

ACCESS ALL AREAS:
A BACKSTAGE LOOK AT WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN THE WEST COAST
ROCK MUSIC SCENE

by

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to address a gap in existing subcultural research. While there has been extensive work done on the experiences of men in subcultural groupings, the examination of women's experiences is sadly lacking. Using a combination of participant observation and ethnographic interviewing, this study looks at the role women play in the local rock music scene. Some interesting themes emerge that challenge existing notions that women are either marginal or absent from subcultural activity.

Women in the scene occupy a richly contradictory social position. While they exercise an impressive degree of sexual and financial autonomy, as illustrated by their initiation of relationships and breadwinner roles in partnerships with male musicians, they also adopt many goals and behaviors typically associated with mainstream constructions of proper femininity. Women in the rock scene are seldom performers, instead they are concentrated in the role of the "nurturant caretaker" (Cole 1993: 89/90) allowing the male musicians to retain recognition, prestige and power in the scene. This construction of the male role as central reflects the acceptance of patriarchal ideology in the scene and obscures the contribution of women to the material maintenance of the subculture.

Women's roles in the scene can be characterized as a simultaneous acceptance and rejection of mainstream

prescriptions for feminine behavior. While women in the rock scene are undeniably the focus of much sexual objectification and exploitation, they cannot be viewed as either passive or dependent. Women are described by scene members as sexually powerful decision makers, and although women's power is cast in disappointingly sexual terms, it is the active nature of this sexuality that leads me to describe women not as "passive" sexual objects, but rather as "active" sexual objects.

Women's experiences in the rock scene are inextricably linked to heterosexual relations with male musicians. While rock women focus on the same goals of marriage and motherhood as mainstream women, their relationships are characterized by complications imposed by the rock lifestyle. According female participants, the overt sexuality of the scene, lack of financial stability, and the consuming nature of the music business combine to challenge the maintenance of a healthy relationship with a musician. However, while women's willingness to deal with such obstacles is puzzling, it can be seen as determination to transcend traditional limitations on masculine and feminine roles. The rock scene, despite its disproportionate consequences for women, offers both women and men alternatives to mainstream constructions of masculinity and femininity. The scene is identified by both female and male participants as offering excitement, spontaneity and passion absent in mainstream society.

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PREFACE

Perhaps I should begin right off by explaining how I came to have an interest in rock culture. It wasn't from reading some fascinating academic account of a musical subculture, although it is my hope this account turns out to be one; rather it was a very real interest and participation in such a subculture myself. Like many teenaged girls, I found long haired, bad boy rock idols infinitely more interesting than their clean cut, preppy counterparts. While I listened to all sorts of music ranging from heavy metal to jazz to classical and dance pop, it was a poster of David Lee Roth in black leather that occupied the place of honor above my bed.

Some may assume that I went to a working class school and hung around with a rough and ready crowd, a commonly held but contested stereotype of the "rock type". Quite the opposite, I went to a school where many kids received cars for their sixteenth birthdays, the most "in" thing to do was be on a sports team and most of the parents were successful professionals. My best friends were children of doctors, lawyers, and successful entrepreneurs. We were all on the honor roll consistently, and we even babysat the principal's kids. I was hardly the picture of a harsh, intimidating smoke pit crowd girl. I didn't smoke, or drink, and I certainly didn't wear heavy metal band t-shirts and black

leather. Black didn't seem to be my colour, I looked more the part of a preppy, well adjusted teenaged girl.

So why the fascination with such harsh music and sexually provocative images? It could be dismissed as natural adolescent curiosity I suppose, but I never did grow out of it. I still enjoy heavy metal, although I have long since given up hanging up pictures of rock gods on my walls and reading articles about my favourite musicians in magazines. I abandoned that long before I even finished high school for fear that it would be construed as immature, adolescent enthusiasm.

My interest in famous rock personalities was replaced by a more immediate and realistic interest in boys around me who approximated the image. This was where giving the impression of cool nonchalance became useful. Up and coming local musicians were far more attainable, closer to my own age, and far less likely to burn out and go bald before I reached twenty. The local music scene in my home town was concentrated in a different area than where I grew up. I guess you could say it thrived on the "wrong side of the tracks". There didn't seem to be many musically inclined people at my school, regardless of genre, they were too busy playing rugby, basketball and field hockey. While sports did not come naturally to me, music did. I had been taking piano lessons since I was six, and found the culture of music far easier to relate to than that of athletics. While my training was primarily classical, I also loved to play

contemporary rock that offered any sort of technical challenge. (It is probably this technical knowledge that gained me respect among the musicians I was to know throughout my life.)

The musical talent in town was concentrated at a school about 20 minutes from where I lived. I had a cousin who lived there and went to that school, so I had an "in". Although I went to a pretty high end school, my family background was simple; my mother was born and grew up in that small town just like her mother before her. My father was an electrician, I guess that made us working class although we never used terms like working class or middle class. I didn't learn those terms until my first year sociology class at college. "Class" at my school referred to how well you dressed, spoke and behaved. There were obvious social divisions between those "with" and those "without", but we never "consciously" identified the role of one's economic background in the process. We were a group well fed on ideas of social mobility and individual potential.

My parents had been brave enough to buy a house early in an undeveloped area that later became the prestigious area of the city. As typically happens, property values rose, making the area unaffordable for anyone in our financial position unless they bought in before the market broke. My mother was not officially employed, but like many women of her generation she recognized the impossibility of

supporting a family on my father's income alone. She ran a daycare out of our home, allowing her to generate income as well as preserve the stay at home mom image that was so valued at the time. I certainly never got a car for my sixteenth birthday, and I did a lot of babysitting to keep up with the fashion parade at school.

As soon as we could drive, my best friend Alex and I would borrow the family car and explore other areas of the city. Neither of us felt a part of the jock culture at our school, so instead we frequented cafes and areas that musicians and artists hung around. This eventually led to the complete abandonment of the social scene in our area, and the adoption of an alternative, music oriented subculture. The friendships formed here have remained important into my adult life. Some of them will be discussed later in this thesis.

INTRODUCTION

One of the key purposes of this project is to examine, via the lived experiences of subcultural participants, the expected roles of women and men in the rock scene. These roles have an obvious effect on the dynamics of rock relationships and the maintenance of gendered identities in social interaction in the scene. The personal stories and observations presented in this paper are derived from participation in the scene. While this project focuses primarily on the experiences of women in order to address a gap in the literature, men's experiences, opinions, and personal stories have also been included as they are obviously engaged directly in the relationships and social activities discussed.

This work takes as a basic assumption the belief that gender is socially constructed. As Susan G. Cole explains,

Gender describes a social dynamic through which members of both sexes take on prescribed sex roles through a socialization process. ... The process of gendering has several aspects. One of them is the social separation of roles, activities, qualities, and behaviors according to male and female categories. Thus, according to typical sex roles, women are nurturant caretakers while men are active doers. (Cole 1993: 89/90)

We will later see evidence that these gendering processes are alive and well in the construction of feminine and masculine rock identities. Like myself, Cole is interested in how these gendered social practices influence the activities of women and men in the rock scene. She

continues by stating that gendering not only constructs difference, but assigns differential value to gender roles.

... the gendering process does not stop with this "difference." It gives different value and status to those male and female qualities. So, the active qualities in males are considered more valuable than the qualities of nurturance that are ascribed to females. (Cole 1993: 90)

As Cole points out, "All these dynamics of gendering- gender roles, gender values, and changing values depending on sex- occur in one way or another within the context of popular music." (Cole 1993: 90)

As Leslie Roman and Linda Christian-Smith suggest in their introduction to Becoming Feminine, popular culture may be,

... a possible site or set of practices around which feminists might intervene to understand how the relational categories of femininity and masculinity are constructed as unequal meanings and sets of power relations for gender. (3)

These authors express a view shared by feminists, including myself, that patriarchy and the subordination of women are neither natural nor inevitable; and must therefore be continually maintained by the force of cultural hegemony. What is socially constructed is obviously unstable, and a potential arena of struggle. As Leslie Roman and Linda Christian-Smith point out,

We turn our attention to contemporary popular cultural forms because like Hall, we find compelling the argument that popular culture is an important site in the struggle for and against cultural and ideological hegemony of dominant groups. ... If one takes a Gramscian position on the relationship of popular culture to hegemony, then popular cultural forms matter for feminist materialist struggle because they are

involved intimately in securing and producing the consent of women and men to particular hegemonic meanings for gender (the relational categories of femininity at a particular historic juncture) and sexual difference. (Roman and Christian-Smith 1988: 3/4)

While Roman and Christian-Smith's collection draws attention to the omission of women in popular cultural theory, the focus of most of the articles remains on the level of textual analysis. Examples include the analyses of film (Elizabeth Ellsworth 107-119), magazine advice columns for women (Erica Carter 60-75), and adolescent romance novels (Linda K. Christian-Smith 76-101) and their effects on women's identity formation. Leslie G. Roman's analysis of women's experiences in the Punk Slam Dance is one exception (Roman 143-184). My criticism of the tendency for social theorists to work with cultural texts in isolation from lived experience will be discussed later in this introduction.

This leads us to a general discussion of how gender issues have been approached in the fields of sociology and cultural studies. As Angela McRobbie asserts in her article, "Settling Accounts with Subculture: A Feminist Critique":

Although 'youth culture' and the 'sociology of youth'... have been central strands in the development of cultural studies over the past 15 years, the emphasis from the earliest work of the National Deviancy Conference (NDC) onwards has remained consistently on male youth cultural forms. (McRobbie 1991: 16)

In McRobbie's discussion of "Girls and Subcultures", co-written with Jenny Garber, she notes that,

Very little seems to have been written about the role of girls in youth cultural groupings. They are absent from the classic subcultural ethnographic studies, the pop histories, the personal accounts and the journalistic surveys of the field. When girls do appear, it is either in ways which uncritically reinforce the stereotypical image of women with which we are now familiar ... or else they are fleetingly and marginally presented. (1)

While this article first appeared in 1978, it has been reprinted in a number of books and journals, and its point still holds.¹ As S. Rowbotham notes,

It is as if everything that relates only to us comes out in footnotes to the main text, as worthy of the odd reference. We come on the agenda somewhere between "Youth" and "Any Other Business". We encounter ourselves in men's cultures as "by the way" and peripheral. According to all the reflections we are not really there. (S. Rowbotham, in McRobbie 1991: 1)

As McRobbie asks,

How do we make sense of this invisibility? Are girls really not present in youth subcultures? Or is it something in the way this kind of research is carried out that renders them invisible? (McRobbie 1991: 1)

Because most disciplines were founded by men, they have become androcentric in their methods, their recognition of suitable topic areas, and their subsequent description of social life, leading Barbara Du Bois to suggest that, "The androcentric perspective in social science has rendered women not only unknown, but virtually unknowable." (DuBois in Bowles and Klein 1983: 107)

Similar critiques have developed in most academic disciplines, including cultural studies. By challenging the discipline to deal with sex and gender, along with existing issues of race and class, feminists intend to reshape the way cultural studies is defined.

According to McRobbie, to better understand the place of women/girls in subcultures it is necessary to address the following concerns:

- Are they present but invisible?
 - Where present and visible, are their roles the same, but more marginal than the boys, or are they quite different?
 - Is the position of girls specific to the subcultural option, or do their roles reflect the more general social subordination of women in mainstream culture?
 - If subcultural options are not readily available to girls, what are the different but complimentary ways in which girls organise their cultural life?
 - Are these, in their own terms, subcultural?
- (McRobbie 1991: 3)

While the temptation to ignore male subcultural work and forge a new independent analysis of female culture is appealing, it is of course both impractical and self-defeatist. Female culture is embedded in the larger patriarchal society which both men and women inhabit. McRobbie cautions that by dismissing existing works on the basis of sexism, we would miss the opportunity to 'grapple', "with questions which, examined from a feminist perspective, can increase our understanding of masculinity, male culture and sexuality, and their place within class culture." (16)

McRobbie encourages us to examine female experiences and gender relations in context. Otherwise, she claims "Questions about girls, sexual relations and femininity in youth will continue to be defused or marginalized in the ghetto of women's studies." (18)

According to McRobbie, the other option is:

... to combine a clear commitment to the analysis of girls' culture with a direct engagement with youth

culture as it is constructed in sociological and cultural studies. Rather than simply being dismissed, the subcultural 'classics' should be re-read critically so that questions hitherto ignored or waved aside in embarrassment become central. (McRobbie 1991: 17)

While McRobbie recognizes Dick Hebdige's classic work, Subculture: The Meaning of Style, as the "most sophisticated account to date of youth culture and style", she critically points out that,

Ostensibly his argument is that it is on the concrete and symbolic meeting-ground of black and white (implicitly male) youth that we have to understand the emergence and form of subcultural style, its syncopations and cadences. ... Despite his emphasis on the neglect of race and racism in youth and subcultural work, he seems oblivious to the equal neglect of sexuality and sexism. (McRobbie 1991: 23)

She continues her critique by suggesting that, "If only he had pushed his analysis of style further, Hebdige might well have unravelled the question of sexuality, masculinity and the apparent redundancy of women in most subcultures." (25)

Rock music is a driving force in the socialization and identity formation of North American youth. As McRobbie suggests,

Rock music has been so much a part of post-war youth cultures that its presence has often just been noted by writers; the meanings signified by its various forms have not received the attention they deserve. Dick Hebdige does something to redress this, but again without developing a perspective sensitive to gender and sexual division. (McRobbie 1991: 28)

Most of the existing literature that focuses specifically on rock music and rock culture has been written by and about men without incorporating any sort of gender analysis. (Bennet 1980, Curtis 1987, Fletcher 1981, Harker 1980, White 1987) These works focus on the political

capacity of rock music, the analysis of lyrics, the changing technology of the craft, and the experiences of male performers in the scene. While some works have taken race and ethnicity into account due to the influential role they have played in the development of musical styles, gender has for the most part been left untouched. (Curtis 1987, Hebdige 1979)

The key figure in the sociological analysis of rock culture has been Simon Frith, a British sociologist who has published several volumes on rock and popular culture. As Frith and Goodwin suggest,

The academic study of pop and rock music is rooted in sociology, not musicology (for which, even now, popular music is at best of marginal interest), and the sociology of pop and rock is, in turn, rooted in two nonmusical concerns: the meaning of "mass culture" and the empirical study of youth (and delinquency). (Frith and Goodwin 1990: 1)

Frith is one of the few writers who recognizes and addresses the issue of gender in rock culture. While rock culture is seen by many as challenging societal restrictions on sexual behavior, the rock challenge is still firmly anchored on patriarchal and heterosexual terms. As Frith states,

The male chauvinism of rock in general is reflected in rock lyrics, which with their assertions of romance, of male supremacy, narcissism and self-pity are hardly 'counter-cultural'. As far as musicians' culture is concerned what is significant is women's exclusion from the heart of the players' lives... . The Great Live Rock Experience is often presented as an exclusively male affair; female fans are reduced to sex objects, teeny-boppers, potential groupies. (Frith 1987: 194/195)

If, as Frith asserts, this is the position most women in the scene find themselves in, then this is where my project shall begin. Frith acknowledges the sexism in rock, the powerful images of male sexuality, and the narrowly prescribed roles for women in rock culture. His 1990 book, On Record, coedited with Andrew Goodwin, includes several articles that address issues of feminism, marginalization of women and female performers in popular culture. Angela McRobbie's "Settling Accounts with Subcultures" was republished in this collection, along with several other relevant articles such as Mavis Bayton's "How Women Become Musicians", Frith and McRobbie's "Rock and Sexuality", and Sheryl Garratt's "Teenage Dreams".

Mavis Bayton's work examines the difficulties women experience in becoming rock musicians. According to Bayton, "... young girls do not see rock musician as a role to which they can aspire." (239) In talking to women who have stepped outside societal expectations to become musicians, Bayton discovered that social and family demands interfere with women's ability to define themselves as musicians. According to Bayton, women lack the confidence and the freedom that society allows men in the pursuit of musical careers.

