From the Bay City Rollers to One Direction: Using the “Reverse ICE” Approach in a Gender and Popular Music Seminar

Kip Pegley
Dan School of Drama and Music, Queen’s University
“I”: Ideas
“C”: Connections
“E”: Extensions
Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie

ROCK AND SEXUALITY

1978

Of all the mass media rock is the most explicitly concerned with sexual expression. This reflects its function as a youth cultural form: rock treats the problems of puberty, it draws on and articulates the psychological and physical tensions of adolescence, it accompanies the moment when boys and girls learn their repertoire of public sexual behavior. If rock’s lyrics mostly follow the rules of romance, its musical elements, its sounds and rhythms, draw on other conventions of sexual representation, and rock is highly charged emotionally even when its direct concern is nonsexual. Rock is the ever-present background of dancing, dating, courting. “Rock ’n’ roll” was originally a synonym for sex, and the music has been a cause of moral panic since Elvis Presley first swiveled his hips in public. It has equally been a cause for the advocates of sexual permissiveness—the sixties counterculturalists claimed rock as “liberating,” the means by which the young would free themselves from adult hangups and repression. For a large section of postwar youth, rock music has been the aesthetic form most closely bound up with their first sexual experiences and difficulties, and to understand rock’s relationship to sexuality isn’t just an academic exercise—it is a necessary part of understanding how sexual feelings and attitudes are learned.

Unfortunately, knowing that rock is important is not the same thing as knowing how it
Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie

ROCK AND SEXUALITY

1978
Jackie Magazine (1964-1993)

Too often the work of women musicians, and the implication feminism has for music, are ignored, even in political and experimental areas. In the collection of reports on the Music for Socialism Festival in MUSICS 13, only three of the contributors mention the women and music sessions. Predictably, those three were feminist musicians who had participated in the festival. The peripheral position occupied by women in the contemporary creation of music (and, conversely, the central one they occupy as a musical market) demands analysis. What follows are notes towards such an investigation. Lindsay Cooper.
# MeToo
Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie

ROCK AND SEXUALITY

1978

Of all the mass media rock is the most explicitly concerned with sexual expression. This reflects its function as a youth cultural form: rock treats the problems of puberty, it draws on and articulates the psychological and physical tensions of adolescence, it accompanies the moment when boys and girls learn their repertoire of public sexual behavior. If rock’s lyrics mostly follow the rules of romance, its musical elements, its sounds and rhythms, draw on other conventions of sexual representation, and rock is highly charged emotionally even when its direct concern is nonsexual. Rock is the ever-present background of dancing, dating, courting. “Rock ’n’ roll” was originally a synonym for sex, and the music has been a cause of moral panic since Elvis Presley first swiveled his hips in public. It has equally been a cause for the advocates of sexual permissiveness—the sixties counterculturalists claimed rock as “liberating,” the means by which the young would free themselves from adult hangups and repression. For a large section of postwar youth, rock music has been the aesthetic form most closely bound up with their first sexual experiences and difficulties, and to understand rock’s relationship to sexuality isn’t just an academic exercise—it is a necessary part of understanding how sexual feelings and attitudes are learned.

Unfortunately, knowing that rock is important is not the same thing as knowing how it