

***Kerrang! magazine and the representation of
Heavy Metal masculinities: A content analysis of
Kerrang! cover images from 1981-1995.***

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sounds HEAVY METAL SPECIAL

No.1 June 1981 50p

KERRANG!

**featuring
the
official
All-Time
HM
Top
100!**



**In colour . . .
MOTORHEAD!
GIRLSCHOOL!
UFO! SAXON!
KISS! TRUST!
SCHENKER!
WILD HORSES!**

**PAT BENATAR! Z Z TOP!
STYX! VARDIS! TED NUGENT!
BLACKFOOT! GRAHAM BONNET!
RONNIE MONTROSE! ROSE TATTOO!**

**Deep Purple Family Tree! Black Axe! Handsome Beasts! Venom!
Silverwing! HM Quiz! Elitist LPs! Gross pix! Mayhem! Etc!**

Robinson



This study:

Extends from a number of analyses of Heavy Metal culture (Weinstein, 1991; Walser, 1993; Whitely, 1997; etc.).

Asks how masculinity is expressed in Heavy Metal culture (focusing on musicians and performers) and...

whether the images presented on the cover of Kerrang! magazine correlate with the analyses set out in previous research.

KERRANG! Magazine



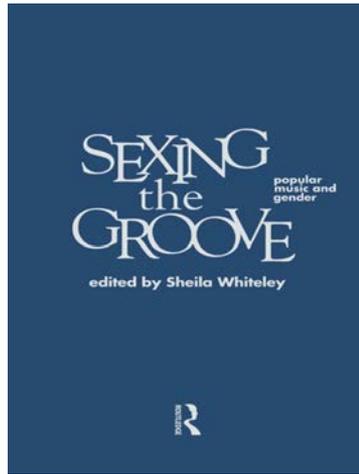
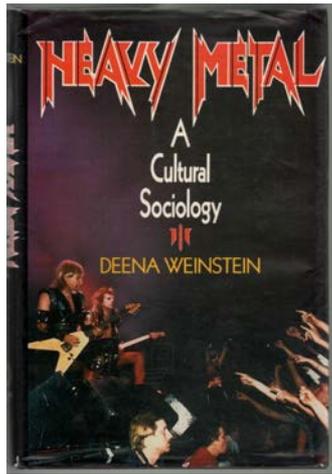
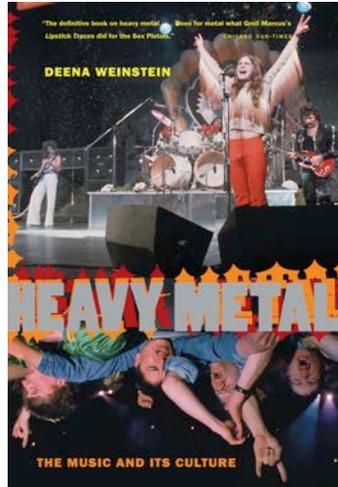
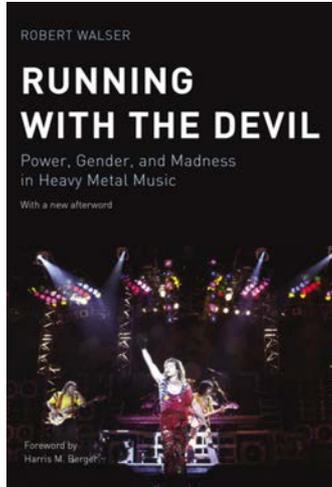
Started in 1981 initially as a supplement in the music newspaper "Sounds".

Emerged in reaction and reference to the New Wave of British Heavy Metal.

1981 – 1995 represents Kerrang! magazine's formative period – during this time the magazine focused exclusively on Heavy metal, glam metal and thrash.

1995 saw the established popularity of Grunge and other sub-genres which initiated significant changes in the magazines focus.