Frith and McRobbie begin "Rock and Sexuality" by stating, "Our starting point is that the most important ideological work done by rock is the 'construction' of sexuality." (373) According to Frith and McRobbie, "rock

is a male form." (373) The construction of sexuality in rock culture, although potentially liberating, closely parallels the heterosexual norms that exist in mainstream society. While Frith and McRobbie characterize "cock rock" as the most aggressive and blatant form of sexuality in male rock performance, they also point out that,

If the music tends to treat women as objects... in attacking or ignoring conventions of sexual decency, obligation, and security, cock rockers do, in some respects, challenge the ways in which those conventions are limiting- to women as well as men. (381)

Frith and McRobbie acknowledge that men are also presented as sex objects in rock, however, it must be noted that images of male sexuality are typically associated with active male power and often results in further exploitation of women. According to Frith and McRobbie,

Cock rock presents an ideal world of sex without physical or emotional difficulties, in which all men are attractive and potent and have endless opportunities to prove it. (382)

Frith and McRobbie end their discussion by asking, "Can rock be nonsexist?" and "How can we counter rock's dominant sexual messages?" (389) These are obviously important questions, unfortunately, they do not offer any suggestions.

Sheryl Garratt's, "Teenage Dreams" looks at the obsession of women with male musicians. While Garratt specifically focuses on adolescent women, and "pop" as opposed to "rock" musicians, she makes some insightful points. Bayton, perhaps because of her own musical and sexual interests, suggests that softer male pop performers

enjoy female attention while hard rock performers do not. I strongly disagree with her claim that,

... although many of their lyrics tell how girls continually lust over their irresistible bodies, Rainbow, Whitesnake, or even the more enlightened, younger heavy metal bands just don't get women screaming at them. The people most attracted to the ideal of the hard, hairy, virile hunk of male are, in fact, other men... (402)

According to Garratt, "Women seem far more excited by slim, unthreatening, baby-faced types who act vulnerable and who resemble them." (402) As we will see, the women in my study obviously prove otherwise. Although I disagree with Garratt's depiction of the hard rock scene as less appealing to women, I agree with many of her points. As Garratt suggests,

With so few role models to follow, to fantasize about being on stage as a female performer may be almost a contradiction in terms. Instead, most of us dream of being a pop star's girlfriend: fame and recognition by proxy. (407)

While there has been a recent explosion of feminist work on gender and sexuality in cultural studies, as suggested earlier, the bulk of this work has focused on the analysis of cultural texts, rather than on lived experience. (Roman and Christian-Smith 1988; Modeleski 1991; Budgeon 1993; Kaplan 1987) Such work provides fascinating insights into the social construction of gender and draws on techniques of semiotic and textual analysis. While such developments are both useful and encouraging, this project endeavors to bridge the widening gap between the theoretical

study of gender and the lived experiences of subcultural participants.

As Angela McRobbie points out, studies that engage directly in lived experience are becoming increasingly rare in sociology. She claims that sociology is becoming less interactive, and less willing to fund research styles that engage with subjects in more than a superficial or anonymous way. While ethnographic works are still revered within the discipline as "classics" (Whyte 1943; Humphreys 1975; Liebow 1967), there has been a shift towards more policy-oriented research or abstract, theoretical work. McRobbie feels that ethnography is in "deep danger of dying out altogether."

(McRobbie 1991: xi/xii) I agree with McRobbie's suggestion that,

Without studies of this sort, sociology remains a dry and unexciting subject given over either to empiricism and the presentation of social facts and statistics ... or to the development of broad structuralist accounts of the objective conditions of existence (xii)

She contrasts such work with the "lived experience studies of the late 1960's through mid-1970's" which she characterizes as "exciting" and "engaging". (xiii) As McRobbie notes, "These studies also created their own theoretical insights and paradigms. They represent an important and too easily neglected tradition." (xiii) McRobbie's comments resonate well with my own observation of the discipline and experiences undertaking this project. Some of these feelings will be discussed in more detail in Appendix A of this thesis.

Robert Walser makes an analogous point in his 1993 work, Running With the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal. Walser is critical of work that attempts to analyze cultural artifacts without exploring the viewpoints of the individuals whose texts are being examined. In particular, Walser is critical of E. Ann Kaplan's work on sexism in heavy metal video. While he compliments and agrees with parts of her analysis, he sees her work as methodologically flawed. As Walser points out, "Kaplan's comments appear to be uninformed by any ethnographic or personal contact with the heavy metal musicians and fans whose texts and lives she presumes to explain." (112) As Walser suggests, "This is not to argue that metal videos are unimportant but rather to say that they do not operate in a social vacuum: their analysis must be inflected by knowledge of the lives and cultural investments of the viewers." (112)

As Walser points out, "... it is crucial for the cultural critic to develop an understanding of the interests and activities of the communities that find meaning in their encounters with these texts." (Walser 1993: 114) (This argument will be discussed further in the "Methods" section.) It is my hope that this thesis goes some distance towards this goal.

This project focuses specifically on participants' own stories and observable behavior in the rock music scene. My work differs from existing work in that it privileges the

experiential; it examines lived social relations rather than textual representations as a strategy for understanding gender roles in subcultural groupings.

This study aims to provide a voice for women, whose lived experiences have been conspicuously absent in the subcultural discourse. It is my strong belief that women are not absent from the rock subculture, but that they are infact an integral part of the scene. Women in the rock scene occupy a richly conflicted social position. While they have undeniably experienced intensive sexual objectification, they cannot be viewed as either passive or dependent. Women in the rock scene play an active role in seeking and maintaining heterosexual relationships as well as providing a necessary foundation of economic and emotional support. These women are simultaneously engaged in activities that reject as well as reinforce dominant mainstream prescriptions for appropriate female behavior.

The purpose of this project is to examine these contradictions, along with the roles and social relations of women and men in the rock music scene, paying particular attention to women's experiences and interpretations of their social world.

METHODS

The material in the study was obtained through participant observation. A more specific discussion of my technique will follow the explanation of why such a method is appropriate.

The use of ethnographic research techniques for this project was the most natural, and in fact the only reasonable choice. As James Spradley, a respected ethnographer notes,

Ethnography is an exciting enterprise. It reveals what people think and shows us the cultural meanings they use daily. It is the one systematic approach in the social sciences that leads us into those separate realities which others have learned and which they use to make sense out of their worlds. In our complex society the need for understanding how other people see their experience has never been greater. (Spradley 1980: vii.)

Ethnography is a method of describing a culture from the viewpoint of that culture. As Spradley explains,

Fieldwork, then, involves the disciplined study of what the world is like to people who have learned to see, hear, speak, think, and act in ways that are different. Rather than 'studying people', ethnography means 'learning from people.' (Spradley 1980: 3)

It has been my commitment throughout this project, to describe as well as explore patterns of behavior in the rock scene without making the typical academic mistake of rendering the information gathered unrecognizable to the participants. The point is to gain a clearer understanding of how the members of this subculture interpret their own behavior.

As Spradley suggests,

It has become increasingly clear that our culture is not homogeneous, that people who live in modern, complex societies actually live by many different cultural codes. ... As people move from one cultural scene to another in complex societies, they employ different cultural rules. Ethnography offers one of the best ways to understand these complex features of modern life. It can show the range of cultural differences and how people with diverse perspectives interact. (Spradley 1980: 16)

Ethnography, as a method, has most often been used to understand foreign cultures. While such a goal is obviously important, it is my belief that the understanding of 'alternative' cultures within our own culture is an equally valuable yet often overlooked goal.

As suggested earlier, existing sociological research on subcultures too often remains on the level of textual analysis. While academic analysis of cultural artifacts such as rock videos or fan magazines may be both interesting and illuminating, it must be recognized as offering only a limited picture of the scene itself. As Spradley notes,

Any explanation of behavior which excludes what the actors themselves know, how they define their actions, remains a partial explanation that distorts the human situation. The tools of ethnography offer one means to deal with this fact of meaning. (16)

Ethnography's concern with establishing meaning as seen by cultural members themselves is perhaps its most distinctive characteristic. As Spradley states, "It says to all investigators of human behavior, 'Before you impose your theories on the people you study, find out how those people define the world.'" (14)

THE NITTY GRITTY

The data in this study were gathered by participant observation supplemented with ethnographic interviews. As well as being a regular participant in the rock scene over the past ten years, for the purposes of this study my observation of the scene was intensified and recorded for the period of approximately one year. (September 1993-February 1995)

Observation took place in a number of locations. The initial focus was on activities in five local bars, but moved to parties and more personal discussions in one on one interaction. While observations and areas of inquiry arose as a consequence of being in the bars an average of 2-4 times per week, such venues are not conducive to more in depth exploration of issues. I discovered more detailed information in conversations I had with both men and women on the telephone, at private parties, and in one on one social interactions. While the last 3-4 months of field work focused more specifically on interviews, I still attended gigs 2-3 times per month.

Each period of observation was followed by careful and detailed note taking, often referred to as "logging the data". The written observations, essentially field notes, form what is called the "ethnographic record". Recording field notes was done as soon as possible after an interaction in the field or a conversation with a participant. However, when activity in the field was

particularly late at night, I would take notes immediately upon waking up the next morning. As long as there was no distracting social interaction in between, this method proved effective.

As Lofland points out,

Happily, it has been found that memory decays very little during sleep. That is, forgetting has more to do with the acquisition of new experience than with the sheer passage of time. Therefore it is reasonably safe to sleep on a day's or evening's observations and to write them up the first thing next morning, thus avoiding the necessity of staying up half the night.
(64)

While most of the material was easily gathered in informal conversation, a more intensive interview format was used near the end of the project to supplement and explore issues that appeared to be primary in the scene. A total of 12 structured interviews (8 female and 4 male) were conducted in my home or the participants' home. The participants were both women and men in the scene whom I had approached or whom had offered to be interviewed for the purposes of this study. (Some of the participants had been to my home before, and had supplied information during informal socializing.) Interviews ranged from one to four hours and were tape recorded and later transcribed substituting pseudonyms for all people, places and bands mentioned.

Interviews were loosely structured; a copy of the interview guide is included in Appendix B. Participants were clearly informed of the purposes of the study, and were

assured of confidentiality. They were also reminded of their right to end the interview at any point, and skip any questions they found offensive or inappropriate.

Participants were encouraged to bring up issues they felt were important and to let me know if any of my questions seemed irrelevant to their experiences. While the questions were used as a point of departure, participants usually used them as a spring board for more personal, experiential storytelling. Questions were intentionally open ended and elicited responses that often exceeded fifteen minutes per question.

Other than the formality of reading and signing the consent form, and listening to an explanation of the study, the interviews proceeded informally and in an unselfconscious manner. Overall, participants seemed comfortable with the conversation and appeared enthusiastic about sharing their experiences. The level of discussion was dependent on the level of trust established between myself and the participant. While in most cases this had been achieved through continued contact over an extended period of time, some participants shared intimate details about their lives in our first conversation together. It seemed that I had tapped into a need for these individuals to talk about their experiences that clearly existed prior to and independent of my research.

One particular woman seemed about to burst from all the frustration and questioning in her life. We met at a party

and shortly after being introduced she launched into an unprompted three hour discussion of most of my key areas of interest. Such events should not be surprising given that my areas of inquiry and ethnographic questions emerged out of continued observation in the field. All the topics I broached with the participants were received as both natural and relevant areas of inquiry, reassuring me that I was, as Stoddart suggests, "addressing the concerns native to the domain of interest". (Stoddart-1986: 8)

As testimony to participants' enthusiasm, after an interview they often volunteered to recruit other scene members for interviews. It should be noted that the decision to stop at a relatively small number of interviews (12), was made on the basis of the already extensive quantity of data recorded in my field notes.

THE FINDINGS

CHAPTER I. ACROSS A CROWDED ROOM: WOMEN AT WORK

Any discussion of "relationships" in a social scene should logically start with the participants own descriptions of how such relationships began. The following stories are based primarily on discussions with participants in the scene as well as my own observation in the scene. The story of how Devon and Jamie met is perhaps the most twisted, but fascinating of the beginnings I witnessed.

Erica phoned me, she was having a party, ... of sorts, actually, she was having people over to her place for a get together after Leslie's funeral. To provide context I will backtrack, Leslie had been a friend of Erica, Lynne and Angie's whom I had met only once, many years ago when Alex and I had come to Vancouver to visit Craig, Scott and Kevin, musicians originally from our home town. We were going out to the bar, and we had to stop off at Leslie's so she could help Craig do his hair. Hair was a really big thing in those days, literally, "big hair" was a big thing. We must have spent an hour at Leslie's watching them back comb, hair spray, blow dry, and repeat the whole process all over again until they had achieved heavy metal perfection. The whole thing was quite fascinating to Alex and I who had never back combed at all and barely used hairspray. These were real, hardcore rockers and we were accepted because we had known Craig, Scott and Kevin even longer than them.

Anyhow... now almost 10 years later I was going to a party with these same girls, but Leslie was dead. She died of cancer, not some morbidly glamorous drug over dose. Erica was convinced that Leslie would have wanted her friends to party. I took Devon and Brenda with me. They didn't know these people other than through me, but we had been out to the bar a million times recently and it was always the same crowd.

Erica and I immediately started talking about our trips to L.A. to visit Craig, who had moved there in search of stardom. She had gone about a month before I had, and we looked through her pictures. Devon seemed to be handling things all right. There were a lot of people there and I saw her chatting to a few of them comfortably. Then, just like out of a sappy novel, this guy across the living room made tracks straight for us. Well, I suppose it wasn't exactly as romantic as a Harlequin, he kind of stumbled and appeared to have consumed a considerable amount of alcohol. He was intent on finding out who we were. So we all introduced ourselves. His name was Jamie, and Erica seemed to have a particular maternal concern for his well being, the reason for which I found out later.

Devon and Jamie seemed to hit it off well, and became engrossed in conversation. It was decided that some of us would go to the area bar and catch a friend's band's last set and maybe last call. Jamie seemed to really want to get out of there, and Devon was the one who was driving so he

joined in. Erica told us to take good care of Jamie and bring him back to her place when he passed out. This turned out to be an accurate prediction.

Upon reaching the bar Jamie immediately jumped up on stage and commandeered Tyler's guitar; he tried to play Baracuda, somewhat unsuccessfully, with Tyler shooting me "help", get him off the stage looks. While Jamie flailed around drunkenly, we realized that the sound man had turned him practically off, and all you could hear was the rest of the band trying to make the best of a bad situation. Eventually Jamie was led off stage and the band resumed their regular set.

Everyone seemed to know Jamie, the waitresses were bringing him free drinks, the owner was hovering around attentively, and everyone was asking how he was. When Tyler came off stage he pulled me aside and asked how we had come to babysit Jamie. I explained where we had been, and Tyler explained Jamie's behavior. Apparently Leslie had been Jamie's fiance, and this was his way of dealing with his loss. Although he did end that evening sleeping it off back at Erica's, he spent the next few nights baring his soul and forging a new relationship at Devon's.

Of course not all relationships began under such dramatic circumstances. The most common format for a blossoming relationship was: boy plays in band, girl sees band, girl chooses target, girl gets boy. Lisa and Dylan personify the storybook rock romance beginning. Lisa told

me she was eighteen when she met Dylan, she had gone out of town to stay with a friend for the weekend after a "fizzled relationship". Her friend took her to a bar where Dylan's band was playing; the remainder of the story is most effectively told in Lisa's own words,

The first time I saw them (the band), they were all sitting at the bar ... so I turned around and I looked behind me and there they were; all I saw was just "hair". ... They started playing and I checked out the band, and then I saw Dylan, and that just did it! ... and so I was trying to get his attention through the whole first set and I couldn't tell if he was looking at me or not, ... he needed a hair cut. It turns out later, he was looking at me ... in between the first and second set one of the waitresses brought me a glass of white wine and she said that was from the guitar player... I was too chicken to go talk to him, so when they came up for their second set I kinda nodded thanks, and he nodded back and from then on the whole rest of the night we just looked at each other, and it was like we were the only two that were there.

According to Lisa, this was her exciting introduction to the rock scene. It was the first time she had ever seen a live band, and in her words, she "liked it!"

I didn't talk to him until the end of the night and then I talked to him for about ten minutes ... I thought I'd probably never see him again. He asked me for my phone number so I gave it to him, which I never do, and then just before we left I asked him for a hug and apparently I just really shocked him. ... I didn't think he was going to call me for like three weeks, (the band was supposed to play in Calgary, where Lisa lived three weeks later) all the way home I couldn't eat, I couldn't eat for about three days, I could hardly sleep. So I got home and the next night he called from Castlegar and he called me probably close to every night after that while they were on the road. ... They were supposed to come to Calgary and then they fired their drummer, ... so it turned into three weeks, it turned into five weeks, finally I thought, okay, screw this, I'm not going to wait for him to come to me, I'm going to find out what's going on, if I really do like him. So I told him I was going to come visit him, I told my parents I was going to Cranbrook, and I

took a flight that went to Cranbrook but continued on to Vancouver! (laughs)

According to Lisa, her instincts had been right. She and Dylan fell in love, she moved to Vancouver to be with him, and after living together for two years, they were married.

