

Women and Rock Music¹

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ABSTRACT

Rock music is the most misogynistic and aggressive form of music currently listened to. Women's place in it since the 1950's is described and analyzed in this article. Rock music was originally a working-class male challenge to the established symbolic order. In terms of the revenue generated by the industry thirty years later, it is the most important cultural expression of popular music. The enterprise is almost exclusively male, the majority of listeners are male, and even though women singers contributed in the early 1960's, there have been only a few female performers. An analysis of feminine representations in rock music lyrics and album covers in 1981 reveals a variety of male-identified images of women. In view of the cultural context in which rock music originated and the industry developed, the recent penetration by a few more women into the industry raises questions about whether numbers will continue to increase and, even if they do, whether rock music constitutes an appropriate voice in which women can authentically express themselves.

Women's images—especially those we choose ourselves—can both reflect and determine the economic and political parts we play in society. (Flora, 1979)

Although the statement was made in conjunction with an investigation of women's reflections in magazine fiction, it applies as well to other types of media. Studies have found that women are portrayed as stereotypically passive, in roles discrepant with reality, and as devalued and invisible. The findings have been derived from research into various media including film (Wolfenstein and Leites, 1960; Matthews-Klein, 1979), art (Hess and Nochlin, 1972), television (Courtney and Whipple, 1974; McNeil, 1975), literature (Cornillon, 1972; Deegan, 1952), and magazine fiction and advertising (Flora, 1971; Millum, 1975; Wilson, 1977). Thus far, women's representations in popular music have been examined in a very limited way.

Music, unlike many other forms of media, is a direct expression of ideas. For this reason it provides a wealth of information about women since they most often are the *subject* of songs. From classical tunes with mermaids luring sailors to their deaths, to country and western tunes with wives and their cheating hearts, women and the roles they play, or are expected to play, in society have been characterized by men. This is no more true than in rock music which has been affectionately described by those in the industry as "kicking ass" and which is probably the most blatantly misogynistic and aggressive form of music currently listened to.

Popular music has undergone far reaching changes since rock music emerged on the scene in the 1950's. As Hirsch (1971) has noted, to a large extent this radical change could not have occurred without the structural changes in the radio industry which were brought about by developments in mass communication technol-



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ogy. Accordingly, a situation arose in which instead of one audience for popular music, as existed at the turn of the century (see Skidmore, 1977, for an analysis of women in popular lyrics for that period) there developed many audiences—"heterogeneous, stratified in social class and song style preference." Much has been made of the social class and age distinctions in audience, but little attention has been paid to gender which obviously is important. So far women's place in popular music has hardly been described, much less analyzed or probed in terms of how women enter into this medium. The paucity of commentary is particularly interesting in view of a recent sociological interest in rock music (Frith, 1978; Denisoff and Peterson, 1972).

It is the treatment of women in rock music which is the focus of this paper. The importance of rock music financially and culturally, and the history of women as performers in the industry will be briefly described in the next section. The description is merely a backdrop to the research contribution of the paper—an analysis of the images of women in rock lyrics and on album covers during the period of investigation in Winnipeg during the Spring of 1981. In the conclusion we shall address the question of whether or not women can and do determine the parts they play in popular music. The overall aim is to suggest some relationships between the structure of the industry, the type of songs aired and sold, and the deeply rooted sexism or combination of women's subordination in our society and the degradation of the feminine in our culture.

THE BACKGROUND

The rock music industry is the most important cultural expression of popular music in North America today in terms of the revenue it generates. In the United States and Canada, rock music accounts for 80 per cent of all records sold and is the nucleus of the three billion dollar industry in the United States and 295 million dollar industry in Canada. In Winnipeg alone,

the Canadian city where this study was conducted, rock music reaches some 247,000 people weekly (Christian, 1981). For the age category eighteen to twenty-five, rock music serves the function television did previously as the primary source of entertainment (LeBlanc, 1978).

Sexism in the Rock Music Industry

The rock music enterprise is almost exclusively male-dominated, including the recording industry, the broadcasting industry, and the audience. With regard to the record companies, few women hold executive positions, and these are the positions which provide the power in the industry to make hits (Ditlea, 1977). Furthermore, there are virtually no women as producers, which are the key creative positions in recording, and the musicians are overwhelmingly men (Chapple, *et al.*, 1977). In the other positions too, including managers/financiers, recording engineers, scouts, mixers and roadies, men hold sway almost without exception.