Heavy Metal Masculinities



Heavy Metal culture sits within Western patriarchal structures

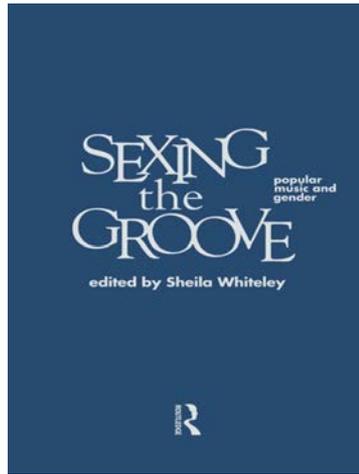
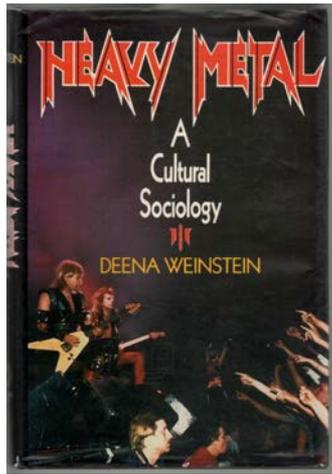
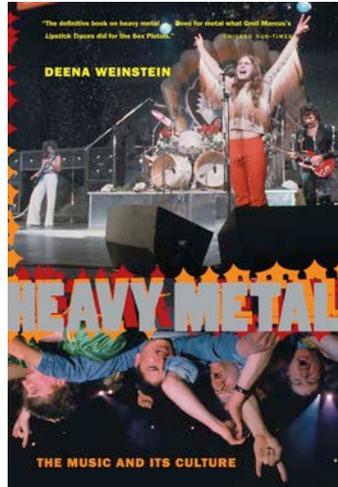
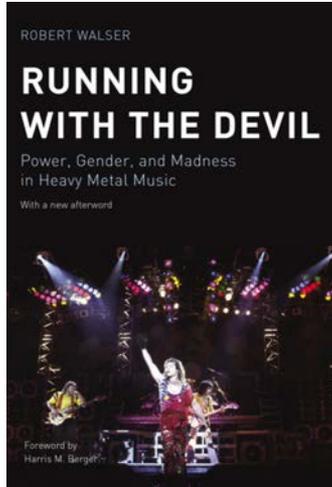
Lives up to and often emphasizes dichotomous gender difference

Heavy Metal culture/music is built on rebellion:

...is appealing to *'a group generally lacking in social, physical, and economic power'* (Walser, 1993 p.109)

Themes of horror, madness and Satanism act to rebel against *'the pieties and platitudes of normal society'* (Weinstein, 1991 p.39)

Heavy Metal Masculinities



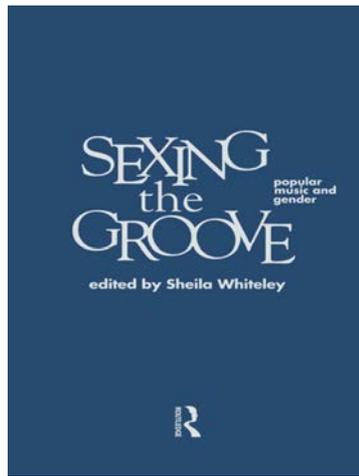
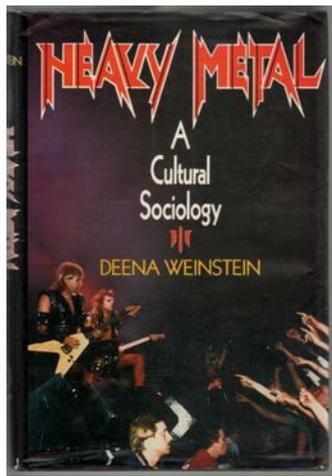
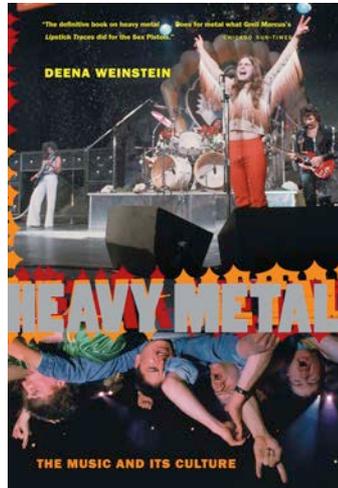
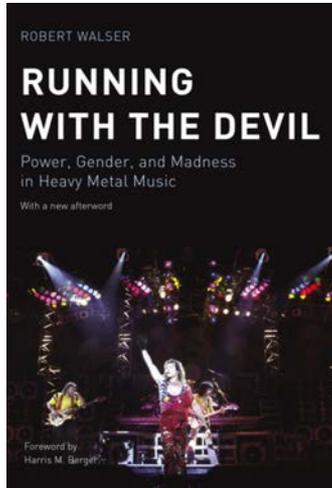
the 'special insecurities of youth' heightens masculinity within heavy metal subculture 'fortified [...] by the social, cultural, and economic marginalisation of white, blue-collar males' (Weinstein, 1991 p. 106).

