

I CAN'T GET NO SATISFACTION: SEXUAL FRUSTRATION + POP MUSIC



(cw csa + self harm)

Sex isn't real. But pop stars are. And we can twin the history of rock and pop to the construct of the orgasm, mass marketed, instantly accessible and utterly out of reach. The stadium seats of Beatles concerts were covered in the come of girls who just wanted to hold their hand, the opposite perhaps of sexual frustration? Sexual elevation? Sex without boys but by boys, John Lennon was a pretentious creep in retrospect, but his contribution as a rampant rabbit to girls the world over can be seen as a gold star for the history books.

"My audience has an urgent need to touch, to shake hands, to move out of their seats, to defy so-called security, to make physical contact. They don't simply sit and observe, but feel the urge to act. It's a great compliment for me, and one that most Grammy winners could probably never imagine."

- Morrissey

To both create and engage in pop music is by definition to be trapped. Trapped in school, trapped in youth, trapped in record contracts, trapped in your television set. Trapped behind the stage, trapped beyond the stage. It is to be both central and sideways, the tight trousers and blue ballsing, the curdled desire contained on 7 inches, to be a figure of fuckability who sings songs about no one wanting to fuck them, in order to have people fuck them. It's all a bit weird and back to front.

Self-harm is my sex, I engage with male celebrities only in an elaborate performance art of disassociation (childhood sexual abuse is a snow globe in which physical intimacy and bodily identity is distorted) and whilst initially this led to an utterly apologetic introduction of imposter syndrome of the authenticity of my authorship for this essay maybe this all slots in nicely. Abuse and the imagination. Masturbation is called self-abuse in abstinence pamphlets and day-time TV moves and abuse-abuse (read: statutory rape) is altogether common in the unbalanced system between consumer and creator. If these performers are not presented as people but something beyond, impossible to touch, impossible to hold, how can we hold them accountable as perpetrators of systematic abuse? How can an angel break my heart?

"Now more than ever the rock star is the untouchable god. What has Britain got if it hasn't got its cool? What would happen if police started to turn up at the front doors of our rock stars whose sexual misconduct has been well documented?"

-Alex Miller, How Britain's Paedophile Scandal Killed the 1960s

Blink 182 was as much about the passing of time as it was fucking the neighbour's dog and the comic crotch thrusting and first date singing places sexual frustration as synonymous with escape: escape from suburbia, escape from parents, escape from the monotony of the lower middle class and as the fandom ages, realizing that though the school timetable has lifted freedom never came, escape becomes a nostalgia. Let's make this night last forever:

"Blink-182 can still headline because their core fan base never really grew up - they're just a lost mass of 20-somethings who've realised that the key to their own personal happiness is watching Travis Barker play a 15-minute drum solo in a field.

This regressive middle class is a generation that was sold a lie.

They are a group who once believed that working hard in school, getting a degree and staying off heroin was the key to financial mobility, but have finally recognised that this is just bullshit."

-Jack Blocker

Pop music has become the black head build up on the back of the public imagination and I've been watching pimple-popping videos on YouTube to relieve my own tension. It's been building up and now it's ready to burst.