The women in the rock scene demonstrate a high degree of "activity" in choosing and pursuing potential partners. Most women I observed were anything but passive. They reported a significant amount of planning and method involved in setting the stage for a potential relationship. As one woman explained,

Well after you pick who you're after, you have to make him notice you. You have to make sure you're in plain view, by dancing near him when he's playing, hangin' out near him in the bar when he's not on stage, and hopefully getting him in a conversation. It has to appear really natural, otherwise you come off looking like a groupie. ... Indirect beginnings are the best, I know a lot of people in the scene, so if I know someone he knows and can talk to them when he's nearby it can lead nicely into an introduction to him. ... You do a lot of hidden work setting up potential situations for getting together. You make sure you end up at the same parties, go to the same gigs, you know... .

The women I talked to continually noted how important it was to be introduced by the "right" people. If you couldn't get him to notice you and approach all by himself, it was imperative that the people you were observed with were "respected" members of the scene.

While the women generally claimed that most men were oblivious to the female "work" going on, some men also recognized that women in the scene play an "active" role. Near the beginning of this project I was talking to Craig,

now a participant in both the local as well as Los Angeles rock scenes. His immediate comment was that anyone who thinks the women in the scene are powerless and passive should look again. He suggested that women actually "call all the shots" when it comes to sex and starting relationships. It was his opinion that a woman is in far more control of her sexuality than a man because if she goes out with the intention of finding someone to have sex with, she has close to a 100% chance of being successful. On the other hand, a man looking for a sexual encounter is at the mercy of the woman's power to say yes or no. It was his contention that the women in the scene are the true holders of power. In his experience, they choose who they will become involved with and when the relationship will become intimate.

This view is obviously premised on some problematic assumptions. The first assumption is that men are, for whatever reason, always interested in sex. On the average he believed that more men would be willing to have sex than would women, meaning that by sheer availability of potential partners women held power.

In saying that a woman holds the power to control whether or not the evening ends in sex, he also assumes that any decision the woman makes will be respected. However, regardless of the deeper issues, he operates within the scene believing that women are both active agents and

sexually powerful decision makers. This is a power more often attributed to men by mainstream society.

Craig's characterization of the scene is obviously informed by his own experience. Having known Craig for over twelve years, I feel compelled to fill in some of the relevant background information. Craig's experiences, while fascinating, are not unique, I know many male musicians who have had similar experiences.

Craig is an unusually attractive heavy metal guitarist who has never had to seek out romantic attention, women have always pursued him. We both spent our teenaged years in the same small town and socialized with the same core group of musicians. One by one we all moved to Vancouver and took up positions in the Vancouver rock scene.

Craig played in various rock bands in our hometown and later in Vancouver. His relationships have usually been with beautiful, attentive women who have been attracted to him in his capacity as a guitarist. Even when he was not on stage, Craig was usually the focus of much female attention. In some ways Craig has been objectified by women. He is pursued based on his sexual appeal. While this has usually worked to his advantage, allowing him relative sexual freedom, it has also made him vulnerable to some of the same insecurities typically associated with women. He has on occasion felt "used", and has had to fight being valued for his appearance alone. As attractiveness fades with youth,

such a position is threatening to a man just as it is to a woman.

Craig was recently married, after what seemed to me like a lifetime of promiscuity and sexual abandon. The past few years have found him increasingly valuing intellectual connection and compatibility over sexual attraction. However, his relationship with his wife Jenna began as most rock relationships do, based on mutual sexual attraction in the bar.

Craig and Jenna met in a nightclub. She had been admiring him from across the room, and had made several comments to the women she was with. Unknown to her, one of her companions started sending Craig drinks from a "secret admirer". According to Craig, and most other musicians I know, free drinks are always welcome to those that are perpetually poor. Craig claimed to be especially grateful because according to the waitress the sender preferred to remain anonymous, relieving him of the responsibility of meeting and engaging in a conversation with this woman out of indebtedness. However, after receiving several drinks, the waitress informed him that the donor had expressed an interest in meeting him.

According to Craig, when he approached the group of women to express his thanks, Jenna became embarrassed and it was discovered that one of her friends had been sending the drinks on her behalf. However, after a period of awkwardness, they did share a conversation, and ended up

spending the night together. While in this case, Jenna herself did not arrange the meeting, it was still a woman who took steps to address her attraction.

According to most scene participants, when a relationship, be it a one night affair or a more permanent involvement, begins with the purchase of a drink, it is almost always a woman who sends the man a drink. According to participants, this gesture translates loosely in bar symbolism to, "I find you interesting and would like to meet you." The most common scenario is for women to send drinks to members of the band whom they find particularly attractive. By musicians' own admission, they rarely chase women, or buy anyone a drink. As they point out, except in unusual circumstances, "it is not necessary".

CHAPTER II. SO WHAT'S THE ATTRACTION?

Both women and men claimed to be attracted to the rock scene for similar reasons. They find the music compelling, the scene is full of energy and excitement, and being a part of it is "fun". Attraction to the scene for most women began during their teen years and was often solidified the first time they saw a live band. Monica's comments reflect the experience many women had as an introduction to the scene,

I was in my teens, I didn't have a clue who any of these bands were, I was more into the dance stuff, and then girlfriends would check out some place and say come check out this band, so we went to this club and there was this rock band playing and of course that was it! (laughs) You see these guys on stage, like whoa! I like that! ... the long hair, the tight jeans, the loud music, the people, pretty much the whole aura about it, ... you know, after that it was totally rock, it was like nothing else mattered, rock is it. ... and it's different from going to see a concert where you're not really close... you can get on the dance floor, you're right there with the action so to speak.

Whether or not the women had been fans of the music before they began going out in the scene varied, but most identified the first time they saw a live band as the "clincher". According to Gina, the first time you walk into a rock bar with a live band, "You Know". You know you've found your niche. As Gina explained, "The first time I saw a live rock band I thought to myself, yeah, this is where I want to be, I was totally drawn to the scene from that point on, and I've never looked back."

According to Devon,

It was fun, there were cool people... I liked the music more than anything, we could go dancing, it was good to dance to. ... It was exciting, it was very different from my day to day life, it was a little escape at night... it was exciting, there was something Hollywood about it, bigger than life, especially if you were "in" at all.

While women and men often gave similar reasons for being attracted to the scene, they usually came to play very different roles in the scene. While most men aspire to be musicians, most women aspire to be with musicians. For most women, attraction to the scene went hand in hand with attraction to male musicians.

According to most women, there were at least two levels of attraction to male musicians. The first being, in the words of countless women, "the bad boy thing". It seemed to go without saying that longhaired, dark, dangerous looking men inspired a high degree of desire. As one woman explained,

They were different, different than boys you had dated in school, different than the boys your mother wanted you to date, they were so much sexier, more powerful and intriguing. There was this raw sexuality that really turned me on.

Looking back at my own attraction to this male image, I could relate to what these women were saying. As I wrote the preface to this project long before the interview stage, the continual appearance of the phrase "bad boy" was particularly relevant and familiar to me, as I too had used this term to describe the men in the scene.

According to many of the women, the other component to attraction is the fact that these men are on stage. As Devon explained,

It's exciting, a guy being up on stage and having all that attention, and all the women around wanting that man, and him looking at you and wanting you was a real kick. It was like peacock feathers. ... Wow, you're bigger than life, yet you want me.

Monica made a similar point, although she added that it was the musician's ability coupled with his image that inspired awe,

It's the image, ... the way they look, the way they carry themselves, the fact that they're a star and all these other people want them. ... It's just the fact that someone's up there doing something they do best and whenever you see someone doing their best at something they're always attractive.

Both these comments convey a sense that these women identify performance with power and that this makes performers sexually appealing. There is a sense of vicarious thrill in being associated with the power of the performer. Devon's statement is a particularly good illustration of this point.

While men also demonstrate a desire to be personally identified with powerful figures, women often translate this desire into a sexual form. In my observation, men would hang around musicians hoping to be seen with them and share in their limelight, however, women hung around musicians hoping to become romantically involved with them. There are of course exceptions to the rule, some women purposely avoid becoming physically involved with musicians because of such

stereotypes. These women restricted their interactions with musicians to friendships and professional exchanges.

However, in my view, exceptions were rare, only highlighting the existence of the pattern. These themes will be discussed further in the "groupies" section of this paper.

As suggested, women rarely play the role of musician in the scene, instead they are concentrated in the role of spectators and fans. This is not meant to imply that women form more than half of rock's audience, audiences are, as Robert Walser points out, roughly gender balanced. However, the bulk of musicians have traditionally been and continue to be men. While women are increasingly whittling away at men's domination of the performance scene, the vast majority of women still find themselves playing the role of fan, girlfriend, wife or potential groupie. This role expectation was clearly recognized by both women and men in the scene.

As Devon explained, typical roles for men included, "Playing any instrument or singing, roadie, management, any sort of agency position..." When I asked her what most of the women in the scene do, she explained that, "Women generally 'hang-out', they were there socially, to hang-out, or they were groupies..." Devon claimed that it definitely wasn't a professional scene for women. However, she admitted that although it was rare,

a woman could be a singer, or a musician, but never a roadie, never a manager, never an agent. Out of a

dozen bands, one might have a female singer. Any other woman in the scene was a coatcheck girl or a waitress.

Lisa echoed Devon's description of men's and women's roles in the scene as did most of the other participants I spoke to. When asked what men do in the scene, Lisa's response was, "Pretty well everything: musicians, managers, road managers, agents, producers, club owners, roadies...". When I asked her what most women in the scene do her response was, "That's changing a lot, but it used to be that women were more like, just the people who came out to see them play, and were groupies or whatever..." .

As one woman characterized it, most women are in the scene to enjoy the music, dance, and "chase after the men". Chasing after the men has a whole host of repercussions as well as rewards. According to Monica,

The women, of course, are always considered little bimbos, doesn't matter what type of music scene you're in, if you're wanting to get to know somebody, especially if it's in the band, you're considered a little groupie, and you're considered that you have no morals, very, very stereotypical. And also you had to dress a certain way to get any attention, ... you had to have a miniskirt or tight jeans, and definitely the higher the heels that you wore the better reception you got, usually black, that was the "in" color, black or red. ...

While most participants still identify women's primary role in the scene as fan and sex object, Lisa's response indicates an optimism that slowly women's roles are changing,

... now women are moving more into A&R (artists and repertoire) positions from record companies coming out to see bands play, there are some who are managers, not very many, there's a lot more musicians who are female, um ... that's about it, I mean like it's really male

dominated but its definitely opened up a lot more to women.

Lisa, Devon, Monica and others all commented on the 80's rock scene as being the pinnacle of male domination of rock. As Lisa suggested,

It was totally male dominated before, in the 80's, like if there was ever a female band, like Vixen or whatever, it was just, it wasn't like 'yeah, they're good musicians', it was like, 'well, they're good musicians, ... for girls'. It was more like, well, not like a freak show kind of thing, but, (laughs) you know, they were different because they were an all girl band kind of thing, but not a lot of respect for them... If you watch a video from the 80's, the men are all the ones who are musicians and the women were totally just the sex objects kind of thing.

Lisa's comments underscore the fact that women musicians, particularly all women bands were not taken seriously by most members of the scene especially in the 80's and early 90's. In my recollection, all women bands were treated by both men and women as a "novelty". Their image and stage shows often played heavily on their sexuality making them attractive to a male audience but simultaneously undermining any recognition of their technical ability.

Women were generally skeptical, finding such bands uninspiring and unfulfilling. As one woman suggested,

We went to the bar to see sexy men on stage, not sexy women. It sounds terrible, but the only reason I went to see those all women bands at all was that they usually drew a pretty good crowd of men, we went to check out the men, not the band.

Women musicians who played in bands with male members were not dismissed quite as vehemently. Women in mixed sex bands usually played the part of the singer, which according to most women was okay because, "You still had the rest of the

band to look at". Although female singers were "accepted", they were still relatively rare, and were not necessarily respected or supported as much as their male counterparts by either men or women.

Monica was one of the few women I spoke to who was a performer. She is a singer and has played on the road. According to Monica, while being on the road could be both rewarding and fun, the attitudes and assumptions about women constituted an added burden for her.

Even though there's more women performers coming out, you're still considered as a bimbo. You're just there to get laid and you're just there to pick up men and the only reason you're with the band is because you're sleeping with someone in the band, and that's the only way you got what you did.

Monica had been hired to sing back up vocals, with another woman singing lead, and although she had proved her talent and had been recruited out of a music program at school, she found a lot of the emphasis for women was on assets other than their voices.

The reason they wanted to have two girls there in the band was, having two girls. For one, they could make more money, two, it brings in more men because there's women in the band, they've got something to ogle, and three, there's more men, so it brings in more women.

Monica admitted that as a performer, there was as much attention on her sexuality and appearance as there was on her talent and musical ability.

... of course we had to dress a certain way, the more cleavage the better, no flat shoes, always heels, you know, the shorter the skirt the better kind of thing, because it sells, and it does unfortunately. ... the guys could pretty much wear whatever they wanted but we

had to dress to the nine's because we were the women of the band and we helped give them their image.

Both Monica and Nicole, another singer who has toured with a male rock band, stated that working in hotels that have both a music venue and a strip joint, they were consistently mistaken for strippers. The clear assumption is that men play in bands, women "peel". According to Monica, on one particular occasion this assumption could have worked to her financial benefit, as the front desk manager kept trying to pay her the dancer's fee, which according to Monica was "a helluva a lot more than the band made!". Such assumptions clearly signalled to the women that they were valued more for their bodies and sexuality than they were for their musical ability.

The bulk of this project deals with women's experiences in their relationships with male musicians. Although Monica and Nicole are both experienced and talented singers, they have since abandoned performing and are pursuing alternative careers. According to most women, female performers experience far more discrimination and objectification than their male counterparts. Because of this, many female performers get discouraged and quit. Nicole admitted that not being taken seriously influenced her move to the business side of the music industry. She is now employed in promotions and bookings, while Monica has left the music business altogether. Both women are currently living with male musicians and their experiences and observations will be discussed throughout this thesis.

CHAPTER III. SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Although many aspects of the rock scene appear to uphold traditional masculine and feminine roles, financial arrangements within couples could actually be viewed as "counter"-traditional. The male as bread winner, female as homemaker ideal is both rare and impractical in most rock relationships. The most common financial arrangement finds the woman bringing in a steady income, however limited, and paying for rent, food and basic living expenses. Because of the intermittent nature of income for musicians, they can seldom be depended on to do much more than "help out" with household expenses. In describing her relationship with Jamie, Devon claimed that,

He never paid rent. If he ever had a little bit of money, I allowed him to pay off his guitars, ... when I did eventually work it out financially, I figured after two years he owed me \$10,000.00 ... I paid for everything.

This system obviously runs counter to the societal ideal of males holding financial power and therefore decision making power in the household. When it comes to household purchases, securing and paying for utilities and the like, women appear to be completely in control. In fact, most of the women I interviewed stated that their partners had moved into an already existing household situation with little more than their clothes, shampoo and musical gear.

According to Devon, Jamie had been living in the recording studio he had been working for. Essentially, he could sleep on the couch there in exchange for repairing equipment and doing some studio work.

That was where he was living for about, not even a month after I met him until he moved in with me, but basically he was just always at my place. ... It was just a gradual thing, he would stay, and stay- just continue to stay, ... he didn't have anything, he had no possessions, basically he had a suitcase and that was how he lived. ... I think as soon as he came back from being on the road, he just automatically came back to my apartment. ... it was a gradual, but quick thing, ... he was just there.

It also seems a common pattern for musicians to move in with their lovers fairly quickly. The males seemed almost nomadic, staying with friends, getting temporary places together etc. between relationships. In fact, the word "nomadic" was used on several occasions by the musicians to describe themselves. It seems their present relationship status could be taken as a direct indicator of where they would be found living.

The first time I visited Craig in Los Angeles, he was living in much the same situation as Jamie. Upon the breakup of his previous relationship, he had moved out of his girlfriend's apartment and into the warehouse rehearsal space where he and his band practiced. His living conditions, and mine while I was visiting, consisted of a mattress on the concrete floor, a bathroom with a toilet and sink, no shower facilities, no hot water, and a refrigerator with the requisite bottle of wine and half-sac of beer.

Craig was still in contact with his ex-girlfriend, (also a rock guitarist) who compassionately allowed him, and me, to use her shower every few days.

The women in the scene, as illustrated, tended to be far more stable. Many had been living in the same apartment for years, their living pattern disturbed only by the "moving in" or "moving out" of a lover. The women themselves seldom "moved out" upon dissolution of a relationship. The male usually chose to or was asked to leave, and since in most cases he had arrived after, and with fewer material possessions, this usually seemed logical.

