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I'M NOT LOUD ENOUGH TO BE HEARD: ROCK 'N' ROLL CAMP FOR GIRLS AND FEMINIST QUESTS FOR EQUITY, COMMUNITY, AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION

By

STACEY LYNN SINGER

Under the Direction of Susan Talburt

ABSTRACT

Because of what I perceive to be important contributions to female youth empowerment and the construction of culture and community, I chose to conduct a qualitative case study that explores the methods utilized in the performance of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, as well as the experiences of camp administrators, participants, and volunteers, in order to identify feminist constructs, aims, and outcomes of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. My interests lie in the feminist and activist approaches in the construction and production of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, as well as in the quest for equity, community building, and the production of culture that arises through participation. This thesis discusses the themes of feminism, feminist activism, networking, community building, cultural production, and the waging of equity as they are found in the production and performance of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls.

INDEX WORDS: Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, Feminism, Equity, Community, Cultural Production

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STACEY LYNN SINGER

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2006

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Stacey Lynn Singer
2006

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by

STACEY LYNN SINGER

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Office of Graduate Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University
August 2006

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to all the campers and activists at Rock ‘n’ Roll Camp for Girls.

And to every girl who has ever had her volume turned down by someone else.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I extend a heartfelt and resounding thank you to my thesis chair, Dr. Susan Talburt. Her guidance has led me to this place. Thank you, also, to my committee members Dr. Kathryn McClymond and Dr. Layli Phillips, whose suggestions helped to enrich this project. I gratefully acknowledge the faculty of the Women's Studies Institute at Georgia State University for awarding me a graduate research assistantship and The Ethel Woodruff Draper Research Fellowship in the Development of Young Women. Many thanks, of course, to Rock 'n' Roll Camp for girls for allowing me to observe, interview, and participate.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ……. v

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION …… 1

This is a Man's World: A Review of Literature ……..…….. 7
Research Questions and Methods…….……... 26
Glory Days ……..... 40
On With the Show ……... 46

2 (YOU MAKE ME FEEL LIKE) A NATURAL WOMAN: NATURALIZING EQUITY AND CRITICAL THOUGHT IN EARLY GIRLHOOD DEVELOPMENT …….. 49

A Panel Discussion with The Donnas ……..……... 51
Zines ....……... 58
Image and Identity …....…… 65
Self-Defense …….……... 73
How to Rock in the Free World ….……..... 77
Concluding Remarks …….……..... 82

3 YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION: FROM RIOT GRRRL TO LADYFEST TO ROCK 'N' ROLL CAMP FOR GIRLS AND BEYOND …… 84

Riot Grrrl: Ladyfest: Rock Camp …...……... 87
And Beyond …….……... 93
Concluding Remarks ……... 102

4 LIKE A BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER: RACE, CLASS, AND FEMINISM AT ROCK 'N' ROLL CAMP FOR GIRLS ……..... 104
Race ……. 104
Class …… 114
Feminism ……. 119

CONCLUSION ……... 127

REFERENCES …… 134

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It is not a new or secret concept. In American society girls and boys are not awarded the same opportunities. Of course, this is assuming that there are but two sexes. But until our social structures evolve to consider and include gender variations and inter- and transsexuals, sexual divisions will remain as they have, between male and female. Gendered and sexual divisions are apparent in the way we are socialized. From as early as birth, girls are swaddled in pink and are given dolls and baking ovens as play toys to encourage identification with the mother and promote girls' development towards homemaking and life in the private sphere. According to theorist and former punk Lauraine Leblanc (1999), girls "fall victim to a socialization process that robs them of the qualities of self-reliance, efficacy, and assurance" (p. 8). Boys, on the other hand, are encouraged to play more destructively or technically, and are steered towards toys emulating the violence of war or the construction of architecture. These toys are meant to encourage boys' development towards life in the public sphere as they pretend to do the work of their fathers. In these ways and more, "conventions of femininity [carry] the implicit and explicit messages to girls and women that they should not be too independent in their thinking, too outspoken, or too responsive to their own desires if they [are] to be accepted in the world" (Taylor, 1994, p. 32).

As I stated, this is not new information. During the mainstream (white) U.S. women's movement of the 1960s and '70s, feminist theorists recognized that the funneling of girls and boys towards specifically ascribed social divisions was damaging to personal and community development. Nancy Chodorow drew "attention to the ways in which culture…privileged masculine personality and experience and devalued that of females" (Taylor, 1994, p. 34), and Carol Gilligan found that "girls lose their 'voice' as they mature. Girls not only become literally less audible, but their speech is more halting, less certain, their statements, when uttered at all, less assured" (Leblanc, 1999, p. 10). This funneling perpetuated social and economic inequities that were easy for many who studied them to understand, but difficult to challenge. For it is easier to recognize inequity than it is to correct it, especially because, according to Jean Baker Miller, race, class, and gender are underlying conditions that lead to *permanent* inequality and the formation of dominant and subordinate groups (Taylor, 1994, p. 35, emphasis added). And while Miller includes race and class in her analyses, leaders and theorists of the second-wave feminist movement on the whole under-addressed (at best) the race- and class-based inequities that many U.S. Third World and Black feminists such as Cherríe Moraga, Patricia Hill Collins, and Gloria Anzaldúa have since shown exist. Hence, Reagan-era claims made by the media and right wing groups that the feminist fight had been won and feminism was dead and buried were untrue and grossly premature.[1] The struggle was, and is, nowhere near complete. Moreover, voices that were under-represented in the white, mainstream feminist movement of the 1960s and '70s were

[1] See Susan Faludi's *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*.

finally coming to be heard in the ‘80s and ‘90s and helped to create awareness among feminists that the struggle was not one, but, in fact, many struggles against “multiple oppressions of class, race, homophobia, and sexism” (Roth, 2004, p. xi).

Ideologically, third-wave feminist discourse locates its own beginnings in response to the post-feminism touted by the mainstream media during the Reagan-Bush era. Post-feminism claims that the strides made by second-wavers towards women’s equality and other rights (such as those won during *Roe v. Wade*) have been simultaneously lost and won (i.e., the Equal Rights Amendment and Title IX, respectively). While attempts were made to challenge sex roles and gender norms by protesting beauty pageants, naming the Glass Ceiling, and producing equality-themed recordings like *Free to be, You and Me*, Miss America still gets a sparkly, new crown every year, women still earn less money and get passed over for promotion more often than men, and though I, for one, did play sports with the boys on the playground, it didn’t stop them, nor other girls, from treating me like total shit. I guess what *I* learned from Marlo Thomas and friends was that although I could do anything a boy could do, I would still suffer for having made the attempt. Spinning that record over and over again in my bedroom did not provide me with the *tools* I would need to make such attempts, just words. And have you ever tried to drive a nail with a dictionary? While it can be argued that words are indeed tools, they are only potentially so when they are not falling upon deaf ears. And then, as is the case regarding the waging of equity, words must also inspire action for them to truly be means to an end, or means towards progress or change.

Tools and action, as well as my own personal commitments to equity, community building, change, politics, and creative process, are what inspired my interest in Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. This five-day summer day camp for girls ages eight to eighteen located in Portland, Oregon, aims to nurture creativity and to challenge the marginalization of women as people, artists, and workers in the American popular music industry, as well as in U.S. society in general. As a feminist researcher, a woman, a musician, an activist, a music industry and summer camp insider, I approached this study of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls armed with a solid belief in my experiential capability to conduct the research wisely and thoroughly. During my youth I attended various types of summer camps and as an adult have six seasons of experience as a summer camp counselor and programmer. As a bass player in a performing punk band, and as a former tour manager and record label staff member, I have had the fortunate misfortune of having to learn to identify, navigate, and combat music industry discriminations perpetuated by print, radio, television, and internet media, as well as in boardrooms, record stores, radio stations, rock clubs, on stage, and by other musicians. However, this same positioning and my job as a publicist at a grassroots activist-based independent record label have allowed me to establish a trusting and enjoyable networking relationship with the executive director of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. I have also spent time as a volunteer at the Southern Girls Rock & Roll Camp in Murfreesboro, Tennessee during the 2004 and 2005 camp sessions, as both a music and activism panelist and as their showcase stage manager.

The first known rock and roll summer camp for girls in the United States was founded in 2001 in Portland, Oregon, by Misty McElroy. An idea that was originally only supposed to last for five days in July has now developed into a full-fledged 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that also hosts a year-round institute, allowing for more space for local girls, which enables the summer camp to accommodate the proliferation of its national and international attendees. According to its mission statement, Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls seizes "upon the powerful influence of music on popular culture….[and] engenders community-building and daily life self-defense skills, autonomy and political awareness to create social change" (McElroy, 2005, p. 6). For many girls, rock camp provides their first experiences in a setting that encourages such principles. The camp has become so popular that its coordinators have become unable to accommodate every girl who desires to attend. And, due in part to its popularity, other rock and roll camps for girls are proliferating in cities across the United States.[2] Therefore, this study comes at a time when many new camp coordinators will be developing curriculums and strategizing new program development. I chose the Portland site for my research because it is the first girls' rock camp model and has had the longest period of time and opportunity to grow and nurture itself and its participating communities. Further, the Portland camp seems to be the most popular, not only among

[2] Other rock and roll camps for girls include the Southern Girls Rock & Roll Camp in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, the Willie Mae Rock Camp for Girls (the only other camp affiliated with Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in Portland) in New York, New York, the Institute for the Musical Arts Rock & Roll Camp for Girls (a two-week overnight rock camp) in Goshen, Massachusetts, and the NC Rock and Roll Camp for Girls in Durham, North Carolina. This list is not all-inclusive. A recent internet search yielded mentions of still other camps in Washington, D.C., Arizona, and California.

its campers, but with musicians, music industry insiders, and popular music journalists as well.

Promoting independence and positive self-expression through music education and mentoring, Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls provides a fun and encouraging environment for adolescent females. As well as musical and technical instruction, campers participate in workshops that are structured to help develop self-reliance, community building, and youth empowerment. Daily panel discussions include topics ranging from activism through music, the history of women in rock, body politics, starting your own record label, and sound and technical instruction.

Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls seeks to provide learning and growth spaces where debilitating socio-cultural permeations of the popular music industry, as well as society at large, are brought to light and countered with grassroots strategies that offer girls tools that enable them to navigate their marginalizations. For example, the popular music industry often relies on images of scantily clad women to sell guitars and glorify music made by men, as well as the men who make the music. Women who are actual, talented musicians are all too often passed over by industry executives who knowingly exploit pretty faces and unattainable body ideals for company and personal gains. Adolescents receive information from popular performers regarding anything from manner of dress and speech to sexual behavior and politics, and the mainstream music industry is guilty of constructing and promoting talentless boardroom fabrications as informants of American youth and progenitors of American youth culture. At rock camp, through participation in workshops, instrument instruction, and band development and performance, girls are

taught how to identify disingenuous corporate cultural products and are provided with space and tools that enable them to collaboratively construct and engage in their own communities. `

Because of what I perceive to be important contributions to female youth empowerment and the construction of culture and community, I chose to conduct a qualitative case study that explores the methods utilized in the performance of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, as well as the experiences of camp administrators, participants, and volunteers, in order to identify feminist constructs, aims, and outcomes of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. My interests lie in the feminist and activist approaches in the construction and production of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, as well as in the quest for equity, community building, and the creation of culture that arises through participation. Later in this chapter I present my research questions and discuss research methodology. First, however, I provide a review of literature to present information in larger context. In order to provide clarity and perspective, this review of literature includes an exploration of the marginalization of women in the popular music industry as well as of the politics and practice of third-wave feminism (with specific attention paid to the riot grrrl movement, feminist networking, and cultural production).

This is a Man's World: A Review of Literature

In order to understand the context in which Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls is situated, it is necessary to become familiar with the discourse on the marginalization of

women as performers and subjects of popular music. Also, an evaluation of the feminist objectives of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls cannot take place without an understanding of feminist discourse in general. However, a researcher cannot simply say "feminist discourse in general" and expect the phrase to glide by without question. As anyone who has studied feminism knows, there is not one grand feminist narrative. Understanding this, based on my assessment of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls as it is currently politically and socially situated, I believe that a review of literature on third-wave feminist discourse is appropriate. In the paragraphs below I discuss the marginalization of women in popular music and cite the riot grrrl movement as one response to this marginalization. Riot grrrl, because of its situation within third-wave feminism, will also be used to bridge the discussion on third wave feminism that follows. Later in this paper, riot grrrl will come up again regarding the feminist networking and cultural production engaged in by Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. Further review of literature, including a discussion of early childhood development, will appear in the following chapters to allow for more cohesive and comprehensible analysis.

In her essay "Men Making a Scene," popular music theorist Sara Cohen (1997) explains why women don't play as much of a central role in creating popular music culture. The essay, which appears as a chapter in the book *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender* (Whitely, 1997), offers an account of the music "scene" in Liverpool, England. The term "scene" is used as the descriptor for the local music industry community. This community is comprised of "predominantly male groups, cliques or networks [who] engage in activities shaped by social norms and conventions, through

which they establish and maintain relationships with other men" (Cohen, 1997, p. 20). Cohen explains that the contemporary "scene" in Liverpool extends itself on a national and international basis, eventually becoming a microcosm of a larger, international network of business and culture.

According to Cohen, the predominantly male networks are not the only aspect of the "scene" that contributes to the exclusion of women. The physical locations of many of the small, live-music venues in Liverpool are not in areas in which many women feel safe. What is more, because the vast majority of live musical performance occurs at night, women who tend to homes and to children must often forego participation. These factors exacerbate the situation by helping to establish a mainly male patronage of the venues in which an individual can participate in the ritual of experiencing live music, either as a performer or audience member. In these venues, the business and social girders of the "scene" are reinforced, which perpetuates the cycle of female exclusion.

The behavior of network insiders further serves to exclude women. Cohen (1997) explains that the:

> …conversation within the scene's male networks, for example, is frequently 'insider-ish', involving nicknames, in-jokes and jargon that discourage women newcomers from joining in, and it is often sexist. In the everyday conversation of male band members women are often treated as objects of sexual desire, conquest, or derision, or linked with the domestic sphere of family and home. (p. 22)

Moreover, certain types of rock and roll music rely more heavily on loud instruments such as drums and electric guitars to reinforce masculinist rock and roll communities and male dominance in general. In his book *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*, Robert Walser (1993) argues that heavy metal music has been constructed by "societies that are aligned by patriarchy, capitalism, and mass mediation" (p. 110), and claims that one of the most important items on the heavy metal agenda is "to deal with what patriarchy perennially perceives as the 'threat' of women" (p. 110). Performers of heavy metal music, as well as producers and music video directors, construct gender to reflect and inflect patriarchal ideologies and assumptions in order to "represent and reproduce spectacles that depend" (Walser, 1993, p. 115) on the excription of women for their appeal (Walser, 1993, p. 115). When women do appear in heavy metal videos, Walser describes it as an intrusion on male bonding. However, the women who do appear in these videos are most often portrayed as seductive, triggering desire. The desire is then credited to the "appeal of the main image" (Walser, 1993, p. 116).

Even though the exclusion and portrayal of women in heavy metal music is explicitly sexist, the genre still attracts female fans. These fans, explains Walser (1993), "identify with a kind of power that is usually understood in our culture as male – because physical power, dominance, rebellion, and flirting with the dark side of life are all culturally designated as male prerogatives" (pp. 131-132).

However, women and girls are not always written out of rock and roll texts; often they make appearances as antagonists and protagonists in the lyrical content of rock and roll songs. The guidelines aren't totally inflexible; still, the norms dictate that it is safe to assume she is the antagonist when deconstructing a musician's manhood by denying him sex, usurping his money, or dating his best friend. She is the protagonist when she is portrayed as vulnerable and promiscuous. In *The Sex Revolts: Gender, Rebellion, and Rock and Roll*, Simon Reynolds and Joy Press (1995) offer the example of the song "Welcome to the Jungle," by Guns 'N Roses. They argue that rape is the subtext of the song:

> …a strange song addressed to a girl making her first tentative steps into Los Angeles. Axl [the band's lead singer] taunts her with the city's danger, wielding his vision of chaos like a sexual threat, sneering that he hopes it'll bring her to her knees. Midsong, he makes orgasmic cries and moans, seemingly mimicking the sound of the girl being fucked. (p. 120)

The lyrical inclusion of women in rock and roll music further serves to propagate the patriarchal order of the society in which the music is created by consistently portraying women as objects who can't take care of themselves and as subordinates who need to be controlled. This is exemplified in the song "The End" by The Doors. The song's author and charismatic lead singer of The Doors, Jim Morrison, delivers an

"Oedipal psychodrama" (Reynolds & Press, 1995, p. 124) wherein Morrison portrays himself as owning the desire to kill his father and have sex with his mother.

After exploring literature on the marginalization of women in popular music it becomes easier to identify male networking, obstruction of female access, the exscription of women, the portrayal of women as signifiers of the appeal of the male central figure, and the objectification of women in song lyrics as locations for the enforcement of sexual divisions and ascribed roles in rock and roll. These are the circumstances that give rise to the need to create space in popular music culture where young women can learn to counter the sexual divisions and ascribed roles created by exclusion and subjugation of women.

Beyond rock and roll, because the popular music industry is constantly in search of new products to commodify, it has expanded to include punk and rap genres.[3] Ironically, cultural productions that, much like folk music, were considered anti-establishment in their "rejection of mass society and mass culture" (Keightley, 2001, p. 121) are now a part of mainstream culture. Because punk and rap music have been thrust into the mainstream, the songs and their performers have also become informants of mainstream American youth. It is for this reason that I have chosen to include punk and rap as components of this review of literature even though my study would seem to center rock and roll, given the camp's name and focus. Moreover, regarding rap music, I

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[3] On commidifcation, see Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment.*

believe it is important to illustrate that misogyny and the marginalization of women are not relegated only to the predominantly white male world of rock and punk.

As the music and subculture were developing, punk exhibited class and racial awareness, but offered very little of the same support to women. According to Roger Sabin, punk involved a "consciousness of class-based politics" (Borthwick & Moy, 2004, p. 77), and "punk audiences frequently participated in anti-racist struggles" (Negus, 1996, p. 19). But, as Lauraine Leblanc (1995) points out, "punk is constructed and enacted as a discourse of masculinity: a scene that is male-dominated by numerical preponderance; a subculture whose norms are constructed to be 'masculinist', and a group in which punk girls are constrained within male-defined gender expectations" (pp. 104-105). Moreover,

> Punk had learned the art of defiance from '60s mod and garage bands whose songs aggressively targeted women; it redirected the riffs and accusatory machismo at society or at a despised, anonymous 'you' (either a crushed conformist or an oppressor). But inevitably, punk's roots in the masculinism of '60s rock were bound to resurface. At times, the misogyny was even more virulent than in the '60s, because punk's general nihilism and 'we hate everybody' attitude encouraged a no-holds-barred assault on liberal values (including feminism) and common decency. (Reynolds & Press, 1995, p. 33)

Beyond music, sexist messages are inherent in other elements of punk subculture. Malcolm McLaren, the infamous (fetish) clothing designer and manager of the Sex Pistols, has been implicated in the glorification of the Cambridge Rapist as well as the promotion of underage sex and pedophilia. Mclaren was also bent on cashing in on the stabbing death of Nancy Spungeon, the heroine-addicted groupie girlfriend of the Sex Pistols' bass player, Sid Vicious. It was Vicious (read: the musician) himself who stabbed her (read: the girlfriend of the musician or not the musician) (Reynolds & Press, 1995, pp. 41-42).

Regarding rap as a product of hip-hop culture, Tricia Rose "suggests that 'hip-hop is propelled by Afro-diasporic traditions'" (Borthwick & Moy, 2004, p. 159), including the use of African modes of communication and drumming during U.S. Black slavery as means for slaves to communicate among themselves (Borthwick & Moy, 2004, p. 160). Once these practices were banned, "Afrocentric forms of speech and African rhythms were seen to be synonymous with protest and African-American articulations of discontent in American society. Rap continues this process" (Borthwick & Moy, 2004, p. 160). However, while rap music and culture do challenge racial and class-based inequalities, misogyny and heterosexism have also been significant components of rap lyrics and style, reinforcing "gender divisions, and…offensive and stereotypical representations of homosexuality, femininity, and gender relations" (Borthwick & Moy, 2004, p. 160). Consider the lyrics and video for Juvenile's (1998) "Back That Azz Up," released on the Cash Money record label. Lyrically, Juvenile rhymes:

> Girl, you looks good, won't you back that ass up. You's a fine motherfucker, won't you back that ass up. Call me Big Daddy when you back that ass up. Hoe, who is you playin wit? Back that ass up….Them titties sittin nice, yeah. I wanna bite, yeah. I could fuck you right, yeah, all night, yeah. Wanna bring it to my house, yeah, on the couch, yeah. Knock the pussy out, yeah, get them out, yeah. I wanna see these hoes, yeah, bend it low, yeah. Let me run it in the hole, yeah, and let me know, yeah. (Juvenile, 1998)

Not only is this language misogynist and heterosexist, it is also violent. What's more, in the music video for this song, Juvenile can be seen fanning a pile of crisp, green, American cash, waving and flaunting it in front of a woman, suggesting payment for her services, who is jiggling her generous backside for the rapper.

