesting because the narrator can either be a man or a woman singing to their lover. In both songs, the narrators demonstrate their quest for freedom and power both sexually and personally. In Bowie’s lyrics and performance, in both songs and his persona, the theme of sexuality is important.

Shining In The Night, Princess By Dawn

“King for a Day” (Armstrong, 1997) is Green Day’s 16th songs on their album *Nimrod* which was released in 1997. The first stanza focuses on a young boy (he is four-years-old) who sneaks into his mother’s closet to try on clothes. It is obvious that this is a taboo in his household because he waits until his mother is gone before he’s trying her garments.

Started at the age of four
My mother went to the grocery store
Went sneaking through her bedroom door to find something in a size four (Armstrong, 1997, Track 16)

We are not quite sure if the boy believes himself to be gay, curious, or confused by gender identities. In Bornstein's book *Gender Outlaw* (1994), she a transgender herself, describes how she had to define the phenomenon she was becoming, even at a young age:

There's a real simple way to look at gender: Once upon a time, someone drew a line in the sands of culture and proclaimed with great self-importance, "On this side, you are a man; on the other side, you are a woman." [...] Gender means class. By calling gender a system of classification, we can dismantle the system and examine its components. (p. 21-22)

Gender identity focuses on two questions: "who am I?" and "to which gender class do I belong to?" At the young age of four, the young protagonist is figuring out which class system he belongs to through childlike curiosities.

The next stanza references an old English poem turned nursery rhyme about little girls; and also references a classic boy's toy: GI Joe.

Sugar and spice and everything nice wasn't made for only girls
GI Joe in panty hose is making room for the one and only (Armstrong, 1997, Track 16)

The narrator is refuting gender stereotypes despite the opposition to break those gender roles. Not all boys aspire to be G.I. Joes, unless of course that G.I. Joe is in pantyhose. Even though his father does not like it, dressing up in his mother's clothes makes him feel like a "king for a day," and a "princess by dawn."

King for a day, princess by dawn
King for a day in a leather thong
King for a day, princess by dawn
Just wait 'till all the guys get a load of me (Armstrong, 1997, Track 16)

Despite the narrator knowing it's wrong, he is proud of the way he looks, and wants his friends to see him. Children are aware of items typically associated with either males or females in a

society. According to Martin and Ruble (1998), they highlighted a developmental pattern indicating early knowledge by preschoolers of gender-typed toys and gender-typed adult clothing and activities. “For example, children as young as 3 years of age have been shown to like their own sex more than the other. Similarly, young children attribute more positive characteristics to their own sex than to the other (Ruble & Martin, 1998, p. 68). They also propose that with the emergence of gender identity, and a growing understanding of the stability of social group membership, affects children’s motivation to learn about gender, to gather information about their gender group (p. 68). What is the motivation of the narrator in the song? His mother has obviously had a tremendous influence and motivation for him wanting to wear her clothes.

The next stanza is a bit sadder in how his father reacts to his gender curiosity. He reacts aggressively by throwing his son into therapy, and negating his manhood. But the narrator is reinforcing the way he feels about cross-dressing: don’t knock it until you try it. In a way, the narrator is communicating through the last line that he is something else, or maybe he wants us to believe he is something else. He is playing with different notions of gender identity. In the act of playing with gender, we question, and we bring into light the fact that rules can be broken.

My daddy threw me in therapy
He thinks I’m not a real man
Who put the drag in drag queen
Don’t knock it until you tried it on

Sugar and spice and everything nice wasn’t made for only girls
G.I. Joe in panty hose is making room for the one and only (Armstrong, 1997, Track 16)

“Walking in the Rain” (Jones, G., 1981) is Grace Jones 1st song off her 1981 record *Nightclubbing*. By Jones’ fifth album, she was known for her post-punk pop that delved into the worlds of disco, reggae and funk much more successfully than other artists of the time. The

album is named after an Iggy Pop track from his Bowie collaboration *The Idiot* (1977). Jones' skill as facilitator of gender blending, as well as pop cultural icon is exposed in the way the original song is covered, from Krautrock-damaged, sleaze-fest, into sophisticated, dub-disco reggae. "Walking in the Rain" is an original song by band Flash and the Pan, and Jones' cover is mean and more moody. The cover shot of *Nightclubbing* is Jones caked in maroon paint beneath a black Giorgio Armani jacket and that prim pillbox haircut; her stare is cold and impenetrable.

Walking down the street
Kicking cans
Looking at the billboards
Oh so rad

Summing up the people
Checking out the race
Doing what I'm doing
Feeling out of place (Jones, G., 1981, Track 1:1)

How is Jones summarizing how she is feeling? On several other songs, including this one, Jones plays a different character, especially when she covers songs. In "Walking in the Rain," Jones, looking like a diva-dominatrix, wanders listlessly as a member of the third sex, and thus an exile on Main Street (Reynolds & Press, 1995, p. 293). The second stanza especially, shows us what she is doing. By calling life a "race" she is gesturing that she is a contender, a player in the game (Jones, G., 1981). We all feel the need to compare ourselves to other people from time to time, and by doing so, there is a need to prove one's self. But she is feeling alienated, feeling out of place in a world of the disconnected female; "looking at the billboards/oh so rad" (Jones, G., 1981).

Feeling like a woman
Looking like a man (Jones, G., 1981, Track 1:1)

Jones' looks are both male and female. Her muscular, athletic body and sculpted features have achieved a kind of celebrity status. Designers have glossed her massive lips, burnished her coal-black skin, trimmed and cut her luxurious hair like a garden hedge, and zipped her into a thousand S&M and dominatrix costumes. These two lines from "Walking in the Rain" conjure an infinite amount of visions and ideas. Even Jones' voice, singing in a monotone speak-sing voice; with a deep soprano, she sometimes "sounds like a no-no" (Jones, G., 1981).

Sounding like a no-no
Mating when I can
Shining in the night
Coming to conclusion
Right is night is tight (Jones, G., 1981, Track 1:1)

Jones is wandering through the night, perhaps looking for something or someone? Jones' display of masculine qualities comes through in this stanza, "mating when I can" (Jones, G., 1981). Even though she "sounds" like a woman and "looks" like a man, the way she speak-sings her song is a masculine characteristic. She also "mates" when she can. The song seems to suggest rather progressive ideas concerning sexuality; the theme is underlined with a sense of masculine traditionalism as well. As Jones' lyrics point out, along with her physical appearance, she is androgynous, her "looking" like a man and "mating" when he/she can, Jones sports traditional machismo. In effect, Jones' masculine qualities are much more obvious than her feminine qualities. Another masculine characteristic that comes out is the idea of the "lone wolf" by never becoming part of a pack, and spending her life alone and solitary. She "mates" when she wants to, and does not feel bad about it, "whistling in the darkness" (Jones, G., 1981). In fact, she feels a restored sense of affirmation at night, "shining in the darkness/coming to conclusion/right is night is tight" (Jones, G., 1981). What is her conclusion? The answer is not

quite clear as one might assume, but she does challenge others to follow her, or at least call out “fools” that are other “no-no’s” like her.

Come in all you jesters
Enter all you fools
Sit down no-no’s
Vulgar fools
Trip the light fantastic
Dance the swivel hips
Coming to conclusions
Button up your lips (Jones, G., 1981, Track 1:1)

“Come in all you jesters,” who are the “jesters, fools and no-no’s” she is telling to free themselves (Jones, G., 1981)? According to Bornstein, real gender begins with fun (Bornstein, 1994, p. 87). Cross-culturally, the individuals who have freed themselves from the fear of humiliation are clowns, fools, jesters, and tricksters. Is humiliation what Jones is “walking” away from? Is it fear of it? So what do fools, jesters, and no-no’s have in common? Bornstein (1994) explains:

Well, they don’t play by the rules, they laugh at most rules, and they encourage us to laugh at ourselves. Their pranks of substituting one thing for another create instability and uncertainty, making visible the lies imbedded in a culture. Fools demonstrate the wisdom of simplicity and innocence. These are valuable crafts and skills. (p. 89)

Jones is troublemaker, and Bornstein brings up an interesting idea of why. She says jesters, fools, and tricksters are so by flexing the rules, and boundaries of a group (p. 92). A fool, in order to survive, must not identify along with any rigidly-structured group. But is Jones identifying with a group in the first place? Yes and no. “Summing up the people/checking out the race,” she does not feel an affinity toward this society (Jones, G., 1981). She is becoming more aware of her surroundings than wanting to become part of it. But, she is calling out for the “jesters” and “fools” to “sit down, trip, and dance” to come to a conclusion with her. The last line is more

confusing. By this point, I would assume that Jones and her crew will not be quiet about their “conclusion” or their lifestyle. She tells them to “button up your lips” (Jones, G., 1981). “Vulgar fools/trip the light fantastic”, is she telling us that only vulgar fools are able to use disgust that figures in the attractions and repulsions of the sexual (Jones, G., 1981)? Why button up lips then? In Miller’s book, *The Anatomy of Disgust*, there is an interesting passage about when only vulgar fools love and witness disgust in another person, “Yet are no vulgar fools loved by people who are neither their parents nor themselves vulgar fools?” (Miller, 1997, p. 140).

