

I don't know if you should be trying to impress anyone. When you phone a parent or grandparent past a certain age it seems to give that resounding security you'd internally built up as being questionable. Communication and self reliance alone seem to have taken people from all walks as far as they should and if you're just sustaining yourself right now that would allude to strength in consistency and the cunning to be pretty self serving. Something in you will hit something structured to not be tested and and then it's paths or walls because nobody is on any roads, no one actually feels the same as you or them or like at the inception.

Little shifty guys in a love-for-all style metropolis suffer limits to the amount of freedom they're moving in but those like Larry David and Ariel Pink seem to take the bear by the ears. I've seen nothing about Ariel Pink's social assassin skills through first hand experience or recorded dramatization - but this many journalists jumping at the chance to highlight his neurotic and playful abrasiveness, you'd assume he's long enjoyed life in his own lane. It's not really a lane though, it's more along the zig zags that Ricky should've looked – the fringes that most provocateurs tread rough. “That's not really sex” he laments of homosexual activity bedside with *IMBOYCRAZY* interviewer Alexi Wasser, “I want to be objectified the way I objectify women” - yet in the same interview again, telling young fans “get in touch with your eccentricities, get in touch with your weird as soon as possible” from a question that was actually fielded towards beginner musicianship.

So sometimes jokesters get maced and remain pure to their spirit. Sometimes a scary portion of what men do is a knee jerk reaction, apologies follow less then half the time. Just last month Pink's onstage antics landed him in hot water, during the first of a four night takeover of San Francisco's Chapel. The rider was apparently used to full capacity leading to the singer's run to get off to a rough start, an uncharacteristic level of raucous messiness was achieved when he pinned bandmate and girlfriend Charlotte Ercoli to the ground. The collective stomach of the audience turned, many actually feeling links to the biggest news story in entertainment recently and headed for the exit. On the last night of the Chapel leg, Pink took to Twitter in a rare mode of public self-reflection to “touch base” - he admits he's is in his own world and regrets without defence that his actions made people uncomfortable. Ercoli was far more defensive to the local backlash Ariel felt, particularly from an article from indie mammoth *Pitchfork*. She stated on Twitter towards a vocal walker-out; “He's my bf of 2.5 years. We were just feeling our oats. Tamed it down though, After (all) the customer is always right & (it's) a sensitive time.” She goes on to state that self-involving activists have misplaced time and judgement to try to pick apart herself being as active as the man in question doing one of them PDAs to some people.

Pink's penchant for winding up towers him over other household names who push the boundaries perhaps with subject matter, but who have always surprised in doing so due to a more traditional aesthetic. He is the renaissance man of being the perennial outsider, often considerably contradicting himself over a matter of minutes in captured dialogue. How can the guy take such a seemingly troubling stance on homosexuality he's spent much of his career heavily referencing, often appearing to submerge himself in transgender experiences? The freedom with which Pink has zig-zagged through obsession with gender has led to an undeniable image of what it means to be a popstar with a DIY attitude.

His releases have been a mixed bag, kind of an LA surfer boy wading through dimly-lit memories at a Halloween party he wasn't invited to. Musical consistency with his persona it makes his following all the more cult-like to know he believes his own mess. Holding expectations over him would be completely missing the point of Ariel Pink as an idea and further disarming the element of surprise in today's music. Much of that dip in mystique hasn't harmed Pink and probably won't – the visuals play along with the only consistent lyrical theme of the surrealism of modern American life, both open for consumption and created in his head, swaying the lines of gender.

The creation of events from an over-active brain span over genre areas and colours, there's been some other stripey, less natural shades adopted into the palette. If Tyler The Creator stuck with an altered pitch present throughout his career for the entirety of his latest album it'd be like a musical Coke/Pepsi taste test. Instead I see someone who I've looked up to since I became aware of him, before I'd so much as thought about the effect that word he used a couple hundred times on his first studio album (distributed by a huge indie label from a country he's now banned from) would have on a few of my friends today. I'm not the only one who sometimes admires musicians quietly, without so much as the most passive of social media endorsement. To the end of 2012 I really started to lose the large portion of my interest, so just stuck to looking out for new releases like others driven by something that makes music vibrant.