While woman/pussy domination is a central theme in "Back That Azz Up," it is important to point out that woman/pussy subjugation is not the central theme in *all* rap songs. For instance, Public Enemy's music focuses mainly on race- and class-based injustices, Digable Planets has a song about the need for safe abortion, and Arrested Development "respects women, and….are opposed to the pimp/ho approach to male/female relations" (www.arresteddevelopmentmusic-.com). Still it is difficult, as it

is in rock, metal, and punk, to find artists who completely avoid the subjection of women. Even in the early days of rap in the 1970s, though The Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" was mostly a spectacle of lyrical flow and certainly not as aggressive as "Back That Azz Up," the song still contained subject matter that advertised pimphood and the rappers' attractiveness to women.[4]

"In the 1990s [the] notion of rap as the radical voice of America's black community was disrupted by the arrival of so-called 'gangsta rap', which featured the violent and frequently misogynist fantasies of its flamboyant lyricists" (Borthwick & Moy, 2004, pp. 158-159). In the late 1970s and early to mid-1980s, before mainstream commodification of rap music and hip-hop culture, expressions of male domination were less crude and explicit than those of later rappers like NWA, Snoop Dogg, and Eminem. While pimphood and attractiveness to women were still being flaunted, rappers seemed more to centralize their expressions of culture and artistry. Rap showdowns took place in arenas that pitted artist against artist in a contest of flow, lyrics, and beats, and in the mid-1980s, women rappers were awarded the microphone so that they could respond to some of the messages that oppressed them.

> Roxanne Shanté gave the women pursued in UTFO's
> 'Roxanne, Roxanne' a voice and ultimately let it be known
> that women would no longer suffer insults and degradation

[4] For complete lyrics to "Rapper's Delight" by The Sugarhill Gang visit http://www.lyrics007.com/Gang%20Sugarhill%20Lyrics/Rapper's%20Delight%20Lyrics.html

> in silence. Salt-N-Pepa's 'The Show Stopper (Is Stupid Fresh)' was a direct refutation of Doug E. Fresh and Slick Rick's 'The Show' – a song in which women are portrayed as objects of conquest. (Pough, 2002, p. 86)

Here, the refutation of female conquest and male privilege by female musicians can be observed. This refutation would also be pursued by female musicians who participated in the riot grrrl movement. Unlike rap music, however, this trend did not arise until after the 1980s and may have been more indirectly influenced by the backlash that followed Reagan-era conservativism.

Before Reagan was in office, one could turn on the radio and hear female-fronted bands without a second thought to how they got there. Rock and pop musicians like Heart, Fleetwood Mac, The Carpenters, Joan Jett, Patti Smith; disco divas like Donna Summer, Patti Labelle, Vicki Sue Robinson, A Taste of Honey; these female voices graced the airwaves and somehow it seemed more "normal" than it does today. After Reagan took office, the female voice, and especially the American female voice, was something that could be heard less and less on the radio in the same context as it had been. This isn't to say that female voices were not heard on the radio, they were, except their voices were less defiant. "By the late eighties…the percentage of cynical songs went down while the percentage of 'love-is-positive' songs went up" (Marcic, 2002, p. 168). Reagan's politics, as well as his popular image, were grounded in the conservatism of the era during the transition between the first and second waves of U.S. feminism. The

1980s were a time of silent suffering for many U.S. women who hadn't yet realized that just because women had won battles for the right to vote and the right to safe and legal abortions, it didn't automatically mean that they had gained social and political equality.

However, the artistic backlash to the conservatism of the era took shape almost immediately. "By 1984, male performers were wearing more hairspray and makeup than their female counterparts, and the prominent female musicians included gender-bending singers like Annie Lennox and Grace Jones" (Darcangelo, 2003). Even when matters got worse as Reagan's successor, George Bush, steered the country's climate towards a Christian conservatism, Bill Clinton quickly disrupted this conservatism, even on the campaign trail. Remember the "cool" image of Clinton in sunglasses blowing his saxophone on *The Arsenio Hall Show*? And in 1992, Clinton became the first politician to conduct a town hall style meeting on MTV, something no other politician had done in the twelve years that MTV had, at the time, been on air.

At this same time in the early 1990s, in the U.S. Pacific Northwest, the grunge movement was beginning to take shape. Kids who had grown up with Reagan in the White House were now considered old enough to have and use their social voices to describe their experiences. Their disdain was clear in the lyrics of their songs, as well as in the gaping holes in their clothing. Kurt Cobain, who could barely stand to open his mouth wide enough to sing clearly, expressed his irreverence in a way that none other who had come before him had done. Here was a postmodern punk rocker. An anti-hero. And other bands like Mudhoney, Soundgarden, Alice in Chains, and Pearl Jam followed suit stylistically. However, noticeably even more absent from this genre were the girls.

It makes sense, then, that the riot grrrl movement, at first, was "geographically located within the punk scenes of…the Pacific Northwest" (Kearney, 1997, p. 211), which can also be referred to as grunge movement. However, it's not useful to assume that riot grrrl was a *direct* response to their exclusion from this genre. The "positioning of punk music as the father figure for riot grrrls dismisses many other important influences on this group which make it such a powerful force for female youth today, especially feminism" (Kearney, 1997, pp. 208-209). So, while punk (and grunge, a post-punk, postmodern version of the genre) did influence the riot grrrl movement, its inherent feminism is what gave it its unique voice.

Female musicians who participated in riot grrrl were dedicated to the expression of their rights to the same assertiveness that was normative in male musicians. The do-it-yourself (DIY) culture pioneered by the masculinist punk movement of the 1970s was adopted by riot grrrls as a means to encourage the proliferation of the riot grrrl ethos. "This feminist network grew out of…underground music communities," practiced the dissemination of information through fanzines and other media, organized around political and social agendas, and "challenged notions of female display" (Leonard, 1997, pp. 230, 235). Riot grrrl was more than merely the style to which it was later reduced, co-opted, and commodified by mainstream media and corporate moguls (i.e., The Spice Girls' sugar-coated and widely marketed brand of "Girl Power"). Riot grrrl was a location, a frame of mind, and a support system.

Whether or not a musician identified *semantically* as "riot grrrl" didn't matter as much as *how* she participated. Within the movement there were attempts towards group empowerment in musicianship:

> Riot grrrls…aimed at mobilising grrrls to meet together and engage in activities such as music production. The Leeds and Bradford 'chapters' of the riot grrrl network organised a work-shop event…where they amassed musical equipment in a club and invited girls to experiment....The idea was to 'give girls a chance to try stuff out, to get comfortable with the idea of playing guitar without any expectations.' (Leonard, 1997, p. 239)

Riot grrrls, states Marion Leonard (1997), "aimed to educate and empower other girls and women to obtain their potential, unfettered by an ideology of femininity" (p. 247). Further, riot grrrl carved "out a space for young women where they're free to express themselves without being overshadowed or scrutinized by boys" (Reynolds & Press, 1995, p. 324). As I will discuss in the later chapter, You Say You Want a Revolution, it is in this space that clear connections can be drawn between the feminist support and networking that was a driving force behind the riot grrrl movement and the construction and agenda of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls.

What my inquiry aims to identify are the locations in the production of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls where feminist discourse and action are embodied. While rock camp

employs second-wave methods such as consciousness raising and self-defense workshops, as I will show, the production of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls incorporates methods and issues that have been taken on during the third-wave, such as female participation in cultural production, "the ascendancy of the lesbian/gay/bi/trans movement" (Findlen, 2001, p. xv), and the construction of language and discourse to include "the combined strength and wisdom of people from all walks of life who are fighting for meaningful equality" (Findlen, 2001, p. xv).

Here it is important to acknowledge that chronologically delineating feminism into waves is problematic. According to Astrid Henry (2004), "third-wave feminism refers to at least three distinct, albeit interconnected, concepts: generational age, ideological position, and historical moment" (p. 34). Henry (2004) states, "members of the second wave can be read as Baby Boomers (people born between 1947 and 1961)…third-wave feminists are easily collapsed into the larger category Generation X (people born between 1961 and 1981)" (p. 5). While this definition may be useful when categorizing feminists according to age, age does not define a feminist nor what a feminist is capable of understanding or accomplishing. According to this definition, feminism is defined by time, not philosophy or cultural variables. What's to say that a feminist born in the 1940s can't come to rely on the Internet (a chronologically third-wave tool) for feminist communications? Or that she can't develop gender, race, class, or sexuality awarenesses such as those raised by Angela Davis, bell hooks, Urvashi Vaid, and Judith Butler, women born as second-wavers but thinking and writing as the third?

Though this problem is noted, it is also difficult to fix. Attempting to choose other descriptors for third-wave feminism creates similar issues. Using the adjectives "new," "current," or "contemporary" in front of feminism still locates feminism in time, and someday the issues being discussed won't be new, current, or contemporary anymore. So, until we feminists can come up with less exclusive terms for our feminisms, and for the purposes of this project, I use the term "third-wave" as the descriptor for the feminisms that are being theorized and practiced during this current era. According to Rebecca Walker (1995), this is an era that has been constructed by a "different set of experiences to draw from, an entirely different set of reference points, and a whole new set of questions" (p. xxxiv) than those that were prevalent and integral to the construction of the second wave. The third-wave vision, or visions, have

> been shaped by the unique events and circumstances of our time: HIV/AIDS, the attack on reproductive rights, the erosion of affirmative action, the increasing visibility of diverse family forms, the advent of women's studies, thegrowth of technology, consumerism, mass media, the movement towards multi-culturalism and greater global awareness, the ascendancy of the lesbian/gay/bi/trans movement, a greater overall awareness of sexuality…all of these realities inform and shape our approaches to feminism. (Findlen, 2001, p. xv)

According to Beth Dublin, the third-wave vision is:

> …to become a national network for young feminists; to politicize and organize young women from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds; to strengthen the relationship between young women and older feminists; and to consolidate a strong base of membership able to mobilize for specific issues, political candidates and events. (Orr, 1997 p. 30)

While third-wave discourse is encouraging and respectful of multiple feminisms, according to feminist theorist Melissa Klein (1997), the "issues pertinent to older women do not necessarily resonate" (p. 207) in the lives of third-wave feminists. Even though many third-wavers grew up during the second wave, they don't experience their oppression or develop goals in the same way as their predecessors. She explains:

> Though we grew up in the aftermath of feminism and have taken some of its gains for granted, we experienced the backlash in areas such as reproductive rights as a rude jolt into action. Activism in the arena of AIDS drew renewed attention to gay and lesbian rights. The resurgence of interest in these…issues began to shape a new feminism, a new kind of activism emphasizing our generation's cynical

> and disenfranchised temperament…[o]ur politics reflects a postmodern focus on contradiction and duality. (Klein, 1997, p. 208)

Dovetailing third wave-feminism with what I seek to identify in my research of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, Klein (1997) then states, "the underground music community has served as a particularly fertile breeding ground for redefining a feminism to fit our lives" (p. 208).

Based on a comparison of what is already known about the marginalization and subjugation of women in the performance and politics of popular music and the stated objectives and actual practices of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, I argue that Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls rides the third wave by helping "young women articulate a feminism that responds to the political, economic, technical, and cultural circumstances that are unique to the current era" (Kinser, 2004, p. 124). Borrowing phrases from the third-wave feminist text *Manifesta* (by Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, 2000), Kinser (2004) explains, "one of the third wave's most critical features is that it speaks to a 'media-savvy, culture-driven' generation of young women" (p. 136). And "media-savvy, culture driven" (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000, p. 77) feminists are talking back. This "dialogue" results in feminist participation in the production of culture. While cultural production is not new to feminism, due to two fundamental arrangements, it is easier for third-wave feminists to participate in cultural production than it was for feminists to do so during the second wave. First, advancements facilitated by the second-wave women's movement have resulted in more access for women; thus more are able to occupy spaces

as the creators of culture. Second, third-wave feminists are able to utilize technologies (i.e., computers and the internet) that were unavailable to feminists during the second wave. This results in, as Kinser (2004) cites the assessment of Irene Karras, the ability of third-wave feminists to become "more directly influential in cultural reproduction as writers, producers, and directors than second wave feminists were in their youth" (p. 138). Regarding the production of rock (or popular) music, Melissa Klein (1997) explains, "a new social context means that within the alternative music community and elsewhere, girls have created new forms of feminism" (p. 207). Similarly, Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls produces culture by creating space and offering curricula and resources that enable girls and women to create culture and community to serve their lives. Moreover, it mobilizes young women and girls in the quest for sexual and gender equity in the arenas of identity politics and cultural production.

In the chapters that follow I explain how culture and community are constructed through participation in Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. However, it is necessary to discuss research questions and methods before I can begin to share analyses. In the section that follows I identify my research questions as well as the research methods I employed while in the field at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls.

Research Questions and Methods

As I stated above, the purpose of my qualitative ethnographic case study was to explore the methods utilized in the performance of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, as well as the experiences of camp administrators, participants, and volunteers, in order to identify feminist aims and outcomes of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. Because my interests lie in the feminist and activist approaches in the construction and production of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, as well as in the quest for equity, community building, and the creation of culture that arises through participation, in order to conduct a study true to these intentions, I began with the following overarching research questions:

1. What do participants say are the feminist objectives of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls?
2. How do administrators, volunteers, campers, and parents/guardians describe their roles at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls?
3. To what extent are the feminist objectives of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls being realized?

Also of interest to me was an assessment of what coordinators and campers *said* are the intended outcomes of participation and what those outcomes actually *are*. Using these inquiries as guidelines I was able to administer interview questions that raised the topics of the construction of culture and the marginalization of women and girls in the

music industry and society at large, as well as participants' involvement in networking, activism, and the waging of equity.

As a feminist-identified researcher, I chose to approach this study qualitatively. Positivism isn't my bag. A qualitative approach enabled me to interpret data and construct conclusions holistically and personally (Cresswell, 2003, p. 182). By conducting observation/participation on site, I was able "to develop a level of detail about the…place and…[was] highly involved in actual experiences of the participants" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 181). In doing so, interview questions emerged as I made observational notes and I learned to calculate what questions would be most appropriate to ask, and of which people (Cresswell, 2003, p. 181). By employing open-ended, one-on-one interviews, I was able to "elicit views and opinions" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 188) directly from camp participants, and by embedding myself among camp participants I was able to develop "rapport and credibility" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 181) with the people I was observing and interviewing without disrupting camp functions. Ultimately, this qualitative approach allowed me to develop grounded interpretations (Cresswell, 2003, p. 182) and to "generate inductive theory" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 169), or an "interpretation of the data" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 182) based on observed instances at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls.

This case study includes "a fully developed description of a single event" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 164) and group, and analyzes the significance and the relationships among the parts of the rock camp phenomenon (Reinharz, 1992, p. 164). Though the study does not extend far enough over time to qualify as a "true" ethnography, I did

employ ethnographic methods including literature review, "observation, participation, archival [or document] analysis, and interviewing" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 46), and sought "to document the lives and activities of women [and girls], to understand the experience of women [and girls] from their own point of view, and to conceptualize women's [and girls'] behavior as an expression of social contexts" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 46). Further, while on site, my participation as a sort of catch-all volunteer, as well as my own personal participation in and commitment to feminist music communities, enabled me to experience a sense of the community I observed (Reinharz, 1992, p. 53) and developed in me the desire to continue to advocate for the mission of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls.

Because of this commitment, this is also an advocacy study. Advocacy "researchers believe that inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political agenda" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 9), and advocacy research is connected to "important social issues…such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, and alienation" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 10). Collected information is to be made available to camp administrators in order to assist in future program development of, or modifications to, the existing five-day model of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. And because I was able to develop trust and rapport based on my own participation at camp, executive director Misty McElroy has called upon me to assist her with a similar endeavor, Rock Power for Girls, which brings three-day rock camp workshops to various U.S. cities in the summer of 2006. As I have agreed to help Rock Power for Girls, I have become a component of the feminist network that I am studying.

Undergirding the research methodologies I employ is a commitment to feminist research. "Feminist scholarship begins by asking questions informed by women's exclusion in the world" (Taylor, 1998, p. 358) and feminist methodology aims to challenge gender inequality and empower women (Taylor, 1998, p. 358). It shifts "the focus of standard practice from men's concerns in order to reveal the locations and perspectives of…women [and girls]" (Devault, 1996, p. 32), renders visible the experiences of women and girls, and challenges gender inequality (Taylor, 1998, p. 357). Further, data analysis includes "the use of feminist theory (Reinharz, 1992, p. 71). My interest in Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls is motivated by feminist critiques of early childhood development, the popular music industry, and the production of culture. Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls is, I will argue, a feminist response to the oppression that girls struggle with as members of this society. In this sense, this research becomes an ingredient of a wider body of knowledge that seeks "social change and action beneficial to women [and girls]" (Devault, 1996, p. 33) and attempts to represent the participants "in ways that do not reproduce harmful stereotypes" (Devault, 1996, p. 42).

It is important to note that my status as a feminist and rock and roll insider risks creating biased knowledge. While there are advantages to being an insider, like having ability and access that allows me to blend into the group in order to get a closer view, being an insider can have disadvantages. As an insider and an advocate of the camp's mission, my ability to be skeptical and critical is at risk. Being an insider may permit me a richer understanding of music production and rock culture terminology, but at the same time, I may also be fearful of voicing my skepticisms and critiques for fear of disrupting

the personal relationship I developed with Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. However, although feminist research that centers women and girls risks creating biased knowledge, Patricia Hill Collins points out that "knowledge that is admittedly partial is more trustworthy than partial knowledge presented as generally true" (Devault, 1996, p. 41).

Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls is the brainchild of executive director Misty McElroy. When it was founded, McElroy was a 30 year-old Women's Studies undergraduate attending Portland State University. The camp was a project that McElroy conceived and created utilizing do-it-yourself (DIY) methods in order to fulfill a practicum required by Portland State in order for her to graduate. And though Misty did not intend to carry the camp beyond the year of her graduation, the overwhelming enthusiasm displayed by first-year volunteers, campers, and campers' parents, as well as the Portland music community and the media (including Sally Jesse Raphael), helped her to realize that the needs that were being addressed transcended the camp's originally intended five days. Four years later, in 2005, during the camp's fifth season, I would find myself embedded on site conducting this research.

If you were to go looking for Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, you would have to look closely in a seemingly contrary place. Housed in an old warehouse, it rests nestled in contrast among the shipping docks, lumberyards, and machine shops of Northeast Portland, Oregon. In the small warehouse parking lot in front of the building, next to a sandwich-board sign hand-painted with the Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls logo, I sat behind a table, ready, with all of my consent and assent forms, to greet campers and their guardians on the first day of camp. The assent and consent forms explained the purpose

of my study, assured participants that my research had been legitimated by the Institutional Review Board, and contained my pledge not to put participants at risk. In fact, the only calculated risk was participant confidentiality. Therefore, all names of camp participants included in this paper are pseudonyms, save for founder and executive director Misty McElroy, from whom permission was given to print her actual name. Also appearing in this paper are names of actual artists and bands that either volunteered to play at camp or have participated in camp networking or that have been named as influential by interviewees. It is my preference to use the actual names of these artists in order to provide points of reference and to factually illustrate how networks are developed. This networking will be discussed later in the chapter You Say You Want a Revolution.