Heavy Metal Masculinities



'Heavy metal musicians and fans have developed tactics for modelling male power and control within the context of a patriarchal culture, and metal's enactions of masculinity include varieties of misogyny, as well as "exscription" of the feminine – that is, total denial of gender anxieties through the articulation of fantastic worlds without women – supported by male, sometimes homoerotic, bonding.' (Walser, 1991 p.110)

Heavy Metal Masculinities



GLAM METAL:

Appropriation of feminine signifiers – make up; pruned and heavily styled hair; spandex; pink and leopard print.

Androgynous approaches to style yet overt masculinity is emphasised in behaviour and attitude.

Often viewed disdainfully by traditional heavy metal fans.

Method

1. Literature review
2. Organise core themes – style / behavioural
3. Coding scheme
4. Pilot 1 – single coder
5. Pilot 2 – two coders
6. Full coding (n=138)
7. Organise and analyse results.

Working hypothesis:

The images presented on Kerrang! would positively correlate with the characteristics set out in the literature.

Coding Scheme

1. Race
2. Photographic format

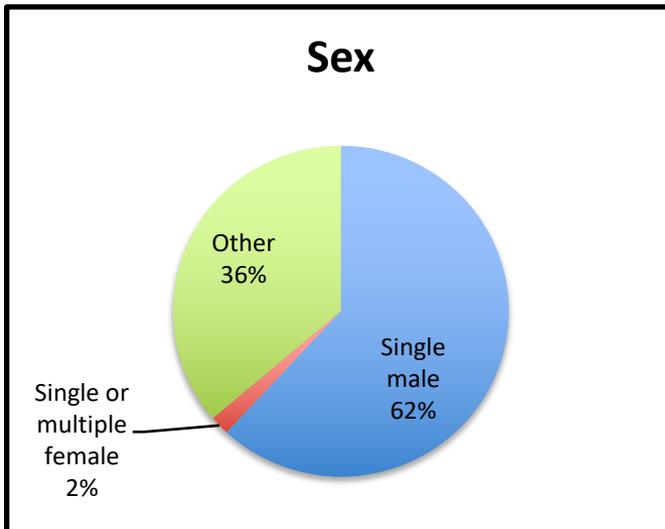
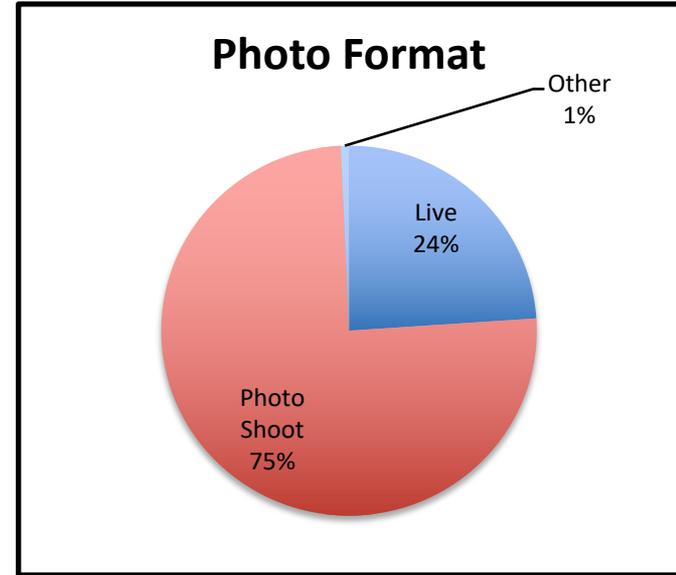
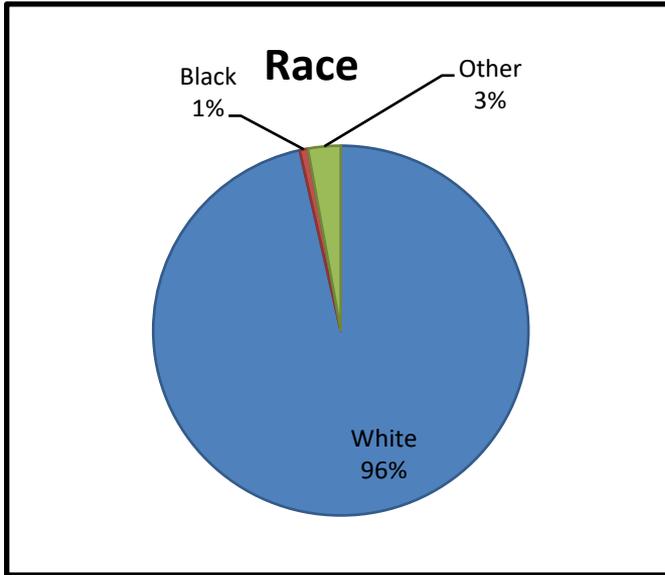
STYLE:

