**Title: Abuse and Control in ‘Black Widow’s Eyes’**

‘Abuse and Control in “Black Widow’s Eyes”’ will argue that the song concerns issues of domestic violence and terrorism. The paper will also suggest that the song articulates general concerns over the abuse and mechanization of self in the new millennium.

The paper will be divided into three parts. Initially, I shall explore the dominant theme of violence within romantic relationships. With brief reference to the black widow spider and sexual cannibalism inherent in the usage, the paper will examine the animalization of human predators and the ‘toxicity’ of some romantic relationships (with subtle reference to infections such as sexually transmitted diseases). Through offering an in-depth historical overview of Stockholm Syndrome (suggested by Roger Daltrey initially), I will examine how the song actually complicates understandings of triggers and symptoms within Stockholm Syndrome. Is the song really about Stockholm Syndrome? Or, is the song speaking more generally about psychological phenomenon in any type of ‘hostage’ situation in which an individual can feel powerless?

The idea of ‘hostages’ leads into the second part of the paper which explores the theme of conflict violence in the new millennium – namely the Beslan school hostage crisis of 2004 as evidenced through reference to ‘children’, ‘guns’ and death (‘shattered’). The paper will address the sense of familiarity present in the song between victim and assailant and the moment in which the connection fails. This analysis will impact and challenge dominant cultural understandings of the terrorist as ‘Other’.

Through a close reading of the lyrics, the final part of the paper will explore underlining tensions within the song pertaining to deeper issues of abuse in various guises. The lines ‘Been preparing for lies’ and ‘when infatuation calls’ articulate concerns over subterfuge within society in the new millennium. Concepts of media created illusion will be examined with an emphasis on the discovery of authenticity through the testing of, and breaking of, boundaries as suggested by repetition of ‘broken’ and ‘shattered’. By exploring the lines ‘It pumps like the pressure in the station hall / As the express-train thunders on by’, the paper further analyzes ideas relating to testable artificial systems verses the unreliable nature of human emotion (‘We think we've got real love in our life’). This concept will be extended through comparing fallible biological function and processes (eyes, blood), with violent technology (wires, gun). The product of the close reading will suggest that the song presents the modern world as a place of conflict and control. This control, I will argue, is evidenced on three pivotal levels: domestic (personal, e.g. romantic), battlefront (combat area, e.g. terrorism), and global (universal, e.g. general ideas of mechanization).