Of course, as a fledgling researcher, I had no previous experience regarding how to gauge when research complications would arise. I was only armed with the knowledge that complications are an inevitable component of research. So, from day one I battled with little things like locating a dozen rocks to secure each stack of forms from the breeze because storing them in a binder would not have been convenient for the expediting of the collection of signatures. It would have taken time away from everyone, and I was not there to get in the way. I hadn't thought to bring a stapler with me, a tool that would have been useful to make sure that the separate forms I was required to have signed by campers and their guardians could be matched and fastened together based on which guardian belonged to which camper. Had I had the luxury of time to send out assent/consent forms with other camper registration materials before camp began, the

confused mass that my forms became could have been avoided. And it would have saved a lot of time on that first day of camp. Alas, as is the case so often in academia, my timing was off. You stop a professor in the hallway to inquire about a reading assignment and the next thing you know, she's strongly advising you to push your project up by an entire year.

While on site it was my plan to administer qualitative, "unstructured and generally open-ended" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 188) interviews with willing camp participants, be they campers, volunteers, administrators, campers' parents, or visiting musicians. With these interviews, I "intended to elicit views and opinions from participants" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 188) in order to uncover the ways in which feminism, activism, and networking appeared in the construction and performance of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. Because the interviews I conducted were open, I had "no set agenda of questions" (McNiff, Lomax, & Whitehead, 2003, p. 124). This method allowed the interviewee to lead my line of questioning, though I stayed "within the general framework" (McNiff, Lomax, & Whitehead, 2003, p. 124) of the interview. Some of the questions I asked participants included: What is your age and where are you from? Do you think it is important for girls to have their own space to create rock and roll music? Do you consider yourself a feminist? (For the younger girls: Have you ever heard the word "feminism"?) How did you hear about Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls? What inspired you to attend or volunteer at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls? Do you consider yourself an activist? What is your role at rock camp? And, do you consider rock camp a feminist space? Interviews lasted between fifteen minutes to two hours in length and

though many of them were similar, none were the same, allowing for the development of "conversations that [led] to enhanced insights for all participants" (McNiff, Lomax, & Whitehead, 2003, p. 124). It was my intention to later analyze these insights in order to answer the following research questions that I refined and developed during fieldwork: Were the goals addressed in the camp's mission statement being accomplished? What tactics were being used to accomplish these goals and why? Why is it important for girls to have their own space, away from the male gaze, to learn how to play and perform rock and roll music? Why rock and roll? How does the rock camp environment differ from other social and learning institutions that a camper or volunteer might attend? Why were parents not only sending their daughters to a rock and roll camp, but also encouraging and enthusiastic about their child's participation in an art form stereotypically reserved for sex and drug abusers?

When choosing interviewees I relied on "[s]tratified sampling…a method for obtaining a greater degree of representativeness" (Babbie, 1992, p. 215) of camp participants. And because "choice of stratification variables typically depend on what variables are available (Babbie, 1992, p. 215), my intent was to speak to as many different types of participants as possible. I wanted to get perspectives from girls and women of color, especially because rock and roll is generally considered a cultural product of white males. It was important to speak with participants who were there on scholarship or who had received some type of aid to help bring them to camp. I wanted the perspectives of lesbians, transgendered, and multi-racial participants, as well as the lone biological male volunteer, and from participants who had traveled from other states

and countries to be there. I wanted to talk to the youngest and oldest campers, the youngest and oldest volunteers, and male and female parents or guardians. And again, because this project had to be developed at such an accelerated rate, I was unable to make these preparations before camp began. Once I arrived, interview selection was a matter of observation, introducing myself to people, sharing with them the reasons why I was there, and asking them if they'd be interested to talk to me. In order to do so, I relied quite a bit on snowball sampling, "a method through which…an ever-increasing set of sample observations" (Babbie, 1992, p. 309) is developed. One participant is asked "to recommend others for interviewing, and each of the subsequently interviewed participants is asked for further recommendations" (Babbie, 1992, p. 309).

In all, during the five days that camp lasted, I completed twenty-five individual face-to-face interviews. Of approximately seventy-five volunteers, I spoke to fifteen, ranging in age from 15- to 51-years. Of nearly one hundred campers, I spoke to six, ranging in age from 9- to 18-years. And of the uncountable parents/guardians, I spoke to four, ranging in ages 33- to 51-years, two of whom were camp volunteers. Among the fifteen volunteers with whom I spoke, five identified as queer, lesbian, or transgendered; five identified as transnational or multi-racial; seven identified as low-income or unemployed; and two had previously been campers. Of the six campers I spoke with directly, three identified as low-income; two identified as Black or multi-racial; and two alluded to identifying as queer. Lastly, among the four parents with whom I spoke, one identified as low-income. Unfortunately, because of time and resource constraints, as well as the nature and goals of this qualitative study, I was unable to gather or obtain

quantitative information regarding *all* participants' racial, gender, sexual, or economic demographics. While this information could have been a useful and interesting component to this study, it is information that I believe this paper can (and must) do without, for now. Perhaps this is information I will return to the field to gather. Leaving some stones unturned gives me good incentive to further this research.

By the fifth and last regular day of camp I had only conducted interviews with six campers. Because it was important that I hear more campers' voices, I quickly managed to round-up two small impromptu camper "focus groups [for] guided, small-group discussions" (Babbie, 1992, p. 90). Although the campers who participated were not "statistically representative of…[the camp] population…the purpose of [this method]…[was] to explore rather than to describe or explain in any definitive sense" (Babbie, 1992, p. 255). The benefits of utilizing this method were that I was able to gather input from more participants quickly, but at the cost of having "less control than individual interviews" (Babbie, 1992, p. 255) and having a bit of difficulty analyzing the data during analysis (Babbie, 1992, p. 255). With multiple and excited voices talking over one another during these two focus groups, it was challenging to keep track of specific participants' comments. Focus group number one consisted of three eight-year-olds, and focus group number two consisted of six 16- and 17-year-olds.

I also sat in as a participant-observer on daily morning and afternoon assemblies, as well as a number of workshops. On Sunday, the day before camp began, I observed an anti-oppression workshop for volunteers. On Monday, the first day of camp, I observed morning assembly, band formation, a lunchtime panel discussion on the challenges of

being a female musician in the popular music industry with the rock group The Donnas, a zine making workshop, and afternoon assembly. On Tuesday, day two, I observed morning assembly, a lunchtime performance by the Gossip, a self-defense workshop, and afternoon assembly. On Wednesday, day three, I observed morning assembly, the Image and Identity (oppression awareness) workshop, and afternoon assembly. On the fourth day, Thursday, I observed morning assembly, a workshop called How to Rock in the Free World, a messages in music workshop that attempted to shed light on corporate marketers' use of music to enhance product sales as well as the power music has to deliver information, a lunchtime performance by loud rock band LKN, and afternoon assembly. After camp on Thursday I drove with two camp volunteers to Olympia, Washington, to observe a camper band's participation as performers at Ladyfest Olympia.[5] On Friday, the fifth and final day of camp, I observed morning assembly, a lunchtime performance by the rap group Siren's Echo, and afternoon assembly. After camp on Friday, I went with three camp volunteers to see LKN perform at a local rock club. And on Saturday, the day of the showcase, I spent the afternoon in the camp office helping Misty create and photocopy 700 showcase programs, then sped off to watch the

[5] Ladyfests are non-profit or not-for-profit festivals/conferences organized by local women of all identities to showcase, celebrate and encourage the art and activism of women everywhere. Ladyfests happen all over the world and are not affiliated with other Ladyfests except in spirit. The first Ladyfest was held in Olympia, Washington, in 2000, and, as I will discuss in the chapter You Say You Want a Revolution, was a major factor in Misty McElroy's creation of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. Visit www.ladyfestolympia.org or www.ladyfest.org for information.

big show.[6] My participation during the assemblies, workshops, and performances also included helping to set up microphones and chairs for panelists, wrangling wayward campers, though none were forced to participate if they chose not too, and simply sitting, listening, and asking questions.

My decisions to observe these specific events were based on which events I believed were representative of my research goals, the camp's goals and activities, and which events, like instrument instruction and band rehearsals, I felt I could forego in order to have time to conduct interviews. When not observing specific activities, I roamed the halls looking at rock posters and informational pamphlets, listening to instrument instruction, and observing random band rehearsals. Observation methods included taking field notes and photographs, and, at times, recording workshop conversations and band rehearsals as I did during the interviews.

Subsequently, the recordings I made presented another of those unforeseen research complications. At the time, I thought I was being crafty and high-tech in my choice of recording devices. I had taken my iPod to camp with me, for which I had purchased a small recording module that easily clicked into the top of the portable machine. The whole thing fit nicely in the palm of my hand and I didn't have the burden of having to purchase, transport, and keep track of tapes. My iPod recorder enabled me to make digital recordings of interviews, songs, and workshops, which, at the end of each

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[6] On Saturday afternoon, before the showcase, I was originally supposed to conduct an interview with Misty McElroy. However, she had become much too busy with showcase preparations to give me the interview at that time. Instead, I spent the time we had allotted for the interview helping her, turning a research complication into research action.

day, I was able to quickly download on to my laptop's hard drive. It took all of three minutes to transfer, label, and store the entirety of a day's interviews. That was the easy part. What turned into a bit of a nightmare was my inability to replay these digital recordings through a foot-operated transcription machine, which would have freed my hands to type. So, during the transcription phase of my research I spent extra hours navigating by hand the iTunes playback program on my computer while at the same time typing as furiously as possible, but having to stop and start again every few seconds. What I learned from this glitch is that before I make any more digital recordings that require transcription to make sure that I have access to a machine that will allow me to operate digital playback by foot, if that technology even exists. If it doesn't, I'll stick with tape.

After my fieldwork was completed and all the interviews I had conducted were transcribed, I began analyzing the data. First, I thoroughly read every interview transcript, as well as camp pamphlets and notes that I had collected in the field. This was done "in order to obtain a *general sense* of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 191, emphasis author). I made notes in the margins of my interview transcripts that identified themes or patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 215) and "overall trends" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p 216) in the responses to my interview questions. I studied participant responses for developing patterns as well as for responses that contradicted developing patterns, though these responses were not prevalent. From these notes, as well as from notes I had taken in the field, I made "contact summary" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 50) sheets. "A contact summary is a single sheet

containing a series of focusing or summarizing questions about a particular field contact" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 50) and "is a rapid, practical way to do first-run data reduction – without losing any of the basic information…to which it refers" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 51). Cresswell (2003) also refers to this as "clustering" (P. 192), whereby the researcher "make[s] a list of all topics" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 192) and forms the list of "topics into columns" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 192). I then coded the topics by "finding the most descriptive wording for" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 192) them and "turn[ing] them into categories" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 192). These categories, including "Feminism," "Riot Grrrl," "Empowerment," "Community/Networking," "Culture," and "Activism," were then "cut from text segments and placed on notecards" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 193) in order to assemble and organize them for preliminary analysis. A summary of my preliminary analysis is included at the end of this chapter and final analyses will be discussed in the chapters to follow. Final analyses will include descriptions of participants, experiences, interviews, and events (Cresswell, 2003, p. 193) that occurred at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. I will support my interpretation and analyses with "diverse quotations and specific evidence" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 194) I collected throughout this research. Before analyses can be discussed, however, it is important, for the sake of coherence, that the reader be provided with a detailed description of the activities and events that occurred at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls.

Glory Days

So, what did a day in the life at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls look like? Camp began early, before the typical American workday. At 7:45 am, prior to the campers' arrival, volunteers moved chairs and tables out into the facility's parking lot in order to greet and sign-in campers, as well as address questions and concerns of the parents or guardians who dropped them off for the day. These inquiries ranged from the cursory arrangement of carpools, to the purchasing of tickets to the camper showcase, to lengthy discussions regarding campers' musical progressions. At 8:30 am, once each camper had been checked-in or otherwise accounted for, morning assembly began in the rock room. The rock room was the largest room on site and was reserved for the camp's major gatherings, including workshops, band performances, and lunchtime panel discussions. During the morning assembly campers participated in energetic and community building games, exercises, and sing-a-longs, and were treated to humorous and instructional skits performed by the volunteers. Among the volunteers who led the morning assembly was a member of the popular indie band Sleater-Kinney.

After morning assembly on Monday, the first day of camp, campers were given thirty minutes to form the band that they would practice with for the week. This was also the band they would perform as during the end-of-camp showcase on Saturday. Signs were posted on the rock room walls demarcating various genres of popular music including punk, hip-hop, rock, pop, goth, and heavy metal, and campers congregated underneath these signs to advertise their availability according to the style of music they

were interested in playing. Campers were responsible for forming their own bands and the process was a bit chaotic. Spontaneously self-dividing a group of nearly one hundred eight- to eighteen-year-old girls was a challenging procedure, not only because it was easy for the large group to become socially distracted, but especially because the instrumentation and personal chemistry of the band needed to be taken into consideration. While campers were entrusted to accomplish this on their own, volunteers were present to aid them if a group expressed a need for assistance. Some returning campers who had played in bands with one another in years past teamed up again, but many needed volunteers to steer them towards other girls who, they would decide together, would add the desired components.

After it had been decided which girls would play together as a band, the campers started off to instrument instruction. Instructional sessions were held in various rooms off of the main hallway, as well as in makeshift locations both inside and outside of the building. The rooms were marked Bass 1 and Bass 2 for beginning and advanced bass players, Guitar, Vocals, Drums, Keyboards, and so forth. Here, campers spent the remainder of the morning with their respective instructors and fellow campers and were taught licks, riffs, chops, chords, strumming patterns, beats, timing, and other such techniques. A walk down the main hallway while these sessions were in progress was a cacophonous jolt to the head. While none of the instruments was really blaring during instruction, the mashing of all the different sounds and skill levels was not for the faint of ear.

Lunch began between 11:30 am and 12:30 pm depending on the scheduled lunchtime activity. Volunteers, mainly camper-moms, donated, prepared, and delivered approximately 75 boxed lunches every day for the volunteers. All of these meals were vegan to accommodate all dietary needs. This way, all lunches were animal cruelty-free and could be made the same without the hassle of having to meet the separate needs of each volunteer. Of course, if a volunteer preferred a little meat or dairy, she or he was welcome to pack her or his own lunch. The campers were asked to pack their own lunches, but there was always at least peanut butter and jelly on hand in the small camp kitchen in case someone forgot hers. In the rock room, while they inhaled or picked apart their bagged lunches, campers participated in panel discussions and were treated to performances by all-female or female-fronted bands. On the first day of the 2005 camp session, Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls welcomed the popular rock band The Donnas to discuss how they have managed to navigate their musical careers as women in a male-dominated industry. Other participating bands included the dance-punk band the Gossip, whose tough-as-nails lead singer was a volunteer vocal instructor; loud rock band LKN, whose drummer taught drums at camp and whose bass player was a founding member of the seminal riot grrrl band Team Dresch; Pom Pom Meltdown, whose guitarist was a camp sound technician and volunteer guitar instructor; and hip-hop band Siren's Echo, who were the most influential in getting the entire camp off of their booties for a lunchtime break-dance party.

After lunch, campers participated in workshops that included zine making, self-defense, image and identity discussions, socio-political musical messaging, and sound

and roadie instruction. As it is explained in the Rockin' Road Map, the significance of including these particular workshops was to "emphasize the connections between music and other venues of self-reliance and creative expression" (McElroy, 2005, p. 6). After their workshops, campers were given most of the rest of the afternoon to practice with their bands.

Afternoon band practices took place in the rooms that were used for morning instruction and were autonomous and egalitarian for the most part. At least one "band manager" (volunteer camp counselor) was always present at band practice to offer instruction, production advice, and to assist in troubleshooting and communication. At the beginning of the week, with the campers new to and out of practice with one another, the sounds that emanated from the practice rooms were loudly dissonant and prompted my reflexes to bring hands to ears in fruitless attempts to block the vibrations from entering my brain. By the third day, rehearsals became much more pleasant to experience, relatively speaking, and by the fifth, it had become clear that practice does indeed make better.

During band practice, camp volunteers, including the executive director's mother and sister, who, due to cerebral palsy, must use a wheelchair for mobility, helped to make afternoon snacks for all the campers and volunteers in the tiny camp kitchen. Usually, this was something that could be made and doled out easily in mass quantities, like popcorn or pretzels. On the last day of camp a local vendor donated strawberry ice cream.

Band practices lasted until 5:00 pm, at which time, campers and volunteers adjourned once again to the rock room for afternoon assembly. Here, announcements pertinent to the following day were made and campers participated in exercises and games that helped them to relax and wind-down before leaving camp for the day. Then, in the parking lot at 5:30 pm, they awaited their transportation home. Campers not from the Portland area would leave with relatives who lived nearby or a host family that camp organizers helped to arrange. A few out-of-town campers and their parents rented hotel rooms for the week. And national and international volunteers were housed by willing volunteers or friends. (I stayed the week with a former roommate and her girlfriend.) As campers milled about the parking lot, they made arrangements to rehearse, compared the outfits they would wear during the showcase, hatched post-showcase party plans, and discussed how they were going to remain in contact with one another once camp had ended. By the end of each day, nine hours for the campers and ten or eleven hours, at least, for the volunteers, everyone, including me, was exhausted. As each day passed, excitement and nervousness grew in the campers, volunteers, and their parents and guardians, as the showcase drew nearer.

On Saturday morning, the day of the showcase, the doors to the camp warehouse were unlocked and campers given free-reign to spend as much time as they needed for one last rehearsal with their bands. The halls bustled as they did on every other day, in a flurry of girls carrying drumsticks, guitars, and amplifiers. But by the middle of the afternoon, after every camper had gone her way to prepare for the gig, the halls became peculiar and empty, the rehearsal rooms noiseless. Perhaps it was simply the quiet before

the storm, for once the girls and volunteers began pouring into the Wonder Ballroom, a 762-person capacity venue in Portland, the din was resurrected in full force. And then parents, grandparents, guardians, friends, aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbors, and the press began to arrive and the cold and cavernous room became small, tight, and hot. Not long after dusk, before a clamoring capacity crowd, each band took the stage to perform the rite for which every girl had worked so diligently to prepare. Even the girls who were scared out of their minds to perform in front of a crowd that size wore some sort of smile, indicating she'd made it. A standing ovation and then, just like that, it was all over. The crowd, campers, and volunteers filed out of the Wonder Ballroom and into the night in both satisfied glory and sadness that another summer's session had taken its curtain call.

It would be an oversight not to mention that during the 2005 camp season, a documentary film crew was on site every day. The documentary, *Girls Rock! The Movie*, has yet to see release, but there are trailers up on the film's website and on the *Girls Rock! The Movie* My Space page.[7] While the presence of documentarians at rock camp is not the norm year by year, it was this year, as was the daily presence of a photojournalist from *Life* magazine. The film crew followed the campers' actions with their lights and cameras practically non-stop, and a few campers who were chosen, or screen-tested, or whatever filmmakers do to decide who gets to be the star, had been rigged with wireless microphones so their every utterance could be recorded. In the available trailer footage,

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[7] To view the *Girls Rock! The Movie* trailer, visit www.girlsrockmovie.com or the film's My Space page at www.myspace.com/girlsrockmovie.

during an interview with executive director Misty McElroy, she reminds us of one of the major reasons why Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls exists: "…the world really isn't that easy for girls, still" (www.girlsrockmovie.com). And while the world seemed pretty easy for girls at camp and on the night of the showcase, the respect, nurturing, and applause they received there is not the norm away from the rock camp oasis.

On With the Show

In the chapters that follow I discuss further the themes of feminism, feminist activism, networking, community building, cultural production, and the waging of equity as they are found in the production and performance of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. Chapter two, (You Make Me Feel Like a) Natural Woman: Naturalizing Equity and Critical Thought in Early Girlhood Development, shows how Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls aids in the breakdown of mainstream cultural norms in the music industry and in society as a whole. I show the ways in which Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls offers girls tools that help them to identify the ways in which they are oppressed as well as the importance of learning to work *with* one another versus *against* one another. I also show how rock camp offers girls tools that enable them to create their *own* images, identities, and cultures, and that aid in the development of self-determination, confidence, and strength by challenging the mythology of the quiet, little girl. It is in this chapter that I discuss the importance of girl-only space at rock camp and describe many of the

workshops and activities that took place at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in order to verify my findings.

In chapter three, You Say You Want a Revolution: From Riot Grrrl to Ladyfest to Rock Camp and Beyond, I detail how feminist activism and networking influence women's DIY music and arts communities and show how the nurturing of these communities positions girls and women, and the music they create, as agents of social change. In this chapter, through the analysis of interviews, events, and musical/cultural production, I show how rock camp volunteers educate one another as well as other communities to which they belong. This chapter includes an analysis of the location of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in Portland, Oregon, and its relationship with neighboring Olympia, Washington, where riot grrrl and Ladyfest began.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, Like a Bridge Over Troubled Water: Race, Class, and Feminism at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, I offer analyses of race and class, as well as inherent feminism in the production and performance of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. This chapter also contains summaries of the previous chapters' findings as well as my closing remarks. In this section I offer suggestions regarding how this research can be furthered and expanded to include other rock camps for girls.