The message and impact of lyrics from both “King for a Day” (Armstrong, 1997) and “Walking in the Rain” (Jones, G., 1981) are discursive in popular culture. A focus of individual expression no matter what the cost, “daddy threw me in therapy, feeling out of place.” No doubt, these messages hold a lot of appeal to fans. Those who want an excuse to rebel as well as those who genuinely want to be appreciated for just being different, “don’t knock it until you tried it on, right is night is tight.” I chose these two songs because on a basic level, they are about telling society that the protagonists are not going to adhere to their rules, “sugar and spice and everything nice wasn’t made for only girls, sounding like a no-no.” At some level, the two songs are very political and are anti-mainstream, “king for a day in a leather thong, feeling like a woman, looking like a man.” At another level, they are also very personal, “he thinks I’m not a real man, doing what I’m doing/feeling out of place” (Armstrong, 1997 & Jones, G. 1981).

John, I’m Only a Queen

“John, I’m only Dancing” is a single released by David Bowie in 1972 (Jones, D. 1972). The song was originally lined up to appear on *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* (1972) album, but was eventually released as a stand-alone single. The single

was first released in the U.K. and was overlooked in America because of its homosexual connotations and it was finally released in 1976 (Auslander, 2006, p. 106). In January of 1972, in a now-legendary interview, Bowie had declared: “I’m gay [...] and always have been” (Watts, 1972, p. 1). The song, at first glance, is about a homosexual relationship where the protagonist is reassuring his lover that he is only dancing with a girl and not in love with her. There are four characters in the song, Annie, Joey, John, and presumably Bowie.

Well Annie’s pretty neat, she always eats her meat
Joey comes on strong, bet your life he’s putting us on
Oh lordy, oh lordy, you know I need some loving
Oh move me, touch me (Jones, D., 1972, Track 1)

The song provides listeners with the tale of Annie, Joey, and John. Annie, we can speculate that she is either the girl Bowie is dancing with and is enamored by her, or Annie and Joey are the same person, “bet your life he’s putting us on” (Jones, D., 1972). Bowie has blended the masculine and feminine by directing his reassurance towards a lover (John) and accepting that he is turned on by a she (Annie?). I chose this song because of its mystery of double entendres and the unique performance of queer masculinity.²

Shadow love was quick and clean, life’s a well-thumbed machine
I saw you watching from the stairs, you’re everyone that ever cared
Oh lordy, oh lordy, you know I need some loving
Move me, touch me
John, I’m only dancing
She turns me on, but I’m only dancing
She turns me on, but don’t get me wrong
I’m only dancing
Dancing, won’t someone dance with me?
Touch me
Ohhhh! (Jones, D., 1972, Track 1)

² I chose not to analyze other obvious major-hit Bowie glanthems like “Rebel Rebel” (Jones, D., 1974) and “All the Young Dudes” (Jones, D., 1972) where there are more progressive notions concerning queer sexuality.

The song carries submissive characteristics. He reassures his lover that he is not going to stray from him/her. He begs and pleads for him to believe him, “don’t get me wrong/I’m only dancing” (Jones, D., 1972). Also, he asks his lover to “touch” him and to “move” him, perhaps he is desperate for someone to dance with and being rejected by his lover, his only partner is Annie, “won’t someone dance with me” (Jones, D., 1972)? The song also carries double entendres that could be interpreted as homosexual references, “shadow love was quick and clean/life’s a well-thumbed machine” (Jones, D., 1972).

The whole song sounds very feminine, especially Bowie’s voice, it is high and somewhat pinched. His high-pitch vocal mannerisms range from a prissy-sounding emphasis of certain words, “move me/touch me,” to an almost squeaky, imploring tone as urges his dancer, and he reassures his lover, “won’t someone dance with me” (Jones, D., 1972)? The song ends with more beseeching repetitions of wanting to dance. His voice can almost be found humorous, almost like a parody of gender. Butler refers to “the replication of heterosexual constructs in non-heterosexual frames” (Butler, 1990, p. 331). Auslander (2006) continues on this idea:

Like most rock songs, they reflect the social behavior and attitudes of heterosexual men, but Bowie’s performance of a queer identity on television, in print, and on stage [...] constituted the “non-heterosexual frame” within which he placed male heterosexuality. (p. 137)

Bowie’s performance of bisexuality identity in this song challenges masculine sexuality and reverses traditional gender roles.

The fourth and last song I will be analyzing is “Queen Bitch” (Jones, D., 1971) also by David Bowie. “Queen Bitch” was released on his 1971 album *Hunky Dory*. Bowie has always said that the Velvet Underground and Andy Warhol had a major influence in the narratives, and images of his career early on. It is known that this song is strongly influenced by Low Reed’s

songwriting style. Lou Reed was drawn and influenced by Andy Warhol's Factory subculture and their open acceptance of gay sexuality (Auslander, 2006, p. 133). To both Bowie and Reed, "the Factory seemed like an escape into a world that they'd always imagined: a world in which gay men were held in high esteem, a world that was dominated by gay aestheticism" (Cagle, 1995, p. 85). Bowie developed a writing method that created images and characters that were to be taken at face value. His attitude was, "what a fucked-up society. Let's see what it sounds like [...] it was serious and dangerous and I loved it" (DeMain, 2004, p. 59).

In "Queen Bitch," the narrator is dealing with a jealousy problem (Jones, D., 1971). Is he jealous at his lover's rejection, or jealous of the "other" girls dress? The opening starts with a sense of tension and despair.

I'm up on the eleventh floor
And I'm watching the cruisers below
He's down on the street
And he's trying hard to pull sister Flo
Oh, my heart's in the basement
My weekend's at an all-time low
'Cause she's hoping to score
So I can't see her letting him go
Walk out of her heart
Walk out of her mind
Oh not her (Jones, D., 1971, Track 2:4)

The issue of power dynamics between three people mentioned in the song, Bowie, his "lover," and the "she." Actually, we do not know for sure who is male or female, being that we are watching this from Bowie's world, anything can happen, and anyone can be anything. I would argue that, in Bowie's world, the song portrays two gender-benders. That is apparent in the second stanza.

She's so swishy in her satin and tat
In her frock coat and bipperty-bopperty hat

Oh God, I can do better than that (Jones, D., 1971, Track 2:4)

In my own reading, Bowie's celebration of queer identity gives a sense of being out of control, and yet always trying to grasp it. I will re-introduce the idea of queer space, and by celebrating the "otherness" of it you take control of your queer space. In analyzing "Queen Bitch" Bowie seems to have no control of his "lover," "he's down on the street/and he's trying hard to pull sister Flo" (Jones, D., 1971). He also has no love toward women, as his vision of them is no longer sweet. He sees them as scratchers and destroyers. At the same time, he is comparing himself with women and realizing that "he can do better than that" (Jones, D., 1971).

Bowie provides multiple possibilities of what it means to be male in our culture. He challenged both the conventional sexuality of rock culture and the concept of a foundational sexual identity (Auslander, 2006, p. 106).

Images

The images a musician produces for the media is as important to their career as their music is. I will first analyze two artists that are important in the way rock displays masculine and feminine identities, and what kind of images these artists produce through these two videos. I have chosen Janelle Monáe and Annie Lennox. In two distinct videos by these artists, there are two separate ideas of performed female and male identity. In Monáe's video "Many Moons" (Irvin & Monáe, 2008), Monae's alter-ego Cindi Mayweather (who is an android) performs for a crowd while other androids (in her likeness) walk down a catwalk, and are being bought off by the wealthiest of Metropolis (a city in her futuristic world). The second video, "I Need a Man" (Lennox & Stewart, 1987) is by the Eurythmics. Lennox's portrayal as man-as-woman-as-man is quite interesting to watch her definition of drag. Whitely & Rycenga (2006) point out:

If drag must entail a cross to the “opposite” of one’s “true” identity, then that original, that biological sex-based identity becomes normalized and immobile, thus defying both the validity of the performer’s self-identified gender and the power of drag performance has in questioning gender “realness.” (p. 30)

Janelle Monáe and Annie Lennox: Queen or King?