As alluded to above, musicians, perhaps as a consequence of their tendency to be "on the road" much of the time, often had few material possessions other than those related directly to their craft. According to Jodi, "Blair blew into my life and my place with little more than a guitar, amp, duffel bag of clothes and two or three boxes of power cords and cables." Contribution to the household furnishings was usually minimal even according to the musicians themselves, As Blair explained,

I moved around so much that I learned not to accumulate much stuff other than what I needed to play. When I was single and went on the road it was such a big hassle to find a place to store all my junk that finally I stopped having any. Besides I couldn't afford much and all I really needed was my gear, and a couch to crash on somewhere. It didn't have to be "mine". And then when I moved in with Jodi she had all that house stuff anyway...

The women conversely had often acquired all the pieces we typically associate with setting up a home. A couch, a bed, t.v., kitchen ware etc. Even in couples who had been together a number of years, most of the furnishings seemed to have been chosen by and paid for by the woman, often before the relationship began.

To some degree all this seems logical, after all, the male musician knows he has a future of road trips and much moving around ahead of him. He is unlikely to receive a stable or substantial enough income to set up and maintain a place he will often be absent from. It seems far more likely and more realistic for him to spend any money he has on furthering his career by investing in equipment.

The women, in most cases non-musicians, on the other hand, expected to live in the same place for at least some period of time. Most received a steady income, however small, and made it a priority to establish a comfortable home.

In terms of gender role expectations, rock relationships present a curious paradox. Women's preoccupation and identification with "the home" is decidedly traditional, as is men's aggressive pursuit of their careers. However, as suggested, this is not balanced by the usual norm of male as financial provider. Women have come to play the role of both home maker and provider. While this demonstration of independence is considered by

many women to be a source of pride and power, it is also obviously an area of potential exploitation.

Although most women were aware of the imbalance, they found it the most striking after a relationship ended. One woman explained that it really sinks in when he's gone and materially, nothing changes. "Emotionally, you're all fucked up, but your apartment looks the same, you pay the bills the same as usual, and you actually find that you have a little more spending money." What this woman, and many others realized, was that "he contributed nothing". As Jodi pointed out,

I guess I kinda knew that all along, but I hadn't admitted it to myself. After Blair and I split up I couldn't ignore the facts any longer, I felt totally used. ... The worst part of it was that he ended up moving in with another woman soon after, and I ended up doubting his emotional contribution on top of the whole money thing...

Women, consciously or not, provide a necessary economic base for the scene. According to Nicole, this domestic arrangement was most visible in the late 80's and early 90's when the Vancouver music scene was "peaking",

Every band that was happening then was a male band, and I swear to you, it was completely funded by females, you know, all the girls were working, taking care of the guys in the bands... Oh god! I remember... snake skin boots were in, and every guy had no money, but they had a three, or four, or five hundred dollar pair of snake skin boots! ... and wicked leather jackets, and they're driving these girls' cars while the girls are at work all day ... It's true, it was funded by females, for sure.

In some ways, women played a role more comparable to "mothers" than to "partners". They were the nurturers,

filling society's prescribed role of caretakers, however, the financial element added a new dimension to the position. From my observation, and from many women's stories, this situation did not disappear after the 80's. According to Nikki, who is only 21, and was not involved in the 80's scene, the set up is pretty common even among new members of the scene. She told me about a male musician she knows who went home with a "groupie" one night and basically never left. According to Nikki, "now they're living together and she's totally supporting him, and he's really doing nothing except snorting coke all day on her expense."

Nicole also admitted that although she feels she has outgrown such tendencies, "I certainly went through that thing of having to be the person bringing in the money each month just so you had groceries..." She also spoke of relationships she knew of currently operating under such circumstances.

For most women, the dependency is justified by the belief that the situation is temporary. A strong admiration for their partner's talent and potential underpins the acceptance of such living conditions. As Monica explained,

Most of the time I understand (supporting him), but at the same time its stressful, you know, cause now I'm left to handle all the bills. He's still living there, he's still eating and so on. It puts some strain, ... I have my little tantrum and I get over it...

The willingness of these women to support their partners through economic and emotional hardship is rationalized by a belief that one day "his ship will come

in." As most musicians point out, the music business works on the "feast or famine" principle; you starve while you are fighting for recognition, but once you get signed you can potentially become rich as well as famous. According to most women, being in a band already affords male musicians a degree of fame even if it is currently limited to the local scene. As explained earlier, this fame coupled with artistic creativity and potential makes musicians "valuable" regardless of their lack of financial resources.

Another theme that emerges out of discussions of financial dependency is the connection between male rock musicians and female strippers. Almost every male musician I know has lived with, or dated a stripper at some point. When asked why there has always been this connection, the participants pointed out that not only are strippers sexually attractive, and working the same "circuit" as the rock bands, but more importantly, "it's notorious that strippers make hoards of cash."

Male musicians were the first to admit that this was part of the appeal. According to Dylan, "The truth is, musicians are poor and dancers make huge cash, and musicians want to stay with them because they buy them dinner and give them a place to stay, and pay off their gear." Many women saw the situation in essentially the same terms. As Devon concluded, "... for the women I think it was idolization of the guys, the bigger than life thing, and for the guys it

was generally that the strippers had money and they would lavish it on the guys."

Of course, women provide emotional support as well as financial support. This aspect of the role is more in keeping with societal expectations for women. As Lisa pointed out,

You have to be able to live with depression, their depression. Because being with a musician, they're very artistic, they also have their fragile egos. ... all this week Dylan's just been like, on the real low end of the roller coaster. You know, he questions his own career, ... you know like that they're not going to get signed, is it worth it and that kind of stuff. ... you have to learn how to live with that.

When I interviewed Dylan, he said the same thing. According to Dylan, all musicians have fragile egos and are prone to depression. As Dylan pointed out, a musician's well being is based on staying on top in an intensely competitive market. To live with someone in that kind of emotional flux requires patience, acceptance, and exceptional communication skills.

Many women claimed they found the emotional demands exhausting. As Gina explained, while all relationships require emotional nurturance and support, living with a musician poses its own unique challenges,

Every musician I've ever gone out with needs constant ego stroking. I don't know, I guess its a part of the "artist" thing. They confide in you, share their fears, the fear of failure, the fear of losing the creative spark, fear of not getting signed... and your job is to make them feel better, reassure them that they are talented, they will succeed, that you believe in them. It's a never ending cycle.

In my observation, women provide both economic and emotional support to musicians in the rock scene. Many participants feel the scene would collapse without this support, indicating that women are not marginal in the scene, they are in fact foundational.

CHAPTER IV. ROMANTIC RESIDUE

While most would say that a rock relationship is far from a traditional route to society's prescribed role of wife and mother, most women in the scene still held to these goals with romantic conviction. The fascination with the romantic ideals of marriage and family would strike most outsiders as a puzzling contradiction in a scene that is presumed to reject society's conventional roles by endorsing overt sexuality and casual encounters. Yet within the scene, notions of heterosexual romance not so different from mainstream ideas, are seen to anchor social relations.

As one woman explained,

Although there's a lot of short lived flings in the scene, I think the hope is always that it will turn into something more meaningful. ... The fantasy, especially for women, is that he will pick you out of the crowd, you'll fall in love, and you'll live happily ever after.

Relationships, such as Lisa and Dylan's, that approximated this romantic ideal were held up as proof that even rockers could have meaningful relationships. As some women pointed out, the knowledge that "the odds are against you" only fueled their determination,

I think that made it even more exciting, the challenge of knowing that circumstances conspired against you, ... it made being in love really exciting, romantic, ... it felt like it was you and him against the world. Like you had something to prove.

As Tyler pointed out, the challenge seemed to form a big part of the appeal. Tyler was not the only one who

suggested that women seem to demonstrate a desire to "conquer" musicians. Many women characterized rock musicians as "wild horses", in need of "breaking". Attracted by their wild, sexual appeal, the clear intent was to be the one to "tame" him. According to Nicole,

I don't know what it is, if it's women like to see things and fix it and change it, but it's so funny, you see so many women that say, I love musicians because they're this and they're that, ... and the larger percent of women that go for musicians ultimately want them to become accountants or something. It's funny, ... I don't know, maybe it's that women want to conquer.

Whether or not a woman wanted the change to be so extreme varied, however, the desire to change him into a responsible and dedicated life partner was clearly shared by most women. In my observation, women wanted the serious, stable love relationships so highly valued by mainstream society at the same time as they were drawn to the passion, creativity and intensity personified by musicians. As one woman insightfully suggested,

The problem I think is that what most women are attracted to and what most women need in a relationship are two totally different things. I am passionately attracted to artistic longhaired bad boys, instead of the responsible, normal mainstream men that would probably offer me more stability and future happiness. ... since relationships always begin with chemistry, I am powerless to change the pattern. ... I guess my dream is to find a stable, loving musician who can offer me both worlds, ... good luck eh?

According to most participants, getting married is a landmark accomplishment. Lisa, who has been married to Dylan for over five years, remarked that "being married is totally different. You get way more respect." To the

members of the scene, there is a huge distinction between a "girlfriend" and a "wife". Being someone's wife commanded respect, it distinguished you from all the other women in the scene, it signalled that your musician was serious about you and your future together. It was an indication of permanence, and it contrasted sharply with the usual transitory nature of most relationships in the scene. As one woman suggested,

It was the ultimate proof that you were not just a groupie. I remember when we got engaged, it was like 'see, he's committed to me! This is not just another relationship, this is different, this is special.'

Although the goal of becoming a wife and mother remained important to most women, the lifestyle often complicated the process of reaching these goals.

In some cases the order gets sort of screwed up, but most of the women I know want to get married and have kids. Sometimes it seems easier to have kids than it does to get married. (laughs) Maybe that's because one is a 15 minute commitment for a guy and the other is a whole lot more. ... Getting married is a big decision, most of the women I know would like to get married but it doesn't seem to fit with their guy's vision of himself as a free rocker, and besides, planning a wedding doesn't fit in well with touring and lack of funds etc. ... But lots of women in the scene have kids, and many of them raise those kids by themselves.

The above quote exposes a number of themes. While many women refuse to give up the goal of motherhood, they often abandon society's traditional route. As most women suggested, if you want to wait for the diamond ring, the stable income, and the house with the white picket fence, it'll never happen. For some, the lifestyle meant putting

off children far into the future, or out of their plans completely. For others, it meant doing it on their own and learning to be self-reliant. Again, women's independence played a major role in their choices. A woman depending on a man for support was not a part of the scene reality.

When Brock met Heather she was a young single mother with two children and was cocktail waitressing in the club where he was playing. According to Brock, Heather was fiercely independent, and he found this attractive and inspiring. Brock and Heather's relationship began as most do, by sleeping together first, and developing more serious intentions later.

Brock could be characterized as a free spirited, sexually open person. It was difficult for him to settle down, and going on the road did not help matters any. Although he told me he was totally in love with Heather, living together did not prove easy, and over a two year period they broke up too many times for me to keep track of.

Ironically, at the point when they decided that living together put too much strain on their relationship, Heather became pregnant. They decided to keep the baby, but to live apart. The baby is now almost a year old, and Brock and Heather have accepted that their relationship is over. Although Brock is excited and proud to be a father, his involvement in his daughter's life is limited. He is also not in a financial position to be of much help, as his band is currently touring and focusing on promoting their first

release. As is common in the scene, Heather bears the primary responsibility for raising her children.

Morgan is also a single mother with a seven year old son. According to Morgan, whom I met at a scene party, she got married at 21 and had a baby at 22. She pointed out that, unlike most women in the scene, her pregnancy was planned, and she was happily married. According to Morgan, she was also happily divorced soon after. When I initially asked Morgan if she had any children, she had replied, "Yes, two." After talking about her son for some time she introduced me to the man sitting next to her on the couch as "the other one."

In Morgan's view, because her boyfriend Todd was a musician, and was unable to help with their household expenses, she considered him her second dependent. This was obviously a well worn argument, as Morgan later joked about her disappointment that her son was already showing an interest in the guitar. She claimed that she had no intention of encouraging him, "Because I don't want to support him until he's thirty." Her partner chimed in casually, "What are you trying to say?" and they both laughed.

Later, when Morgan and I were alone I asked her how long she and Todd had been together. "Oh, almost a year now", was her reply. According to Morgan, she and Todd were considering having a child together in the next year or two. She was turning thirty, and would like to have at least one

more child. She didn't think they'd bother getting married though, they hadn't really talked about that.

Morgan was neither naive, nor uninformed. She was well aware of the difficulties of living with a musician. In her own words she was a "repeat offender", Todd was the third musician she had been involved with. We talked at great length about the problems associated with the lifestyle; the lack of money, the threat of infidelity, and the lack of stability. However, Morgan was convinced that she and Todd could struggle through. According to Morgan, she was strong, and Todd was "learning".

Troy and Holly are another fascinating story. When I met Troy, I was shocked to find out that he had a two year old daughter. Troy was only twenty three, and admitted it wasn't how he had envisioned his life at all. Troy played keyboards for a band called "Riddler". According to common friends, Holly had been a "Riddler" groupie who followed the band until she successfully met and slept with Troy. Shortly after they started sleeping together, they moved in together. As suggested earlier, this is a common pattern in the scene, and does not necessarily indicate long term intentions. According to Troy, it soon became apparent that they were not well suited and they agreed to separate.

However, they continued to sleep together for a short time after they broke up, and during that time Holly became pregnant. Although Holly insists her pregnancy was an accident, other members of Riddler claim she had told them

on several occasions that she and Troy had been trying to have a child together. She had also confided in other women that she was hoping Troy would marry her when he discovered the pregnancy.

After careful consideration, Troy decided not to marry her, but they continued to live together for a year after the baby was born. After the baby's birth, Holly went back to work, and Troy stayed home to care for their daughter. During that time his relationship with Holly continued to deteriorate until it was decided that he should move out and she should move in with her parents.

Troy has shown considerable concern for his daughter's well being and future. When I met him he was working a full time retail job to give Holly support money, on top of rehearsing and playing with his band. He cares for his daughter two to three days a week and is trying to see her more. Troy demonstrates an unusually responsible attitude towards his daughter. It has become increasingly clear to him that without an education, he will be unlikely to find a good paying job, so he recently left Riddler to go back to school. Troy is a rare example of someone who abandoned his dream because of his family obligations. Although Holly's dream of being married to a musician has obviously been derailed, she is luckier than most rock moms who receive little assistance from their former partners.

CHAPTER V. OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

This chapter will focus on what the women identified as obstacles to maintaining a stable, healthy relationship with a musician. The most common complaint was fear of infidelity. This issue was brought up continually by both the partners of musicians, as well as the musicians themselves and went hand in hand with complaints about touring and absence in the relationship. Overt sexuality is often identified by those outside as well as those inside the scene as one of the most salient aspects of the scene.

While "cheating" is obviously not a problem restricted to rock relationships, the combination of the sexual nature of the scene with the social nature of the business is a mixture that most characterized as explosive. As one woman noted,

What other situation regularly puts your boyfriend out of town and out of sight, in a dark smokey room full of alcohol and people looking to get lucky? It's obviously a lethal mix!

A musician's career routinely involves being on the road for up to, and sometimes exceeding three months at a time. According to most women, road trips are the hardest times to get through.

Musicians while on stage, and even when off, are perceived as figures to be admired, imitated and even idolized. They enjoy the power to inspire "desire". As Devon explained,

It was always there, it was constantly there, I would say initially I didn't have a fear of it (infidelity) because I knew that he was very much in love with me, but as things got rockier, I got jealous. I would react, I saw other situations happen with other band wives or other guys in the band, that I would be witnessing them screwing around on their wives or girlfriends and thinking, geez, and they don't really even have that much of a conscience about it. They would look at me like, 'yeah, I know you know, just keep your mouth shut' kind of thing... I would like to think that Jamie was above it, but ultimately he did come home at one point and tell me that he had kissed another girl, and I flipped ...

According to Devon, one of the hardest things to deal with was the fact that not only had her partner broken her trust, but that all the other guys in the band knew and had presumably told their wives and girlfriends.

He was kissing some girl in the back room and Darren or one of the other guys walked in, so not only did I have to deal with a feeling of infidelity... I had to deal with the humiliation of the rest of the band knowing.

This point was suggested by many other participants as complicating issues between couples. As Nicole pointed out, when you become involved with a musician, you also become involved with everyone else in his band.