Women's absence permeates the entire enterprise, even to the extent that it is men who are the "gates" of the broadcasting scene once the records have been cut. Men are ultimately responsible for what is played over the air since they hold key positions as station managers, radio engineers, program directors, and disc jockies (Denisoff, 1975). Using Winnipeg as an example once more, station 92 CITI FM in early 1981 was run by men. The programme, music and assistant music directors, as well as eight of the nine disc jockies were men; the only woman disc jockey at the station was hired as recently as November 1980.

Another sex distribution peculiarity in the rock music industry is that the majority of listeners are men (Lull *et al.*, 1978). Research over the past fifteen years documents the greater tendency for young women to favour the more conventional forms of pop music (Tanner, 1981). In

Winnipeg, the ratio of male to female listeners of rock music is 60:40 (McKana, 1981).

Despite the exclusion of women from the rock industry as a whole, women do figure in the most visible part of rock as a cultural phenomenon; both as performers and in the imagery of the songs and album covers. We turn now to a brief history of women performers in rock music, after which we shall present the findings of a study of the imagery of women in rock songs and album covers.

The History of Women Rock Performers

At the beginnings in the early 1950's, rock and roll music was performed exclusively by men. From 1960 until 1965 women singers became a recognized trend. According to Chapple *et al.*, (1977), the reason was that women contributed the only real sexual music of the era, while clean cut types such as Bobby Vinton, Gene Pitney and the Beach Boys dominated the music industry. The successful female groups at this time were Black. They were the only readily available sex object, since White women were still rather much on a pedestal in North America in this era. These all "girl" Black groups sang about men; the male was the star of the show even so. Songs such as *He's a Rebel* and *Leader of the Pack* were typical (Busnar, 1979). Chapple's focus on the *industry* as such, ignoring the *social movement* out of which rock music originated, leads to a somewhat simplistic description of women and rock and roll music in the 1950's and 1960's. We shall return later to another theory about the origins of rock music and the role of gender in it.

After the mid 1960's, women performers suffered a setback in rock music. A number of trends have been suggested as being responsible. For one the folk heroine, in the form of Joni Mitchell and Joan Baez among others, emerged. It is no coincidence that White women singers especially succeeded in the notoriously asexual (non-erotic) genre of folk music since it is harder for a

woman than a man to portray her sexuality in a way that contributes positively to her image, and no one disputes that rock music is erotic music. Another factor in the setback for women performers in rock had been the almost total return to electric music with the invasion of British performers and songwriters at this time; it is a fact that women did not play electrical instruments. It is also a fact, however, that this new rock was incompatible with accepted norms of "feminine" behaviour. As rock lyrics became raunchier, women performers were relegated to the backstream (Grossman, 1976).

The 1970's marked another turn for women in rock music. Re-entering the mainstream were such women performers as Janis Joplin and Gracie Slick of the Jefferson Airplane. These women, however, fronted male bands. Few women followed their lead since the most socially accepted way for a woman to make music was still as a sensitive song writer and singer. By 1972 there were no hard rockers among women that sold gold (Chapple *et al.*, 1977).

Today, there are still few women in rock music, but there are some who are successful and the attitudes these women project in their songs are changing. We shall comment on them in the next section.

IMAGES OF WOMEN IN ROCK MUSIC

If women personally are almost entirely missing from the key positions in the record making industry involving rock music, and only recently have re-emerged visibly as performers, symbolically they have from its outset attained prominence in the lyrics and portraits on the album covers of the records. It is this symbolic or cultural realm of rock music which cannot be ignored in any explanation of women's exclusion from the industry.

Representations in the Lyrics

Rock music has been called “the frenzied celebration of masculine potency” (Meade, 1971). The lyrics of the 40 songs aired in Winnipeg during January-March 1981 bear this out. These songs were mostly selected from the Winnipeg radio station CITI FM by the procedure to be described, but some were taken from one of the top albums for 1980 (Pink Floyd, *The Wall*), and the remaining were selected because they were sung by women.

Music was tape recorded by the first author throughout selected spots during the radio station’s rock format (not a top 40 format). By definition, any music played by the station is rock since this format is defined by the Canadian Radio and Television Commission. If the station does not follow their assigned format they risk losing their license. Songs thus selected were presumed to be representative of what was being aired in Winnipeg during that month and in the country as a whole. The particular songs played at any given time rapidly become quite dated or passé since hits in popular music have a relatively short life span. Themes change as well, but much more slowly; there is indication that although the emphasis has shifted, the basic attitudes in rock have persisted over the decades (Cole, 1971). The songs chosen for the sample could be said to be representative of rock music played throughout Canada at that time because music chosen to be aired in Winnipeg is based on what is popular in other major cities in Canada and the United States. A rather stringent pre-selection process is involved, including the use of information gathered from surveys, trade publications, and record sales. Such representativeness is further assured by the nature of the industry; i.e., the aim of music directors to sell as much music as possible by reaching as wide an audience as possible.