The first artist I have chosen is fairly new on the music scene: Janelle Monáe. She is an androgynous, tuxedo-sporting, queer-supporting, soul-oriented, alternative singer/songwriter, dancer and performer. She has been compared as the female André 3000. Monáe’s style is R&B and funk mixed with soul and hip-hop. I find her quite interesting because I have not seen an artist quite like her before in the way that she has stuck to a one continued “uniform” and identity. In the gimmicky world of mainstream pop, Monáe is not only a pretty woman with a pretty good voice; she has the artist-as-separate-character act down pat, and I believe she means it.

Her video for “Many Moons” celebrates and embraces her ambiguous confidence of a super star, her rendition of sci-fi mythology, and her fascination with androids (Irvin & Monáe, 2008). In the video, Monáe plays several faux-hawked androids, first, Cindi Mayweather, a singer from the year 2719, and who is the prototype of the androids, the Alpha Platinum 9000 (Monáe, :37). With a style which can only be described as black and white retro 1930’s Deco “gentlewoman” in tuxedo and spats, all droids don menswear. Her second alter-ego is Lady Maestra, who is the master of the Show Droids (Monáe, :34). Throughout the video we are shown seven Monáe alter-egos, they are displayed as auctioned-off droids, and all have their own names and “uniforms.” Monáe revels in androgyny, choosing not to be exactly feminine or masculine; she is deconstructing femininity and feminine fashion. She carries an almost Grace

Jones list of characteristics. The use of a monotone sing-speak voice in this song and “Walking in the Rain” carries a masculine air of confidence (Jones, G., 1981).

What comes to mind when watching this video are ideas of gender performance, particularly drag performance. Drag is defined as someone who “puts on” something other than their gender (Butler, 1993, p. 230). Is Monáe acting out a gender parody or impersonation? She seems to be living her out her performance daily. When in public, she usually appears in monochromatic black suits, countered by ultra-feminine broad cuffed blouses, men’s oxford shoes, and her signature pompadour. Is this an instance of some sort of “drag kinging?” According to Halberstam, a drag king is a “female (usually) who dresses up in recognizable male costume and performs theatrically in that costume” (as cited in Whitely & Rycenga, 2006, p. 29). In discourse of drag queens and kings, along with gender, there is not a lot of scholarship that deals with “real girls” in drag performing femininity. Monáe looks masculine, but her overall feeling is definitely feminine.

Monáe certainly is performing theatrically in her video. She dances and sashays with enthusiasm and intensity a-la James Brown, and she seems to be walking a fine line between compliment and copying (Monáe, 4:23). Although there are limited definitions of drag offered, most scholarship on gender performance focuses more on the genre’s ability to critique. Monáe’s “performance” of gender is not exactly a parody or an imitation, because it is not depending on assumed gender binarisms. Whitley and Rycenga (2006) quote Butler saying:

Drag has the power to indicate that “imitation” is at the heart of the heterosexual project and its gender binarisms, that drag is not a secondary imitation that presupposes a prior and original gender, but that hegemonic heterosexuality is itself a constant and repeated effort to imitate its own idealizations. (p. 30)

If Butler is saying that “imitation” is at the heart of a heterosexual project, and that heterosexuality is a “constant and repeated effort” to imitate, where does this leave Monáe and her “gentlewoman?” Are we witnessing not an imitation of heterosexual drag but a performance of gender of a different kind?

Monáe’s fascination with a futuristic notion of androids is found throughout her whole album, but this video deals with her love with science fiction. She has said (Kot) her concept and connection with androids started with her love of the 1950s TV show *the Twilight Zone*:

I had this quote in mind: “The mediator between the hand and the mind is always the heart.” I wanted to represent the heart. I chose an android because the android to me represents “the other” in our society. I can connect to the other, because it has so many parallels to my own life – just by being a female, African-American artist in today’s music industry. (p. 1)

The android, a synthetic organism, has no set sex or gender. An android is neither, but it is also “other.” Monáe’s android alter-ego, Cindi Mayweather, eventually overloads, and her human “like-ness” fails and her true droid “face” breaks through (Monáe, 6:14). Towards the end of her video she is eventually lifted through the air where her body is shocked with an electrical flow (Monáe, 5:11). She is slowly lowered back down on stage where Lady Maestra looks on surrounded by three other droids in bride’s dresses (Monáe, 5:46). Mayweather’s eyes illuminate for one last time and she shorts out (Monáe, 6:14). Haraway’s image of “cyborg” is “a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction” (Haraway, 1991, p.149). Haraway’s cyborg stands for shifting political and physical boundaries which, in its interface with us and the world around us, often wittily pulls the rug out from under what we perceive to be “natural.” Monáe’s android is portrayed as natural and encourage to be accepted as such, but at the end of the video, we are shown that her android is

only a distortion of what we consider “natural.” Since Haraway’s cyborg does not exist as nature *or* culture, but is rather a hybrid of both and more, a hybrid of both the female and male, it is not limited by traditional binarisms and dualist paradigms (p. 151). This, I believe is where Monáe is headed, and she has already taken steps to assure us that her android is not natural and is not limited to cultural representations of gender identities.

Apart from Monáe, the singer that has had a successful career out of gender bending and passing into the mainstream is Annie Lennox. When the Eurythmics first commercial breakthrough song came out “Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)” in 1983, Lennox’s look was very Bowie-esque—short, sharp orange hair, poisonous red lips, a streamlined and hard-edged physique, and big-shouldered men’s suits (Lennox & Stewart, 1983). Their video for “I Need a Man” (Lennox & Stewart, 1987) shows Lennox in a dress and vamped to the hilt with her caked in make-up where; she can easily pass as male transvestite (Eurythmics, :15). Lennox seems to playing a game of gender confusion, is she playing a man in drag that is impersonating a man-eating vamp, or is she a “real” female vamp?

Lennox’s more feminine personae often have an air of drag about them. In the video, Lennox impersonates Mick Jagger’s raunchy, disco-fied swagger of the 1970s, “parodying his own caricature of low-down blues rapacity” (Reynolds & Press, 1995, p. 296). In the song, the narrator treats men like men treat women: as object, prey, and plaything. Her contempt is as obvious as her lust, “her repetition of the word “baby” is beautifully belittling (p. 296).

Lennox seems to be staging a kind of femininity that is up for grabs for any performer; she is challenging the viewer that she is an authentic woman. By separating femininity from a particular body, she is exposing it as something “unstable, theatrical, imitable, and able to be

owned by anyone who performs is best” (Whitley & Rycenga, 2006, p. 31). Lennox in her video is certainly communicating a parody of femininity—big blonde hair (a wig), dark, dramatic make-up, and a sexy walk that almost borders on looking intoxicated (Eurythmics, 1:15). Her video is dripping with female stereotypes and issues of “camp.”

Camp has had a big part in the creative expression of gay sensibilities. The gay sensibility, as defined by Jack Babuscio, is “creative energy reflecting a consciousness that is different from the mainstream [...] a perception of the world which is colored, shaped, directed, and defined by the fact of one’s own gayness” (Babuscio, 1999, p. 118). So camp, as a product of the gay sensibility, describes those elements in a person, situation, or activity that expresses the gay sensibility (p. 119). Lennox’s over-the-top performance exaggerates the ironic contrast of the feminine and masculine. By playing femininity to the hilt and thus emphasizing its imitative nature, Lennox is engaging the standard tactics of drag.

Unlike Monée’s video, where she seems to be “kinging” (to an extent), she is able to critique the authenticity of masculinity by making its own lack of theatricality performative. Monée’s video does not feel like a parody of either femininity or masculinity, and Lennox’s video is presented as simply costume.

Both videos provide an opportunity to critique different structures of how gender identities are presented in the media. The images that they present and their performances as separate artists challenge a common sense understanding of gender. Both women represent new ideas of what it means to showcase femininity and masculinity

Performance

Lady Gaga's Monster

The world of Lady Gaga has been infused with the fantastic, the over-top, and filled to the brim with creatures that can only haunt the dreams of a self-proclaimed “monster” since her debut album in 2008. Gaga has consumed and has been consumed by her artistic reputation and pop culture presence that is also closely tied to an endless stream of avant-garde fashion worn in her music videos, performances, and public appearances. Gaga’s numerous references to animals and monsters have a significant role in her music, her performances, and her personal life. Her demonstration for the quest for freedom and power both sexually and personally has an important role in her lyrics and performance.