3. **Leather** (Cohen, 1997; Walser, 1993)
4. **Denim** (Cohen, 1997)
5. **Elaborate Hair*** (Coates, 1997; Walser 1993; Nordstrom and Herz, 2013)
6. **Long Hair** (Walser, 1993)
7. **Tight Clothes** (Coates, 1997; Schippers, 2002)
8. **Make Up*** (Walser, 1993; Schippers, 2002; Nordstrom and Herz, 2013)
9. **Elaborate clothing** (Walser, 1993)
10. **Exposed flesh (added by the author)**
11. **Tattoos (added by the author)**

PERFORMATIVE / BEHAVIOURAL

12. **Macho** (Cohen, 1997; Beyton, 1997; Walser, 1993; Riches, 2015; Nordstrom and Herz, 2013)
13. **Spectacle – hypermasculine or androgynous** (Cohen, 1997; Walser, 1993; Riches; 2015)
14. **Madness** (Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 1991)
15. **Horror** (Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 1991)

Results



Results

STYLE:

1. Leather 19%

2. Denim 11%

Either leather or denim = 30%

3. Elaborate Hair 21%

4. Long Hair 78%

5. Tight Clothes 20%

6. Make Up 12%

7. Elaborate clothing 38%

8. Exposed flesh (either arms, chest, whole upper body or other) 47%

9. Tattoos 16%

Results

PERFORMATIVE / BEHAVIOURAL:

10. Macho 38%

11. Spectacle – hypermasculine or androgynous 40%

12. Madness 26%*

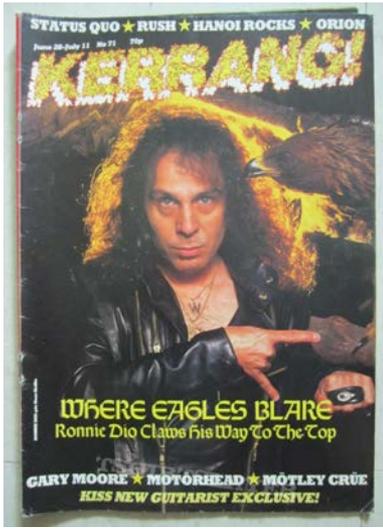
13. Horror 5%*

7 out of 13 features correlate with the literature.

The most important are “macho” and “gender spectacle” being those featuring most predominantly in the literature.

Exscription of the feminine is also supported here through the almost total exclusion of women in the image content.