The forty songs initially taped by the researcher were analyzed first for clarity of lyrics and then

for references to women (again we stress that 40 is merely the N of the sample, not a Top 40 broadcasting format). Any song in which the lyrics referred to women was included (these 28 songs are listed in Appendix I). In the process, only two of the forty songs in the sample were found to be sung by women; for this reason, five songs then being sung by women were added to the sample for comparison purposes. The lyrics from Pink Floyd’s *The Wall* were examined in detail because this album was considered the best rock album recorded during the year prior to which the study was made (the ten exceptions to random selection are listed in Appendix II).

Results of the Analysis of Lyrics

It almost immediately became obvious that the only type of “sense” which could be made of the representations of women found in this music which is created by and distributed by men for men’s taste and consumption is in terms of the sexual and sexist fantasies so blatant in its lyrics. We have chosen to make a qualitative analysis and have located our findings within a feminist framework, which best helps us organize them.

In a society where men have controlled the conceptual arena and have determined social values and the structure of institutions, men define the female as they define everything else (Smith, 1971). As the subject of rock songs, the male-identified woman becomes the object or the other (a social-moral as well as a personal-psychological assignment, unfortunately for women). As objects, the images of women (i.e., the moral judgements made by men) reflect men’s ambivalences. Thus, an image may be “good” at one time, “bad” at another, depending on its servicability for the man making the judgement. As the image is judged, so is the woman incarnating that image (Ruth, 1980:90).

Male-identified women are always defined and understood within their biological capaci-

ties, either of reproduction or sexual arousal and gratification. Thus women as objects in rock songs are cast into the nurturing role or the erotic role, two separate but often conflicting parts to be played. These images in turn have their “good” and “bad” sides, depending on how well they serve their men. Therefore, the *perfect* mother (nurturing) and the *perfect* playmate (erotic) which men fantasize have their flip-sides. That is, there is a dependent and sexually uninteresting woman in the case of the innocent and pure lady-mother, and the dangerous and potentially castrating witch-bitch in the case of the lusty playmate. The basic incompatibilities in the two biological roles are far from resolved in the lyrics of rock music, in which men's ambivalences toward women are evoked repeatedly.

The Erotic Image

Rock lyrics most often depict a woman as a sex object or as a sexual servicer of men. She is the playmate who is always available and her prime function is happily to accommodate any man that happens along. Woman's place is therefore between the sheets (Blondie, *Call Me*, the Streetheart, *Tin Soldier*) whether she provides the sex for free (Emerson, Lake and Palmer, *Lucky Man*) or whether he has to pay for it (Streetheart, *Sin City*). Interestingly, in the manner of women whose patriarchal socialization has deprived them of a feminine consciousness, the female groups do not escape the masculine perspective since a woman begs a man to put her in her place (Pat Benatar, *Hit Me with Your Best Shot*) and to tell her what she's going to do (Heart, *Down on Me*.)

However, in her place in bed a woman is something to be feared. She has the powerful weapon or the golden gun (Toto, *Girl With the Golden Gun*), she is going to get him and he just can't refuse (Harlequin, *What's Your Name, Little Girl?*), she makes his body twitch (Rough Trade, *High School Confidential*), and she is

like a dog who has had its day (Streetheart/Rolling Stones, *Under my Thumb*).

Masculine ambivalence about women's erotic nature is accompanied by misogyny. Women are not only frightening because the good part of them has its bad side (UFO, *Too Hot to Handle*), they are also subhuman. A woman is an animal; a pussy (Ted Nugent, *Cat Scratch Fever*), a kitten (Toto, *Girl With the Golden Gun*), a squirming dog (Streetheart/Rolling Stones, *Under my Thumb*), a bitch (Harlequin, *What's Your Name, Little Girl?*), a Siamese cat and a pet (Streetheart/Rolling Stones, *Under my Thumb*). Because women are not quite human, they must be controlled and dominated by men not only for male benefit, but for their own good. This control ranges all the way from having her dreams and visions burned (Bruce Springsteen, *Born to Run*) to having her friends limited for her (Eric Clapton, *I Can't Stand It*), to being beaten to a pulp on Saturday night (Pink Floyd, *Don't Leave Me Now*). Violence is rampant. A woman's head will roll if she doesn't get out of his sight (Ted Nugent, *Heads Will Roll*) or on one of his bad days she will find his axe on her, but only after *she* has fetched it (Pink Floyd, *One of My Turns*). The victim theme is also found among the women singers; a woman does not know what to do when it all comes down to her (Heart, *Down on Me*), she suspects she is going to be used again (Heart, *Even it Up*), she is forced down to her knees (Heart, *Barracuda*), or she describes his hands on her throat, her face turning red, and feeling like a punching bag (Rough Trade, *Physical Violence*).