To date, I am not aware of any published academic research that has been conducted regarding Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls and I am looking forward to introducing new, exciting research to academic, feminist, and music communities. Further, with this study's findings, I hope to provide new information for culture and

gender theorists, specifically those interested in cultural expressions of adolescent females in rock and roll.

CHAPTER 2

(YOU MAKE ME FEEL LIKE) A NATURAL WOMAN: NATURALIZING EQUITY AND CRITICAL THOUGHT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

For girls, much of their early adult life is one of recovery, of getting back on their feet, of trying to become whole again, of becoming comfortable with who they are and with learning how to exercise personal and political power. What would happen to girls if they were not robbed of their 'selves'? If they were raised to be independent, self-sufficient women?

- Judy Mann (in *The Difference*, 1994, p. 15)

Being a woman in rock shouldn't be like a gimmick or handicap, it should just be. People shouldn't pay attention to that, they should just pay attention to the music part.

- 16-year-old Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls camper

In the trailer for the documentary *Girls Rock! The Movie*, a little girl of about seven or eight years old is shown singing meekly, "I'm not loud enough to be heard" (www.girlsrockmovie.com). Though her voice is barely audible, the message she delivers, whether she's aware of it or not, reverberates throughout history and across cultures. As I stated at the beginning of the preceding chapter, social divisions are often constructed around sex and gender (as well as race and class), and these divisions are reinforced by certain behaviors. For girls, loud and boisterous behavior has been something they have historically been told not to exhibit. "Sit quietly like a little lady

and don't take up too much space." At certain times in history, raucous behavior on the part of women or girls was ruled as witchcraft and punishable by death. However, a typical American punishment for rambunctious boys is often simply temporary ejection from the home. Meaning: "it's okay that you're loud, just be loud outside, in public." This socialization has created very different circumstances for boys and girls; a world has taken shape in which girls are punished and sequestered for raising their voices (so they often do not), and boys are rewarded with encouragement and freedom to perform such behavior (and so they do so excessively). Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls takes strides to deconstruct this double standard by literally placing in their hands the tools (guitars, drumsticks, microphones, pen and paper) that enable girls to materially claim their rights to decibels. Noise isn't just for boys and men; if it were, they'd be able to whistle Dixie out of their penises.

Moreover, because we know that "gender bias is rife in America's classrooms and that it has a damaging effect on girls" (Mann, 1994, p. 13), the same-sex environment that Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls provides greatly reduces girls' struggles for the attention of their instructors. At rock camp, girls do not have to compete with boys to be heard. And so here, the myth of the quiet little girl is dispelled, but not just with guitars and amplifiers. Workshops that instruct the girls in self-defense, oppression awareness, and zine making, all aid in the debunking of this myth by showing and allowing girls their voices, individually and collectively. In their bands, as the girls work with one another towards common goals, they realize the benefits of collaboration, a lesson that aids in the breakdown of competition and the realization of community among them. In

the following chapter sections, through description and analysis of panels, workshops, and interviews I observed and conducted at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, I show how Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls attempts to develop in girls comprehensions of self-worth, camaraderie, and productivity that enable them to go forward with their lives believing in the equity, access, voice, and participation rights they deserve. I also show how the Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls experience aids girls in the development of their creativity and critical thought that are the integral components of their senses of self-worth and respect for others. And isn't self-worth and respect for others fundamental when engaging in the waging of equity and community?

I chose to focus on camp workshops and panels in this chapter because they provided spaces where topics such as equity, construction of culture and participation in media creation, race, class, size, gender, and sex oppression, and politics in general were most discussed. Attending the workshops and panels allowed me to observe the greatest number of campers in one location at the same time and I am convinced that observing workshops and panels afforded me the best opportunities to witness how the topics mentioned above were included in the camp curriculum.

A Panel Discussion with The Donnas

On the first day of camp, four panelist chairs were set up on the rock room stage, one for each member of the popular all-female rock band, The Donnas. The band had been invited to talk to the camp about their experiences as women in the music industry.

The Donnas are a band that has gained a bit of mainstream notoriety; perhaps more for the fact that the band is comprised of four women than for the music they create, and given that it was the first day of camp, and The Donnas are somewhat famous, campers and volunteers were abuzz with the anticipation of their arrival. I seemed to be the only person on site who was at all apprehensive about their participation. The cover of the band's most recent album, *Spend the Night*, which was displayed along the rock camp hallway leading into the rock room, depicts the four Donnas, women in their early- to mid-twenties, lounging about a bedroom in their pajamas. My apprehension was derived from this choice of album cover, obviously designed to simulate a teenage girls' slumber party and to beckon the viewer/listener to "spend the night." Thinking to myself, I questioned how The Donnas would be able to speak to the camp with integrity and contribute positively to the rock camp experience with what I read as an oppressive album cover looming just a few feet away from where the panel discussion was to take place. Wasn't this type of imagery, female musicians equated with girlhood and promiscuity, what rock camp was attempting to deflect? Wasn't this role, that of the female creator being "limited and mediated through male notions of female ability" (McRobbie & Frith, 2000, p. 140), a role that rock camp was attempting to deconstruct? But because I was on site mainly as a researcher, I kept my concern to myself. And these observations seemed to be only mine. The Donnas were rapturously welcomed and disappointingly unchallenged.

The panel was mainly a question and answer session. The band did not prepare long speeches for the campers, and after simple introductions (which Donna was how old

and played which instrument) they began to field questions. Many questions posed to the band by campers were under-developed surface questions about The Donnas' personalities and tastes. "Do you like pizza?" "What's your favorite movie?" "Do you like being fashionable?" To this, one Donna replied with commentary on expectations that had been put on the band regarding image. "I'm not a model," she said. "I never wanted to be a model, and you don't have to be, and I don't have to be." Her response received a great round of applause. Here, I found myself hoping that a volunteer might interject to raise more questions about image, specifically regarding the album art for *Spend the Night*. When none did, I concerned myself with constructing an appropriate, but non-confrontational question for the band. I was there to participate, too, but not to create disruptions. So I asked The Donnas whether they recalled anyone in the industry ever asking them to change or compromise the way they look. Their collective answer was no, which honestly surprised me. Based on my research as well as my own personal experiences, and countless experiences of other women I know in the industry, I personally found this answer to be brief and difficult to accept.

Still, The Donnas did make relevant contributions that day. When a camper posed the question, "How do you feel about being women in the music industry?" one band member shared with the girls some of the pitfalls of the music industry, naming radio airplay as just one location where women get the short end of the stick, adding that they are sometimes inappropriately approached by males fans and warning the girls that the music industry is one where they, as females, were constantly having to prove themselves worthy of inclusion. And when asked how they had managed to become so

successful, one Donna replied that success, for her, does not rely on how many albums the band has sold, but on the fact that the group has stayed together for as long as they have. "Stick with your friends," she advised. "Girls make friends forever, guys really don't care. Through all of this, I've had three other people to help keep me strong." And with that, she smiled and gestured towards the other women sitting on stage.

Album art aside, by highlighting their experience of working steadfastly collaboratively, The Donnas helped set the tone for the rest of the week, and perhaps for years to come. The privileging of collaborative success rather than industry and financial success helped to illustrate for the campers the importance of teamwork and commitment versus compromising ideals to appease record companies and achieve rock stardom. One 27-year-old volunteer I spoke with, who was also helping to organize the Willie Mae Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in New York City, told me that she hoped that participation at rock camp would help campers understand that they don't need to "feel like they have to be rock stars. That's really bogus." And Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls is not, in founder and executive director Misty McElroy's words, "a rock star factory," by any means. To Misty, rock camp "isn't really even about music, it's about consciousness." Perhaps that is why comments like, "you're pretty good players for girls," or "show us your tits," or other such inappropriate gestures that The Donnas said they often receive from male fans, were not offered during the panel discussion.

Another important aspect I noticed regarding The Donnas' panel was that it simply occurred. That the discussion took place became an illustration of access. Dialogues with rock musicians (famous female musicians, at that) have, until now, not

been so available to groups of young girls. First of all, adults and children exist in separate social, political, and economical realms. (In the U. S., adults generally socialize with other adults, they construct laws, and go to work and receive paychecks that enable them to pay bills and make purchases. Children generally socialized with other children, they have almost no political voice until they become legal adults, and are subject to child labor laws that keep them financially dependent on their guardians.) Second, because rock and roll is predominantly a cultural product of adult (and sometimes adolescent) males, there are few opportunities for younger people, especially girls, to witness, explore, and therefore make inquiries regarding the production of rock music. Children have very little access to instruments and recording studios, and are too young to get themselves to and into most rock and roll music clubs. Even if they did have this access, as was discussed in the previous chapter, girls would have considerably less access than boys. Through The Donnas' participation, campers were able traverse boundaries with the band that they normally would not be permitted to even approach. Seeing a band on television or listening to one of their CDs is not a materially reciprocal relationship, managers and publicists keep industry outsiders (and many insiders) from contacting artists, and security measures at concerts aren't conducive to contact and dialogue with the performers. And as well as inviting performing musicians to speak and/or play at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, throughout the year, camp administrators and volunteers operate the Backstage Pass program. Backstage Pass allows camp volunteers to escort campers to rock music venues so that campers can observe sound checks, visit backstage areas and tour busses, and have their technical questions answered by musicians and

sound engineers. Furthermore, the showcase that marks the end of camp gives girls access to the stage itself. And getting onto the stage is no small feat for women, let alone girls. As was shown in the first chapter, music venues are predominantly male spaces.

Access marks acceptance. Specifically, the opportunities for access to other (adult) musicians, music production, and performance spaces that Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls creates are instrumental to the development of the campers' self-worth as musicians and individuals. Furthermore, the more access is gained and practiced, the more normalized it becomes, not only for young, female campers, but for adult musicians and industry insiders as well, male and female. In this way, the girls who attend Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls can "grow up," as one 30-year-old volunteer told me, receiving "new and better information." When I asked her what information she was speaking of, specifically, she replied, "these girls have opportunities to become familiar with spaces, activities, and communications that had, for the most part, been denied to their predecessors and receive messages that validate their techniques, creativity, and intuitions." For young rock camp campers (and some volunteers), especially those who return year after year, the panel discussion with The Donnas was not particularly unique. The practice has become routine, normalized. And if constructive concepts or practices are established early enough in a young person's development, there may be fewer destructive experiences obscuring a young person's growth. Moreover, because the rock camp environment was girl-only, (save for the lone biologically male intern and one transgendered male intern), girls who chose to participate in the discussion did not have to compete with boys' interruptions and commands for attention; they did not have to

wait in vain to be called upon (Mann, 1994, p. 13).[8] The result for campers, more than simply receiving first-hand accounts of the experiences of established female musicians, was that they were not left feeling "muted, invisible, and less important" (Mann, 1994, p. 13) than boys. On the contrary, regardless of the superficial questions that many asked, because they were permitted to ask questions without interference, an opportunity was created for the girls to develop their senses of voice, visibility, and importance. While this opportunity may not be unique to Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, what *was* unique in this instance were the *topics* being discussed and access to their voices and other musicians.

In concluding this section on the panel with The Donnas, it is necessary to point out that my skepticism regarding the inclusion of the band as rock camp participants may have been based on my own understanding and experiences with feminism, female productions of rock music, and knowledge of the ways in which women in rock have been objectified by corporate marketers. This was an instance where my insider status may have skewed my investigative goals. However, I do believe that my skepticism was relevant to the matter being considered, even if it was developed according to my standards and not necessarily according to the mission of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls.

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[8] The policy at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls allows males to volunteer and intern, but it does not permit males to be instructors or campers.

Zines

The workshops I observed also offered for campers access to their voices. After The Donnas had left the building on that first day of camp, I sat in on Zines, a zine making workshop that was led by a self-proclaimed "24-year-old queer punk musician zinester." The workshop was held in the front room of the camp warehouse and attended by roughly 20 campers, who sat poised with their pens around a large table or lounging on surrounding sofas. Bettie, the workshop instructor, who told me during our interview that she had been self-publishing her own zines since she was 13-years-old, shared with the campers one reason why zines can be important and empowering. "If you don't see yourself represented in the media," she offered at the beginning of the workshop, "sometimes you have to make your own." She continued to explain that writing, publishing, and distributing zines have become methods for which many people who are not given access and voice to participate in public debate can do so independent of the corporate, glossy publications that circulate in the millions and often exclude the marginalized and/or publish classist, racist, and sexist views of public and private spheres, nationally and internationally. A zine, taken from the word fanzine, is a

> genre of publications whose roots are usually traced back only as far as the alternative press created to celebrate punk music in the late 1970s despite fanzines' roots in a variety of groups not associated with music (e.g., the science

> fiction press of the late 1930s and French leftist radicals of the 1960s). (Kearney, 1997, p. 215)

Furthermore,

> Zines have generally been a phenomenon of Western countries where mass media, economic globalization and corporatization of youth leisure, style and voice have had a particular impact on youth culture and politics. Traditionally, those involved with zines have been predominantly of ethnic majorities and in the case of the use of the web, those with some technological resources. However, the purpose of these media has been to create an inexpensive, self-produced site for expression for those without access to or interest in mainstream forums. Consequently, zines are often produced by young women marginalized by poverty and geography, attempting to forge new communities beyond their locales. (Harris, 2003, p. 45)

For girls, especially those who construct "Grrrlzines [that] offer spaces for young women to discuss and organize among themselves, and in particular to wrestle with and

parody contemporary images of girlhood" (Harris, 2003, p. 39), zine making can be empowering in unique ways. A girl who creates her own zine has no rules to follow, no advertisers to make happy. Therefore, the content of the publication is limited only by its creator. As the creator, she is free to write, draw, include, exclude, comment, spout, tout, rant, bitch, complain, argue, *whatever*, about anything and everything she wants. Bettie made this quite clear to the girls in the workshop. For example, when telling me her own story, Bettie's first zine was about her job at a Subway restaurant. She later moved on to write about her friends' bands, and then began to include writings about politics and emotions. She alone assumed the power to make each and every decision regarding the production of her zine.

Bettie also explained to the campers how zine publication (in print and on the world wide web) has become a tool for creating networks and communities. "For example," she said, "a lot of my friends who are vegetarians and write zines about being vegetarian or vegan share their stories with each other. They trade zines back and forth. And then they might trade zines or columns with other people who are writing anti-animal cruelty zines or animal rights zines." In this way, the information zinesters collect through personal experience becomes shared through dissemination, and what were once private musings become public and communal.

The campers in the workshop dialogued for about 30 minutes regarding these basic zine premises and were then given the rest of the hour to create their own page that would be included in the all-camp zine published on the last day of camp. Kat, an 11-year-old camper I interviewed, told me that she really enjoyed the zine making workshop

and was thinking about starting a zine of her own. When I asked her what she would want to write about, she replied, "Maybe one about racist [racism] because I think that's really sad and I would write how I feel about that…I would want to share that." And while I could not find Kat's entry in the all-camp zine, I did come across one page that illustrated another camper's new understanding. "I really want to go and write a zine now, I realized I have a lot to talk about. I'm sure they'll bring up contraversy [sic], but I'm prepared for an argument" (Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls Zine, 2005, p. 19). This camper's "realization" that she has a lot to talk about, as well as her "preparedness" for an argument, is illustrative of two things. First, that she had gained a critical awareness of the importance of her experiences, and second, that she has learned that she does not need permission to access her own thoughts, voice, emotions, and creativity regardless of whether or not she receives validation for the things she says, thinks, or feels. This example, then, depicts a location within Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls where the myth of the quiet little girl is countered with the reality that girls do have the desire and ability to sound off. As in the case of the zine making workshop, sometimes all it takes is for girls to be able to recognize their desires and abilities is a critical explanation that discloses how girls' voices are squelched and how "America today limits girls' development, truncates their wholeness and leaves many of them traumatized" (Pipher, 1994, p. 12), and to provide them with tools, options, and outlets for amplification of their voices. And in Zines, Bettie offered not only a critical explanation, but advice on how to recognize when a publication's content might be at the mercy of other influences and decision makers (citing *Bust* magazine's inclusion of cigarette ads as example), therefore

providing campers (and other volunteers) with knowledge that enables them to perform critical assessments of their own. Zines not only told the girls "you can," but also showed them how to do it, and literally put pens and paper into their hands so that they *would*.

Whether or not campers leave camp and create zines on their own time cannot be determined unless a lengthier study is conducted. A few girls, like Kat, told me that they desired to create their own zines, and one girl, an 18-year-old camper from New England named Michel, told me that she had even participated in zine making before her arrival at camp. But a final published product is nowhere named as a goal of the workshop or of camp on the whole. Instead, by gaining an understanding of how and why zines are published, working together to create a zine, and receiving examples of other zine communities, the girls were able to come away from this workshop armed with knowledge and tools that would enable them to participate in the cultural production of zines should they so desire.

At first examination, the pages of the *Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls Zine (2005)* do not appear to point to the possibility that the girls had fully digested the politics of zine making as discussed in the workshop. Of the approximately 100 entries, 52 either began with or contained anecdotes about "yesterday," "today," or "tomorrow." When making suggestions for topics, Bettie told the girls that "yesterday," "today," and "tomorrow" could be potential topics, but the overabundance of such entries makes it seem, at first, that the girls were simply submitting their entries based on her suggestions rather than accessing their own passions to produce the end result. However, upon closer inspection

of each entry, one girl's submission states that the theme of the zine is "Today," and therefore that was what she was writing about.[9] With this information, instead of the zine being read as chock full of entries that were simply a repetition of the lesson, the entries become thematic with their uniqueness occurring in each camper's description of "yesterday," "today," and "tomorrow." Granted, some entries are a bit juvenile in content and contain descriptions of pets, stuffed animals, or the contents of campers' breakfasts. But, many of these campers *were* juveniles and a major rule for zinemaking is that the creator can write about *whatever* the creator desires. So theoretically, stuffed animals and Rice Krispies are perfectly acceptable zine topics indeed. However, the question arises: Would the campers have submitted more constructive or reflective zine entries if they had been able to spend more time than just one hour learning about zines and the purposes they serve?

During the 1970s, punks in the U.S. and in the United Kingdom published zines that "promoted local bands by reviewing shows and recordings and by interviewing local musicians, as well as promoting DIY, urging readers to form their own bands" (Leblanc, 1999, p. 38). In the 1990s, when riot grrrl was developing, (male) editors of punk zines used words such as "'bitches,' 'cunts,' 'man-haters,' and 'dykes'" (Sinker, 2001, p. 60) to describe women who were participants in the movement – it's no wonder that riot grrrls began publishing their own zines. Jody Bleyle of riot grrrl bands Hazel and Team Dresch said it most concisely, "If you don't like what the press is saying about you, say it

[9] How I neglected to make note of this during my observations, I don't know. Perhaps this theme was decided in another zine workshop (same workshop, different campers) that I did not observe.

yourself" (Sinker, 2001, p. 232.) For example, not only did riot grrrl band Bikini Kill publish a zine called *Bikini Kill*, lead singer Kathleen Hannah also wrote her own zine called "*April Fool's Day*, which was about the connections between drug addiction and oppression" (Sinker, 2001, p. 64).

Is a one-hour workshop enough time for campers to develop full comprehension of zine publishing and to access their own passions? One volunteer I interviewed offered, "it's hard because [the workshops] are only an hour so it just kind of skims the surface of a lot of stuff." However, she shared my opinion that the workshops still provide a good starting point. "[E]ven if we're not going really into depth with them, just showing the girls that this is stuff that's good to talk about, here and other places in your life" is important and constructive.

Moreover, relating zine production to my aims for this paper, it is important to point out that the campers, by creating their camp zine, regardless of its content, participated in the production of culture, which has been specifically named by third-wave feminist theorists (see Chapter 1) as characteristic of third-wave feminist practice. By becoming agents of cultural production and of their own representation, campers create (for themselves and others) subjective narratives that oppose colonizing commercial representations. When girls are not in control of their own representation, "their experiences are in fact homogenized, highly regulated and reduced to a symbolic or market value" (Harris, 2003, p. 43). So, even while "the spaces and discourses [girls] can use to complicate contemporary representations of girlhood and articulate resistance and a diversity of alternative stories are diminishing as a consequence of surveillance,

colonization and commodification," (Harris, 2003, p. 43) by offering zine (and other) workshops, Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls continues to provide space and discourse that enable girls to present "articulated resistance" of their commodification and colonization.

