

New Romantic Queering Tactics of English Pop in Early Thatcherite Britain and The Second British Invasion

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Everyone wanted to go to the ball. Everyone wanted everything. And somewhere in London, the city that was once the capital of the world, two very different groups of people conspired to bring the ball to them: the Plotters and Poseurs. The New Right and the New Romantics.¹

One of the constitutive moments of English/British pop of the early 1980s was its relationship with the New Romantic (queer) imagination and Thatcherism. This imagination was embodied in two early 1980s British pop phenomena: New Pop – shiny, visual and commercial synth-based pop music – and its globally successful form, the Second British Invasion, in the US media. As Stan Hawkins has suggested, happenings in British pop were then matched by a schizophrenic response to Thatcherism, ‘with a move towards style culture. In fact, the gendered ambiguity of the New Romantics and the Mod revival provided a critique of Thatcher’s vision of Britain, as well as pandering to elitism and materialistic gain.’² 1

In this article I will ask how the supposed stylishness, elitism and lavishness of English pop – both in its dandyist performances and new cosmopolitan demi-mondenness – celebrated the new dawn of postmodern/1980s identity politics. In order to do so I will discuss the ambivalent manner in which the movement paved the way for the early cultural milieu of Thatcherite individualism and personality but also reflected and criticised the very same goals. This 1980s cult of personality was especially present in the gay/queer politics of the era, often controversially performed in the context of the star machinery of the New Pop. In connection to this, I will ask whether the New Romantic movement was an ambiguous (queer) celebration of the Thatcherite milieu: did it succeed in subverting its inherent (neo)-conservative basis or did it, instead, create a typically postmodern smorgasbord of fashionable *chic* – whatever its merits in propagating sexual politics of the era – only too quickly to be consumed by the same consumerist machine it criticised? 2

David Bowie and ‘half English’ British soul boys

Already during the 1970s, the emerging neoconservatism was apparently a reaction towards the 1960s sexual permissiveness and its various displays of blurring differences between male and female sexuality: ‘pop being an ideal stage for depicting gender in quite extraordinary ways, often driving home the arbitrariness of sexual categorization’.³ In the history of (male) pop stardom, especially 1970s Britain had tested the limits of gender-bending and androgyny. Therefore, the New Romantic movement – and the most successful bands (Human League, 3

Culture Club, Eurythmics, Dead or Alive) born from its subculture – was the logical step in the long line of the gender experiments practised in the post-war British youth/pop culture.⁴ Thus the New Pop related British soul-boy movement of the 1970s had initially expressed the political dimensions of oppositional youth-culture, much in the style of punk, but it quickly turned into more complex notions of pop/rock values, thus ambiguously reflecting this history of gender-bending and, later, disclosing its associations with the experience of the new Thatcherite marketplace, Americanisation and British popular culture of the 1980s. The Northern soul scene and the mid-1970s East London Soul Culture, 'apparently, were (also) the "true roots" of punk'⁵, and their provincial/working-class disco aesthetics paved the way for the larger 1980s British Soul Boy Culture.

But the stylistic notion of the white British soul boy was originally constructed by David Bowie 4 in his album *Young Americans* (1975),⁶ the record seeming to work as the blueprint for the whole genre, at the same time paraphrasing Colin MacInnes's utopian promise of young England being half English and the other half being young American, 'stylised, slick, expensive and fake, simultaneously nostalgic and forward looking'⁷ – much like the cultural ethos of the Thatcherite 1980s.⁸ The front cover photo of the album emulated Bowie as the icon who embraced the glamour-androgyny imaginary of a certain period of Hollywood female stardom – mostly associated with stars like Marlene Dietrich and Lauren Bacall – and coming 'across like a young and androgynous Katharine Hepburn'.⁹ For Bowie, this was very much an act of taking the (subversive) sexual referencing of glam rock androgyny a step further and creating a blueprint for the White Soul Boy movement in London clubland: 'out went the stack heels and in baggy suits' and even old glam era Bowie favourites like 'Changes' (1971) wailed like a soul man, 'Aladdin Sane' (1973) swung with a Latin beat, while 'All the Young Dudes' (1974) sounded like a Stax-session highlight.¹⁰ In return, this transatlantic musical package was christened by Bowie as plastic soul.

Bowie's prophetic élan thus preceded both the 1980s style/image culture and its white soul 5 boy scene: the politics of authenticity and the peculiar mixture of futurism and nostalgia – emphasised in the early 1980s patriotic crusade of the Second British Invasion to US – that the Swinging 1960s Britain had reconstructed itself for a new decade. This nationalistic 'brouhaha' was most often related to the political and cultural climate of early 1980s Britain: patriotic euphoria created around the Falklands War (1983) and the earlier triumphs of films like *Chariots of Fire* (Hugh Hudson, 1981), the Royal Wedding of Charles and Diana – also in 1981 – and the emerging neoconservative patriotism elevated by the new Thatcher government and even the Thatcher persona itself.¹¹

The (Short) History of Pop-Queering and its (Thatcherite) Puritan Antidote

Although the new pop and its subsequent forms of dance-oriented pop was quite often – and 6 sometimes misleadingly – seen as the passport to the (imaginary) flashy life exemplified by the new consumerism, Thatcherite and yuppie ideas of streamlining the English post-war life, it also managed to criticise this environment. By the provocative and outrageous bricolage of punk – including rubber fetish sex clothes and safety pins – and because of the century long Baudelairean temperament in Western culture and its dandyist-decadent aesthetics, subversive tactics had denounced 'the utilitarian aspirations of bourgeois [and] concentrated on the sensory surfaces of performance'. Thus, these aesthetics created 'the theatricalized social space of a post-war British context, where performance practices have steadily altered

and developed over time'.¹² In the case of early 1980s Thatcherite Britain, the New Romantics represented the paradigm of this development, in which an epochal turn in culture disclosed dandyism coming into existence in the period of transition.