Lady Gaga was born Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta, and has released three full length albums. Her stage name is influenced by the rock group Queen and their song “Radio Ga Ga” (1984). Gaga’s images have never conjured “girl-next-door” sweetness as other pop stars in their early years have traditionally done: Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera, and Jessica Simpson to name a few. Instead, “her elaborate performances and sartorial experimentation are deployed to create visual impressions that are practically tailor-made for the age of viral marketing and generate expectations of ever grander spectacles” (Corona, 2011, p. 2).

In analyzing Gaga’s celebration of monstrosity and otherness, I will first focus on the animalistic metaphors evident in her lyrics. Corona (2011) continues to link Gaga and categories of Otherness:

By celebrating the “monster,” the “freak,” or the “misfit” in multiple expressions—not “fitting in” at school or being gay—she is able to build a sense of subculture membership among fans while the catch-all liveliness of her music works to sustain mass appeal.
(p. 2)

I would argue that Gaga challenges gender roles through her performances as well as in her lyrics by being loud, expansive, and active by addressing the theme of sexuality in several songs off her albums *The Fame Monster* (2009), and *Born This Way* (2011).

In the song “Teeth” (Gaga & Riley, 2009), she makes the female first person’s demand for sex the main feature. The focus on teeth, the mention of fangs, and the invitation for him to take a bite suggests vampirism:

Take a bite of my bad girl meat [...] need a man now show me your fangs (Gaga & Riley, 2009, Track 8)

“Teeth” focuses on the sexual act only, in an expression of an anonymous encounter, but at the same time she expresses the need of a man. When reading the lyrics, the characters’ own sexuality is in focus, rather than any part of the man’s body. She asks the male figure to take a bite out of her and show her his fangs meaning that she challenges him to become as beastly and ferocious as she is. The image of vampire, of blood and death, correlates with today’s popular culture obsession with eternal life and youth. Gaga’s obsession is with the eternal ugly, and the morbid spectacle. By using “monster” images she uses monstrosity to “show us what happens—to them, certainly, and possibly to us as well—when the always vulnerable line between civility and incivility fails” (p. 9).

Her song “Monster” is about a man with “evil eyes” that she cannot stop staring into, who later sings, he “ate my heart and then he ate my brain” (Gaga & RedOne, 2009). Gaga explains that he is bad, “a wolf in disguise” (2009). Even though she tells him “get your paws right off of me,” he manages to get her into bed (2009). That “boy” is a monster with paws, who also ate her heart. A deeper reading into her lyrics, Gaga has used “monster” for other purposes,

not just ferocious lovers. The power of the “monster” motif lies in being able to attract other self-identifying outcasts to her music and aesthetic (p. 11). In an interview with Brian Hiatt (2009) of *Rolling Stone* magazine, Gaga explains why her fascination with monsters became the title of her album:

Each one of these songs on my album represents a different demon that I’ve faced in myself, so the music is much more personal. I don’t write about fame or money at all on this new record. So we talked about monsters and how, I believe, that innately we’re all born with the monsters already inside of us—I guess in Christianity they call it original sin—the prospect that we will, at some point, sin in our lives, and we will, at some point, have to face our own demons, and they’re already inside of us. (p.43)

Even her tour, from 2009-2010, was aptly named “Monster Ball” conjures up images of beauty and the macabre in which she called the tour a “truly artistic experience that is going to take the form of the greatest post-apocalyptic house party that you’ve ever been to” (Hiatt, 2009, p.43). In truth, a monster ball refers to the term that evokes the “monster’s ball” tradition of English jailers in which they would celebrate on the night before a prisoner’s execution (Corona, 2011, p. 8). She consistently addresses her fans as “my little monsters,” a term which they eagerly use among themselves, and she has been dubbed “mother monster.” Her slogan for her newest album is “put your paws up,” in which all of her little monsters and animals have paws. It seems that Gaga’s mission with the slogan is to “empower” all the freaks and rejects to put up a hand of resistance to bullying.

Animals were used in her video “Bad Romance” (Gaga & RedOne, 2009) to add a bestial flavor in the story of a sex slave in which Gaga is sold to the Russian mafia but ultimately destroys the man who bought her. In the video she uses a furless cat (Gaga, 2:43), furless bat (Gaga, 3:01) and taxidermied rat as a hairpiece (Gaga, 2:19), mounted antelopes on the mafioso’s bedroom walls (Gaga, 3:45) and a coat whose train ends in the head of a polar bear

(Gaga, 3:45). Her dance moves recall the clawed fingers used in Michael Jackson's video "Thriller," who also had Jackson star as a werewolf and a zombie (Gaga, 1:21).

So this monster identity that Gaga has embraced certainly does push the boundaries of theatrics in which the varying degree that Gaga has incorporated this persona can be used as a challenge to established definitions of identity and expected forms of behavior. Auslander writes that "glam rock's central social innovation was to open a safe cultural space in which to experiment with versions of masculinity (and femininity) that clearly flouted social norms" (Auslander, 2006, p. 228). Gaga certainly has used this Glam space as much as she can and has bent, and blurred the boundaries of it. She addresses her audience as individuals with the power to transform them and emphasizes accessibility and fun.

David Bowie's Alien

Certainly the most famous of the Glam rockers, Bowie's gender-bending alien Ziggy Stardust captivated audiences in the 1970s with "his skeletal face riven with audacious lightning bolts, penetrating eyes that didn't match color and an impossible grace" (Gilmore, 2012, p. 42). Bowie took on the androgynous alien persona from 1971 to 1974. His albums—*Hunky Dory* (1971), *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* (1972), *Aladdin Sane* (1973) and *Diamond Dogs* (1974)—are considered a grand epic of rock and roll that took sexual expression and popular culture to a place that was never permitted before.

Ziggy Stardust, the alien who came to earth to save it, but instead found rock and roll, however, "as Ziggy's plan unfolds he becomes the ultimate 'plastic' rock and roll star. His narcissism takes control and he momentarily abandons his mission to make love to his own ego. As a result, the character murders his ego and leaves earth in ruins" (Cagle, 1995, p. 147).

Through his persona, Bowie was able to embrace an audience of misfits and a form community around his singularity. He provided a model of courage to millions who had never been embraced by a popular culture hero before. Bowie, like Gaga, empowered people to free themselves from the bubble of perceived cultural and gendered stereotypes. In “Rock ‘n’ Roll Suicide” (Jones, D., 1974), he sings:

You’re not alone
No matter what or who you’ve been with
No matter when or where you’ve seen
All the knives seem to lacerate your brain
I’ve had my share, I’ll help you with the pain
You’re not alone (Jones, D., 1974, Track 2:11)

Bowie sung to “the outsiders who felt depressed and lost, wasted by their own despair or by the world’s unkindness” (Gilmore, 2012, p. 42).

Bowie’s androgynous alien signaled that changes were coming, Glam rock had been born, and at its best, it was not just about music and style; rather, it was about a radical new mode of liberation. Why alien though? Bowie had started to feel a disconnection with how society had been reacting to feminine masculinity. He had already tapped into the concern of female masculinity as early as 1964 where he was the founder of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Longhaired Men. “He knew, with his Brian Jones-style hair, that his appearance conveyed an ambiguity: he was beautiful face and body that both women and men might be attracted to” (Gilmore, 2012, p. 41). He used a lot of references to outer space, space travel, and aliens in his songs. Bowie had a long-standing interest in space travel. Space takes on several meanings in rock and roll, “a voyage into outer space, and an unknown and unpredictable realm. A journey into outer space is this metaphorically equivalent to a ‘Journey to the Center of the

Mind” (Auslander, 2006, p. 127). Sometimes, it is suggested that such a utopian world might exist on another planet or be built in space, and Bowie definitely suggested this in his songs, particularly “Space Oddity” (Jones, D., 1974).

“Space Oddity” is inspired by Stanley Kubrick’s film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1969) tells the story of Major Tom, an astronaut who ends up stranded in space, and presumably faces death, “it expresses something of the counterculture’s reservations about technology and the military-industrial complex” (Auslander, 2006, p. 128). Auslander argues that there is a struggle against technocracy and that Bowie’s song reinforces a technophobic position:

A sense that the technology is in the hands of people who do not have Major Tom’s best interest at heart emerges when the first thing is asked after entering orbit is to endorse a brand of shirts [...] the consequence is that Major Tom is rendered helpless to address the world’s ill: sitting in his capsule, he muses, “planet earth is blue/and there’s nothing I can do.” (p. 128)

Bowie’s other song that starred an “alien” was “Starman” (Jones, D., 1972), where an alien communicates with the song’s protagonist, a teenage rock fan. His space-alien persona and alien taste for combining theater and rock was symbolic of his sexual alienation from the conventions of traditional “straight” society. His futuristic image combined with his desire for the seemingly mysterious form of space travel, and theater presented a rejection of values central to the counter-culture ethos.