Other workshops I observed that were integral to the camp's goals of helping to develop in girls knowledge regarding *what* is important for them to resist, as well as the language and physical skills with which to articulate their resistance, were Image and Identity, Self-Defense, and How to Rock in the Free World. While each of these three workshops were quite different from one another in presentation and content, the unifying threads were the raising of consciousness regarding the politics of objectivity, the affirmation of the girls' senses of self-worth, and recognition of the rights of others in similar or different circumstances.

Image and Identity

The Image and Identity workshop, first offered during the 2004 camp session, was led by two bi-racial and queer-identified volunteers whose goal it was to offer new information and language skills to participating campers faced with sex, gender, race, and size oppressions. Jennifer, a 25-year-old woman of Chinese and Norwegian descent who co-led the workshop, shared with me the reason she proposed including the Image and Identity in the Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls curriculum. "I didn't see anything like that [at camp]," she said during our interview. "And I thought since rock camp is so subversive and alternative, why not give it some education on issues that oppress

people….So many girls are identifying as mixed-race, bi-racial, and [I] thought, 'there's a need here that we're not covering.'" Jennifer told me that the workshop aims to aid in the breakdown and deconstruction of binary images and representations that are upheld by the dominant social order, including body image, sexuality norms, and racial profiling.

During my observation of the workshop, which was simply a free-form, feminist pedagogical discussion among the two workshop leaders and roughly twenty-five campers ranging in ages from 11- to 18-years, I witnessed an open, honest, and respectful exchange of information. The campers were informed that in order to conduct an effective workshop and create a positive experience for participants, the Image and Identity environment should be non-judgmental and respectful. Jennifer and Lee, the other workshop leader, offered definitions of sexism and gender. "Sexism," Lee shared with the group, "is the social belief that women and men are very different and results in discrimination based on gender." "And gender is a social construction," added Jennifer. "The construction of gender roles is how our society creates expectations regarding the way women and men should behave and appear." Upon hearing this definition, a 14-year-old camper offered the example of the way the media portrays women as having "slender body sizes." To which Jennifer responded that girls participate in their own discrimination as well, through internalization. "We've been socialized, taught that it's normal, for women to be perfect." Then Jennifer shared with the group the goals of the workshop mentioned above using language that many of the participants would be hearing for the first time. Words and concepts like deconstruction, binaries, internalization, institutionalized power, size oppression, homophobia, and heterosexism

were discussed, and a simple exercise in binary thinking was undertaken to give the girls an understanding of how the concept works. "All these 'isms,'" Amy explained, "body oppression, racism, sexism, homophobia, work together to make all of us question constantly why we have such a hard time fitting in." Given that these "isms" exist and inform the way people think about and act towards one another, the girls were then asked to be accountable for their own thoughts and actions towards others.

Something that was very noticeable during the workshop was the campers' willingness to participate by answering and asking questions and offering feedback as well as their own anecdotes. One camper in particular shared a story that helped to further develop my understanding of the importance of the girls-only environment of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. This rather tomboy-ish girl shared with the group her disgust with certain boys she knew from her school who liked to shout at her, "show us your tits!" As the group discussed the many ways in which the slogan is oppressive (i.e., body, sex, and gender oppressive), my attention turned to the workshop environment and how it differed from the co-educational environments of the schools that many campers attend.

Generally, co-educational public schools are patriarchal hierarchies that privilege hard sciences and histories that have been written and recorded predominantly by men. Considering this bias, it is logical to assume, then, that the performance of co-educational public school curricula creates biases that privilege boys' education. What kind of changes can be made to such curricula to balance such biases?

> According to most feminist theorists (e.g., Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberg, and Tarule 1986; Lewis 1990; Stone 1994), schools are places where power resides with males and indeed the entire structure is male dominated. In order to create schools where gender bias no longer exists, where females can be equal participants and beneficiaries of a positive educational experience, the existing framework of schools would have to be de-constructed and redesigned to become very different places. This process would have to go far beyond an emphasis on value of the individual, where issues of gender could be topics of discussion. (Streitmatter, 1999, p. 8)

I began to wonder whether or not the girls who participated in the Image and Identity discussion would have felt as free to express themselves in their schools or in other co-educational venues. I also noticed that because co-educational environments, according to Streitmatter, are not typically safe spaces for discussions on gender and sexual harassment, rock camp provided a safer space and more progressive curriculum by allowing the girls to engage in such conversation with minimal to no fear of being ridiculed for expressing themselves. This is because "single-sex schools [or in this case, girls' rock camp] do guarantee equality of treatment within school [or in this case, girls' rock camp]" (Riordan, 1990, p. 47) and campers know that they will not be punished,

quieted, or reprimanded by instructors for speaking their minds. Research has shown that "single-sex institutions may assist adolescent academic development by providing children a place to learn without the distractions of the adolescent social agenda" (Mann, 1994, p. 123). And perhaps the acceptance and encouragement they received from their instructors trickled down, for girls were not policing one another in this environment, either.

When I asked Kat about the some of the differences she noticed between rock camp and school she told me that at school she gets made fun of for wearing different clothes (an expression of her self) than most other students and that she had been reprimanded for causing fights because of her choice of outfits. At rock camp, Kat told me, "They don't care about what I wear. They care more about my insides and they don't yell at me if I wear a whole bunch of black or all these cool colors." And in an interview I conducted with a fifteen-year-old transgendered male intern named Michael, who had been coming to rock camp since the age of eleven, he told me that rock camp specifically helped him to become more aware of his gender. He said,

> For most of my life I've been aware of my gender as something that wasn't for society's standards normal….I was always told I was a tomboy. I didn't understand the identity trans, I only knew gay, bi, and lesbian. So at the time when I came to rock camp it opened my eyes to a lot of different ideals and different identities and different

> lifestyles that at the time I wasn't really aware of….I was able to say I liked girls and be all right about it. And thanks to some counselors…and having long conversations with them about sexuality, I was able to really sort of get an idea of who I was.

When I asked Michael if he had been able to discuss any of those things at school he replied, "no." He also offered that although his family had been "very accepting of the queer community," he has been "kicked out of my house before for having my gender identity confused." So, beyond camp being a safer place for campers to express themselves physically and emotionally than at school, in Michael's case, Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls had become an even safer and more embracing and encouraging location than his own home.

The Image and Identity workshop was also something that was named by Tamara, a 16-year-old Korean-American camper from Oklahoma, as an activity that was instrumental in helping to structure her ideas of sex, gender, and feminism. When I asked her if she'd ever had a conversation like the one that was held in the workshop, she replied, "Oh no, never. That was really enlightening." She went on to explain to me, without prompting, that the workshop helped her to gain a better understanding of feminism. "I don't think that feminism is saying that women are better than men," she said.

> I think maybe feminism, from what I've heard, is saying that women can be just as good as men and we don't need to be judged because of our sex or gender – because it's two different things. I learned that in the workshop. And I'm saying that it's, like, feminist to be in a women's rock camp and to be with women who were in bands and seeing them play and get inspired.

Tamara also learned from the Image and Identity workshop new skills to help her deal with social issues regarding racism and other oppressions. While Tamara told me that she doesn't often hear racist comments, she has had to contend with a boyfriend who said to her, "women have no business singing in heavy metal bands." "How do you think the Image and Identity workshop will help you deal with comments like that?" I asked her. She replied,

> Well, they put definitions to words and that was kind of helpful. One thing that helped me was when they said if someone makes a racist or sexist comment you [can say] 'Oh, we were having such a good time until you had to say that.' And, like, putting the blame on them and not [have] to defend yourself because it's not your fault.

Tamara's response to my question demonstrated her new awareness that she is not responsible for the thoughts and actions of another person. She also learned language that she would be comfortable using when presented with undesirable, oppressive comments. This type of education is paramount for young girls. Discussions regarding the social construction of gender were not presented to me until I was well into my undergraduate coursework in the early 1990s. And it wasn't until I was in my thirties and had begun graduate coursework in Women's Studies that I began to study differences between sex and gender. Granted, the theoretical framework that separates sex and gender had not yet been developed when I was a girl, but this just illustrates how newer information benefits younger people. For rock camp campers, third-wave queer theory is something that the volunteers have studied and lived and are passing on to them. Subsequently, because they are presented with this information at young ages, the campers experience early familiarity with the language and concepts, as well as effective uses for them. In this way, discussions of sexuality, sex, gender, race, economic awareness and so forth, as was presented in the Image and Identity and other camp workshops, have a fighting chance of being internalized as normal by the girls who participate in them.

To assume that Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls is the only environment in which such discussions and experiences are normalized would be incorrect. However, given what is known about the patriarchal hierarchies and curricula of many public (and private) schools and other educational institutions, it is clear that the Portland rock camp does provide girls with developmentally progressive information and feedback that they

are not, for the most part, receiving in their schools and even, for some like Michael, in their own homes.

Self-Defense

According to Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls founder and executive director Misty McElroy, self-defense has always been intricately linked to rock and roll. When I asked her during our interview why she decided to include a self-defense workshop at a rock and roll camp she told me, "I had always gone to shows alone….I got jumped in the parking lot many, many times at two in the morning getting home by myself and I broke my ankle in the mosh pit at a Pearl Jam concert." McElroy continued, "You think at a rock show you [the attendees] have this one thing in common and so you're all supportive of each other, but it's really quite the opposite. And that was a shock to me when I started going to shows…."

As was shown in the previous chapter, the dangers that McElroy faced are gendered circumstances more than they are general ones. Live rock and roll music venues are often situated in unsafe urban locations and performance times often run late at night and into dark morning hours, creating safety issues for people, especially women, who want to attend. Misty's response to my question is illustrative of this. Furthermore, her decision to include self-defense in the rock camp curriculum also addresses the danger of presumption. McElroy feels that it's very important for people (and

specifically attending campers) to be aware of the need to protect one's self in what is presumed to be a safe environment.

The privileging of female safety at rock shows is something that was exercised during many riot grrrl band performances as a way to counter physically dangerous gender biases in music venues, illustrating further feminist awareness of the connections between self-defense and rock and roll music. Marion Leonard (1997) writes of a joint Bikini Kill/Huggy Bear tour where audience members were

> issued handouts requesting that girls and women stand near the front of the stage rather than toward the back. The handout commented that the front of the stage usually excluded women due to the violence of slam-dancing or the potential for harassment….The bands thus forced a re-negotiation of the spaces that girls and women inhabit at shows. (pp. 233-234)

During Self-Defense, the instructors, two women in their mid- to late-twenties, stood in front of a group of about forty campers and demonstrated appropriate maneuvers the girls could use to defend themselves against would-be aggressors. After the kicks, jabs, punches, and vocal exclamations were demonstrated, the instructors asked the group to form four vertical lines. At the head of each line, a camp volunteer was poised with punching pads and each camper took her turn to approach the volunteer. As each girl

stepped forward she was first asked to shout the word "no" loudly and repeatedly while she punched at the pads in the ways that were demonstrated. Some girls, especially the few girls of color who were present at the workshop, had to be coaxed more than others to yell and hit. Others wailed loudly and struck the pads with as much force as they could muster. After a few rounds, the girls who, at first, seemed rather meek, began to yell louder and hit more effectively. Next, the girls were asked to approach the padded volunteer and yell an affirmation of their own construction while they kicked at the pads. One adolescent camper yelled, "Girls are strong!" Another offered, "I am worth protecting!" Hearing these slogans being shouted led me to understand that because they were being used as affirmations, somewhere in these girls' past experiences they had received opposite information. But wherever and however they were learning (and probably internalizing) that girls are weak and not worth protecting was obviously being confronted and overturned during Self-Defense.

As well as learning some fundamental physical defenses, from the campers I spoke with about their experiences in the self-defense workshop, I learned that the workshop was also about accessing their own inner-strengths, desires, rights, and voices. This combination is as useful in a crowded mosh pit or against a would-be attacker in a dark alley, as it is during a performance on a well-lit stage.

Jessica, a nine-year-old vocals camper I interviewed, shared with me that at rock camp she is learning how to find her "mad voice." When I asked her what she meant by "mad voice," she told me, "I usually talk soft and when I rock I have to find it," meaning that she understood that creating loud music requires being able to use a loud, or "mad,"

voice. What Jessica may not have been able to piece together is how the self-defense workshop was useful in helping her to access this voice. Jessica told me that in Self-Defense she learned to yell, "NO, NO, NO, NO, NO, NO!" Loud and mad. As a punk musician myself, who also suffers from a bit of stage fright, I know how difficult it can be to access this voice, especially in front of a crowd. I also know that the more I am able to access this voice, the easier access becomes. Once a performer becomes more familiar with sounding the way she wants to sound, in Jessica's case, "mad," the sound of that "mad" voice becomes a reference point. And the self-defense exercise she was asked to perform, yelling the word "no" repeatedly, helped her to become more familiar with the voice that she wanted to access to enhance her musical expression.

Tamara, the sixteen-year-old Korean-American heavy-metal vocalist from Oklahoma, told me that she enjoyed the self-defense workshop more than most of the others. When I asked her why, she replied, "I liked getting to kick and yell NO, NO, NO, NO!" I then asked her if kicking and yelling was something she normally didn't have opportunity to do, whereupon she likened the exercise to the moves she makes while rocking out in her bedroom.

Of the three campers I specifically talked to regarding their experiences in the self-defense workshop, Kat, Jessica, and Tamara, each of them mentioned that they liked saying no. When asked what they were saying "no" to, 11-year-old Kat replied, "…say somebody wants to give you something but you don't want it, you have to learn how to say no." And nine-year-old Jessica answered, "If people are trying to take you." While their ability to understand that "no" is an option if dealing with such situations may have

developed well before their arrival at rock camp, through participation, their senses of selves as active participants in their own safety is at the very least reinforced as something that is acceptable; furthermore, it is encouraged.

How to Rock in the Free World

Active participation as informed and aware consumers is something that campers were also encouraged to exercise during the workshop How to Rock in the Free World. The workshop, which was led by Misty McElroy, who is self-identified as queer, and Gabriela, a 25-year-old self-identified queer punk feminist musician from Brazil, informed the campers about the importance of identifying and/or including political and commercial messages in music. The entire camp population participated in this workshop and huddled around Misty and Gabriela as they spoke from a small stage in one of the larger practice rooms. Gabriela told the camp population that the music she creates with her band in Brazil always contains political and feminist themes they collectively feel are of importance to express. She shared with the girls how writing and performing songs has the power to affect culture and effect change, and encouraged them to explore other cultures, countries, and people in order to produce their own songs that attempt to encourage change.

In order to engage some of the younger campers, Misty and Gabriela passed out pages containing nursery rhymes such as “Humpty Dumpty,” “Jack Sprat,” and “Baa Baa Black Sheep.” They then led the camp in socio-political analyses of these nursery

rhymes, pointing to the different ways each poem delivered imperialist ("Humpty Dumpty"), socialist ("Jack Sprat"), or racist/classist ("Baa Baa Black Sheep") messages. From there, the discussion turned to financial power and Misty asked the campers to give some examples of corporations. The girls shouted out many names, demonstrating their knowledge: "Microsoft! Wal-Mart! Coca-Cola! McDonald's! Dell! Starbucks! Nike!" And when asked how these corporations are able to spread word about their products, the girls collectively offered, "Advertisements!"

Do they ever write songs that get stuck in your head and make you think that you need their product?" Misty asked. Her question was answered with the resounding collective response, "Yeah!" Then the campers began to sing examples of original jingles and popular songs that are used in commercials to, as Misty pointed out, sell products. The point of the exercise was to aid the girls in the development of their awareness that music contains messages.

"What about other messages?" asked Gabriela. "Do you think that we can make songs that everybody sings like this, too, but with other kind of message[s]?" The crowd of girls screamed "Yeah!" And Misty asked them to give examples of songs they knew were social protest songs. Based on the campers' response, it was clear that they knew more commercial songs than they did social protest songs, though a couple of girls did offer examples.

Seeing that the campers needed help through this exercise, Misty shared with them the examples of independent punk and hip-hop music, two musical cultures, she said, that are more heavily involved in creating social protest music than major-label

produced popular music. Referring to independent punk and hip-hop musicians, she asked, "Do they generally get more support from a major label or an independent label?" The campers collectively answered, "Independent." And when asked who makes more money and who has more creative control, the campers collectively responded that major labels make more money but independent labels give more creative control.

Then, likening some rap music to the nursery rhymes that were passed around, Misty explained that there is often a high level of oral community historical experience that is retold through rap music and lyrics. "These slogans…these songs that get into your head, they socialize a lot of people and they can really set the tone for what you believe in and what you want out of life." She continued with an explanation of the point of the workshop.

> Basically the point of this workshop is to get you to think about that and start critiquing and analyzing the songs that you hear and the messages that you're getting in the media and how powerful those songs and messages are and how manipulative they can be.

Gabriela added, "How can we make music to fight against all the things that you think [are] wrong? And Misty responded:

> Something that happens at rock camp is your voice is being

> amplified. That's why all the volunteers are working so hard to move your P.A.s and amps, so that we can make your instruments and your voices louder. And that's what we want, is to get louder and louder and louder and LOUDER. So you [should] be really thinking about what that message is that you want to be so loud because people are going to listen. They're going to listen on Saturday night [at the showcase], and they're going to listen for as long as you keep putting it out there.

Upon hearing this, one camper asked for examples of musicians who do engage in social protest. Misty responded by naming Bob Marley and Bob Dylan, and then other campers began to shout examples as well. They named feminist bands Le Tigre and Bikini Kill. They also named Patti Smith, Pete Seeger, The Dead Kennedys, Nina Simone, and Sleater-Kinney, demonstrating what they had not been able to demonstrate just a few minutes before; that they do have knowledge of artists who have included (and continue to include) messages of social protest in their music.[10]

How to Rock in the Free World aimed to help campers help themselves not be passive consumers of music and products. Though I was not able to speak to every

[10] At the close of the workshop, because Gabriela had mentioned that her band includes feminist messages in their music, a volunteer asked if she could explain to the campers what feminism means. Gabriela offered a definition that I will include and analyze in the concluding chapter of this paper. I mention it here for the sake of an accurate recounting of the How to Rock in the Free World workshop.

camper about her experience in the workshop, I feel it is safe to assume that, for many campers, this workshop was the first time they were discussing these topics and receiving this type of information, especially the younger ones. But I was curious. It's one thing to discuss and receive information. What, if anything, campers do with that information is another. One camper I did interview about the workshop, a ten-year-old bass player from California, told me that after participating in How to Rock in the Free World, her band decided to change the lyrics of the song they wrote for the showcase to relay a political message about global warming. And the campers in my older focus group all agreed that How to Rock in the Free World did, in fact, present new information to them. None of the girls in this group had ever deconstructed nursery rhymes in search of political meaning before, and to be honest, neither had I. That being the case, I imagine that this was the first time some volunteers were receiving this information as well.

The desire to combat campers' passive consumption and replace it with active production is something I found to be integral to the aims of How to Rock in the Free World, as well as Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls on the whole; and the methods for doing so mentioned in this chapter, seem to be working. Misty McElroy told me that many returning campers who had arrived at camp their first years "loving *NSYNC and Britney Spears" were now wearing Bikini Kill t-shirts and had become completely politicized. Many campers named bands like Sleater-Kinney, The Gossip, both of which contain women who actually play instruments and volunteer at camp, as influential. None of the campers I spoke with named Spears or Jessica Simpson or other performers that, according to a volunteer named Becky, are "canned and created for youth and then

sold back [to] them," as influences. Of the campers I spoke with, all of them told me that they intended to form new bands with people (girls *and* boys) in their neighborhoods once camp was over.[11]

It is important to acknowledge that during my research I discovered that some campers had heard about bands such as Sleater-Kinney from their parents or friends or other family members outside of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. Therefore, I do not claim that Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls is solely responsible for setting all campers on this trajectory. For some campers, rock camp does introduce them to bands and concepts that veer from the mainstream, thus lighting the way towards new and different paths of discovery. For others, the rock camp experience at least reinforces opinions and knowledge that may have been developed prior to attending camp.