Appearing in between the last gasp of Labourism and the full flush of Thatcher, New Romantic defied easy description precisely because it represented a turning point. Between rock and dance, live music and DJs, venues and clubs. Between music as music and music as celebrity. Between authenticity and artifice. Between the calculated rebelliousness of punk and the calculated career moves of the new British pop bands...¹³

Apart from the New Romantics, many British male stars of the 1980s – for instance Morrissey – continually renegotiated these understandings, quite often as an antidote to the mainstream popular culture dictating 'a space of affluence, heterosexuality and homogeneity'.¹⁴ The various levels of queering and gender-bending practised since the days of Elvis Presley, the Beatles and the Kinks – and experienced especially during the so called glam rock era of the early 1970s – had still quite often avoided direct references targeted against heteronormality in pop/rock. The coy and clumsy references to the notion of queer, as represented by songs like Barbarians' 'Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl' (1965), had also been partly an attack against the appeal of The Beatles and their mop-top-haircut with its implicit sissiness and a dress-code offering a highly refreshing alternative to the traditional masculinity of fashions in America.¹⁵ It can be argued that the song also reflected on the fragile social climate of the period, especially the gender confusion created by the British Invasion bands ('You are either a girl/or you come from Liverpool') in the rapidly rising counter-cultural atmosphere, also questioning the traditional gender codes.

In the same way, the high-pitched falsetto singing of American doo-wop, pop star Lou Christie (1943–)¹⁶ and The Four Seasons' Frankie Valli (1934–) – teetering on the edge of risqué and euphoric sexual (homo)erotic tension – and Andy Warhol's celebrity stars challenging notions of gender moved the British Invasion notion of gender even further. However, the connotational uses of the word punk – referring among its many meanings to a homosexual¹⁷ – and punk-related counter-culture intensified also the dimensions of gay-political sloganizing. For example, Tom Robinson's single 'Glad To Be Gay' (1978) was connected to the gay-liberational activities both in New York and London's musical scenes,¹⁸ subsequently leading to the overtly political gay-pop produced in the 1980s dance culture: groups like Bronski Beat and The Communards.¹⁹ Earlier, the Bowie-influenced queerness had produced shock-tactics favouring 'outer space' glam stars, like American Jobriath (1946–1983)²⁰ or German-born opera singer Klaus Nomi (1944–1984)²¹, who became 'founding fathers' of the 1980s more art-oriented New Wave scene. Because of their alien and otherworldly decadent charisma, present both in their images and personal histories, they not only represented the earliest openly gay pop stars but also peculiar ways of dandyism, in which the male star body and image is gender-bended via the presentation of outrageous and even aggressive queering linked to fragile and coy male vulnerability. For example, both stars were often represented as doll-like automaton figures or alien Pierrots resembling inhuman toys from another planet – like the character of Pris (Daryl Hannah) from *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982).²²

Although punk's and glam rock's flirting with decadence and seedy androgynous glamour opened up new vistas for century-old queering tactics in (popular) culture, Jobriath and Klaus Nomi can be perceived as the most radical stars of the gender-bending 1970s who fully exploited the imaginary arsenal of queering. In the larger historical frame, the whole dynamics between dandyism and queerness can be related to Wildean subjectivity and gender positionality: the word 'dandy [being] synonymous with something unsettling and repelling...closely affiliated to "homosexual", a mid-nineteenth century discriminatory construct, [and] the "queer", emerging "as a species that bypassed the ontological categories of normality"'.²³ Therefore the ideological basis of Wildean queering – a 'vaguely disconcerting nexus of effeminacy, leisure, idleness, immorality, luxury, insouciance, decadence and aestheticism'²⁴ – could be compared to the ideological basis of Thatcherism. Its need to return to (supposedly) 19th-century 'virtues of thrift, enterprise and family values'²⁵ can be, in this context, seen as the ultimate puritan antithesis represented by the neoconservative revolution to the pop queer of the 1980s.²⁶ 8

It is thus interesting to follow Margaret Thatcher's personal relationship with gender politics and the (de)criminalisation of homosexuality – separated from her (questionable) merits as an established feminist icon due to her becoming the first female Prime Minister in Britain. As a Member of Parliament in the late 1960s, Thatcher was one of the few Conservatives to vote for the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1967.²⁷ However, during her career she was not much interested in commenting on or supporting gender issues, feminist causes or the rights of women.²⁸ Quite the contrary, Thatcher's 'extraordinariness' in terms of these issues soon disclosed itself in the form of praising Victorian values and patriarchal domestic life.²⁹ Things proved to be even worse when Conservatives started their cultural war in the mid-1980s, blaming the 1960s liberalism, egalitarianism and (sexual) permissiveness for the societal problems of contemporary Britain. At the beginning of Thatcher's third term, in 1988, the Thatcher government legislated Britain's first new anti-gay law in 100 years: Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, which forbade promotion of gay-politics by local authorities and schools from teaching the acceptability of homosexuality as a 'pretended family relationship'. As *New Musical Express* then noticed, this could have conceivably led 'to the banning of concerts by "out" gay pop stars like The Communards, Boy George and Andy Bell of Erasure [or] stop radio stations which are partly local authority-funded from playing records by gay people or which deal with gay people (Sting's single 'Englishman in New York' [1988], about Quentin Crisp, for example)'.³⁰ 9

One can only speculate about the change in Thatcher's thinking on these issues during these twenty years, when at the 1987 Conservative party conference she scornfully laughed at people who defended the right to be gay, insinuating that there was no such right. Under her rule, violence towards non-heterosexuals increased, and gay men were widely demonized and scapegoated for the AIDS pandemic: on the contrary, attempts to 'repress homosexuality had wound up only giving the subject more visibility, "promoting" it more strongly than the "loony Left" councils ever had'.³¹ Section 28 instilled panic and propagated the populist and sensasionalist ideas that the sexual liberation of the 1960s was the cause of the widening moral depravity exemplified by licentious life in gay culture.³² 10

London is the place to be: Blitz, New Romantics and Bowie's Children

However, until Margaret Thatcher questioned the post-war consensus, the liberal idea of the 1960s was perceived as reflecting the progressive development of British society. From Harold MacMillan's Conservative government (1957–1963) to the rule of Thatcher in the 1980s, the idea of modernity in Britain was very much linked to the promise of affluence generated through technological progress and consumption.³³ Already from the early 1960s, British society was threatened by the transatlantic and cosmopolitan flow of the 'new, hustling managerial style in the record industry [and] frequently notorious business practices' – later to be eulogised by the Thatcherite philosophy – often centred around the idea of London as 'the central symbol of fashionable, metropolitan, British culture'.³⁴ This new cosmopolitan modernity was embodied in select clubs like the Scotch of St James, the Ad Lib, the Cromwellian and the glitterati of models, fashion designers, hairstylists and photographers. However illusory and restricted this image was of a supposedly classless breed of 'New Aristocrats',³⁵ it preceded the New Romantic version of Swinging London as the capital of the fashionable cognoscenti and style elite, in the same way as it had provided the narcissistic environs for the lunch time mod culture of Swinging London's 'noonday underground'.³⁶ 11