You take the weight on of everybody else in the whole band, into your relationship, and nothing's sacred, nothing's private, ... that would be the hardest thing, just having so many people involved in your life.

According to most women this was a double edged sword. Along with knowing everyone else's business, you were also placed in awkward positions of trust. Many musicians followed the "code of the road", which was to keep road infidelity a secret, however, they usually told their wives about their bandmates' indiscretions. This forced a woman to choose between betraying her husband's confidence, and

betraying a woman who had usually become a friend. According to most women, this was a no win situation, as even if you chose to "snitch", the news was seldom well received; few women were grateful to hear that their partners had cracked under the pressure.

I was repeatedly told stories about women throwing themselves at male musicians, making offers of oral sex or intercourse, "no strings attached". I also witnessed several such situations in which women made it clear they were sexually available regardless of whether the musician had a girlfriend or not. In some cases women would actively pursue a musician even when his girlfriend or wife was obviously present in the club. Devon told me,

I saw some really gross direct approaches from women, and the women in the scene were always really beautiful at night when they were all done up, in high heels and stuff like that, and I had seen a very attractive woman walk up to Dylan and just say "Can I suck you off?", and I'd just be like, 'Oh my god, why are you doing this in front of me? I don't want to hear it!' ... Everything was so direct.

Such outrageous sexual offers, while identified as annoying and potentially threatening, were perceived as "to be expected" by most members of the scene.

According to Nicole, the persistence and nerve of some women was amazing, "It seems that if you're a musician, so many women think that it's open game, and there's no respect for the girlfriend." Nicole told me that some women went as far as finding out her boyfriend's phone number and calling him at home, where he lived with her. According to Nicole,

even if she answered, they didn't care, "I like the idea of sisterhood, but let's face it, there's a lot of really catty women out there, just as much as there are a lot of asshole men."

While such women, commonly referred to as "groupies", often succeeded in bringing about a sexual encounter, they were not highly regarded by anyone, including the musicians who were the targets of their attention. The term "groupie" was usually used to describe a woman² who followed rock performers seeking sexual attention.

While on the surface groupies may appear to have a lot in common with the wives and girlfriends of male musicians, the distinction between them within the scene is relatively clear. "Groupie" is a title that is earned by repetitive pursuit of male musicians without regard for personal pride or reciprocity. While all women in the scene exhibit a high degree of sexual autonomy and pursuit of potential relationships, groupies are identified as "relentless" and most women are cautious of behaving in any way that could be construed as "groupie like".

As one woman suggested on page 28 of this text, the best way to meet a guy you're interested in is through respected members of the scene. This emphasis on "respected" connections insures a degree of credibility. As she explained, although you are in pursuit, your meeting has to be perceived as "natural, otherwise you come off looking like a groupie." While first dates often end in sex, it is

the mutuality of the attraction that distinguishes a potential relationship from a meaningless groupie encounter.

According to my own observation as well as comments from other scene members, groupies are typically more direct, more focused on sexuality and less concerned with how they are perceived by anyone other than the man they are after. As Devon pointed out, they don't care who is standing there, they will just walk up to a male musician whom they have never met and offer him a blow job, no strings attached.

While most participants associated groupies with the pursuit of sexual attention, Tyler offered a deeper explanation, claiming that a groupie is,

Someone who's looking for someone else to fulfill their own life, ... who's relying on someone else to make them happy. ... Whether it be going to bed with them, spending time with them, being able to say they know them, being able to gossip about them, make their lives miserable, just because they get a sense of power out of it- there's a lot that do that. There's a lot of people I would call groupies that don't sleep with the people, but they try to get into a position where they can manipulate them... because it makes them feel powerful. ... the most obvious thing is getting them into bed, ... you know personal shit about them, no matter what it is.

Such behavior needs to be examined from the viewpoint of all the parties involved, the wives/girlfriends, the musicians, and the groupies themselves.

According to the wives such freely offered and aggressive pursuit of sex posed the most serious threat to their relationships.

I think that's why I went to the bar so much the first year Blair and I were together. I was petrified that the minute I wasn't around some bar slut would throw herself at him and he'd turn into some spineless hedonist.

As Devon noted, although you could start out feeling confident and trusting, the more you observed the harder it was to have faith, "As time went on I thought, no, ... it's next to impossible to have that much candy put out in front of you and not respond to it at some point."

According to the musicians, groupies were a "pain in the butt". "It gets to the point where they literally follow you to your room and don't leave you alone and send you little love letters and that kind of thing." Although most admitted that their first few times out on the road they had been far more appreciative and interested in playing the game, they explained that once the novelty has worn off you become more discerning and even disillusioned. As Dylan explained, it was the impersonal nature of the whole groupie thing that turned him off and encouraged many others to objectify the women. According to Lisa, Dylan often told her about walking into the other guys' hotel rooms after a show. He'd be in sweat pants and have his hair pulled back in a pony tail; the women would ask if he was in the band, and he would lie and say he was in the crew. According to Dylan, at that point he usually ceased to be of any interest to them.

Most male musicians found this fascination with the role over the individual grounds for dismissal. According

to most scene members, "a groupie is somebody who doesn't care who the person is, it's just that they're on stage." As Devon explained, although most groupies fixated on a particular musician, they were usually open to change. It would be, "I want that one, ... but there would be a secondary choice, or a third, or a fourth, even sometimes going down to- they would never get a band member, but they would be with a crew member."

According to scene members, there was a hierarchy between band members and crew members that replicated itself in the women. Band wives and girlfriends hung around together and were considered the core, whereas crew wives and girlfriends were on the margins. This replicated itself once again amongst the groupies. As Lisa suggested,

From the band's point of view, the girls who would do the band as opposed to the ones that would go for the crew guys, ... they were considered more low.

Although in some cases, the novelty of easy sex wears off, according to Tyler,

... it doesn't wear off for everybody. I know guys that are like thirty-eight years old now, and they're still playing the bar circuit and their number one priority is to get laid, and just try and do somebody different.

Some suggest that groupie activity has diminished since the 80's rock peak, however others, especially musicians who tour, point out that it is still very much alive.

Like Eric, our singer, I look at him, he's not a very attractive guy or nothin', but that guy gets chicks, ... females all over him... If anybody thinks that's not happening, it does for sure.

Although most of the women I talked to would not identify themselves as groupies, their behavior sometimes told another story. According to one woman,

Usually the way the relationship goes is that we'll just basically see each other when we're out, its not like we go out for dinner, its not those kind of relationships, you know, it's basically sex...

Another woman made an interesting point,

Why is it that men who have meaningless casual sex aren't questioned, but women who do the same thing are automatically assumed to be either hoping for something more, or emotionally disturbed. ... you know, that idea that groupies are somehow pathological, or looking to fill some sort of void in an inappropriate way. What does that make the men who sleep with them? How come nobody talks about their emotional void and insecurity? I think some women just like sex. It is possible that women use men for exactly the same reason men use women, pleasure.

This woman was not the only one to suggest such a possibility. According to Morgan, although she has led a limited sex life compared with her friends, she did have a "slutting around year" between two of her serious relationships. As Morgan explained, she wasn't looking for a relationship, her interest, pure and simple, was sexual gratification. According to Morgan, although she was active, she was "safe", and often didn't even have sex, "Sometimes I just took a guy home and made him 'give me face', and then kicked him out ... you know, guys do it all the time, so why not?" Morgan claims it was the best thing she's ever done, it put her in total control of her sexuality.

It should be noted before moving on that "cheating" was not a strictly male behavior. There were of course women who also found other lovers when their partners were on the road. According to Tyler, although the incidence of male infidelity is higher because of the availability of groupies and the security of being out of town, women have also been known to play the game. "I know girls that have totally faithful boyfriends that are on the road and as soon as they're out the door, they're in another band's tour bus."

According to Nikki, if your boyfriend is away for an extended period of time, it is almost inevitable that something will happen,

What would you do? I mean, you're in a relationship with somebody and he's gone for three months, you're going to go out, you're going to meet new people, you're going to do other things. Who knows what he's doing, he's in a band, you know, of course you're going to meet somebody else...

THE FAT CHICKS: VARIATIONS ON THE GROUPIE THEME

That's what we all called them, "the fat chicks", not to their faces of course, we really liked them and wouldn't want to hurt them, but the guys always called them that and it stuck as the most obvious and descriptive nick name for them. They were three sisters, Cheryl, Dana, and Barb. Sometimes they had a friend or two with them as well, but the three of them seemed to form the nucleus of the group. They were essentially aspiring groupies, and if they had been thin and attractive they would have been perceived

entirely differently, but because they were all considerably over weight and not conventionally beautiful, they were not perceived as a threat. They followed "Harm's Way", a band with whom I had a strong tie, as my best friend Devon was engaged to Jamie, one of the guitar players. Dylan was also a member of "Harm's Way" at that point.

The "fat chicks" were basically a group of incredibly supportive, enthusiastic "Harm's Way" fans. They would follow the band from bar to bar, and even from town to town. They made themselves friends of the band by being their most reliable supporters, and showering them in attention, free drinks, and even gifts. Gifts ranged from clothing, to oversized margarita glasses with each of the band members' names custom etched into the glass. The "girls" would attend gigs faithfully, always arriving early enough to secure a good table, close to the stage. Even when the guys were playing in Haney, they'd be there, an hour and 1/2 drive outside of the city.

For the guys, they were diehard fans, and for the band wives, they were familiar faces in sometimes less than glamorous venues. The wives admitted to me that although at first they found it unsettling and "weird", they soon came to find it comforting to know the "fat chicks" were always around. According to Devon, they were a "safe" variation on standard groupie behavior. They idolized the guys in the band and went to great lengths to please them, however, because they deviated from the acceptable standard of

feminine attractiveness they were perceived as "harmless".

As a general rule, groupies were treated with disdain and suspicion by the band wives and girlfriends. They were usually identified as malicious, manipulative troublemakers. According to most scene members groupies did little to challenge this image; they wasted little time on other women, focusing all their attention on the men. The "fat chicks", however, made a point of maintaining good relations with the band wives and consciously or not, they came to play a supervisory function in the wives' absence.

Whether or not the "fat chicks" ever had any fantasies about becoming involved with any of the guys was never revealed, it seemed irrelevant, as the likelihood of anything ever happening was remote. They chose to make themselves allies of the wives, rather than competitors, a wise strategy that prevented almost certain animosity.

The "fat chicks" became like family for the band. They invited the band, as well as their spouses over for dinner, phoned to make sure everyone had rides to and from gigs, and even provided a shoulder to anyone who needed one in a struggling relationship. The wives and girlfriends tended to confide in each other, but the guys sometimes shared their problems with the "fat chicks".

Because of their connection to the band, the "fat chicks" attained a degree of recognition in the scene. As Tyler suggested earlier, "knowing" a band was often identified as a source of power and prestige. According to

Devon, many women who wanted to get close to the band recognized the "fat chicks" as a valuable avenue of access. This probably afforded the "fat chicks" an increased sense of power and importance, as they not only kept the wives and girlfriends informed of any transgressions, but they also played matchmaker and screened potential girlfriends for unattached band members. The band members came to trust the "fat chicks" judgement and were influenced by their opinions of other scene members. If the "fat chicks" didn't like someone, it was assumed they had good reason. The "fat chicks'" popularity in the scene was solidified by the role they carved out for themselves in influencing the guys' behavior.

The "fat chicks" are an illustration of hero worship that differs in some ways from typical groupie behavior, but that also shares some key characteristics. These women pursued the band based on same admiration of the men as most groupies, however, the "fat chicks" were blocked from accomplishing their connection to the band through sexual means by their failure to conform to the norms of acceptable rock femininity. Their weight prevented them from being perceived as potential sexual partners, therefore the "fat chicks" were forced to replace the goal of sexual relations with non-sexual friendship. The desire to be connected with powerful male performers was still at the root of their behavior, regardless of the movement away from sexual attention as a means of securing recognition.

As Tyler suggested, typical groupie behavior includes the desire to spend time with musicians, and being able to say you know them. According to most musicians, groupies derive a sense of power from being able to influence a band or band member. The "fat chicks" have undoubtedly secured themselves such a position.

REMAINING HAZARDS

Although infidelity topped the list as the biggest threat to a rock relationship, the consuming nature of the music business, and the negative effects of the lifestyle on personal goals was also suggested. As most women pointed out, "they are married to their music, and you will always come in second". According to Devon, who has been involved with two musicians,

It's like they have a job, but they never ever leave it. ... For both of them, they were really dedicated to their music and that was their first love. And so I always felt... very secondary to what they were doing. ... Everything that he did came first, the band came first, the lifestyle came first, the hours, his hours came first, it was always him, him, him, ... yet he did not balance out what a typical normal relationship would be financially at all, um, and emotionally, or even domestically. ... I was the breadwinner and everything else, and all he did was his music.

Many women expressed similar feelings about the lifestyle. As Monica explained,

... all he focuses on sometimes is his music, which gets frustrating, cause it's like, 'hey, I'm here too,' you know, sure I need some attention once in awhile, not a lot, but even just acknowledgement that I'm here, because a lot of times the music becomes them,

especially when they're writing. They just focus in, they've got blinders on and for however long it takes to write that song, or more than one song, you're just out of the picture. ... It's strange, but you sort of get jealous with the instrument. It's like, 'why don't you put that stupid guitar away and spend some time with me,' ... it's stupid because it's an inanimate object, but you get jealous. ...

The hours and out of town touring obviously figured prominently in the concerns of the women. Most of the women I spoke to worked 9-5 in retail or service sector jobs. Many were hairdressers, sales clerks or secretaries. The following quote is representative of many women's experiences,

... the whole hours, schedule, lifestyle thing is completely screwed up because they would play at night, so he would get up at noon if I was lucky. ... At about 6:00 we could potentially eat dinner together, maybe, if there wasn't a sound check that night... at 10:00 at night he'd just be gearing up to a big night, he'd be out of the bar say at, again if we were lucky, between 2:30 and 3:00 and home by 4, but bouncing off the walls because of all the adrenaline and alcohol... and maybe gear down enough to go to bed by 5:00 in the morning. Well, I lived a 9-5 life. ... Ultimately it gets draining on any woman in that situation who doesn't live the exact same hours. But you can't live the exact same hours cause how the heck would you have any money coming in?

The musicians themselves acknowledged that the hours and lifestyle demands put strain on their relationships. According to Tyler, making it in the music business requires a 24 hour a day commitment,

The problems never change, ... one of the things is back asswards schedules, because you're not working 9-5, you know, like you could be in the studio or rehearsal any time of the day, all night, you never know when you're going to get out. You could get called up for a gig right at the last minute, ... you just have to go. ... not being able to plan things, that's a really tough one.³

As suggested, the effects on women's lives was enormous. According to Tyler, the demands of the lifestyle often lead to the breakdown of a relationship. Musicians cannot guarantee their partners time, money, or future plans.

Take my last relationship for example, and I never heard the end of it, she wanted to be able to go off on great fabulous vacations and buy real estate ... and there was so much that she didn't want to do without me, so she ended up not doing it herself and became very resentful.

"Sacrifice" was a theme that appeared consistently in women's stories. Many women claimed they stayed in jobs they disliked because they felt unable to leave. The necessity of a regular income to keep the rent paid was cited as the main contributing factor in keeping an unfulfilling job. As Jodi explained,

I worked at that store for 3 years. You would think that meant I liked it. Actually I hated it! But I felt trapped. It didn't pay well, but it paid the rent, and I couldn't count on Blair to contribute anything. I often thought of quitting and finding something better, but that seemed so unrealistic. I couldn't afford to be unemployed, shit, even missing a day or two of work when I was sick put us in financial hot water. I'd come home miserable day in and day out. I dreamed of going back to school, maybe taking something I could make a career of, something I could be proud of, but how the hell could I ever afford it? ... Blair would give me these pep talks after shitty days at work, I thought he was so sweet, so understanding, you know, supportive. I suppose looking back it was in his interest for me to stay in that job, it was keeping a roof over his head too.

Although the financial burden of involvement with a musician has been thoroughly discussed in a previous chapter, it should be noted that it is a problem that

participants brought up continuously. Most participants identified financial uncertainty as a key element in the suppression of long term and short term goals.

According to Jodi, the money situation affects your life on a variety of levels,

It affects your day to day life by limiting your choices. We had to survive on one income so luxuries like going out for dinner were rare, new clothes were even more rare, and going on a vacation somewhere was out of the question. I'm almost thirty years old, other people my age are buying condos and going to Mexico once a year, ... I'm lucky if I can afford car insurance. ... The money sucks.