Alice Cooper’s Killer

Hailed as the king of shock-rock, Alice Cooper’s stage image was all death and theatricality that presented them as a band of trashy transvestites. Donned in tight-fitting leather, satin, or gold lamé pants with lacy, see-through lingerie and copious mascara, Cooper was able to introduce grandiose androgynous theatricality. A persona that he developed was that of

madman, killer, and misfit, that was often accused as “one of the most responsible for the moral decline among youth in the early 1970s” (Cagle, 1995, p. 126).

Born Vincent Furnier, then later adopted the name Alice Cooper, Cooper and his band established themselves with a bizarre stage show and reputation for grotesque stage sets. Cooper used violent and vile theatrics—simulated executions, the chopping of baby dolls, and often draping himself with a live boa constrictor—and explicit lyrics to become a controversial yet huge star. He was probably the first rock star, and band, to build their entire image around transvestitism.

In 1971, Alice Cooper released the album *Killer* (1971) where it was filled with often “spooky” and “freaky” riffs and lyrics (Bangs, 1972, p.1). Cooper relied on surreal and violent stage antics and extreme special effects. For this album, Cooper decided that the main character of *Killer* would be an axe murderer who would die at the end of a hangman’s noose. The album had several themes that were often found in horror movies, westerns, and television dramas. To go along with the concept of a killer madman, he blackened his eyes with dark make-up that descended down from his eyes and his mouth. He wore ripped tights, leather accessories, chains, and purposely greasy matted hair. In creating the *Killer* persona, Cooper believed that he had created the perfect “villain” (Cagle, 1995, p. 124).

Several songs off the album *Killer* go hand-in-hand with the violence of their stage antics. “Dead Babies” presented a story about children who die as a result of swallowing pills that are left unguarded in parents’ medicine shelves (Bruce, Buxton, Cooper, Dunaway & Smith, 1971).

Dead babies can't take care of themselves
Dead babies can't take things off the shelf (Bruce, Buxton, Cooper, Dunaway & Smith,
1971, Track 2:3)

As Cooper sang the song on stage, he hacked away at baby dolls, and laughed as he tossed their arms and legs into the audience. After singing the song, Cooper showed no remorse for the acts committed on stage, and was later “beat” by the band with canes.

In the song “Desperado”, Cooper’s melodramatic approach of a Hollywood Western film turns to violence as a method of coping with his problems (Bruce & Cooper, 1971).

I’m a killer and I’m a clown
You’re as stiff as my smokin’ gun
You’re as dead as the desert night
You’re a notch and I’m a legend
You’re at peace and I must hide (Bruce & Cooper, 1971, Track 1:4)

His onstage antics following this song were him being led to a gallows, “and through techniques learned from a musician,” Cooper twirled at the end of a noose as blood spewed from his mouth (Cagle, 1995, p. 125). Minutes later, he reappeared in a white tuxedo, and he and the band danced underneath sheets. His on-stage approach was to create a conceptual approach to all areas of his music, including lyrics, story lines, and stage design.

I believe that Cooper had transcended into another realm of androgyny and theatricality that displayed characteristics of gender bending in a dark and decadent light. Cooper used the weirdities, fetishes, and degeneracy of masculine and feminine madness. It is interesting to note that Cooper used the fantastical, nihilistic attitudes into their shows and lyrics. They took-on Hollywood manipulations of fantasy and used them not in a way to fool people that this is how they lived their lives every day. In fact, Alice Cooper prided himself on the fact that his stage show was just that, a show. He saw himself as an actor. “Most reporters had never witnessed this

kind of rock and roll duality: a performer who both did and did not take responsibility for his actions on stage” (Auslander, 2006, p. 35). Unlike Gaga and Bowie where their mystique depended on the idea of that their “madness” and identity was and is real, Cooper always represented himself as a frenzied persona. Cooper once said (1997) in the magazine *Goldmine*:

It would’ve been a lie to have said I’m really Alice all the time. That I live in a big black house, and have boa constrictors everywhere. I thought it was much more interesting that there were two of us. Alice had a life of his own that existed only on stage, and I totally let him have the run of the stage. But then my other life was my own, and it had a lot more aspects to it than Alice’s did. (p. 15)

Both Gaga and Bowie have gone through tremendous feats to convince audiences that their personas are true. Gaga has played both Jo Calderone, a male model from New Jersey, and Mother Monster, a sort of demi-god who gives birth to a new race within the race of humanity, and as motherly figure to all of her fans. Bowie’s most famous persona, Ziggy Stardust, is an androgynous alien that descends to earth. With Cooper’s “killer” persona, he never became Alice Cooper; he was always just a frenzied madman. There was never a true transition to insanity, he was always just insane. So which persona feels as true authenticity? In a way, all three can be argued as true personas. All three stress visual presentation as much as—perhaps even more than—the music, and also present and have presented clearly stages spectacles and have opened a gap between the figures on stage and the “real” people performing them.

Prince’s Lover

The champion of sexual and racial equality, androgyny, and the joys of masturbation, Prince has been an icon of ambiguous and transgressional sexuality for the last thirty years. This section explores the persona that Prince has adopted, one of lover, and sexual liberator. As Prince’s reputation of popular icon for black funk and white rock, his reputation for feminine

gestures and style grew as well. Lace, eye liner, curls, lashes, finger waves, head scarves, midriff tops, and boots were his staple uniform in the 1980's. His lyrics covered all types of sexual trysts, from the pain of incest in "Sister" (Prince, 1980), spin a rags-to-riches tale of a woman who triumphs over every man, "Pussy Control" (Prince, 1995), longing openly to be a woman, "If I Was Your Girlfriend" (Prince, 1987), and very naughty innuendos in "Soft and Wet" (Prince, 1978).

Born Prince Rogers Nelson, he launched himself as a solo artist, eventually shortening his name to Prince, thus starting a public persona. He integrated funk and blues guitar from black musical culture, and modern white guitar hero music (not the video game). Most of his lyrics and live performances draw on themes of overt sexuality from homoerotic and heterosexual references, raw eroticism of early blues, and funk and the transgressional gender ambiguity of 1980s popular music (Till, 2010, p. 72). He sings in a high falsetto voice combined with a feminized image that is neither black nor white, but purple.

An excellent example of Prince's blending of both genders, and his overt sexuality is the 1984 film *Purple Rain* (Cavallo & Magnoli, 1984). The film is styled as an extended rock video, where he took his sex-freak persona to a darker, more sinister place. He stars as The Kid, a struggling musician with an abusive father who passed along his habit of hitting women. He displays a sexually provocative lady/man who danced in high-heeled boots and took his androgyny to the stratosphere of Bowie heights (Webber, 2008, p. 87). There are many examples of sexual references in *Purple Rain* in general. In the scene where he sings "Let's Go Crazy", Prince simulates masturbation by crouching down on the floor with the guitar sticking out between his legs, running his hands up and down the neck (Cavallo & Magnoli, 1984). He

thrusts his pelvis, while at the same time gasping into the microphone. Some scenes in the film were recorded live in concert, and add to the confusion of how much within the film is real and how much is fiction. I believe it helped create the identity of Prince's perceived sexual persona. How were the films sexual images by a man who displays feminine gestures interpreted by the audience? For one, his records were slapped with a Parental Advisory sticker warning parents of the sexual content after Tipper Gore, Vice President Al Gore's wife, walked by her 8-year-old daughter's room and hearing "Darling Nikki" (Prince, 1984), in which Prince sings of the title character, "I met her in a hotel lobby/masturbating with a magazine" (Prince, 1984). Soon, Prince began experiencing back-lash by some fans, and his albums were soon dissected and analyzed—from cover art to lyrics. Even the conversion from his name Prince to the symbol was controversial. Adopted in 1993, it proves that his identity has become purely iconic. He is unconnected to gender, to history, and is visual and instantly recognizable. The symbol is combination of genders, representing male and female and his androgyny.