Therefore 1960s Swinging London, and its diluted 1970s tourist version, was a test lab for the entrepreneurial milieu of the early 1980s: the history of London clublife and its punk regeneration³⁷ formed the basis for the early 1980s second Swinging London activity – not only as the new version of the 1960s counter-cultural ideal but also as the new Thatcherite marketplace ready to package the whole British pop idiom for global consumption. Bands like Visage, Spandau Ballet and Culture Club exemplified the creation of the futurist London club The Blitz, a queer space linked to longing for the imaginary places of Swinging London, Europe's mystical cities full of doomed romance and inspiration spawned by the otherness of the place. Spaces like The Blitz club, fascination with a Swinging London and the decadent/artistic heritage of Europe created the basis for queering tactics in New Pop, subsequently and frequently revisited in the iconography of (British) pop music. 12

The very naming of the place as Blitz was a provocative way to address the spirit of the times: because of the 1970s societal crisis in Britain – and emerging neoconservative political climate – the need for the spirit of the Blitz was often mediated in public discourses. Therefore this particular club on Great Queen Street – surrounded by the massive building of the headquarters of London freemasonry and associated shops – was also 'decorated in homage to the Second World War, with murals of St Paul's wreathed in smoke and fighter planes soaring overhead'.³⁸ Occasional tinted photographs of Winston Churchill – smoking his cigar and observing the innocent clubbers who dared not to be spoken about during Winston's lifetime – were nailed to the walls of Blitz. In contrast to this, Blitz club night was a riot of colour, extravagant costumes and sexually risqué queer performing with the continuing seedy pulse of the latest dystopian synth-pop tunes and continental club faves coming from the loudspeakers: something like the scene from Federico Fellini's *Satyricon* (1969) – a metaphorical pageant of 1960s libidinal excess and its darker undercurrents – set in the final days of Imperial Rome as an adaptation of Petronius' *Trimalchio's Feast*. Soft Cell, one of the contemporary synth duos, even set their music video *Tainted Love* (1981) in the imaginary Edwardian garden party in which young Caligula (played by the singer Marc Almond) provoked the decent English guests – much as the interior of Blitz was meant to annoy the rising neoconservative mentality centred around the spirit of the Blitz.³⁹ Therefore, the whole new range of ambiguous gender-politics and camp was paving the way for the pop-revolution of 13

the 1980s, which often challenged the growing conformity of Thatcherite Middle England values.⁴⁰

The juxtaposing of Fellini's *Satyricon* with the Swinging Sixties instantly awakens images of gender-bending, debauchery and unlimited partying in flamboyant and dream-like settings, much like David Bowie's and Bryan Ferry's extravagant and provocative queering of British maleness, class and dandyism⁴¹ in the 1970s, also preoccupied decadent aesthetics, including its darker fascination with fascist imagery, subversiveness and totalitarianism. The continuing fascination with Nazism in British culture⁴² and the fear of losing identity, of alienation and totalitarian dehumanization of an emergent Euro-state/Thatcherite Britain was confronted with the escape represented by various versions of demi-mondé dandyism, from the role-play of Scarlet Pimpernel and the Weimar dandy to the New Romantic fascination with both street-culture Zoot Suits and English upper class neo-romantic imaginary of the 1940s.⁴³ In this context, the ambivalence of the aspirational imagery of a white soul boy world was often more than confusing. Along with their risqué art-school flirting with European decadence, for example, Spandau Ballet's name referred to Spandau Prison where Nazi Rudolf Hess was kept as the only inmate in the late 1970s, connecting it to the experimental ambience of the early 1980s youth culture.⁴⁴ Spandau became the house band in the Blitz club, and was quickly connected to the views of an economically active youth who created their careers by dressing, photographing, staging and promoting the bands like Spandau Ballet. When it emerged that Heaven 17 – the Sheffield group which formed a quasi-company British Electronic Foundation and turned up for photo sessions in pinstripe executive suits, smart ties and briefcases⁴⁵ – were also leftist protesters, the distinction between subversion and celebration of Thatcherite values became increasingly unclear. 14

Therefore, the 1980s style of British pop could be argued to have developed the interdependence between the idea of Thatcherism, heritage culture and pop-entrepreneurialism. One of the themes of Thatcherism in relation to the new stylishness of British pop music was pop-culture's implicit and explicit links to ultra-individuality, consumerism and success-by-any-means-tactics. The new princes of the music industry created a pop world in which the glorification of style and consumerism, marketing philosophy and their subversion through irony, sent the queer message that consumer desire, vulgar materialism and stylistic excesses were now more than ever an integral part of pop/rock culture. 15

But not only the post-war materialism, also the pre-rock'n'roll era of stylistic conservatism and discreet fashions captured the attention of the new, more conservative generation: Young Fogeys and Sloane Rangers. These new youth cults, which came almost exclusively from the English upper-middle class and upper-class elites of certain London areas – Sloane Square, Chelsea, Mayfair and Fitzrovia – admired Margaret Thatcher, High Anglicanism and writers like P.G.Wodehouse and John Betjeman. These young people not only embraced the conservative upper-class past over 1960s egalitarianism, but they were also the vanguard of the new fascination with the traditions and heritage of British culture which celebrated a return to riding and hunting and the various social rituals and etiquettes of past British elites,⁴⁶ all of this quite often strongly resonating with the neo-Victorian aspirations of Thatcherism and queering of the conservative and historical imaginary. 16