Concluding Remarks

Before continuing on, I'd like to offer that I recognize this chapter may seem to present Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in a biased light. I want to assure readers that I have not purposely excluded relevant information that would point to problems regarding information campers received. Based on my observations and the feedback I received from campers and volunteers, I have made sure to include analyses regarding instances and decisions that may have been potentially oppositional to the stated camp goals. This includes questioning the decision to have The Donnas as panel speakers as well as the

[11] Again, it would be interesting to know if campers are forming bands outside of camp, but cannot be determined unless a larger study is undertaken.

contents of the Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls Zine, and including feedback I received from one volunteer who wondered if an hour of workshop time was enough.

As for dispelling the myth of the quiet little girl, one needs only to take a walk through camp during band rehearsal periods to hear that here girls are very loud and very amplified. Due to their experiences at camp through learning to play instruments and in bands, understanding their rights and accessing their voices and personal desires through zine production, self-defense and consumer/political consciousness workshops, girls who participate are leaving camp and returning to their homes, schools, and communities with heightened consciousness regarding entitlement of access, entitlement to representation in the media and society, and entitlement of self-expression and cultural production. Unfortunately for all girls, and consequently the rest of society, this is a privileged awareness. These entitlements are something that many girls grow up never knowing, and the number of lives that are negatively influenced by girls and women never knowing what they are entitled to are, needless to say, uncountable. What would a move towards this mass consciousness look like? How has it been attempted, and by whom? One thing that is for sure – it takes a village. These are questions I address in the next chapter, You Say You Want a Revolution.

CHAPTER 3

YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION: FROM RIOT GRRRL TO LADYFEST TO ROCK 'N' ROLL CAMP FOR GIRLS AND BEYOND

"A belief in instant revolution," Kathleen Hannah wrote in 1991, "is just what THE POWERS THAT BE want. That way we won't realize that WE ARE THE REVOLUTION."

- Dan Sinker (in *We Owe You Nothing. Punk Planet: The Collected Interviews*, 2001 p. 59)

The message that Kathleen Hannah was trying to convey in the quote above, is that "the revolution" is not an end result that feminist networks word towards, but that the revolution *is* the networking, the exchanging of information, and the new cultural productions that arise from such networking and exchanges of information. To understand this and to participate in such revolutionary acts, is to *be* the revolution. The revolution is not a goal, it is action.

In this chapter I explain how contemporary feminist music and culture communities influence one another, as well as the potential they have to influence others outside of their communities. Specifically, I unpack how the riot grrrl movement and the feminist music, arts, and culture festival Ladyfest 2000 were influential in the construction of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, and how Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls has the potential to, and does, initiate the sharing of resources and knowledge among other communities in locations outside of Portland, Oregon.

What piqued my interest regarding the connections between riot grrrl, Ladyfest 2000, and Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, aside from what I observed as obvious likenesses in methods and ideologies, were the responses of a number of interviewees naming the geographic location of rock camp as relevant to its existence. "It's no accident that rock camp is in Portland, Oregon," one volunteer told me, for, as another volunteer described, it seems like Portland attracts "a lot of people who have been hurt by mainstream culture, and they come here to heal from it." According to an article in *Outside* Magazine,

> [o]n average, Portlanders spend more on reading material, watch more indie films, and grow more flowers than their countrymen. Portlanders drink better beer than most, too, with 23 microbreweries within city limits. The arts, performing and otherwise, are booming, and the 11 farmers' markets help locals eat local. (Grudowski, 2005)

During my interview with Misty McElroy, she explained, in historical context, how and why she had come to reside in Portland, Oregon. Her explanation included an account of her participation as a volunteer at Ladyfest 2000 in Olympia, Washington, as well as feelings of both solidarity and frustration with the riot grrrl movement.

Also of interest to me were the responses of volunteers I spoke with who told me that after their experiences as rock camp volunteers in Portland, they had become inspired

to initiate girls' rock and roll programs in their own home towns and other adopted communities. In Portland, I spoke to women who were taking steps to introduce similar programs in Brazil, Toronto, New York City, and Tucson, Arizona. With this information, as well as information I had already collected that pointed to girls' rock camps taking place in Tennessee, Massachusetts, and North Carolina, I realized that much like the way riot grrrl began in Olympia, Washington, and spread a global message, girls' rock camps have the potential to be similarly influential.

As an aside, with this potential comes the possibility for co-optation. Because the popular music industry has successfully capitalized on other DIY cultural expressions through appropriations of rap, punk, and riot grrrl (i.e., The Spice Girls and their brand of "girl power"), it is possible that music and other product marketers will prey upon the girls' rock camp phenomena as a way to drive the sale of music and products to a specific niche market of adolescent girls. While this would make for an interesting study, it is something that I address in this paper only briefly as something I have noticed already taking shape and as an area of concern. Last summer while in a Blockbuster store in Atlanta, Georgia, where there is no girls-only rock camp, I saw a Coca-Cola commercial on the store's in-house monitors that depicted an all-girl rock band, each of them roughly 13-or 14-years-old, as they were preparing to take the stage before their concert. That corporate giants like Blockbuster and Coca-Cola are already involved in disseminating imagery based on girls as rock musicians, leads me to believe that other corporate media are not too far behind. The danger that this co-optation presents is that it relocates girls' voices. What, at first, may have been a unique expression based on personal experience

for the purpose of unique, personal expression becomes a homogenized and commodified expression based on assumption for the purpose of selling a product or an image. Ultimately, one person's artistic opinions become images that are used to gauge the social and cultural validity (or lack thereof) of many people.

Riot Grrrl: Ladyfest: Rock Camp

As discussed in previous chapters of this paper, the riot grrrl movement was influenced by and comprised of young feminists creating culture and informational networks in the early 1990s. Historically, as the media, corporate *and* independent, provided more and more accounts of riot grrrl bands, ideologies, events, zines, and other cultural productions, "the coverage focused on analyzing the word *feminism* as if it were an autonomous construct rather than on understanding what the term represents" (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000, p. 79), and it reduced feminist action "to a few star-studded examples, just as the media has often misrepresented the Second Wave as consisting of only a few well-known white women writers in New York" (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000, p. 79).[12] And just as the media reduced second-wave feminists to the bra burners and man-haters that mainstream America had come to understand them, the media succeeded in reducing the riot grrrl movement to a simple aesthetic. Ultimately, a

[12] "Riot girls initiated a press blackout in 1993 and…refuse[d] to speak with or be photographed by anyone associated with the popular media" (Kearney, 1997, p. 209). Had they made themselves available for interviews, perhaps the media would have been able to present riot grrrls and the movement in a more accurate light. Whether or not they would have done so is a moot point.

(loose-knit) network of young women "righteous and intent on challenging all forms of oppression: hatred of punks and kids who look different, classism, the marginalization of sex workers, as well as sexism, racism, ableism, and homophobia" (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000, p. 91, was appropriated, re-packaged, and sold back to American (and worldwide) youth as The Spice Girls and their watered-down, less confrontational message of "girl power."

In the late 1990s, The Spice Girls' popularity peaked while riot grrrls had fallen off the media's radar. Also, in 1999 another Woodstock festival took place in New York State, during which, according to a July 29, 1999, *Washington Post* article, it was alleged, "that several women were raped" (Wartofsky, 1999, p. C1). The first Ladyfest, which took place in Olympia, Washington, in July of 2000, was organized, according to a July 26, 2005, *Seattle Times* article, "[p]artly in response to the reported rapes at Woodstock during the summer of 1999" (Hui Hsu, 2005) by former members of the riot grrrl movement. Though riot grrrls had been concerned for female safety at rock shows for quite some time, according to one festival organizer, "Allison Wolfe of [riot grrrl band] Bratmobile decided it was time to create a safe space for women in entertainment…and the idea of organizing a festival for women by women was born" (Hui Hsu, 2005).[13]

Ladyfest was a six-day festival and offered dozens of art openings, music performances by bands like Bratmobile, The Gossip, Sleater-Kinney, and Tracy + the Plastics; and panels and workshops such as Prison Activism, Self-Defense, Gender

[13] It should be noted that Ladyfest 2000 was not the first festival that women had organized for themselves. One example is the Michigan Womyn's Festival, which has been taking place since the 1970s.

Socialization in Schools, Drums, Guitar, Bike Repair, Auto Mechanics, Sex Work, Anti-oppression, Dismantling Racism, and Women of Color Claiming Space in Their World. While the festival did allow males to attend, certain workshops were off-limits to certain people. Women of color only were permitted to attend the Women of Color workshop, and only females were allowed to attend the workshop on alternative menstrual products, as well as all instrument instruction workshops.[14]

It was through participation as a volunteer at the 2000 Ladyfest in Olympia that Misty McElroy had come to reside in Portland, Oregon. And one summer later, in 2001, McElroy would draw upon the Ladyfest model in order to construct the Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls experience. During our interview, McElroy explained to me that until she had traveled to Olympia and participated in Ladyfest, the experiences she had had in the music industry were undesirable and uninspiring:

> I had a lot of nights in vans and on tour buses where I was just really demoralized and just beaten down, tired of having to defend myself physically and emotionally and just always being on guard, always having to work harder, always being the only girl on crew and always just thinking, "this sucks."

[14] For a complete listing of Ladyfest panels, workshops, artists, and performers, visit http://www.ladyfest.org/news/schedule/index.html

At Ladyfest, as McElroy explained to me, she saw first-hand, for the first time, music and activism being combined. In Olympia, she saw bands (like Bratmobile and Sleater-Kinney) that she didn't have access to growing up in Pensacola, Florida. These bands, she told me, "were really influential in developing my politics." She continued: "Ladyfest had workshops that talked about racial identity…with women of color. There were women supporting each other, women playing instruments, women actually being active agents of social change. It blew my mind. I had never seen that before." Later in our interview Misty told me that she felt personally validated during Ladyfest. "I had felt like such a freak and such an outsider for all these years, my childhood, my adulthood. I was thirty when I went to Ladyfest and it took me being 30-years-old to understand what the word community meant….I just felt right at home."

When I asked McElroy to share with me why she "had never seen that before," growing up in Pensacola, and why she thought women engaging in cultural productions and activism was so prevalent in the American Northwest, she was able to shed some light on the cultural differences induced by geography and industry. Regarding Pensacola, she told me, "a lot of it has to do with the fact that [Pensacola] is a naval port, and so the military drives the economy there, and tourism drives the economy there – and both of those things [add]…transient elements to the city." Under such conditions, "it's really hard to sustain a music scene or an art scene or really any scene because you don't go to school with the same kids every year….There's no real consistency or stability or a sense of growth." Also, Pensacola is in the South, a region more infamous for its historical stance on slavery and bible thumping, than it is famous for diverse and/or

progressive cultural expressions. Florida, specifically, is well known for its consistent Republican voting record, political executions, and anti-choice extremist attacks on abortion clinics, including the murder of Dr. David Gunn in 1993.

Granted, according to McElroy, there are not a lot of people of color living in Olympia, but the small city is home to Evergreen State College, which attracts progressive young thinkers and artists, including Kathleen Hannah of the riot grrrl band Bikini Kill and Ladyfest 2005 performer Anna Oxygen. And while students come and go from Evergreen, based on what is known about the geographical beginnings of riot grrrl and Ladyfest in Olympia, as well as Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in Portland, there has developed in the region an arts and culture scene that remains stationary. According to the encyclopedic website Wikipedia, "because of the college's presence, Olympia has become a hub for artists and musicians (many of whom have been influential in punk, post-punk, anti-folk, lo-fi and other music trends" (www.wikipedia.org). More than that, the scene seems to be quite attractive, drawing artists and activists from all over the United States. The scene is what drew Misty McElroy, and many other volunteers with whom I spoke offered that they had been drawn to the Northwest by bands and political movements that they had been following, as well.

Much like the way riot grrrl radiated out from Olympia to Washington, D.C., "and spawned copycat movements in other countries" (Reynolds & Press, 1995, p. 324) to influence national and international networks of feminist artists and activists, Ladyfests have been organized in many locations around the world. In 2001, I personally attended and participated in a panel discussion on women in the music industry at Ladyfest

Midwest in Chicago, Illinois. One year later, the independent record label I was working for organized a showcase during Ladyfest South, and two years after that, My Siamese Self, the punk band I'm currently in, played during the second Ladyfest South. There have also been Ladyfests organized in Colorado, California, Michigan, Ohio, Italy, Mexico, Brazil, Australia, Germany, South Africa, Canada, Singapore, Switzerland, Spain, Sweden, Poland, and France.[15] It should be noted that Ladyfest festivals are not affiliated with one another except in spirit. All Ladyfests are produced by local volunteers whose aim it is to offer female-produced and female-safe music, art, and activist performances and education. In this way, Ladyfest emulates the loose-knit feminist networks that riot grrrl produced.

While I was on site at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, a Portland band named Plasmic Stallion, which was (and still is) comprised of five former campers, was invited to play at Ladyfest Olympia. I wanted to see the show, and to witness the camp's networking in action, so I offered to drive a couple of camp volunteers up to Olympia and help out at the gig. McElroy, along with her mother and sister who were both volunteering at camp, drove the 114 miles as well, to act as liaisons between the former campers, their parents, and Ladyfest volunteers. Earlier that day, Misty had been wavering back and forth between making the trek and not making the trek up to Olympia. The drive entailed her leaving the camp site early and there was always so much work to accomplish once the camp day was completed, so she was apprehensive about falling behind in her work. Finally Misty told me, "I'm going. I have to go. It's like things

[15] For a comprehensive list of Ladyfests, visit http://www.ladyfest.org

have come full circle with this invitation for Plasmic Stallion to play at Ladyfest. Ladyfest is why I'm here. I have to go."

Comparing the examples of workshops and panels that were offered at the first Ladyfest with the panels, workshops, and instrument instruction offered at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, and based on Misty's positive account of her experience at Ladyfest, it is easy to ascertain where ideas for the rock camp curriculum came from. And because "Ladyfest grew out of the Riot Grrrl movement, which began on Olympia's Evergreen State College campus," (Hui Hsu, 2005), it is possible to link riot grrrl, Ladyfest, and Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls as informants of one another, directly and indirectly. How has Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in turn affected Ladyfest? The organizers of Ladyfest Olympia (2005) invited a camp band to be a part of the festival. This illustrates an awareness on the part of local Ladyfest organizers that adolescent females can and do participate in the production of culture and can therefore be considered eligible participants in Ladyfest production. Just because band members, like the girls who comprise Plasmic Stallion, are not legally adults does not mean that they should be overlooked when planning a festival that celebrates female cultural productions.

And Beyond

As well as rock camp returning, as Misty put it, "full circle" to the Olympia Ladyfest community, Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls has made an impact on Portland and influences other communities in the Northwest and beyond. Misty explained to me that

during the first year of rock camp, uncountable members of the Portland popular music, activist, and business communities donated gear, supplies, time, and talent in order to provide instruments, instruction, and necessities for campers. The members of these Portland communities came together to achieve a common goal and are still working to make Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls a constant option for girls who want to rock. During its fifth year, not only were local Portland musicians, activists, and businesses still participating, but volunteers and equipment came from other places such as Canada, Brazil, New York, Arkansas, Georgia, California, and so on, as well. What's more, is that beyond Portland, volunteers have been working to bring similar programming to other areas. Early in the first chapter, I offered examples of other rock and roll camps for girls that have been created around the United States. While the Willie Mae Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in New York City is the only other camp organizationally affiliated with Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in Portland, Oregon, the Southern Girls Rock & Roll Camp in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, provides a good example of how participation at one location influences participation in another and creates new threads (and strengthens existing threads) in the web of networks that make rock camps possible. In fact, I feel confident saying that the reason *I* came to be involved in this project at all is because I was invited to speak on a panel at the girls' rock camp in Murfreesboro in 2004. And *my* invitation would not have come had not the *father* of a camper carbon copied me on an email he sent to one of the artists I was working with at the record label inviting *her* to perform.

In 2003, Kelley Anderson, a female student at Middle Tennessee State University, founded The Southern Girls Rock & Roll Camp. For two summers prior, Anderson had volunteered at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in Portland. During a conversation with Kelley, she told me that the reason she helped to kick-start the Southern camp was because it took a lot out of her, financially, physically, and emotionally, to travel all the way to Portland, Oregon, in order to volunteer; and also because she recognized a need for the same type of programming in her own community. So, with the help of some friends and other volunteers, as well as the Women's Studies department and the Women for Women organization at Middle Tennessee State University, Anderson was able to help construct a new girls' rock camp model from the one that had been presented to her in Portland. Here, then, arose another location, another option, and access to similar resources for girls who had difficulty traveling to or being admitted into Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in Portland. Moreover, the production of the Southern Girls Rock & Roll Camp involved other members of Murfreesboro's communities, including volunteers and musicians, parents of campers, local media, the Women's Studies department, and the Women for Women organization. In addition, because the camp was housed in music, sound engineering, and performance spaces on the campus of Middle Tennessee State University, camp production also drew in local educators, workers, and sound and performance technicians. And just as Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in Portland attracted campers and volunteers from well outside the Portland area, the Southern Girls Rock & Roll Camp has drawn campers, volunteers, and musicians from places such as Oklahoma and Atlanta, Georgia.

Not having spent as much time at the Murfreesboro site, and not having studied the Murfreesboro camp in the same systematic way that I did in Portland, I am not qualified at this time to say that the girls who attend the Southern camp are learning exactly the same things during music instruction and panels and workshops as the girls who attend the Portland rock camp. Nor do I have the space here to provide a comparative analysis. While I am interested in a comparative analysis of rock and roll camps for girls, I believe it is important to first gain rich understandings of each location. However, I would like to offer that I did travel to Murfreesboro in August of 2005, just a few days after I returned from my field work in Portland, as a volunteer stage manager for their end-of-camp showcase, and noticed a couple of differences that piqued my interest. First, the girls at the Southern camp seemed to have attained a higher skill level regarding instrumentation, a phenomenon that may have something to do with the camp's age policy. In Murfreesboro, campers start at 12-years-old; in Portland, they are permitted to attend at eight-years. Second, I noticed many of the showcase attendees in Portland, many of them campers' parents, sporting tattoos and dreadlocks, and it was not uncommon to see same-sex couples in attendance. The standing-room-only crowd cheered loudly and was extremely enthusiastic and supportive of the performers. They also appeared to be a much younger crowd than the Murfreesboro audience, who seemed to be a sea of white hair atop heads that were much more subdued and conservatively dressed than the Portland concert-goers. The material history and geography of Murfreesboro, much like how Misty described the differences between Pensacola and Olympia, as well as the unique personal experiences of the camps' programmers, are

bound to surface as differences in constructions of rock camps for girls. Much like Ladyfests, girls' rock camps have the potential to proliferate with affiliation in spirit. Even if there is organizational affiliation (like the Willie Mae camp in New York and the Portland camp), there are bound to be differences, if not in structure, then in community. Every place is not Portland, Oregon, and consequently every girls' rock camp will not be exactly the same as Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. This, of course, is not necessarily a bad thing. Differences in camp regulations and teaching styles provide choices for campers, their parents, and volunteers.

The notion that every place is not Portland, Oregon, was driven home during interviews I conducted with parents and volunteers while on site in Portland. One father I spoke with, Billy, was from Bend, Oregon. He had two daughters attending camp in 2005, a nine-year-old drummer and an eight-year-old guitarist. "Unfortunately, in Bend it's pretty limiting," he told me. Bend is "a pretty homogenized little community, it doesn't have the benefit of Portland where there is a good mix of diversity." And regarding instrument instruction in Bend, he offered: "A big roadblock we get is that they're too young." Moreover, instructors in Bend have tried to steer Billy's daughter the guitar player in directions she does not want to travel. "Everybody's told her that she has to take acoustic [guitar lessons] first," he offered, "…and she doesn't have any interest in taking acoustic guitar."

When I asked Billy if there were other young girls or boys for his daughters to play music with when they returned to Bend, he seemed hopeful. He told me that after Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls became so popular, a rock camp for kids was created in

Bend, so they might be able to find other young people for his daughters to jam with. According to Billy, the Bend rock camp is co-educational, but his suggestion that its creation was an obvious influence of the popularity of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls points to one of the ways in which Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls affects communities other than feminist music, arts, and politics networks.

Another parent I spoke with, the mother of an 11-year-old guitarist from Port Orchard, Washington, which is about four hours from Portland by car, told me that although they live in a "blue" state (meaning a majority of Democratic voters), they live in a "red" (a majority of Republican voters) county. Regarding Port Orchard, this mother told me, "I was driving down the street with my husband and I said, 'I finally realized what's wrong with this place…I haven't seen a single black person since we got here.'" One of the reasons this parent has accompanied her daughter to Portland for the past three summers, renting a hotel room for the week, is because, as she shared with me, "I want her to realize that the world is different than Port Orchard."