Besides the controversy that he accumulates over his lyrics, his image has continued to draw on provocative feminized images, and androgynous personas. His persona is aloof, contemptuous, and as carefully stylized as any nineteenth-century dandy. A dandy "exalts the values of aesthetic autonomy and individual 'personality,' nineteenth century theorists of dandyism often portrayed the dandy as a trans historical, timeless phenomenon" (Garelick, 1998, p.5). A few of the more famous dandies from the nineteenth-century were Beau Brummell, Baudelaire, and Jean Lorrain, believed that a dandy "possess, to their hearts' content, and to a vast degree, both time and money, without which fantasy, reduced to the state of ephemeral reverie, can scarcely be translated into action" (p.8). Prince appears aware of his debt to

nineteenth-century dandyism. In 1995, Prince appeared on the cover of *Esquire* posed as a latter-day Beau Brummell. Dressed in an all-red suit and high-collared shirt, Prince leans on a crystal, bejeweled walking stick, his fingers covered with heavy rings, and his hair dusted with silver glitter. “Prince is both imposing rock star and diminutive dress-up doll, a living human being and a mere template for the ephemera of *la mode*, an artist and plaything that enveloped dandyism” (p. 155). Like a dandy, his performance is continuous and apparently seamless.

Like the other famous dandy, David Bowie, Prince was heavily influenced by Bowie’s asexuality/bisexuality and his use of costume and make-up. Bowie’s most famous persona, Ziggy Stardust, has clear similarities to Prince’s work. Both are guitar hero and singers, androgynous, wore make-up and were stars of films based on live performances. Popular musicians appear to authenticate their songs, videos, and interviews through those “live” performances. “Here fans can experience the supposed reality of the musician’s mediapheme under carefully controlled conditions, and be given cause to believe that it is authentic” (Till, 2010, p. 146). Prince has even stated that he has no interest in authenticating his “character.” “I have never been convinced by the importance of authenticity...I have always engaged in the idea of an entertainer who performs authenticity. Yes I think one cannot be authentic” (p. 146).

Prince has adopted the sexual physicality that mixed the traditionally masculine and feminine, as well as using heterosexual and homosexual references contributing to his “lover” persona. Like Lady Gaga and David Bowie, sex is very important for all of these musicians. Heterosexuality and homosexuality attitudes are important. It has driven their records and performance, although recently Lady Gaga has gone on record to state for young people to wait until their mid-twenties to have sex. Even though image may exude a sexuality that makes

parents wary of the star, her racy look doesn't necessarily negate her message to fans. Besides her recent tirade of celibacy, sexuality is a driven factor for her still. Sexuality in rock and roll derives from the historical fact that pop and rock music are by their historical nature deeply imbedded in sexuality. The very term “rock and roll” refers to sexual intercourse (Rock ‘n’ roll).

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The significance of studying androgynous identity in popular music is important in understanding and identifying differences in expressions of identity. I have used my research to distinguish unusual and/or discernible characteristics of androgyny identity. I have shared information to point out and link together differences of androgyny expression, and different types of androgyny. In androgynous musical identity there are characteristics that I found out in this thesis that are completely set apart from another, it can be physical, it is also internal, it can be lyrically, and even be found between spaces of voice and ear. But at the same time it is not so different from other musical identities. My argument serves to illustrate a growing recognition of androgynous artists to offer us an opportunity to glimpse the spectacular evolvement of sexual identities. It is important to understand the internal motivations that these artists have and how central the communication of these motivations and differences they portray. It is also vital how discourse is part of that musical identity and the purpose it serves. I have analyzed different personas from different artists and examined them separately and comparatively to re-connect them and intersect them to examine the way communication as an academic study is able to figure out why and how these performers want to and are able to balance two genders.

In chapter one, I begin with an introduction that summarized the need for and importance of examining the topics of gender, androgyny, music and communication. In this chapter, I set up issues of gender and popular music and how androgyny fits into, or does not fit into, popular music, scholarship and the complications of identity. The second chapter is the literature review, and in that section I concentrated on popular music scholarship, the history of punk rock, the growth and development from punk artists into androgynous artists, and the mediated

construction of gender. In the literature review, I proposed my research questions. From there, I explained my methodology and how I will be continuing with the research. The third chapter is the methodology; here I put together the methodology used to address androgyny, gender, and popular music and the significance in cultural studies. Chapter four is my findings section where I analyze my thesis questions and used to try to clarify my research questions by analyzing my body of work.

Significance

Two emerging patterns that I have seen in this study are the evolution of theatricality and spectacle, and the acceptance and tolerance of sexuality in a rock and roll identity. In the evolution of rock and roll theatricality, an artist in the emergence of glam in the 1970s used tactics of theatricality as a tool for his androgynous identity. I am not saying that it was a new art form because it was not. Ancient Greek societies, people would go to the theatre for the evening's entertainment. No women were allowed to act, even though a good majority of the major roles in Greek tragedy are for women. Men, instead, played these roles. With no special effects, no fancy lighting, these actors, supported by a chorus in any one play, kept the attention of the audience through the costumes they wore, the extravagant masks they put on to denote different characters, and the power of the words they spoke. We see the same thing in the 1970s with the emergence of glam and glitter. Men donning fantastical costumes, using extravagancy to keep the attention of their audience in shock and awe method; now, it seems it is almost expected for an artist to keep the element of surprise to keep our attention. The evolution has transitioned from raw and organic forms of entertainment to a spectacle of sorts. The media spectacle has

changed how an artist is first presented to the mainstream. And there seems to be a tactical approach on where the shock value is vital.

Spectacle has also changed with the evolvement of the androgynous artist. It has had an enormous influence on pop culture, music, cinema, fashion and advertising— important examples from popular music history, from the early pioneers and MTV masters who expertly used the medium to define their public identities, like Devo, Beastie Boys, Michael Jackson and Madonna, to artists like OK Go and Lady Gaga who follow in their footsteps today.

The second significant theme is the acceptance and expectancy of overt sexuality. It feels now that artists are expected to show some kind of sexuality to establish gender association early on in their career. Rock stars in this day and age are expected to display a kind of sexual nature that piques the interest of the mainstream. Not knowing whether an artist is gay or straight, sometimes not knowing if they are playing male or female, also tends to hold the audience's attention. Controversy of course follows that ambiguity of gender.

I have come to describe androgyny as a mixing of both male and female genders, where there can be distinct lack of coherent gender identification. Through my research, androgyny has been revealed as an identity that neither men nor women are born with, but embody through time. Most importantly, I see it as a state of distortion that comes from combining them or negating them. Most musicians that are referred to as glam artists use androgyny to add an extra erotic element to their performance; and I have also come to find out, historically, it has been offered to men first, then women. By deconstructing even the name androgyny, it places the masculine before the feminine. It can be argued that through the absent use of the erotic there can be opportunity for the performance to still be sexual. The importance is the opportunity, not the

actual absence. Through that devoid of the erotic, there leaves opportunities for the performance and the audience's relation to the performance. Through this absence of the erotic, gender is then freed to take on any identity or no identity.

Gender ambiguity is the ability to freely and knowingly become one of many of a limitless number of genders, for any length of time. Gender fluidity recognizes no borders or rules of gender. With the constantly changing identities of gender, how can someone shift and cross borders when the boundaries constantly change? The culture of rock and roll has been dominated by male presence, making it difficult for women to participate in rock culture. There are notable women in rock and roll that have challenged the same culture where they are trying to break social gender roles. Lady Gaga, Annie Lennox, Grace Jones, Suzi Quatro are but a few of the notable women in rock and roll who challenge gender roles in popular music and have each constructed a unique (re)presentation of what it means to be a women in a male dominated culture, and who challenged masculinity while doing so. Usually, a woman musician in rock and roll was not singing light, romantic pop songs but was immersed in rock culture, and she was usually labeled as "one of the boys." It did not help that the homosocial "boys club" mentality of the rock press has been highly critical of female artists.

In this paper, I have used the personas and performances of five female musicians. In many ways, all five women have inspired one another, and have contributed to the narratives of unconventional identities of femininity. Suzi Quatro, Janelle Monáe, Annie Lennox, Grace Jones, and Lady Gaga toy with androgynistic dress, and lyrics. By doing so, they open up space for these not necessarily new identities to take on new meanings of gender identity.