The Second British Invasion, Reaganism and Subverting American Way of Life

While British heritage suddenly became hip and alluring, it is good to remember that the British Invasions in America – the idea of music culture as an invading imperial force of Anglophilia⁴⁷ – had from the beginning been manifestations of nostalgic references to the English cultural past and stereotypes – along with their more fantastical elements in transatlantic popular culture. This was quite often referenced in a fascination with Britishness – film musicals like *My Fair Lady* (1964, dir. George Cukor) and cinema from *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956, dir. Michael Anderson) to *From Russia with Love* (1963, dir. Terence Young) worked this way – later to become a ‘mix of irreverence, satire and surrealism’⁴⁸ in the style of the Beatles film *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964, dir. Richard Lester). All of this was famously popularised by The Beatles’ local accents and quirky attitudes – an increasing fashionable interest in different kinds of English novelties in America: from gently ironic characteristics of wackiness to bowler-hatted and furred-umbrella Britishness. The image of the Swinging Sixties, with London as the mythological city of the world’s youth and the British Invasion as the canonised crusade of British pop, was to become a dominant model of pop-European style and fashion.⁴⁹ 17

Although these attitudes were often disclosed as simplistic in their understanding of the dimensions and kaleidoscopic nature of modern Britain, this nature was even more mystified by the transatlantic superstardom of the 1970s. An image especially performed by Elton John and David Bowie – whose flamboyant and gender-bending identities opened a way towards the next phase of British Invasion artists – also opened a path towards more queer interpretations of English dandyism. In the case of Elton John, who also had a ‘love affair with America, and particularly the mythic west’,⁵⁰ queerness was quite easily associated with the Las Vegas-type of flamboyant showbusiness. But when ‘Jethro Tull’s *Thick as a Brick* made number one in 1972, the fact that a band with a flutist as front man could achieve this feat’⁵¹ supposedly symbolised a more controversial idea of arty British queerness. This was especially because of Ian Anderson’s preening and prancing as a medieval minstrel on stage. However, the second (proper) invasion, happening around 1979–83 – most notably led by bands like Culture Club and Human League – presented a new peculiar version of English art-school theatrics, originally nurtured in the New Romantics-influenced London clubland, which elevated the dandyism of British male popstardom to the level of global pop-stardom. 18

Following the Thatcherite neo-conservative revolution, the shift in the values of America to the right and to the religious sentiments started in the early Reagan era, leading to the re-emergence of a conservative lifestyle and way of thinking.⁵² The excesses of the 1960s and especially the 1970s were regarded with derision, and in many ways, rock music was seen to be one of such excesses. Especially the Reagan-sanctioned war on pornography and sexuality heralded a new age of conservative politics within the nation,⁵³ easily associated with the androgynous and degenerate image of New Pop. Ambiguously, the queerness of new British pop was related to the new image of Englishness, first innocuously associated with the glamour of the Royal Wedding of Diana and Charles, but gradually connected to the queerness of a new style of English performers who outrageously extended their gender-bending from the days of Elton John or David Bowie. While the nation started to confront the effects of AIDS and a growing cultural war, the 1980s witnessed other changes, including the advent of the personal computer, a revolution in information technology, the creation of MTV and the rise of postmodernism – all strengthening the future-oriented cultural shifts of the postwar era and 19

building platforms from which to launch the colourful invasion of new British pop stars and discourses centred around them. However, as much as Thatcherism, these developments created a conflict in American society that continues today, pitting cultural conservatism against a secular and multicultural view of the world.

In many ways, both Reaganism and Thatcherism stood in harsh contrast to the world of the British Invasion. Also, this invasion was seen as portraying a new kind of England: England as the more aggressive force in consumer capitalism, music marketing and gender politics – most notably recognised by the English subversiveness – which commented both on the influence of punk in popular music culture and the early entrepreneurial circumstances of Thatcherite Britain. 20

How did the 1960s British Invasion reconstruct itself for a new decade, and how was this invasion seen in early 1980s Reaganite America as portraying new kind of England? First, the politics of musical authenticity – often subverted and turned upside down in British punk and post-punk – were taken into serious consideration by the American music press. Second, fashion and consumerism were seen as heralding the entrepreneurial spirit of new England, but also – along with gender-bending and sexual politics – propagating anti-rock or anti-American attitudes in their queerness. 21

Schaffner has argued that The British Invasion is not a single cohesive narrative, but a collection of waves leading to the 1980s.⁵⁴ Musically, the first invasion went on to dominate Anglo-American pop music with cover versions of black American R&B-songs, before aiming to target mainstream white pop audiences, often – as a sad bonus – leading to the situation in the 1970s, in which, according to Schaffner, 'many of the British Invasion's survivors appeared to have metamorphosed from teen-dream pinups-cum-countercultural prophets into jaded tax exiles, trading in on past glories to join the international jet set and fill Hollywood gossip columns'.⁵⁵ 23

At the end of the 1970s, the American Top Forty was full of soft LA rock, disco or progressive adult-oriented rock, in the style of Styx, Journey, Boston and Foreigner. The new British bands were the antithesis of these: visual style, adventurous marketing and the help of MTV, launched in US in 1981, all helped to market these bands as alternatives to the old guard of 1960s hippie-influenced rock. However, the most important musical feature in the Second British Invasion was to repeat the musical appropriation of black American music by British artists, and sell the American soul and funk back to (the above mentioned) mainstream audiences, in a similar way as had been done with rhythm & blues in the 1960s. But, this time, the black music was now reconstructed and anglicised by the British soul-boy movement, and its political dimensions of oppositional youth-culture – led by the philosophy of punk – and targeted against the superstardom of the 1970s. 23

This peculiar mixture of the politics of post-punk's musical (in)authenticity emphasised the ambiguous patriotic crusade of the Second British Invasion: as often as it exemplified American consumerism and (imaginary) affluent America, it also stood in radical contrast to the domestic mainstream America – embodied in the strict codes of American heteronormative values. An illuminating example of this was when Boy George of Culture Club was invited to *The Donahue Show* on 8 November 1984 and was attacked by television preacher Jerry Falwell who accused him of making kids homosexual by playing them Culture Club pop records.⁵⁶ 24

While the invasion was spearheaded by bands like Culture Club, Duran Duran, Wham! and Police – the last of these sanitising reggae for the white American market – it was followed by a mixed bunch of British bands, from new wave acts like Dexy's Midnight Runners and Madness to more conventional teen acts like Kajagoogoo and A Flock of Seagulls. The apotheosis of this cultural invasion was experienced in July 1983, when 'eighteen of the top 40 US singles were by British acts, breaking a record that had stood since the glory days of the British invasion in the mid-1960s'.⁵⁷ 1983 was also the year of Margaret Thatcher's second election victory – embodied in summery singles like Spandau Ballet's 'True' and Wham's 'Club Tropicana'⁵⁸ – and as much as the years of Harold Wilson's Labour government was associated with The Beatles, Swinging London and the British Invasion, Thatcher's election victory was quickly associated with the new British pop and the Second British Invasion. 25