Even the musicians themselves recognized the pressure that financial instability put on their relationships. According to Tyler,

... it's part of the starving artist syndrome, where you work at it so hard ... but you're always broke. Musicians are all broke ... everybody that's trying to make a serious go of it is broke. If they tell you otherwise, they're totally full of shit.

Subordinating their own goals for the sake of their partners' was a key source of resentment for the women. Many women claimed they felt "stuck", and feared that unless their partner "got signed" there was little hope for change. Getting "signed" to a record label was identified by both musicians and their partners as the key to financial stability and freedom, and this dream sustained many relationships through arduous times.

Dylan and Lisa have been useful throughout this project to illustrate that, despite the odds, some relationships survive. According to Lisa, keeping focus on your own goals

is the key to preventing resentment. Although Lisa admits her goals and choices have been greatly influenced by Dylan's career, she feels that having your own life is essential.

Dylan and Lisa began in much the same situation as most rock couples. Dylan was writing and playing and earning relatively little, while Lisa was working in a 9-5 secretarial position to pay their living expenses. According to Lisa, money was always tight, and their standard of living remained low. Being an intelligent woman, she began to feel unfulfilled and unchallenged. According to Lisa, instead of allowing her unhappiness to destroy her marriage, she decided to apply for a student loan and went back to school. While Dylan was obviously not in a position to contribute financially, he was emotionally supportive and they agreed to struggle by on as little money as possible.

Lisa recently graduated from her program and has opened her own business. The business is thriving, and although she is currently repaying her student loan, her potential future income has jumped dramatically. Dylan's band was also recently signed to Polygram records. After seven years together, Lisa and Dylan appear to have successfully overcome many of the obstacles the rock scene has thrown at them.

CHAPTER VI. FINDING POSITIVE IN THE NEGATIVE

While many women recognized that being involved with a musician posed many challenges, they also pointed out, albeit sometimes sarcastically, how much of a character builder it could be. According to Lisa, "You either find something positive, or you get out." Skills and characteristics fostered by rock relationships included independence, self-sufficiency, flexibility and resilience. The women I observed demonstrated an impressive degree of independence in all areas of their lives. This is particularly interesting in light of the commonly held view that women are by nature overly dependent.

Women in the rock scene, at least those intimately involved with musicians, claimed independence was a necessary skill for making it through,

You need to be independent even when you're with them! You go to the bar together, but he's playing most of the time you're there, so you're left wandering around or sitting by yourself. You learn to make friends fast, usually with the other guys' girlfriends and you hang out together.

According to the women, even when their partners were off stage in the bar they were left on their own the majority of the time. "He'd be wandering around, talking to this person, talking to that person, I could either follow him around and stand there and look stupid, or wander off and do my own thing. I usually opted for the latter."

When the couples were not in the bar, time together was sporadic. A musician's life, as alluded to earlier, is filled with rehearsal, studio time, meetings and extensive out of town touring. According to Dylan, even when in town, he spends an average of 12 hours a day concentrating on his music. Most other musicians said the same thing. The women found themselves on their own a considerable amount of time. According to Gina,

I used to hate being alone, but in some ways it can be a good thing. I get so much more done when Rick is away. The place stays so neat and clean. I try to convince myself that's the best part of being on my own, no one to pick up after except myself. Half as much laundry, half as many dishes, you know, ... no mess to get pissed off about unless I make it myself. ... I also read a lot when Rick is away. I get myself a treat, make a cup of tea and curl up on the couch for the evening.

Many of the women discussed having interests they pursued when their partners were out of town. Darcy had discovered she enjoyed cycling when she had been away visiting her brother. When she returned to Vancouver she purchased a mountain bike and took up the sport seriously. She admitted that because her partner lacked an interest and time for sports, she focused on it more intensively when he was out of town.

I've been thinking about it a lot lately. If Ian hadn't been on the road when I went to visit my brother he probably never would have taken me biking. Paul, (her brother) knows how hard it is to motivate Ian to do anything athletic, if he had been with me we probably would have spent the whole weekend watching movies and drinking beer.

According to Darcy, although she tried to interest her boyfriend in taking up the sport, it was unlikely to become a shared interest.

He always has some sort of excuse for why it's not a good time for a ride. Either he's already showered and doesn't want to have to redo his hair for playing that night, or he's too tired from being up late the night before. There's always something! Basically he's just not an athletic person, and I'm discovering I am. I try to ride even when Ian is home, but I admit I do most of my riding when he's out of town. Then I can go on longer rides instead of just racing around the seawall or doing one trail and trying to be home before Ian gets up.

Darcy pointed out that if Ian was home all the time it would be hard to schedule in time to pursue cycling. She felt that if he was there when she got home from work she would be more likely to flop down on the couch, have something to eat, and waste the whole rest of the evening watching t.v. Darcy stated that knowing he wasn't going to be there when she got home gave her the freedom to plan a ride without feeling guilty or worrying about cutting into their time together.

Other women shared similar feelings about being able to pursue goals and interests not shared by their partners. The activities the women indulged in when their partners were away ranged from artistic to physical to simple leisure pursuits. Two women admitted to having memberships to health clubs, but only going when their partners were out of town. Another woman claimed the best part of her boyfriend being away was, "Complete control of the remote control!" She was commenting on what she called the innate male need

to control what is being watched on t.v. She claimed she took pleasure in watching "girl" shows, which she described as "anything with women characters, a plot, and the absence of blood and guts".

One woman claimed the best part of her boyfriend going away was the freedom to go out to Mexican restaurants with her friends.

I love Mexican food. Steve hates it. When we were first going out, he'd go once in awhile, but it was obvious he didn't enjoy it. He's a hamburger and chicken fingers kind of guy. He'd complain and pick at his food so much it was painful to watch. His eating habits take all the fun out of eating out so we don't bother anymore. But when he's away I call Gina and we go out and have a great time. We order all sorts of stuff that would horrify Steve, and we drink lots of margaritas. She's fun to eat out with, she appreciates things.

Although they admitted it was lonely, most of the women I spoke to tried to see touring time as personal time to rest themselves, indulge in special interests and generally explore parts of themselves they felt were stifled by the day to day expectations of a relationship. This is an unusual opportunity for self-discovery often absent in the lives of women whose relationships lack structured time away from their male partners.

As well as having time to pursue hobbies and interests, the women with absent partners also formed strong friendship networks, often with the wives and girlfriends of the other band members. While the guys were away, the women would get together and have dinner parties, video nights, or go out together. The freedom of being on their own seemed to

afford them social possibilities most other married women had given up.

We get together, usually at Gina's house because she has the most comfortable couches! We rent sappy romance movies and bring big bags of chips and Que Pasa salsa. It's a riot, we talk, gorge ourselves, and get right into the movies. I don't know which is worse the tears over the stupid movies or the garlic!

Many women noted the closeness of female friendships and suggested it was probably the rock lifestyle that gave these friendships strength. According to Devon, during her relationship with Jamie she was, "solely surrounded by people involved in the scene." To Devon, they were a,

comfort zone, a support network that understood what it was really like to be going out with another musician. ... you turn to people who you can relate to, or who can relate to your problems, complaints, highs, lows, whatever. ... It was easier for me to go to the other band wives and talk to them about things that were going on because they were probably experiencing the same things, or similar situations.

Nikki said much the same thing,

... we bitch about the guys, the lifestyle, you know, all the shit we have to put up with. They really understand, because they're involved with musicians too. I guess its a bonding thing. We talk about sex too. Those are the best conversations! When you get 4 or 5 women together and you start talking about sex! My friends are really important to me, I don't remember my Mom ever having those kinds of close friendships. Her and my Dad seemed to only rely on each other, I don't think that was healthy. My Mom and her so called best friend would only see each other sometimes once a month, or only when the men were there too. They didn't talk about anything important, you know, just chit chat, the superficial stuff, certainly not about problems in their relationships, definitely not sex! I don't think she felt comfortable revealing anything intimate, women's friendships in my mother's generation seem so shallow to me, you know, ... useless.

While not all women's friendships outside the rock scene are necessarily superficial, the time factor involved in a touring schedule did leave these women with an unusual amount of time to invest in their female relationships. One woman clearly pointed this out when she said,

If I go for coffee with this woman I work with I always feel like we're on some sort of a schedule. We'll get into a really good conversation, but then she'll start looking at her watch. Her boyfriend gets home from work the same time every night. She always runs off to be there when he gets home. It makes me sick. Most of the women I know rarely go out in the evening without their husbands. They're always so bloody concerned about leaving them alone, like they're babies or something! It's hard to be a close friend with a woman like that, there isn't much to build a friendship on, a half hour here and there. My other friends, like the band wives, have lots more time for me. When the guys are rehearsing we go out for dinner or do something. Even when the guys are around Debbie and I often take off and go for dessert together, you know, to talk. My friends are important in my life, I don't just drop them because my boyfriend is home.

Of course, as Lisa pointed out, who you hung around with and when, was based largely on who your partner was playing with and what their schedule was. As Lisa explained,

For one thing, I'd go out to the clubs all the time, so they were always there, for another, we were all kind of in the same boat, you know, all the girlfriends of the band ... so we had a lot in common.

As many women who had been in the scene for a long time pointed out, the bonding together of band girlfriends also has a dark side. As one woman suggested,

In some ways I think all the band women hanging around together was harmful. We rationalized a lot. ... I think only being with other women who were experiencing the same shitty situations prevented me from recognizing that not all women put up with this stuff.

I think having friends outside the scene, and seeing how their relationships work has been a good reality check for me.

The following point is closely related,

I think the reason I ended up spending so much time with the other band wives was because not only were they the only ones I could relate to, but they were the only ones who could relate to me. Any friends I had outside the scene eventually lost patience hearing about the financial dependence and all the sexual bullshit.

As suggested, when friendships are too narrowly limited to other band wives and girlfriends, they have the potential to become dysfunctional.

According to Lisa, another major problem of relying on the girlfriends of other band members was that your link to them was jeopardized if a relationship broke up, if someone left the band, or if the whole band broke up. Lisa claimed this was one of the reasons she stopped spending so much time with the other band girlfriends. When "Harm's Way" dissolved, Dylan headed off in a different direction than most of the other guys. As Lisa explained, when the men parted ways, basically so did the women. The connection to the band had been the stabilizing force in these friendships.

When Dylan formed "Noxious", Lisa was cautious about bonding with the other band members' partners. According to Lisa, her behavior was influenced by a variety of factors. For one, she had taken a step back from the scene when she went back to school, and had developed a network of friends outside the music scene. Secondly, and perhaps because of

this, she felt she had less in common with the other guys' girlfriends. As Lisa explained,

I think it was a combination of outgrowing the whole thing as well as not wanting to go through that pain of losing people all over again... .

CHAPTER VII. BURNOUT

Burnout seemed an appropriate title for this chapter because it was a term suggested frequently by the women themselves to describe their situation. Outgrowing the club scene was a topic brought up by many women. For some, the result was limited to abandoning the bar scene, while for others the impact went much deeper, moving them to leave their relationships behind as well.

According to Devon,

In the beginning it was kind of exciting... it was neat to know all the little things, like if you were watching the band, all those little signs or signals that they would have, or, I would know if something screwed up because I knew the songs so well, and that was kind of an elitist thing, all the band wives kind of stuck together and it was an elitist thing, ... and then after awhile, it was like I knew every joke, every move, every lyric, every guitar riff, every everything. It became really boring... .

Devon claimed, "I completely lost the ability to have any fun in it anymore... it was no longer entertainment to me, it was his job, and it was a shitty job."

Even though Lisa and Dylan have a strong relationship, she too feels she has outgrown the bar scene.

I hate going to bars now ... you know, when I first met Dylan, I used to go to the clubs maybe three or four nights a week, and you know, it was fun, I was right into it. But I was only like between eighteen to about twenty-two, twenty-three. ... The people that are there are so much younger now, they're the age that I was when I was into it, so I mean I guess you just grow out of it, your interests change.

For many women, outgrowing the scene ran parallel to outgrowing their relationships. When I asked them how and

why a relationship ended the typical responses included:

- I just couldn't take it anymore.
- one day I just woke up.
- I couldn't continue living like that.
- finally I just "burned out".

Many women claimed they still loved their partners when they dissolved the relationship, but felt that they couldn't continue the relationship despite this.

I couldn't handle not having him around- he was out of town all the time. I'd go to parties alone, everyone else I knew from work etc. would be there with their spouses, I always resented that. Even when he was in town, everything revolved around him- he'd be playing so I'd go to the bar, if we did get invited to anything he usually couldn't go anyways, he had rehearsal, he had a meeting, he had a gig... I saw other couples, out for dinner, walking along the seawall, spending time together and I wanted that. I always felt lonely, even when we were together.

According to Jodi, the lifestyle was totally unfair, and left her in a perpetual state of dissatisfaction,

When he was in town he'd be out late at night, playing, rehearsing, checking out other bands etc. I had to get up at 7:00 am to go to work- I either went out to watch him play or I went to bed alone. If I did go out, I'd sit at a table with the other band wives. He'd drink way more than I wanted him to, and I couldn't, I had to drive us home, and I had to get up for work the next day. We wouldn't get home until 3:00 at the earliest, by the time he "tore down" and finished smoozing at the end of the night. I hated it- he had to talk to everyone, the fans, his friends... all I did was wait. Then he was always hungry so we'd stop on the way home for something to eat, I always found myself sitting in some 24 hour Denny's somewhere when I should have been home sleeping.

As Nicole pointed out, the irony of the situation is that, "The very thing that draws you to a person is usually the thing that ultimately you split up over." According to

most women, being involved with a musician is exciting, at first,

He was really different. I was drawn to his creativity. He was always the center of attention and I loved being a part of that. ... At first I loved the whirlwind lifestyle. But eventually the novelty wears off and you realize that what makes a relationship work is not passion and spontaneity, but stability. I just wanted to settle into a routine, but with his lifestyle that was impossible.

As Gina suggested, "It is difficult to live your day to day life under conditions everybody else reserves for the weekend." When I asked women what changes they would like in their relationships, they invariably wanted more financial stability, less time apart, and more commitment from their partners.

According to many women, road trips severely affected their ability to feel connected to their partners. As Devon explained,

...when he would come off the road, it was like starting all over again. It was like, 'who are you? I know I'm supposed to be in love with you, but you've been gone for four months, and all I remember was paying \$400 phone bills every month.' ...he would send me these wonderful romantic letters, ...but it was still weird, all that distance and all that time. And the longer that he would go away, the harder it would be for me to come back emotionally...

As Monica suggested, the intermittent nature of time together forces constant painful readjustment.

Being separated for awhile... being on your own... you get used of being on your own and this person comes back and disrupts your schedule. And then when you're back into them again, then they leave and you're left by yourself again.

For many women, the lifestyle became unbearable. As Devon explained,

I felt robbed, it was such an abnormal relationship. ... I felt angry, at having to live that way, and then looking into the future was probably what got me to thinking about breaking off the relationship, because I'd think, how long can I do this? ...ultimately I did not have the relationship that I wanted, which was to have a partnership with somebody that would be there to share the day to day stuff... .

CHAPTER VIII. BLURRING BOUNDARIES: CHANGES IN THE BIG PICTURE

While most of this thesis has dealt with the micro level of the rock scene, I think it may be helpful to locate rock relationships in the larger context. There has been an undeniable change in the local rock milieu. Anyone in the scene will tell you that for better or worse, "it's not like it used to be". The scene is in a fascinating state of transition. Some attribute the change to the influence of the Seattle based and subsequently commercially exploited "grunge" movement, although others insist the changes were already in motion long before anyone in the mainstream Vancouver scene had even heard of grunge or any of the bands associated with it. Grunge has been identified as a pivotal force encouraging a convergence of the previously polarized rock and punk scenes. Although most scene participants characterize the current scene as "post-grunge", the rise in popularity of such an alternative blend has had a profound impact on the music, fashion, and social organization of the scene.

I will begin by outlining changes taking place in the music scene during this project, and then move to a discussion of how these changes have impacted on gender expectations.

According to most participants, the peak of the music scene in Vancouver occurred in the 1980's. However, they are also quick to point out that the 80's scene was anchored

by rock clubs that offered "cover" bands. The premise of playing "covers" is to offer the audience a live version of what has already proven successful in the charts. While most musicians have a distaste for playing covers, audiences generally respond well. In the 80's, if a band was "tight" it meant that they could perform a technically impressive version of someone else's material. The crowd showed their appreciation by flocking onto the dance floor when their favourite song was played.