The lyrics analyzed of Grace Jones and Lady Gaga play with sexual identities that strive for sexual freedom. Jones' femininity and masculinity comes through solidarity, reflection, and sexual power, "Men are terrified of me. I can easily step into the man's shoes, that's what sets off the tension" (Jones, 2007). Gaga's femininity is also through sexual power, but not through solidarity, she mostly sings to men or other girlfriends to join her in the revelry. What I can take from analyzing the lyrics of these two artists is that there has been a historical shift from radical feminism which aimed to abolish gender differences, to the cultural feminism that prevails today which accepts the existence of gender differences. Grace Jones, Annie Lennox, and Suzi Quatro's early careers follow the trajectory of early radical feminism. They aimed to abolish gender differences by aiming to de-naturalize notions of femininity and masculinity. To me, their personas seem more an aggressive and forceful attack on gender identities. As if, by shocking the audience with their masculinity they threatened the ontological status of the gendered body. With Lady Gaga and Janelle Monáe, their feminism exists where gender differences are accepted more widely; these artists have questioned assumptions and orthodoxies and have pointed out new possibilities of gender identities. Lady Gaga was first assumed as a hermaphrodite. Why? The rumor started after an up-skirt photo sparked rumors that she's a hermaphrodite. The photo, taken from video shot at England's Glastonbury festival, revealed a bulge between Gaga's legs. She has denied the rumor that she is a hermaphrodite but when asked about it she agreed that she is one, the rumor was later denied by her manager and publicist. She has also toyed with the rumor that she is bisexual. And of course, she has said that she considers herself bisexual, though her attraction to women is purely physical.

The personas of Suzi Quatro, and Grace Jones are more of a straight-forward can-do approach, as in “anything a man can do, a woman can do too.” They exude a tough, punky-attitude where women impersonate the toughness, independent irreverence of the male rebel. A different approach attempts to infuse rock and roll with feminine qualities. Rather than imitate men, they try to imagine female strength that is different but equivalent. I found this in Annie Lennox and Janelle Monáe, and sometimes Lady Gaga. These artists shift between a series of female archetypes using clichés without being reduced to them; using stereotypes against the society that created them.

In my examination of the other five musicians, Green Day, David Bowie, Alice Cooper, Prince, and Iggy Pop, their perceptions of gender identity vary in many ways and very distinctly. Where I see Iggy Pop, Alice Cooper, and Green Day as rebellion, misogynistic, with gender-based snobbery; David Bowie and Prince are the “romantic” rockers. All these artists were obsessed with self-conscious style. And to an extent, these artists took Andy Warhol’s artistic truism concerning “all is art” to its extreme in that anyone can be capable of becoming a rock star. Bowie and Prince tapped into female masculinity while drawing themes of homosexual and heterosexual references. Green Day, Iggy Pop, and Alice Cooper rely on theatrical androgyny with rarely any sexuality, if there is; their lyrics mostly reference masturbation and one-night stands. Bowie, Cooper, Prince and Pop played the commercial game under the guise of Ziggy, Killer, Lover and Idiot, who transmitted artful ideas about sexuality and gender coding. They challenged the very system that they used for transmitting their ideas.

Limitations

So what does all this mean for communication studies? I believe I have given a small yet detailed look into a few specific, yet very important artists that have challenged gender identities, and ideas of femininity and masculinity. Through their work as musicians they have opened a space for discourse that not only helps us understand the importance of freedom in rock and roll, but freedom in all areas of life. And that freedom transmits to communication studies, performative studies, and musical scholarship. Each academic study seeps into one other, because music incorporates what is important in life: communication of word through song and dance, communication of life's structures, oratory of the past, and the trials of human life.

A main limitation I came across is the method of choosing the artists I believe are important. The artists in this thesis are popular through the masses because of technology. I have chosen artists that are driven by popular access. Popularity through the masses is what distinguishes my artists. I know that there are many artists in the liminal space of androgyny that have not gained the same popularity, and for the purposes of this paper, I have stuck to artists that have had at least one top 40 hit within the last four decades.

Another limitation would be markers of race. Prince and Grace Jones have sung from African-American point-of-views at times, and race certainly does play a big part in their identity as rock stars. I do acknowledge that race plays a part in the popularity of musicians, and within this paper I do not seek to make it part of my analyzation. Although I do not include issues of race in this study, I believe it does not diminish the study, but I do believe that a major step forward in the study would be to include an analyzation of the kind of role race plays within an artist's identity.

I have asked these two research questions because I believe it is important to ask why something is what it is. Now what? Why are you like that? Can I be that too? It is important to explore the possibilities these questions have raised, and I quickly saw that these questions and the answers I might find out would be an important discovery for me. Gender is so pervasive in today's culture that there are an infinite number of circumstances for playing with it. And after raising the questions, it will be the act of playing with gender that is going to change cultural attitudes about it. We bring about the future of gender when we put it to play in any aspect of our daily lives: family, work, play or relationships. These artists that I have chosen to study, to me, are important in my life and are important to the future of gender studies, and gender performance. I have witnessed in my lifetime those identities being challenged through artists as Madonna, Lady Gaga, Marilyn Manson, Prince and so many others, and through the influence and pathway that was set before them in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, the future of gender has a long way to go. It is when we put gender into play, it is when we question the binary, it is when we break the rules and keep calling attention to the fact that the rules are breakable. We know that there are rules to gender, but rules can be broken.

References

- Anderson, S. (2011). When David Bowie Released his First Album and Jeff Buckley Passed Away. *Rolling Stone*. Retrieved from <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/when-david-bowie-released-his-first-album-and-jeff-buckley-passed-away-20110531#ixzz1fPA5nFoK>
- Armstrong, B.J. (1997). King for a Day [Recorded by Green Day]. On *Nimrod* [CD]. California: Reprise Records.
- Auslander, P. (2006). *Performing Glam Rock: Gender and Theatricality in Popular Music*. Anne Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Auslander, P. (1992). *Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance*. Anne Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Bangs, L. (2003). *Mainlines, Blood Feasts, and Bad Taste: A Lester Bangs Reader*. New York, NY: Anchor.
- Babuscio, J. (1999). The Cinema of Camp (AKA The Gay Sensibility). In F. Cleto (Ed.), *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader* (pp. 117-135). Anne Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Bennett, A. (2001). *Cultures of Popular Music*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Berry, R., (1963). Louie, Louie [Recorded by the Kingsmen]. On *Louie, Louie* [Vinyl Single]. Portland, OR: Northwestern Inc.
- Bornstein, K. (1994). *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Brekhus, W. A. (2003). *Peacocks, Chameleons, Centaurs. Gay Suburbia and the Grammar of Social Identity*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bruce, M., Buxton, G., Cooper, A., Smith, N. (1971). Dead Babies [Recorded by Alice Cooper]. On *Killer* [Vinyl] Los Angeles, CA: Warner Brothers.
- Bruce, M., Cooper, A. (1971). Desperado [Recorded by Alice Cooper]. On *Killer* [Vinyl] Los Angeles, CA: Warner Brothers.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1990). Gender Trouble: Feminist Theory and Psychoanalysis Discourse. In L. Nicholson (Ed.) *Feminism/postmodernism* (pp. 324-340). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1996). Performative Acts and Gender Constitution. In M. Huxley & N. Witts (Eds.) *The Twentieth-Century Performance Reader*. (pp. 120-132). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cagle, V.M. (1995). *Reconstructing Pop/Subculture: Art, Rock, and Andy Warhol*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Cateforis, T. (2011). *Are We Not New Wave? Modern Pop at the Turn of the 1980s*. Anne Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Cavallo, R., Fagnoli, S., & Ruffalo, J. (Producers) & Magnoli, A. (Director). (1984). *Purple Rain* [Motion Picture]. Los Angeles, CA: Warner Brothers Studio.
- Edmonds, B. (1972). Psychedelic Punkitude Lives!! [Review of Nuggets]. *Creem* (December): 54-56.
- Eurythmics. (1987). *I Need a Man* [Music Video]. RCA Records. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3QFu8SD4sqE&ob=av2e>
- Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000). *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Fletcher, T. (2009). *All Hopped Up and Ready to Go: Music the Streets of New York*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Frith, S. (1992). The Cultural Study of Popular Music. In L. Grossberg, C. Nelson & P. A. Treichler (Eds.) *Cultural Studies* (pp. 174-186). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Frith, S. (1985). The Sociology of Youth. In M. Haralambos & A. Foster-Carter (Eds.), *Sociology: New Directions* (303-68). Ormskirk, Lancashire: Causeway.
- Frith, S. (1996). *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music*. Cambridge, MA: First Harvard University Press.
- Gaga, L. (2009). Bad Romance [Music Video]. Interscope Records. Retrieved from 17 April 2012 from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrO4YZeyl0I&ob=av3e>
- Gaga, L. & RedOne. (2009). Bad Romance [Recorded by Lady Gaga]. On *The Fame Monster* [CD] Santa Monica, CA: Interscope Records.
- Gaga, L., & RedOne. (2009). Monster [Recorded by Lady Gaga]. On *The Fame Monster* [CD] Santa Monica, CA: Interscope Records.
- Gaga, L., & Riley, T. (2009). Teeth [Recorded by Lady Gaga]. On *The Fame Monster* [CD] Santa Monica, CA: Interscope Records.
- Garber, M. (1992). *The Drag King Anthology*. Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press.
- Garelick, R. (1998). *Rising Star: Dandyism, Gender, and Performance in the Fin De Siècle*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gendron, B. (2002). *Between Montmartre and the Muddclub*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Gilmore, M. (2012, February 2). How Ziggy Stardust Fell to Earth. *Rolling Stone*, 36-43.
- Glover, T. (1973). New York Dolls. *Rolling Stone*. Retrieved from <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/albumreviews/new-york-dolls-19730913#ixzz1fPGljV1H>.
- Hamlin, J. (Producer). (2011, February 13). *60 Minutes* [Television Broadcast]. New York, NY: Central Broadcasting Service.