In parallel with the political and cultural climate, the British music industry created a pop world in which the glorification of style, consumerism and material excess resonated not only with the pop-world and the aspirations of Thatcherism, but also with Liberacean Las Vegas-style glamour. The dandyist snobbery (and elitism) – in the 1960s as a refreshing and exotic ingredient of British Invasion pop – was gradually turning into distaste for British stylishness: mostly because 'it always had at least as much to do with fashion as with music'.⁵⁹ The situation was not helped by the flow of such art school-inspired marketing and merchandising gimmicks 'as coloured vinyl, the picture disc, and the picture-sleeve single – soon to be followed by six-inch singles, bonus flexidiscs'.⁶⁰ The artistic exploitation of rock'n'roll's collectability and the fascination with the non-musical elements of popular music culture (fashion, adverts, music videos) in British pop gathered to saturation point through the 1980s, leading to sardonic and cynical wonderment about what has been happening in British music industry: 'They come every year, every month, every week, every day, in beautiful packages that look like avant-garde deodorant ads'.⁶¹ Also the often adopted extravagant dress, make-up and period clothes, modelled as 'the eighteenth-century dandy highwayman, the Jacobite highlander look of Spandau Ballet [and] the Victorian/Ruritanian toy soldiers of Visage and Ultravox',⁶² for example – not to forget Boy George's drag performances when dressed as a geisha girl or a fabricated orthodox Jew – were important features of synthesizer, MTV-friendly bands, who sent the same, but ambiguous, message about the reality of early Thatcherite Britain to a mixed response in the American media, often received as a queer provocation made against homemade American rock. 26

From the point of view of suburban America, the first British Invasion was seen to represent new permissiveness, which also included gentle and humorous flaunting of gender and sexual stereotypes, often connected to the cultivation of a wide definition of style, typified in comments like 'Whenever I would hear Mick Jagger speak on television he would have these flamboyant, effeminate gestures. But I just thought that meant he was English.'⁶³ Americans also created their own mop-top versions of British foppery, centred on the combination of mod, trad jazz and beat styles with Beatle haircuts, beatnik polo shirts and jazz beards. Bands like The American Breed, The Buckingham's and especially The Beau Brummels followed the trend. However, other 'authentic' early nineteenth century frock-coated musicians emerged with counter-invasion-inspired wardrobes, like Paul Revere and the Raiders, who wore War of Independence jackets and tricorne hats,⁶⁴ and in their reaction to the British Invasion embodied its cartoonish nature.⁶⁵ With their macho misogyny and R&B stomp – originating from 27

Pacific Northwest garage-band roots – the Raiders combined sissiness and a mildly queer androgynous image with colourful American revolution uniforms and white trousers, easily associated with the image of British Invasion forerunners the Kinks – an unashamedly un-American band, who parodied dandyist tendencies in English culture and its attitudes towards sex and gender, often encoded through its name.⁶⁶ This kinkiness of British Invasion bands was often copied by American ones – called, for example, Beefeaters or Palace Guard⁶⁷ – adding an extra dangerous element to their image. Surprisingly, the copycat influence was quite rare among the Second Invasion American bands, except glam metal ones like Twisted Sister, WASP and Mötley Crüe. Apparently, they stole the invasion moment, exploited the shock-value of the British acts' troubling homoeroticism and offered besides androgyny also troubling aspects of rock-misogyny – but also fostering 'greater perception of the conventionality of gender roles, and thus [helping to] lead to greater participation in metal by women, and to debates over gender stereotypes, masculinity, behaviour and access to power'.⁶⁸

However, during the 1980s, English popstars' homosexuality – 'a token with considerable shock value in Thatcher's Great Britain'⁶⁹ – was also met in Reagan's America with hostility and suspicion, which stripped away part of the British Invasion's earlier cute flavour. Although Boy George of Culture Club was often perceived as a 'chubby and cuddly' version of the next teen-pop idol produced by colourful British Invasion – 'a cannily desexualized version of drag that mixed a hint of edge with a heap of innocuousness'⁷⁰ – his gender-bending tactics were also seen as an outrageous cultural shock to corrupt American youth.⁷¹ While performing in Baton Rouge on the 31st of October in 1984, he had to wear bulletproof vests because of life-threatening calls and, according to Boy George himself, 'there were hecklers in the crowd holding up Bibles, shouting, "Devil's spawn", and "God hates queers"'.⁷² 28

Conclusion

Both London clubland and the Second British Invasion produced the global image of British pop in the 1980s, which also helped to maintain the stereotypical image of queerness of most of the British popstardom from then on. However, this legacy was much contested during the new lad-driven testosterone assault of 1990s Britpop.⁷³ But as Hawkins has suggested, 'in the short space of one century, (Oscar) Wilde's martyrdom would have made its mark, turning queerness into an inclusive, positive signpost'.⁷⁴ If the gendered ambiguity of the New Romantics and New Pop provided a critique of Thatcherism, it also provided a paradoxical legacy, in which the 1980s queer politics and its dandyist performances in British pop created an odd interdependence of these two things, later to be exploited and consumed in the neoliberal market place. So, it can be speculated what would Wilde, or indeed Thatcher herself, have thought about the particularly strange political/subcultural cult of young Conservative homosexual men, who have during recent years elevated Margaret Thatcher to the status of gay icon in UK?⁷⁵ 29

Today, when the roleplay of the New Romantics and the theatricalized space of music is part of the mainstream entertainment industry, however much it appears to clash with Thatcher's image as a supporter of Victorian values and patriarchy, it also made her character seem to embody something queer in its maternal and stern presentation as much as heroic and glamorous in her 'political style'.⁷⁶ But obviously this re-appropriation has created the new league of 'Thomas Colpepers' in the form of young gay Conservatives – an aberration of 30

traditional conservatism, 1980s queer pop and even the early political efforts of the Gay Liberation Front.⁷⁷

Notes

¹ Peter York and Charles Jennings, *Peter York's Eighties* (London: BBC Books, 1995), 9.

² Stan Hawkins, *The British Pop Dandy: Masculinity, Popular Music and Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 20.

³ Hawkins, *British Pop Dandy*, 93.