Results



Leather and/or denim

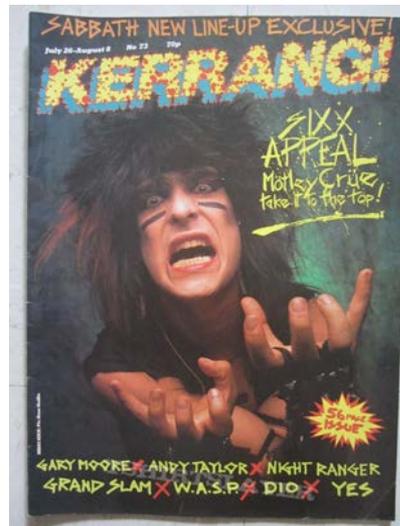
Long Hair

Elaborate Clothing

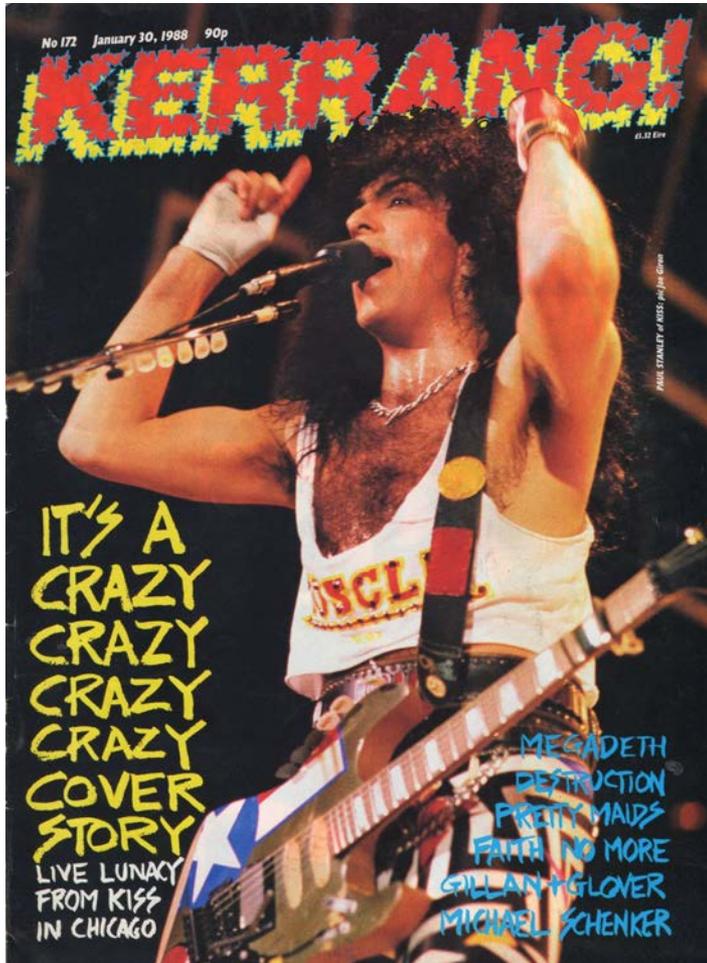
Exposed flesh

Machismo

Hypermasculine / androgyny



Everything louder than everything else



Andy R. Brown (2007) situates Kerrang! and other titles as being an 'institutional regulators'

Metal print culture is:

'central in constituting a sense of what it is to be a global member of metal-oriented youth culture as well as providing a means of public confirmation of various kinds of youth identities'

Everything louder than everything else

Brown argues that ELTEE acts as a useful trope in considering the textual strategies of the magazines:

'clearly then the style of the UK's metal magazines owes something to an attempt to translate the defining aesthetics of the genre into a sympathetic textual strategy'

...

'[The] sense of youthful energy, volume and pushing the sonic envelope is echoed in the textual dynamics of pictures of performing musicians and sweaty, ecstatic crowds; the prominence given to album and live reviews and to interviews of bands and artists that emphasise the detail and textures of life on the road, performing to expectant fans and above all, living the metal lifestyle – to the limit.'

Everything louder than everything else

Kolber and Albanese (1996) conducted a content analysis study of sole-male images in adverts from male audience magazines (USA)

Their study found a number of common masculine characteristics presented:

Strong and muscular physique

Conservative or conventional appearance

Conveying upscale lifestyle

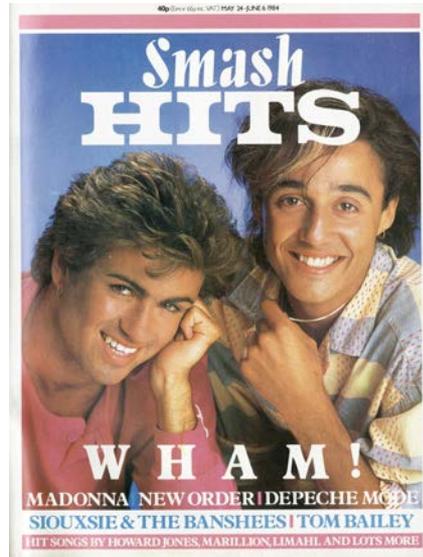
Conservative hairstyles

Side-burns and facial hair also conservative

Aloofness and detachment

Stereotypes of competency and physical domination are not emphasized.

Everything louder than everything Else



A comparative analysis, having surveyed imagery from Smash Hits and NME, suggests that the common features highlighted in this study reflect the notion that Everything Louder Than Everything Else also suitably describes heavy metal masculinities in relation to those expressed in more "mainstream" music cultures.

Conclusion

The results of this study established empirical support for analyses discussed in the literature review in some of the most important aspects of their work. Other aspects don't find suitable correlation however, the relative potency of images is considered.

Brown's term "Everything Louder Than Everything Else" acts as a suitable trope in describing both the textual strategies of the magazine as well as the nature of masculinity described through this study.

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