Woman is thus the object, the defined, the follower, the passive recipient to be used and abused. At best she is treated with distrust, at worst with violence and contempt.

The Nurturing Image

It is not surprising that the Marian image, the virgin lady who represents tenderness, charity,

and purity, does not appear very often in music which appeals to and is created by and for young men. However, women ("girls," that is) are reminded that if life on earth is to continue they must love their man and gently ("take him by the hand") help him to understand the world depends on their femininity (Doors, *Riders in the Storm*). A reversal of the "natural order" in which women do the nurturing (i.e. provide "bread and honey") occurs in one instance of irony where the Queen is sitting in the counting house counting all the money while the King is in the kitchen eating (John Lennon, *Cleanup Time*).

The flip side of the ideal mothering woman is more frequently described in rock lyrics which portray a woman's sexual coldness (Rough Trade, *High School Confidential*, Pink Floyd, *Young Lust*), and which portrays a dependency which ties a man down (Cars, *Slack*, and Billy Joel, *Fantasy Rock*) and prevents them from getting loose once she has got him (Lover Boy, *Turn Me Loose*). However, when the woman obliges and does let go, she has given him the expensive kissoff, that bitch, that heartbreaker (Steely Dan, *Urban Cowboy*). When the woman is his mother, the male in the rock songs is afraid of her because she is going to put all her fears into him (Pink Floyd, *Mother*). When she is his wife she is fat and psychopathic and will thrash him to within inches of his life (Pink Floyd, *Happiest Days of Our Lives*).

Rock lyrics also reinforce the notion of the valuelessness of a woman who has needs of her own and attempts to satisfy them, thereby intruding on the male fantasy of complete and unhampered freedom (allowed by the perfect mother).

Portrayal of Women on Album Covers

Rock music is not only created, played and sung; it is also packaged. The depiction of women on album covers is important since it is visual images of women that are used by the industry to sell its high energy product. As it has

so aptly been put, women have been exploited for years to sell male cock rock (Chapple *et al.*, 1977). Examples are legion. From cheesecake shots of bikinied women to the campaign for the Humble Pie album, *Eat It*, sex is used to sell and women are what is being sold (Chapple *et al.*, 1977).

Forty two album covers were selected for their portrayal of women. (They are listed in Appendix III). To select the albums, the author went through the rock section at a record store in Winnipeg, and those albums with images of women were chosen. Albums were excluded if the representation was of a female band member or lead singer portrayed as herself. The decision as to what constituted rock was thus left to someone familiar with the industry, i.e., the record shop owner who had classified the album, rather than being made by the researcher.

The overriding themes of the covers are similar to those found in the lyrics, but with even more emphasis on the erotic role. From a nun changing into a prostitute in a toilet (Monks, *Bad Habit*), to a woman on her knees staring at a man's crotch (Scorpion, *Animal Magnetism*), women have been objectified and put in their "rightful" places, below men and for their unobstructed use.

A high percentage of women on album covers symbolize evil. They are the tempters of men, desirable yet obviously forbidden and feared. Bizarre covers depict women as witches (Black Sabbath), and as in control of the elements (Rush, *Anthem*), they are also criminals, carrying guns and murdering men (Sniff 'n' the Tears, *Fickle Heart*). Here too a woman appears in animal form; she is a tiger (Eddie and the Hot Rods, *Fish and Chops*), or an evil bird with breasts attacking men (Pink Floyd, *The Wall*). The album cover for *Eve* (Allan Parsons Project) depicts the flaw in every beautiful woman, who harbours ugly, malignant things inside her.

The message on rock album covers about sex is that it is fun when it is illicit. Prostitutes (Robert Palmer, *Sneaking Sally Through the Alley*), physical violence (Ry Cooder, *Borderline*), and the seduction of young girls (Scooter, *Young Girls*) are some of the other themes illustrated on record jackets. The exotic, wishful-fantasy surroundings and nudity (Ching Chawn, *Country Porn*) or dramatic clothing (Rod Stewart, *Blondes Have More Fun*) removes the woman in the pictures for rock music records entirely from the everyday world of work and home in which real women move. In fact, it totally removes her from any kind of self-involved action, since she appears mannequin-like—artificial and lifeless (Sad Cafe, *Misplaced Ideals*), relying on the male (Streethart, *Under Heaven, Under Hell*) or outlandish props (Scorpion, *In Trance*) to enhance her menace or potency.