⁴ I will mainly concentrate on masculine gender in this essay, but it is important to remember that female stars like Toyah Willcox, Hazel O'Connor and Siouxsie Sioux also served examples of gender-bending in the post-punk milieu of British pop.

⁵ Jon Savage, 'Dead Soul Boys', in *Time Travel: From the Sex Pistols to Nirvana: Pop, Media and Sexuality, 1977–96* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1996), 214-216: 215.

⁶ David Bowie, *Young Americans* (CD, EMI CDEM 1021, 1991 [LP, 1975]). See also David Bowie, *The Plastic Soul Review* (DVDVideo, SIDVD523, 2007). David Bowie, 'Young Americans', *Youtube*, 2013 (orig. clip from 1975), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydLcs4VrjZQ> (28 September 2018).

⁷ Robert Elms, 'All You Have to Do Is Win', *The Face*, No. 61 (May 1985), 50-56.

⁸ Examples of this experience and its aesthetics can be found all around in British pop culture of the 1980s, but one of its retroist manifestations was Julian Temple film *Absolute Beginners* (UK, 1986), based on Colin MacInnes' influential novel on teenage revolution in late-1950s London. Although the film's style (un)consciously synthesised the Thatcherite version of an imaginary affluent America assimilated to British escapism of new pop and appropriation of black music – earlier staged as the pre-rock'n'roll romanticism of English theatrical culture in the New Romantic movement – the movie doubtlessly celebrated the aftermath of the Second British Invasion, the success story of post-war British popular music culture and its world-conquering stylishness.

⁹ Christopher Beward, 'For "We Are the Goon Squad": Bowie, Style and the Power of the LP Cover, 1967–1983', in Broackes, Victoria and Geoffrey Marsh (eds.), *David Bowie Is* (London: V&A Publishing, 2013), 192-203: 198.

¹⁰ David Buckley, 'Plastic Fantastic', *Mojo* (May 2014), 76-82: 78.

¹¹ Many references and associations can be made between the New Romantic movement costume ball and the Royal Wedding of Charles and Diana and its Cinderella-like ambience. Diana herself was a big fan of the New Romantic scene, and one of its most successful bands Duran Duran. Andy McSmith, *No Such Thing as Society: A History of Britain in the 1980s* (London: Constable, 2010), 63-77. The ambiguous relationship between *Chariots of Fire* and Thatcherite competition is also presented in a rather sepia-tinted romantic way in the early scene of the film where runners are training 'dressed in angelic white caught between ecstasy and agony on a grey-gold sweep of British beach'. Andy Beckett, *Promised You a Miracle: UK 80–82* (St Ives: Allen Lane, 2015), 16-40: 34. Even Thatcher's personal outlook seemed to resonate with the new-found grandiosity of the times: 'Where was the golden-haired goddess/termagant who queened it for the next decade? [--]The hair, over the preceding twenty years, had definitely changed from the original ministry-issue dark brown...into a fairly radiant blondeish soufflé.' York and Jennings, *Peter York's Eighties*, 21.

¹² Hawkins, *British Pop Dandy*, 40.

¹³ Dave Rimmer, *New Romantics: The Look* (London: Omnibus Press, 2003), 10.

¹⁴ Elisabeth Woronzoff, "'I'm Not The Man You Think I Am": Morrissey's Negotiation of Dominant Gender and Sexuality Codes', in Devereux, Eoin, Aileen Dillane & Martin J. Power (eds.), *Morrissey: Fandom, Representations and Identities* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2011), 271-288: 275.

¹⁵ Nicholas Schaffner, *The British Invasion: From the First Wave to the New Wave* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983), 8.

¹⁶ Lou Christie, 'Lightning Strikes', *Youtube*, 2009 (orig. clip from 1966), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qfIZyadKP8> (28 September 2018).

¹⁷ Dave Laing, *One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985), 55-56.

¹⁸ Neil Miller, *Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History from 1869 to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 422-430.

¹⁹ The legacy of the subversive elements of 1960s blue-eyed-soul, falsetto singing and its queer/gay connections was often announced in the 1980s dance music genre by various covers of songs from this genre. For example, the outrageous American drag artist Divine (1945–1988) recorded his version of Four Seasons' 'Walk Like a Man' (Proto, ENAT 125, 1985), see *Youtube*, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SpHbHyQFOn0> (28 September 2018). Also

The Pet Shop Boys questioned the heteronormativity of most of the Anglo-American (male) rock by connecting U2's 'Where the Streets Have No Name' (*The Joshua Tree*, Island, 1987) to a high-energy disco version of the blue-eyed soul-dance anthem 'Can't Take My Eyes Off of You', originally a hit for Frankie Valli in 1967. Pet Shop Boys, 'Where the Streets Have No Name (I Can't Take My Eyes Off You)', (7 inch, Parlophone – EMI, 1991).

²⁰ Jobriath, 'I'm a Man', *Youtube*, 2008 (orig. clip from 1974), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Lp_e4wUnz4 (28 September 2018).

²¹ Klaus Nomi, 'Nomi Song', *Youtube*, 2014 (orig. 1982), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNINBZasv2A> (28 September 2018). Klaus Nomi also recorded Lou Christie's biggest hit 'Lightning Strikes' (1982), exploiting its full shock-potential with his trained countertenor voice. Both Jobriath and Klaus Nomi were early celebrity-casualties of the AIDS-epidemic.

²² Clip from *Blade Runner*, 'Ending Pris', *Youtube*, 2012 (orig. 1982), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsG06XnEJtg> (28 September 2018). Morrissey – one of the early admirers of 1970s pop/rock queerness – describes Jobriath in the information sheet of the CD collection as having 'no characteristics of either sex [with] the dead-white greenish cast of the face [voicing] the excess destitution of New York's most tormentedly aware, whose lives were favoured by darkness. [--] It was clear that Jobriath was willing to go the gay distance, something that even the intelligentsia didn't much care for.' Morrissey March 2004. Jobriath, *Lonely Planet Boy* (CD, Attack ATKCDO1D, 2004).

²³ Hawkins, *British Pop Dandy*, 95-96.

²⁴ Alan Sinfield, 'Queer Thinking', in *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Moment* (London: Cassel, 1994), 1-24: 3.