- Haraway, D. (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hebdige, D. (1988). *Hiding in the Light*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hebdige, D. (1979). *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. London, England: Methuen & Co. Ltd.
- Hiat, B. (2009, October 21). Inside the Monster Ball: Lady Gaga Reveals Plans for Ambitious New Tour. *Rolling Stone*, 43-44.
- Hiat, B. (2011, June 9). Monster Goddess. *Rolling Stone*, 40-47.
- Irvin, N., Joseph, C., & Robinson, J.M. (2005). Many Moons [Recorded by Janelle Monáe]. On *Metropolis: Suite One (The Chase)* [CD Single]. New York City, NY: Wondaland Arts Society/Bad Boy Records.
- Jones, D. (1972). All the Young Dudes [Recorded by Mott the Hoople]. On *All the Young Dudes* [Vinyl]. London, England: CBS/Columbia Records.
- Jones, D. (1972). John, I'm Only Dancing [Recorded by David Bowie]. On *Hang on to Yourself* [7" Single]. London, England: RCA Records.
- Jones, D. (1974). Rebel Rebel [Recorded by David Bowie]. On *Diamond Dogs* [Vinyl] London, England: RCA Records.
- Jones, D. (1974). Rock 'n' Roll Suicide [Recorded by David Bowie]. On *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* [Vinyl]. London, England: RCA Records.
- Jones, D. (1969). Space Oddity [Recorded by David Bowie]. On *David Bowie* [Vinyl]. London, England: Phillips Records.
- Jones, D. (1972). Starman [Recorded by David Bowie]. On *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* [Vinyl]. London, England: Trident Studios.
- Jones, D. (1971). Queen Bitch. [Recorded by David Bowie]. On *Hunky Dory* [Vinyl]. London, England: RCA Records.
- Jones, G. (2007). The World of Grace Jones. Retrieved from <http://www.theworldofgracejones.com/6.html>
- Jones, G. (1981). Walking In the Rain. [Recorded by Grace Jones]. On *Nightclubbing* [7" Single]. Nassau, Bahamas: Island Records.
- Kot, G. (2010, May 28). Janelle Monáe's Android Power. *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from www.chicagotribune.com.
- Lennox, A. & Stewart, D. (1987). I Need a Man [Recorded by the Eurythmics]. On *Savage* [Cassette Single]. London, England: RCA Records.
- Lennox, A. & Stewart, D. (1983). Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This) [Recorded by the Eurythmics]. On *Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)* [Vinyl]. London, England: RCA Records.
- Lull, J. (1987). Popular music and communication: An introduction. In James Lull (Ed.), *Popular Music and Communication*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- McCracken, A. (2001). Real Men Don't Sing Ballads: The Radio Crooner in Hollywood, 1929-

1933. In P.R. Wojcik & A. Knights (Eds.), *Soundtrack Available: Essays on Film and Popular Music* (105-33). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- McNiel, L., & McCain, G. (1996). *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*. New York, NY: Groves Press.
- Miller, W.A. (1997). *The Anatomy of Disgust*. Cambridge, MA: President and Fellows of Harvard College.
- Mon  e, Janelle. (2008). *Many Moons* [Music Video]. Wondaland Arts Society/Bad Boy Records. Retrieved 3 April 2012 from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZyyORSHbaE&list=UUdxFg3dVeT50SsT1v3ptxTQ&index=8&feature=plcp>
- O'Brien, R. (Composer). (1973). *Fanfare/Don't Dream It, Be It*. [T. Curry, Performer] London, England.
- Osgerby, B. (1999). Chewing Out a Rhythm on My Bubble Gum: The Teenage Aesthetic and the Genealogy of American Punk. In R. Sabin (Ed.), *Punk Rock -- So What? The Cultural Legacy of Punk* (154-70). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Penazola, L. (1998). Just Doing It: A visual ethnographic study of spectacular consumption behavior at Nike Town. *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, 337-465.
- Petal Productions (Producer). (2007) *David Bowie: Spiders from Mars: Interviews* [Motion Picture]. England: Petal Productions.
- Pop, I. (Performer). (1977). *The Idiot* [Vinyl]. Berlin, Germany: Hansa by the Wall.
- Pop, I., & Williamson, J. (1977). Search and Destroy [Recorded by Iggy Pop]. On *The Idiot* [Vinyl] Berlin, Germany: Hansa by the Wall.
- Press, J., & Reynolds, S. (1995). *The Sex Revolts: Gender, Rebellion, and Rock 'n' Roll*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Prince (1984). Darling Nikki [Recorded by Prince and the Revolution]. On *Purple Rain* [CD] Los Angeles, CA: Warner Brothers.
- Prince (1987). If I Was Your Girlfriend [Recorded by Prince]. On *Sign O' the Times* [Cassette Tape] Los Angeles, CA: Warner Brothers.
- Prince (1984). Let's Go Crazy [Recorded by Prince and the Revolution]. On *Purple Rain* [CD] Los Angeles, CA: Warner Brothers.
- Prince (1995). Pussy Control [Recorded by Prince]. On *The Gold Experience* [CD] Los Angeles, CA: Warner Brothers.
- Prince (1980). Sister [Recorded by Prince]. On *Dirty Mind* [Vinyl] Los Angeles, CA: Warner Brothers.
- Prince (1978). Soft and Wet [Recorded by Prince]. On *For You* [Vinyl] Los Angeles, CA: Warner Brothers.
- Reed, L. (Performer). (1972). *Transformer* [Vinyl]. New York, NY: RCA Records.
- Reed, L. (1972). Walk on the Wild Side [Recorded by Lou Reed]. On *Transformer* [Vinyl Single] New York, NY: RCA Records.

- Reynolds, S. (2005). *Rip It Up and Start Again: Postpunk 1978-1984*. New York City, NY: Penguin Books.
- Rock 'n' roll.(n.d.) In *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=Rock-and-roll>
- Stooges, The (Performers). (1973). *Raw Power* [Vinyl]. London, England: Columbia Records.
- Till, R. (2010). The Personality Cult of Prince: Purple Rain, Sex and the Sacred, and the Implicit Religion Surrounding a Popular Icon. *Journal of the Centre for the Study of Implicit Religion and Contemporary Spirituality*, 13, 142-159.
- Till, R. (2010). Pop Stars and Idolatry: An Investigation of the Worship of Popular Music Icons, and the Music and Cult of Prince. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 31, 69-80.
- Van Der Merwe, P. (1992). *Origins of the Popular Style: The Antecedents of Twentieth-Century Popular Music*. New York, NY: Clarendon Press.
- Velvet Underground & Nico. (Performers). (1967). *The Velvet Underground & Nico* [Vinyl]. New York, NY: Verve Records.
- Webber, J. (2008, Summer). Prince and the Revolution: Why the 5'2" Singer is the Biggest Male Feminist Rock Star of the Last 25 Years...Kinda. *Bitch*, 40, 84-89.
- White, C. (1984). *The Life and Times of Little Richard*. New York, NY: Omnibus Press.
- Whiteley, S., & Rycenga, J. (2006). *Queering the Popular Pitch*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Appendix

Songs

“John, I’m Only Dancing”—David Bowie

“King For a Day”—Green Day

“Walking In the Rain”—Grace Jones

“Queen Bitch”—David Bowie

Music Videos

“I Need a Man”—The Eurythmics

“Many Moons”—Janelle Monáe

Vita

Tanya Yvette Flores was born in El Paso, Texas. She is the first sibling in her family to graduate from a university. She was inducted to the nation's oldest, largest and most selective collegiate honor society Phi Kappa Phi in 2012. In 2010 she was selected to travel to Rwanda, Africa, where she assisted in helping a UTEP professor further the academic goals for Rwandan university students. In the summer of 2011, she interned for the USDA Forest Service working for their communication and web department.

Permanent address: 11632 Jim Thorpe
El Paso, Texas, 79936

This thesis/dissertation was typed by Tanya Yvette Flores.