Album titles also reflect male supremacy over women and an obsession with violent phallic sex. Such titles as *Taken By Force*, *Jump On It*, *Wild Eyed Southern Boys*, and *Muscle of Love* all proclaim male potency and the ultimate power of men over women. Rugged masculinity as a way of treating women is highly idealized on album covers (see McCormack, 1978, for a discussion of *machismo* in the media).

Women's images in rock music, as discovered in the lyrics and on the album covers in 1981, reflect masculist attitudes no less than they did in an earlier time in the 1960's of which Cohn (1969) has written as follows:

There were some fierce songs and cruel and the girls [sic] in them were put down and hit and discarded like total trash....The sound destroyed you, raped you and left you with no defenses.

In the 1980's the images continue to be misogynist, ambivalent, and objectified.

CONCLUSIONS

Our purpose in this paper has been to examine the treatment of women in rock music historically and at the present time in order to unmask the sexism in yet another institutionalized sector of culture and society. We have concluded that the organization of the rock music enterprise is sex-segregated and that the symbols in the music itself are even today a reflection of male construction and fantasy. The question arises as to whether women can begin to contribute significantly to the world of commercial popular music of this genre and thereby influence the way in which they are portrayed to large proportions of youthful persons. Perhaps, more fundamentally, the question is whether rock music constitutes an appropriate voice in which women can express themselves. In our minds the questions are not unrelated.

Women in the Industry

As we have indicated, the problem at the organizational level is that there are many locations in the now well-established industry where women are currently restricted and which they will have to enter before changes in sex-segregation can occur. As we have seen, even to enter in as performers in their own right, women are faced with special problems. Life on the road is alienating for most people, but women are likely to have more problems. They probably will have a male manager, male roadies and male sidemen. On stage they are encouraged to be sexy, yet after the show they are expected to be one of the guys. Thus ambivalence and conflict are automatically built into the situation of the performer. North American society also finds it difficult to accept women in primary roles. In addition, women find it even more of a barrier to enter other less accessible positions in the industry. They will have to be able to play all the instruments, to master the technology, to operate the mixing boards, recording studios, and sound equipment, and to become producers, techni-

cians and engineers (Chapple *et al.*, 1977). Several women have set up their own recording studios. This, however, is a limited solution because of the financial overhead of such an enterprise. In 1977 it cost as much as \$75,000 to make an L.P. record (Pepe, 1977). Women also need to enter the industry as "gates" but there is little progress being made in this area since few women are disc jockies or programme and music directors at radio stations. The Canadian Radio and Television Commission could provide support for women in much the same way they promote Canadian talent. In 1970, after it was ruled that Canadian radio stations had to play a set percentage of Canadian music, there were 22 hits from resident Canadian artists compared to six from the year before (Yorke, 1971). This type of legislation could provide Canadian women with the incentive they need, but at the present time affirmative action programmes for women have little appeal or support in this country.

Women are most noticeable as rock music-makers, small as their numbers are. Although some female groups such as Heart still reflect the old norms of woman passively waiting for her man, women can and do write and sing about other experiences than as lovers or toys of men. Marianne Faithful in the *Ballad of Lucy Jordan* sings about a housewife who, realizing that none of her dreams will ever come true, commits suicide. She also blatantly expresses hostility towards men, something no other woman rock singer had done before her. Other groups too are raunchy, aggressive and demanding. Girlschool, a band formed in 1977, has been described as "the first girl [sic] band to survive novelty... comfortably lodged in the upper strata of Britain's heavy metal scene" (Hayes, 1981). Pat Benatar, Deborah Harry of Blondie, Canadian Carole Pope of Rough Trade, as well as Marianne Faithful, are producing lyrics as sexual and as intimidatingly aggressive as any currently marketed by men. It will, however, take some time for women song writers and bands to establish themselves in any numbers if they ever do. Per-

haps only when the men have abandoned the field for newer, more novel kinds of music and more lucrative opportunities will women's exclusion from the rock industry end. Holter (1971) has discussed the general tendency for institutions to accept women's influence when the institutions are becoming obsolete, as a societal technique for "covering" sex differentiation; the rock music industry may be no exception.

Women-Identified Music

A more fundamental issue than women's access to organized or commercial rock, but not unrelated, concerns the matter of a musical style appropriate to women today. Discussions of women entering into rock music at this point in history raise questions about what women have to gain as women by adopting what were the stylistic innovations of a subculture of young working class males, as well as about the appropriation of that style for commercial purposes in late capitalist society.

Rock music, once celebrated (as the voice of a new "generation") and at the same time reviled (as a vehicle of degeneration) has in the ensuing twenty plus years become cultural consumer-goods. What was intended to give meaning and direction—to provide "noise" or a temporary blockage in the societal system of representations—has become a part of the orderly sequence of consumption (Hebidge, 1979). If women at this late date enter into its production and distribution, do they not become themselves defenders of the sexual and economic *status quo*, no matter how much influence they gain or how they change the lyrics of the songs?