²⁵ Tony Thorne, *Dictionary of Popular Culture: Fads, Fashions and Cults* (Reading: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1993), 273. See also Raphael Samuel, 'Mrs Thatcher and Victorian Values', in Light, Alison, Sally Alexander & Gary S. Jones (eds.), *Island Stories: Unravelling Britain. Theatres of Memory, Volume II* (London: Verso, 1999), 330-50.

²⁶ There's also the hidden and quite uncertain history of conservative queering, e.g. found from the history of British cinema. For example, in Powell and Pressburger's 1944 film *A Canterbury Tale* (UK), Thomas Colpeper, a queer squire – living with his mother and pouring glue on girls' hair to break up heterosexual couples so soldiers will come to his romantic lectures on the English countryside and history – is a High Tory missionary in mystically queer cultural conservatism. See *A Canterbury Tale*, 'Extract 3', *Youtube*, 2009 (orig. clip from 1944), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CkPX5daLRhg> (28 September 2018). Alexander Doty, 'An Instrument with a Flaming Sword: Conservative Queerness in *A Canterbury Tale*', in Griffiths, Robin (ed.), *British Queer Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2006), 47-60: 47, 49.

²⁷ Miller, *Out of the Past*, 284.

²⁸ Beckett, *Promised You a Miracle*, 350.

²⁹ As many biographers have noticed, Thatcher's relationship with her methodist father and the values inherited from him very much defined her attitudes to the order of the society – and gender equality was not one of its pillars. John Campbell, *Margaret Thatcher, vol.1: The Grocer's Daughter* (London: Pimlico, 2001), 1-2.

³⁰ Denis Campbell, 'Clause 28. Stars Speak Out!', *New Musical Express* (20th February, 1988), 26-27: 26.

³¹ Miller, *Out of the Past*, 508. See also McSmith, *No Such Thing*, 220-231.

³² As in the movie *Pride* (dir. Matthew Warchus, UK, 2014), in which a group of lesbian and gay activists raised money to help families suffering in the British miner's strike in 1984 – a highly unlikely, but in the end successful true-life alliance – Simon Frith tracked parallels between the openly gay pop group Frankie Goes to Hollywood and the coalminers' strike presented in the populist media: 'I decided this was the final triumph of the "new pop", the eclipse of content by form'. In Britain, 1984 turned out to be the year of the coalminers' strike and Frankie Goes to Hollywood. Repeated images: the miners' stolid anger, Frankie's smirking leatherware; juxtaposed stereotypes – pickets as hooligans, gays lounging promiscuously in the night. Simon Frith, 'Frankie Said. But What Did They Mean?', in Tomlinson, Alan (ed.), *Consumption, Identity and Style: Marketing, Meanings and the Packaging of Pleasure* (London: Routledge, 1990), 172-185: 172.

³³ It is quite significant that among Margaret Thatcher's rare popular music favourites was the 1960s tune 'Telstar' (1962) by The Tornados (see *Youtube*, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPDvslSnUGc> (28 September 2018)), selected by her in the teenage music magazine interview made before her third election victory in spring 1987. Tom Hibbert, 'The Margaret Thatcher Interview', *Smash Hits*, in *The Guardian* 9 April 2013 (orig. 25 March 1987), <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2013/apr/09/margaret-thatcher-smash-hits-interview> (28 September 2018). According to Ian MacDonald, this was 'a record symbolising the rise of technology-driven postwar prosperity and mass social emancipation' – very much a kind of Thatcherite theme spawned in the era of optimism and growing wealth. Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head: Beatles' Records and the Sixties* (London: Pimlico, 1995), 30.

³⁴ Ian Chambers, *Urban Rhythms: Pop Music and Popular Culture* (London: MacMillan, 1985), 57.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Ibid, 71. Indeed, many young aspirants from the New Romantic scene were harking back to the golden era of Swinging London and hoping their club fantasies becoming to the new symbol of this era. Barry Miles, *London Calling: A Countercultural History of London Since 1945* (London: Atlantic Books, 2010), 381.

³⁷ Chambers, *Urban Rhythms*, 56-57.

³⁸ Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain, 1974–1979* (London: Penguin, 2013), 733.

³⁹ Soft Cell, 'Tainted Love', *Youtube*, 2014 (1981), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZVpR3Pk-r8> (28 September 2018).

⁴⁰ In the aftermath of early 1980s New Romantic scene, many bands sought to articulate a more ambiguous and outrageous masculinity – either in the style of social-realist gay-pop of Bronski Beat or Liverpoolian sensation-seeking Frankie Goes to Hollywood – which tested the limits of queer politics accepted by the mainstream media. Especially FGTH's first single 'Relax' (7 inch, ZTT, 1983), which celebrated the seedy pleasures of gay sex in a sensationalist way, and its infamous music video, exploited the idea of the ancient Roman culture as the archetypal era of sexual queering and excess, practised in the form of bread and circuses, orgies and every kind of sexual deviancy imaginable. Frankie Goes To Hollywood, 'Relax', *Youtube*, 2015 (1983), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEBXuhqVSws> (28 September 2018).

⁴¹ This can also be seen as a kind of doppelgänger-act of Anglophilia also defining the outsider sensibility of pop-Englishness, disconcertingly associated with the in-betweenness syndrome of Britishness (e.g. Anglo-Irish, Anglo-Welsh and Anglo-Scottish experiences in Britain) and its queer formulations, while promoting the destabilization of heteronormativity of the established social order of Britain. Jon Savage, 'Tainted Love: The Influence of Male Homosexuality and Sexual Divergence on Pop Music and Culture Since The War', in Tomlinson, Alan (ed), *Consumption, Identity and Style: Marketing, Meanings and the Packaging of Pleasure* (London: Routledge, 1990), 153-71. British pop music is replete with such examples, and in the New Pop it created extravagant versions of this experience for the new Swinging London to exploit. The New Romantic movement never produced remarkable scenes outside London, apart from Birmingham's Duran Duran and Liverpool's own post-punk scene (Rimmer, *New Romantics*, 100), but it attracted truly British outsiders/eccentrics from its geographical peripheries: Steve Strange and Green Gartside from Wales, Gavin Friday from Ireland, and Billy MacKenzie from Scotland – all of them defining different queering tactics in the palette of New Pop. See Associates, 'Party Fears Two', *Youtube*, 2016 (1982), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ww2AYxrPqkk> (28 September 2018).

⁴² Laing, *One Chord Wonders*, 63.