He was always going to be the first to branch out of the group, be it due to logical growth, ego or complete disillusionment. One thing you couldn't accuse Odd Future fans and journalists alike is of failing to pick up or assume something was bubbling away somewhere. There's still a plethora of footage of The Antics™ around the time their bubble popped and before, with a healthy backlog of hopping out on mannequins – for years Tyler was one of the most scrutinised people in music due to the endless possibility of controversy journalists all sides of the earth would wake up to, also inspection from those with little or no experience doing such, due to the fact there was almost always a camera, solicited or otherwise pointed at him.

It was widely noticed his seemingly unstoppable boisterousness suffered a blow in tour vlogs from 2012, soon after it seemed like Christmas in a pair of Vans to see the entirety of the group together.

What followed after was almost a year without seemingly any press that saw the light of day, was a more sincere, almost hunched over figure. In a promotional run for his 2<sup>nd</sup> solo album he met with Elliot Wilson to feature on one of the journalist's *CRWN* episodes, subject matter ranging from upwards financial trajectory and meeting idols to writer's block and even his grandmother's death. After what would be classed as an overshare of credible and highly personal accounts in New York his seemingly voluntary interview exile would continue, only really popping up for the occasional radio interview (maybe a stab at finally getting airplay) and responding to the achievement of being banned from 3 separate countries. The largest dosage fans would get into personal matters would be through his Instagram, the aesthetic of posts developing to eyegrabbing through either consistently lucky captures or a lot of prior thought, he started to unveil more grand clothes under the *Golf* label than socks.

He's long documented his habit of eclecticism, short attention span and defiance, stagnation or following must take the feeling out of anything, Tyler's maturation

appears to have made him more inward looking. He used a goat in a quickly cancelled Mountain Dew advert to actually make an interesting social statement, more recently he put up on Instagram of him singing happy birthday to a lizard, holding it with glittery nail varnish – his Twitter used to feature only explosive comments with a capital letter at the start of every word, now it's predominantly lower case “click bait” with less of an out-of-house insight for the eyes of the public. It's all the more discreet, delicate and deliberate, true to the form of *Flower Boy* where he widens the gap from the the type of content that rose him to prominence. He's always done the opposite so why would he change that while living his best life?

There's been an awful lot said about how the pioneers in rap seem to be excelling with the energy of white guys with guitars from the past 50 years, lots about what kind of constellation Young Thug fell from and the formulaic work-rate of Future – in the height of process-obsession and how-tos and at the height of his career the latter mentioned rapper still cuts of one the most mysterious figures in music. He's had a 3 year plus hot streak, possibly as a cliché wrapped in a riddle wrapped in a mink, but I think it's more than likely he just works insanely hard with a unique voice to create his own escapist universe around his often mentioned Pluto. The process of just how he does it seems curious to everyone, he's like Tim Burton but more diamonds.

He might be the rapper's rapper, if Kendrick is the most clinically skilled, Future is the consistent hottest. While he has heavily relied on being in the materialistic lane there's always been the pointers to darker matter under the surface, not a chance Soundcloud sad-rap would turn out as much potential without Future's clear influence. Not much of his prior work carries the same level of self-awareness than his (close) second latest solo work *FUTURE*. His solo latest was *HNDRXX*, a more pop ready collection (Weeknd, Rihanna, Nicki Minaj) with a slightly more melodic, slightly more direct approach to lyrical matter – I might be kicking a far away horse but I think a notable portion of *FUTURE* is about Ciara. Right from the opener '*Rent Due*' - “I just fucked a rapper bitch I should diss you”, “I fucked this R&B bitch I should thank you”, “got the money comin' in it ain't no issues”, “offered her 25, keep trying to take some of my percentage, I was petrified”. Then on the 2<sup>nd</sup> single '*Draco*' - “you ain't never ever get your bitch back”, “I'll give my bitch to you, if that what she mean to you”. '*POA*'s frantic beat and lyrics could reference a loss of control relationship-wise where there's been money involved “I need a power of attorney, you need to get this on film”, “tell me if I'm too persistent”. '*Mask Off*' is an anthem of vulnerability (with a video featuring one of the most influential Western feminists) particularly being caught in the clasp of drug use – talking about this is a common trait of sad-rappers, they often merge more into a singer-songwriter. A formerly common observation, even from collaborators is that he isn't the most lyrical.