In the view of Hebidge, rock music originally constituted a style of subcultural challenge to the established symbolic order. If we accept his interpretation, then the words, like the sounds, comprise only one of many integrated components in the overall "noise" of rock, the meaning of which is metalinguistic. It follows from this

perspective that the sexism in the words, the obsession with women's erotic value, represented the determination of the subculture to expose what was repressed (and repressive) in the dominant culture of the 1950's.² The words, like the music, were meant to shock and outrage *bourgeois* sensibilities.³

With regard to the notion that the "language" of rock music consists of more than words, researchers have concluded that most young persons are attracted to popular records by overall sound or beat—or the performing groups—and not by their verbal content. In fact, Robinson and Hirsch (1972) found fewer than a third of teenagers understood the alleged messages of popular "protest" tunes. This is not to deny an effect (conscious or unconscious) from the lyrics, but only to indicate that what most analyses of words, including ours, miss, is the way in which lyrics and sounds of rock taken together constituted a metaphor for youthful anarchy during the 1960's. Still applying the notion of rock music as style, the album cover pictures, so important in marketing the records, added to the sound and words a visual dimension for the expression of "forbidden contents...in forbidden forms" which rock as a "spectacular subculture" represented (Hebidge, 1979).

It is impossible for feminists to accept all of the ideas involved in Hebidge's interpretation of the symbolic value of rock music. Although we can accept the notion that words alone do not convey meanings, and that rock music originated as the language of an anti-establishment subculture, the exclusion of women personally from active or respected roles in the making of that subculture raises doubts about the solely social class metaphor in the erotic content of the lyrics of those male created songs. The idea that music is a language by which a subculture attempts to throw off its oppression is applicable, however, as well as the notion that in capitalist society co-optation by means of commercialization results in the loss of the original

meanings in the messages represented by the music. After all, "*bourgeois* sensibilities" connected with eroticism have all but disappeared as attested by the spectacular development of the "pornography industry" in the same period of time that the rock industry took to reach its present zenith; this may be no coincidence.

If rock music was the language of a "spectacular subculture," created mostly by young men (and Black women) in the early 1960's and effectively incorporated into the cultural mainstream in the 1970's as both a commodity and an ideological form, has history ever produced a "spectacular subculture" created mostly by young (or old) women, to be incorporated into the culture? When have women made a collective "noise" musically, in a very distinctive female voice? Has their voice been appropriated by the "music enterprises," to the destruction or distortion of its original meanings? The new scholarship on women in music has yet to address questions of the relationships between women in music and political activism (Wood, 1980). Feminist musicologists can make an important contribution in unearthing and making visible woman-identified music and the conditions under which it is developed and under which it has become hidden in the past. Where such music exists it undoubtedly figuratively expresses the fundamental tension between the power of men and the subordinate positions and second-class lives to which women everywhere have been condemned, in all aspects of their beings and not only the biological or erotic. Where it exists it is also unique and has a style of its own. That it does or has existed we are certain since the parallels in other histories confirm our belief. The belittled role of women in the development of woman-defined styles of music and the takeover by dominant men is a story yet to be told, not less perhaps in rock than in other popular forms.

Summary

We have described the ways in which women are effectively excluded from positions of power and financial reward in what has come to be the rock music industry, and suggested that women's present limited success as songwriters and performers may be a signal of the decline of that industry rather than an opening up of opportunity to women. Furthermore, our point is that the situation of sex segregation is closely linked to the degradation and subordination of the female and the feminine which is deeply engrained in our culture and especially manifested in the symbolic representations of women in rock music since its outset. We admit to the possibility that the misogyny in this cultural development may have originally been metaphorical for the class and sexuality issues being protested in the 1950's and 1960's, and that it was in its commercialization during the 1970's that subcultural meanings were translated into the sexist ones of the dominant masculinist culture, which may in part account for the ambivalent attitudes towards women in the lyrics. On the other hand, this issue will remain debatable until more sophisticated analyses are made of rock music as a cultural phenomenon with political implications for women. In fact, neither feminists, nor sociologists, nor musicologists have investigated the politics of women in music generally, or have developed any theories about the subject. Our interpretation and questioning does little more than suggest that the relationship between gender and sexuality, economics, and symbolic languages including music are little understood even today when we begin to have more than an inkling of how fundamental to women's experiences and opportunities are the politics of sex.