⁴³ Rimmer, *New Romantics*, 117-121.

⁴⁴ Laing, *One Chord Wonders*, 119-121. In his provocative and typically hallucinatory style, Greil Marcus also draws connection between the punk swastika and Thatcher's neoconservatism: 'until 1979, when the Tory party shifted from noblesse oblige to class war and Margaret Thatcher, the new Prime Minister, buried the National Front by co-opting much of its program'. Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), 117.

⁴⁵ Rimmer, *New Romantics*, 122.

⁴⁶ York and Jennings, *Peter York's Eighties*, 49-50. Thorne, *Dictionary*, 252-253, 306.

⁴⁷ Irene Morra, *Britishness, Popular Music, and National Identity: The Making of Modern Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 171.

⁴⁸ Simon Philo, *British Invasion: The Crosscurrents of Musical Influence* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 36.

⁴⁹ Kari Kallioniemi, *Englishness, Pop and Post-War Britain* (Bristol: Intellect, 2016), 92-100.

⁵⁰ Philo, *British Invasion*, 152.

⁵¹ Ibid: 153.

⁵² Robert M. Collins, *Transforming America: Politics and Culture During the Reagan Years* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 172-175; Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 14.

⁵³ Pekka Kolehmainen, "Noise that Annoys": *Rock Music as a Social Problem in The Washington Post and The New York Times in the 1980s*, unpublished Master's thesis (University of Turku, 2014).

⁵⁴ Schaffner, *The British Invasion*, 1.

⁵⁵ Schaffner, *The British Invasion*: 184.

⁵⁶ Boy George and Spencer Bright, *Take it Like a Man: The Autobiography of Boy George* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1995), 251. See also Face the Nation, 'Feminizing of America: Boy George, Jerry Falwell, Gore Vidal, Leslie Stahl', *Youtube*, 2011 (orig. clip from 1984), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IB0hbh1Us9w> (28 September 2018).

⁵⁷ Alwyn W. Turner, *Rejoice! Rejoice! Britain in the 1980s* (London: Aurum Press, 2010), 62.

⁵⁸ Simon Reynolds, *Rip it Up and Start Again: Post-Punk 1978–1984* (London: Faber & Faber, 2005), 412.

⁵⁹ Schaffner, *The British Invasion*, 186.

⁶⁰ Ibid: 189.

⁶¹ John Leland, 'Who Are All These British Twits', *Spin*, vol. 4:10 (January 1989), 82.

⁶² Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940–2000* (London: MacMillan, 2002), 579.

⁶³ Bebe Buell, 'They Had Bulges in Their Pants', *Mojo* (May 1996), 43–44: 44.

⁶⁴ Barry Miles, *The British Invasion* (London: Sterling, 2009), 228.

⁶⁵ Paul Revere & The Raiders, 'Kicks', *Youtube*, 2008 (orig. clip from 1966), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP8G4clUJBY> (28 September 2018).

⁶⁶ Hawkins, *British Pop Dandy*, 48. Especially Kinks' country squire foxhunting attires caused a stir in England and could be seen as a big influence on queering among American British Invasion copyists. It can also be argued, that there was a two-way influence, especially adopted in the Second Invasion and British New Pop stars like Adam Ant, who exploited the historical (queer) imagery of British rogues and rascals, e.g., in the form of a pirate, dandy highwayman and a gay Hussar. Adam Ant's (born Stuart Leslie Goddard, 1954–) stage name was itself taken from the 1960s tv-series *Adam Adamant lives!* (1966–1967) which told the tales of Edwardian adventurer revived from hibernation in 1966. See Adam & The Ants, 'Stand and Deliver', *Youtube*, 2011 (orig. clip from 1981), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4B2a6l6wM2k> (28 September 2018).

⁶⁷ Philo, *British Invasion*, 89–95.

⁶⁸ Robert Walser, 'Forging Masculinity: Heavy-Metal Sounds and Images of Gender', in Frith, Simon, Andrew Goodwin & Lawrence Grossberg (eds.), *Sound & Vision: The Music Video Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 153–183: 175. The B-52's, an openly gay American new wave band from Athens, Georgia, could be an example fitting into the category of British Invasion copycat bands, but it mostly escapes this definition because B-52's main inspiration came from the kitschy and trash elements of 1950s American popular culture.

⁶⁹ Miller, *Out of the Past*, 476.

⁷⁰ Reynolds, *Rip It Up*, 413.

⁷¹ 'Boy George Corrupts America Shock', *Melody Maker* (18th December 1982): 4.

⁷² George and Bright, *Take It Like a Man*, 251.

⁷³ An interesting example of trying to generate a New Romantic revival during the height of Britpop in 1995–96 was the Romo-movement championed by *Melody Maker* – the celebration of a retroist version of British synth-pop and club-culture of early 1980s including bands named like Sexus, Plastic Fantastic, Hollywood and Orlando – and reacting against Britpop's guitar-driven populist rock-authenticity: 'This is a *renaissance*, a rebirth of pop's dormant futurist impulse. The years 1980–84 were one of those occasional ruptures in the continuum of musical history when the intelligent/mischievous/smart people – the *freaks* – quit skulking around on the avant-garde fringes and seized the centre stage, the spotlight, the Number One slot.' Taylor Parkes and Simon Price et al, 'Synthetic Culture', *Melody Maker* (25 November 1995), 9–14: 9.

⁷⁴ Hawkins, *British Pop Dandy*, 96.

⁷⁵ Dominic James, "'One of Us': The Queer Afterlife of Margaret Thatcher as a Gay Icon", *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics*, Vol.8, No. 2–3 (2012), 211–227: 211.

⁷⁶ Peter York: *Modern Times* (London: Futura, 1985), 14–15.

⁷⁷ The fact that Royalty seems to be the acceptable face of heritage/tradition in contemporary culture tells something about changes in camp values. As Richard Dyer has argued, 'if you really believed in the emotions and stories of classical ballet, in the rightness and value of royalty, in the properness of supervirility and fascism, then you could not find *The Sleeping Beauty*, the Queen Mother, or John Wayne camp. What I value about camp is that it is precisely a weapon against the mystique surrounding art, royalty masculinity...' Richard Dyer, 'It's Being So Camp as Keeps Us Going', in *Only Entertainment*, Second Edition (London: Routledge, 2002), 135–147.

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