Part of the mystique around Future is how half of his lyrics reference an apparent addiction or at least dependency on prescription drugs. He'll turn 34 in 3 weeks time, he didn't release his first mixtape until he was 25. The following year he gained his first hit with '*Tony Montana*', the exposure to ridiculous work ethic and attention to detail he gained from thousands of hours in studios around the Dungeon Family had him hit the ground running. During the time honing is craft as “Meathead” he reminisces sleeping on floors and adolescence spent in often violent houses variously powered by various narcotics – he has said (to much shock, disbelief, even anger) that he is living vicariously through the music, he doesn't really live the chemical addled

lifestyle, it's just what sells. Other accounts like his *Rolling Stone* cover detail heavy amounts of codeine promethazine around him and in his hand at almost all times while recording, he says he likes to spend as long as possible in the studio, especially after the situation with the breakdown of his marriage, further escapism or maybe a safe bet in financial security to keep working. He's one of the only prolific artists I think worth as many release promotions as he requires, I hope he maintains his universe in a healthy minded way.

George Orwell was a prick. Not in all possible ways, but in terms of registered femininity and homosexuality in men, even just for pushing the apparently undeniable link between the two, absolutely. "He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it" being commonly used to describe the problem of masculinity in young men and boys would piss him off, it's great. The quote even features as a foreword in *The Mask You Live In*, a Netflix available documentary about the dangers of pushing toxic masculinity onto young boys, particularly in the US. Most matters discussed are pretty entry level, like the ridiculousness of telling a six year old boy to man up, then to think about the potential to harm in telling anyone to man up, that there's limitless danger in gender expectations. As a cohesive it's an effective work.

Probably the biggest entertainment news story of the year is the demise of Harvey Weinstein. The only thing more shocking than the lack of an arrest is the suspicion that there may still be a further flurry of women to come forward, law enforcement could be waiting for a maximum number of solid cases to level against him. The situation becomes less shocking if you look at his presets – a white guy born to a diamond cutter, until recently pretty much the most powerful person in American film. He was before labelled simply a player, now it's come to light that there has been 7 out of court settlements excluding Rose McGowan, that he's been investigated by various law enforcement agencies and talked about in the female Hollywood bubble for 20 years, in terms of how powerful, creepy and intimidating anyone could possibly be. This is what hyper-masculinity can lead to.

The casual nature of networking and hiring has provided issues to women in the music industry as well. Most allegations and admissions have been happening in a pretty recent storm, a stand out to me is the case of Ducktails, Matt Mondanile. It stuck out as I was a fan, we'd even interacted online previously. I've written before about how far we let musicians sway morally before we cut off support for what they do artistically, and this is exactly that point of no return. Like this case and all it's even more troubling to know there's an uncertain history – when Mondanile parted with Real Estate it was communicated as a friendly decision, simply so he could focus on being the front man in his side project, a week before the details of numerous assaults became public, present members of Real Estate are believed to have told journalists Mondanile was actually removed from the group due to "allegations of unacceptable treatment of women." Legal action could also play out in the favour of Mondanile against his former bandmates for apparently breaching an all-protecting exit agreement. Legends of music have been horrible at treating women – John Lennon's violence, Elvis marrying a 14 year old, James Brown having numerous cases of domestic disturbances levelled against him – all abusers of power.

There is the side to music and general communication that doesn't work with masculinity – the worry of oversharing. The cyclical issues of guys Chester

Bennington's age that often stem from their dads, now they're ours. This is the other direction that hyper-masculinity can lead to. All types of musicians and creatives suffer from mental health issues, it may come with the craft in terms of the problem of the dehumanization of a performer, masculinity can often have the same effect, to reduce the integrity of existence and wipe you from it. Middle aged men are political, business, intellectual and social leaders, but there's a 40% rise in suicide in that group in the past 9 years. Ages in 20-49 in the UK suicide is the leading cause of death and three-quarters aren't diagnosed with any mental health illness. Stop comparing and

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