NOTES

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2. See Hirsch (1971) for a description of the way musicians themselves gained power in the popular music organization during the anomic situation resulting from rapid technological changes and the consequent intrusion of their minority values into the songs they recorded.
3. We are grateful to Kathryn Dean of Elizabeth Dafoe Library, University of Manitoba for her comments on voice in music. She pointed out that rock singers use the voice in a bizarre way compared to other popular singers; the voice is merely another instrument of sound, which accounts in part for the use of so few words, repeatedly. The "throaty" quality of the voice, and the wailing, are part of the protest the music represents.

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APPENDIX I

Songs Selected at Random From Airplay of 92 CITI FM for Lyric Analysis

GROUP	TITLE OF SONG	LYRICS
Blondie	<i>Call Me</i>	"Roll me in designer sheets."
Billy Joel	<i>Fantasy Rocks</i>	"I don't want to do with no outside action."
Bruce Springsteen	<i>Born To Run</i>	"I want to burn your dreams and visions.
Cars	<i>Slack</i>	"Just give me some slack."
Doors	<i>Riders on the Storm</i>	"Girl you gotta love your man, Take him by the hand, Make him understand. The world on you depends, that life will never end."
Emerson, Lake and Palmer	<i>Lucky Man</i>	"Ladies by the score, All dressed in satin, and waiting by the door, Oh what a lucky man."
Eric Clapton	<i>I Can't Stand It</i>	"I can't stand your fooling around, I can't stand your running around, I won't stand...."
Harlequin	<i>Thinking of You</i>	"I'll be thinking of you next time around."
Harlequin	<i>What's Your Name Little Girl</i>	"She is coming to get you, you just can't refuse...What's your name you bitch."
Heart	<i>Barracuda</i>	"You have me down, Down on my knees, Don't you Barracuda."
Jackson Brown	<i>That Girl Could Sing</i>	"With the possible exception of who I wanted her to be."
John Lennon	<i>Cleanup Time</i>	"Queen is in the country house, Counting all the money. King is in the kitchen, Making bread and honey...It's cleanup time."
Led Zeppelin	<i>Good Times, Bad Times</i>	"Girl as sweet as could be, she was rid of me."
Lover Boy	<i>Turn Me Loose</i>	"Making love to whoever I please, Why don't you turn me loose, I got to do it my way."

GROUP	TITLE OF SONG	LYRICS
Michael Stanley Band	<i>He Can't Love You Like I Love You</i>	"Just let me do it to you, He wants to hold you, Don't let him try."
Phil Collins	<i>In the Air Tonight</i>	"If you were drowning, I wouldn't lend a hand...wipe off that grin."
Rolling Stones	<i>Under My Thumb</i>	"I think I love you even if it takes all night...Under my thumb, a squirming dog who just had her day. Under my thumb, she's a Siamese cat of a girl, Under my thumb, she's the sweetest oh yeah, pet in the world."
Steely Dan	<i>Urban Cowboy</i>	"One more expensive kissoff, Would you care to explain."
Stevie Windwards	<i>Night Train</i>	"Heart break. All alone movin' on."
Stretheart	<i>Tin Soldier</i>	"I just want someone to give me satisfaction. I want to sleep with you."
Stretheart	<i>Sin City</i>	"Got some money, Say the word, come on now honey."
Ted Nugent	<i>Cat Scratch Fever</i>	"I make a pussy purr with a scratch of my hand, They know where to go to get a loving man."
Ted Nugent	<i>Heads Will Roll</i>	"Heads will roll if you don't get out of my sight."
Ted Nugent	<i>Put Up or Shut Up</i>	"Put up or shut up."
Toronto	<i>Tying You Down</i>	"You'll be here and I'll be gone."
Toto	<i>Girl With a Golden Gun</i>	"She's a kitten with a golden gun, She's got me on the run."
Toto	<i>Hold the Line</i>	"It's not in the way that love sets me free."
UFO	<i>Too Hot to Handle</i>	"All the girls look so good, looking bad."

APPENDIX II
Songs Selected from Sources other Than 92 CITI FM for Lyric Analysis

GROUP	TITLE OF SONG	LYRICS
Heart	<i>Down on Me</i>	"Tell me what I am going to do, If it all comes down, down on me."
Heart	<i>Even it Up</i>	"I took you over the tracks, When you wanted some sin...Now something tells me you're going to use me again."
Pat Benatar	<i>Hit Me with Your Best Shot</i>	"Put me in my place. Put up your dukes and let's get down to it."
Pink Floyd	<i>Don't Leave Me Now</i>	"I need you Babe, to put through the shredder in front of my friends...when you know now I need you, To beat to a pulp on a Saturday night."
Pink Floyd	<i>Happiest Days of Our Lives</i>	"their fat and psychopathic wives, Would thrash them to within inches of their lives."
Pink Floyd	<i>Mother</i>	"Mum's gonna make all your nightmares come true, Massas gonna put all her fears into you."
Pink Floyd	<i>One of My Turns</i>	"You'll find my favorite axe. Don't look so frightened. This is just a passing phase. Just one of my bad days."
Pink Floyd	<i>Young Lust</i>	"Will some cold woman in this desert land, make me feel like a real man."
Rough Trade	<i>High School Confidential</i>	"She's a cool blonde scheming bitch, she makes my body twitch."
Rough Trade	<i>Physical Violence</i>	"I can feel your hands on my throat, Face turning red, I'm not your punching bag."