In Port Orchard, this mom told me, many of her daughter's friends are involved in a Masonic youth group for girls that requires girls to wear dresses and have male escorts to certain functions. "They teach them about their roles as women," she told me, "…I just want her to know there's something else out there." When I asked her what that something else was that she wanted her to experience, she replied that camp

> teaches girls how to treat other girls. It teaches them that it's okay to be however you are, if you're fat, if you're

> skinny, if you dress in all black, if you're "foofy," it doesn't matter…you're still a person. You're not defined by what you wear or who you hang out with or what kind of car your parents drive…and it's so important to me that things like that don't define her life….It's just such an empowering thing for them [attending campers].

While this example doesn't show Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls influencing Port Orchard directly, it does illustrate how Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls becomes a resource for parents and girls in isolated or less progressive communities to explore or experience alternatives to home community norms. And while the Port Orchard community doesn't seem to be affected by Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, it would be a premature judgment to say that this young guitar player does not have the potential to influence her home community in the future, especially considering that her participation at rock camp has outfitted her with tools for opposing existing social norms. Based on what my research has shown regarding the rock camp curriculum and the resources it offers campers, it is entirely possible that this guitarist could return to Port Orchard and someday write and perform songs that harness the power to create social change. It is possible, when she is older, that she may desire to conduct workshops and/or music instruction in Port Orchard that attempt to teach the things she learned while a camper at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. It is possible that her peers in Port Orchard will detect a difference in her personality and/or musicianship and desire to learn the same for themselves. To be fair,

it is also entirely possible that this girl will succumb to the influences of her hometown community and peers who participate in the Masonic youth group. However, at least her experience at rock camp has provided her with alternative information that creates the potential for new or different forms of association.

Spending time talking to the members of the Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls community, and by submersing myself on-site, I learned that the girls' rock camp model has been adopted for execution in locations other than Portland, Oregon. Becky, a volunteer from Portland, but currently living and studying in Tucson, Arizona, told me that through her volunteerism at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in Portland, she became very inspired to help bring similar programming to Tucson. She is currently conducting a project-based thesis that offers after school rock and roll instruction to girls. Becky told me that she believes that music instruction is something that can be taught in language arts classrooms, in arts programs, and in after school programs. She also "firmly believe[s] in [the] process of engaging in popular culture as a way of taking the power back from what popular culture is and using it so that young people don't become powerless against the forces of capitalism." As a woman, scholar, and musician herself, Becky spoke to me of her awareness of the imbalance of power in all industries, especially in the popular music industry. And, as an educator and self-identified feminist, she shared with me her desire to educate girls on that imbalance of power, with an emphasis on the way the sexualization and infantilization of women on the part of the American popular music industry tips the scales.

Mia, a young volunteer and queer musician from Toronto told me that as a follower of riot grrrl bands, she had been "on the Portland/Olympia bandwagon for a long time. She was drawn to living in Portland after her first summer volunteering at camp, and while she had become enthralled with the supportiveness of the Portland music and politics scene, she decided to return to Toronto. She went back to Toronto with a new enthusiasm. "We have to make Toronto a really great girl community…let's throw a Ladyfest!" she said. Subsequently, her band did play a Toronto Ladyfest.

And Gabriela, the volunteer I spoke with from Brazil, an educator who had also recently written a Master's thesis on youth and the Brazilian feminist movement, told me that she and her band mates had also helped to organize a Ladyfest in Sao Paolo, and that she was interested in starting a girls' rock camp there as well. Gabriela offered that she came to camp to volunteer because she felt like Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls' mission and her mission were synonymous. When I asked her to explain what she meant, she replied, "I believe that this is my struggle, this is part of the feminist struggle and mine…to try to show or teach girls that they are not weak or *incapacitado*." Gabriela also told me that she had expected to discuss politics at rock camp as a volunteer but that Americans have a leg up on Brazilians in regards to *visibilidade* of political issues, especially issues regarding feminism and women as rock and roll musicians. In other words, feminist topics and issues that are just beginning to be recognized and discussed in Brazil have already been addressed at length in the U.S., so much so that they don't need to be discussed as often as they once were. "Teaching girls to play guitar and have more self-esteem and to believe that they can do whatever they want to do…that

historical[ly] everyone [has] said girls can't do" is something that isn't as accepted in Brazil as it is in the United States, she explained. "I want to learn as much as I can to bring back to Brazil and try to do something there." However, she continued, "Our reality is totally different than yours so I don't think a project like this one will be for the same class [of people]. In Brazil we have a lot of social problems. I'm planning to do something with poor kids for free."

Concluding Remarks

It is my intention to follow up with Gabriela in another year or two to inquire whether or not she has made any progress in creating rock and roll and empowerment programming for girls in Brazil. In general, I intend to continue researching the ways in which Rock 'n' Roll for Girls influences communities, as well as whether or not what is learned at rock camp can impacts the way girls create and consume popular music. I am also deeply interested to discover ways in which girls' rock and roll programs might impact the popular music industry. While I am not comfortable claiming that Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls would not have come into existence if Misty McElroy had not participated in Ladyfest, the following questions arise: Would Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls exist had it not been for Ladyfest? Would Ladyfest have occurred if its founders had not participated in the riot grrrl movement? And because girls' rock camps do exist, and because, as I have shown, they exist in part due to the influences of riot grrrl and Ladyfest, I have come to the logical conclusion that Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls is not

the end result of those influences. In other words, this is not a narrative of linear causality, but one of links, relays, and networks. At this time, this study only uncovers the beginnings and I am curious to discover what is to come. How will campers learn from their experiences and what will they produce, if anything, from that knowledge? Will they choose to pass along the skills and information they acquire and contribute to the ever-evolving web of networks? And if so, in what ways? What is the risk of appropriation and co-optation? Will the girls who attend Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls ever be truly loud enough to be heard?

CHAPTER 4

LIKE A BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER: RACE, CLASS, AND FEMINISM AT ROCK 'N' ROLL CAMP FOR GIRLS

In this chapter, I provide analyses of race and class at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. I then offer remarks regarding activism and the use of feminist language in the production of rock camp. Until this point in the thesis I have only mentioned race and class without including analysis. It is important that readers understand that my inclusion of race and class analyses in this chapter should not be read as an afterthought. Contrarily, race and class are variables that I attempted to pay close attention to while on site. And while race and class analyses cannot be separated from gender analyses, to single out these variables out underscores their importance.

Race

During my interview with Misty McElroy, she shared with me that her frustration with the riot grrrl movement was based on its lack of racial inclusivity. "I found the whole riot grrrl movement really elitist and racist," she told me.

> I was definitely influenced by it and…clinging to a lot of the messages they were putting out and I was fully supportive of it, but I was also very critical of it….I just

> never saw any girls of color involved….All I was ever exposed to [regarding riot grrrl] were white girls.

While at Ladyfest in the year 2000, Misty found that workshops were taking place that covered racial identity issues and were being led and attended by women of color. So when the time came for her to construct rock camp programming, she decided that it would be important to have multi-racial visibility, as well as to provide attendance opportunities for girls whose families might not be able to afford instruments or tuition. Granted, the first summer that Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls took place, attendance fees were only $20 for the week. Still, five summers later, there is a no-cost instrument loan program in place and scholarships and financial aid are available so that girls are not turned away based on inability to pay the current $300 tuition.

Misty's decision to include programming that would be attractive to girls from a variety of racially (and economically) cultured backgrounds is indeed a step in the right direction. It illustrates her awareness of the importance of inclusion and collaboration. It was her intention that campers who might not normally delve into straight-up rock and roll have choices and representation. And it was important to her not to centralize white campers. To some extent, Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls achieved the transformative multi-racial, multi-cultural collaboration it sought. There were also instances where attempted inclusivity fell short. I explain further in the following paragraphs.

Unfortunately, while on site, I was unable to collect quantitative information regarding race and class demographics of campers and volunteers. Misty informed me

that though she does try to keep track of such specific information, she learned that if she proceeded with a race and class breakdown before camp began, the numbers would usually wind up being inaccurate due to the potential for lack of attendance. At this time, I still have not been provided with a quantitative analysis of race and class demographics for the 2005 season of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. Based on my observations and discussions with volunteers on the topics of the racial make-up of attending campers in 2005, I feel comfortable providing a ballpark figure based on quantitative data collected in 2004. "Of the 160 campers who attended both sessions of camp in 2004, approximately 40% were girls of color" (Dahl, 2004, p. 13). This figure includes girls who identified themselves as mixed-race and includes Black, Native American, Asian, and Chicana lineages. Although I recognize that there are dangers that come with providing ballpark figures, this estimate offers a partial context for qualitative analysis regarding the ways in which race and class were negotiated during the performance of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls.

Regarding the volunteers, the presence of so many women from different racial and fiscal backgrounds helped to create an atmosphere of heterogeneity. Specifically, the participation of certain volunteers helped to transform the camp environment from one that could have been solely about the production of rock music into an environment that depended on multiplicity of culture in order to effectively produce the camp's intended curricula. For example, Gabriela from Brazil, spoke during How to Rock in the Free World about U.S. imperialism and the difficulty she had procuring a travel visa to the U.S. as a Brazilian; and Jennifer and Lee drew from their own multi-racial cultural

experiences in order to lead the discussion during Image and Identity. Additionally, the participation on behalf of a Persian drummer from a wealthy family, an Asian-Pacific Islander vocalist, an Israeli-American vocalist, an out-of-work queer guitar player from New York, and a young, poor, queer bass player from Canada, aided in this transformation. These women were not on site as spokespersons, tokens, or objects; their volunteerism and personal cultural input was valued, nay, privileged, as integral in the development of the total Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls experience.

However, even though Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls achieved transformative multi-racial, multi-cultural relationships on one hand, on the other, there were also noticeable drawbacks. Becky, the volunteer studying in Tucson, shared the following opinion with me regarding race at rock camp: "In terms of the genre of music, camp counselors could have more [musical] diversity so that the student[s] would feel more comfortable." She also shared with me that because there are hip-hop and DJ camps popping up all over the country, marketing Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls as a rock and roll camp "is not going to bring in girls from other demographics….You don't generally see women of color in rock music. It's generally a white expression." I feel it is safe to say that Becky wasn't a racist, but her choice of language illustrates how whiteness is inherently centralized. During our conversation, Becky even mentioned to me how slippery the slope is when two white women talk about race. So, even though she was on guard, by using the phrases "diversity" and "other demographics," she still managed to centralize whiteness. Regarding her recognition of the need for a more developed multi-variance of musical instruction, she is correct, and I will address that below. However,

first, Becky's comment also drew my attention to rock and roll as a white cultural expression.

The "funny" thing about rock and roll music is that "the transformations in popular music that we associate with the rise and development of rock were the result of white fascination with black music" (Shank, 2001, p. 256). A popular illustration of this claim is to draw upon the example of Elvis Presley's rendition of the song "Hound Dog." Originally a number one hit for Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton in 1953, Presley's 1956 recording of the song eclipsed "Big Mama" Thornton's earlier version. I think it is safe to assume that few members of the general public are aware of this fact.

If it is true that rock and roll did come into existence because of white fascination with Black music, what is paradoxically striking is that what began as an appropriation of rhythm and blues music, historically Black expressions of experiences "drawn from the history of slavery and segregation" (Shank, 2001, p. 257), by 1999 had developed into a $38 billion worldwide popular music industry (Frith, Straw, & Street, 2001, p. ix) run (by majority) by white males. (Based on this reasoning, it is also no big surprise that many early popular white rock and roll musicians such as Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Buddy Holly came from Southern states.) Moreover, the popular music industry is currently so dominated by white males with regards to the production of music and music performance that Vernon Reid of the band Living Color, journalist Greg Tate, and producer Konda Mason felt it necessary to form the Black Rock Coalition "in reaction to the constrictions that the commercial music industry places on Black artists" (www.blackrockcoalition.org). The Black Rock Coalition "support[s] and advocate[s]

the performance by black musicians of musical styles publicly associated with whiteness" (Shank, 2001, p. 266).

According to Barry Shank (2001), the constrictions the music industry places on non-whites developed out of pre-1954 socio-political segregation laws (p. 259). Specifically,

> the music industry developed separate and unequal branches to cater to racially segregated markets. While the pop audience was served by a relatively coherent and organised network…the 'specialty' markets (the industry's term before the Second World War for the race and hillbilly audiences) relied on a catch-as-catch-can system of mail order and retail sales in barber shops and furniture stores. *Billboard* magazine developed charts to track the success of recordings during the 1940s, and by 1947 had developed separate charts to track the success of 'pop' and 'race' recordings. From the 1920s through the 1940s, the recording industry operated under the (probably accurate) assumption that the mainstream of the demographically larger white audience would more eagerly purchase music played by white musicians. Before the 1950s, whenever a new form of African-American popular music would attain

> growing commercial popularity, greater economic rewards would go to the white performers who had adopted the broad outlines of the current musical style and who had better access to the channels of the music industry that catered to the larger white audiences. At that point in the historical process, however, the social connotations of the sounds that defined that particular musical form, and which musically encoded race, would change: what had been 'black', became 'white'. (Shank, 2001, p. 259)

From this lengthy quote, it is clear to see how and why rhythm and blues informed and sometimes actually became rock and roll from an industrial standpoint. As well, it gives us a good idea how radio airplay and record sales tracking charts became segregated in the first place. One reason I chose to include this overview of the history of white appropriations of Black music is because this history is something that I did not observe being discussed at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, even though the information could have enhanced the anti-oppression and politics workshops, especially because it explains how oppression and race- and class-politics directly relate to the production of rock and roll music. It is possible that an entire workshop hour could have been spent discussing this particular history. Moreover, the fact that this history was not brought up at all during the panels and workshops I observed was what I consider to be an oversight on the part of camp programmers.

As well, regarding the need for more multi-variant musical instruction mentioned above, I offer the example below as illustration of another oversight. On the first day of camp, when campers were instructed to form their bands, they were asked to congregate near signs that were posted along the rock room walls that divided the campers into groups based on their preferences of pop music genres. Of the seven or eight Black campers, most of them convened underneath the sign that read "Hip-Hop." There was one other girl, who appeared to be white, underneath that particular sign. As discussed in the second chapter, hip-hop, specifically rap music, is a Black cultural production. That the formulation of hip-hop bands was offered as an option for campers points to the awareness on the part of rock camp programmers that Black cultural productions of music do have a place in mainstream popular music, and thus at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. However, I did not observe any instructional groups for girls who desired to learn how to construct and perform rap music. There were turntables on site that were available for the purpose of inclusion in bands, but the instructors who were present to engage campers who desired to learn how to use them were not specifically turntablists. Because of these oversights, I have concluded that offering girls the option of forming a hip-hop band without providing proper instruction on how to do so turned what had the potential to be a transformative element into one of tokenism. Offering campers the option to form a hip-hop band, though it illustrates an awareness of the necessity of that option, is not enough. If campers are to be given such an option, it is only fair that resources be sought out that would offer campers who do choose to create hip-hop guidance and instruction on how to do so. It is difficult to say if those resources were

available to camp programmers. A local hip-hop band called Siren's Echo played during lunchtime on the final day of camp, so I do know that there were female rappers living in Portland during the 2005 camp session. I do not know whether or not they had been asked to volunteer at camp for the week. And even if they had been asked to volunteer, there could be any number of reasons why they would be unable to do so. The following question then arises: If hip-hop instructional resources are unavailable or unattainable, is it better to take the hip-hop band option away from campers altogether?

As well as most of the Black girls choosing to form hip-hop bands, I observed further racialized behaviors among them. During the self-defense workshop, Becky volunteered to wear a set of punch pads and get kicked, punched, and yelled at by participating campers. "The Black girls were really shy about punching me and saying 'no,'" she told me. In the second chapter of this paper I mentioned that this phenomenon was something I observed as well. Why did these girls have more difficulty than most of the other campers accessing their power and force? Would these girls have been more willing to access their power and force had the padded volunteers been Black women? What was it about their individual experiences that prohibited them from accessing their power and force? Because I was unfortunately unable to speak to any of these particular girls about their experiences in Self-Defense, I can only speculate. "Black women's bodies have been objectified and commodified under U.S. capitalist class relations" (Hill-Collins, 2000, p. 132). This country's history regarding slavery and the way Blacks were routinely beaten, abused, whipped, or threatened with the prospect of violence by whites as a way to make them behave in a manner suitable to whites has left behind quite a

legacy. In the U.S., the regulation of Black women's bodies is traceable back to slavery and regulating tactics included putting their bodies on display, assault, sexual assault, and murder (Hill-Collins, 2000, p. 146). "Rape and other forms of sexual violence act to strip victims of their will to resist and make them passive and submissive to the will of the rapist" (Hill-Collins, 2000, p. 135). It is possible, then, that these Black campers were acting out submissiveness they have internalized based on the way they, as Black females, have been, and still are, abused by society.

That it is possible that Black girls were afraid to hit and yell at white volunteers because of internalized beliefs that they are to behave passively when facing their oppressors, points to the need for investigation on the part of camp programmers and self-defense instructors and volunteers. If there is any potential that Black girls are afraid to defend themselves based on these internalized beliefs, and I claim that there is, then perhaps steps should be taken during the self-defense workshop to educate participants on this particular history so that the problems could at least be identified. Awareness is the first step to creating change. Or perhaps programmers would consider including a women of color only self-defense workshop in the camp's curriculum. This would be a workshop led by women of color for girls of color, with specific attention paid to the myriad of ways female bodies, especially Black female bodies, are controlled by society. This would help girls to understand that self-defense is not always a solely physically combative necessity, and that to be able to completely defend the self, racial, social, economic, and theocratic hierarchies of power must be understood so that it is possible to construct oppositional, self-defensive viewpoints. The idea here is to help to instill in

Black girls the belief that they are, in fact, worth defending. Most of the white and other lighter-skinned campers illustrated their acceptance of this in the self-defense workshop by yelling loudly and punching and kicking with fervor and intent. Because the Black girls I observed did not exhibit the same behavior, leads me to believe that they have developed different opinions of the self than white and other lighter-skinned girls, an opinion of self that possibly they feel is not worth defending.

Class

Obviously, class is not as easily read as race. A person's economic status is not as readily identifiable as the color of her or his skin. And even if a person drives a high-end car, wears posh clothing, and carries expensive accessories that were once markers of upper-class status, without inquiring, there is no way to know whether such items were purchased with an actual abundance of money or if the buyer has accrued debt in order to give the appearance of financial wealth. At Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls I found it very difficult to differentiate without inquiring among campers and volunteers who had come from which economic background. And because class differences are not as easy to spot as race, issues regarding class were not as apparent.

Overall, Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls is not a wealthy organization. Its grassroots beginnings have blossomed into grassroots adolescence. As a non-profit organization, rock camp relies on many things other than money to make it go, like volunteers, all of whom I consider to be activists. "An activist," according to

Baumgardner and Richards (2005), "is anyone who accesses the resources that he or she has as an individual for the benefit of the common good" (p. xix). In the case of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, the volunteers access and provide *time* and *knowledge* (not money) in order to provide musical instruction and socio-political and cultural analyses. There was even a young volunteer nurse on site to provide care for those not feeling well. Were these volunteers, and other people, donating *money*, it is likely that the camp warehouse would have been outfitted with more proper music rooms, equipment, and other necessities and niceties. However, as it was, instructional and rehearsal spaces were makeshift at best (a tarp set up outside served as the meeting place for vocal instruction), instruments were donated when campers could not provide their own, as were necessities like drinking water. As for niceties, the camp warehouse was not air-conditioned and campers had to share one portable latrine unit located outside. Moreover, as Misty McElroy shared with me, none of the volunteers received any form of financial compensation for their time and efforts.

Money, of course, had to come from somewhere, however. Rent and utilities had to be paid, and Misty, as the founder and executive director, did have the privilege of receiving a paycheck. Throughout the year local bands, and even bands in other states, held fundraisers for Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, and campers' parents who could afford the tuition were required to pay it. On occasion, those who could also afford to help sponsor another camper were asked to do so. One year, the grunge band Pearl Jam donated money that went towards rent. And while I was on site in 2005, I was asked to give a representative from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation (Allen co-founded

Microsoft with Bill Gates) a walking tour of the camp facility. Misty told me that the representative agreed that the foundation would donate a few thousand dollars.