Most participants agree that in the 80's and early 90's more emphasis was placed on the social scene than on the music itself. While this study took place primarily in 1993/94, for anyone over the age of twenty, the so-called 80's scene has been the primary site of their experience. As seen throughout this thesis, participants constantly move back and forth between events that happened yesterday and events that happened a number of years ago. Participants also constantly point out and contrast the late 80's with changes currently taking shape in the scene. According to Dylan, who's band "Harm's Way" was a popular bar band at that time,

The scene in the 80's was more of a poser thing, where all the guys on stage tried to look as cute as possible to bring out the girls, so they'd bring out the guys and the guys would buy beer, and everybody could be happy. ...It wasn't about the music, it was mostly about posing. I'm the first to admit it... .

While the appearance of original bands was rare, the cover scene thrived. Most bands would appear at a club for

a week. A "week" consisted of three sets of roughly fifty minutes each for six nights. At the most a band might carefully insert 4-5 original songs into their last set. Mid-week crowds were moderate and weekends clubs were packed.

According to most participants, if you were involved in the scene at that point it was easy to become totally immersed. As Monica suggested,

We were out 4-5 days a week, yeah, or more, no one ever saw me, it was like you go to work, you get home, you take a nap, get dressed, you're gone, get back at 3 or 4 in the morning, do the same thing over again every night.

As Monica explained, dancing was a big part of it, especially for women,

Everybody danced, it was just what you did, you know, certain songs would come on and the dance floor would be packed. ...it was a great feeling ... everybody was so into it, the hair, the clothes and the style of music...

Many participants characterize the 80's and early 90's scene as "glamorous".

...people used to dress to the nine's just to go to a local club, everybody, even the guys... it was sort of like being a peacock letting your feathers go kind of thing...

As Devon explained, "it was definitely a look, long hair, backcombed, lots of makeup, 'pretty', always made up 'pretty'". Clothing styles focused on sexuality. Both women and men spent a great deal of time and effort on their appearance. For men, tight jeans, leather, and boots was the norm. For women, tight jeans, short skirts and sexually

provocative clothing was essential. While many clubs, bands and scene members still subscribe to this traditional rock look, the vanguard of the scene is currently moving in a new direction. Lisa admitted, in some ways she misses the 80's scene,

...it was more glamorous, it was fun to get all decked out and wear high heels and you know... go out and have fun and be sexy. Whereas now you wear just jeans and a big shirt and whatever... it's not a glamorous thing at all.

Most participants agree, the 80's glam rock scene had a limited life expectancy and eventually burned itself out. While some mourn its death, others bid it good riddance. The Seattle based grunge movement could be viewed as the antithesis of glam rock. According to Dylan,

The grunge scene started because everything was so happy... it's more the negative side of life, they tune the guitars down so it sounds deeper and heavier, sing about topics like child abuse and starvation and more negative aspects of life, which is good. ...it's not just this glossy rock and roll, let's party and get laid (mentality), it's more about real life... it's more real.

The fashion, like the music became more real. The grunge look is intentionally unpretentious, and in fact, ungroomed. Baggy jeans, plaid shirts, t-shirts and doc martins are the base of the look. Big backcombed hair has been replaced by more natural, unkept styles. The message of grunge on appearance seems to be the less effort the better.

Whether the explosion of grunge onto the scene caused the collapse of the glam rock scene or simply occurred at the same time, the Vancouver scene is in a state of

transition. Musically, the emphasis is moving from cover bands to original music. Although cover bands still exist, many of the venues that supported them have shut down. As Dylan suggests, "I think people are sick of hearing cover tunes, they want to hear something original and see something exciting".

The organization of the club scene is also being affected. There has been a movement away from showcasing cover bands for a week at a time, to featuring original acts for one nighters. This has also had a huge impact on the social scene. While the behavior discussed throughout this thesis is still very much in evidence, as the scene becomes more fragmented, patterns are not as easily discernable. As Tyler suggests,

Where the music cycle is right now, the trend is anti-establishment, anti-money, underground. And it's coming from that headspace so they're keeping that in smaller underground less money making kinds of venues... the mainstream pop commercial industry is taking a big beating.

There are signs that this musical shift has had some effect on gender roles and expectations. As suggested, the most visible change so far is in fashion. Whether the recent abandonment of stiletto heels and miniskirts will equate to more respectful treatment of women remains to be seen, however some scene members insist it has already made a difference. According to Dylan,

In the 80's women were treated like shit, and it's totally true, they were looked down on as total sex objects and brain dead, and they seemed to play it up a lot too...

As Gina noted,

It's hard to be viewed as anything more than a sex object when you're wearing a bustier, miniskirt and five inch heels. Even in the 80's, I got treated with more respect if I was just wearing jeans and boots. ...granted, the women in miniskirts got more attention, but I got more respect.

As most participants suggest, the 80's rock scene placed an inordinate emphasis on sexuality, especially for women. According to Nicole,

I'm glad we're out of the 80's in a big way. I think it was damaging to all of us, ... that whole female image thing, we're working out of it, women are getting the respect back...

Many participants point to the current success of women bands as evidence that the gender climate is changing.

According to Dylan,

Now there are great girl bands out there, before it was like, 'oh they can't play', ...in the 80's women bands were kind of laughed about.

According to most scene members, women are making huge inroads as performers in heavy rock. It is interesting that the increased acceptance of women performers in heavy rock coincides with the musical movement towards deeper lyric content and sociopolitical subject matter. On the one hand, women may feel their issues have more of a place in the current music shift, and on another, the audience has been "primed" to accept such challenging contributions.

As Robert Walser suggests, there has been a move away from the "...standard leather/chains/eyeliner heavy metal band, with lots of tragic macho songs about running, shooting, and falling down..." (Walser 1993: 120)

Contemporary hard rock has altered its course to include topics as diverse as romantic love, environmental issues, world politics, and gender inequality.

While there have always been successful women in rock, (Chrissie Hynde, Pat Benetar, Tina Turner, Lita Ford, and Ann and Nancy Wilson) they have typically been seen as anomalies, exceptions to the rule, ... the male rule. Rock has been a male dominated and male defined scene, however, according to both male and female participants, the male stronghold on the rock medium is beginning to come under attack. While the changes currently taking place in the scene at the performance level are relatively new and beyond the scope of this research, when a number of women bands call themselves Riot Grrrls and demand a 'revolution', it is hard not to be optimistic.⁴

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

One of the purposes of this thesis has been, "to provide a voice for women, whose lived experiences have been conspicuously absent in the subcultural discourse." (17) It has been my intention not only to provide an accurate description of heterosexual relationships in the rock subculture, but also to highlight the importance of the role that women play in the perpetuation of the scene.

The reason women have been absent in most subcultural accounts likely stems from the invisibility and devaluation of the role they play. As in mainstream society, women and men have been socialized to fill two different roles in the music scene. While men aspire to be, and often are, musicians, women more often play the role of fan, girlfriend or wife. These roles support what Susan Cole describes as the societal stereotype of women as "nurturant caretakers" and men as "active doers". (Cole 1993: 89/90)

Not surprisingly, because men are the "doers", in this case the performers, they have been identified by researchers as playing a more important role in the scene. However, while men dominate the performance aspect of the scene, performers are only one component of the subculture. The majority of individuals in the rock subculture are spectators.

Examining women's behaviors and perceptions has led to some interesting observations. While on one level women fit

easily into the stereotype of caretaker or sexual object, on another, they exhibit behavior that rejects this role expectation. It is as if the appearance of the scene contradicts its material reality: while women exhibit the stereotypical feminine traits of preoccupation with physical attractiveness and fixation on male attention, they also exercise agency, independence and financial autonomy. Such traits have usually been associated with the ability to exercise power, a traditionally masculine characteristic.

Ironically, while men enjoy visibility and recognition in their role as artists, the cultural remuneration for their work is inadequate. I am referring here to what participants dubbed "the starving artist syndrome". (see p.72) While society claims to revere the artistic, except in advanced stages of recognition it does little to pay for its production. While some musicians have "day jobs" to pay for their living expenses, most do not. According to most musicians, holding down a job is impossible if you are serious about your music. To become successful requires investing all available time and energy in your music. (see p.70) As Tyler pointed out, making it in the music business requires a 24 hour a day commitment.

Scheduling practice, rehearsal and gigs around even a part time job is difficult. Therefore, most rock couples reverse the stereotype and establish male dependency on female material as well as emotional support. As discussed in Chapter III, women typically fulfill the breadwinner role

in most rock relationships. As Nicole pointed out, " ...all the girls were working, taking care of the guys in the bands... it's true, it was funded by females for sure."

(45)

It could be argued, therefore, that without the support of women, the male dominated music scene would collapse. While the role of providing economic sustenance is devalued and obscured, it is an obvious contributing factor to the survival of the scene. If women are as marginal as most subcultural theorists have led us to believe, their withdrawal should leave the scene more or less intact. I would argue that the withdrawal of women from the scene would be detrimental, because as I stated earlier, "Women are not marginal in the scene, they are in fact foundational." (49)

It would be useful at this point refer back to what Angela McRobbie identifies as necessary questions concerning the place of women and girls in subcultures. (this text: 9)

1. "Are [women and girls] present but invisible?"

As I have argued above, women are definitely present in the rock scene. As Robert Walser points out, the audience for rock music, including heavy metal, is now "roughly gender balanced." (Walser 1993: 110) Academic preoccupation with "the male" is therefore informed by a focus on "musicians" at the expense of all other participants in the subculture. While it is true that the majority of musicians, especially in heavier styles of rock

music are male, they are not the only members of the social scene. The invisibility of women is therefore a direct result of "who" is deemed worthy of study, and "how" research is carried out. The invisibility of women in the contemporary rock subculture is an artificially constructed absence that is not recognized by members of the subculture themselves. Subcultural participants, while recognizing the performance side of the scene as male dominated, characterize the social scene as either gender balanced or driven by its female members.

2. "Where present and visible are [women's] roles the same, but more marginal than the [men's], or are they quite different?"

I think there are two components to this question with regards to social roles in the rock subculture. For the most part, women play a totally different role than men in the scene. Men are musicians; women are supporters. As Devon stated on page 36, "Women generally 'hang-out'... or they were groupies... It was not a professional scene for women."

In the case of women as supporters, the female role involves sexual service, admiration of male activity and accomplishment, and provision of an emotional and economic foundation in relationships. While in terms of survival women's contributions are important, glory and recognition are reserved for the male artist. The focus on the male performer as the "hero" and recipient of public adoration effectively diffuses the accumulation of women's power and

retains men as the center of attention. While women's contributions to their partners' success and subsistence are impressive they remain hidden, much the way a secretary's work makes an executive's accomplishment possible without entitling her to a share of his prestige.

There are of course some women who have stepped outside the role of woman as silent supporter to become musicians themselves. Unfortunately, the limelight does not automatically translate into role equality with men; for women it brings with it gendered expectations. As most female performers pointed out, for women sexuality is a key aspect of performance success. This is not surprising given our society's construction of women as sexual objects. As Susan Cole suggests, and my study supports, the most acceptable position for a woman in a band is as a singer. (this text: 36) According to Cole, a woman as singer is consistent with the societal image of women as "to be looked at" and identified with their bodies. (Cole 1993: 90/91/92)

According to cultural stereotypes, women are "technologically impaired", therefore "Generally speaking, men play instruments, women play their bodies as instruments." (92) As Monica explained, much of the emphasis for female performers was on assets other than their voices:

... we had to dress a certain way, the more cleavage the better, no flat shoes, always heels, you know, the shorter the skirt the better kind of thing, because it sells, and it does unfortunately ... the guys could pretty well wear whatever they wanted but we had to

dress to the nine's because we were the women of the band and we helped give them their image. (39)

As I stated earlier, the message to women was clear, they "were valued more for their bodies and sexuality than they were for their musical ability." (40)

As Cole points out,

This is not to say that men are never perceived as sexy, but only that when male pop stars convey sex, they are not reduced to sex, but rather elevated to positions of power. (96)

The reduction of women performers to sexual objects was brought up by many women and men in this study. While male musicians recognized the contribution that sexuality played in their own performances, the degree to which it determined their success was perceived as less crucial.

3. "Is the position of [women] specific to the subcultural option, or do their roles reflect the more general social subordination of women in mainstream culture?"

This question is certainly the most fruitful but difficult to examine. It is my belief that women in the rock scene occupy a richly conflicted position with regards to the mainstream cultural construction of femininity. If the dominant culture defines femininity as submissive, restrained sexuality and dependence, women in the rock scene clearly deviate from this standard. As illustrated in Chapter I, women play an active role in initiating and maintaining relationships. They exercise a great deal more power in directing their sexual behavior than is typically expected of women in mainstream society.

At this point, however, I think it would be useful to explore in some detail the nature of women's "power" in the scene. Women's power is still undeniably linked to their sexuality. It is however the "active" nature of this sexuality that somehow rejects society's behavioral norms at the same time that it accepts them. Sexual objectification is a complex issue in a scene that encourages both men and women to display themselves in a sexually explicit manner. Perhaps the most accurate depiction would be of women not as "passive" sexual objects, but rather as "active" sexual objects.

Many participants suggested that at the peak of sexism in the rock scene, women appeared to actively embrace the focus on their sexuality as a source of power. As Robert Walser points out, "... the social context within which heavy metal circulates (primarily Western Societies in the late twentieth century) are highly patriarchal... ." Walser discusses the tendency of rock music to portray women as powerful, but in specifically sexual terms. This theme is especially popular in heavy metal videos. According to Walser, heavy metal has developed a "discourse of male victimization" in which female attractiveness "threatens to disrupt both male self-control and the collective strength of male bonding". (Walser 1993: 118)

Walser offers an impressive characterization of female power in the scene, and connects it to the broader social context,

Female fans, ... are invited to identify with the powerful position that is thus constructed for them. It's a familiar one, since women are encouraged by a variety of cultural means to think of appearance as their natural route to empowerment. (119)

Walser believes, as do most feminists, that gender roles are constructed. I agree with Walser's assessment that,

... I see sex roles as contradictory, mutable social constructions rather than as normative formations somehow grounded in biology or an ahistorical psychology. ... no component of identity is stable or natural. Heavy metal, like all other culture, offers occasions for doing "identity work" -among other things, for "accomplishing gender." (109)

The rock scene offers women an interesting variation on the role women occupy in mainstream society. While the rock subculture allows an unprecedented degree of sexual choice and control for women, it also firmly focuses women's aspirations on the maintenance of heterosexual relationships. The desire to become involved with powerful men is not surprising given our society's measurement of women's success through their relations with men. As Sheryl Garratt suggests,

A lifetime of supervision means that few girls dream of themselves becoming exceptional, instead, they fantasize about boyfriends who do it for them, projecting their desires yet again onto men. (Garratt in Frith and Goodwin 1990: 403)

While Garratt's work focuses specifically on adolescent girls' infatuations with male pop icons, her argument is equally relevant to the rock subcultural context. As Devon explained,

It's exciting, a guy being up on stage and having all that attention, and all the women around wanting that man, and him looking at you and wanting you was a real

kick. It was like peacock feathers. ... Wow, you're bigger than life and you want me. (35)

As I stated on page 35, many women thrive on the connection to famous men, "There is a sense of vicarious thrill in being associated with the power of the performer."

Why is it that so few women aspire to be musicians? Does society drain girls of their confidence so systematically that it extinguishes their ambition even before they become aware of the institutional discrimination in the music business? Most of the women I interviewed, although heavily involved in the music scene, denied having any musical talent themselves. Participation in the scene in a strictly social capacity was considered perfectly appropriate for women. Even women who were talented musicians were hesitant to identify themselves as such, and downplayed their accomplishments.

It seems that women in the rock scene retain as many conventions of mainstream femininity as they reject. The gender construction of male as performer and female as spectator is one convention that is seldom broken, despite the resistance of some spirited women. As Robert Walser suggests, "The sexual politics of heavy metal are, as we will see, a conflicted mixture of confirmation and contradiction of dominant myths about gender." (Walser 1993: 120)

While society discourages women from realizing the confidence necessary to become a performer, (Bayton in Frith and Goodwin 1990) it imbues them with the determination to

seek and maintain relationships with others. For women, the necessity of securing a heterosexual relationship with a man is of the upmost importance. As Mavis Bayton explains, this reflects society's prescription for proper female focus,

Women are, then, expected to be most "committed" to their families, to their children and partners. A girl's search for a boyfriend is conventionally more important than a boy's search for a girlfriend. It takes up more time and effort, and boys thus give a far more wholehearted commitment to their hobbies than girls typically feel they can... (256)

The evidence of this pattern in the rock scene is impressive. In the rock context, the male hobby, in this case the music, becomes the barometer of success. As Devon noted on page 69,

It's like they have a job, but they never leave it. ...they were really dedicated to their music and that was their first love. And so I always felt ... very secondary to what they were doing.