APPENDIX III
Album Covers Selected for Their Portrayal of Women

NAME OF GROUP	TITLE OF ALBUM	IMAGE
Alice Cooper	<i>Muscle of Love</i>	No image
Allan Parsons Project	<i>Eve</i>	Three beautiful women with growths on their faces.
Asleep at the Wheel	<i>Framed</i>	A man and two women standing in front of a woman's toilet.
Babys	<i>Headfirst</i>	Woman's legs.
Black Sabbath		Witch
Burton Cummings	<i>Women In Love</i>	Man playing piano at the feet of a woman's naked legs.
Cars	<i>Candy-O</i>	Woman dressed in a sheer camisole.
Charlie	<i>No Second Chance</i>	Woman wearing a camisole on bed.
Ching Chawn	<i>Country Porn</i>	Woman naked to her waist.
Dr. Hook	<i>Sometimes You Win</i>	Eyes of a woman on dice, crying.
Eddie and the Hot Rods	<i>Fish and Chops</i>	Woman with fangs dressed like a tiger.
Foreigner	<i>Headgames</i>	Woman in toilet.
Generation X	<i>Valley of Dolls</i>	Woman in camisole lying on bed.
Harlequin	<i>Love Cries</i>	Woman in car with her legs spread.
Kansas	<i>Low Budget</i>	Woman's feet in high heeled red shoes.
Monks	<i>Bad Habits</i>	Nun changing into a prostitute in a toilet
Montrose	<i>Jump On It</i>	No image.
Peter Townsend	<i>Empty Glass</i>	Artist with a halo, a woman on either side.
Pink Floyd	<i>The Wall</i>	Vicious looking female bird with breasts.
Reo Speedwagon	<i>Hi Infidelity</i>	Woman in black bra and panties in a hotel room.
Robert Palmer	<i>Sneaking Sally</i>	Lead singer with a whore with eyes blackened out.
Robert Palmer	<i>Some People Can Do What They Want</i>	A couple playing strip poker. Woman throws away cards.

NAME OF GROUP	TITLE OF ALBUM	IMAGE
Rod Stewart	<i>Blondes Have More Fun</i>	Stewart hugging woman in a leopard suit.
Rolling Stones	<i>It's Only Rock and Roll</i>	Group surrounded by maidens throwing flowers.
Rush	<i>Anthem</i>	Smiling woman walking away from a calamity with her dress blown up.
Ry Cooder	<i>Borderline</i>	Naked woman facing a bull.
Sad Cafe	<i>Misplaced Ideals</i>	Woman's face, red mouth, red nails
Santa Esmeralda	<i>Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood</i>	Male singer surrounded by three partially naked women.
Scooter	<i>Young Girls</i>	Young girl on a scooter surrounded by band.
Scorpion	<i>Animal Magnetism</i>	Girl on her knees staring at a man's crotch.
Scorpion	<i>In Trance</i>	Woman, sexually aroused by a guitar.
Scorpion	<i>Love Drive</i>	Man pulling gum from woman's breasts.
Scorpion	<i>Taken By Force</i>	No image
Skids	<i>Days on Europea</i>	Man embracing a woman. Another woman waiting.
Sniff 'n' the Tears	<i>Fickle Heart</i>	Woman with a gun and a black cat who has just murdered a man.
Sniff 'n' the Tears	<i>Games Up</i>	Drunk woman in an evening dress. Shoulder straps falling down.
Streethart	<i>Meanwhile Back in Paris</i>	Woman in a trench coat which is open showing her underwear.
Streethart	<i>Under Heaven, Under Hell</i>	A woman, evil-looking, watching a man bring her red roses.
Supertramp	<i>Breakfast In America</i>	Jolly Waitress.
Styx		Older woman with 'Easter Island statue earrings.'
38 Special	<i>Wild-eyed Southern Boys</i>	Woman dressed in pink shorts facing six men.
Tourist	<i>Reality Effect</i>	A bride and 4 men dressed in white, sprayed with paint.