As well, in order to function, the camp relies on other goods and services donations such as lunches for the volunteers (provided by a few camper mothers), day-old baked goods from a local bakery, coffee and tea, guitar picks, drumsticks, microphones, chords, cables, rock posters, music magazines, CDs and music industry resource materials for the camp lending library, whatever, you name it. Of course, if Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls had a wellspring of greenbacks at their disposal, these things and more could simply be purchased instead of volunteers having to take time to solicit donations. What I'm trying to illustrate is that the Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls organization is financially poor.

It is possible that a larger, quantitative study could yield information regarding the financial wealth, or lack thereof, of volunteers and attending campers' families. Perhaps this is another issue to address, someday. However, for the purposes of this study, I simply looked at qualitative data that pointed to the class status of rock camp participants as a way in which to view representations of different classes at camp. Most of the volunteers with whom I spoke offered without prompting information that distinguished their individual and family class standings. In fact, some volunteers and campers even pinpointed their low-income statuses as reasons why they had not been involved with camp in previous years, or why they felt it would be difficult to return. Aside from Gabriela's problems procuring a travel visa to visit the U.S., she had to rely on friends in Portland to help her with travel expenses. "They made a benefit for me to be able to

come," she told me. And Mia, the young feminist bass player from Toronto, told me that although she had first heard about Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls three or four years prior to 2005, she had been unable to volunteer before 2004 because she couldn't afford it. "A plane ticket is like $700," she said. That's a lot of money for a lot of people. One camper mom expressed to me her desire, but inability, to give rock camp "a huge, fat check." And another camper, Jess, a 17-year-old guitar player from Florida, spoke gently about sacrifices her mother has made for her and her siblings so that they could afford to participate in activities in which they expressed interest.

Regarding the interviews I conducted, nearly half of the volunteers, campers, and parents with whom I spoke brought up their low-income status without prompting. In retrospect, it seems as though participants who had financial concerns expressed them to me, and those who did not have financial concerns did not offer up for discussion the topic of money or sacrifice. However, there is no way to know this for sure. At this point in this study, quantitative data regarding participants' financial statuses would be useful information. Without this data, it is difficult and inadvisable to make claims regarding participants' class statuses at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls.

What *was* clear, however, was a level playing field. Though I do not know the exact number of campers who were in attendance on scholarship, Misty told me that there were many. And during the camp week, I observed no instances where scholarship campers were singled out in any way on the part of camp programming. Of course, it is possible that attending campers of financially privileged upbringing may have had more musical instruction outside of camp, or were able to bring their own instruments instead

of having to borrow camp-issued gear, and in which case would have stood out in that way; but contrary to this possibility, Jess, the girl who expressed deep gratitude for her mother's sacrifices, was, according to my observation, the most accomplished guitar player at camp – *and* she had brought her own instrument to camp.

As well, other signifiers of class, such as food and clothing, were not easy to read either. Perhaps if it had been possible to inspect campers' lunches, I could have made class-based assessments according to what campers had packed to eat. But I was not there to make assumptions based on who had packed bologna and who had packed foie gras. Besides, because some campers were staying with host families for the week, and because some were living out of hotels and did not have normal access to their usual foods, and because it is possible that rich kids actually *like* bologna, an inspection of lunches would not have yielded reliable data regarding who could afford to bring what to eat. And as for clothing, this was rock and roll camp, and campers, for the most part, dressed like it was rock and roll camp. Torn jeans, bandanas, ripped leggings, and thrift store threads were normal uniforms. So, retrieving reliable data based on clothing was out of the question as well.

These observations (skill, whether or not a camper owned her own instrument, food, and clothing) support the concept of a level playing field at camp in regard to class. Furthermore, because the Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls organization cannot be considered financially wealthy, and because it can be said that all participants *comprise* Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, it can be deduced that all campers and volunteers were poor, at least for the time they spent on site during one week in July of 2005.

Feminism

When I spoke to Misty McElroy about activism she expressed to me that when she began this camp project she did not think of it as an activist undertaking. However, according to the way Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards define feminist activism in their book *Grassroots: A Field Guide for Feminist Activism*, all of the Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls volunteers can be considered feminist activists. By agreeing to play a role in the production of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls they are actively "expressing [their] values with the goal of making the world more just" (Baumgardner & Richards, 2005, p. xix). Moreover, through their participation, whether on purpose or accident, they are taking "off the cultural lens that sees mostly men and filters out women and replac[ing] it with one that [attempts to see] all people" (Baumgardner & Richards, 2005, p. xix). In 2005, by Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls' fifth summer, McElroy had indeed recognized the production of rock camp as activism. Perhaps this recognition had something to do with the camp achieving non-profit status and with the realization that people came from far away places to volunteer their time. And while Misty and nearly every volunteer I spoke with consider themselves to be feminists, and consider camp to be a feminist space, the subject of feminism was barely discussed during camp programs. Nor has feminism recently been discussed when McElroy has solicited donations.

Regarding the word "feminism," Misty explained to me that she "was always told to remove it" from proposals and donation solicitations. When I asked her who had suggested she remove feminist language, she replied, "By instrument companies…they

said they were put off by the word[s] 'feminism' and 'oppression.' That was the feedback I kept getting." And when I asked her if she was dealing mostly with men at these instrument companies, she said yes, save for a woman who heads Daisy Rock, a guitar company that manufactures colorful heart- and flower-shaped electric guitars that are marketed to little girls. I asked Misty *why* she had been using feminist language in her proposals and she explained, very matter-of-factly, that she had been attempting "to demonstrate the *need* for Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls….but I heard it over and over. The word [feminism] was too strong. It put everybody on the defensive. [It was] too risky, too edgy."

When I asked Misty if she used feminist language in camp advertisements and recruitment forms for volunteers, she told me no.

> Eventually I just stopped using it and let it create itself. I had such a clear agenda. I knew exactly what I wanted and exactly what I didn't want and decided not to call it anything. And it just came out of the girls' transformations. And then other people [in the community] started calling it "feminism" and "activism" and it was okay. I think the instrument companies wanted it cutesy and non-threatening and they wanted it like a guitar shaped like a heart or flower – a gimmick they could market.

While I only observed the use of the word "feminism" a couple of times during camp workshops, further exploration found that feminism had perhaps been an over-discussed topic at rock camp in years prior to 2005. In an article that was printed in the May 7, 2004, issue of *The Austin Chronicle*, a former camper was quoted as saying that "she 'just didn't want to hear the word 'feminist' again for a long time'" (Welch, 2004). Still, according to the same article, this former camper was scheduled to return to camp as a volunteer, even though she had obviously tired of the camp's blatant use of feminist programming.

When I asked Misty about the blatant use of feminist programming in the years prior to 2005, she said,

> I think we had to be more in your face about it…because times were different then, even a few years ago....It just got to the point where we'd done it enough times to where we didn't have to say, "this is what we're doing." It was just sort of understood.

At what point during the production of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls does feminism become a matter of semantics? When is "feminism" just a word? It's just a word when a former camper tires of hearing and talking about it, but makes a decision to participate in rock camp production anyway. "Feminism" is just a word when a camper mom who is also a volunteer tells me that she doesn't consider herself to be a feminist but is on site

every day to teach the youngest girls how to play guitar. It is just a word when Misty tells me, "It just got to the point where we'd done it enough times to where we didn't have to *say* this is what we're doing. It was just sort of understood."

And what of this business of male-run instrument companies that only consider girls a viable market when guitars are shaped like hearts or flowers? Of all the many dozens of guitars I observed girls playing while on site at rock camp, only one was shaped like a flower. Girls are not interested in playing a guitar because it is shaped like a flower. Girls are interested in playing the guitar because they are *entitled* to play the guitar. Unfortunately, based on Misty's experiences when soliciting donations, male-run guitar companies have offered anything *but* guitars.

> There's a certain instrument company that just gave us a lot of gear this week that I've been begging for five years for instruments and all I would get was, "we've started a new clothing line of women's girlie [t-shirts] and we'd love to send you some."

Misty has even gone to instrument trade shows to pitch her donation proposals and told me that in her proposals she explains that parents of campers call her "every day saying, 'help me buy an instrument for my daughter,' and whatever I put in their hands, that's what they're going to stick with." Still, McElroy doesn't think that these companies "have a concept of girls possessing brand loyalty like a boy." Perhaps if girls were being

shown, through something like making instrument donations to rock camp, they would have an easier time developing this brand loyalty that marketers are striving for.

Still, while this particular year camp did receive a relatively large quantity of guitars, bass guitars, amplifiers, and other promotional items such as stickers and wristbands from a male-run company that had been turning requests down for five years, it is important to point out that this donation actually came from the band members of Raining Jane, two of whom were on site as volunteers in 2005. Raining Jane is a band comprised of four Californian women who are endorsed by this particular instrument company; the band actually gave over a sizeable portion of their yearly gear endorsement to Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. So this donation was in actuality given by Raining Jane; it was not a decision that was made by the company out of a change of heart or marketing strategy.

When I asked one of Raining Jane's members why she and her band mate were volunteering at rock camp, and why they had donated so much of their yearly endorsement to Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, she told me that she had a desire to

> live out what we're trying to do every day as musicians….I want to say something. I want to inspire people, specifically young women....Playing the drums or teaching the drums or sharing experiences with other musicians or young women through music is going to take me somewhere else so I can do greater work for this world.

This volunteer's response mirrors the definition of feminist activism given by Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards quoted at the beginning of this section. Through their volunteerism at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, she and her band mate were "expressing [their] values with the goal of making the world more just" (Baumgardner & Richards, 2005, p. xix).

It is clear that many of the men who run the companies that advised Misty McElroy to omit the use of the word "feminism" in her proposals have not been challenged by the same obstacles as women have faced in the music industry and therefore have not developed similar outlooks regarding how and why it is important to give girls who are aspiring musicians a leg up. Even though women have "been closely connected with music since ancient times…when it came to music in the public arena, they were mostly excluded" (Marcic, 2002, p. 4). "The careers of female musicians are dependent on the decisions of a series of men in key positions" (Bayton, 1998, p. 2). Individually, many of the volunteers and campers I interviewed spoke of ways in which they had been silenced, oppressed, and disregarded by boys and men along their journeys as musicians. More than one person gave accounts of male band members turning the volume down on her amplifier. Another told me that the boys in her band asked her to write guitar parts, then kicked her out of the band, but continued to use the parts she'd written. And another told me that even though she was the leader of her band, sound men have ignored her presence and authority and communicated only with male band members, assuming she was unable or not knowledgeable regarding the use of her own

sound equipment. Personally, I have worked with a multitude of bands, produced many shows, and been behind the scenes in rock clubs across the United States, and I have *never* seen a female band member turn down the volume on another band member's amp. I have never witnessed a female sound person (the few that clubs employ) disregard *any* band member. I also have been personally told my male stagehands and tour bus drivers to "get off the stage," "don't touch that," and "get away from there." Even after they realized I was the tour or stage manager, I never once received an apology for their assumptive and rude behavior.

At Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, such individual experiences come together and combine to create a collective female experience in rock and roll production. In turn, through the participation of all involved, the collective oppressed female experience in rock and roll production (and thus in life) is countered with educational, embracing, encouraging, and empowering experiences through participation in camp workshops, the construction of bands, rehearsals, performances, and networking. While Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls does not claim to want to take on the entire popular music industry, as this thesis has shown, what girls learn and accomplish through participation does challenge the existing norms of the industry regarding the production *and* consumption of popular music. Perhaps by challenging industry norms, industry will take notice. I have already seen signs of the industry embracing girls as producers of popular music, but thus far, only in ways that encourage the marketing of products to certain demographics. While networks of women, girls, and even some males, like Riot Grrrls, Ladyfest organizers, and Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls volunteers have made strides towards

making music and cultural production more accessible to women and other minorities, because the larger industry has thus far neglected to follow suit, female productions of culture are still relegated to the margins.

So what if Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls doesn't use the word "feminist" very much anymore, either in camp or in public? There are times when *doing* accomplishes so much more than *talking about doing it*. It is a feminist act when two hundred women and girls take over an entire music venue in Portland for one night, doing all the things that the mainstream still thinks men are meant to do – like running sound and lights and performing music that they have created together. It is a feminist act for volunteer musicians to make themselves available for and accessible to girls who would normally not have the opportunity to be in the same room together. It is a feminist act to place an electric guitar into the hands of a young girl and give her full control of her own volume knob, for without that control (to which she is fully entitled) she may very well never be loud enough to be heard. With that control, at least she has a choice.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Revisiting my overarching research questions, I began this study by asking what participants claimed were the feminist objectives of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. Many volunteers answered by discussing the importance of allowing campers to make their own choices, and by providing them with tools and information that enabled them to make educated decisions. Volunteers also spoke of the importance of nurturing campers' confidence in their abilities (musical and social), as well as highlighting the significance of campers' entitlement and ability to create their own culture. Furthermore, it was also of importance that girls were shown how to be conscientious consumers of culture. I observed the manifestations of these objectives in such instances as allowing campers their choice of instruments, band members, and by allowing them to write their own songs and contributions to the all-camp zine. And during the panel and workshops I observed, space was provided for girls to have access to other musicians, as well as safe space for discussions of topics not normally addressed in patriarchal institutional settings, including the learning of basic self-defense skills.

Next, I asked how administrators, volunteers, campers, and parents/guardians described their roles at camp. I found that beyond physical descriptions such as, "I move equipment," "I teach zines," "I play drums," and "I'm a camper mom," participants had specific *reasons* for performing their roles. The parents I interviewed spoke of their responsibilities to provide a place for their daughters to develop senses of selves away from gender normative confines of the social structures of their hometowns. Many

volunteers and the camp's executive director shared that they felt a social responsibility to help provide access, instruction, and encouragement for girls in ways that they themselves were never afforded but would have enjoyed and found helpful. And campers (as well as volunteers) told me that they sought space to learn and play music with other girls, as their experiences playing with boys were unsavory and left them feeling inadequate and tokenized.

Lastly, I intended to discover to what extent the feminist goals of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls are being realized. This was not a question that I posed directly to interviewees but addressed in the analysis of my interviews and observations. At this point, however, a lengthier ethnographic study would have to be undertaken in order to determine to what extent the goals have been (or are being) realized. I discuss this further below. It is clear that the goal of providing space for girls to receive instruction and play music with other girls has been attained and maintained. Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls continues to occupy a warehouse in Northeast Portland, Oregon, and as well as offering two session of camp in the summer of 2006, the Girls Rock Institute and Backstage Pass programs are still in full swing. Not only that, but due to popularity and need, other girls' rock camps are providing similar spaces for girls in other locations around the U. S. Based on camper responses during interviews, it is also evident that they had internalized the self-worth and entitlement to culture that they were shown is accessible *and* acceptable. Some campers (and even volunteers) claimed that rock camp was the first place they received complete acceptance from their peers and instructors;

while for others, the rock camp experience simply reinforced positive notions of self that girls had developed before attending camp.

Popular music theorist Mavis Bayton has claimed,

> [F]eminism has been a major force in getting women into popular music-making. It has given women access to instruments and provided safe women-only spaces for the learning of skills as well as rehearsal and performance; it has challenged ingrained 'technophobia' and given women the confidence to believe that, like the boys, they can be music-makers rather than simply music fans. (Kearney, 1997, p. 216)

As I have shown throughout the chapters of this thesis, Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls provides the *same* opportunities to girls that feminism has provided for women regarding popular music-making. Therefore, I claim that Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls *is* feminism in action. By employing second-wave methods, such as consciousness raising and self-defense instruction, taught by mainly third-wave feminists in a third-wave setting, Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls has provided for girls what it set out to provide, and then some. Not only have the campers benefited (musically and personally) from attending rock camp, but their parents experience enjoyment and a sense of gratification knowing that their daughters receive education and acceptance they may not receive elsewhere.

Volunteers experience a sense of accomplishment as nurturers of young musicians who may not have ever otherwise obtained access to musicians willing to help them in ways of their own choosing. Moreover, as they work together to construct socio-political programming and musical education within camp, volunteers develop networks among themselves. And as the volunteers see how participants (campers, parents, and the volunteers themselves) benefit from involvement in camp, they realize the need for similar programming elsewhere. Some volunteers are even motivated enough to start other camp sites, such as the Southern Girls Rock & Roll Camp and the Willie Mae Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls.

Granted, as discussed in the previous chapters, the Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls curriculum is not without drawbacks. While it is good that many instructors and volunteers come from a variant of racial, cultural, economic, gender, and sexual backgrounds, one of the most serious flaws I observed was the camp's lack of hip-hop instructors, even though campers were encouraged to form hip-hop bands. Because most of the Black campers chose this options led me to believe that hip-hop was the style of music they most wanted to perform. This is not surprising given the high volume of Black representation in hip-hop versus the pittance of Black representation in rock and roll. Rock camp administrators, if they cannot provide hip-hop instruction, should take steps towards making the production of rock and roll more interesting to Black girls. Meaning: rock and roll production needs to accommodate the creative desires of Black girls, not that Black girls need to assimilate to the (generally white) production of rock and roll. It is therefore my suggestion that the administrators of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for

Girls contact the Black Rock Coalition in order to communicate an exchange of ideas and methods, and to facilitate possible future collaboration.

Also, based on my observations of rock camp's commitment to anti-oppression training, I suggest that camp administrators create a panel discussion that highlight histories of gender, sexual, and racial oppressions and co-optations specifically in rock and roll. In years past Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls has offered a workshop on the history of women in rock, but I do not know to what extent the history of women's oppression in rock and roll was discussed, or if it was discussed at all. And while I understand that camp administrators may not want to offer exactly the same programs year after year, especially because replicated material would become repetitious for returning campers, I am of the belief that a discussion of oppressions within rock and roll production should be a compulsory component of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. Furthermore, because Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls is committed to the waging of equity, its curriculum would be enriched by a panel discussion regarding the histories of gender, sexual, and racial oppressions and co-optations in rock and roll. Ultimately, there are ways to offer such a panel each year, at the beginning of camp, and to provide new information or alternative activities for returning campers.

Not addressed in the body of this text were what I found to be structural shortcomings of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls. The DIY methods that camp employed regarding volunteer productivity were described by a couple of volunteers as frustrating, and the fact that I was told by Misty that she didn't even have camp letterhead pointed to a lack of organization and professionalism much needed when operating a full-fledged

organization. One volunteer complained of feeling obligated to take on too much responsibility because roles were not clearly defined and developed. Another volunteer claimed not knowing the names and faces of interns responsible for the moving of equipment. Although not within the original intent of my research, I mention these issues now because I realize that they could have been deterring the camp's mission. If volunteers had to spend extra time to obtain such elementary information, it is likely that time and resources were taken away from campers, thus jeopardizing goals.

Indeed, part of the charm and uniqueness of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls is its commitment to DIY methods, but to become better organized does not necessarily mean that an independent spirit has to be sacrificed. By appointing a board of directors who are dedicated to deconstructing hierarchy and constructing equitable participation, and by accepting volunteers who are willing to participate in equitable DIY methods, productivity confusion becomes less prevalent, productivity levels become enhanced, and goals become more easily attained. Moreover, as is the case with any organization seeking to survive, fundraising is key. Perhaps if more fundraising efforts were undertaken by the Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls' board of directors, more volunteers would become paid employees, thus making participation more truly equitable.

Regarding to what extent camp goals have been (or are being) realized, further research questions arise. As I have stated above and throughout this thesis, different and lengthier studies need to be undertaken in order to develop an even richer understanding of Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls and the numerable effects it has on participants and communities. Post-camp, do campers return to their hometowns, schools, and families

and retain the senses of self-worth and entitlement they showed have developed, at least in part, as a result of their participation at Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls? Are girls returning home and continuing to hone their musical skills, forming bands, and nurturing the connections they made with other girls at camp? And are campers aware of the power they possess as potential threads in ever-evolving webs of feminist networking? What will they do about it? Are the volunteers returning to their hometowns and actually developing similar programs? How will rock and roll culture and consumerism be affected by campers as some of them grow up as producers of rock music? To what extent will rock and roll girl culture be co-opted by the mainstream? How are other girls' rock camps similar to and different from Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls in Portland, Oregon? All of these questions arose as a result of my study and in order to uncover the answers to these questions and more, I encourage feminists, social theorists, musicians, and educators to look closely, and at length, at the ways in which Rock 'n' Roll Camp impacts participants, community members, the media, and rock culture. And though this thesis has come to its close, my own work is not done. Because of my membership in feminist and rock and roll communities, I feel a personal and communal responsibility to continue to seek out these answers and outcomes. I feel it is my responsibility to *listen* to what Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls campers are shouting. For the more we actually listen, the more they are heard.

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