Monica expressed a similar frustration, "... all he focuses on sometimes is his music ... a lot of times the music becomes them... ." (69)

As Bayton points out, socialization puts women and men on two different paths. Men work on their music, women work on their relationships with men.

The most striking thing about women's experiences with rock musicians is their commitment to their relationships despite what they identified as overwhelming obstacles. Dealing with issues of sexual promiscuity in the scene, as well as lack of financial stability and regular time together put an incredible amount of pressure on rock

relationships. As many participants suggested, although "the odds are against you", women display a strong dedication to making their situations work. As I stated on page 51, if women are attracted to rock musicians "by their wild, sexual appeal, the clear intent [is] to be the one to 'tame' him." As one woman suggested, "... The fantasy, especially for women, is that he will pick you out of the crowd, you'll fall in love, and you'll live happily ever after." (50)

Women in the rock scene clearly embrace notions of heterosexual romance, however they reject traditional male figures and conventional routes to the prescribed female roles of wife and mother. While women's willingness to deal with problems most would define as unfair is puzzling, I think it is part of a bigger process. Rather than viewing women's behavior as settling for less than mainstream women, I came to recognize it as a desire for "more".

By becoming a member of the rock scene, women have not abandoned societal expectations of heterosexual pairing and relationships, rather, they have rejected what they see as boring, traditional, routinized relationships offered by the mainstream. Most women claimed they are drawn to the excitement, the spontaneity and the passion of musicians. They are not rejecting longterm relations with men; they are rejecting involvement with what they identify as typically boring, traditionally defined men.

In contrasting the rock scene with mainstream society, Lisa explained,

... it's always changing, there's never anything that's the same, it's very interesting... I like it, there's lots of things that other people wouldn't like about it, ... but I could never be with somebody who had just a normal 9-5 job after this... just because it's so different, and it's exciting... I like it.

In discussing her relationship, Nicole elaborated on this idea,

He's creative, and I think creativity also in a large sense means you're more in touch with your feminine side, and musicians on the most part, are passionate or they wouldn't be doing what they're doing, and these are great qualities.

It is not that rock women are willing to settle for less, as suggested by their acceptance of and struggle with the lifestyle demands. Rather, they are forced to struggle with these obstacles in their pursuit of more. Whether or not musicians are truly more sensitive, passionate and creative than other men is really inconsequential; the point is that these women believe they are, and are attracted to them for this reason. Most people identify artists in a similar way; they are usually contrasted with traditional, patriarchal male figures. Artists symbolize creativity, nonconformity and emotional depth. Women's pursuit of musicians could therefore be construed as a resistance to conventional images of masculinity.

It would appear that masculinity and femininity are both decentered in the rock scene. The rock scene offers both men and women alternatives to what they recognize as

conventional gendered subject positions at the same time as it establishes a heterosexual norm. As Robert Walser points out,

Debates over the liberating possibilities of mass culture all too often proceed in terms that neglect the gendered character of all social experience. Yet popular music's politics are the most effective in the realm of gender and sexuality, where pleasure, dance, the body, romance, power and subjectivity all meet with an affective charge. (Walser 1993: 126)

Although the rock subculture obviously maintains some gendered expectations from mainstream society, its challenges also underscore the instability of gender and gender roles. I agree with Walser, that the antics of rock musicians and scene members, particularly the play with androgyny and glam styles, "Shakes up the underlying categories that structure social experience." (134) As Walser points out, rock and all its spectacles "plays" with identities and the assignment of gender roles. According to Walser,

There is nothing superficial about such play; fans and musicians do their most important 'identity work' when they participate in the formations of gender and power that constitute heavy metal ... unreal solutions are attractive and effective precisely because they seem to step outside the normal social categories that construct the conflicts in the first place. (134/135)

Walser strongly supports John Fiske's suggestion that, "Dismissing fantasy and escapism 'avoids the vital question of 'what' is being escaped from, 'why' escape is necessary, and 'what' is escaped to.'" (134/135) As Walser suggests, rebellion and escapism are best understood as "an attempt to create an alternative community." (xvii)

It seems evident to me that by differentiating themselves from the mainstream, rock subcultures are automatically engaged in a struggle over identity and roles. What they choose to retain from the dominant culture and what they choose to reject provides valuable cues to the site of their resistance. The alternative community dreamed of by the women in the scene in many ways reflects mainstream aspirations. Rock women still desire fulfilling stable relationships with men, however, they want their men to be in touch with their creative, sensitive and passionate characteristics. The dream of financial freedom underscores both women and men's commitment to the scene. As mentioned earlier, "getting signed" is identified as a ticket to both freedom and stability.

It should be noted that subcultures are not homogeneous; their members display different degrees of commitment to the group culture. Resistance to society's notions of sexual propriety are obviously at the base of most youth music subcultures. During the U.S. Senate hearings investigating the impact of rock and pop music,

... those rising to pop music's defence conveyed their views that rock musicians challenge the social order with their creative dissidence, in particular with their increasingly sexually explicit imagery. (Cole 1993: 89)

The connection between rock music and resistance to restrictions on sexuality was brought up continuously by the participants in this study. While rock music has undoubtedly challenged societal norms of acceptable sexual

behavior, it has often issued its challenge in disappointingly sexist terms. As Walser points out,

Heavy metal perpetuates some of the worst images and ideals of patriarchy at the same time that it stands as an example of the kinds of imaginative transformations and rebuttals people produce from within such oppressive systems. (135/136)

There has however, been a recent explosion of women onto the heavy rock scene who challenge the sexist underpinnings of the scene. As Dylan and many others pointed out, "Now there are great girl bands out there."

(91) Such challenges indicate a fundamental questioning of the subservient role women have come to play in the subculture. If the 80's and early 90's rock scene was characterized by an acceptance of gendered power relations, the late 90's appears to be developing in strong opposition to such definitions. Heavy women bands are displaying an overt engagement with feminist ideals and are working such material into their music, fashion, and social behavior in the scene. The "Riot Grrrl" movement appears to qualify as what Walser calls,

... many extant examples of rock music that use the powerful codings of gender available in order to engage with, challenge, disrupt, or transform not only rock's representation of gender but also the beliefs and material practices which those representations engage. (Walser 1993: 135)

The point of such challenges is to highlight the flexibility of gender construction, and negotiate a more powerful and unconventional role for women in the social structure. Although Robert Walser focuses his gender

analysis on the construction of masculinity in the rock scene, his comments illustrate the constructed nature of both masculinity and femininity,

Masculinity is forged whenever it is hammered out anew through the negotiations of men and women with the contradictory positions available to them in such contexts. It is also forged because masculinity is passed like a bad cheque as a promise that is never kept. Masculinity will always be forged because it is a social construction, not a set of abstract qualities but something defined through the actions and power relations of men and women... . (135/136)

The implications for gender roles are clear; they are artificial constructions that have changed dramatically over the decades, and promise to continue changing in the future. The role of women in negotiating their own identities in the gender game is becoming increasingly strong. As Joanne Gottlieb and Gayle Wald suggest,

In the past, when women have participated in rock culture they have tended to do so as consumers and fans- their public roles limited to groupie, girlfriend or backup singer, their primary function to bolster male performance. (Gottlieb and Wald, in Ross and Rose 1994: 256)

While the majority of the women in this study are still trapped in this role, it appears that women are becoming discontented with such limitations, and are increasingly demanding more. As Gottlieb and Wald optimistically suggest,

Despite real fears about the erosion of their integrity, ... the signing of the three most recognizable "angry women bands" to major labels may signal mainstream commercial acceptance of a new role for women in rock and, most optimistically, the beginnings of a new role for women. (252)

In conclusion I would like to say that women are not absent in rock subcultures, nor are they silent. Women are increasingly finding their voices and rejecting sexist gender constructions in loud and confrontational ways. I have no doubt that women have the strength and independence to seriously challenge the existing social order and negotiate themselves a new and revolutionary subjectivity. Women in the rock scene, as shown in this study, have already broken free from financial dependence on men, however, they have only recently began questioning emotional dependence and personal identification through relations to men.

The recent acceptance of female performers who openly criticize the patriarchal construction of male power and female subservience is indicative of changing gender expectations. While Riot Grrrl activity is relatively recent and beyond the focus of this research, slogans such as "Overthrow cock rock, idolize your grrrlfriend" illustrate the potential for new gender identities.

Dick Hebdige concluded his discussion of Subculture by stating that,

It is highly unlikely... that the members of any of the subcultures described in this book would recognize themselves reflected here. They are still less likely to welcome any efforts on our part to understand them. (Hebdige 1979: 139)

It is my hope that the participants in my study do recognize themselves here, and identify the collective nature of women's struggles in the rock scene. The enthusiasm with

which participants shared their experiences leads me to believe that members of this subculture do want to be understood. Perhaps the point is to take subcultures seriously and examine them on their own terms.

NOTES

- 1 1976 Resistance Through Rituals edited by Stuart Hall et al.
- 1990 On Record: Pop, Rock and the Written Word edited by Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin.
- 1991 Feminism and Youth Culture Angela McRobbie.
- 1980 Screen Education 34.

2 According to most participants, the word "groupie" was usually reserved for females, however some males could also be called groupies. The male groupie usually hung around bands with the hope of cultivating a friendship. Participants suggested that most males were after notoriety by association and access to the female attention that was usually focused on rock bands. Male groupies were often accorded more respect than females and were allowed the less stigmatizing title of "fans".

3 Although I have always known that "making plans" with a musician is difficult, Tyler's statement rang particularly true during the interview part of this study. The interviews I did with women were usually scheduled a week in advance, and proceeded according to plan. The interviews with male musicians, on the other hand, were usually rescheduled a minimum of three times, with many no shows and last minute cancellations. It was an interesting taste of what many women were complaining about.

4 A full explanation of Riot Grrrl activity is beyond the scope of this thesis. As Joanne Gottlieb and Gayle Wald suggest, the Riot Grrrl movement refers to the "recent explosion onto the independent or underground scene of all-women bands or individual women artists making loud, confrontational music in the ongoing tradition of punk rock." (Gottlieb and Wald, in Ross and Rose 1994: 250) Riot Grrrls demonstrate a commitment to self-conscious and political exploration of female identity. As the authors suggest, "The recent visibility of women in rock not only signals greater access for women to male dominated realms of expression, but also specifically frames these expressions in terms of femininity and feminism." (251)

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APPENDIX A

PROBLEMS AND THOUGHTS

I consider myself lucky to be able to honestly say that, unlike most of my colleagues, at this point I am not sick of my topic. For the most part I found this project an exciting and interesting endeavor. However, as has become fashionable, I would like to share some of my more personal reflections on this research.

I must admit I did encounter a series of obstacles during the research process, some of them external and some of them internal. With regards to external obstacles I would like to say that I now emphatically support Angela McRobbie's claim that sociology has become disappointingly superficial and empirical. As McRobbie points out, ethnography seems to be in "deep danger of dying out altogether." (McRobbie 1991: xi/xii)

McRobbie's observation that such work is becoming increasingly underfunded rings particularly true for me. When I chose my topic it became clear to me that I would have to be both self-directed and self-funded. There was only one faculty member who was familiar with my method, and only a handful more who had any understanding of feminist theory or popular culture. For the most part, I was on my own. While I was willing to make the necessary mental adjustment, the financial element almost derailed the project. My experience has been that funding is not

available for projects that seek to understand youth and youth settings, particularly groups that could be construed as deviant. Basically, getting money to "go out to the bar" is not an easy task.

So, armed only with my remaining student loan money and part-time earnings, I tried to attend as many gigs as I could afford. The cost of doing this type of field work is staggering. Cover charges range from \$7-\$12, and higher for special acts. Once inside, waitresses and other patrons expect you to drink, after all, this is a bar. While I usually didn't order alcoholic beverages, as I was concerned that alcohol would interfere with the quality of my observation, I felt obligated to order at least two or three non-alcoholic drinks per night. As one would expect in a business that is based on the sale of alcohol, non-alcoholic drinks were no less expensive and required just as much of a tip. If going out three or four nights a week is too expensive for the average person, it was no less painful for me.

On a more personal level, I found it hard to motivate myself to go out on a regular basis. As many of the women in my study pointed out, you reach a point where you feel you have outgrown the scene. A word of advice to anyone considering doing this kind of work; do it when you are young and full of energy... and single!

I am also married, and although my partner is extremely supportive, the temptation to stay home and curl up on the

couch after a hard day sometimes proved irresistible. Going out at 10 or 11:00 at night and coming home at 2 or 3:00 in the morning is definitely a part of my youth that I have no desire to relive. As sleeping until noon was often not an option I found the hours grueling, as many women in the study also pointed out.

In the hopes of increasing my motivation as well as participating in my marriage, I often took my husband with me. Fortunately he fits into the scene comfortably, and actually helped make my presence less obvious. Women just do not go to rock clubs alone, and I found going with female companions too distracting to observe effectively.

My husband Andy has hair almost to his waist, and a likeable easy going manner that often made him an asset to have along. He would wander off on his own and talk to people he knew, or would engage a male companion in a conversation while I got to know female participants better. I also noticed that women were more comfortable with me once they discovered that I was attached. As a married woman I posed no threat or competition for male attention in the scene.

Once I managed to drag myself to the bar, I usually enjoyed myself. I still find rockers an enthusiastic and fun bunch of people. The music is infectious, and there were many mornings my muscles were sore from long hours of standing and bouncing with enthusiasm the night before. However, coming home reeking like smoke is not something I

will miss. As many women point out, when you come home after being in the bar you just want to peel off all your clothes and jump in the tub. Washing my hair at 3:00 in the morning became a real chore.

Closer to the end of the project I was able to focus my time on more personal exchanges outside the bar atmosphere. I found this part of the study far more enjoyable and easy to complete. Talking to women and men about their loves and their lives over coffee or nachos was a pleasant and rewarding experience. The depth of disclosure was also obviously more valuable. I found parties, social appointments, and even the interviews totally painless. Informal conversations and interviews with women were wonderfully rich and interesting exchanges. And as mentioned earlier, formal interviews with male musicians were more difficult to arrange, but once in progress were every bit as relaxed and enjoyable as the women's.

If I had to do this project over again, I would only change two things. I would find more money somewhere, and I would allow myself more time for interviews. While I do not think that more interviews are necessary or would significantly change the data, I found them fascinating and thoroughly enjoyable. Next time around I wouldn't limit myself to a thesis, I'd write a book!

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Tell me how you became involved in the rock scene.
(essentially why, what is it about the rock scene that you like?)
2. How does the rock scene differ from other scenes?
(for example pop, punk, jazz...)
3. How much time do you spend actively involved in the scene?
(eg. How many gigs do you go to per week, per month?)
4. [musicians only] How long have you been playing?
5. Do you hang out mostly with people inside or outside the scene? (Why?)
6. What are some of the roles available for men and women in the scene? Let's start with for men...
for women...
7. Do the number of potential roles differ depending on if one is male or female?
8. Are female performers received any differently than male performers? (if yes, why?)
[If interviewee is a female performer- explore any difficulties for female performers...]
9. [non-musicians]
Are you musical yourself?
Do you play an instrument?
Have you ever considered performing? (explore)
10. [musicians only]
Tell me about the experience of being on the road.
11. Have you ever been involved with a musician?
Can you tell me about it?
(If presently involved, were previous boyfriends musicians?)
12. What are some of the difficulties in maintaining a stable relationship with a (as a) musician?
13. How do other band members respond when one of the guys gets into a serious relationship?

14. How do band wives/ girlfriends get treated by the other guys in the band?
15. What are some of the reasons for relationships breaking down in the rock scene?
Do you think this is any different from relationships outside the scene?
16. What are some of the positive things about the scene?
17. What are some of the positive things about being involved with a musician?
18. [women only] Why were you attracted to him? Them?
[women and men] Why do you think women are attracted to musicians?
19. Where did you learn what is appropriate to look like and act like in the scene?
20. Why do you think there has always been such a strong link between rockers and strippers?
21. Do you think sexuality is viewed any differently in the rock scene than in mainstream society?
22. How is casual sex viewed by members of the scene?
23. How would you define a groupie?
How are they viewed?
Is this a term used in the scene?
Are there other terms?
Are they always female?
24. Some say the Vancouver rock scene is dying, do you think this is true?
25. What do you predict for the rock scene's future?
26. What changes would you like to see in the scene?
27. Are there any areas you feel this interview has not touched on that you would like to discuss?